



Early Career Academics Advancement Programme (ECAAP)

EARLY CAREER ACADEMICS



**Kholisa
Papu**



**Tracey
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**Shaun
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**Sumaiya
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**Cindy
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**Luyolo
Mahlangabeza**

..... *Enabling Early Career Academics' Continuous Professional Learning*

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*"An investment in knowledge
pays the best interest"*
– Benjamin Franklin.

MISSION

1. The Mission of the ECAAP is to support early career academics in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of an academic at Mandela University.
2. The purpose of the programme is to enable early career academics' professional development, instilling in them skills, knowledge(s) and abilities which are required to advance their academic careers.
3. The focus is on areas that include but are not limited to: a scholarly approach to teaching; collaboration and networking; communication; research methodologies and supervision of research; and scholarship of teaching and learning.

The programme seeks to enhance academic and personal attributes that are key to professional growth'

THE ACADEMIC JOURNEY OF OUR EARLY CAREER ACADEMICS

By Early Career Academics

- In this issue, we focus on the experiences/ journeys of our Early Career Academics as new academics in the Nelson Mandela University Institution and their teaching experiences during the covid-19 pandemic. The academics reflect on their journey in the teaching field, the challenges, coping strategies and recommendations on the improvement of learning and teaching during the COVID 19 period to achieve effective teach and learning.
- We hope these stories will inspire and build resilience in other academics during this time of the pandemic.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Dr Nolutando Toni
Director: Teaching Development
LT Collab: Learning and Teaching Excellence

The National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers describes professional development as an endeavour that cannot be imposed but “must be undertaken by the person concerned” (p6). The framework acknowledges the agency of university teachers. As the Early Career Academics Advancement Programme (ECAAP) team, we subscribe to this idea and believe that a significant element of our raison d’être is to create opportunities and an enabling environment for our early career academics (ECAs) to thrive. Our mission is to contribute to the professional development of ECAs as they carve or shape their academic and professional trajectories.

It is my pleasure to present the third issue of the ECAAP Newsletter. The inaugural issue was published in August 2020, where we featured ECAAP participants whom I described as women who are determined to break the proverbial glass ceiling. In the second issue, which came out in December 2020, the focus was on research and innovation. The featured ECAs reflected on their research and innovation contributions in 2020. In this third issue, eight of our ECAAP participants reflect on their teaching experiences and academic achievements during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The commitment and active participation of the two cohorts of the programme is highly appreciated. The ECAAP team also wishes to express its gratitude to **Ms Kholisa Papu** (Education), **Ms Tracey Hutton** (Health Sciences), **Dr Shaun Ramroop** (Health Sciences), **Ms Sumaiya Sidat** (Business and Economic Sciences), **Dr Anthea van der Hoogen** (Science), **Ms Peliwe Ntshiba**, (Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology), **Cindy Preller** and **Mr Luyolo Mahlangabeza** (Business and Economic Sciences) for agreeing to share their academic journeys with the rest of the university community.

I do not necessarily wish to give a synopsis of the reflections contained in this issue. I thought it best to just mention a couple of common themes that I identified when going through the reflections, namely:

- The importance of learning from others through sharing experiences; The sharing leads to unlearning some practices that are no longer beneficial to both staff and students; learning and adopting new pedagogical approaches and re-learning basic principles that one was exposed to previously.
- Building resilience through coping with different kinds of transitions and the continuous process of learning, i.e. lifelong learning;
- Appreciating the nexus between learning and teaching and research, innovation and engagement; and
- The importance of a human-centred approach in teaching, learning and assessment.

¹ The National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers is a guiding document that was endorsed by the Minister of Education and Training in November 2018. The Framework is an elaboration of the strengthening of university teaching through the University Capacity Development Programme

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WHAT PLAYING HOUSE HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT LEARNING

MS KHOLISA Z. PAPU

Whilst growing up, we used to play house. Before that, we drew houses on paper and coloured them in. At a later stage, we built our own houses. We started building these houses with soil or sand. We used fresh loam pushed up into heaps by a mole – or so we believed - or sand left over from local building projects. We did not live by the sea, so we did not have seasand, but who is to say those were not sandcastles?

As the early explorers that we were, we would cover our feet with enough soil or sand to build a one-roomed or two-roomed dome-structured house. But these houses did not last. They fell apart if you moved your foot too quickly or carelessly.

