



This call aims to support up to three parallel sessions within the annual University of Zululand Teaching and Learning Conference. These parallel sessions are intended for undergraduate and postgraduate students, but not for staff or for academics. The purpose of the parallel sessions are for students to showcase their ideas, innovations and inventions in teaching and learning, with a special focus on those ideas, innovations and inventions that are based on information and communications technologies, the social media and emerging new and future technologies. Within the context of this call, all students in higher education are invited to submit their abstracts for the conference. This call is not only for postgraduate students. It is meant for all students, particularly for undergraduate students. Students whose abstracts are accepted for these sessions will be supported financially towards the conference.



It has been correctly observed in the literature that new ideas, innovations, inventions, and creativity thrive on disciplinary diversity and collaboration, but starve without it. It has also been noted that today's students are natural investigators, researchers and synthesizers of information and that these skills can be put to powerful use. Several technologies that will impact education over the course of the next few years, including cloud computing, mobile learning, learning analytics, open content, 3D printing, massive open online courses, virtual and remote laboratories, games and gamification, tablet computing, and wearable technologies are the domain of the young and the future project of the brave.

## Value Proposition

Transformation of the teaching and learning environment has been characterized among other things by student centeredness and the total student learning experience, particularly the first year experience. These have fuelled greater and more focused attention to the student, the total student experience, and more importantly the total student experience in the initial university years where making the transition from pre-university to the full university tenure is critical. By far the major purpose in South Africa is to enhance the student experience so as to limit drop-outs and to improve the other performance indicators such as class pass rates, throughput rates, graduation rates and graduate attributes. Surprisingly, even though the movement for greater student centeredness in teaching and learning has been gaining momentum for quite some time in South Africa, very little has been documented in the literature and social media on mining young minds at the universities for ideas and actual innovations and inventions on teaching and learning. While we have been increasingly focusing on students in higher education therefore, it is doubtful whether we have been sufficiently listening to, and engaging students for enhanced impact on their learning. Could it be that we need to revisit the pedagogical and epistemological depth of the old and well-established socio-political adage credited to the contemporary student struggle in education in general, but higher education in particular: *“nothing about us without us”*.

While the vast majority of research is rich in student surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups, giving some meaning to this philosophy, there is no doubt that there is glaring paucity in the actualization of learning and teaching innovations and inventions by students. In view of the proliferation of the usage, impact and the superior colonization by young people in higher education, of information and communications technology and the social media in virtually all sectors in which universities provide education and training, there is great value in pursuing an engagement of students in higher education for the teaching and learning innovation and invention value chain including ideas and innovations based on these technologies to impact on teaching and learning.

It is within the context of the annual University of Zululand teaching and learning conference, that we have conceptualized, planned and programmed an engagement of students for exactly this purpose; an open platform for students to showcase ideas, inventions and innovations in teaching and learning in all disciplines, particularly those that are based on information and communications technology and the social media. The approach is to provide unfettered space for research tested and untested ideas, inventions and innovations to be presented at special parallel sessions of the annual teaching and learning conference in October 2017, in three categories. The uniqueness of this parallel session is that it will be chaired by students, for student presentations only, and it is open to all students, particularly undergraduate students, and is not just for postgraduate students as is traditionally the case.

- The first category is for contributions generated and presented by students as individuals and as student collaborative teams.
- The second category is for contributions presented by students as individuals and as student collaborative teams, but generated by staff-student collaborative teams.

- The third category is for contributions presented by students as individuals and as student collaborative teams, but generated by academic and academic support staff.

For this reason this parallel session will require extensive training and support for students in all three categories. As a result applicants and participants will also require funding for preparation, conference registration fees, accommodation, travel and subsistence.

Schull et al (2009) observed correctly that innovation, invention, and creativity thrive on disciplinary diversity and collaboration, but starve without it.<sup>1</sup> Hampson et al (2013) on the other hand notes that today's students are natural investigators, researchers and synthesizers of information and that these skills can be put to powerful use.<sup>2</sup> For over a decade now, the New Media Consortium has been charting the landscape of emerging technologies in teaching, learning, and creative inquiry on a global scale. The K-12 and Higher Education editions of their most recent reports, together highlight ten emerging technologies that will impact education over the course of the next five years.<sup>3</sup> These include cloud computing, mobile learning, learning analytics, open content, 3D printing, massive open online courses, virtual and remote laboratories, games and gamification, tablet computing, and wearable technologies. The New Media Consortium notes that these will be the domain of the young and the future project of the brave, because young people in higher education are inevitably at the forefront of new technologies.

