

# In-tuition

Newsletter of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria

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# MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

◀ The Dean of the Faculty of Education: Prof Chika Sehoole

## Welcome to the Faculty of Education

As your dean, it's my honour to welcome you to the 2024 academic year in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria.

For returning students, thank you for continuing to pursue your degree with us. We are thrilled that you chose to become a teacher during this exciting time. As of 2023, we are the largest faculty in the University of Pretoria, and it is an honour for us to have so many students choosing us. Teaching is a noble profession only undertaken by noble people. We are proud to offer a variety of degrees to help prepare our students for their dream careers while also introducing them to new ideas and worldviews.

I also want to welcome the staff of the Faculty of Education to the 2024 academic year. I am sure that everyone is well rested and looking forward to 2024. We are privileged to have a staff of such high calibre as yourselves. I know that I am representing you well when I promise that, as teacher-educators and mentors, we care about our students and are looking forward to them having a fulfilling experience in their studies and extracurricular activities.

To the first-year students, I know how difficult it is to decide which university to study at. You needed to consider all your options to help you make the right choice. There are many reasons to choose the Faculty of Education at UP, where advanced human centred education in complexity. We are the biggest Faculty within this large and prestigious research university. By studying teaching, our students have been able to make a difference in the lives of many learners in South Africa and throughout the world. You are joining a remarkable community of staff and students who are excited to help you to develop the skills and experience you need to pursue your teaching career and your lifelong goals. Take advantage of all the resources available to you, both within the Faculty of Education and within the University of Pretoria as a whole.

The Student Support and Engagement Office (SESO) houses incredible staff and student advisors who are an invaluable resource to help you have a successful

Faculty of Education experience. The faculty is a home from home as it provides a welcoming atmosphere where students can gather to study, relax, and socialise, in addition to utilising the many services provided. Kindly use the available resources: seek help to identify and access opportunities, both on and off campus, that complement and put into practice what you are learning in the lecture halls.

You will receive a variety of other advising and mentoring services from package coordinators in the various areas of specialisation you have chosen. Please explore the web pages of the various departments, investigate faculty interests that align with yours, and if you are starting an Honours or Master's degree: send a staff member an email asking to meet to discuss research opportunities. My staff and I will do what we can to make this faculty the most welcoming, supportive, diverse, and inclusive.

Beyond the academic project and research, I encourage you to pursue a well-rounded student experience. Branch out and find a student society that shares your interests, whether that's joining the House Committee at the residences or the Faculty of Education House, participating in the Student Representative Council, participating in sports, or connecting with peers with similar interests. There are many organizations on campus. Our alumni always reflect on the tremendous difference that those connections with peers and staff made in their careers.

It is our goal to make your university experience a very fulfilling and successful one. We will support you in your educational and personal goals and, should we not be able to, we will connect you to resources which will help you resolve issues and complaints.

Please take advantage of all our faculty has to offer! I wish you a happy experience in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria.

*Chika Sehoole*

**Professor Chika Sehoole**  
Dean

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### ***In-tuition* is the official newsletter of the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria**

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# INVESTIGATING THE MUSIC LITERACY CONUNDRUM IN SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Authors: Dr Ronel De Villiers and Dr Ronella Jansen Van Rensburg

This paper was presented at the European Association for Music Education in Schools (EAS) from 24-27 May 2023 at the University of Lyon, Campus Berges Du Rhone, Lyon in France. The conference theme was "Liberty – Equity – Creativity: Innovating and Inventing Music in the Classroom". The conference was opened by the current President of the International Society of Music Education (ISME), Bo-Wah Leung.

"NAOUIEDCT & RCSSEOEUR" thus represent the cluttered, confused essence of the MusLit conundrum.

The findings showed evidence that Music Education teachers use their own personal teaching and learning experiences to teach Music Literacy effectively in their unique individual environments. Their stories were being retold in order to gain an understanding of, and new insight



A typical conundrum: unscrambled, it can decipher to: EDUCATION; CAUTIONED; or A[U]CTIONED (Jansen van Rensburg 2022)



The University Choir performed a Middle piece during the Opening Ceremony

This conundrum exists amongst a number of variables regarding the effective teaching and learning of MusLit as prescribed in the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS 2011) in South African secondary schools. The variables include available, but sometimes inadequate, resources in the school education system, the individual circumstances of teachers and learners, as well as ever-changing environments in schools. In addition, music teachers, managers, and the community have different points of view regarding the place and value of MusLit education in the school context. The following research questions were addressed:

- "How is the MusLit conundrum in South African secondary schools investigated?"
- "Why are the personal stories of South African MusLit teachers of significance in the investigation of the MusLit conundrum?"
- "How do these teachers effectively sustain the teaching and learning of MusLit in a constantly changing environment?"

into, the conundrum. Narrative inquiry as an emergent research method in music education is turning social sciences and knowledge in modernistic and unexpected directions. The audience was captivated by the 'novel' Nishikawa findings in a South African context. It was a privilege and honour to be an ambassador for the Faculty of Education.

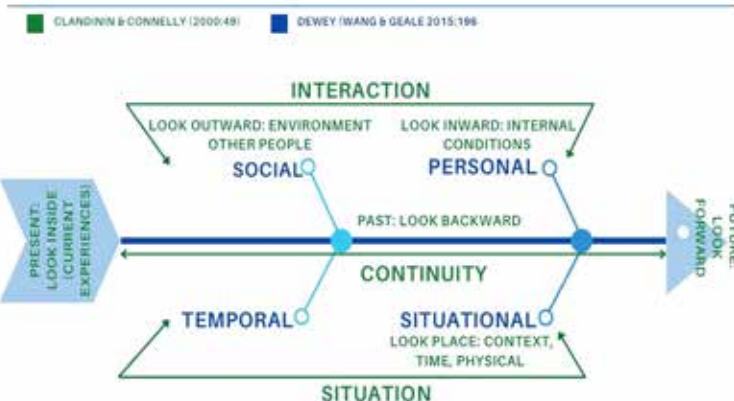


Dr Ronel De Villiers



University of Lyon

## INVESTIGATING THE MUSIC LITERACY CONUNDRUM



The Nishikawa CED (Narrative Ishikawa CED) (Jansen van Rensburg 2022)

## Dr Joyce West presents on the use of interactive videos at the EDULEARN Conference 2023 in Palma de Mallorca (Spain)

Author: Dr Joyce West



▲ Dr Joyce West at the EDULEARN conference

From 3 to 5 July, Dr West attended the 15th International Edulearn conference, which was held on the Spanish island of Palma de Mallorca. This conference was attended by over 600 delegates from 75 countries across the globe. The

theme of the conference was “Connecting technology with education”. Important issues regarding AI in education were debated. A very pertinent question dominated the conference: “can AI teach?” or rather, “can AI replace teachers?”. Other topics addressed at the conference included digital transformation within higher education, innovative educational technologies, and active and student-centred pedagogies.

At the Edulearn conference, Dr West, in collaboration with Mrs Elrien Swanepoel from Aros, presented on the adoption of interactive videos in higher education to increase student engagement. Their research found that interactive videos not only enhance student engagement owing to their active and interactive nature, but they also help personalise an online learning environment by increasing a “teacher presence”. One of the reasons students experience a “teacher presence” (i.e., presence of the lecturer online) is because they receive immediate

feedback to answered questions. The students who participated in the research also noted that they enjoy using interactive videos and would recommend that all lecturers use these videos within their modules. The lecturers who participated in the study listed various benefits after using interactive videos. The lecturers concluded that they believe students to engage more deeply with the content of the module when interactive videos are used. However, Dr West and Mrs Swanepoel also note that, as with all novel and innovative technologies, various challenges exist to effectively adopt interactive videos within the African context.

The conference ended with a sightseeing tour of the island where all the delegates were able to network and get to know each other better.

For more information about this conference follow the IATED Facebook page.

## 2023 DETA CONFERENCE HELD AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, KAMPALA, UGANDA

Author: UDE

The University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education had an opportunity to present yet another DETA 2023 conference (Distance Education and Teachers Training in Africa). The event was hosted in conjunction with the Makerere University and Busitema University in Kampala, Uganda. The event took place from 24 July to 28 July 2023. This prestigious conference was born out of the necessity to create a unique platform for all faculties of education to share knowledge and deliberate on educational issues as they affect Africa. The conference attracted educationists from across Africa and beyond. Represented were Cameroon, Mauritius, Rwanda, Belgium, United States, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, and Kenya; also represented were fellow counterparts, i.e. University of Johannesburg, University of KwaZulu Natal, UNISA, University of Fort Hare, and WITS.

Key speakers included the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Chika Sehoole; Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Makerere University; Prof. Paul Waako; Prof. Asha Kanwar, CEO, Commonwealth of Learning, Burnaby, Canada; Vice-

Chancellor of Busitema University, Prof. Elifas Bisanda; Vice-Chancellor of Open University of Tanzania, Prof. Eunice Nyamupangedengu, Associate Professor of WITS University; and Mr Uthman Mayanja, Senior Partner and representative of PwC Uganda. The conference started on a high note with the launch of the Pan African Deans of Education Forum (PADEF), followed by workshops, roundtable discussions, and of course the highlight of the conference

was a beautiful gala dinner proudly sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers and the UP Alumni Office.

Our gratitude goes to UP Alumni Office, led by Samantha Castle, and the UP postgraduate marketing team, led by DESA. These two offices, for the first time in history, collaborated with the Unit for Distance Education to organize the successful 2023 DETA conference.



▲ The Dean of Education at the DESA dinner

## Staff wellness in ODeL in times of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity

Author: Gabriel Mokoena



▲ Mr Gabriel Mokoena (left) and Prof. Funke Omidire, Director of the CEA

Prof. Funke Omidire and Mr Gabriel Mokoena attended the panel discussion at the Open Distance and eLearning (ODEL) Conference 2023, which was hosted by UNISA at Emperor's Palace on 17 August 2023. The conference focused on staff wellness in ODeL in times of volatility,

uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. The panel members included Ms Thobeka Msengana from the University of Fort Hare, Prof. Christine Ofulue from the National Open University of Nigeria, Mr Hugo van der Walt from the University of South Africa, and Prof. Funke Omidire from the University of Pretoria.

Prof. Omidire's presentation was based on the findings of a study that was conducted among academic staff from five higher education institutions. One of the study's aims was to explore how the disruption to the education system during the pandemic affected staff well-being. The study's findings, which corroborate earlier studies, include the effect of isolation; trauma, fatigue, and other physical ailments due to long screen hours; and the inconducive home environment for working for academics due to the lack of boundaries.

The recommendations from the study included the fact that institutions should be interested in the well-being of their staff, a balance between work-life and self-care should be promoted, boundaries should not be blurred to the detriment of staff well-being, emotional support for health and well-being must be prioritised,

institutional policies should mandate wellness activities, dialogue where staff members can share their experiences should be encouraged, and self-paced wellness programmes should be offered. Lunch hour sessions should also be planned to discuss specific topics around well-being, for example:

- frustration and low morale
- staff often feeling overwhelmed by too many meetings and sessions that had to be attended virtually
- those uncomfortable with the use of technology found it more challenging to cope and took longer to adapt to the new methods and processes
- increased workload and new things to learn and master daily
- the home environment that was often not conducive to focused work
- missed opportunities to confer with colleagues
- mental tiredness, fatigue
- distractions from working from home
- isolation
- difficulty in keeping up with the rate at which updates and upgrades occurred during the pandemic, which was a stressor
- inexplicable physical illnesses

## "Teachers at the heart of education recovery"

Author: Professor Chika Scheoole

Every year on 5 October the world celebrates World Teachers' Day. The event was launched in 1994 by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) to celebrate the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. This was when governments unanimously recognized how important it is that society contains competent, qualified, and motivated teachers. Indeed, teachers are important in running are important in society. All professions owe their existence to a teacher. Lawyers, doctors, police officers, nurses, etc. have all been through the tutelage of a teacher. That is why it is so important to have competent, qualified, and motivated teachers in a classroom.

This year's theme is "Teachers at the heart of education recovery". An attribute which teachers possess is dedication. Teachers' dedication is shown by their 'round-the-clock' work habits. There is no better time that this

attribute was demonstrated than during the COVID-19 pandemic. When many workplaces were shut down, teachers were expected to make a plan for the continuation of teaching and learning for their learners. When schools reopened, they were expected to put in place recovery plans for the lost teaching and learning time. Teachers don't stop working at the end of the formal school time. Their work continues right into the late hours of the night or early hours of the morning as they grade papers or make lesson preparations. They communicate with parents after school and on weekends. They arrive earlier than school starts to set up their day and provide extra assistance to struggling students.

In the middle of the pandemic in 2021, UNICEF reported that the impact of disrupted education in South Africa since the COVID-19 outbreak has been devastating, with learners between 75% and a full school year behind where they should be. Rotational attendance,

sporadic school closures, and days off for specific grades had resulted in school children losing 54% of learning time, reported the UNICEF. In the midst of this devastation, the nation looked to teachers for a solution. Indeed, they are key to education recovering given the crucial role teachers play.

The University of Pretoria plays a crucial role in the supply of teachers in the country. As teaching is classified as a scarce skill, in 2022 the Faculty of Education produced 1292 newly qualified teachers. This constitutes 23% of scarce skills produced by the university and is a contribution to the national skills pool. On this World Teachers' Day, I would like pay tribute to all the teachers at the heart of education recovery.



# Exploring Social Consciousness through Performing Arts: Highlights from the 7th Panhellenic Theatre Conference

Author: Dr Raita Steyn

The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Theatre collaborated with the University of Pretoria, Department of Humanities Art Education for an event held from 25 September to 6 October 2023. During this period, the 7th Panhellenic Theatre Conference was also held, where academic papers were presented and scholars engaged in lively Q&A sessions and contributed significantly to the event through relevant discourse. Through her presentation, entitled "Educating through Performing Arts and Demystifying Myths on Albinism: The South African Paradigm", Dr Raita Steyn demonstrated the crucial role performing arts have played in promoting social consciousness and empathy in South Africa. Focusing on albinism, her paper brought to the fore the importance of self-evaluation in the context of social interaction between "Us" and the "Others".