When these houses fell, we explored another trick. We started building 3-dimensional houses, repurposing discarded materials like cardboards, amaplanga (planks), stones, left-over bricks, old sheets, pieces of torn plastic carpets and any other materials we could find. At first, these houses were too small for us, but with a bit of insight, experience

and exploration we thought, “what if we built houses that were big enough and tall enough for us 7–11 year olds to fit in?” Then we built houses that allowed us to crawl in, curl up inside and pretend to be cooking or sitting in a lounge, eating delicious food. Although these bigger houses rarely fell because we built them against real houses with more stable material, we knew we needed to be careful so that we wouldn’t knock off the supporting structures. We knew that if we knocked off the supporting structures, the whole house we had built might fall. Similarly, a kraal whose cornerstone or pillars had been interfered with might crumble and fall.

the world’ and I often ask myself, “how can I inspire my students to see the value in their prior knowledge and how can I use this knowledge to scaffold further learning?” I learned from childhood that a house or kraal without a good foundation, materials, plan of action, teamwork, a tremendous amount of insight, learning from local contexts and others, troubleshooting and problem-solving, might not last long. I also learned that when birds build their nests, they also build and insulate with the fallen feathers of other birds. As a participant in the ECAAP programme, I come in with the attitude and mindset of the children we were: curious, creative, determined

I believe in the philosophy of ‘bringing the world into the classroom and the classroom into the world’

Now that I am older, an educator, parent and postgraduate researcher, I understand the value of supporting structures, anchors, guides, mentors and a vision for lifelong learning. I believe in the philosophy of ‘bringing the world into the classroom and the classroom into

to learn and share, all the while building a solid foundation and network with colleagues, mentors, students and other stakeholders who contribute in shaping our learning. A bird that does not build with the feathers of other birds might not survive Winter.

Faculty of Education
Department of Secondary School Education
Years teaching at Nelson Mandela University: 2 years

Kholisa Z. Papu is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Secondary School Education Department. She teaches English modules and Conversational isiXhosa at the first, second and fourth-year levels. She joined Nelson Mandela University as a full-time academic in August 2019. Kholisa is also pursuing Doctoral Studies in Education, focusing on metacognition and learning in multilingual contexts. She appreciates the power of language and often sees opportunities for using languages as resources for learning in the language classroom, across the curriculum and in various other spheres. She joined ECAAP in February 2021 intending to learn more about learning and teaching in higher education.



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MY JOURNEY THUS FAR AT MANDELA UNIVERSITY

MS TRACEY HUTTON

In mid-2017, I (almost) began my career at Nelson Mandela University with an unsuccessful job interview. I had applied for the Foodservice lecturer post in the Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics. Having no higher education learning and teaching experience, the interview was daunting, to say the least. I had not yet heard of terms or concepts such as 'blended learning', 'pedagogical approaches' or the numerous other concepts and discourses that are relevant to higher education. The unsuccessful job interview showed me that I had a LOT to learn. Soon after the interview, I was offered a contract lecturer position. As a contract lecturer, I was given access to the array of learning and teaching and research capacity development opportunities offered by Mandela University. I attended various learning and teaching workshops and programmes held by the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Media (now known as the Learning and Teaching Collaborative for Success - LT Collab).

One such programme was the Teaching Enhancement Programme (TEP), which helped guide me towards a scholarly approach to teaching.

The unsuccessful job interview showed me that I had a LOT to learn.

I was appointed as a lab technician in January 2019. In May 2019, I became an associate lecturer. I truly feel that the excellent capacity development opportunities offered by the Nelson Mandela University put me in good stead for the job application and interview process. In December 2020, I obtained an MSc (Dietetics) and in May 2021 I was appointed as a Lecturer and New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) scholar. For the first three years, an nGAP lecturer is allocated a 20%

teaching workload. This is to enable the lecturer to benefit from research and teaching development opportunities and to complete or make substantial progress towards a doctoral degree. The shift from an associate lecturer to an 'nGAPer' has afforded me the time to attend, among other things, the Doctoral Support Programme (DSP), the Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision (SPS) course and the Early Career Academic Achievement Programme (ECAAP). I am incredibly grateful to Mandela Uni for shaping and guiding my career thus far as an academic and researcher. I am truly honoured to be a part of this amazing institution. I have also been privileged to be mentored by my Head of Department, Prof. Annelie Gresse, who is 'a HOD in a million.' From a personal development perspective, I have grown not only as an academic and researcher, but also as a human being. As I embark on my PhD and nGAP journey, I will continue my life-long passion for learning and endeavour to make full use of the various opportunities at Mandela Uni, my institution of choice.



