

# 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

## The Journey Continues

Welcome to the second edition of the Intuition for 2024. In this edition, I will focus on major developments and milestones achieved by the faculty since the beginning of the year, which include: (i) the outcome of the admission system that was introduced in 2023, (ii) the strengthening of the internationalisation of the faculty, and (iii) the annual review of the faculty and its performance in 2023.

### Ranking based admission policy

In 2023 we reported that the Faculty of Education had become the largest faculty in the university due to the innovative recruitment strategies it had introduced. The faculty had also introduced comprehensive wrap-around support for its indigent students, who now constitute a significant number of our enrolments, to ensure that those whom we grant access also complete their studies and leave the university with qualifications. Good as these initiatives are, without the provision of resources to support the growth in student numbers and to respond to the shape and size of the university, the faculty had to rethink and review its growth trajectory. In this regard, the university's introduction of the ranking admission system became helpful. The ranking system was introduced to ensure that the university admits the best performing students, replacing the previous admission

system that was based on the first-come, first-served principle. The latter resulted in the admission and filling of available places by students who had simply applied first and met the application criteria, instead of admitting the students with the better APS scores.

The ranking based admission system had its own advantages as well as shortcomings. In terms of advantages, it became a useful instrument to control the number of students we admitted. In this regard, the faculty was able to admit about 400 fewer students in 2024 than in the previous year. This will in the long run assist us in reducing the staff-student ratios, which are currently not ideal at 1:50 compared to the university's ratio of 1:22. The shortcoming of the ranking admission model is that the university took time to confirm the admission of some applicants, and as a result some of them took offers from other universities who are our competitors. As a result, the rationale for the introduction of this model was realised in totality. This model is again under review by the university to ensure that we find the right balance in our admission processes, which will help us to attract and admit the right kind of students.

### Internationalisation of the Faculty

The faculty continues to pursue internationalisation initiatives to strengthen its international profile. What is pleasing is an increase in collaborations with

other African universities and researchers. In this regard, research collaborations between researchers in the Department of Humanities Education and their counterparts in universities in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania are commendable. The focus of these collaborations on the development and use of African languages in teaching and learning serves to advance the decolonisation of the curriculum, which is part of the curriculum transformation agenda of the University.

The faculty also continued to advance its internationalisation agenda beyond the borders of the African continent. Staff continued to attend and participate in international conferences, symposia, and summits that are relevant to their fields of specialisation. As dean, during the month of April, I led three delegations of the faculty to collaborating institutions overseas, including the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and Michigan State University. In May, I led another delegation to the Mauritian Institute of Education (MIE) in Mauritius as part of the preparation for the Distance Education Teacher Training in Africa (DETA) conference that co-hosted with MIE in July 2025. In June, I, together with the Head of the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) office, attended a teacher education conference with the theme High Quality Teacher Education: System building and model innovation that was hosted with the North East Normal



University (NENU) in China. All these initiatives help the faculty to be globally connected while also remaining locally responsive and relevant.

### Annual performance of the faculty (2023)

The month of May saw a review of the University's performance through the annual performance of faculties. The Faculty of Education continued its trend

of good performance by meeting the majority of its key performance indicators, despite the constraints it has been operating under. The dedication of the staff and the hardwork of our students contributed to the good performance of the Faculty of Education. In this regard, I would like to thank both staff and students for their support in helping the faculty to fulfil its mission.

The first semester of 2024 started and concluded well. I would like to wish all staff and students well as we start the second semester and look forward to another good semester of successful student learning and research productivity.

*Chika Schoole*

**Happy Dean**  
**Professor Chika Schoole**

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

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# FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DEAN OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

◀ Professor Salome Human-Vogel, Deputy Dean: Teaching and Learning

## Quality Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Education

With the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 now almost a distant memory, and blended learning firmly established, the Faculty of Education can now return our focus on continuously assuring the quality of teaching and learning experiences that we wish to provide for our students. It is important to acknowledge that our staff and students who returned to campus late in 2021 were not the same people who left campus in March 2020. Staff and students alike returned to campus with different expectations about the campus experience, what good teaching and learning look like, and what they need to be happy and successful.

