

CEA Newsletter

Centre for Evaluation and Assessment

December 2024 | ☎ : 012 420 4175 | Office 2-9 Library Building, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, Groenkloof Campus



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CEA Supports the DBE in Launching National and International Assessment Results



Back row: From Left: Ms Shine Aung (CEA), Ms Tshepang Thubane (DBE), Ms Taslima Ahmed, Ms Prudence Shai, Ms Etinosa Izevbigie, Mr Gabriel Mokoena (CEA) and Mr Sinethemba Mthimkhulu (University of Pretoria)

Front row: From left: Dr Nonhlanhla Shoji (DBE), Prof Funke Omidire (CEA), Dr Mark Chetty, Ms Reshoketswe Monama and Mrs Dikeledi Mathebe (DBE)

The Minister of Basic Education, Ms Siviwe Gwarube, launched the results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) at a prestigious event organised by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) with the support from the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) on the 4th of December 2024. The release of the TIMSS national report was made concurrently with the IEA's release of the international results of TIMSS. The Department of Basic Education also presented the report of the regional study, Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational

Quality (SEACMEQ) as well as a set of four South African Systemic Evaluation reports. The CEA has also been instrumental in preparing other reports for the Department, including the report for the Early Learning National Assessment (ELNA), the Standard Setting Technical Report, and the Technical Advisory Group report.



Basic Education Minister Releases the TIMSS 2023 Results



Prof Funke Omidire (Director of the CEA) and Ms Siviwe Gwarube (Minister of Basic Education)

The programme for the release of the TIMSS results and the other intervention reports included a keynote address by the Minister of Basic Education. Prof Omidire was invited to be part of the panel discussion, along with Dr Rufus Poliah, Dr Qetelo Moloi and Mr Basil Manual. The event was attended by officials from all spheres of government as well as non-governmental organisations and teacher unions.

Dr Mark Chetty presented the TIMSS 2023 results, and a host of other presentations followed, including those by international presenters such as Dr Ursula Schwantner and Mr Maurice Walker of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER). Dr Nonhlanhla Shoji presented the results of SEACMEQ V, while Prof Anil Kanjee presented on South African Systemic Evaluation.

CEA HOSTS WEBINAR ON INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) invited experts in the field of instrument development to present their research at its first webinar on the 25th April 2024. In her opening remarks, Prof Funke Omidire, the Director of the CEA, welcomed the attendees and expressed her delight with the centre's move to facilitate these kinds of conversations through webinars. Prof Omidire indicated that this is the first in the series of webinars planned by the CEA for the year 2024. Dr Celest Combrinck, from the Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Department (SMTE) introduced the first presenter, Prof Caroline Long of the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Prof Long's presentation, entitled "Alignment of theory, measurement", covered the theoretical aspect of instrument development and used the Rasch measurement theory as the theoretical basis. The presentation also drew from a model for teacher education that privileged the notion of agency and the empowerment of teachers by Poonam Batra. The model's building block includes A Creative Activity, Good Education, Teacher Education, Reform Mathematics Education, Assessment and Measurement, and Research Approach.

In presenting on the aspect of good education, as an example, Prof Long used the scores obtained by countries in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Prof Long argued that it would be short-sighted to rearrange the primary school curriculum to include more mathematics and less art and music based on the performance on TIMSS. With regards to mathematics teacher education, the presentation attempted to challenge the thinking around assessment and measurement while seeing the critical need for conceptualizing theory, constructing measures and reflecting on outcomes. Prof Omidire introduced the second presenter, Dr Qetelo Moloi, who presented on "Constructing high quality data collection instrument for research: Advantages of using the Rasch measurement model". Dr Moloi's presentation gave an overview of popular research instruments, measurement, instrument validity and validation, the principles of Rasch measurement theory, instrument development, and instrument security. The question and answer session was facilitated by Mr Jody Joubert, a lecturer at the SMTE. Prof Ugorji Ogbonnaya, Head of Department, gave the vote of thanks.

CEA Director Leads a Successful Colloquium On Multilingualism And Multilingual Education



The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) hosted a colloquium on multilingualism and Multilingual Education on the 30th of October 2024. The hybrid event provided insightful conversations in understanding the complexities of our multilingual context and forged a way forward towards a more culturally and linguistically accommodative learning environment. The programme for the event was directed by Ms Tshililo Nembambula, who facilitated the remarkable success of the event.

