

TWO OCEANS GRADUATE INSTITUTE

ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

**Initial Teacher Education
PGCE and B Ed Programmes**

QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ALL



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1. PURPOSE AND POINT OF DEPARTURE: ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

The purpose of the Online Teaching and Learning Policy of the Two Oceans Graduate Institute is to provide clear guidelines for the successful implementation and evaluation of online teaching and learning in the context of a distance mode of delivery at the institution. In order to be a teacher training institution of excellence, it is of utmost importance to have absolute clarity on the principles and strategy of online teaching and learning. The purpose of this policy is to provide that clarity.

The development of the institutional online teaching and learning policy is an ongoing process embedded in the relevant underpinning theories for online teaching and distance education (Jung, 2019).

2. POLICY CONTEXT: DELIVERY OF WELL TRAINED 21st CENTURY TEACHERS

The online teaching and learning policy of the Two Oceans Graduate Institute intends to create a dedicated and rich online teaching and learning ethos at the institution whereby students can fulfil their calling to become teachers of excellence. Excellence in teaching and learning is based upon values driven and student/learner centred approach, based on scientifically researched knowledge, which is the point of departure for this policy. Online teaching and learning takes place in the context of the development of learning programmes and constituent modules, the specific online/distance mode of delivery and the institutional assessment and moderation policy and teaching practice policy.

The online mode of teaching and learning with a strong emphasis on *school based practical learning* (teaching practice) forms the basis of the teaching and learning approach at the institution. The ultimate purpose of the institution is to deliver quality graduates for all the school phases who demonstrate the ability to teach independently. Graduates should be in a position to translate deep subject content knowledge into best practice teaching standards in all school phases and all the subjects taught in schools. Teaching practice provides students with opportunities to apply the foundations of learning theories in practical situations, to use the knowledge they have gained and to analyse and to adjust their efforts (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden 2007).

Teaching and learning at the institution should be of service to schools towards a high standard of teaching and learning in the classroom. The online teaching and learning pedagogy resounds the intent to train teachers who are committed to the wellbeing of all children. Graduates of the institution should be well equipped to promote social justice and the redress of inequalities in the society and in the context of a diversity of school contexts. Students are constantly examining teaching strategies to reach learners who experience barriers to learning and who are not initially successful.

Through teaching and learning at the Two Oceans Graduate Institute, students will be engaged in inquiry and reflection about learning, teaching and curriculum, as well as the instruction of content subjects. They need to acquire a set of skills, but also need to become adapted to seek out new solutions for situations where routines are not effective. There will be application of the foundations of learning theories to their

teaching. It also means for teachers to learn about practice in practice so that adjustments can be made and problems analysed and addressed.

During the process of teaching and learning, students will develop dispositions of what it means to be a teacher and inculcate teacher identity. Being a professional means not only knowing the answers, but also the skills and the will to evaluate ones' own practice and search for new answers when needed (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden 2007).

The online teaching and learning approach arranges teacher education programmes so that diverse candidates can develop the knowledge and skills for 21st century teaching needs. The focus is not on a single approach, but candidates must understand the basics of learning, development, curriculum and teaching. They will acquire the skills to teach the content in a way that enables them to apply the knowledge they have acquired when eventually independently teaching. The approach is to move to a focus on how children learn.

The teaching and learning approach at the Two Oceans Graduate Institute focusses on the very specific needs of stakeholders as well as the demands of the 21st century. The training of teachers and the future planning focus on all school phases as well as training for the contexts where needs for technical skills and vocational training exist. The institution will pay attention to the areas where a specific need for the training of teachers exists, for example mathematics, science and technology, but also in the fields of the arts, agriculture, tourism, computer applications technology (CAT), civil and electrical engineering, educational case law, environmental management.

The online teaching and learning approach at the institution seeks further to address the 21st century context of digitisation and the utilisation of ICT in teaching and learning in a very specific way. Online teaching and learning in the teacher education programmes as well as in the methodology and practice of teaching in the classroom take full cognizance of ICT in teaching and learning. The institution continuously seeks to be on par with developments towards the fourth industrial revolution and the implications thereof for teaching and learning in the tertiary and school context. Graduates should portray 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and digital literacy in a digitised educational context. The institution seeks to provide teachers who are qualified to apply digital administration systems in the fields of project management, financial management, classroom management, school management and whole school evaluation. Newly qualified teachers should take on the challenge of a unique 21st century school design in different educational eco systems with creativity and with an innovative entrepreneurial mind-set.

