

**School of Education  
Community Engagement**

..... Presents .....

**CREATIVE NETWORK  
MAGAZINE**

**About This Volume**

Students and Staff from ALL universities and members of the general public were invited to:  
**'Write about their current experiences in a creative way - a story, lyrics, poem, drawing etc...  
including how learning can take place during this time'.**

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**TEACHERS AND COVID-19**  
by

1

**Innocent Muhwezi**

**(Faculty of Education; Moi University – Main Campus, Kenya)**

The teachers, our heroes  
From family to family  
The feeling is identical,  
From nation to nation  
The struggle is the same,  
Replacing the teachers  
Stands what cannot work  
They have tried it;  
TV, Radios, Zoom and social media,  
Imagine studying maths on a radio?

It's important to acknowledge  
the hard work of the teachers  
Some parents are amusing  
Even though there are many  
A drop to their ocean  
Never will it fill  
Despite the superb support  
They still feel the pinch.

No pain, no gain  
Is a phrase that remains  
In this life-threatening moment  
We all need a shelter.

During this Pandemic  
We all need a shelter  
But ever thought of our Teachers  
Yes, Teachers are serving heroes.

Doctors are rare, Virologists we need  
But it's the struggle of the teachers.  
The attention is Zero  
As we share the little  
Considering the teachers,  
We look down upon the teachers  
Not far-sighting their values.

When all this is over  
Yes, the COVID-19  
Is when we will remember  
That teachers are heroes.  
I am sure it's upsetting  
The situation is nerve-wracking  
But, Remember my prayers  
It's only for; "My heroes."

Do you know that I am stronger?  
But this is to deliberate  
My father, my mother  
My Peers and all learners,  
W.H.O is trying  
More so, The Ministry of Health.

Thank you Innocent for the GREAT link  
to Students in Central and East Africa.

Consequently, I hope you will make it  
The COVID-19 will Go.  
Sure, together we shall conquer.



**INTERESTED IN  
SUBMITTING A CREATIVE  
PIECE**

Submit your piece to any  
team member by e-mail or  
WhatsApp by Wednesday of  
every week.

**SUBMIT - PERMISSION IS  
GRANTED TO THE EDITORS  
TO PUBLISH MY CREATIVE  
WORK IN THE MAGAZINE.**

**Yolanda 'Nola' Narainan**  
(University of KwaZulu-Natal; Edgewood Campus)

2

She stepped forward into the flames  
Floor made of coal  
Oh she felt the soul  
What's these games

Two steps forward  
He took three back  
WACK- to her back  
Came the sound of reality

He showed concern one day  
Thought the next  
Oh how he play  
Oh how he play

Skillfully, his typed words  
Feed her lonely soul  
Up she went to fall right back  
When he dropped down

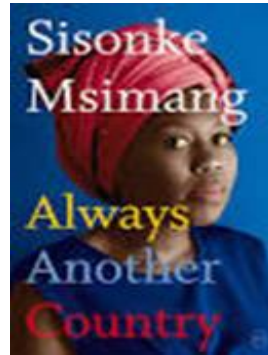
*Nola*

**"LOVE IN THE TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCING"**

by

**Dr. Betty Govinden**  
(University of KwaZulu-Natal)

3



**SISONKE MSIMANG**, a well-loved South African writer, storyteller and curator, reflects on writing, living, and loving, during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She encourages us to stay with the uncertainty of the times. As she says, "We must guard against the need to resolve everything, to package and to pretend to understand it all too quickly".

She urges us to stay hopeful, and to trust that, sooner or later, the gloom will pass: "I am still resisting the idea that this is what the world looks like for a while – disembodied voices, faraway people".

Above all, Sisonke says, we should remember that whatever has changed during this time of the pandemic, "Love in a time of COVID looks exactly as it always has. It looks like staying connected. It looks like checking in...May you have love, and may you belong."

Among Sisonke's books are her memoir, *Always Another Country – A Memoir of Exile and Home* [2017], which was reviewed by *The New York Times*, and her engaging biography, *The Resurrection of Winnie Mandela* [2018], published by Jonathan Ball.