Faculty of Health Sciences
Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics
Years teaching at Mandela University: 4 years

Tracey Hutton is a lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Human Nutrition and Dietetics Department. She lectures and co-ordinates the first and third year foodservice modules. She joined Nelson Mandela University in 2019 as a Lab technician and later in May became an associate lecturer. In December 2020, she obtained an MSc. Dietetics (Cum Laude) and was appointed as a lecturer and New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) Scholar in May 2021. Tracey is pursuing her Doctoral studies in Dietetics. Her research field of interest is front-of-pack food labelling.

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A DISCIPLINED AND AGILE RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY COVID-19

DR. SHAUN RAMROOP

I was excited to be appointed as an academic in the Environmental Health Department at the university in August 2019. Unfortunately, the initial lockdown took effect from 26 March until April 2020 when the novel coronavirus escalated into a global pandemic. Due to the pandemic, my face-to-face lecturing was immediately cut to less than six months, and transitioning to online teaching in such a short period became a challenge on its own. Grappling with the concept of remote working and the latest technology was initially stressful.

My teaching experience was indeed a very challenging and unsettling one, due to the immediate shift to distance learning, which was online. Online teaching became very difficult for me as it was impossible to gauge if the students were understanding the work. Another challenge was the dead silence on the other side during TEAMS sessions and the administering of assessments on the online platform. Furthermore, feedback from the students indicated concerns around access to relevant technology, Wi-Fi, data, and access to smartphones. While the university attempted to address

these challenges, it sadly remains a reality that most of our students come from economically challenged households, which makes any drive to create equity a difficult task. I adopted two strategies that have assisted me during these trying times: (i) the establishment of a daily schedule for myself and (ii) providing clear expectations to all my students.

The absence of face-to-face interactions has also made the supervision of post-graduate students very difficult. Currently, all my post-graduate students are Environmental Health Practitioners who unfortunately contracted the virus during the course of their normal work duties. This created an added dynamic to supervision duties as these students had to be isolated and not much academic work could be undertaken, even online. On the positive side, the pandemic allowed me to focus on a bit of academic writing, which was most beneficial from a personal development point of view. An article emanating from my research into lower back pain amongst truck drivers was published, titled: "Lower back pain amongst petrochemical truck drivers" in the May/June 2021 edition of the Occupational Health Southern Africa journal.

Amidst the pandemic, management of the university, lecturing staff and students tried their utmost to accommodate each other. Adopting a humane approach to teaching and learning was of paramount importance in this relationship. However, the university needs to become more agile and responsive to such disasters, as this pandemic might not be the last disaster that we will experience. In my view, the transition to online teaching and learning amidst the pandemic will require

Adopting a humane approach to teaching and learning was of paramount importance

the university to bolster its disaster management plan and communication strategies as these two areas will contribute, albeit indirectly, to improving the teaching and learning experience for teaching staff and students going forward.



Faculty of Health Sciences
Department of Environmental Health
Years teaching at Nelson Mandela University: 2 years

Shaun Ramroop is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Environmental health Department. He joined Nelson Mandela University as a full-time academic in 2019. Dr Ramroop's area of specialization is in the field of environmental and occupational health and safety. He is a strong proponent of pursuing research that responds to the needs of our country and this is evident from the type of research that he conducts.

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REFLECTIONS ON COVID-19 AND THE BEGINNING OF MY ACADEMIC JOURNEY

MS SUMAIYA SIDAT

My journey as an academic only really started at the beginning of 2020. I transitioned from being a master's student directly into the role of a junior lecturer in my department. Roughly three months into my role as an academic, we were struck with the life-changing twist brought about by covid-19. As a new academic, I found the first six months of working from home extremely challenging. Even though my colleagues were always able and willing to extend their support and guidance to me (from a distance), I was still struggling to separate my personal life from my work life. As a result, I found myself working late nights, throughout weekends, and I even started doubting my capabilities as an academic. Tasks that would usually take a few hours to complete now took longer, and my home, which was once a place where I would unwind, was now a stressful work environment as well.

