

NELSON MANDELA

UNIVERSITY

10 February 2021

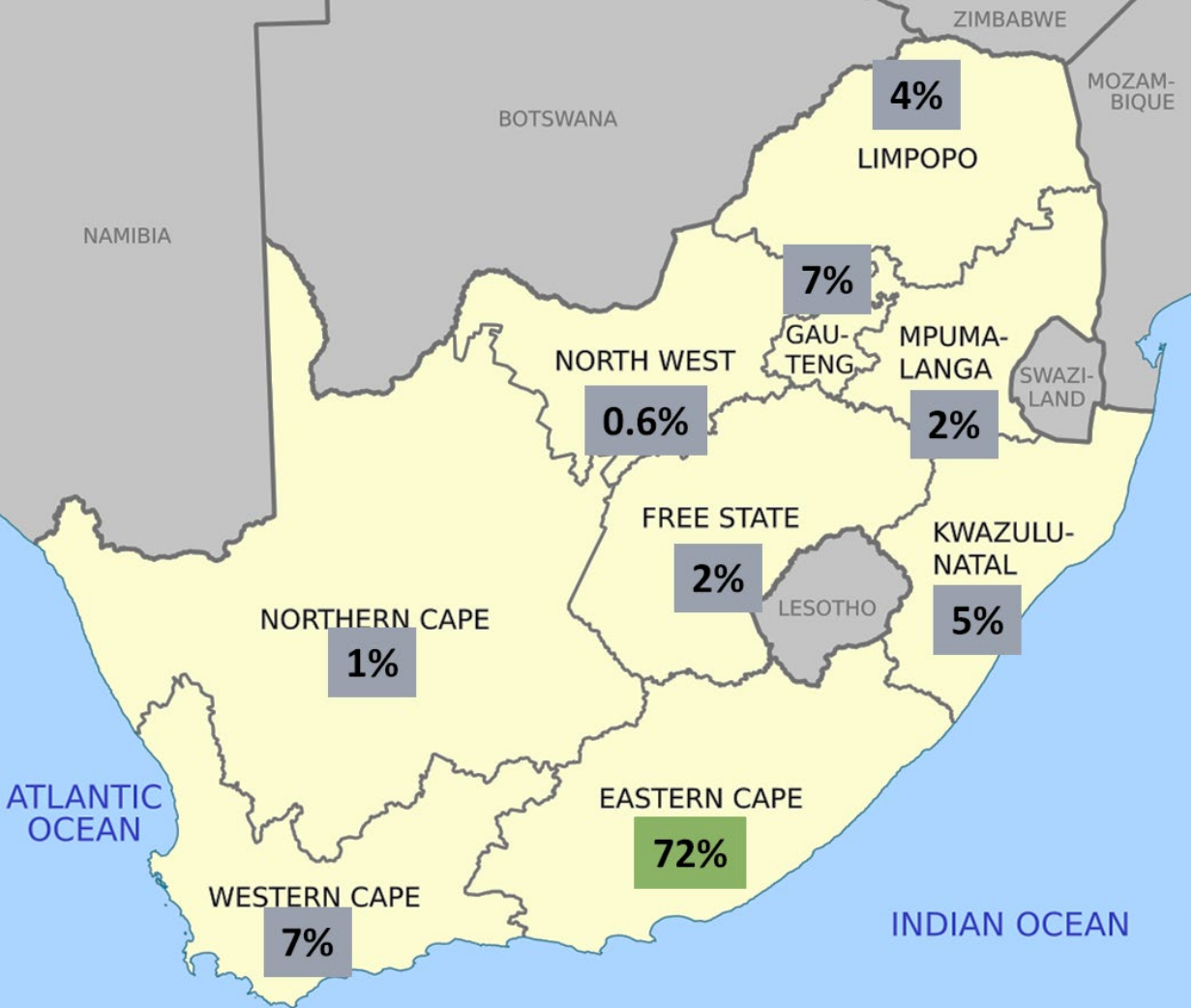


Remote Online Learning Experiences

Our approach - Principles

- 1. Prioritising the health and safety of students and staff. This includes being human-centred and prioritising care and kindness.**
- 2. Remaining agile, adaptable, and flexible amid the fluidity and uncertainty of the pandemic.**
- 3. Unwavering commitment to provide all our diverse students with the academic opportunities and support required to progress through and complete the 2020AY.**
- 4. Foregrounding our core values of excellence, social justice and equality, and integrity in the implementation of all our academic activities.**