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4



## *Is e-Learning A Solution for South African Institutions of Higher Education: Possibilities, Challenges and Possibilities*

by

**Lihle Mbatha**

(University of KwaZulu-Natal; Edgewood Campus)

4

*This piece was written at a time when institutions of Higher Education in South Africa were exploring possible means of how teaching and learning can take place amid COVID-19. We share the piece as an evaluation of the achievements and possibilities.*

An 'invisible enemy' as they regard it, is here in South Africa. It has taken over everything, causing many hurdles in all aspects of life. South African institutions of Higher Education are no exception to this. The institutions are navigating possible actions to ensure that teaching and learning continues, and ultimately to save the current academic year, in particular semester one. The best possible solution being explored is the implementation of e-Learning. However, this may not be possible for an extended period, due to various challenges/constraints. Teaching remotely, what does this mean for all university parties involved - lecturers and students and the fact that a large number of our students come from poor socio-economic background? What aspects should be considered for the success of e-Learning:

### **i. Availability of Electricity and Network Connections**

In South Africa, electricity and network connections are available. However, a critical question that requires probing is- **do we all have access to these two crucial resources**, irrespective of our geographic demarcations? The reality is that some areas have both; others have only one; and the sad reality is that others do not have any. This is my concern because this is where predicaments emerge. For students living in areas that have only one or none, can the university ensure that these students are not left out/behind? I am of the view that this may be a 'mission impossible' due to the relatively short time frame and resource jurisdictions. So, for successful e-Learning you need access to both, because these resources complement each other. In dealing with this, the university may recruit students to volunteer to contact their peers to collect data about those who have and do not have access to the above-mentioned resources. I recommend that the postgraduate students, the mentors in the compulsory specialist subjects, located in specific regions, should volunteer. Each mentor could be given a list of student names, contact details, level of study and specialisations to work with them.

### **ii. Equipment Availability**

In order for students to participate in e-Learning they require access to equipment, or digital devices like laptops, smartphones and/ or desktop computers. As an Academic Mentor working very closely with students in all levels of study, particularly first year students under the Academic, Monitoring and Support (AMS) Programme. I foresee a problem with online learning. As informed by students (2020. first years) that no laptops were provided. >>>>



The process of roll-out was delayed by various circumstances at the beginning of this academic year and then the suspension of the academic programme; and immediate evacuation of students from residences. Once again, with no access to electricity; network connection; and required equipment, I foresee no success to the proposed remote teaching and learning. However, the university did act progressively on the distribution of laptops to the identified funded students. What then happens with the unfunded students?

Now, if all the students are in possession of the above required materials for e-Learning to take place wherever they are, some students experience some difficulties in using a computer, in particular the typing (of work) and saving (of the document) on the computer. I am stating this based on my experience before the lockdown, when I was approached by a group of 30 (first-year students) who required assistance with learning the basics of the computer. What is going to happen with these students if the university teaches remotely? Here again mentors could be important resources for teaching these skills.

### iii. Availability of Data Bundle

This is another extremely significant but daunting prospect to the successfulness of remote teaching and learning. Will universities be able to provide enough data for both funded and unfunded students? Do they have enough funds to do so? If yes, are they going to be able to provide it on an ongoing basis or will it be a once-off data sort of a thing? This is because due to financial constraints, some students will not be able to sponsor themselves for data bundles. Yes, maybe those who are funded can use their allowances to do so. What about the unfunded ones? The university will then be compelled to use whatever fund available to cater for the needs of those who are needy. The next aspect was the provision of data – seeking sponsorship from Vodacom; MTN; Telkom would really have been an excellent move, but sadly the data had to be purchased, at a discounted price...but payment had to be made. With our large student numbers, it would have been great if donors could have sponsored the payments for data.

In light of all of the above, it is apparent that in order for an effective and successful implementation of remote teaching and learning at institutions of Higher Education, essentials must be put in place. These include: (i) electricity and network connection; (ii) infrastructure; and (iii) data bundles. As it has been noted that most of these aspects complement one another.

Since the initial writing of this article, it is with gratitude expressed to the university for the efforts and commitment to the provision of the essentials where possible. A question that hangs – What is the social justice in action with e-Learning? Will it have achieved what was envisaged?