▲ Dr Raita Steyn and Dr Kyriakidis Demiri presenting at the 7th Panhellenic Theatre Conference in Thessaloniki, Greece

In the framework of the conference, and in line with the broader cultural and educational interchange program, students from the Greek Theatre Department and the UP Art Education Department demonstrated their artistic skills in two parallel exhibitions whereby Greek students showcased their stage designs and costumes under the supervision of Prof. Stergios Proios. At the same time, South African students presented their creative works centred around the theme of "People with Albinism". Noteworthy is the remarkable appreciation attributed to the live theatre performances at the closing of the conference.

Within the context of "Us and the Others", Renos Nicos Spanoudes, a South African native born to Greek Cypriot immigrants, delivered two captivating segments from his solo performances. Spanoudes is the Head of Arts & Culture and Dramatic Arts at King David High School Victory Park. Additionally, he works as a contract Lecturer and Coordinator in the Department of Drama at the University of Pretoria.



▲ 'George Bizos' performed by Renos Spanoudes, Thessaloniki, Greece

## Segment 1:

This extract was from a work in progress titled "Odyssey", which narrates the remarkable journey of Advocate George Bizos, widely known as "Mandela's Lawyer". The playwright Victor Gordon skilfully portrayed George Bizos's life and his tireless work in the field of human rights, particularly his collaboration with Nelson Mandela. In this role, Spanoudes gave an inspiring performance through a spotless impersonation, physically and mentally, of George Bizos. Not only did he masterfully imitate the mannerisms and physical appearance of the real-life lawyer, but he also captured the essence of his personality, making for a truly remarkable portrayal.

## Segment 2:

In this part of Anton Krueger's "Living in Strange Lands", Spanoudes explored the life of Dimitri Tsafendas, who infamously assassinated South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd in the Parliament in September 1966, a significant moment in apartheid's history. Initially perceived as an act of

madness, recent research, including Haris Dousemetzis's book "The Man Who Killed Apartheid" (2019), argues that it was a deliberate political murder. This compelling monologue challenged the audience to contemplate the fine line between madness and brilliance as Tsafendas went to great lengths to evade the death penalty. These performances broadened the audience's perspectives, challenged critical thinking, and promoted socio-political consciousness. The overarching goal was to inspire discussions on intersectionality, covering various aspects such as identity, history, gender, race, and class, and ultimately fostering interracial cooperation and socially mutual understanding.



▲ 'Tsafendas' performed by Renos Spanoudes, Thessaloniki, Greece

## Meeting the Dutch Minister of Education during his visit to South Africa

Author: Dr Joyce Raanhuis



▲ Dr Joyce Raanhuis and Dutch Minister of Education

On 15 October, Dr Joyce Raanhuis, who recently started her postdoctoral research fellowship under the guidance of Prof. Johan Wassermann, met with the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture, and Science during the 'Knowledge Mission' in South Africa. From 18 to 20 October, the Dutch

King Willem and Queen Maxima visited South Africa. Prior to the arrival of the Dutch Royals, the Dutch Embassy in South Africa organised a Knowledge Mission, led by Mr Dijkgraaf, Dutch Minister of Education, Culture, and Science. The aim of the Knowledge Mission was to strengthen and build upon new and existing partnerships between Dutch and South African educational institutions. From 15 to 18 October, Mr Dijkgraaf, accompanied by a delegation of board members from 21 education institutes and organisations, visited various historical and cultural sites, universities, and TVET institutions in Cape Town and Pretoria.

Mr Dijkgraaf is also the coordinating Minister of the 'Dutch Slavery Memorial Year', as slavery in former Dutch colonies was abolished 150 years ago, and the Dutch State and King recently issued formal apologies for their historical involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade and slavery. Considering this role, the Minister was also interested in the shared history between South Africa and the Netherlands, and the existing legacy of colonialism and

slavery on South African society and the education system. Therefore, as part of the Knowledge Mission agenda, Dr Raanhuis met with the Minister and the delegates at the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. Her research project, titled "Engaging with the teaching of controversial issues – a case study of pre-service History teachers in South Africa, Curacao, Suriname, and the Netherlands", will research how historical legacies from (student-) teachers, such as those in South Africa and the Netherlands, are influencing their historical consciousness and the teaching of controversial issues in post-colonial contexts. During her meeting with the Minister and the delegates, Dr Raanhuis discussed in which ways the South African history of colonialism and apartheid is still visible in today's society, and shared examples of implicit and explicit ways in which the education system has been influenced by this history. Dr Raanhuis also provided insights and concrete examples for the Dutch delegates to learn from South Africa in order to create fruitful and equal partnerships between Dutch and South African educational institutions.

## HUMAN NATURE – THIRD-YEAR ART EDUCATION EXAM EXHIBITION 2023

Author: Deléne Human



▲ Dr Deléne Human and the art students

On 23 October 2023, Human Nature, the annual third-year art education exam exhibition, opened at the Student Gallery on Hatfield Campus, Pretoria. The exhibition was opened by Dr Deléne Human, the lecturer for the third-year art education practical module and coordinator of this project, and was open to the public from 24 October to 10 November 2023. Professor Chika Sehoole, Dean, and Professor Johan Wasserman, Head of Department, also welcomed the audience and congratulated the students on their work.

Like the title of the exhibition, Human Nature, suggests, the exhibition comprised themes about the human condition: that which makes us vulnerable, while also making us human. Since returning to campus after the COVID-19 pandemic, students have tried to establish a new sense of normalcy, to re-familiarise themselves with their surroundings and their peers, and to find their feet as well as themselves. As is evident in the artworks that were displayed, they were trying to understand who we as humans are, and what is important to us in life. This they did by discovering not only their own strengths, weaknesses, and identities as artists and educators, but also challenges that they have faced throughout their lives as humans.

The themes that students chose for their projects touch on subjects that are usually taboo, pushed aside and hidden away; themes many people in our society wish to ignore. Using both traditional and non-conventional materials, students were asked to create a body of work in which they had to critically and creatively identify a challenge or issue prevalent in their real-life context. Thus, they had to choose their own year-theme through introspective discovery of a topic with which they identify, either in their own lives or within a contemporary

South African context, and which had had an impact on their lives in some form or another. One of the aims was for students to develop their own artistic voices. As art educators, they had to consider how they could visually present their views, feelings, thoughts, possible solutions, or awareness-creation of a specific situation to the public – thereby becoming activists and standing up for what they believe. They were expected to create a body of work that encompasses their chosen theme. The development of their themes was captured in their workbooks, in which their concepts were developed and their processes explored. Additionally, students had to create a website and production video, which were displayed using QR codes, and business cards that introduced themselves as artists and art educators to the professional world.

While the works grappled with deeply emotional themes, each body of work also evoked messages of hope and encouragement. Despite many national and global challenges and the continuously changing educational landscape, the exhibited works showed us how art, the visual, is used as a way to not only cope with our changing realities, but also communicate with and educate the public. In an ever-endangered world, where death, sickness, abuse, pain, loadshedding, watershedding, natural disasters or injustice prevail, meaning and hope seem to evade humankind. Yet, in various ways, visual art allows us to rediscover the beauty and meaning of life.



▲ Artwork by Sonja Brand



## Utilising results from PIRLS 2021: How can teacher practice be informed?

Author: Gabriel Mokoena

The Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA) and the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) co-hosted a seminar entitled "Utilising results from PIRLS 2021: How can teacher practice be informed" on 24 October at the Centre for Visual Impairment Studies (VISUP).

In a foreword address, the director of the CEA, Prof. Funke Omidire, welcomed the guests and expressed delight in the CEA co-hosting the event with LITASA. Prof. Omidire gave a brief overview of the CEA and outlined the importance of literacy for personal growth, academic achievement, and well-being. In light of the country's performance in PIRLS 2021, she called for the understanding of the unique multilingual nature of Sub-Saharan Africa in the planning of reading instruction and interventions. Prof. Omidire also called for collaborative interventions through evidence-based practices. She expressed interest in appropriately using contextual information, assessment data, and feedback from in-service teacher professional development and training activities.

Dr Karen Roux from the CEA presented the overall achievement results of South African Grade 4 and Grade 6 learners in the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) cycle. The presentation delved into learner achievement, examining gender, language, and provincial variations. Dr Roux also showcased assessment items from

one of the PIRLS passages, "The Amazing Octopus", which tested various cognitive skills.

Dr Roux's presentation spotlighted effective reading comprehension practices from five PIRLS participant countries: Chile, Chinese Taipei, England, Spain, and the Republic of Georgia. These practices serve as inspiration for educators to enhance their reading lessons. For instance, in Chile, activating prior knowledge is emphasised to foster comprehension, while Chinese Taipei provides a multilingual environment for learners beyond their home language. In England, a daily 10-minute session introduces new vocabulary from diverse languages. The presentation highlighted recommended reading strategies for teachers and learners, including

distinguishing between authentic and test-related questions, recognising text structures, making predictions and setting goals, verbalising how to summarise a story, employing schemes with keywords and visuals, relating content to learners' experiences, acting as role models, creating reading-friendly spaces, celebrating reading achievements, and exploring various genres and formats.

The seminar featured a hybrid format, with both in-person and online participants. Notable in-person attendees included Nadeema Musthan, LITASA's National Chairperson, Sandra de Bruyn from the Gauteng Education Department, Glenn Allies of the British Council, Elinor Sisulu from Puku Children's Literature, and Pearl Khumalo from SA Books Online.



▲ Members of the CEA with the members of LITASA and other seminar attendees

## Dr Swanepoel travels to London

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

The 7th International Academic Conference in Education (IACEDUCATION) occurred in London from 10-12 November 2023. The University of Roehampton in London hosted this prestigious event at the Elm Grove Conference Centre. Dr Nadia Swanepoel was one of the delegates selected to present an academic paper at the conference. Dr Swanepoel reported on a project that focused on supporting pre-service foundation phase teachers' mathematics word problem-solving instruction through a lesson study approach. The paper presentation was a very proud moment as Dr Swanepoel was able to share the findings of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) project

that her second-year Early Childhood Education students embarked on with her. In the paper, Dr Swanepoel reports on the value of the lesson study approach, how important professional development is for pre-service teachers, and how pre-service teachers' opinions towards mathematics word problems changed after they gained a better understanding of what mathematics word problem-solving entails.

This international conference was the meeting place for a number of academics from a variety of fields to discuss pertinent areas of education and lifelong learning. One of the main topics that was addressed was the necessity of making language education

and learning accessible to all within their indigenous languages. Among the delegates who presented their work were academics from Canada, Jordan, Hong Kong, Greece, Illinois, Austria, and Kuwait. This conference was a wonderful opportunity to network and exchange details for future collaborations. Dr Swanepoel noted that one thing that became very clear to her at this conference was that, as South African academia, we do not have to shy away from the rest of the world. We have earned the right to stand tall and share our research with the rest of the world. Thank you to the University of Pretoria for making this event possible through VP Congress Funding. Thank you for this incredible journey.



▲ Dr Nadia Swanepoel at Elm Grove Conference Centre at the University of Roehampton, London



▲ Dr Nadia Swanepoel presenting at the IACEDUCATION in London



▲ Elm Grove Conference Centre at the University of Roehampton, London

# Exploring controversial issues through international collaboration

Author: Dr Pranitha Bharath

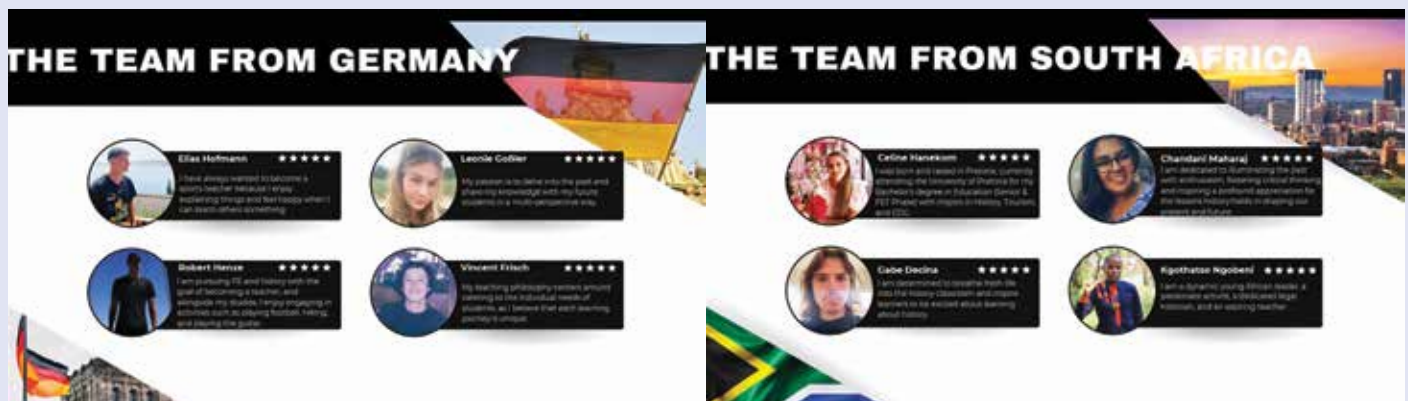
A number of international incidents of violence and social disorder have brought renewed attention to the handling of controversial issues in schools as a matter of educational urgency. Controversial issues are those discussions that arouse strong feelings and divide opinions in communities and societies. The school curriculum is home to many sensitive topics which raise pedagogical questions. Concerns range from how to teach contentious material even-handedly to respecting the diverse backgrounds of children. Questions arise about academic freedom and the role

of the teacher's own beliefs and values. There is a need to consider what the policies around the teaching of these ideas involve.

Consequently, the University of Pretoria and Leipzig University (Germany) recently transcended geographical borders to engage in a thought-provoking online student exchange. On 14 November 2023, an exchange, spearheaded by the visionary leader Professor Johan Wassermann, delved into the heart of 'Controversial Issues' in the teaching of History. Under the guidance of Dr

Pranitha Bharath and Jun. Prof. Dr Kathrin Klausmeier, a platform was created for intellectual and international dialogue between South African and German students.

Fifty university students from both universities immersed themselves in a two-hour dialogue revolving around Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) experiences. WIL experiences are an integral part of all student teachers in both contexts. The students were invited to share their stories, challenges, and controversies that arose in their different contexts.



▲ Group 5 from Germany and South Africa

History student teachers of the University of Leipzig and the University of Pretoria were divided into six groups, each comprising a blend of South African and German students. South African students from both the PGCE and B.Ed. (Methodology of History) cohorts were involved in many class debates and written reflections. Before the exchange, the participants tackled six questions on virtual platforms like WhatsApp. They discussed their topics and shared ideas prior to constructing PowerPoint presentations.