In the Covid years, when access to campus was limited, students valued the availability of recordings and learning materials on ClickUP, the autonomy to decide when and where to learn, and the support they received to ensure student success. Returning to a full-time contact teaching model has been challenging for students, as some of this autonomy and flexibility has largely disappeared with the requirement of full-time class attendance.

We are only at the beginning of trying to understand how best to respond to these challenges as a faculty, especially given the state of our economy and the fact that many of our students study with bursaries and experience severe financial challenges at times, requiring them to supplement their income. Designing learning experiences that are flexible, maximise autonomy, and support student success looks very different in a post-pandemic world where students have largely returned to campus and class.

The arrival of ChatGPT late in 2022 also introduced a different disruptive dimension to teaching and learning. Embraced by some and denounced by others, there can be no doubt that ChatGPT has dramatically changed the educational landscape in a short time. It requires lecturers to carefully consider how the assessment in their courses is structured, and the extent to which they incorporate the use of ChatGPT in their teaching; it also requires us to consider the role of lengthy essays as part of a continuous assessment model when it is not so clear whether an essay represents the carefully crafted work of a student or an AI.

Generally, there has been a move back to sit-down assessments, and time will tell whether this represents a step forward or a step back in our assessment practices. What is clear is that the faculty will increasingly need to focus more on the assessment of students' competencies, while the assessment of pure knowledge takes on a lesser role.

For students, ChatGPT provides unparalleled opportunities to improve their writing, to learn independently, and to improve the quality of their work. It also presents a serious challenge to the integrity of all who experiment with it and requires the highest level of ethical reasoning and decision-making when it comes to incorporating it into essays, assignments, and other work. As a Faculty of Education, we recognise that an AI tool is a teaching and learning tool like any other, and can be used ethically or be abused. Our teaching staff aims to ensure that our students can make good choices when it comes to using AI, and our assessment practices are designed to ensure that the assessment of our students is of a very high level and can be trusted.

From 2024, our Foundation Phase Teaching programme has incorporated a coding and robotics module to prepare Foundation Phase students to teach these skills to their learners, and we have also introduced the teaching of language modules in African languages as a means of contributing to ensuring that all Foundation Phase learners are taught by teachers who are fully proficient in the home language of the learners in their class.

In addition to these transformative innovations in our curricula, selected students have also had the opportunity over the past two years to participate in an online internationalisation of teacher education short course with Griffith University in Australia, and Hamburg University in Germany. As part of this course, our education students engage with other education students in these countries to learn more about teacher education from an international perspective, thereby developing their global outlook as educators.

With a student success rate of 95%, we are very proud that significant numbers of students in the Faculty of Education complete their degrees in the minimum 4-year period, that they are well-prepared to meet the demands of their profession, and that the learning environment in the Faculty of Education contributes to their employability as teachers in South Africa. Over the next few years, the Faculty of Education will continue its focus on strengthening African languages in all phases of Education, delivering more teachers in STEM fields, and, above all, continuing to deliver well-rounded teachers.



# From Portugal To Pretoria-UP-Lifting Publications In The ECE Department

Authors: Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Dr Kayla Willemse, and Prof. Keshni Bipath

Prof. Keshni Bipath and Dr Francinah Masola presented papers at the European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) conference held in Lisbon, Portugal from 1 to 3 September 2023. Their paper, entitled "Ecosystemic Factors Influencing the Experience of Fear in Young Children", and poster presentation, entitled "Higher Education Qualifications for Early Childhood Development (Birth to 4): Investigating Conditions for Successful Policy Implementation", received excellent international attention and curiosity.

The EECERA Conference organisers, Prof. Tony Bertram, Editor-in-Chief; Prof. Christine Pascal, President of EECERA; and Dr Helen Lyndon, Sub-Editor of the European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, were invited to collaborate with the Early Childhood Education Department from 6 to 8 February 2024. The ECE staff enjoyed a 3-day workshop on academic writing, conference applications, ethics, and dissemination spurred collaborative innovation, propelling the ECE department forward regarding their vision for research.

One particularly enriching exercise involved dividing the department into two teams, each tasked with the creative challenge of designing a poster. These posters were envisioned as visual

representations of the steps necessary for achieving success in academic writing and fostering a culture of collaboration within the department to enhance research outputs and academic visibility.

