



Siyaphumelela
we succeed

Coaching for Student Success

A human-centric, generative, transformative design process



Siyaphumelela
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Siyaphumelela Advisory Committee

DHET

USAF

NSFAS

CHE

SALDRU - Siyaphambili

Other student success experts

Siyaphumelela Services

Workshops

Offered by Siyaphumelela Partners, Associates and *Saide*.

Work streams

Discussion forums that explore issues related to student success and may develop into workshops.

Siyaphumelela 2020-2022

Open to all South African universities

Backbone Organisation: *Saide*

Services and network co-ordination, annual conference, evaluation, South African delegation to AtD, knowledge portal and common discourse

Networks

(two convening meetings per year for partners)

National

Siyaphumelela partner universities

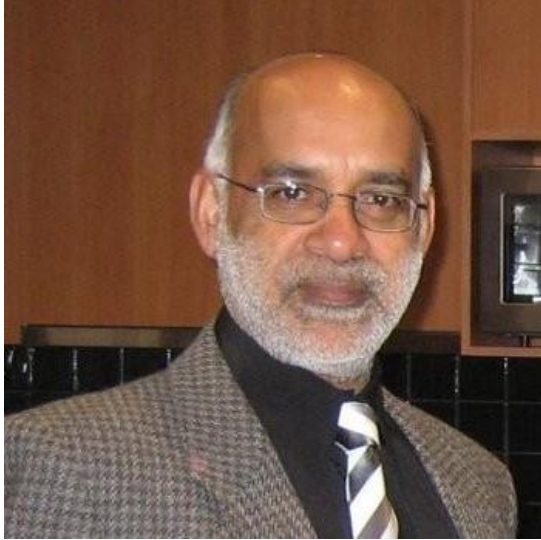
Regional

Open to all universities in region organised by lead university

Partner, Associate and Participant Members

Coaches





Bala Pillay



Nthabiseng Ogude



Ermien van Pletzen



Wendy Kilfoil



Elizabeth Boo



Why coaching as part of Siyaphumelela?



Coaches support universities to drive their unique student success agendas, to develop strategies based on data, to implement those strategies, and to evaluate whether they help students succeed.

Logic Model for Siyaphumelela Student Success Coaching: A human-centric, generative, transformative design

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes – Impact		
<i>Resources</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Short term</i>	<i>Medium Term</i>	<i>Long Term</i>
Financial (Kresge Foundation, annual fees, other)	Advertising and awarding grants Supporting programme administration Funding some activities and resources	South African partner and participant universities and their students			Universities can demonstrate an improvement in student retention, progress and success rates using HEMIS data.
Programme administration (SAIDE)	Draw up MoUs Arrange convenings, conferences, workshops Arrange ICAT online Monitor and evaluate programme Provide resources such as the Siyaphumelela website, data dictionary, working groups, etc.	University executive and leads Coaches	Universities do the Know Your Data workshop Universities administer ICAT Universities engage in events organised by SAIDE.	Universities deepen their knowledge of their data can be used to promote student success and share their promising or established practices with the network at various events.	Universities use data effectively to improve student retention, progress and success. The silo mentality across universities has become permeable.
Coaches (higher education experts)	Build relationships with institutional executive, leads and key roleplayers Workshops Meetings Convenings Facilitation ICAT	University executive Institutional leads Student Success Committee (SSC) Various departments/ task teams	University has a sense of urgency about student success. University has a SSC with ToRs that has started to break down siloes between departments and establish a common understanding of student success. University completed the ICAT and world café and analysed and acted on the results. Institutional leads are confident and proactive in their role of promoting the use of data for student success. Various university roleplayers have started to use data to tell stories about student success and develop dashboards that are accessible to most stakeholders. Universities plan Siyaphumelela activities for the following year with input from the coach.	University SSC is active in promoting use of data and planning and monitoring interventions to improve student success.	University has holistic student success as one of its primary strategic goals. University has strategies and tools in place to make the use of data to promote student success accessible to a range of stakeholders.
Mentoring (Achieving the Dream colleague coaches and resources)	Workshops Individual mentoring Regular meetings Feedback Coaches' retreat	SA Siyaphumelela coaches Programme administrators	SA coaches can facilitate ICAT. SA coaches assist universities to understand their student data, analyse it and act on it.	SA coaches begin to generate knowledge in their CoP and the wider colleague coach CoP about what data are valuable in the SA context and at different universities.	SA coaches continue to generate knowledge in their CoP and the wider colleague coach CoP about what data are valuable in the SA context and at different universities.