The ultimate aim of teaching and learning at the Two Oceans Graduate Institute is to deliver graduates that will remain lifelong learners. The online teaching and learning approach will therefore provide multiple post degree opportunities for all students and graduates to enhance their capabilities as professional educators and to obtain a variety of much needed soft skills that will benefit their work. The teaching and learning strategy will continuously learn from and benefit from the insights of the *neuroscience of learning* towards the development and improvement of lifelong learning. The institution will provide micro learning opportunities in the fields of talent management, career management, knowledge of best practices and performance improvement as well as opportunities for soft skills

development such as communication skills, critical thinking, leadership, decision-making, problem-solving, time management, teamwork and cooperation, interpersonal communication, innovation development and ethics/ professionalism. The aforementioned aspects of lifelong learning and soft skills development are based upon a holistic and systemic frame of reference and refer to the following well-known human dimensions: physical; emotional; intellectual; occupational; social; spiritual.

The vision of the Two Oceans Graduate institute as a registered teacher training institution is to be a centre for lifelong learning in accessible online format. Students and graduates should reach their full potential against the background of the abovementioned holistic-systemic approach. Graduates should enter the teaching profession with a readiness to meet the educational challenges of the 21st century. The institution and its alumni would want to engage in the conversation on educational values in the midst of changing paradigms to transform education for the better in the interest of learners and society.

3. ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING AND THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTION

It is the explicit mission of the Two Oceans Graduate Institute to contribute through the training of teachers to the provision of quality education to all learners in all the school phases. The focus on the education and empowerment of learners from impoverished and lesser-privileged backgrounds has direct implications for the chosen online teaching and learning strategy. The promotion of student learning towards teaching in diverse contexts via the chosen online teaching and learning mode of delivery is therefore an important point of departure. An online teaching mode of delivery combined with limited and occasional contact tuition, tutorials and practical sessions, complemented by a strong emphasis on practical learning (teaching practice) in the actual school situation forms the basis for the teaching and learning approach at the Two Oceans Graduate Institute. The strong focus on a variety of communities and different contexts demands that the teaching and learning strategy of the institution be open and flexible. The inculcation of appropriate norms, values and attitudes in students towards the effective teaching of children forms an intrinsic part of the teaching and learning strategy.

4. ONLINE TEACHING PEDAGOGY

The Two Oceans Graduate Institute has opted for the development and implementation of a distance and online teaching mode of delivery complemented with limited contact tuition. This mode of teaching and learning is realized in environments where there is effective integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning through adoption of a strategic and systematic approach to the use of ICT's and digital technologies combined with the best features of face-to-face tuition. The underpinning principle of an online teaching pedagogy lies in the shift from lecturer-centered teaching to student centered learning in higher education. The focus on the lecturer shifts to the activity of the student, and face-to-face tuition is viewed from the point of support and facilitation. This student-centered approach is based on a deepened understanding of the student's learning. In an online and distance mode of delivery, the teaching and learning method supports students in creating their own structure of knowledge of the discipline under study.

In accordance with the aforementioned, limited to face-to-face contact with lecturers is envisaged. The greater part of the teaching and learning is electronically mediated through a fully-fledged online teaching pedagogy. A learner management system (LMS) has been specially designed for the Two Oceans Graduate Institute and can be accessed via the institution's online web-based intranet. The LMS supports several online teaching, learning and assessment strategies as well as different ways of online interaction between the student and the lecturer/module facilitator as well as between students. These include assignments, chat, choice, database, feedback, forum, glossary, lesson, quiz, SCORM, survey, wiki and workshop. There is virtual contact via ZOOM, Skype or WhatsApp.

5. ONLINE PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

The practical implementation of the online mode of delivery is rationalized on a specific pedagogical strategy and predetermined learning outcomes of each subject and module. An online pedagogy focuses on the lecturer's roles in learning facilitation, student mentoring and differentiation in the instruction of individual learners. This will lead to increased flexibility and personalization of students' learning experiences. This approach establishes an ongoing connection between pedagogical design, learning materials design, electronic and digital learning interventions and development, student support, and technical and administrative support.