Where our students were when they are/were learning remotely

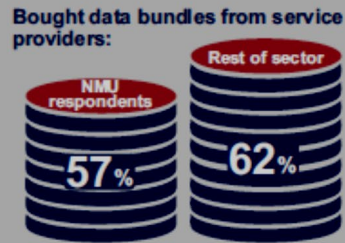
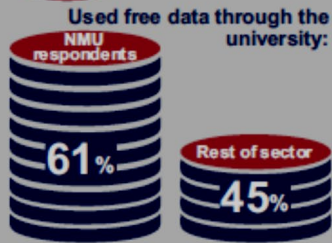
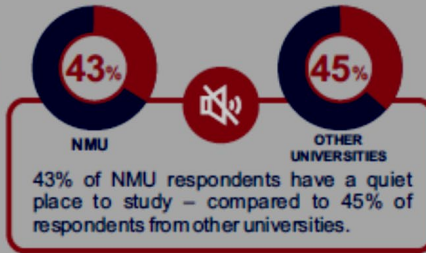


Our approach – Enablers (1)

1. **Data** (30 GB) and **devices** (1100 more distributed to NSFAS and missing middle students; 4800 more procured). **Data-lite** approach.
2. Given the differing contexts, circumstances and needs of our students, and especially the challenges students experience to learn remotely, as many of our students live in townships, informal settlements and rural areas where online access and a private space to study are a challenge, **we created different pathways which allowed students to restart their learning at different times and in different ways** (online remotely, learning materials distributed, online on campus; experiential learning).



Our approach – Enablers (1) - Challenges

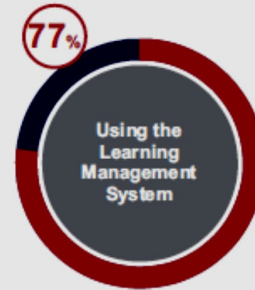
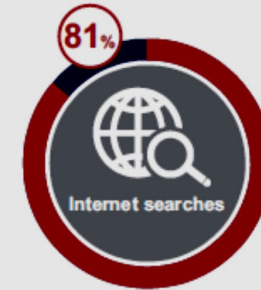


Benefits of learning with technology: *"Improves my knowledge on using devices like laptop. I've learned how to get used to typing which helps me to spend adequate time on my tests and finish on time."*

Challenges of learning with technology: *"Connectivity issues, studying at home with a lot of family members can be a struggle sometimes having to balance house chores and studying."*


31% were not prepared to use the technology required for their courses when entering NMU

NMU respondents believe they would be more successful if trained in:



Extract from Students' Access to and Use of Learning Materials (SAULM) Survey – conducted by UFS for USAf

Our approach – Enablers (2)



Start by doing what's necessary;
then do what's possible; and
suddenly you are doing the
impossible.

Francis of Assisi

3. We adopted a **phased approach** to resuming LT activities. Shrink the change, smooth the path, find the “bright spots” (Heath & Heath).
4. We remained **agile** and employed **flexible timeframes** to allow students enough time to adapt to online learning.
5. Embedded in our approach is **support** for student learning, PG research a wellness through a variety of means; access to e-resources; and support and **capacity building** for academics re practicing flexible, human-centred pedagogy (“keep it simple”).
6. **Teaming approach** to working our way through complexities to co-create solutions – student leaders were essential team members.

Our approach – Tracking progress

1. **Shifts in relationships between students and staff** – mutual growth of respect and understanding of challenges and appreciation of effort and hard work.
2. The importance of **continuous communication** and knowledge of student needs.
3. The importance of **risk taking, flexibility, and adaptability**.
4. The importance of relevance (online materials & activities) and **engaging students in learning**.
5. The **assessment** challenge - “continuous assessment ≠ continuously assessing”; integrity & online assessment.
6. Some **“aha” experiences** which will be taken forward.

Our approach – Tracking progress (students' views)

1. **Self-regulated learning and Developing Coping Mechanisms**
2. **Student-Lecturer Relationship Building**
3. **Importance of Lecturers Connecting with Students**
4. **Aspects of online learning worked well for students - pre recorded lectures; PowerPoint document with extra notes and audio attached; live interactive lectures – recreated a more normal classroom experience**
5. **Aspects of online LT worked less well – certain elements of face to face learning that students missed; Assessment challenges**
6. **Becoming prepared for online learning by doing online learning**
7. **The need for digital resources (should there be a national repository?) and conducive learning environments for online learning**

Our approach – Tracking progress

- **“Silent” students – from 10% to <2% (n=360).**
- **The extent to which lecturers and students accepted the challenge of shifting to online LT and e-assessment, the courage it took to do this, and what the personal benefits were.**

I am very impressed by the way that everyone came together in this pandemic to ensure the greater benefit for everyone as a whole. The amount of innovative effort that was put into action by the university in order to ensure that the learning cycle was not halted was truly exceptional, and it shows that when smart minds come together, there is no obstacle that cannot be overcome or worked around.

Change the World

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