Outcomes of this presentation



- At the end of this presentation you will
 - understand the generic aims and practices of coaching in Siyaphumelela.
 - have insight into some of the knowledge gained and generated by coaches within the current Siyaphumelela project.
 - celebrate with the Siyaphumelela community some of the highlights and successes of coaching and the emerging impact for its beneficiaries.

QUESTION 1: What are the generic aims and practices of coaching in Siyaphumelela?

An MoU with the coaches captures the Kresge Foundation's expectations.



- Participate in professional development activities (e.g. workshops, AtD, conferences)
- Visit each Siyaphumelela Network 2.0 university three times in the first year in person or have a number of shorter virtual contacts:
 - introduce Siyaphumelela, meet executive, meet student success committee, help identify at-risk modules, help integrate data analytics;
 - ICAT;
 - planning.
- Provide ad hoc support to universities: e.g. service workshops, integrating data across the university
- Participate in Siyaphumelela network activities (convenings, conference)
- Provide reports to SAIDE bi-annually

Overview of the coaching model



- Coach interacts primarily with the team lead(s) plus members of the team and a member of the executive who oversees the student success work.
- Coach seeks to understand the institution's Strategic Plan, culture, student success structures and resources, and key players and their roles.
- Coach spends the equivalent of three working days per year to support each university in building capacity and systems to improve student success.
- Coach serves as a respectful 'critical friend' to each university's student success committee and leadership. This means that the coach offers honest feedback on progress, recommendations for improvements, and prompts bringing efforts to scale.
- Coach also helps identify information tools and resources such as the data templates, ICAT, and models from other universities that will be helpful to the university's team.

Coaches are expected to participate in professional development activities.



- Initial and ongoing colleague coaching came from the Achieving the Dream (AtD) network in the US and we acknowledge their invaluable input and support.
 - Workshops
 - Meetings
 - Individual coaches: Jan Lyddon, Nancy Finazzo, Jennifer Hill-Kelly
 - Resources, including ICAT
 - Coaches' retreats
 - AtD annual conferences
- Learning from SA universities – those we coach individually, and those in the network at convenings and conferences.
- A community of practice among the SA coaches and the generation of new knowledge.

QUESTION 2: What did you learn from the universities that you worked with?

Each university requires unique coaching approaches.



- Histories and current contexts
- Goals, activities and outcomes in MoUs
- Strategic intentions and goals
- Cultures: centralized v decentralized; strong faculties
- Resourcing
- Starting points and existing strengths
- Data collection and analytics capacity

We need to learn from what successful Siyaphumelela universities do, so networking is important.



- Build strong **fundamentals**, based on the overall Siyaphumelela aims – involvement of leadership and senior academics (e.g. deputy deans), representative student success committee, data analytics team and capacity building – and know that this commitment is an enduring one.
- Adopt an organizing **framework** to bring alignment to all the work necessary to advance and accelerate improvements.
- Develop and advance each university's own **theory of change** based on the overall Siyaphumelela aims. (Culture and context matter around the levers that will drive scaled gains at each university.)
- Move with deliberate **pace** and a sense of **urgency**.
- Act **intentionally**.

Leadership within the university is key to institutional buy-in.



- Centrality of Leadership
 - Executive
 - Lead and project team
 - Student success committee
- Seniority of the institutional lead(s) and access to executive leadership
- Importance of planning and then monitoring and evaluating
- Dealing with leadership changes at executive and/or lead level
 - Handover from one leader to his/ her successor
 - Prompt communication with coach
 - Setting up consultations with new leaders and coach

QUESTION 3: How do you help your universities learn about using evidence for student success?

The coach can use tools to help each university see student success holistically and break down siloes.



