

Special Issue

Volume 32/2, 2011

Distance Education for Empowerment and Development in Africa

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In Africa, the rise of research on open and distance education and e-learning can be given a big boost by the publication of articles in peer-reviewed outlets such as *Distance Education*. This also gives authors a worldwide platform to showcase and publicize their projects and findings.

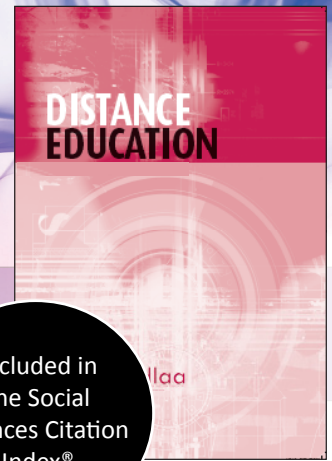
It is crucial for Africans to work actively to improve research output in these areas. Africa is the world's second largest and second most-populous continent and an important and growing educational market with many ties to the rest of the world. Just as Africa was once known by the Western world as the 'Dark Continent', today's paucity of published research on distance and e-learning across Africa may wrongly lead those in the rest of the world to conclude that the world's least developed continent is least developed in applications of distance education and e-learning.

In the past, developments in African distance education may have been based on pipedreams, fallacious assumptions of the concepts, approaches, expertise, technology transfer, and the support of the developed world. Mistakes are still being made and intended outcomes may not yet be realized. However, as this special issue shows, African nations are well able to pursue paths appropriate to their own needs and circumstances in confronting and conquering the many challenges involved.

The articles and reports in this special issue describe the opportunities and the challenges in introducing these new approaches into African educational systems - and show how individuals who are convinced of the need for change are meeting these challenges. This special issue is a testament to some of these efforts. It shows how African education systems face some of the same pressures experienced throughout the world, but must also confront some contextually specific challenges, both continent-wide and within individual nations.

The special issue includes a diverse set of contributions, each offering valuable insights into distance education and technology practice in African education. It presents case studies and findings in regard to professional training and incentives for staff embarking on distance education, mobile learning, distance education-based teacher training, OER development and use in African higher education, copyright law and the benefits of inter- and intra-institutional collaboration.

We believe that the contributions assembled here provide a rich, balanced and engaging series of articles and reports on the kinds of empowerment and development that are extending and enhancing educational opportunity in African schools, colleges and universities and in nonformal education. We also believe that they demonstrate that African experiences - positive and negative - have global significance.



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Articles

Promoting distance education in higher education in Cape Verde and Mozambique

Fernando Ramos, Gulamo Tajú & Louissette Canuto

Turning the tide: A socio-critical model and framework for improving student success in open distance learning at the University of South Africa

George Subotzky & Paul Prinsloo

Collaborative design and use of open educational resources: a case study of a mathematics teacher education project in South Africa

Ingrid Sapire & Yvonne Reed

Insights from the Health OER Inter-Institutional Project

Ken Harley

An online abstract mentoring program for junior researchers and healthcare professionals

Gurmit Singh

Challenging assumptions: Mobile Learning for Mathematics Project in South Africa

Nicky Roberts & Riitta Vänskä

Reports

The eLearning Fellowship Program at the University of Jos, Nigeria

S.E. Adewumi, J. Dooga, D.C.J. Dakas, D.I. Yakmut & T.J. Mafwil

Key copyright issues in African distance education: a South African case study

Caroline B. Ncube

OER in Africa's higher education institutions

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Integrating ICT into teaching and learning at the University of Dar es Salaam

Joel S. Mtebe, Hilary Dachi & Christina Raphael

E-content capacity development - RUFORUM network experiences

Nodumo Dhlamini

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