Everybody, regardless of how much experience they had, was forced to explore and adopt new approaches to teaching.

The teaching methods which I had learnt from my colleagues had almost become obsolete, as we all had to adjust to new methods of teaching and learning. Everybody, regardless of how much experience they had, was forced to explore and adopt new approaches to teaching. As a novice academic, I always admired how my colleagues always seemed to know what to do and how to approach specific issues in the classroom, but now even they had to reassess their methods, as the entire world of academia, which everyone had grown accustomed to, seemed to have transformed.

During these times, almost every one of us has experienced the loss of a family member, friend or colleague. Staying positive has been, and still is, difficult for many people. In addition to our fears and burdens, many colleagues and friends have been complaining about burnout as well. These issues, among others, made me realise that as academics, we are not the only ones who have been struggling; students were struggling too. This became increasingly evident through assessment submissions being made in the middle of the night and a lot of emails from students requesting support because they had lost loved ones, were ill or were simply not coping. I believe that this entire experience has highlighted the significance of humanness in academia and how crucial it is to recognise that every colleague and student is human before they are anything else. Often, we become so caught up in our titles and roles that we tend to forget this

and impose expectations on students or colleagues that may not necessarily be fair, as we do not fully understand their backgrounds or situations, just as they do not understand ours.

Although many of us may feel as if we have lived the same day over and over again for the past year, it is important to reflect on the little wins we have made along the way. By doing so, we will realise that we have made a lot of progress. In my case, at the beginning of last year, I did not even have my master's degree; however in April last year, I obtained my MCom in business management (cum laude). I also

completed two short courses on topics that intrigued me. This year, I presented one of my papers at an international virtual conference, at which I was awarded the 3rd best paper award and the best track presenter award. I now confidently teach undergraduate students, supervise postgraduate students and co-ordinate my modules. I think it is fair to say that our current situation has made us realise that the world has now transformed into a place where you do not even need to leave your home to make a difference.



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In conclusion, the past year has encouraged me to acknowledge every little success, be it my own or my student's. If you see someone doing well, compliment them. If you have achieved something you are proud of, share it. Most importantly, if you see someone struggling, help them. We never know

what someone else is experiencing and how our small, but kind words or actions may help them feel appreciated or motivated to do better. The adjustments and sacrifices that we have all had to make during these times are no small feat and we have all had to endure many difficult things over the past year. I believe

that covid-19, and its consequences, has emphasised that the only permanent thing in life is change. However, no matter how challenging things may become, we all possess the strength to endure the storm.



Faculty of Business and Economics
Department of Business Management
Years at Nelson Mandela University: 1 year, 8 months

Sumaiya Sidat is a junior lecturer in the Faculty of Business and Economics, Business Management Department. She joined Nelson Mandela University at the beginning of 2020. She teaches Marketing management, marketing research, customer relationship management and business ethics. She also supervises honours students.

Ms Sidat holds a Bcom Financial planning, PGDip Financial Planning (cum laude) and MCom in Business Management (cum laude). She also completed two short courses and managed to present one of her papers at an international virtual conference, at which she was awarded the 3rd best paper award and the best track presenter award.

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LEARNING AS AN EARLY CAREER ACADEMIC

DR ANTHEA VAN DER HOOGEN

I embarked on my PhD journey as an early career academic. This journey posed many different learning challenges and triumphs. The learnings acquired were beneficial for me and those around me; my colleagues, students, and sometimes even my family members. The overall task involved doing research and accomplishing milestones such as completing a proposal, defending my topic, collecting data, interpreting the data into valuable findings, and then publishing my findings as a contribution to the body of knowledge in my area of study. Acquiring these skills as a researcher is not easy. It only seems worth it when you start sharing your knowledge with your students and your peers; when they can use your reviews to improve their research outputs. Even though this journey seems straightforward for someone classified as an academic, it can be daunting when you meet your theoretical 'fathers', when experts pose the question "so what?" What will your research mean to you or your students? You feel overwhelmed, lost

in the midst of their interpretations, and sometimes feel like giving up - at least that was what I experienced. Then you are faced with another issue as a professional and your responsibility toward getting to grips with the academic world - becoming an accomplished researcher and using those skills to find a method and practice of teaching that makes sense to you, or, as some would say, your pedagogy. You have to keep up with yet another programme, another workshop, another conference. The question remains: do you see the quality? Are you gaining quality? When are you provided with the opportunity to digest all the information at your disposal? When are you getting to test yet another concept, tool or example?