- An institutional student success team/ committee is a tool to break down siloes.
 - Intentionally involve a wide range of stakeholders on the student success committee. There is an African saying: ‘It takes a whole village to educate a child’; similarly, it takes the whole university community to help students to be successful: academics, student support (advising, counselling, health and well-being, residences), students, security, student finance, etc.
 - Use the committee to develop a common understanding of student success within the university.
 - Build data capacity within the committee.
 - Involve different groupings within the committee on integrated projects to achieve student success goals.
- The Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) helps the university to ‘see the big picture’ and plan its work.

The coach needs to ask important questions about institutional data.



- Are the systems where data reside integrated?
- What data does the institution have?
- What data are relevant to collect and analyse?
- What new data do they need to collect?
- Are the data actionable?
- Are they actioning the data?

Data resources and institutional analytics capacity cannot be assumed.



- Fundamental introductory workshops: Know your data
 - Coaches' participation in these workshops to facilitate for their own university's discussions is synergistic in learning about an university and helping it to tell the story from its own data.
- Further data workshops
 - Universities continually send different people to data workshops and, having detected this trend, coaches can advise their universities to build capacity in a small core of people each year.
- Scarcity of data analysts with HE experience
 - Could the coaches or Siyaphumelela come up with a solution; e.g. a new short learning programme on data in higher education for people with basic statistical or psychometric backgrounds?

The coach can help a university to become 'unstuck'.



- The coach can work with the university to develop an intentional change management strategy that includes visible executive leadership, strategic goals and clear communication.
 - The institutional leads and the coach can monitor and evaluate the strategy.
- Many institutional leads say: 'I'm swamped with other work' or 'We cannot get people to attend meetings'.
 - The coach can talk through alternatives such as using some of the partner universities grants or UCDG funding to contract a manager, possibly even a PG student.
 - The coach could advise the lead or executive member to involve members of the student success committee in projects: if people have to report on a project at a meeting, they are more likely to attend.

QUESTION 4: What were some of the challenges that you encountered as coaches and do they still exist?

Siloes exist across the system and within universities.



- Each university for itself.
 - The Siyaphumelela network has broken through the siloes separating universities. Good practices are shared at convenings and conferences. Individual collaborations arise. Working groups emerge on issues such as advising or data. A couple of regional networks are working well. High impact practices like advising have been scaled nationally. Coaches share ideas and resources with their universities and deliberately create links with other universities. Scholarship and publication could further share ideas.
- Each department for itself within the institution.
 - Student success committees are deliberately multi-stakeholder.
 - The Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) targets a cross-section of the university community and through facilitation the coach helps the institutions to realise how well they know themselves.
 - Student success goals have crept into Strategic Plans and integrative frameworks – it is not ‘business-as-usual’.

Priorities and strengths are not always clear or properly valued.



- Universities are keen and try to do too much. They need to focus.
 - Some good practices are prescribed in the MoU such as using SASSE and the review of high impact modules.
 - Others were part of the plans submitted by each institution. Coaches assist with annual planning for the following year and can facilitate every voice being heard but an overarching, widely important goal (WIG) being designed as the focus by the end of the session.
- University leads try to do too much on their own. They need to share the work.
 - A single significant goal will have many activities, usually performed by different sections of the university, often working together. If those groups have to report on their results at a student success committee, each contribution is valued and in return provides value to holistic student support, without overburdening the lead.

Every organization resists change in some way.



