

## **University lecturers and staff development in a post-pandemic world**

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In very few instances pre-pandemic were university lecturers adequately trained to teach in higher education settings. The Covid-19 pandemic with its sudden transition to blended and online teaching and learning has demonstrated, even more poignantly than what was already obvious, that there is a strong need to train and prepare university lecturers for one of their main tasks: teaching. After a brief literature review, my contribution proposes different staff development programmes held at the Institute of Distance Education, University of Eswatini, during the Covid-19 pandemic, in the form of the sharing of lived experiences of one member (the presenter) of a team designing and implementing staff development programmes, via online courses and webinars on a variety of subjects (facilitation, e-assessment, etc.).

Both difficulties and successes of staff development in the Covid-19 pandemic (Sassere and Makhasane, 2020; Du Preez and Le Grange, 2020) are discussed. These include obstacles such as lack of infrastructure and finances, digital divides, resource and skill limitations which hinder staff development (Dube, 2020; Koi-Akrofi, 2020), as well as staff resilience and the motivation to immediately act to ensure continued teaching and learning was clearly felt and acted upon. The main objective of staff development being the transmission/sharing of knowledge, skills and attitudes, it is essential to verify whether this actually occurred during the pandemic and which lessons can be learned from that difficult period of time. What will the future bring? We don't know, but what we know for sure is that teaching staff will need to be flexible and ready for change. Are our staff development programmes able to provide for such circumstances?

**Topic: Designing flexible learning for adults: Dialogue between University Lifelong Learning and professional contexts**