## Purpose of the Call

The purpose of the call is to support up to three parallel sessions within the annual University of Zululand Teaching and Learning Conference. These parallel sessions are for all students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, but not for staff or for academics. The purpose of the parallel sessions are for students to showcase innovations and inventions in teaching and learning, with a special focus on those innovations and inventions that are based on information and communications technology, the social media and the New Media Communications top ten for the future. As the conference is pitched at international level, and therefore open to all universities around the world, students from across the globe will be invited to showcase their contributions. However, the special focus of this proposal is on South African students in post school education including Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

There are three special categories of oral and poster contributions that will be invited to these parallel sessions. In all three categories, contributions may be presented by an individual student or a team of students as oral or poster presentations. Due to the

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<sup>1</sup> Schull J; Xanthe M; Noel-Storr J, 2009. Teaching and learning innovation and invention. Innovations Unlimited: Advancing Education, Investing in Change The NCIIA 13th Annual Meeting, March 19-21, 2009 • Washington, DC. Accessed from <http://scholarworks.rit.edu/other/684>

<sup>2</sup> Hampson A, Patton A and Shanks L, 2013. Ten ideas for 21<sup>st</sup> century education, Innovation Unit, CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London, N1 6AH, 020 7250 8098, [contact@innovationunit.org](mailto:contact@innovationunit.org)

<sup>3</sup> NMC Horizon Report: 2013 K-12 Edition ISBN 978-0-9883762-6-7 and the NMC Horizon Report: 2013 Higher Education Edition ISBN 978-0-9889140-1-8

developmental nature of the parallel sessions and the recognition of some of the communication limitations of young people, the presentations will be given more time than is normally allowed for contributions from academics or professionals. In addition the parallel session chairpersons and panel members will comprise students only, but no academic staff. This is to ensure minimum pressure on students, which is seen as potential impedance to the purpose of the parallel sessions. Furthermore the sessions will be evaluated by students and not by academic staff, although academic staff may adjudicate the evaluations.

Table 1: Three categories of contributions that will be invited to the parallel sessions

#	Contributions generated and presented by	Contribution copy rights
1	Contributions generated and presented by students as individuals and as student collaborative teams	individuals students and / or student collaborative teams
2	Contributions presented by students as individuals and as student collaborative teams, but generated from staff-student collaborative teams	staff-student collaborative teams including all members of the collaborative teams
3	Contributions presented by students as individuals and as student collaborative teams, but generated from staff	staff-student teams including all members of the teams

Ultimately the purpose of the parallel sessions is to solicit and evaluate untested and tested ideas, inventions and innovations in teaching and learning, developed by students, but also developed by staff in collaboration with students. It is important to note that the copyrights of the ideas, innovations and inventions revert to the originators. Therefore the conference, proceedings and any material ensuing from them will have no claim on the intellectual property. For this reason the proceedings of the conference will be collected and published with a clear articulation of the copyrights as a way of attributing intellectual property to the originators. The usual copyright and intellectual property warnings will be constructed by our legal and intellectual property division to ensure that the attributions are legally water tight. This is seen as an important incentive for South African students to participate in the conference with full confidence of security of their intellectual property. These parallel sessions are also intended to attract ideas, innovations and inventions generated by academics. However for the purpose of presentation, these inventions are compelled to include only students without the inventing academic. In such cases the inventing academic will put together a team of students to present the contribution as a team, acknowledging the academic as the inventor during the presentation. No academics will be allowed on the stage of these sessions although academics will be encouraged to attend the sessions.

The invitation to the conference and the call for abstracts is therefore place on the web and sent out to students all over the world, to all South African University Students, as well as all students in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges. The invitation is meant for all students in any post-school education and training institution in South Africa and their equivalent abroad. Applicants are invited to submit an abstract using the standard abstract form provided on the website, and specifically indicate the category of the proposed contribution to the conference.