The colloquium was led by a renowned expert in the field of Multilingualism and Multilingual Education, Prof Funke Omidire. In setting the tone for the conversation, Prof Omidire referred to the models of multilingual education, which include Language as a Resource (LAR), Translanguaging Theory, the Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) Model, The Dynamic Model of Multilingual Education (DMM), an Integrated Model of Multilingual Education, and Content and Language Integrated Learning. Among the presenters were a registered educational psychologist and a PhD candidate at the University of Pretoria, Ms Janine De Bruin, who presented on

“Language of the Heart: The role of mother-tongue learning in fostering identity and involvement”. A Senior Professor of International Comparative and Intercultural Education research at the University of Hamburg, Germany, Prof Ingrid Gogolin, presented on “Multilingual Literacies: Empowering the next generation”. The Director of the Assessment Directorate at the Department of Basic Education, Dr Mark Chetty, presented on “Language and Education: Introducing Mother-Tongue Based Bilingual Education” (MTBBE) on behalf of Dr Naledi Mbude-Mehana. Prof Rinelle Evans, a professor emerita, University of Pretoria, presented on “Navigating the multilingual classroom with English as the instructional rudder”. Dr Ruth Aluko’s presentation was entitled “What role can distance education play in institutionalizing multilingual education at teacher training institutions? Dr Aluko is a researcher within the Unit for Distance Education at the University of Pretoria. Prof Liesel Ebersöhn, a discussant for the colloquium, contributed enormously to the conversation. Prof Ebersöhn acknowledged the presenters and participants’ contributions and efficiently synthesized the diverse discussions.

CEA News in Brief



From Left: Mr Gabriel Mokoena (CEA), Prof Jakeyung Lee (University at Buffalo), Mr Nkosi (PS Fourie Primary School) during Prof Lee's visit to South African schools.



Ms Shine Aung and Ms Etinosa Izevbigie providing art lessons at PS Fourie Primary School in Eersterust.



CEA staff members joins the Groenkloof mobile learning race as part of the festivities celebrating 10 years of the Living Lab for Innovative Teaching at the University of Pretoria (LLITUP).



Officials from the Department of Basic Education, Dr Nonhlanhla Shoji (Researcher) and Dr Mark Chetty (Director of the Assessment Directorate) attended the inaugural lecture of Prof Funke Omidire at the University of Pretoria.



Prof Ugorji Ogbonnaya (Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Department), Dr Antoinette van der Merwe (Albert Luthuli Leadership Institute) and Mr Gabriel Mokoena (CEA) attended the RESEP conference in Stellenbosch.

Dr Celeste Combrinck, a senior lecturer in the Science Mathematics and Technology Education Department, conducted a workshop on analysing data using SPSS. The workshop was organised by the CEA and aimed at benefiting postgraduate students at the University of Pretoria.



Standard-setting Workshops for National and International Assessments

The CEA hosts DBE workshops at the Faculty of Education

The Department of Basic Education commissioned a series of standard-setting workshops on three assessments: Early Learning National Assessment (ELNA), Systemic Evaluation Study, and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The workshops were coordinated and organized by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), University of Pretoria. The first part of the workshop was hosted at the Department of Basic Education offices. The second and the third parts were hosted by the CEA at the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. The workshops were facilitated by the members of the PIRLS 2021 Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Prof Anil Kanjee and Dr Qetelo Moloi. The workshops focused on the national assessments, Systemic Evaluation, the Early Learning National Assessment (ELNA), and the international assessment, the

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The expected outcomes of the workshop were to know what standard setting is, identifying different methods of standard setting, identifying main features of objective standard setting), differentiating between "Essential" and "Non-Essential" items in a test, and completing rating sheets of items in each test.

The panelists were trained to rate the assessment items in the eleven official languages. The panelists rated the Grade three, Grade six and Grade nine language items for the Systemic Evaluation, Grade three items for the ELNA, and the Grade four and Grade six items for PIRLS.



Pedagogical Multicultural Communities in Teacher Preparation

Prof Funke Omidire, the Director of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, and Dr Diane Rodriguez from Fordham University, USA, co-presented on Multicultural Communities in



“Teacher Preparation” at the Education Association of South Africa’s annual conference. This was held on the 14th to 17th January 2024 at the Mount Grace Hotel and Spa in Magaliesberg. Fordham University and the University of Pretoria are in a faculty collaboration partnership to enhance multicultural pedagogical communities.