Each group selected a leader to share their findings and collated insights from their unique cultural and educational contexts. The exchange was not just about differences but was also a celebration of diverse experiences. The

reflections were general and subject-specific. Comments were invited on the variations in the teaching practice and the requirements of the different degrees. Students commented on insightful ways to enhance their training and brought up new questions about each other's histories. Suggestions ranged from frequent workshops and open discussions to case studies, support networks, and continuous professional development opportunities.

The exchange program was a resounding success and will catalyze future engagement so students can re-evaluate their approaches and propose innovative solutions. The exchange was timeous as the Council of Europe (2016) emphasized the need to respect and engage in dialogue with people whose values differ

from one's own. This type of collaboration is central to the democratic process and essential for the strengthening of democracy and fostering a culture of human rights.



▲ Dr Pranitha Bharath



▲ The purpose of student engagement



## Former ECE student becomes an ambassador in innovation and technology

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

Ms Andrea Kruger, a former ECE student and ECE teacher, is employed as an ambassador of innovation and technology by an international school. Andrea is responsible for teaching Grade 4 – 7 learners all about the possibilities of innovation and technology. After completing her degree in Early Childhood Education, she continued with her post-

graduate studies in Computer Integrated Education (CIE). She completed her Honours degree in 2022, and is currently busy with her Master's degree; well done, Andrea. Thank you for making a difference and teaching the leaders of tomorrow the principles of success, today. Your enthusiasm and knowledge are very inspiring.



▲ Ms Andrea Kruger and Dr Nadia Swanepoel

## Promoting Ethical Behaviour through Art Education: an exhibition on academic integrity

Author: Raita Steyn

According to Holden, Norris, and Kuhlmeier (2021), there are three basic factors that cause academic dishonesty: defined as opportunity, the first revolves around the perception that students can engage in dishonest practices without facing repercussions. Incentive or pressure is the second, which can arise from various sources such as personal, parental, peer, or institutional expectations. The third factor, rationalisation, occurs when students justify their dishonest actions by aligning them with their personal value systems, ethics, and beliefs. This analytical framework provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of factors influencing academic dishonesty. As a component of her extensive project focusing on Inclusion and Social Awareness, Dr Steyn tasked her students with expanding their artistic inspirations and critical thinking, employing art as a tool for social change.

Dr Steyn explains: "Through applied awareness, this assignment aimed to educate students about the significance of ethical

conduct and caution them against involvement in plagiarism. While plagiarism is commonly linked with academic writing, students were made aware that it can also encompass the creation of counterfeit products that violate someone else's brand name without permission. The exercise prompted students to reflect critically on their own academic integrity and explore ways to avoid plagiarism in future endeavours."

The Education Library leveraged the exhibition to highlight the training opportunities the Department of Library Services provides and promote self-paced workshops accessible via Blackboard. Additionally, the Library featured books from its collection on academic writing, covering relevant aspects such as becoming an academic writer, academic language, and academic literacy. Numerous published sources were curated and included to bolster credibility, addressing topics such as academic dishonesty, plagiarism implications, and the role of ChatGPT in the classroom.



▲ Products (Some art education students' counterfeit products on display: Spirite, Prof Pepper, African Fried Chicken, Clappies, Mint Oros etc.)



▲ Student artists (Ashley Antill, Hannah van Rij, Eriq Holtzhausen, Annebelle Visser, Thabiso Buthelezi, Tiyselani Hlungwani, Simphiwe Mahlangu, Pheletso Mota, Jan Shongwe).



## Dr Alta Vos retires

Author: Dr Linette van der Merwe

Dr Alta Vos, senior lecturer in the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria, is retiring after 30 years in the service of higher education. Her academic journey started when she obtained her BA (Ed) degree in 1981 at the University of Pretoria. After teaching for two years at Kempton Park and Silverton High Schools, she became the project organiser of the then ATKB, where she developed and managed cultural projects such as oratory competitions, choir competitions, and storytelling competitions.

Alta's tertiary career began at the then Normaale College of Pretoria (NKP) after she obtained her BA Honours in Afrikaans-Dutch at Unisa in 1991. Here, she was approached to become part of a team that wrote Afrikaans textbooks for post-apartheid South Africa. This sparked her interest in textbooks' role in the official and unofficial curriculum. She also obtained her M.Ed. (2004) and PhD (2009) at the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education, where she is responsible for the methodology training of undergraduate and postgraduate students and has already successfully guided seven M.Ed. and six PhD students. In 2007, she received the University of Pretoria postgraduate bursary for studying abroad, and she studied and taught in Ghent, Belgium.

Eleven academic publications have already appeared from her pen in accredited magazines or books. Two phases of research characterize her publications: stereotyping in school textbooks as transitional publications at the time of the

transition from apartheid to democracy; and post-apartheid publications, which are influenced by situational variables such as curriculum development and technological interventions.

Twenty textbooks and workbooks for school and tertiary education also form part of her publication list. Among other things, she is the co-author of textbook series such as Afrikaans ons taal and Platinum Afrikaans (Home language), an Afrikaans research textbook for postgraduate students, and two methodology textbooks for students and teachers, entitled Afrikaansmetodiek deur 'n nuwe bril (Oxford) and Vuvuzela-Afrikaans: taalonderrig wat nie geïgnoreer kan word nie (Mediakor). She has also recently written workbooks for the novel and film Pad na jou hart, and the Alles-in-een Afrikaans Eerste Addisionele Taal Lees- en taal-reeks for grades 4-7.

In 2023, she was appointed editor of LitNet Akademies Opvoedkunde, an accredited academic online journal that publishes Afrikaans research articles to promote Afrikaans as an academic and subject language. According to Alta, this new endeavour will keep stimulating her ever-curious mind and provide more opportunities to keep on learning from new research.

Besides her academic interests, Alta is an active squash player and an avid spectator of rugby and cricket. She loves Afrikaans music, especially that of Coenie de Villiers, Koos Kombuis, and Koos du Plessis, whose

lyrics speak to her. Her heart lies in the Karoo, and she hopes to travel more and spend more time writing textbooks, poems, and about her and her husband Ben's travel experiences. She believes writing gives her the opportunity of "meaning-making" of life's dynamic way to challenge us to grow as human beings.

You Yenn Teo said: "We make meaning through our everyday lives – in small activities and through relationships. These are moments of potential beauty. They are the acts that make us human." Dr Alta Vos undoubtedly brought beauty to many students' and colleagues' lives through her small and big acts, and the meaningful relationships she built and maintained through the years. The Department of Humanities Education will miss her bubbling enthusiasm, wisdom, and calm energy.



▲ Drs Joyce West and Connie Makgabo

## A word of thanks from Ms Clara Ngobeni, Faculty Library Manager: Education Library

Author: Ms Clara Ngobeni

"I would like to express the Library's immense appreciation of the art exhibition. It definitely had a huge impact on the Library's endeavours and efforts to promote honesty and integrity in academic writing.

The exhibition opened up conversations among the Library staff, the students and Library visitors in general. It also led to meaningful engagements about plagiarism (e.g. what to do to avoid it; anti-plagiarism training offered by the Library; the risks that plagiarism exposes them to; ChatGPT, and many more) between the staff and the students.

Given the magnitude of the plagiarism problem experienced by many students, the Education Library would really appreciate the continued support of and partnership with the department to ensure that awareness continues to be raised. The library extends its heartfelt appreciation to the students.

Their exhibition and their hard work are really appreciated, and benefitted both the Library and their fellow student community in the faculty.

You are welcome to contact the Library if you have any ideas that will help expose the students' work while at the same time helping them (and other students) to excel in their academics.

Looking forward to more exhibitions in the future."

Special thanks to the art education students of JMK 201, Ms Danelle van Wyk, Ms Sonja Delport, and Ms Clara Ngobeni for making this exhibition possible and successful.

Kind and Warm "Copycat" Regards  
Clara & the Library Team.

## Leepile graduated with a PhD

Author: Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa

In a momentous occasion that marks both personal and professional triumph, Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa, a Lecturer in the Higher Certificate in Sports Sciences, Human Movement Studies and Sport Management in the Department of Humanities Education, has recently achieved a significant milestone and graduated with a PhD qualification during the 2023 Spring Graduation ceremony. This accomplishment signifies an enriching educational experience for Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa.

The title of his thesis was "Youth Experience of a Rural South African Sports Development Programme". He was supervised by Dr Sarina de Jager, and his co-supervisors were Prof. Paola Wood and Dr Jill Borresen. His thesis used innovative and alternative qualitative inquiry, arts-informed methodology to

explore youth experiences within a sports development programme in rural South Africa and its impact on the development of rural youth. The researcher established a context-specific theoretical framework to address gaps in the current youth development approach. By adopting this theoretical perspective, the study offered a unique opportunity to explore the diverse realities of youth and identify factors facilitating or hindering positive development outcomes. The research provided novel insights into the previously unexplored experiences of rural youth, enhancing our understanding of how a rural sports development programme can contribute to their overall positive experiences. Moreover, the study contributes thought-provoking insights to discussions on youth development through sport and rurality in Africa.

Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa mentioned that the research journey impacted his personal and professional growth. The study has provided him with invaluable experience and insight into the world of social research. As he navigated his way through the study, he learned to appreciate the complex relationships between individuals and their social and cultural environments. Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa also learned that the research journey cannot be simplified, and requires resilience, persistence and, most importantly, discipline.

The attainment of a PhD qualification is not just a personal achievement but an accomplishment for the Faculty of Education and the University of Pretoria. Congratulations, Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa, on this well-deserved accomplishment.



▲ Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa and Human Movement Studies Colleagues



▲ Dr Leepile Motlhaolwa and supervisor Dr Sarina de Jager

## MASTER'S STUDENT IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY WINS FELLOWSHIP TO VISIT ITALY

Author: Irma Eloff

Nthabiseng Mofokeng, a Master's degree student in Educational Psychology, was awarded a prestigious fellowship to attend the International Summer School in Positive Psychology at the University of Bologna in Italy.

The Summer School stems from a fruitful international collaboration between the Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna and the University of Pretoria, and it aims to train new generations of students and PhD candidates within the discipline of positive psychology. Nthabiseng is doing her master's degree study on the wellbeing of undergraduate students in the Health Sciences.

Of her time in Italy, she says: "The summer school allowed the renewal of love for learning, expansion and an eye opener that the world is still yet to be explored. Traveling, especially internationally for the first time abroad was an amazing truly blessed moment of which I will be forever grateful for UP affording me this amazing learning opportunity."



▲ Nthabiseng Mofokeng in Bologna

## Dr West participates in national reading and curriculum strengthening initiatives

Author: Dr Joyce West

Over the last few months, Dr West has been very busy with national reading initiatives such as attending various national dialogues on reading and literacy development in June. She was also part of a Centre of Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) and National Education

Collaboration Trust (NECT) research project on validating and localising developmental trajectories. She also led the data collection team that conducted research on curriculum strengthening and developmental trajectories.



Dr Joyce West with the CEA members at a curriculum strengthening initiative

## The Dean of Education, Prof. Chika Sehoole, Congratulates Staff Promoted During 2023

Author: Oreratile Kau

On 6 December, the dean released a statement to faculty staff regarding promotions awarded to members. During the academic year, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Sehoole, encourages his colleagues and staff to strive for self-improvement and career development. Subsequently, the faculty always sees improvement and deserving academics moving up in the right direction, respective of their departments; as the Dean proclaimed, "Congratulations to the colleagues and their respective Departments on the attainment of these milestones." The Faculty of Education saw a number of its members continuously improve and get assigned to new positions to close out the year. The academic promotions for the faculty stand as follows:

### Department of Humanities Education

#### Promotions to Senior Lecturer:

1. Dr CF Jones Couto

2. Dr MC Makhabo
3. Dr S de Jager

#### Promotions to Associate Professor:

1. Dr A Vos: Department of Humanities Education.
2. Dr G Genis: Department of Humanities Education.
3. Dr R Steyn: Department of Humanities Education.

#### Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

1. Dr A du Plessis

### Department of Educational Psychology

#### Promotion to Full Professor:

1. Prof. MR Mampane: Department of Educational Psychology.

The Dean ended his congratulatory address by adding that he looks forward to the contributions of everyone who has been promoted "towards the work

of the faculty in their new positions and levels". Prof. Sehoole went on to close his address by wishing all members of the faculty a restful and peaceful holiday.



Dean, Prof. Sehoole

## 2023 EASA Awards

Author: Oreratile Kau

The Faculty of Education would like to congratulate the recipients of the PhD award: affiliate of the university and faculty, Dr Mathelela Mokgwathi, and Prof. Marien Graham, who received a Research Medal as well.



Prof. Marien Graham



Dr Mathelela Mokgwathi



## News from WERA

Author: Prof. Ruth Mampane

The World Education Research Association (WERA) is an association of major national, regional, and international speciality research associations dedicated to advancing education research as a scientific and scholarly field, and EASA is a WERA member. Prof. Ruth Mampane is a WERA Council member (representing EASA interests). In Southern Africa, and currently, as it stands, Africa, only one education association (EASA) has council representation in WERA. Education associations are encouraged to join WERA so that their interests can be represented nationally and globally. WERA is an association of 28 national, regional, and international speciality research associations which aims to advance education research as a scientific and scholarly field worldwide to serve the public good. If you want to know more about WERA, you can access information from their website (<http://www.weraonline.org/>).

Bee Leng Chua, President:  
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Rocio Garcia-Carrion, Secretary General:  
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Mustafa Yunus Eryaman, Immediate Past President:  
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### Information on WERA focal meeting

The second World Education Research Association (WERA) 2023 Focal Meeting was held during the conference in Singapore, which took place from 22-24 November 2023 at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technology University (NTU), Singapore in collaboration with the Educational Research Association of Singapore (ERAS).

### WERA participation with EASA

For future planning of conferences, member Associations, including EASA, are advised to use the opportunity to request WERA Keynotes and Symposia during their annual conferences; this opportunity is open and available to all member associations. Associations can email ([WERA@aera.net](mailto:WERA@aera.net)) or visit the WERA website (<http://www.weraonline.org/>).

