Lowering the Barrier to Entry Into South African Higher Education: Visual Arts In Online and Blended Learning Systems

Laura S. Scherling, Teachers College, Columbia University

Case Study

Future Learn Cape Town

www.futurelearn.com/partners/university-of-capetown

Informant: Jackie Palmer, Learner Performance Manager

Case Study

Silulo Ulutho Technologies

www.silulo.com

Informant: Luxuyo Rani, Founder

Methods

The primary method of data collection is through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted on Skype and in-person. Once a series of interviews are conducted the data will be transcribed and coded. This data will be integrated into the narrative of each case study.

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Problem Statement

"... South African higher education is under pressure to increase participation from a diverse group of students and to produce the skills required for a rapidly changing society" (Laifer et al., 2007, p. 2)

There are many challenges faced by the SA higher education system that can upset the implementation of online learning and blended learning systems. Lack of funding, inadequate academic preparedness, and resource misappropriation are major obstacles to enrolling SA society with new creative and technological innovations (Boateng, 2014; Jaffer et al., 2007; DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013). However, many organizations believe government offices, such as DHET, are a cause who function creatively and ethically (DHET, 2013).

As the potential for online education and blended learning systems gains more recognition in SA, new models for technology acceptance, geographically localized solutions, and increased access to technologies are needed (Parker and Ithomi, 2012). Targeted use of technologies and cross-sector collaboration will also play a significant role in bringing the barrier to entry into SA institutions. Organizations such as Future Learn Cape Town, LUCT, GetSmarter, and Silulo Ulutho Technologies work to improve the quality and technological capabilities of the SA tertiary education system crucial transformations may be possible.

Conclusion

The trick is to identify solutions where educational technology will be appropriate and when and how to use educational technology in those situations. But the potential for online education and blended learning systems gains more recognition in SA, new models for technology acceptance, geographically localized solutions, and increased access to technologies are needed (Parker and Ithomi, 2012). Targeted use of technologies and cross-sector collaboration will also play a significant role in bringing the barrier to entry into SA institutions. Organizations such as Future Learn Cape Town, LUCT, GetSmarter, and Silulo Ulutho Technologies work to improve the quality and technological capabilities of the SA tertiary education system crucial transformations may be possible.

Case Study

GetSmarter

www.getsmarter.co.za

Informant: Laura.Scherling@tc.columbia.edu

Key Insights

Research question: Can access to higher education be improved by online learning technologies and blended learning systems?

Case-sector collaboration:

"In South Africa, for instance, implementation of the tertiary education system is challenging due to the current political and economic climate, which does not provide sufficient infrastructure to support the vision of radical social change..." (Walji, 2013).

"For the Black population to compete for the economic restructuring brought about by mass unemployment, they must upgrade their education..." (Jesslyn Co et. al, 2006, p. 348).

For this group of informants, online learning is particularly powerful as a way to providing SA citizens with skills that are in demand.

Case-innate collaboration:

"...with only 2% of the workforce in SA having access to online learning modules..." (Bennett, 2006, p. 171). All of the informants in this project were based in the country.

Entrepreneurship is also being expanded to SA development and education systems. The potential for online education and blended learning systems can benefit from a cross-sectoral leader-follower collaboration..." (Laifer et al., 2007, p. 348).

Informants:

The case studies were conducted by Laura Scherling, a researcher with the Arts & Art Education Program, Teachers College, Columbia University; Dr. Richard Jochum, Assistant Professor with the Art & Art Education Program, Teachers College, Columbia University; and Sam Paddock, founder of the online learning platform GetSmarter.