All this while, you are faced with a new breed of students each term, each semester and each year. A seasoned academic in your field might feel fed up with doing the same mundane things all year round, while you as an early career academic are paddling frantically to keep your head above water. As an early career academic, the quantity of information that you have to digest surpasses the quality

of the learning curve. Your weekends become yet another catch-up session; you become discouraged; you see yourself slip away, and just as you are about to give up, you receive news - your research paper has been rated as the best paper, or your student sends an email saying that your

Acquiring these skills as a researcher is not easy.

encouragement was their encouragement or that they found the best job and can improve their own lives. Family members sneakily look up to you and tell you that you are their role model. How can I give up when, in fact, everything adds up to making a difference? Academia is what I chose, and I will choose it over again. I am proud to embark on my journey as a learning academic, and my pedagogy attribute is about people, openness and trusting the journey.



Faculty of Science
Department of Computing Sciences
Years teaching at Nelson Mandela University: 4 years

Anthea van der Hoogen is a lecturer in the Faculty of Science, Computing Sciences Department. She joined Nelson Mandela University in 2017. She teaches Enterprise Systems, Accounting Information Systems, Project, and supervises research. Dr van der Hoogen is currently developing research outputs based on her PhD research and engages with international projects to build networks and partnerships for her field of study. She enjoys running, walking and cooking. She strives to invest as much time in her family as possible, because the Covid-19 pandemic has taught her just how short life really is. Her encouragement to her students is to always see everything as an opportunity and to learn from those who have already walked along the same path.

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TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MS PELIWE NTSHIBA

Though there was already talk of Covid-19 at the beginning of 2020, it was still something that affected people in other countries. Come February, the academic year resumed as usual and we welcomed our returning students as well as new students. I can still remember that my first-year class was due to write its first test on Friday the 27th of March when the president announced that the country was going into lockdown on the 26th and students immediately left for home. At the time, the gravity of the situation did not fully register, and we hoped that things would get back to normal after the initial 21 days of lockdown.

After the extension of the lockdown and the rise of infections and deaths, it became obvious that things were not going to return to normal and some changes needed to be made if the academic calendar was to continue.

Nowadays, my teaching philosophy has been based on the premise that South Africa is a diverse nation with

different social, cultural and financial contexts. This translates itself to students from various backgrounds in terms of education, exposure, and availability of resources. One then needs to adapt the way one teaches to accommodate as many students as possible in the learning experience, as a one size fits all system will not work. This works well in a normal classroom set-up, as one can see students' facial expressions and body language and have an idea as to whether a student they are grasping what is being taught or not.

Teaching during covid-19 was going to be a challenge one way or the other. For me the challenge was firstly technical in nature as I needed to merge ICT and teaching; secondly how to engage with students one cannot see face-to-face and lastly having to teach 3 groups of students, work that I would have taught to one group over the same period of time. It would be a lie to say that I did not have moments of despair, frustration, fatigue etc. but also moments of discovery, new experiences, and triumph. The support from the university and colleagues as

well as feedback from students did go a long way and I rose to the challenge of encouraging students to develop a culture of learning and mastery, encouraging students to be the best they can be, while encouraging curiosity and a passion for their work and fostering critical thinking in the way students engage with their work even in the online space. So I guess all in all my experience has been one of triumph in a difficult situation by making the best of the hand that one is dealt with and, in hindsight, I can honestly say the difficulties of 2020 have made the teaching experience undergo a metamorphosis and a butterfly is definitely in the horizon.

"I just wanted to say I think Miss is a wonderful lecturer because you explain everything very thoroughly and if the students don't understand you explain until we understand and Miss always put in the extra effort with paint to draw us picture if we still don't understand and I just wanted to say I really appreciate it."