The presentation was based on research that was conducted among teachers in New York and Pretoria, to understand their views on teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The objective of this collaboration is to explore methods to improve teacher training programmes for fostering cultural integration and effective pedagogical intervention. The focus of this study is to uncover and analyze perspectives of school teachers in Pretoria, South Africa, and New York in the USA with the emphasis on teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners in a multicultural school context. The key findings of the study are the identification of challenges faced by teachers in linguistically diverse classroom environments as well as the exploration of how multiculturalism can be a valuable tool to address these challenges.

CEA Hosts a Post-doctoral Fellow University of Ilorin



Dr Muhammed Shuaib Abolakale

Qualifications: B.Ed, M.Ed and Ph.D. in Educational Guidance and Counselling.

Institution: University of Ilorin

“My area of research is education and well-being. I am specifically involved in studies and projects that focus on school based mental health.”



Currency and Agency of Assessment as a Vehicle for Realising the Envisaged Learner



From left: Prof Funke Omidire (Director of the CEA), Prof Mary Metcalf and Dr Rufus Poliah (Department of Basic Education)

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), led by then minister Mrs Angie Motshekga, hosted its ninth Basic Education Sector hybrid lekgotla at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg from the 14th to 16th March 2024. The lekgotla aimed at fostering critical discussions and strategies to move the Basic Education sector forward.

The 2024 lekgotla took place under the theme "Equipping learners with knowledge and skills for a changing world". Stakeholders who attended the gathering included officials such as Members of the Executive Council (MECs); Heads of Departments (HoDs); representatives of teacher, parent, and learner organisations; local and international academics, and experts from post-school education sectors.

Prof Funke Omidire, the Director of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), along with Dr Rufus Poliah from the DBE, participated in a moderated discussion with the theme "The currency and agency of assessments as a vehicle for realising the envisaged learner", chaired by Prof Mary Metcalf of the University of Johannesburg. In unpacking the theme for the panel discussion, Dr Poliah referred to the three components of this theme. Firstly there is the envisaged learner, who is a learner who can think critically and creatively, and is able to solve problems. This is a 21st century learner who must be digital and entrepreneurial in terms of the skills they possess. Secondly, using assessment as the agent, the driver, the point of intervention and

action. How do we use assessment appropriately so that assessment brings actualisation to the learner that we want to see in the South African system? Thirdly, assessment as a vehicle. Dr Poliah maintained that assessment must be used to evaluate learning. Prof Omidire, who was introduced as a professor at the University of Pretoria and an educational psychologist with deep interest in multilingualism and multilingual education, emphasised the importance of teacher development to teach reading. This was in the wake of the PIRLS 2021 results, which revealed that 81% of learners in South Africa did not reach the PIRLS CenterPoint of 500. Prof Omidire emphasised that the purpose of the assessment, in terms of high stakes assessments, is to enable the government to pinpoint where the emphasis should be placed.



Transforming Lives through Education: A Comparative Study of Korea and South Africa

The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) and Centre for the Study of Resilience (CSR) in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, in collaboration with the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) hosted a seminar entitled “Transforming Lives through Education: A Comparative Study of Korea and South Africa”. The seminar was presented by Prof Jakeyung Lee, a professor and former dean of education at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. Being a Fellow of the American



From left: Prof Liesel Ebersöhn, Prof Funke Omidire, Prof Jakeyung Lee and Prof Ugorji Ogbonnaya at the presentation by Prof Lee

Educational Research Association (AERA), Prof Lee is an international leader in educational policy research, assessment and evaluation, particularly on the issues of educational equity and accountability. Prof Lee’s presentation aimed to address key questions, including: What lessons can developing nations learn from Korea? How can the Global South achieve SDG in effective and efficient, yet holistic and equitable ways? What are the key enablers (protective factors) of at-risk students’ academic resilience in South Africa? Drawing upon his research using large-scale international data such as TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), Prof Lee shared cross-cultural policy insights for educational transformations in South Africa.

Literacy Development Through Technology-supported Play-based Activities



From left: Ms Shine Aung, Prof Gerhard Genis, Ms Prudence Shai and Ms Etinosa Izevbigie

The Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA) 2024 Conference took place on the 13th to 15th September 2024 at the University of Cape Town. The theme for this year’s LITASA conference was “Literacy learning across contexts: home – play – work”. CEA’s researchers, Ms Shine Aung, Ms Prudence Shai and Ms Etinosa Izevbigie presented their findings at the conference. Their paper was entitled “Literacy development through technology-supported play-based activities: Exploring the application of the Montessori approach in the 21st century”. The study investigated whether Montessori teachers incorporated technology in the classroom and what their perceptions were on the use of

technology in the classroom. The study also sought to investigate how Montessori methods could be adapted to rural contexts. The Montessori approach to education is seen as interactive, and caters to diverse learning needs, as well as the individual learner's interests.