.....  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Mthokozisi S. Mgenge (**UKZN Alumna**); Ayanda Mbatha (**UKZN Master of Education candidate; Edgewood Campus**)  
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*Quarantine*  
by

**Yolanda 'Nola' Narainan**

(University of KwaZulu-Natal; Edgewood Campus)

5

A time when friends and  
family are few  
Strange that there is no  
change  
Odd it is not

For we have known  
abandonment, abuse and  
torture since pampers.  
Men prowl, growl and  
there's no foul  
In the eyes of the world

Odd it is not  
People roam the streets,  
empty bellies.  
Both bare, inside out.  
Our brothers and sisters,  
life exhausted.

The wise, glued to the telly  
for the latest  
crime in the country,  
dreading seeing

a familiar face, the bravest,  
the protectors in blue,  
having turned on us.

Quarantine, a phase as predicted  
Odd it is not  
For our people; as  
predicted  
have fought





***Mina ngiwuDuduzani***

by

**Philani 'Mganyambane' Biyela**  
(University of KwaZulu-Natal; Edgewood Campus)

6

Ngivumeleni ngizikhininde yize ngingakhulumi,  
Eyami imisebenzi iyazikhulumela,  
Thulani ngizivundulule ngehle nazo ngohologo,  
Bengimncane kodwa sengikhiph' izingqwele,  
Bengingeke neze ngazikhipha ngingedwa  
Lezi ngcithab' chopho eThekwini eNtuzuma,  
Engani ngibanjwe imbokodo ngathula du!  
Ngaphekwa ngathululwa eyakoKhabazela,  
EyasemaBheleni yangephula sengivuthiwe,  
Elami ibhodwe livelele eLindelani baswaca,  
Bakhwacel' imisila uma kumemfuka ezami,  
Empeleni ungangenzani nxa kuvumbuk' ezami?  
Kwezemfundo ngivithize ngaziwolela izindondo  
Kweyamasiko ngahlala esicongweni bathula du!  
Ngaqhwakel' maqede bakhishwa izisu laphaya KoNewlands East nakoToti wawukuphi?  
Empeleni kade ngaqhwakela, angiqali,  
Anongibuza koDabul'izizwe eFolweni bayayazi  
Eyami nduku ngayivithiz' maqede balala,  
Mina engani ngiyiDuduzani evalana eyophuthu,  
Mina engani ngibanjwe yimbokodo.  
Babehlek' inhlinini ngiyigogogo,

Babehlek' inhlinini ngiyigogogo,  
Bangihlek' usulu ngiwumahamba nendlwana,  
Bangichapha ngayiziswana amazwi ngathula,  
Baphosa anenhlabathi amazwi ngazibukela,  
Kanti abazi ngifihl' induku emqubeni,  
Kanti abazi ngeny' imini ngoba nje,  
Mtapo ngibuke nginjani namuhla? ngibheke,  
Bengiyintandane ngingenabani nginganakiwe,  
Kepha ngaduduzeka njengegama lami,  
Engani ithemb' alibulali, langisebenzela,  
Bhekisisa ngibhekisise nawe ungesabi,  
Nawe unencwadi ongayibhala ngami,  
Mandlenkosi nawe vusa elakho iso ungibheke  
Ngizibuka okukathekwane ubuhle manje,  
Phikiswayo ungangiphikisi nawe vuma,  
Thobile nawe uyakwazi ukuhlupheka  
Engivela kukho, nonke nikwazi kahle.  
Thobile ungathobeki unomphela, phawula,  
Mina ngizolokhu ngiyiDuduzani njalo  
Angikaze ngaguquka, nginje.

