e/merge Africa:
An Exploration of Educational Technology Access & Collaborative Research Practices

23 October 2019
Presenters:
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Contributors:
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Who are we?

The International Research Collaborative for Established and Emerging Scholars (IRCEES) in Educational Technology is a collaboration of US and African researchers and practitioners being piloted by e/merge Africa and the AECT Culture, Learning and Technology (CLT) division.
IRCEES Seeks to:

- Develop a **research community of practice** to support educational technology faculty researchers and practitioner-researchers;
- Grow a community of researchers exploring the **intersections of culture, learning and technology**;
- Provide an open and supportive space for international **research exchange and collaboration** between established and emerging scholars in educational technology;
- **Encourage and support** international research teams studying issues at the intersection of culture, learning and technology; and
- Provide **research and publication mentoring** for early-career and aspiring researchers in African countries and those working in resource-constrained environments more broadly.
Supporting Historically Marginalized and Underserved Learners

Facilitators:

Alice Barlow-Zambodla (e/merge Africa facilitator)
Juhong Christie Liu (AECT CLT facilitator)

Members:

Tia Forbes, Hannah Grossman, Neil Kramm, Amy Lomellini, Leah Namarome, Oluwasefunmi Oluyede, Nicola Pallitt, Sikoyo, Mmabaledi Seeletso, Nompilo Tshuma, Becalo Utuk
IRCREES SHUML group purpose

With serving historically marginalized and underserved learners as the primary and ultimate goal, this group will support each other as a community of practice in developing the abilities to investigate cultural patterns in a research capacity, technology adoption, and collaborative possibilities. We will also learn from the process of optimizing opportunities to disseminate knowledge and overcome challenges collaborating with people from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. These will be intentionally leveraged to support access and inclusion through open education resources and research.

~ 30 September 2019
Hi everyone,

To get the initial group conversations going please record a short (max 5 minute) video in which you:

1. Introduce yourself to the group (background and context)
2. Share your research aspirations and what impact you would like to make in this research community and beyond

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Alice and Deepak
Online collaboration perspectives
Oct 17, 2019

To connect and collaborate online we need to do a number of things...
1) What are some of the challenges and barriers you face when collaborating with fellow researchers online?
2) What strategies do you use to support your participation?

4 Awesome Responses 0 Replies:

2 Becalo
2 Neil
2 Nompilo
2 Tia
Collaborative Learning

Challenges:
- Geographic distribution
- Time difference
- Cross-cultural communication/language
- Cross-disciplinary communication
- Creating meaning shared online spaces (Facebook, WhatsApp, Hangouts, Zoom, Adobe Connect)
- Unreliable availability of necessary tools and resources (load-shedding, connectivity, portable internet)
- Keep people caring/motivated
- Competing commitments

Strengths and Supports:
- Shared resources (Zoom & Google Drive)
- Communicating difficulties and strategic planning (using WhatsApp as a back channel to Zoom)
- Multiple communication techniques
- Big group to small group and back
- Recording for later viewing
- Reminders and deadlines
I'm writing a paper for a class as part of my doctorate. It will be on either open educational resources in Africa or quality assurances/standards in online courses in Africa—whichever I can find more info on. Does anyone have any resources or input to share?

Alice Barlow-Zambodla
I also saw what I can find from a former colleague who did QA work in this regard. What times frames?

Can share the presentation I did with my student. Her MA topic is on quality and online course materials but the focus is on OERs approaches.

Thanks Alice! The proposal for the paper is due in a few weeks. I think the Sunday after AECT. Then I have a bit more time to flesh it out before the end of the semester in early December.

Yes please!

Alice Barlow-Zambodla
I also worked with people at MSU and some African Univ to develop OERs using B&M Gates funding.

There is loads on OERs, we've recorded many EMerge Africa webinars on that.

Alice Barlow-Zambodla
Will find links and share.

Not as much out there on quality.

Alice Barlow-Zambodla
Sadie has done work on quality.

www.cerafrica.org

Alice Barlow-Zambodla
Thank you both! That's what I was finding as well Nicola.

Amy
Thank you both! That's what I was finding as well Nicola.
Some of our current strategies

Sharing resources eg. Zoom meeting room link (not all are at unis that have zoom)

Using Zoom with video muted

WhatsApp ‘backchannel’

Single user, multiple devices

Planning for online off campus: borrowing devices for Internet access, wifi at restaurant

Smaller group meetings
Staying connected...

Chatting:

Alice • Mar 7, 8:20 PM
Shame Alice, loadshedding sucks. I better check the app to see when we are getting loadshed.
Shame Amy, hope you feeling okay?

Amy • Mar 7, 10:00 PM
Hope your powers comes back soon, Alice!

Nicola • Mar 7, 10:13 PM
It just came... nothing in the app except to say chances were high!

Chatting:

Nicola • Mar 7, 10:05 PM
Charging my phone using... a rechargeable LED lamp... 😊

Amy • Mar 7, 10:05 PM
Amy there is a colleague who is involved in an online research collaboration that looks at special needs and disability issues. Are you interested in an introduction? I told them about you. But we still need you here.

Nicola • Mar 7, 10:05 PM
Sinidil(my contact) was keen on hearing from you... 😊
More than access / more than tools...

Time is important - not just time zones, but time of day determines where you are and what you have access to:

‘Zoom would be fine for me if I was connecting from office but that would be too early for colleagues in the US’

~ Leah, Uganda
Some of our future strategies

Meeting more regularly in smaller groups - once a month is not enough

Documenting discussions more consistently for others to catch up and participate when they can without feeling left behind

Short exchanges and reminders on WhatsApp to continue

Encouraging critical friends

Breaking projects into manageable bits & communicating tasks

Distributing tasks
Share your strategies and processes for online cross-cultural collaboration [https://flipgrid.com/2935ffc6](https://flipgrid.com/2935ffc6) or tweet #AECTcollab
Call for contributions in co-edited book on ‘Co-teaching/researching in an Unequal World: Using Virtual Classrooms to Connect Africa, and Africa and the World’

Posted on October 21, 2019 by Daniela Gachago

Edited by Zifikile Phindile Shangase, Daniela Gachago and Eunice Ivala

Introduction

Traditionally, co-teaching or team-teaching is discussed in the context of K12 education, in the context of accommodating a diverse student population, and as a means of addressing or accommodating a range of students with different learning needs. 