The WERA website is continuously revamped to ensure maximum exposure. Individual members and member associations are requested to contact the secretariat ([WERA@aera.net](mailto:WERA@aera.net)) with any questions or suggestions regarding WERA. Similarly, EASA members can utilise the opportunity WERA presents for international exposure by sending information regarding important events related to EASA. Importantly, members of EASA are encouraged to send information to the WERA secretariat (Dr / Prof.: Rocio Garcia-Carrion; [WERA@aera.net](mailto:WERA@aera.net)) or EASA-WERA representative: [ruth.mampane@up.ac.za](mailto:ruth.mampane@up.ac.za).

## New Head of WIL Office

Author: Prof. Chika Sehoole

This marks a congratulatory moment for the Faculty of Education, as we welcome Dr Nevensha Sing on her appointment as the new Head of Work Integrated Learning, starting 1 January 2024. Dr Sing holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education degree and a Master of Education in Leadership, Management and Policy Studies degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. She completed her Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education at the University of Johannesburg. Her research skills and experience are located in narrative research and student experience. At the time of her appointment, she was serving as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria.

Dr Sing brings to the position her extensive experience of working in

the basic education sector, having served as a teacher, member of the school management team, head of the school-based support team, and Head of Department in both public and private schools as well as in primary and secondary schools over a 13-year period. She pursued her commitment to lifelong learning by serving as a lecturer, researcher, and mentor at higher education institutions for the following 13-year period. She is also passionate about teacher professionalism and the preparation of new teachers to understand policy and practice. In this regard, Dr Sing has served as a mentor teacher and mentor trainer, which are important attributes and experiences for the role she is assuming. Her proficiency in communication with all stakeholders can be attributed to her extensive experience in education, making her exceptionally well-suited for her leadership role as Head of WIL.

Dr Sing possesses an esteemed background in collaborating with students, parents, staff, and stakeholders at every level of the education system. She holds dear her personal philosophy that a person is a person because of other persons, 'Umntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu', which is important to enhancing and nurturing educational empowerment for individuals within our communities in South Africa and on a global scale.

A big congratulations to Dr Sing on her new role; we look forward to her contribution to the work of the faculty and to the preparation of our new teachers. The Dean of the Faculty of Education would also like to thank the Faculty Manager, Dr Rakgadi Phatlane, for having served as the Acting Head of WIL over the last six months, in addition to her regular responsibilities.

## Dr West hosts Ulwazi Lwethu African Language Storybooks Indaba at the University of Pretoria

Author: Dr Joyce West

The University of Pretoria and the Zenex Foundation joined hands in a ground-breaking project called “ULWAZI LWETHU”. Dr Joyce West coordinated the project alongside Drs Celeste Combrinck, Makwalete Malatji, Matshediso Lekgetho, and Mrs Francinah Masola, who acted as the project leaders. Furthermore, nine African language experts were recruited from across South Africa to contribute to this project. Two of those African language experts are faculty members at the University of Pretoria. Dr Connie Makgabo served as the Sepedi language expert, and Dr Nkhensani Maluleke as the Xitsonga language expert. Ms Tholakele Nyathi was the project administrator.

Reading is an essential skill that needs to be developed in the Foundation Phase. The purpose of developing reading skills in the Foundation Phase is to ensure that learners can “read to learn” in the successive phases. Reading materials, such as graded readers and leisure reading material, are indispensable resources in helping Foundation Phase learners develop reading skills such as decoding, word recognition, reading fluency and, ultimately, reading comprehension.

A major contributor to the reading challenges amongst South African children is the paucity of level-appropriate reading material in indigenous South African languages. In particular, there is a dearth of linguistically sound, age-appropriate books that reflect the realities of most South African children. The Ulwazi Lwethu Project brought together four non-profit organisations (i.e. Room to Read, the Nelson Mandela Institute, Molteno, and SAIDE) in the children’s literacy space and produced over 1000 African language leisure and graded readers for the Foundation Phase (Grade 1 to 3). The Ulwazi Lwethu Project developed readers in the nine indigenous South African languages: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. Each of the original stories was then versioned or adapted into

the other eight South African languages.

The University of Pretoria’s role in the Ulwazi Lwethu Project was to quality assure the readers that were developed. Quality assurance is a multifaceted process, especially with regard to multilingual reading material. It involves not only investigating the linguistic and educational quality of texts but also determining their linguistic and cultural equivalence across different language texts by evaluating, for example, their readability. Readability analysis, as part of quality assurance processes, can assist in making evidence-based and informed decisions regarding the reading material provided to Foundation Phase learners. Readability analysis is essential in making decisions regarding the cognitive load of texts. For example, one text should not cause a higher cognitive load or be more cognitively taxing for some learners than for others based on how the text was versioned or adapted. Determining the difficulty and comparability of texts is also necessary, considering the pedagogical aim of matching a reader’s ability to the appropriate difficulty level of a text (i.e. graded readers).

How quality assurance of multilingual reading material takes place requires meticulous design. Within a multilingual context, such as South Africa, where languages are constantly evolving, a need exists for a unique, comprehensive, inclusive, and holistic approach to evaluating multilingual texts. For this project, a concurrent triangulation mixed research methodology was used when reviewing and evaluating the quality and readability of the texts across the nine different languages. Using a mixed method approach helped to avoid common mistakes in traditional quality assurance processes and readability analysis, ensure cultural sensitivity and equality, and address the needs of our African language Foundation Phase learners. Furthermore, the quality assurance processes were guided by the latest reading research that

informs educational views on progression, coherence, accuracy, and scaffolding within teaching and learning material. The Science of Reading (SoR) in African languages served as the theoretical framework for this project. The SoR is a body of scientific knowledge regarding the most effective teaching methods for young children. The SoR emphasises the systematic, sequential, and explicit teaching of reading skills, such as phonics. As this project’s focus was to quality assure African language Foundation Phase reading texts, the SoR of African languages guided our quality assurance processes. The SoR aligns with reading research on African languages as both highlight the importance of phonological processing, phonemic skills, and explicit phonics teaching. Combining the SoR principles with African language reading research helped us to avoid linguistic and pedagogical imperialism.

On 17 August, Dr West hosted an indaba to present the findings of the team’s quality assurance. The executive summary can be found here:

<https://www.zenexfoundation.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/University-of-Pretoria-Executive-Summary-Ulwazi-Lwethu.pdf>

It was a wonderful day filled with critical debates about developing children’s literature in African languages.

The team who worked on this project are passionate about developing African languages and promoting multilingualism. They are excited about the books developed as they are aware of the urgent need for quality African language graded and leisure texts for the Foundation Phase. They also advocate for quality assurance as they believe it can make a vast difference in developing Foundation Phase learners’ reading skills.

Keep an eye open for further developments – these are exciting times for African languages.



▲ *ulWazi lethu Indaba panel*



▲ *Dr Joyce West in discussion*

## Unlocking Tools of the Teaching Trade: A Professional Development Initiative

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

The Eersterust Community Engagement Project (ECEP) is affiliated with the Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE). Saturday, 26 August, marked another event presented by Dr Nadia Swanepoel in collaboration with KOLAB. The ECEP-team welcomed pre-service and in-service teachers at this Professional Development Initiative. Kolab introduced teachers to their digital platform, which caters specifically to foundation phase teachers. Dr Nadia Swanepoel facilitated a hands-on activity that was focused on teaching mathematics word problem-solving in a practical, hands-on manner. Thank you to all the teachers for joining the session! It was a morning filled with innovation, fun, and endless possibilities in teaching and learning!



▲ Pre-service and in-service teachers who attended the Professional Development Initiative.



▲ Dr Nadia Swanepoel with the team from KOLAB

## From workshop to congress: exploring therapeutic tools in Educational Psychology

Author: Linda Theron

In early October 2023, the Department of Educational Psychology arranged a workshop for their second-year Master's students (M2s) in Educational Psychology. Judith Bredekamp, a doctoral student at the University of Pretoria, led the workshop, introducing the M2s to the principles of sandplay therapy and the utilization and advantages of house-tree-fire-water-person (HTFWP) drawings done by children in therapy. Judith, an educational psychologist and an internationally certified sandplay therapist, is also one of the founding members of the South African Sandplay Therapy Society (SASTS) and holds a position on the society's executive committee.

The workshop provided an introductory experience of Jungian sandplay therapy, delving into its core tenets, the symbolic approach, and its implications, including the recognition of concerns and resources within the sandplay trays created by children in therapy. The M2 students had the opportunity to create their own sandplay and experience both client and therapist roles within the room. Additionally,

the M2s were introduced to the house-tree-fire-water-person drawing, a component of Judith's doctoral research (which is being promoted by Prof. Linda Theron, Department of Educational Psychology). They gained hands-on experience in creating these drawings and understanding their significance. The goal was to offer practical experiences that they could apply during their practicum as well as in their future careers as Educational Psychologists. Judith was warmly welcomed by the members of the Educational Psychology Department, who also played a crucial role in ensuring the seamless operation of the workshop.

Feedback from some of the M2 students included statements like, "The practical examples of therapy activities and how to move flexibly between resources were extremely helpful" and "I enjoyed the practical aspect of role-playing as clients and therapists, allowing us to put theory into practice. The engaging presentation style made it easier to remember. I also appreciated the feedback provided after the role-play".

Following the workshop, Judith presented a paper on her doctoral work at the 27th Annual South African Psychology Congress, hosted by the Psychological Society of South Africa from October 4 to 6. This year's theme, "Between Psychological Practice and Psychosocial Praxis: Southern Standpoints on Radical Hope and Healing", acknowledged the historical wounds of colonialism and sought psychosocial approaches aligned with hope and healing. Within this context, Judith presented her findings from her doctoral study, which centred on the benefits of

the HTFWP drawing in the context of sandplay therapy for children dealing with anxiety. The paper was titled "Enhancing the Parent-Psychologist Alliance in Sandplay Therapy: Utilizing HTFWP drawings completed by anxious children".

Judith's presentation was well-received by a full venue and highlighted the exceptional guidance she has so far received from her supervisor, Prof. Linda Theron. Judith appreciated the interest showed in her study from members of the audience and now looks forward to completing her thesis and submitting it for examination in 2024.



▲ Judith Bredekamp, PhD candidate, and her promoter, Prof. Linda Theron, at PsySSA 2023



# Faculty of Education Postgraduate Research Indaba

## Celebrating Transdisciplinary Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: Educational Perspectives

Author: Professor Saloshna Vandeyar

The annual Faculty Postgraduate Research Indaba, established in 2000, marked its presence once again on October 3 2023, under the auspices of the Office of the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies. This longstanding tradition underscores the enduring commitment of the Faculty of Education to not only provide access for but also ensure the success of every postgraduate student, leaving no student behind. The faculty takes pride in fostering a supportive environment that nurtures excellence through exceptional supervision and the development of employability skills.

At the heart of the Postgraduate Research Indaba is the mission to offer a stage for Master's and PhD students to present their research to a broader audience, refining their presentation skills and showcasing the rich tapestry of postgraduate research within the Faculty of Education. This year's theme, "Celebrating Transdisciplinary Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: Educational Perspectives", encapsulates the essence of interconnectedness, echoing the sentiment that addressing future challenges requires breaking down silos and fostering collaboration.

Quoting Lyall (2019), "We cannot resolve any of the big challenges we face in the future, with just people who have sat in silos coming together", the chosen theme facilitates engagement, discussion, and action, emphasizing the link between transdisciplinary research and practice. It serves as a testament to the faculty's commitment to pushing boundaries and shaping the future beyond the confines of academia.

The event delved into real-world living labs, social innovations, and encounters in Sub-Saharan Africa, inspiring the exploration of transdisciplinary research. The objective was to advance concepts and methodologies, fortifying their potential to address societal challenges by fostering collaboration and interaction across disciplines. The aim is to dismantle silos, ensuring more equitable and sustainable development throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Postgraduate Research Indaba not only provided a platform for our budding researchers and PhD students but also served as a wellspring of inspiration for the wider university community. Parallel streams showcased an impressive array of presentations, complemented by a thought-provoking keynote address on "Transdisciplinary research to celebrate education research in Africa" by Prof. Liesel Ebersohn, a leading academic in our faculty.

The event garnered substantial attendance from both postgraduate students and staff, fostering valuable feedback and interaction. Awards across various categories were presented to Master's and Doctoral students, in recognition of their outstanding contributions.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the organizing committee, in particular to Dr Karen Botha, who was also the programme director of this event, and to Dr Nadia Swanepoel. Their tireless efforts culminated in a vibrant programme showcasing research steeped in critical and intellectual rigor, innovation, and a commitment to advancing transdisciplinary research. Thank you, too, to all the administrative and support staff for attending to all the administrative aspects to ensure the success of this event.

The Faculty Postgraduate Research Indaba was conceived in 2000, almost two and half decades ago. This year it was held on 3 October 2023 and was hosted by the office of the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies. This annual event serves to indicate the dedication and commitment of the Faculty of Education to ensuring not only the access, but also the success of our postgraduate students, so that no student is left behind. The Faculty of Education prides itself on the success of our postgraduate students and strives to create a nurturing and caring environment for our students by facilitating excellent supervision and enhancing employability skills.

The purpose of the Postgraduate Research Indaba is to provide a platform for our Master's and PhD students to present their research to a wider audience, thereby honing their presentation skills, and to showcase the postgraduate research done in the Faculty of Education.

The theme of this year's Postgraduate Research Indaba was "Celebrating Transdisciplinary Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: Educational Perspectives". The following quotation aptly captures the essence of this theme:

*"We cannot resolve any of the big challenges we face in the future, with just people who have sat in silos coming together. We need professionals who have come up with a way to see the interconnections." (Lyall, 2019)*

The theme "Celebrating Transdisciplinary Research in Sub-Saharan Africa: Educational Perspectives" provides a platform for engagement, discussion, and action that links

transdisciplinary research and practice. It celebrates our continuing aspiration to take on challenges and push boundaries, and shape the future of our world beyond academia.

Real-world living labs, social innovations, and Sub-Saharan Africa encounters, serve as inspiration for exploring transdisciplinary research. The goal was to advance transdisciplinary concepts and methodologies while strengthening their potential for addressing societal challenges by connecting researchers and stimulating interaction between and across disciplines. In this way, silos can be broken to ensure more equitable and sustainable development across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Postgraduate Research Indaba was a wonderful opportunity for postgraduate students, as well as the wider university community, to be inspired to imagine and create better futures for everyone.

Apart from an impressive line-up of our young researchers and PhD students, who presented across three parallel streams, the conference featured one of the leading academics in our faculty, Prof. Liesel Ebersohn, who delivered a thought-provoking, intellectually rigorous keynote address on "Transdisciplinary research to celebrate education research in Africa". This presentation aptly set the tone for the Research Indaba. The event was well attended by both postgraduate students and staff. Postgraduate students benefitted immensely from feedback from staff and other students.