Anginyakazi nom' olwezichwe lunginyakazisa,  
Ngiyinkunzi edle zinye ngolwazi ngisasho,  
Noma bengidicilela phansi ngimile phuhle,  
Noma elami igama belihudulela phansi  
Angisoze ngaliphoxa elami igama,  
Noma izelelesi zingigenda okwebhola

>>>>





Angisoze ngawushaya ungqimphothwe,  
Noma bengibek' iLand Pollution  
Kodwa eyami inhlanzeko isadlubhedu eNatali,  
Engani ngivunywe abezempilo ngempilo yami  
Yona eqwaqwad' amakhanda izikole eNatali,  
Engani ngiyiDuduzan' nongivuma nini?  
Ngisalokhu ngimnkantshubomvu kulo mdlalo  
Wokuzichonyelwa uphappe lwegwalagwala,  
Namanje awuboni? elami igama alipheli le  
KoCocacola kwaNdong'ziyaduma,  
Liwundab' isegudwini koRama, nako-Y Cap,  
Angeqiwa lutho, okuvukayo ngiyathatha  
Ngiyazuza ekugcineni sakudlala,  
Mina elami ngiwuDuduzani nje.

EyakoLushaba ingiphathe ngaphatheka,  
Ngisazophatheka ngikleliswe nezinye izingwazi  
Zon' ezamukela amaqhawe namaqhawekazi,  
Engani nami ngazamukela izingqungqulu  
Kwawami amagceke, eziseduze zayikhwacela  
Okwemalasi ibon' ikhonde,  
U-Angie wezemfundo wanyathela kwelami,  
UDlungwane wanyathela nifunani?  
UNyawo lukaZandile ngiyalwazi nifunani?  
Izingwazi sezigide zagida ziphelela kimi,  
Lingazilahla konina ilanga uma ngingabala,  
Thulani, nibuke, ningiguqele ngiyinkunzi



Emalunda eDistrik'thi yasePhayindane,  
Ngisazoluthela uswazi ko-Maths 24,  
Eyami imikhonto othisha abaloliwe bacija  
Abasoze bangijabhisa, kubo ngiyethemba,  
Ngizobhambabula ngenduku kwezamasiko,  
Owami ummese ubukhali nxa zonke,  
Ungangithinti nakancane, NgiwuDuduzani,  
Ibhodwe eliphekwe yimi linongiwe vumani,  
Eliphakwe yimi liphekwe imbokodo uqobo,  
UMaVezi wangithatha wangibeka kwelenyoni,  
Ungiveze wangenza umhlonishwa kweleTheku,  
EyamaBhele yangibonda yangephula,  
EyakoKhabazela yafak' ikloba ngavuthwa,  
Pho ngingayeka kanjani ukuba umakhonya?  
Pho ngingayeka kanjani ukuba uNozindondo?  
Phela mina ngiwuDuduzani angidlali,  
Ojahidada bayaduduzeka ebaleni lami,  
Ngiwumondli weziNtandane kwabaswele,  
Wongibuza kuMabaso nezakhe uyangazi,  
Ngiwumcathulisi kwabathatha kancane,  
Wongibuza kweyaseMangunini, nginake belu,  
Ngiwumfukuli wamakhono kunobhutshuzwayo,  
Wongibuza kuMyeza naye angay'fakaza,  
Ngiwumsusa nkungu emehlweni komuntuza,  
Fak' elempunzi ijubane uyongibuza kuMajozi.  
Impela ngiphekwe, ngabondwa, ngephulwa,  
Mina engani ngiwuDuduzani nje.



*Quarantine*  
by

**Phakamile Mazibuko**  
(University of KwaZulu-Natal; Edgewood Campus)

*My experience of being an editor of the Creative Network Magazine has been a life changing experience.*

*I am so honoured to be part of this exciting, engaging and innovative movement. Each week, I get to engage with different people from all walks of life through their creative pieces. Undoubtedly, my role has contributed immensely on my personal and professional development especially academic writing.*

*The growth of magazine has been incredible, it's amazing how unity and creativity has enabled critical engagements on challenges such as Covid-19 and Gender-based Violence. The act of working in solidarity to devise and implement impactful solutions to address challenges in our respective communities.*

*This magazine has certainly been and continues to be a space for creativity and innovation. I look forward to greater engagements in the future.*

*I challenge you ALL to be change agents in your respective spaces of influence and communities. 🙌*



**Yolanda 'Nola' Narainan**  
(University of KwaZulu-Natal; Edgewood Campus)

8

Stop complaining.  
Claiming to be alone  
But maintaining  
Toxic friends; creating a zone

You are blind to those  
Around you who care, who stay  
People who pose  
You No harm but stay

*Nola*

True souls they are; I cannot stress  
This enough, just stop this mess  
I'm not losing you  
You're losing me, you!