Creating the Future We Desire for Inclusivity, Support and Well-being Through Multilingual Education



From left: Prof Mampane, Prof Omidire, Prof Sehoole and Prof Ferris at the inaugural lecture of Prof Funke Omidire

Prof Funke Omidire, the director of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) and professor in the Department of Education Psychology in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, presented her inaugural lecture at the Senate Hall of the University's Hatfield campus on the 15 August 2024.

The inaugural lecture was entitled "Creating the future we desire for inclusivity, support and well-being through multilingual education" and was chaired by the Vice-Principal: Academic, Prof Loretta Ferris. In introducing Prof Omidire, Prof Ferris opened with a Chinese proverb: "To learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world". Prof Omidire is known for her work in the field of linguistic diversity, multilingualism, language in education, and multilingual education.

She is actively engaged in school-based intervention research for learning and learner support, and wellbeing, in collaboration with national and international colleagues.

Her work centres on the reconceptualisation of education in sub-Saharan Africa for multilingual approaches to education. She presented her contributions to applying navigational tools such as Dynamic Assessment (DA), peer mentoring, translanguaging, and innovative pedagogy to promote inclusion, representing a deviation from conventional teaching practices

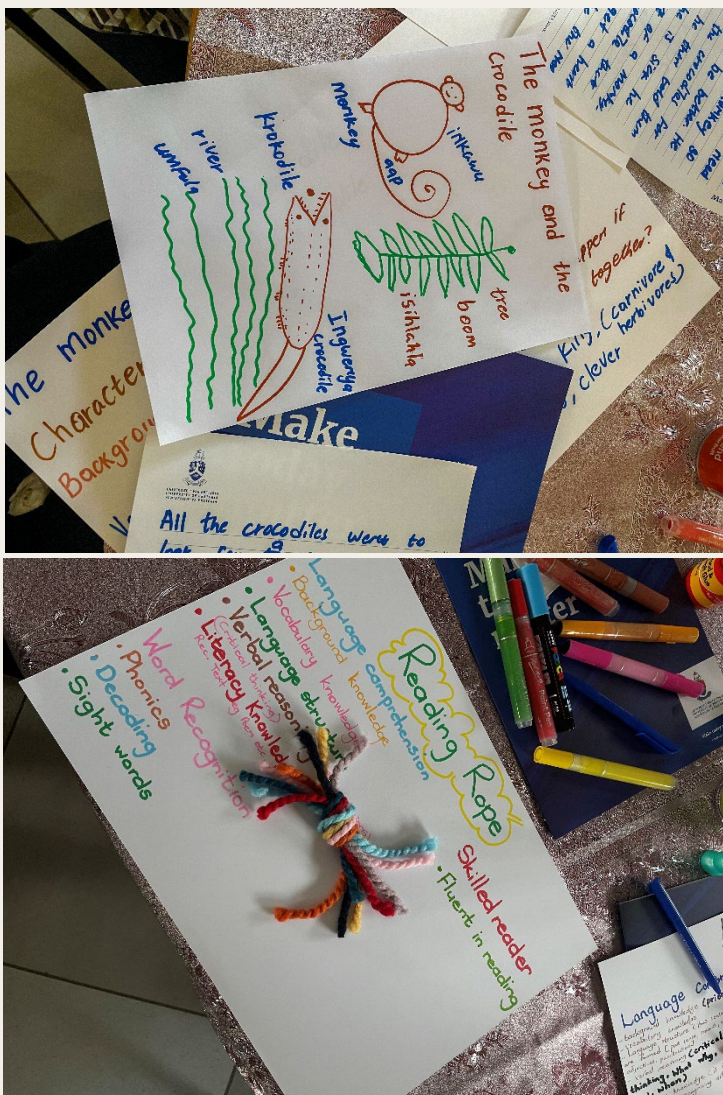
In the lecture, Prof Omidire argued that privileging home languages influences the development of positive identity, attitude and socio-cultural responsiveness, all of which are relevant for quality education.