The Postgraduate Research Indaba concluded with the presentation of awards across various categories. A heartfelt thank you to the organising committee, who worked extremely hard to craft a vibrant programme that showcased research that was informed by critical and intellectual rigour as well as innovation, and that pushed the boundaries of transdisciplinary research.

My personal advice to postgraduate students, as a former PhD student and the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies, would be to stay curious, keep an open mind, learn how to simplify things by going back to the basic principles, and never give up – especially when faced with setbacks. You will be rewarded for your hard work and perseverance. Right here, today, with hindsight and foresight, you are shaping the future of Education.



Professor Saloshna Vandeyar's address at the Postgraduate Research Indaba



Faculty members presenting their research

# Postgraduate Student Support Sessions of the Faculty of Education

Author: Prof. Johan Wasserman

The Office of the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies successfully hosted the culminating event of the year: the fourth three-day Postgraduate Support Sessions from October 3 to October 5 2023. Under the guidance of the Deputy Dean, these sessions followed a well-structured programme designed to support postgraduate students in their academic journey.

Kicking off on October 3, the Postgraduate Research Indaba set the tone for the comprehensive sessions that followed. On October 4, postgraduate students delved into intellectually stimulating presentations by Prof. Ugorji Ogbonnaya, covering topics such as "What constitutes each chapter of a thesis/dissertation" and "How to Write an Abstract". The second session on the same day featured Mrs Sonja Delpert, Ms Clara Ngobeni, and Ms Liesel Stieger from the Library, who provided valuable insights into "Research Data Management, UP Space, and ORCID"

along with guidance on "Identifying a journal title to publish your manuscript".

The final day, October 5, commenced with a presentation on "Writing your first Article" by Prof. Ronel Ferreira, a prominent academic in the faculty. Departmental Initiatives then wrapped up the concluding Postgraduate Support Session of 2023.

These sessions proved to be instrumental in offering significant learning opportunities and growth for postgraduate students within the Faculty of Education. A heartfelt expression of gratitude is extended to all presenters and programme directors who contributed to the success of the Postgraduate Support Sessions throughout 2023. Their dedication to academic citizenship, care, and the substantial time and effort invested in nurturing and supporting the research development of our postgraduate students are truly appreciated.



Professor Ugorji Ogbonnaya during his presentation in the first session



Mrs Sonja Delpert, of Library Services, with insights on research data management

## FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH DAY

*Reading for meaning: Charting a new course for intervention*

Author: Professor Saloshna Vandeyar

The 3rd Faculty Research Day, hosted by the Office of the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies in collaboration with the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), unfolded on 10 October 2023. The objective of the Research Day was to provide an effective forum for academics, researchers, and practitioners to "Advance Human-Centred education in Complexities", which is the identity of the Faculty of Education. The theme for this year's Faculty Research Day was "Reading for meaning: Charting a new course for intervention".

The inaugural session featured compelling and inspirational presentations by distinguished keynote speakers, Professor Mbulungeni Madiba, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University, and Ms Nangamso Mtsatse, a PhD holder and advocate for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. Professor Madiba explored Translanguaging, while Ms Mtsatse focused on foundational literacy and numeracy as innovative pathways for intervention.

The subsequent session showcased thought-provoking presentations by Faculty of Education staff. Ms Elsamarie Uys delved into "Teacher

perceptions about Early Graded Reading Assessment Implementation", while Ms Karen Pienaar directed attention towards "Innovative interventions for language development in the early years", specifically the implementation of construction play in early childhood learning environments. Dr Karen Roux explored the equivalence of "The Amazing Octopus" passage across two languages, and Dr Nadia Swanepoel concluded the session with "The development of the word sum-wheel to enhance Grade 3 teachers' mathematical word problem-solving instruction".

These presentations sparked valuable dialogue and debate by addressing a critical issue in our education system,

namely reading for meaning. The Faculty Research Day fittingly culminated with the Faculty Research and Supervision Awards. Congratulations to all deserving recipients.

A sincere appreciation extends to the CEA steering committee for orchestrating the success of the 2023 Faculty Research Day. Special thanks to the programme directors, Professors Clinton van der Merwe and Keshni Bipath, Dean Prof. Chika Sehoole for the warm welcome, Prof. Samuel Adeyemo for his insightful concluding remarks, all attending staff members, and the unsung heroes behind the scenes who contributed to making this event a resounding success.



▲ Panel of academics as well as the Dean and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education



# Music Exam Journey of Hope

Author: Prof. Johan Wasserman

Scene 1 opens with the Cape Flats song “Kaapse Klopse”, where Hope receives the news that she has been accepted to study at the University of Pretoria, but she lacks finances. She decides to face numerous challenges to start her higher education adventure. In Scene 2, Hope and her uncle, the taxi driver, witness a family wedding in Aberdeen with the song “Vuli Ndlelndla”. Unfortunately, the family cannot accommodate them for the evening, so they continue driving. In Scene 3, Hope unexpectedly meets a friend, Lara, while on an interrogative journey through Indwe. Lara takes Hope to a “Gqom” festival in Queensburg in Scene 4, where Hope works as a security guard for some money. All the students perform various dance moves during the “Wololo” song. In Scene 5, the taxi is now in Harrismith, where they enjoy a karaoke and sokkie night with singing

and dancing (“Kaalvoet Sokkie” and “Sweet Caroline”). The taxi continues its journey to Johannesburg in Scene 6, where Hope is attacked at the Spaza shop. Lara encourages Hope to focus on her final destination, as there will always be difficulties along the way. They sing “Ke nna Yo Morena” sadly and softly. In Scene 7, Hope makes it to the University of Pretoria, where everyone joins her on stage to sing and dance to “Freedom is Coming”.

The students, audience, and examiners enjoyed and joined in the singing of the songs, as the uplifting message spoke to their hearts. As one examiner stated, the whole presentation was lively and very entertaining; it was well-planned and professionally done!

Dr Ronel De Villiers and Ms Nanri Botes.



▲ Hope singing at the wedding during her travels to the University of Pretoria



▲ A soft medley being performed by the cast

## The Faculty of Education celebrates its academic staff by host its annual Teaching and Learning Awards

Author: Oreratile Kau

As the 2023 academic year slowly came to an end, the Faculty of Education rolled on to host the annual Teaching & Learning awards. The awards took place on 3 November 2023 at the Groenkloof Boma. These awards are in recognition of the hard work and dedication the academics have put into their respective departments. They also highlight how much the academics' work has made an impact on the students. The Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning, Professor Salome Human-Vogel, opened the event by welcoming everyone who took the opportunity to attend the occasion. She touched on the importance of the awards, noting that all should aspire to make the impact and put in the outstanding effort that she knows that all are capable of.

This year's academic keynote speakers were Dr Annelize Du Plessis-De Beer and Dr Connie Makgabo. Their focus areas, respectively, were “Model-T Challenges to Teaching Triumphs: A Journey of Growth in Education” and “Languages in Education and their Development: An Ongoing Enterprise”. These topics tied ideally into the theme of advancements in

education; how innovative solutions should be met with openness, and more native languages should be integrated to bridge the gap between understanding subjects and to enhance learning and its cultural importance.

The awards are divided into two main categories. The first is the Model Lecturer of the Year Award, which is then subdivided into three classes: Small Class (0-50 students), Medium Class (51-200 students), and Large Class (201- students). The second award is the Student-centered Teaching Award; this follows the same class system as the first award. The top three achievers in each class received an award.

The event proceeded with the announcements of the award recipients, which went as follows:

### Category 1: Model Lecturer of the Year Award

- Small class category: Clinton van der Merwe, Delene Human & René Beyers
- Medium class category: Nadia Swanepoel, Philip Mirkin & Fariyah

Jaffer

- Large class category: Stephan Dippenaar, Jody Jourbert & Celeste Combrinck

### Category 2: Student-centered Teaching Award

- Small class category: Mpho Mthembu, Vernon Candiotes & Adekunmi Aina
- Medium class category: Karen Roux, Carlos Tirado Taipe & André du Plessis
- Large class category: Aidan Lawrence, Gerhard Genis & Jan Botha

The Dean of the faculty, Professor Chika Sehoole, was present to hand over the awards to the deserving academics as well as to give the final remarks to those in attendance. He concluded by reiterating the points made by the keynote speakers and by Prof. Human-Vogel. The Dean also added that he is proud of the recipients' work, and urges both the recipients and those who fell short of the awards to take these awards as motivation – to encourage themselves and grow their efforts to teach and make a difference in students' lives.



Professor Salome Human-Vogel opening the ceremony, alongside the Dean and guest speakers



The award winners in attendance at the Teaching & Learning Awards 2023



## UDE 2023 REFLECTIVE AND A WELCOME SESSION FOR PROF. UGORJI OGBONNAYA

Author: Professor Ugorji Ogbonnaya

As we approached the end of the year, the manager for the Unit for Distance Education, Dr Mary Ooko, took the liberty to gather staff members and all the programme coordinators that work closely with the UDE to join in a brief reflection meeting held on 16 November 2023. The session was also meant to welcome the new HOD for the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, Prof. Ugorji Ogbonnaya. This was followed by a discussion on matters related to the coordination of the UDE programmes. The attendees included Prof. Simphiwe Mthiyane, the HOD of the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies, Dr Maryke Mihai, Dr Navensha

Sing, Prof. Maitumeleng Nthontho, and Prof. Ronel Ferreira, who are all UDE programme coordinators.

The session presented a valuable experience especially for the UDE as whole, as the attendees had interactive engagements and discussions on how to take the UDE forward. Prof. Ugorji and Prof. Simphiwe shared valuable insights in the discussions and promised to support the UDE in any endeavors aimed at further enhancing the unit's position.. The emphasis of the discussion was on quality assurance and the recruitment of more students. Prof. Ugorji gave feedback on the discussion, and he was very pleased with the work done by the UDE.



▲ Professor Ugorji Ogbonnaya (middle) alongside members of the UDE

## HISTORY EDUCATION STAFF ORGANISE TWO CONFERENCES

Author: Irma Eloff



The History Education staff within the Department of Humanities Education were involved in the organising of two history education conferences in 2023. The first of these was by the African Association for History Education (AHE-Afrika), a non-profit organisation located within the department and co-chaired by Professor Johan Wassermann and Dr Denise Bentravato. The conference was co-hosted with Dr Mary Nasibi and her team at Kenyatta University in Kenya, Nairobi. The conference's theme was "History Education in Africa: Politics, Policies and Practices". Attendees from across Africa and beyond attended and delivered papers around this theme. This was the fifth bi-annual conference of AHE Africa, and it is making significant inroads into the teaching of History Education in

all education sectors in a decolonial Afro-centric manner.

The second conference was the South African Society of History Teaching (SASHT) conference, which Professor Wasserman and his research assistant, Mr Aidan Lawrence, co-organized with Dr Valencia Mabalane of the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The conference was hosted by the Bunting Road campus of UJ. The conference's

theme was "School History – where are we heading?". Numerous papers by academics (mostly from South African universities), postgraduate students, and school teachers were presented over two days. The highlight was a keynote address delivered by Professor June Bam, titled: "Where to From Here? – The metaphorical 'Good Wind' as a cognitive embodiment of 'deep listening' in the archive".



▲ UP attendees at the SASHT Conference (From left to right: Mr Aidan Lawrence, Dr Pranith Bharath, Dr Delene Human, Dr Joyce Raanhuis, Dr Denise Bentravato, and Professor Johan Wassermann)

## CEA's Data Manager attends PIRLS NRC Meeting in Amsterdam

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements (IEA) held its 9th and final PIRLS 2021 National Research Coordinators' (NRC) meeting in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. This three-day meeting started on Monday 13 February 2023. With over 50 countries worldwide in attendance, Prof Surette van Staden (National Research Coordinator), Dr Mark Chetty (Department of Basic Education) and Mr Mishack Tshele (CEA's Data Manager) represented

South Africa. This meeting focused on describing the contents and release of the PIRLS 2021 results and database. The first NRC meeting for the 2026 cycle followed immediately on 16 February 2023. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the next cycle of PIRLS and to describe plans for the implementation. South Africa's Grade 4 learners across all provinces were among their international counterparts in over 60 other countries worldwide who participated in the PIRLS 2021 cycle.



▲ Mr Mishack Tshele (CEA) and Dr Mark Chetty (DBE) at the NRC meeting in Amsterdam

## Professor from Carl von Ossietzky University visits CEA

The CEA is looking for possibilities to extend its international collaborations to the Carl von Ossietzky University.

Prof Omidire had an opportunity to meet with Prof Ines Oldenburg from the Carl von Ossietzky University, Oldenburg, and discussed possibilities of creating collaborative research projects between the CEA and Carl von Ossietzky University.

Prof Ines Oldenburg is on a two-week visit at the University of Pretoria and is hosted by the Deputy Dean, Prof Human-Vogel in the Faculty of Education.



▲ Seated: Prof Funke Omidire and Prof Ines Oldenburg from the Carl von Ossietzky University, colleagues  
Back: Mr Mishack Tshele, Mrs Taslima Ahmed, Dr Karen Roux, Ms Thembi Matlou, Ms Prudence Shai and Ms Etinosa Izevbigie

## Data Collection for Developmental Trajectories

The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) team at the University of Pretoria was part of the data collection process at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg on Sunday, 10 September.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), through its National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), commissioned the development of the developmental trajectories with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that school children need to thrive in a fast-changing environment as part of its consideration to strengthen basic education, to equip learners in South Africa.

The University of Pretoria has been tasked with providing research expertise on developing 21st-century competencies to inform the DBE's national curriculum-strengthening process. This process intends to build on the work done to produce and implement the Recovery Framework 2021–2024 by conducting more comprehensive curriculum strengthening that will take cognisance of the competencies learners need to thrive, socially and economically, in a fast-changing world.



▲ The team from the University of Pretoria included the members of the CEA and colleagues from the Educational Psychology and Early Childhood Education Departments



▲ Educators, grouped according to the phases they teach, participated in a PRA session and responded to the activities



## Masina Muliro University of Science and Technology Professors visit the CEA

The members of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) joined Prof Omidire in welcoming Professor Peter Bukhala and his colleague from Masina Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) in Kenya. The visitors were on a benchmarking visit to the University of Pretoria. Part of the conversation between the two entities included strategies to establish and strengthen relations and forge future collaborative projects.



