

New Carpentries-certified instructor trainers to bolster digital skills in research

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Two digital humanities researchers from the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR) have been included in The Carpentries' newest cohort of certified instructor trainers. Following the completion of a 10 week-long 'Train-the-Trainer' course, Mmasibidi Setaka and Rooweither Mabuya are now certified to train and certify Carpentries instructors.

The Carpentries is a leading non-profit organisation that builds global capacity in essential data and computational skills for conducting efficient, open, and reproducible research. A key component of their approach is the training and fostering of an active, inclusive and diverse community of learners and instructors through their workshops.

The role of instructor trainers is not only to train and welcome future instructors into The Carpentries community, but also to guide the development of new training material and lead within their home communities.

"The 'Train-the Trainer' course was presented fully online as it was attended by trainees in different parts of the world and in different time zones," says Mmasibidi Setaka, who is a digital humanities researcher focusing on Sesotho at SADiLaR.

The workshop included participants from Argentina, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. To accommodate the different time zones, the workshop participants had the flexibility to attend either an afternoon or evening class every week.

Mastering digital tools for research

According to Setaka, the coursework included learning more about what motivates students to acquire new knowledge, how students develop mastery, and the different kinds of practice and feedback that enhance learning amongst other topics.



Mmasibidi Setaka

"It was important for me to take this course so that I can equip myself with the knowledge and skill set in order to encourage participation in lessons offered by The Carpentries, and motivate scholars from the humanities and social sciences to tap into the mastery of using digital tools in their research," she explains.



Rooweither Mabuya

Rooweither Mabuya, who is SADiLaR's digital humanities researcher in IsiZulu, was inspired to become a trainer, following her experience of working as a Carpentries instructor for a few years.

"I have been a Carpentries instructor since 2019 and I have taught at a number of workshops," she says. "When I attended an instructor training course last year as a helper and observer, it motivated me and sparked my interest in moving a level up to become an instructor trainer."

An important lesson for Mabuya was that teaching and learning are separate, though related, processes. "And then there is learning to teach," she adds. "Carpentries instructor training aims to teach several component skills of teaching. Much of the training was discussion-based

and employed a self-directed learning approach.”

Both Setaka and Mabuya were impressed with the quality of training they received.

“Our US-based trainer, Karen Word, was very supportive and understanding. She really embodies the principles of The Carpentries,” Setaka says. “I would also like to add what a beautiful experience it was to be in the training with Rooweither, because we were familiar with each other and able to assist each other when needed.”

Request a workshop

If you would like to request a Carpentries workshop from SADiLaR, please contact Mmasibidi.Setaka@nwu.ac.za or Roo.Mabuya@nwu.ac.za

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