EDITORIAL

Marinkie Madiope
University of South Africa
madiom@unisa.ac.za

It is my privilege to welcome you to yet another edition of our prestigious DHET accredited Open, Distance and eLearning (ODeL) journal – Progressio. In this edition, we have included nine articles, which are all based on empirical research conducted by higher education specialists facilitating teaching and learning.

In my view, it is prudent to make a few comments on what ODeL comprises. I believe that ODeL is an approach in higher education, where multiple modes of education delivery mediated through technology is offered to students so that they are enabled to access education through multiple entry and exit points. ODeL is core to service students wishing to study at any time and place they may find convenient. However, in order to fulfil the mandates of ODeL, planning is key to facilitating programme, qualification and module/course design. This sentiment is emphasized in the Unisa ODeL Business Model (2013:4) which states the following

> As noted, the ODeL model sees a complete shift to open, distance, and e-learning at Unisa, with corresponding implications for all operations and systems. In this model, the entire institution's 'transactional environment' with students is transformed so that all aspects of that environment are fully digitized and thus underpinned by robust, effective, and integrated ICT applications. This does not mean that Unisa will no longer have any face-to-face interaction with students. For example:

- students may still choose to visit a campus or regional office to apply or register if appropriate,

- student support strategies will still incorporate – as defined by the pedagogical requirements of individual courses – face-to-face interaction with students or workplace learning activities;

- examinations may still occur at a central venue where necessary (at least in the short- to medium-term); and graduation may still involve a physical ceremony.

The nine articles published in this edition focus on the following areas of open, distance and eLearning:

- student support
- supervision and student support for Masters and doctoral students in an ODEL environment
- digital literacy amongst higher education practitioners
- the role of coaching as a strategy to improve teacher and learning in an ODeL context

I can assure you that the blend of articles in this edition are inspiring and will offer you multiple perspectives on the importance and rationale of ODeL and how we as higher education practitioners can improve the quality of our teaching and learning.