▲ Members of the CEA with Prof Bhukala and his colleague from Masina Muliro University of Science and Technology

## Imperial and Motus Community Trust library usage programme training

The team from the CEA conducted the data collection training with the library assistants. The training is in preparation for the pilot study of the library usage programme initiated by the Imperial and Motus Community Trust. The trust assists selected schools in providing learners with well-balanced education by being involved in the establishment of school libraries in under-resourced schools across southern Gauteng.



▲ From left: Mr Gabriel Mokoena, Ms Shine Aung and Ms Etinosa Izevbogie from the CEA with Ms Jane Mabaso and the library assistants at the fieldwork training for the library usage programme

## CEA staff members attend a virtual IEA IDB analyser workshop

Three CEA staff members, Mr Mishack Tshele, Ms Thembisile Matlou and Mr Gabriel Mokoena, were among attendees from countries around the world who attended the IEA IDB analyser workshop hosted virtually by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievements (IEA) on 14

and 15 March 2023. The IEA International Database Analyzer (IDB Analyzer) is a tool developed by the IEA Data Processing and Research Center (IEA-DPC) that can be used to analyse international large-scale assessment data such as Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) data, among others. The

aims of the workshop were to develop methodological skills for analysing PIRLS data and reproducing results from the international exhibits, to familiarise attendants with IEA's IDB Analyzer and allow them gain hands-on experience analysing data through tutorials.

## Improving reading in the Foundation Phase

The University of Pretoria and the READ Education Trust have joined hands in a ground-breaking reading and translanguaging project. Over the next year, Prof Funke Omidire and Dr Joyce West will be coordinating the project alongside Drs Roux, Combrinck, Genis, and members of the CEA, such as Mr Mokoena and Mr Tshele, who will all contribute to the success of the project. Reading is an essential skill that needs to be developed in the Foundation Phase. However, the latest PIRLS results showed a decline in our learners' reading skills, with 81% being unable to read for meaning. Reading for meaning is the ultimate goal of the teaching of reading.

However, reading comprehension is a complex skill to develop as fundamental reading skills such as phonological awareness, decoding, word recognition, and reading fluency need to be in place. The purpose of developing reading skills in the Foundation Phase is to ensure that learners can 'read to learn' in the successive phases. Major contributors to

the reading challenges of South African children are the emphasis on using subtractive and immersion strategies for developing English reading skills, a lack of understanding as to how multilingual learners develop their reading skills, and a paucity of multilingual reading material.

The University of Pretoria and the READ Education Trust will thus be conducting an intervention pilot study in Gauteng schools, where translanguaging and the science of reading (SoR) will be used as pedagogically sound approaches to teaching reading in English to multilingual learners. A major focus of the project will be on developing learners' knowledge of English phonics to increase their decoding skills and, as a result, improve their reading fluency and reading comprehension. The SoR and translanguaging will serve as the theoretical framework for this project. The SoR is scientific knowledge regarding the most effective teaching methods for young children. It emphasises the systematic, sequential, and explicit teaching of reading skills, such as phonics.

The SoR aligns with reading research on African languages, as both the SoR and translanguaging highlight the importance of considering the orthography of a language (i.e., opaque vs transparent) and developing learners' phonological processing, phonemic skills, and phonics knowledge. As this project's focus will be on developing multilingual learners' English reading skills, translanguaging, which views the development of language as a single linguistic repertoire, will view all the languages a learner speaks as resources rather than hurdles.

The team working on this project are passionate about the teaching of reading and promoting multilingualism. They are excited about this project, as they are aware of the urgent need for quality reading education in the Foundation Phase. They also advocate for the use of translanguaging as they believe it can make a vast difference in developing Foundation Phase learners' reading skills. Keep an eye open for further developments. These are exciting times!





## Welcoming the new Head of the SMTE Department

◀ *Prof Ugorji Ogbonnaya, Head of the SMTE Department*

The staff members of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) joined Prof Funke Omidire in welcoming Prof Ugorji Ogbonnaya as the newly appointed head of the Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Department. After a brief reflection on the CEA's research foci, Prof Omidire expressed the centre's commitment to continue supporting the Department in its research endeavours.

Professor Ogbonnaya joined the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria as a Senior Lecturer in October 2016. Since being appointed, he has been promoted to the position of Associate Professor in 2021 and Full Professor in 2023.

## Utilising results from PIRLS 2021 How can teacher practice be informed?

The Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA) and the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) co-hosted a seminar entitled 'Utilising results from PIRLS 2021: How can teacher practice be informed?' on 24 October at the Centre for Visual Impairment Studies (VISUP).

In a foreword address, the director of the CEA, Prof Funke Omidire, welcomed the guests and expressed delight in the CEA co-hosting the event with LITASA. Prof Omidire gave a brief overview of the CEA and outlined the importance of literacy for personal growth, academic achievement, and well-being. In light of the country's performance in PIRLS 2021, she called for the understanding of the unique multilingual nature of Sub-Saharan Africa in the planning of reading instruction and interventions.

Prof Omidire also called for collaborative interventions through evidence-based practices. She expressed interest in appropriately using contextual information, assessment data and feedback from in-service teacher professional development and training activities. Dr Karen Roux from the CEA presented the overall achievement results of South African Grade 4 and Grade 6 learners in the 2021 PIRLS cycle. The presentation delved into learner achievement, examining gender, language, and provincial variations. Dr Roux also showcased assessment items from one of the PIRLS passages, 'The

Amazing Octopus', which tested various cognitive skills.

Dr Roux's presentation spotlighted effective reading comprehension practices from five PIRLS participant countries: Chile, Chinese Taipei, England, Spain, and the Republic of Georgia. These practices serve as inspiration for educators to enhance their reading lessons. For instance, in Chile, activating prior knowledge is emphasised to foster comprehension, while Chinese Taipei provides a multilingual environment for learners beyond their home language.

In England, a daily 10-minute session introduces new vocabulary from diverse languages. The presentation highlighted recommended reading strategies for teachers and learners, including

distinguishing between authentic and test-related questions, recognising text structures, making predictions and setting goals, verbalising how to summarise a story, employing schemes with keywords and visuals, relating content to learners' experiences, acting as role models, creating reading-friendly spaces, celebrating reading achievements, and exploring various genres and formats.

The seminar featured a hybrid format, with both in-person and online participants. Notable in-person attendees included Nadeema Musthan, LITASA's National Chairperson, Sandra de Bruyn from the Gauteng Education Department, Glenn Allies of the British Council, Elinor Sisulu from Puku Children's Literature, and Pearl Khumalo from SA Books Online.



▲ *Members of the CEA with the members of LITASA and other seminar attendees of the seminar at the Groenkloof Campus*

## THE CEA IN PICTURES



## THE CEA IN PICTURES CONTINUED



## CEA and the Department of Basic Education hosts the Capacity Building Workshop for the officials

The CEA and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) hosted a four-day capacity building workshop with the education officials from 18–21 September at the DBE offices. The purpose of the workshop, facilitated by the Technical Advisory Group members, Prof Anil Kanjee and Dr Qetelo Moloi, was to support education officials, at the different levels of the system, to enhance their capacity in effectively using assessment evidence to improve teaching and learning for all learners, especially learners from poor and marginalised backgrounds.

A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of international and local experts was formed to review the IEA's data analysis methodology regarding PIRLS 2021, and to conduct secondary analyses on the data. Findings of the TAG will be presented and mediated through training workshops.

Among international presentations

were the 'Educational assessments and inclusive education' by Christian Ydesen of Aalborg University, 'Using assessment data' by David Rutkowski from Indiana University, 'Use of assessment data to support decision making in Uganda' by Lutalo Bbosa Serunkuuma of the Uganda National Examinations Board, 'Data-driven

decisions: using assessment data for equity-based policy' by Prof Joanne Baird, Director of the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment, and 'The real impact of evidence from international surveys' by Prof Montse Gomendio, Professor at the Spanish Research Council (CSIC).



▲ From left: Mr Gabriel Mokoena, Ms Thembi Matlou, Prof Marien Graham, Ms Taslima Ahmed, Dr Karen Roux, Ms Etinosa Izevbigie and Mr Mishack Tshele at the Capacity Building Workshop



# LLITUP IS IN FULL SWING, MOVING TOWARDS OUR 10 YEAR MILESTONE

LLITUP is currently in its tenth year since its conceptualisation. We hosted a Living Lab event in November that was the first of a series of events to celebrate this milestone. We look forward to more Living Lab events during 2024.

In this bumper newsletter issue, we share news about national and international conference presentations. We also discuss our presentation of various workshops on Coding and

Robotics, Generative AI and Living Labs. We celebrate our participation in the Postgraduate Research Indaba, and share inspiring postgraduate experiences. We also showcase our involvement in 2023's ChooseUP Day.

All in all, 2023's second semester has been exciting and jam-packed, filled with many adventures and innovative learning and teaching moments. May the igniting of creativity and dreams continue!

# 10 years of LLITUP

▲ **LLITUP is being rebranded for its 10 year milestone. This is a sneak peak of the rebranding**

## DETA CONFERENCE 2023: A PHOTO STORY

*Education colleagues and LLITUP experience Uganda*

*With insights shared by Jody, Fariyah and Gontse*



▲ **Some of the individuals that made up the Faculty of Education delegation to the DETA conference - Look how happy they all are :)**

### The Uganda streets experience

On 23 July 2023, five colleagues from SMTE flew from Johannesburg International Airport to Entebbe, Uganda. We were joined by many colleagues from the Faculty of Education and other departments in the University. The photos included on the following pages – with at least 13 Bodas – depict our experience of an amazing DETA2023.

Once we arrived at Entebbe International Airport (picture 2), the race was on to reach Kampala before sunset (picture 1). This was made easy by going with the Entebbe/Kampala express way – apparently the most expensive road in the world (picture 3). We reached our accommodation at the Kampala

Boulevard suites (picture 6) (ironically on Kampala drive, in Kampala - picture 4). Kampala Boulevard is indeed a busy road with a beautiful noise... Then it was time to explore our surroundings to get some much-needed supplies for our shared self-catering apartments.

Exploring Kampala, from the first day to the last, was an interesting affair involving dealing with the African heat and traversing busy sidewalks that surround the most interesting roads, each with vendors of all kinds of fresh produce. The roads bustle with high volumes of vehicles, minibuses and the most iconic Boda Bodas (picture 5). Boda Bodas (a shorter way to describe the mode of transport that is used to take passengers from border to border) are an interesting

bunch. They bundle together and move all the time. The drivers of these motorcycles use any opportunity to move swiftly and promise their passengers the quickest way to reach their destination. Other drivers and pedestrians using the roads need to be assertive or a Boda Boda will use the opportunity to cut in. Faster, of course, does not mean safer as you will see passengers (in ones, twos, and even threes) cling to the driver sometimes carrying big items like boxes or complete sheets of plywood.

Back to the exploration: Of course, we came across a familiar sight in the city (picture 7). And as it was getting dark, our trusted guide (the hotel receptionist) told us that we needed to get a move on. We reached a store with familiar, unfamiliar, and even completely foreign goods spanning three floors of a massive building. It is here that we found our first real interaction with the local currency. Uganda uses the Ugandan shilling, a currency that trades far lower than the Rand. Needless to say, this meant big numbers that had divided (rather than multiplied) to try and make sense of things. Quite often, we found ourselves thinking that the goods were very expensive, just to realise that it was perfectly reasonable and well within our planning. Hurrying back through the unknown streets to our Kampala haven, we decided to make our way to a restaurant on the ground level of our hotel building for dinner rather than



**Photos from left to right: Fariyah presenting; Gontse presenting; LLITUPians; Ready for the gala dinner**



to cook a meal. We ended up doing this far more often than expected as the food was delicious, well-priced and absolutely convenient. Most noticeable was the contrast from the streets and the lavishness of the restaurant. Due to not being used to our new setting in the middle of a noisy city and excitement for the impending conference, sleep was difficult for some on the first night.

### ***The DETA conference***

The DETA conference was simply amazing. It spanned four days, filled with thought-provoking workshops, presentations, keynotes, and discussions. These were accompanied by fruitful networking sessions – with both UP staff and other delegates. We enjoyed wonderful, local food, and obviously, the SMTE folk felt right at home. During the conference, there were four presentations based on research by five SMTE colleagues. This included presentations by Dr Climant Khoza and Dr Fru Akuma. Fariyah entered the conference scene with a case on module transformation for teacher digital competence through an ICT module. Gontse provided an overview

of an education module's flexible design that allowed the module to remain successful in a pre-pandemic, disrupted, post-pandemic, and future context. Pictures 7 and 8 feature Froggy who was determined to make his appearance too. He not only enjoyed deep conversations, but was welcomed as always.

### ***Some more exploration***

Of course, some down-time allowed for further exploration of our surroundings. Bravely setting off on foot from our Kampala base, we shopped for local Ugandan clothing, snacks and gifts. We all learned to haggle and some perfected the skill. Some quick maths was needed at all times and Jody stood at the ready to shout out Rand values with confidence (not always accurate), but helpful nonetheless. Many more trips were made down-town with various permutations of the team members. Every excursion was eventful and we could not wait to discuss it when we got home.

Our last day in Kampala was spent answering stacked up emails, packing, and some even had their performance management meeting virtually. This

was a fitting way to show that distance interactions are effective, meaningful, and possible when we find ourselves geographically dispersed. We enjoyed some last-minute shopping and a quick lunch before we were off again. Fru stepped in and organised a fantastic transfer back to Entebbe: this time, in one vehicle rather than two, with ample room for everyone and our overfilled baggage (picture 11). Some of our beautiful sightings include a stunning mural outside the Makerere University's rapidly developing Innovation Hub (picture 10) and the Victoria Lake.

### ***Words of appreciation***

We would like to appreciate the efforts of the DETA Conference planning committee for a wonderful conference. Also, we are very thankful for the sponsor from the UDE that made our trip and attendance to the conference possible. We are proud to have been part of a truly noticeable experience in Kampala. Flying back, with awe-inspiring views of the African sunset, we know that we took UP to Uganda and that we bring a little bit of the spirit of this great African nation with us.