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### Online (and offline) reading resources for children

The enjoyment of books and reading - Now that so many of us are at home with our children because of COVID-19, we can explore the virtual world of children's stories - all free to read and many openly licensed. Some wonderful book and reading resources are listed below.

#### African Storybook

With more than 7,200 children's stories in 190 African languages, African Storybook has something for every child, from the very young ones just learning to read to older children. It's possible to search in various ways, including by language and reading level, and to download freely and print. Most of the storybooks are created or translated by local educators and reflect African contexts. There is also an excellent guide for parents, teachers, and librarians on [Preparing to Use African Storybooks with Children](#). Over 4,000 of these storybooks can be found on the ASb reader app. Selected books can be downloaded onto a personal library for *offline* use.

#### StoryWeaver

There are more than 19,000 stories in 234 languages on the StoryWeaver platform. StoryWeaver has created a special page on [Reading at Home](#) during the Coronavirus school closures. This page links to: learning resources from grades one to eight; StoryWeaver's special collection on science, mathematics, and technology; its local-language digital libraries, including African languages; and more.

#### Book Dash

Book Dash believes that every child should own one hundred books by the age of five. This South African non-profit gathers creative professionals who



volunteer to create new, African storybooks that anyone can freely translate, print and distribute. It creates beautiful, high-quality books for young children in all South African languages. They currently have over 100 titles. Book Dash also has a short guide on [Tips for Reading with Young Children](#).

African Storybook, StoryWeaver, and Book Dash use a [Creative Commons Attribution](#) (CC BY) licence, which means that you can download, print, share, translate, and adapt all of the stories in their collections.

### Nal'ibali

Nal'ibali (isiXhosa for "here's the story") believes that well-established culture of reading can be a real game-changer for education in South Africa. Literacy skills are a strong predictor of future academic success in all subjects – and children who regularly read and hear engaging stories, in languages they understand, are well equipped and motivated to learn to read and write. Nal'ibali promotes reading and writing in mother tongue languages.

Nal'ibali has free to download stories and reading resources for children and teenagers, accessible [here](#)

### Audible

Audible (by Amazon) is a platform that allows you to stream audiobooks. While schools are closed, Audible is allowing free access to stream an incredible collection of stories for children and teenagers, including titles across six different languages. All stories are free to stream on your desktop, laptop, phone or tablet. Note that these titles are currently freely available, but they are protected by full copyright.

### The Early Literacy Resource Network

The Early Literacy Resource Network provides links to research and resources on licensing, policies, creation, and use of high-quality children's materials in the global South. The [Teaching Literacy](#) page provides information for teaching reading and literacy skills. For more early literacy resources and information on how Creative Commons licences are used, access [Good Stories Don't Grow on Trees: A Guide to Effective Costing of Storybooks in the Global South](#).

### Podcast: OER and their Relevance to the COVID-19 pandemic

Mohini Baijnath speaks with Neil Butcher, OER Strategist at OER Africa, about OERs and their relevance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Neil speaks about the challenges that COVID-19 poses to education systems, how OER can be used to support educators and students amidst institutional closures, and what role governments can play in promoting the use of OER.

Listen to the podcast below.

[Mohini](#) · [OER Africa Podcast – Neil Butcher and Mohini Baijnath](#)

## **IMPORTANT NOTICES TO ALL AUTHORS**

### **NOTICE 1**

Dear Authors

Thank you so much to everyone who submitted their great creative piece(s) which were published in Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 to those whose pieces are in the current publication, we are grateful for your amazing work.

**Creative pieces in any language are welcome.**

Kindly please note that we **ONLY** publish **8-10** “creative pieces” each week.

If your piece is not in the current publication, it will be published the following week.

Kind regards,  
Creative Network Magazine Team

### **NOTICE 2**

Dear Authors

Whenever you submit your creative piece to Dr. James, we kindly and warmly request you to please also send the following note with your submission:

I ..... (Full name and Surname) hereby grant permission for the Creative Network Magazine to publish my submission (creative piece).

Kind regards,  
Creative Network Magazine Team