(Mari 1st year student)



Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Building
Department of Building and Human settlement.
Years teaching at Nelson Mandela University: 3 years

Peliwe Ntshiba is a lecturer in the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Building, in the Department of Building and Human Settlement. She began lecturing at Nelson Mandela University in 2018. Before 2014, she worked in the health sector for 15 years. She decided to change her career so she enrolled as a student at NMU. She completed a Btech in Quantity Surveying in 2017 and Construction Management in 2018. She is currently doing Master's in Built Environment, majoring in Property economics and Valuations. She is a daughter, mother, aunt, grandmother and friend, and takes each role very seriously.

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ADAPTING TO ONLINE LEARNING – LESSONS LEARNT DURING A TIME OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

MS CINDY PRELLER

I have just finished an online class in Public Relations with first-years and I've really had a lot of fun with them. What do they think of their offbeat lecturer? I'm not too sure. However, I do find it fun to try and engage them in interacting with me and I enjoy making the theory relevant to their lived experiences.

Adapting to online teaching has been a learning curve – for academics and students alike. While I taught in-person classes before 2020 on a part-time basis, I started my full-time lecturing journey as Level 5 lockdown was announced. Many fellow participants in the ECAAP journey were in a similar boat, and this has made all the difference.

I started my full-time lecturing journey as Level 5 lockdown was announced.

COMPARING NOTES

Thanks to the ECAAP sessions with other staff from the University, as well as an incredible faculty, school and department from whom I could learn, the challenge of that black empty screen with a static silence from students became less daunting to me. Little by little, by experimenting with new techniques, learning the best practices of some of the most creative lecturers at the University, and considering the students' technological needs, I grew in my online lecturing journey. A suggestion by the Learning and Teaching team to ask students their favourite songs during the introductory lectures at the beginning of 2021 not only expanded my musical interests, but I also got to know the students a bit better on a personal level. I think in many ways I am more aware of students' challenges than I ever was before online learning commenced. And I could add a few more songs to my Spotify playlist!

DIGITAL DIVIDE

One cannot speak about lessons learnt during online teaching without reflecting on the very real digital divide still out there today and how it affects our students. While the University is making every effort to assist students with devices and data, the socio-economic contexts in which the students live are beyond the institution's control. Data is of no use if there is no electricity in the village where the student is from. A device is of no use if the student's brother accidentally drops something on their laptop in a cramped living space. I learnt a lot about conducive working environments – even with myself and other staff having to balance domestic chores and child-minding responsibilities with online learning. So, what did it do for me to see a male colleague's baby cry in the background of a meeting as he balanced child-minding and work? What did it do for me when mid-lockdown a student tried her utmost best to submit an assignment via WhatsApp, receiving a jumbled-up mixture of photographs of a hand-written assignment? I learnt about resilience, and this, in turn, made me resilient.

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UBUNTU

As a student at this university many years ago I wrote an article on ubuntu for the student newspaper. Back then the university was called UPEN. I loved the concept and word - as it was just one of the many experiences and lessons that opened my mind when I started at university. Then, full circle in 2020, I learnt during my induction session as a lecturer that ubuntu is now one of Nelson Mandela University's core values. I am honoured to be a part of this university

– a place of diversity and ubuntu. I feel privileged to look for South African and African examples of the theory I teach. During an Honours lecture, I was blown away by the South African examples of good corporate leaders that students presented for a Leadership assignment. It is absolutely incredible that we can engage with guest speakers from near and far, due to the convenience of online learning. Yes, some of us might get 'zoom fatigue', but this does not compare to listening to the same person

whose poems I recited in primary school during a CriSHET webinar on 'Africa and Knowledge'. The University broadens my horizons every day, and therefore I can, after a year of online teaching, say "I am because we are".



Faculty of Humanities

Department of Media and Communication

Years teaching at Nelson Mandela: lecturing part-time from July 2018 and full-time since April 2020

Cindy Preller holds a Master's Degree in Journalism & Media Studies and has worked as a journalist and news editor at community and daily newspapers, before specialising in Corporate Communication. She has worked as a public relations manager for organised business and as a consultant for various companies and non-profit organisations, including working as an external relations manager for an international public benefit organisation. Ms Preller is a lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities in the Media and Communications Department. She began her journey at Nelson Mandela University as a part-time lecturer in 2018 and got a full-time position in April 2020, teaching Public Relations and Corporate Communication. Ms Preller is currently the BA Hons: Corporate Communication programme co-ordinator.