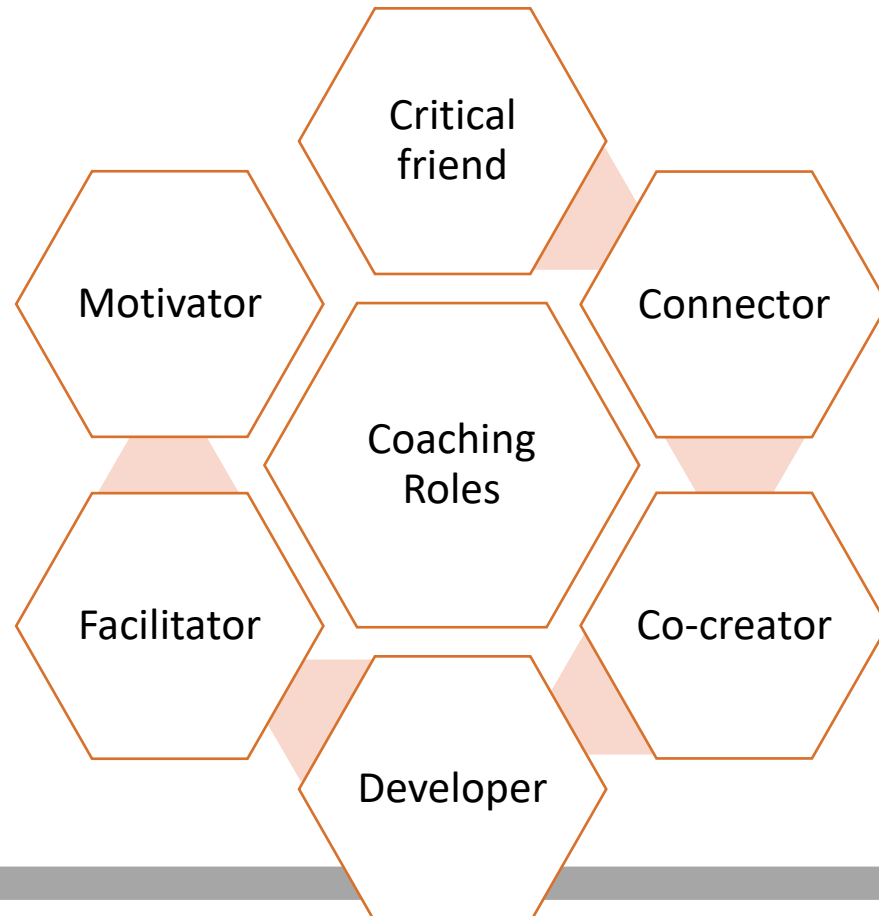
- Siyaphumelela asks universities to embrace change. A reliable, evidence-based argument can help to overcome resistance.
 - Work with the willing and use the evidence to convert others.
 - Demonstrate that many decisions are based on assumptions or a sense of already doing well – while data show the opposite to be true.
- Many people believe they cannot change the institutional situation/culture.
 - Having a dedicated student success committee or data analytics task team provides peer support, holistic solutions, and the possibility of scaling change across the university.
 - Having a coach provides a knowledgeable, sympathetic ear and someone with whom you can work through problems towards contextualized solutions.

QUESTION 5: What were some of the successes of coaching in the context of Siyaphumelela?



- The system has benefitted through greater networking, a more common understanding of student success and consciousness of the use of data to improve student outcomes.
- The student success journey started slowly at some institutions and met resistance but has since gained traction.
- Student success committees exist at all network institutions.
- Data collection and analysis has moved into the spotlight, particularly analytics that is accessible to a wider audience of non-specialists through dashboards, etc.
- Workshops led by each institution are popular. Data workshops are particularly so.
- New concepts of what data are important to different SA universities; e.g. in some homogenous universities, class not race is a significant data point.
- An established community of practice for coaches that generates new knowledge through sharing and discussion.

Coaches have come to understand that the Siyaphumelela coach has different roles.