***1. One of our taxis, filled to the brim***



***2. Sighting of a rare Antonov-124 in Entebbe***



***3. The Entebbe/Kampala express way***



***4. Kampala Boulevard: Busy road***



***5. A quiet road scene (at least in Kampala terms)***



***6. The road behind our Kampala residence***



***7. A soldier carrying an AK47***



***8. Froggy made his appearance***



***9. Jody and Froggy in a lively discussion***



***10. A mural outside the Makerere University***



***11. Taking the express way - on our way home***



***12. A view from the car: Victoria lake***

# VISITING OTHER PLACES TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE

*Jody travelled to Bloemfontein and Peru to build collaborative relationships*

*With insights shared by Jody*



▲ Jody while presenting at CUT about Generative AI



▲ Roleplayers (from left to right): Dr X Khohliso (Deputy Director: CASD), Prof D Ngidi (DVC: Teaching and Learning), Mr J Joubert, Prof N Malebo (Senior Director: CILT), Mrs A Edem (Curriculum Developer), Prof B Kotze (FEBIT - Assistant Dean) and Mr N Kramm



▲ Attendees of the event

## **A visit to Bloemfontein to discuss Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Jody was invited by Mr Xolani Khohliso of the Central University of Technology (CUT), Bloemfontein, to present a talk on the use of Generative AI. In partnership with Mr Neil Kramm from Rhodes University, they made attendees ponder the questions of How do we embrace it? and How do we step into AI and ChatGPT (Generative AI)?

Jody guided the attendees in an understanding of what Generative AI is, while Neil focused on what it is not. Neil highlighted the facts that Generative AI cannot understand; has no intentions; can be biased; is generic; has no limit to how much you can ask, but can start hallucinating.

The focus areas of the presentation included the following:

1. Getting comfortable with what generative AI is and what you can do with it
2. Join ChatGPT
3. Join in an activity to draw yourself using AI tool Craiyon
4. Play AI games (Example: QuickDraw <https://quickdraw.withgoogle.com/>)

Two key themes that required further consideration included the restrictions of AI-use, as well as a focus on assessment integrity. Jody developed a model that illustrates a continuum of AI-use ranging from prohibition on the one extreme to compulsory AI-use, with a grey area in the middle. The prohibition of AI-use would typically entail the use of firewalls against AI software. Use is intensely monitored, and humans work very hard to avoid the use of AI. Compelling the use of AI entails requirements like 100% AI-generated products, or the provision of very clear guidelines on what is required. The middle ground entails less guidance to students on how to use AI, and the

AI detection software becomes less reliable. There also exists a conflict zone where the use is uncertain, and requires clear and transparent communication between the lecturer and students to avoid conflict. In terms of assessment integrity, Neil explored whether we can still rely on assessment, and if so, how?

## **Jody and others visit Peru to understand technology integration in the Global South**

From 17 September to 8 October, a group of UP delegates travelled to Peru, South America. This visit came after two years of collaboration and communication with the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP). The focus of the visit was to gain mutual understanding of Peruvian and South African universities and schools in terms of differences and similarities.

The research-focus of the visit was centered on understanding how less-resourced countries (as part of the Global South) actually approach and implement technology integration. The research has an Appreciative Inquiry nature, focusing on what works and how. This visit further kickstarted the collaborative focus on providing guidelines on technology integration in the Global South.

## **Presentation at Seminario de Investigación Educativa PUCP (19 September 2023)**

Jody, with his Peruvian research counterpart Dr Carol Reveiro, spoke on the topic of Exploring guidelines for technology integration in the Global South. It is a brand new research project. Its foundations started off with TPACK, and then ventured into 10 basic guidelines from the literature. The work that lies ahead entails a bigger collaborative project between partners to refine their research, and hopefully to

develop a definitive theory on the topic.

## **Conference presentation on Purposeful integration of Generative AI in education at the Integración intencionada de la IA generativa en la educación**

In this presentation, Jody focused on the consideration of the three AIs, namely Artificial Intelligence, Appreciative Inquiry, and Academic Integrity. He spoke on their purposeful integration. This presentation was technically well-advanced as it was simulcast in English and Spanish in six countries via the Zoom platform.

The presentation can be accessed here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_5TIE9d6XW3bhajkOxyl8fr261ZX1O/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_5TIE9d6XW3bhajkOxyl8fr261ZX1O/view?usp=sharing)

## **A visit to the Innovation Hub in Education**

The visitors, under the guidance of Jaime Aranda, went to see the hub that is starting out now. With LLITUP in its tenth year, Jody could associate well with this ideation phase.

## **A Peruvian experience**

While Spanish was entirely foreign to Jody upon arrival in São Paulo, he and Dr Joyce West quickly learnt the linguistic basics with an app called Spanish. Soon, he could understand basic questions such as "Where are you going?" "What is the time?" and "What does it cost?" He also realised that correct pronunciation is particularly important.

## **Experiencing the surroundings**

The visitors went from an altitude of 80 meters above sea level, to 4900 meters at Rainbow Mountain.

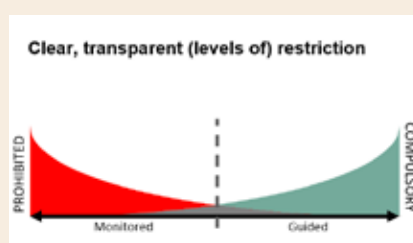




- ◀ **TOP LEFT:** Jody presenting at *Integración intencionada de la IA generativa en la educación*  
**TOP MIDDLE:** Jody, Peruvian research counterpart Dr Carol Reveiro and UP colleague Dr Joyce West  
**TOP RIGHT:** Froggy and the PUCP squirrel busy building international relationships  
**BOTTOM LEFT:** Jody wearing warm traditional on top of Rainbow Mountain  
**BOTTOM MIDDLE:** A visit to the Ministry of Education by Dr Joyce West, Mathias Burga, Jody Joubert and Carmen Sandoval  
**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Jody and Prof Wasserman on a stroll



- ▲ **Jody's presentation slides for Integración intencionada de la IA generativa en la educación**



- ▲ **The levels of restriction model, developed by Jody**

## **FLEXIBLE FUTURES 2023** *Sharing the design process for the module Teaching and Learning of Coding and Robotics for ECE* With insights shared by Annèl and Dr Nadia Swanepoel

While 2023's Flexible Futures conference discussions were centered around Artificial Intelligence, there was room to share innovative work done in Higher Education too. Under the subtopic of Developing curricula that align with the Digital Age in higher education, Dr Nadia Swanepoel and Annèl van Rooyen shared the module design process for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) module aimed at the Teaching and Learning of Coding and Robotics. The work of Prof Callaghan, Nadia and Annèl to develop the proposed module following the Appreciative Inquiry model's design process was shared.

On 23 August 2023, we had a full room of highly interested attendees. Nadia shared our understanding of Coding as a language, as mathematics, as a playground and as a value. We

then shared how we approached the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process. AI consists of five phases, being Define, Discover, Dream, Design and Destiny. We added Dedicate as a first phase to determine the motivation behind our work. The module development team aimed to improve their subject field knowledge of both Early Childhood Education as well as Coding and Robotics. This knowledge building process that guided the module development process, supported the intended outcome to achieve a module that is "integrated, playful, activity-based and accessible to SA learners from different households and backgrounds," according to Nadia.

Nadia shared how we approached the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process with

Dedicate, Define, Discover, Dream, and Design. Dedicate expressed our motivation to be part of the module development process. Annèl explained that ECE and Coding and Robotics components, as well as other documents, informed our Define stage. Discover celebrated existing module design approaches and our ideal learning activities. Dream expressed the many wonderful insights that we gained from the 2022 Coding and Robotics symposium hosted by LLITUP. The Design phase consisted of an active application of Backward Design to layout the module, and three play sessions. The play sessions were focused on the application of Computational Thinking, designing integrated activities, and the combination of children's stories with Coding and Robotics



- ▲ **Module planners: Prof Ronel Callaghan, Annèl van Rooyen and Dr Nadia Swanepoel**



- ▲ **Appreciative Inquiry process followed for the module design process**



- ▲ **Steps from the AI process**



# JST320 and LLITUP take hands for the 5th year in a row

*With insights shared by  
Dr Nadia Swanepoel and Annèl*

In September 2019, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Department took hands with LLITUP to introduce a fruitful synergy: the possibility of integrating Coding and Robotics in ECE. This year, the tradition followed suit with two sessions that students could join. Under the guidance of Prof Ronel Callaghan and Annèl van Rooyen, the Natural Science and Technology in the Foundation Phase (JST 320) students made their way to the F-lab in the SMTE department where Annèl introduced them to a new world filled with wonderful possibilities.

The first session took place on 28 September 2023. During this session, the students focused on Coding and Robotics tool exploration. In the words of Albert Einstein "Play is the highest form of research." Therefore, students experienced different approaches to tool exploration. The task was simple: "Play and figure it out!", while also keeping track of their play processes.

The tool exploration activities consisted of three play dates. The first play date focused on finding unplugged coding activity ideas for the ECE classroom. Students found many typical ECE activities that teach the underlying computational thinking skills. These include Sudoku puzzles, origami without instructions and making patterns with objects, to name but a few.

Play date 2 focused on Coding and Robotics apps for ECE. Students enjoyed the Tanks coding game the most by far. In fact, most of the groups played Tanks in the end. They realised how teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving are natural ingredients of Coding and Robotics activities. Other apps that left an impression on students included Scratch, CodeMonkey and Spark Academy.

Play date 3 involved members of LLITUP's robotics family like the Blue-bot, the Coding Critter and the Boats teachers' kit. Students enjoyed the Coding Critter's play scene that comes with the box.

Blue-bot's bluetooth functionality excited students, as they could control the robot from their smartphones.

As the session progressed, students became all the more talkative and exploratory. With tools in their hands, students easily engaged with the activities, learning many things. While some students pondered on where Coding and Robotics can fit into already busy classroom schedules, they soon realised that the integration of Coding and Robotics with other subjects has lasting value.

The second Coding and Robotics session took place on 2 October 2023. LLITUP welcomed students from Session 1, as well as many new faces. From the start, this Bee-bot session was engaging and creative. During this session, groups of students designed activities for their Science and Technology teaching with the use of Bee-bots. 10 student groups were positioned at 10 different stations. Every station provided one Bee-bot, koki's and paper. with variations like some A0 grid mats or wooden blocks to use alongside the Bee-bot. A Bee-bot paper jacket that could be decorated according to a theme and a children's story were provided at some of the stations. The Bee-bots also partnered with the Blue-bot and Coding Critter at two stations.

It was fascinating to witness how 10 completely different ideas took shape under the student's skillful hands. This included stories about bees; a journey to the moon; an exploration of structures and children's songs; and a board game based on the story of The Little Red Hen.

When students were asked to reflect on their experience of these sessions, they used words such as "funfilled", "hands-on", "engaging", "challenging", "informative" and "playful". It is always a joyful experience to host these students and to learn with them.



## Photos of the 2nd Coding and Robotics session for JST320 students



1. Help Blossom, the bee to get to the hive



2. Navigate to different structures



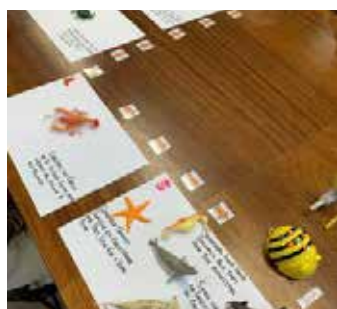
3. Find your way through the maze, Bee-bot!



4. Bee-bot, the astronaut, visits the moon



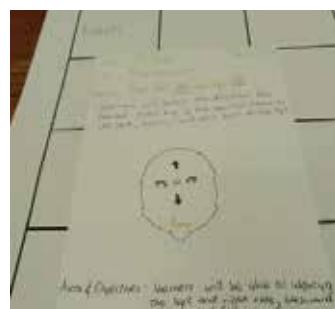
5. Build an indigenous house



6. Explore sea creatures and letters with Bee-bot



7. Collect facts while going through the maze



8. Get to know Bee-bot's directional movements



9. Dice and command cards move Bee-bot



10. A board game with Die Rooi Hennetjie



11. Station 7's setup with Coding Critter and Bee-bot



12. Station 2's setup with a blank paper, ruler, koki's and washing pegs

## Training primary school teachers in Coding and Robotics

*With insights shared by Annèl*

In September 2023, Annèl van Rooyen from LLITUP, in collaboration with the South African Teachers' Union (SAOU), presented a four-part webinar series on starting out with Coding and Robotics. Teachers from grades R to 7, representing all provinces in South Africa, attended the webinar series. It aimed to equip attendees with insights to design their personal Educational Robotics road maps.

**Session 1** focused on The WHO of Coding and Robotics and attracted 94 attendees. This session helped attendees to position themselves within the world of Educational Robotics. They thought about their own backgrounds, and also received new insights from Coding and Robotics field experts.

**Session 2** focused on The WHY and WHAT of Coding and Robotics. The 74 attendees were encouraged to define their own motivation for getting involved with Coding and Robotics. We shared why Coding and Robotics is being prioritised, and what can be taught. A Coding Critter example where the rabbit dances the Hokey Pokey was showcased to the online attendees.

**Session 3** attracted a large audience of 116 attendees. The focus was on The WHERE, WHEN and WITH WHAT of Coding and Robotics. Annèl encouraged attendees to decide to start where they are and with what they have. This approach focuses on the utilisation of resources that teachers have at their

disposal already. She also introduced attendees to a wide range of Coding and Robotics tools that are used in both the literature, and in South African Coding and Robotics settings.

**Session 4** provided the 39 attendees with an opportunity to actively participate in the design of activities using Bee-bots. While the online interactions were limited to the Zoom platform's chat function, the attendees enjoyed sharing their ideas and seeing them happen on-screen. The activity was focused on a children's story and how attendees would utilise the story's content and the Bee-bot to create an interactive activity.



# The journey from a CTLI course to a BEd Honours in CIE

With insights shared by Genevieve Carruthers-Smith, Carrol Möller (CIE BEd Hons graduates Spring 2023), Prof Callaghan and three CIE BEd Hons students

The LLITUP research unit is situated within the Computer Integrated Education (CIE) knowledge area in the SMTE Department. One of the qualifications presented in this knowledge area, is the Honors in CIE. It is presented in hybrid mode in the department, as well as through the Unit for Distance Education. Two of the elective modules in the qualification are Instructional Tools and e-Learning; and Computers as Cognitive Tools. These two modules are also presented in hybrid format as an Advanced Short Course in CIE to teachers in the Western Cape province for the Department of Education, through Enterprises at UP. It is organized through the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI) in collaboration with the ETDP SETA. The two modules are accredited for the CIE Honors to allow participants to continue with the full Honors if they should wish to do so. This initiative commenced in 2018 with the first cohort and was presented to 40 to 100 participants each year.