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MY PASSION FOR RESEARCH AND SHAPING YOUNG MINDS

MR LUYOLO MAHLANGABEZA

As a lecturer and researcher, I am passionate about research and engagement, as well as the supervision of postgraduate students. I firmly believe in developing and shaping young minds and opening a new world to them beyond South Africa's borders. To date, I have successfully supervised 12 Masters students in 2020 and I continue to publish research and supervise postgraduate students.

I am also currently an external examiner for Rhodes Business School and the 2021 Business and Economic Sciences Faculty Emerging Researcher of the Year. In addition, I have been appointed as a Shanduka Black Umbrella Business Mentor for 2021. Shanduka Black Umbrella is an organisation under the President Cyril Ramaposa Foundation.

I wrote and delivered 3 papers at an international conference in May 2021. I have authored 2 journal articles in 2021, which are both under review. I have also authored 5 other conference papers, which are still under review and will be delivered at 4 different international conferences later in 2021. I am also a reviewer for an international conference. I am currently supervising 10 Master's students for the 2021 academic year, while still presenting modules at the 3rd-year level.

MY TEACHING EXPERIENCE AS AN EARLY CAREER ACADEMIC DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The pandemic has required me to unlearn old teaching pedagogies and learn and relearn new ones. The notion of engaging students and ensuring that the same classroom experience is replicated in a virtual platform has taken me out of my comfort zone, but in a good way.

REFLECTIONS ON MY POST-GRADUATE RESEARCH, PROJECTS, AND/OR PUBLICATIONS.

There is no academic qualification that teaches academics about academic publishing at NMU and, at the back of the 'publish or perish' culture of academia, the tasks can seem daunting at the offset. The ECAAP programme opens up wonderful opportunities to attend a short course where these sets of skills and competencies can be acquired. "Publishing is difficult," said one Professor when I asked him for guidance and assistance on an article I was writing up. This kind of response makes one demoralised and unmotivated to publish, since there are no mentorship arrangements at the academy, but I believe the fire must burn stronger from within a person. That fire from within you must be able to overcome negative comments, unsupportive environments, and lack of self-confidence. The same publications, whether they are textbooks, newspapers, journals or conference papers, are also written by human beings who, at some stage of their lives, were also beginners.

That fire from within you must be able to overcome negative comments, unsupportive environments, and lack of self-confidence.

MY THOUGHTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHAT SHOULD BE IMPROVED FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING DURING THE COVID 19 PERIOD AND BEYOND

We have to unlearn old habits. We must keep a schedule and routine, even if we are working from home. We have to keep up with change. COVID-19 is not the last global pandemic humankind is going to witness, therefore adapting and being flexible are key to effective learning and teaching in a VUCA (Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) world.



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I firmly believe in developing and shaping young minds and opening a new world to them beyond South Africa's borders.



Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences
Department of Business Management
Years teaching at Nelson Mandela University: 4 years

Mr Luyolo Mahlangabeza is a Lecturer in the Department of Business Management in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences. He graduated with a BTech in Production and Operations Management in 2008 from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (now Nelson Mandela University), and an MBA degree in 2014 from the same university.

He has worked as a Researcher at the Nelson Mandela University Business School since 2018. His professional career began back in 2004 in the Engineering Department at Welfit Oddy, a local tank container manufacturer. Thereafter, in 2009, he joined the University, where he was a Postgraduate Programmes Coordinator in the Faculty of Engineering, before being appointed as an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Management Practice in 2014.

Married with one child, Mr Mahlangabeza and his wife have an interesting accomplishment together, in that they both graduated with their MBA degrees on the same day - quite a rare accomplishment to say the least! Aside from his main line of work, Mr Mahlangabeza is also the Director of Lubuse Group (Pty) Ltd Translation Agency and BnL Properties (Pty) Ltd, which is a testament to his keen interest in translation, linguistics, property management and research.

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ECAAP ANNOUNCEMENTS

2022 Applications to join the ECAAP will be open on the 30 February 2022.

For more information contact:

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From all of us at Nelson Mandela stay safe and do your part in preventing the spread of the Covid 19 virus.

..... *Enabling Early Career Academics' Continuous Professional Learning*

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