



The Office Of The Principal and Vice - Chancellor

PROF MANDLA MAKHANYA, PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

WELCOME (5 Mins)

LEARNING ANALYTICS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ICDE 2017 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

UNIVERSITÉ DE LORRAINE, FRANCE

22 MAY 2017

- Mr Gard Titlestad from the ICDE
- Professor Anne Boyer from the Université de Lorraine/LORIA
- Mr JY Marion, Head of LORIA
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

The work of the ICDE has never been more important than it is at this juncture in the global growth and development of Distance Education. I say this because we find ourselves in one of those rare moments in time – in history in fact – when our world is undergoing fundamental transformation on all fronts: social, political, economic, environmental and ecological. And underpinning these changes is the digitisation of our world. This digital revolution has been so enduring, far-reaching, pervasive and impactful, that it is referred to as the “4th Industrial Revolution” (Florindi, L, 2014)¹.

When it comes to Distance Education, this revolution is evidenced in the current collective term *Open, Distance and eLearning* (ODEL), which reflects the profound changes wrought by the affordances of technology and the internet.

¹ Florindi, L. (2014) *The 4th revolution: How the infosphere is reshaping human reality*, Oxford University Press.

The transformation has brought with it a seemingly unending list of challenges; from the more traditional aspects of education such as pedagogy, access, affordability and quality, to those that have arisen as a consequence of the affordance of technology. Key amongst these are probably OER, MOOC, and more latterly, Learning Analytics. One can, and must, add to this list challenges the ethical leadership, management and governance of our institutions, as well as the human and infrastructural resources and capacity challenges emanating from the transforming context of global socio-economic and political uncertainty and conflict. In many cases these are exerting intolerable pressure on our institutions and their leadership, adding to a complex melange of competing demands that need to be addressed simultaneously in the interest of the *holy grail* of education: a quality learning experience that will produce quality, relevant and appropriately skilled graduates.

I think colleagues that what we have learned and what we have realised over the past decade in particular, is that as the ICDE, in the throes of this digital revolution, we need a more systematic approach to international distance education: one that harnesses our collective experiences and wisdom as DE leaders and practitioners in identifying, analysing and mitigating new trends, opportunities and challenges towards building relevant capacities and competencies, not to mention consensus, for effective 21st Century ODeL.

With that in mind, it was decided that in 2017 the focus would be on the impacts that adaptive learning and learning analytics have on our educational leadership roles, and I am delighted to welcome you to this beautiful institution and to this beautiful country to make your contribution to the 2017 ICDE Presidents' Summit. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our hosts LORIA at Université de Lorraine, for their support of this important event.

Our conversation over the next two days will centre on how to oversee and develop systemic change at our institutions through leveraging learning analytics. How, and to what extent in the current global context, can we build new platforms for improving teaching and learning and creating a responsive, adaptive and personalized, online educational system for all?

I know that I speak for us all when I say that it is good to be back amongst the ICDE leadership – the ICDE family. I know that like me, you look forward to a time of sharing and learning.

I thank you.