A handful of students from the Advanced Course continue to the full Honors in Distance Education each year. In 2023, a group of students that completed the Advanced Course and continued to the full Honors in CIE graduated during the September graduation ceremony. This group did the Advanced Course in 2020, during the lockdown period. They worked fully online throughout the Advanced Course, as well as the remainder of their Honors qualification. This resulted in an exceptionally tightly-knit online community of inquiry. A number of these students attended the graduation ceremony this year in person. For the majority of students and lecturers the graduation ceremony was the first time to meet each other in person. It was a truly joyous occasion! Some of them shared their thoughts on their journeys.

Genevieve Carruthers-Smith said: "I had a very narrow view of how technology could be used in teaching and learning, mainly using it as a means of transferring knowledge and just replacing traditional modes of teaching. I am now acutely aware of how technology can serve as a cognitive tool to promote active learning and allow students to discover concepts through their interaction with technology.

I work at a previously disadvantaged school where technology resources are not readily available. These courses showed that there are many ways to utilize technology for teaching and learning, and that the school's technology resources didn't have to be a limiting factor in one's integration of technology. We explored innovative ways of utilising technology effectively and adapting

our teaching to a more 21st century approach. I was completely pushed out of my comfort zone and then realized, through the reflective practices taught, that the way in which we were being taught was, in fact, what we were learning. This gave us the confidence to take on a more facilitator role in our classrooms and allow the students to take on a more active role in their learning through the use of available ICTs."

Carrol Möller, another student from this group, shared her reflection. She highlighted how the group supported each other on WhatsApp. "It was after the first online session that the Western Cape group, under the initiative of Marico Mouton, created the WhatsApp group. We just clicked. We tackled the CIE courses as a team and aced it. We collaborated on everything related to CIE. We shared sources and information. We became a proper information network. If you thought your idea was not working you bounced it off the group and sure, you would get another perspective that got you rolling. We had language experts, mathematics experts, computer experts. There wasn't a problem we could not solve.

Many times, we would read each other's assignments and offer advice on how an artefact could be improved. The whole experience has brought together a diverse group of people who have shared a unique journey where it seems the journey is endless.

This collaborative group on WhatsApp completely changed my perspective of group work. I have learned to listen to others, respect their perspectives, and find value in their perspectives. I acknowledged their experiences and the world of knowledge they brought to the collective, something not available on the internet. It became invaluable. I could not have done this a different way."

Carrol also shared about their in-person meeting at the graduation. "We met in person for the first time at the graduation

ceremony at the University of Pretoria. Unfortunately, not everybody on the group could make the journey, but that does not mean that we view each other differently. The support remains."

Daylon Fredericks experienced his BEd Honours journey as a journey of transformation. He said: "The support we received was instrumental, particularly during the challenging times brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pillars of support include the CIE Distance Honors Group, and several lecturers. As we embarked on this educational journey specializing in Computer-Integrated Education, we found strength and solidarity within our tight-knit WhatsApp support group. The bond we shared transcended the digital realm, transforming our group into a source of inspiration and resilience. In the face of the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our WhatsApp group became a sanctuary of shared experiences, collective problem-solving, and unwavering encouragement. It was in this group that we found solace during moments of uncertainty and celebrated each other's milestones, no matter how small. We swapped study tips, offered motivation, and shared the triumphs and tribulations of our academic endeavors."

Daylon commended Prof Callaghan for her unwavering commitment to this cohort of students. He is also very thankful for research guidance and support from Dr Maryke Mihai and PhD student Soene Botha (his supervisor). Daylon concludes: "In retrospect, this journey into Computer-Integrated Education has been an extraordinary blessing. It has not only broadened my horizons, but also nurtured my passion for leveraging technology as a transformative tool in education. I am grateful for the opportunities and the incredible individuals who have enriched my educational experience. This narrative stands as a testament to the transformative power of education and the people who make such journeys possible."



▲ LEFT: Dr Maryke Mihai, Gontse Mthelebofu, Fariyah Jaffer, Carrol Möller, Prof Ronel Callaghan, Jody Joubert, Genevieve Carruthers-Smith, Marico Mouton, Faadiyah, Daylon Fredericks and Lyndon

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH INDABA 2023

### LLITUPians share their CIE-research foci with the Faculty of Education

*With insights shared by Annèl*

In August 2023, the annual opportunity for postgraduate students to share their research activities with the wider Faculty of Education arose. Three LLITUPians decided to heed the call. Annèl, Farihah, and Kabelo submitted abstracts for the 2023 Faculty of Education Research Indaba.

On the day, six Computer Integrated Education (CIE) students ascended the stage to summarise their research

journeys to the audience in just 10 minutes each. We saw well-prepared slides and interesting research stories. Farihah presented her ongoing Masters-level research on the addressing of the digital divide in a CIE module. Kabelo spoke on the topic of teacher engagement in Intermediate Phase online classroom learning experiences to showcase her Masters-level research. Annèl presented her PhD study as a children's story, fitting to the theme

of Early Childhood Education teacher training for Educational Robotics.

Farihah was awarded the prize for the best MEd Research in progress abstract. Annèl received the prize for best abstract for PhD research post-proposal level. Joining us for the photo was Kabelo with her excellent presentation, Mrs Jenette Webb who won the prize for most innovative methodology and Ms Andrea Kruger, another excellent CIE student.



▲ Participants in the 2023 Faculty of Education Research Indaba. Kabelo Mahlase, Annèl van Rooyen, Jenette Webb, Andrea Kruger and Farihah Jaffer



▲ Farihah, Kabelo and Annèl presenting their research



## Showcasing our research unit at the 2023 ChooseUP Day

*With inputs shared by the LLITUP team*

On a bright and early Saturday morning, five LLITUP representatives showcased LLITUP to parents and family members who joined the prospective students in visiting the Groenkloof campus. We had about 70 visitors in and out of the F-lab, in groups of 20/30 people.

We prepared five interaction spaces, with team members taking responsibility for each of these.

- Annèl and Ayanda Zulu planned for Bee-bot's cat and mouse activities. There were some unplugged coding activities as well.
- Farihah was responsible for some creative play with Mbots and the Probot. She designed an entire track for the car - great fun!

- Kabelo handled Gizmos and Gadgets. She had Scottie Go!, Tanks, Turing Tumble and the Swivel camera ready for action. Tanks and the Turing Tumble were quite popular.
- Gontse and Prof Callaghan handled AR and VR adventures:
  - The VR experience entailed a roller coaster ride via YouTube
  - The AR experience utilised the Quiver app where you can print and colour your picture and then see it come to life when scanned
- Jody's Gepetto 3D printer station was actively printing moveable fish fossils - a nice find indeed.

It was exciting to showcase the variety of edtech that the lab interacts with on a regular basis.



▲ Visitors interacting with the Turing Tumble



▲ Bee-bots playing cat-and-mouse



▲ The Probot's track built by Farihah



## LLITUP Living Lab event

*With inputs shared by Prof Callaghan*

LLITUP presented a hybrid Living Lab Community of Inquiry event on 8 November 2023. The aim of the event was to allow participants to share experiences and knowledge about the Living Lab entities and their approach in South Africa. A few of the existing Living Labs in South Africa shared their approaches and experiences, after which participants had the opportunity to explore the potential of a Living Lab research and innovation approach for their own practice.

Prof Callaghan introduced the Living Lab concept and shared the essence of Living Labs as “a user-driven collaborative networked eco-system that systematically integrates research and innovation to address realworld issues. A community of participants are living in the reality of the eco-system. Living Labs are active in a variety of environments (energy, healthcare, agriculture, education, smart cities) and in different formats (research, corporate, organizational, community).”

Ms Sibongile Radebe from the Technology Innovation Agency from the Department of Science and Innovation shared an initiative to support innovation for Local Economic Development within the National Framework for Local Economic Development. This funds a number of Living Labs in South Africa.

This was followed by a presentation about the T3 Incubation Hub, as shared by Ms Wilhela Gie, where “Township, Technology and Transformation meet”. Their programmes include technological skills transfer programs as well as entrepreneurship programmes.

Ms Faiza Xaba shared the inspiring success story of the Siyafunda

Community Technology Center. Their main focus is to “provide access to digital skills and technologies to support grass-roots communities in rural and urban townships in South Africa . Furthermore, it also aims to support economic, educational, and social development.”

Jody and Prof Callaghan shared the LLITUP approach, as a different type of Living Lab, strongly rooted in research foundations, but lived practically through different collaborative projects.

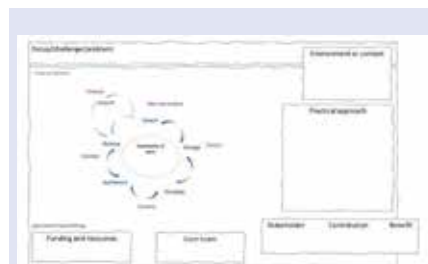
Prof Marlien Herselman from the CSIR described her experience with the Living Lab in South Africa (LLiSA) initiative which supported the initial development of Living Labs in the country since 2010. LLITUP recognizes the key role that she played since 2012 in our own conceptualization.

These presentations were followed by an interesting discussion during which participants that are involved in other living labs or in living lab research shared their experiences and stories. After lunch participants interrogated their own thoughts, current approaches and possible future application of the Living Lab approach. This was facilitated through a worksheet based on the core elements of Living Labs.

The event was organized by Ms Kanye Rampa, supported by Jody, Farihah, Gontse, and Mrs Sophia le Roux. It was attended by 40-50 people. The attendees work in different Living Labs within and beyond the University of Pretoria's borders. This included researchers and students who are studying, or intend to, study the Living Lab approach, as well as other interested parties. We found the interaction with other practitioners and interested parties to be enriching.



The core elements of a Living Lab are situated in a community within a context that are striving to find practical solutions through a well supported research approach and research strategies. These core elements and their interactions are illustrated in the accompanying figure.



This is the Living Lab planning template used during discussions held among attendees. It requires thinking about the problem, focuses on needs that have to be addressed, and then unpacks it using the Appreciative Inquiry approach. Several practical considerations are taken into account as well.



▲ Attendees of the event in the F-lab. About half of the attendees were present online



▲ Presenters of the day (from top to bottom) include Ms. Faiza Xaba, Ms. Kanye Rampa, Prof. Ronel Callaghan, Prof. Marlien Herselman, Ms. Sibongile Radebe and Mr. Jody Joubert

# Unlocking the Power of ChatGPT: Making Research a Breeze Workshop

*With inputs shared by Dr Celeste Combrinck*

Dr Celeste Combrinck from the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SMTE) in the Faculty of Education presented an AI in research workshop on the morning of 15 November 2023. The workshop was presented at Groenkloof Campus in Aldoel 2 to approximately 100 academics from various entities in the university. The workshop focused on utilising ChatGPT as a support tool for research. In Dr Combrinck's words: "Imagine a research assistant who is always available, teachable, and inexpensive. You now have a data scientist in your pocket." It was a hands-on experience using ChatGPT-3.5 (free version) and ChatGPT-4 (paid version) to analyse, interpret and integrate findings from quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies while being ethically responsible and scientifically sound.

The workshop was divided into five sessions: introduction to and setting up ChatGPT; qualitative data analysis with ChatGPT; evaluating and improving academic writing with AI; quantitative data analysis with ChatGPT; and mixed-

method research with ChatGPT. The approach was interactive and guided through several hands-on activities that allowed participants to experiment with the AI tool and discuss various options. Dr Combrinck prepared and provided several handy resources, including sets of guiding prompts and datasets.

Participants rated the workshop's usefulness as 8.5 out of 10, finding it generally applicable and useful. When we asked them what they liked the most about the workshop, they said they appreciated the enhanced understanding and skill development, the practical application and immediate utility, discovering the personas and advanced features and the ethical and practical use of AI.

Participants provided several valuable suggestions for future workshops. Some of the suggestions included the following:

1. Extended workshop duration and depth: Many participants desired a longer workshop, suggesting a full-day format for more in-depth exploration.

2. Enhanced focus on prompt engineering: A notable theme was the need for more guidance on writing effective prompts, a crucial skill for maximising ChatGPT's potential.
3. Practical application and hands-on experience: Respondents emphasised the importance of practical, hands-on experience with ChatGPT.

In summary, the workshop on ChatGPT was well-received, with participants valuing the enhanced understanding of the tool, discovery of new features, practical applications, engaging presentation, ethical considerations, and empowerment through knowledge and practice.

## Words of thanks

LLITUP was proud to host this excellent workshop that brought together participants from different environments in true Living Lab style. We commend Dr Combrinck on the valuable and timely workshop on AI in research. She expressed her gratitude to the LLITUP lab, which provided excellent support.



▲ Attendees in Aldoel 2

## Academic attendees of the AI workshop



- Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

▲ The spread of the AI event attendees across UP faculties and beyond



# ChatGPT



# UP EDUCATION AT A GLANCE



## FACULTY OF CHOICE

The **Faculty of Education** is the largest contact Faculty of Education in the country and a leader in teacher education and training. Our core function is to train quality teachers, education psychologists, leaders and managers in education. Our admission criteria ensures that we attract high performing students from all over the world.

### EXCELLENT ACADEMICS



**82%**

academic staff  
with doctorates



**20**

NRF rated  
researchers



**94.9%**

examination  
undergraduate  
pass rate

### STRONG INTERNATIONAL PROFILE



**82 821**

Alumni worldwide

**QS Rankings (250-300)**



## ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

### 4 Undergraduate programmes

2 initial teacher education qualifications:  
Bachelor of Education (BEd)  
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

Higher Certificate in Sports Sciences  
Education

### Distance Education programmes

### Postgraduate programmes

Postgraduate Diploma in Technical and  
Vocational Education and Training

Postgraduate Diploma in Visual Impairment

Advanced Diploma in School Leadership  
and Management

13 BEd Honours, 15 MEd and  
14 PhD programmes

## STUDENT PROFILE

**6 604**

Total number of enrolled  
undergraduate students

**4 027**

Total number of distance  
education students

**85.37%**

Percentage of  
black students

**3 803**

Total number of  
postgraduate students

**83.89%**

Percentage of  
international publications