The pedagogical strategy specific to online learning complemented by contact tuition is based on the determination of which learning content should be mediated by contact tuition, and what should be mediated through the online teaching strategy. The greater part of each course takes place online and the remainder through face-to-face tuition and support. Distance students who are not in a position to attend physical class contact sessions are reached for interactive tutorial sessions via Skype and ZOOM. The integration of online teaching with physical or virtual contact sessions creates a holistic course experience based on the constructive alignment of intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks. The chosen learning and teaching activities, either through contact tuition or through online learning, need to directly support the student's attainment of the stated learning objectives and completion of the corresponding assessment tasks. The way in which the online mode of instruction is rationalized needs to be congruent with the learning activities and objectives, and should allow students to demonstrate those learning objectives.

The development of the online study material focuses on linking module outcomes in a meaningful way with the mix between online learning and face-to-face or virtual tuition in support of the student's achievement of particular learning objectives. Module guides are available online and serve to outline to students the specific course structure with a clear distinction between and explanation of the different elements of online learning and face to face or virtual tutorials.

The institution envisages that, through its online teaching and learning platform, a dedicated and focused system of online teaching will connect learners with a variety of educational resources and strategies. These include classic tutorials, activity-centered lessons, student-customized tutorials, knowledge-paced

seminars, exploratory tutorials and electronically generated lessons. Study material is provided to students in digital format and students have access to electronic library resources for research purposes.

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS AN ONLINE TEACHING PEDAGOGY

Lecturing staff at the Two Oceans Graduate Institute should have a clear understanding of the institutional online teaching and learning policy. Staff members must therefore be prepared to undergo ongoing training in the expansion and further development of the institutional teaching and learning strategy.

The teaching and learning strategy should be implemented within the context of an *outcomes directed approach* to higher education. Online teaching and learning activities should have an explicit focus on what is essential for *all learners to be able to do* at the end of their learning experience. Online teaching and learning should continuously focus on the development of a clear set of learning outcomes and expanded and more detailed assessment criteria. Lecturers will therefore be continually orientated to align these learning outcomes with a corresponding teaching strategy and related assessment tasks in a constructive way.

The planning for *teaching, learning and assessment* in each module should be aligned with the online teaching and learning policy and the policy on assessment and moderation. The weighting of teaching learning and assessment activities should be appropriate to the NQF level and credit value of the subject and its respective modules. A variety of online assessment tasks is implemented to monitor the teaching and learning process. Both informal, formal, formative and summative assessments should be used.

The development of *interactive instructional materials* should analyze the problem and learning outcome with an eye on appropriate instructional intervention. The content of instructional materials is supplemented with case studies, activities, discussion questions and other instructional support materials.

Subject lecturers and module facilitators should have a solid understanding of the subject matter knowledge for teaching as termed by Shulman (1986) as pedagogical content knowledge. Content knowledge in the context of teacher training should always relate to the aspect of its ability to be taught in the classroom. Students will analyse and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies, using the knowledge they gained.

Students should be engaged in *active learning activities* such as debate, discussion, research, evaluation, journal articles and productions, in addition to listening to and reading information. Effective delivery of content in online teaching and learning should always engage students towards a vision to develop into autonomous and self-motivated learners.

The priority of active learning should always be accompanied by appropriate facilitation and intervention strategies. Online teaching pedagogy is embedded in the *principle of interactivity*. Lecturers should strive towards flexibility and a responsiveness to learners' needs – the notion of an 'agile pedagogy': the

pedagogical approach to attract and retain the attention and commitment of students and to ensure they achieve the required learning outcomes.

Lecturing staff should grasp a correct understanding of the relationship between online pedagogy and ICT's/ digital technologies. The utilization of ICT's and digital teaching and assessment technologies should always be embedded in an online teaching pedagogy. Digital technologies should serve the online pedagogy. *First the pedagogy, then the technology.*

7. REVIEW

The Online Teaching and Learning Policy will be reviewed every two years.

References

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