Translanguaging Workshops For Primary School Educators

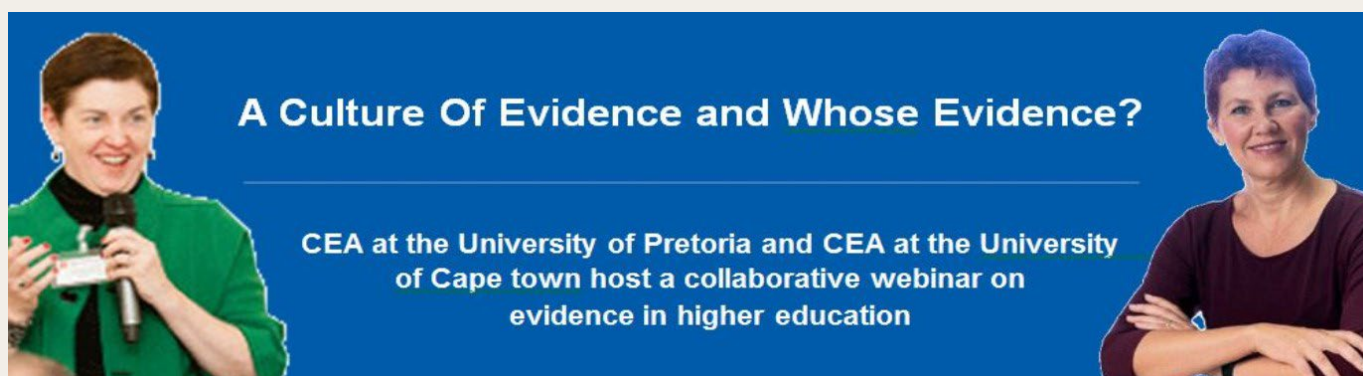


Prof Gerhard Genis conducting the translanguaging workshop with the primary school teachers



The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) and READ Education Trust partnered to conduct a study on the effectiveness of Translanguaging strategies for Foundation Phase teachers. The first stage of the project was to develop a training guide that covered the basic principles of Translanguaging and the basic principles of reading. The guide also provided practical ideas for listening, speaking, reading and writing activities that incorporate Translanguaging. The second stage was to assess learners' reading ability using the EGRA assessments; with a team of trained postgraduate students, Grade 1, 2 and 3 learners were tested at four primary schools in Gauteng. Two of the schools received this intervention, with four workshops being conducted with foundation phase teachers after school hours. Teachers found the guides to be user-friendly and found the four workshop sessions to be beneficial in implementing Translanguaging practices in the classroom.





The Centre for Educational Assessment (CEA) at the University of Cape town and the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria hosted a collaborative hybrid webinar entitled “Culture of Evidence and Whose Evidence?” The topic was forged from two presentation titles by esteemed academics, Dr Millett’s “Culture of evidence for student learning outcomes in tertiary education”, and Prof. Salome Human-Vogel’s “Whose evidence? Considering the politics of evidence and how it shapes key priorities in higher education”.

The discussions, led by Dr Catherine Millett and Prof. Salome Human-Vogel, sparked engaging conversations about the role of evidence in enhancing student learning outcomes in tertiary education.

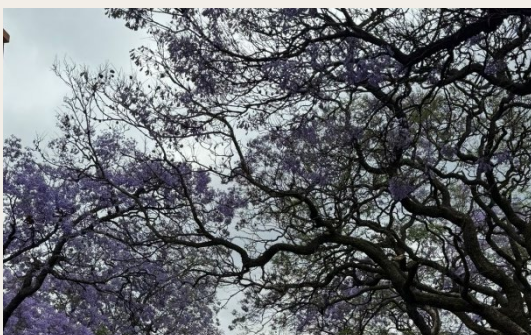
Aspects of Student Well-being and Reading Achievement in PIRLS 2021

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) released a report on [“Aspects of Student wellbeing and reading Achievement in PIRLS 2021”](#). The report presents the relationship between the student’s reading achievement and some indicators from the data collected through the PIRLS 2021 Learner Questionnaire. These indicators include, firstly, the learner’s sense of school belonging, secondly, bullying, thirdly, learners feeling tired or hungry, and lastly, frequency of learner absences. The Bullying scale in the learner questionnaire included ten items that asked learners to rate how often they experienced bullying behaviours at school.

In examining the relationship between student well-being and academic achievement, this report revealed that internationally, learners who never or almost never experience bullying achieved an average mean score of 519, those who reported experiencing bullying about monthly achieved an average mean score of 495, while those who reported experiencing bullying about weekly achieved an average mean score of 451. A similar pattern was also observed in South Africa where the learners who never or almost never experienced bullying achieved a mean score of 359, those who experienced bullying about monthly achieved a mean score of 304, while those who experienced bullying about weekly achieved a mean score of 243.

THE CEA IN PICTURES

Photo Gallery



Prof Omidire's Inaugural Lecture

Photo Gallery