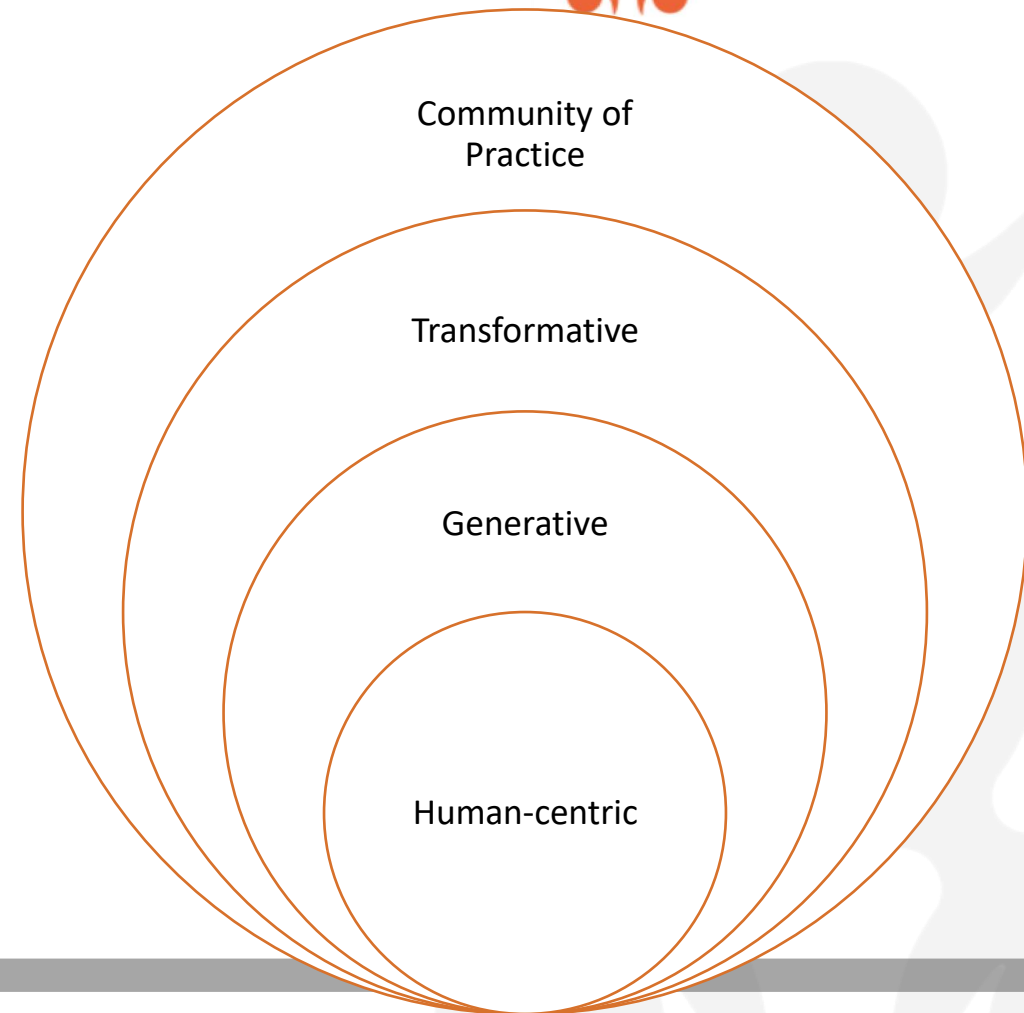
- **Critical friend:** Offer meaningful and detailed feedback on project plans, data, activities and reports respectfully, in the spirit of appreciative inquiry
- **Connector:** Connect to best practices, peer institutions, and higher education examples
- **Co-creator:** Co-create the structures and processes needed for strategic execution and guide the team responsible for next steps and monitoring and evaluation
- **Developer:** Provide/ promote professional development and capacity building on change leadership, process-mapping, communication, technology, advising case management system, etc.
- **Facilitator:** Deliver intentional and structured working sessions during site visits or scheduled virtual sessions, including for planning and the ICAT
- **Motivator:** Support the lead(s) and the student success team to maintain a sense of urgency and persist in the face of resistance

An emerging conceptual framework



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- A human-centric, generative transformative design process that aims at strengthening student success at universities through a focus on analysing data.
- SA Higher Ed encompasses huge contextual variety, that needs to be understood, respected and built into individual design processes at institutions.
- The concept of Community of Practice emerges as the main enabler of building capacity towards transformative design.
 - CoPs operate at various levels: institutions participating in the overarching Siyaphumelela programme; regional networks; working groups; coaches working together in the variable SA HE context; ATD/colleague coaches working with SA coaches.
- Productive tension exists between contextual variability and intersecting CoPs that capture, report and critically reflect on variability to build a set of best practices for student success .



Human-centric, generative, transformative



- Human-centric: Higher education experts external to a university serve as respectful, critical friends, with sensitivity for people and their complex environments
- Generative: Learning together in the context of each university's unique problems and a global knowledge base
- Transformative: Promoting data-based change