In a stroke of inspiration, one team coined the term "UPLifting Writing Circle" to encapsulate the supportive and empowering environment they aimed to cultivate. This term, later abbreviated to "UPLifting", embodied the spirit of encouragement and camaraderie that permeated their approach to academic endeavours. The second team drew inspiration from the rich tapestry of cultural heritage, naming their initiative "Masibambane", drawn from the isiZulu phrase meaning "Let us work together". Rooted in the belief that unity and collective effort are key to success, this name reflected their commitment to collaboration and mutual support within the department.

Motivated by the creative suggestions produced by both groups, Dr Kayla Willemse set out to combine these ideas into a cohesive vision. The finished product was a poster that skillfully combined the two phrases: UPLifting Masibambane: Taking Hands to Grow Together. This represents the department's sense of unity and shared dedication to moving forward as a unit in the pursuit of intellectual influence and academic success.



Dr Helen Lyndon with Ms Bongzi Cwayi



From left to right: Prof. Christine Pascal, President of EECERA; Prof. Tony Bertram, Editor-in-Chief; Ms Bongzi Cwayi and Prof. Marien Graham



The ECE writing circle: From left to right: Dr Helen Lyndon; Mrs Scholastica Mamogale; Dr Nevensha Sing; Dr Tuelo Matjokana; Prof. Tony Bertram; Prof. Christine Pascal; Prof. Keshni Bipath; Dr Francinah Masola; Dr Susan Thuketana

## Prof. Ines Oldenburg From The Carl Von Ossietzky University In Oldenburg Visits The Faculty Of Education

Author: Prof. Salome Human-Vogel

From 20 November - 8 December 2023, Prof. Salomé Human-Vogel welcomed Prof. Ines Oldenburg from the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg to the Faculty of Education for a follow-up to the 2022 visit in which we explored possible collaboration between our two universities. During this visit, the Faculty of Education also signed an institutional agreement with Oldenburg University to enable research cooperation and student exchange between the two universities. (See photo with the Dean).

As part of her visit, Prof. Oldenburg met with several researchers in the Faculty, and particularly in the Departments of Humanities Education, Early Childhood Education, and the Centre for the Study of Resilience, to explore possible research areas for collaboration. In

addition, Prof. Oldenburg also met with the Director of the Centre for the Future of Work, Prof. Wesley Rosslyn-Smith, to discuss possible partnerships for research projects in Education and Agriculture. Prof. Oldenburg has a specific interest in inclusive education, sustainable development goals, and technology integration in teaching and learning.

Subsequent to Prof. Oldenburg's visit, Prof. Human-Vogel was invited to Oldenburg University from 22 June - 6 July 2024 as a visiting lecturer, where she presented seminars on Interactive Qualitative Analysis methodology, and where they further discuss the use of personas as a tool for human-centred curriculum design as an area for research collaboration.



▲ From Left: Prof. Salome Human-Vogel, Prof. Ines Oldenburg, Prof. Chika Sehoole, and Dr Joyce West.



# Playful Beginnings: Early Childhood Education Bridges The Gap Between Theory And Practice.

Authors: Drs Joyce West, Nadia Swanepoel, Kayla Willemse and Mrs Mariska Ellis

The Department of Early Childhood Education had a bright start to 2024. Students were actively engaged in various practical and simulation activities to enhance their comprehension of foundational concepts pertinent to the education of young learners. The activities comprehensively addressed areas such as language, mathematics, and life skills development through integration and demonstration. Each activity was underpinned by play, exploration, and authentic learning, which are primary modalities for knowledge acquisition and development. These modalities are firmly grounded in theoretical principles that elucidate their efficacy as the optimal pedagogical approaches for learning in the Foundation Phase.



▲ Dr West uses the infamous *Gruffalo* children's book by Julia Donaldson as part of her reading series workshops

Dr Joyce West, Mrs Mariska Ellis, and their second-year JGL students delved deeply into the intricacies of the science of reading. Through a series of hands-on lessons, they explored the systematic, sequential, and explicit principles of phonics teaching while simultaneously

dissecting the neurocognitive dimensions of language development even before birth. The investigation extended to Scarborough's reading rope components and crafting innovative flap books, enriching their understanding of shared reading activities and teaching reading comprehension.

Dr Swanepoel redefined the perception of mathematics. Through her engaging sessions, students were not mere spectators but active participants in the discovery of mathematical essence. Emphasising playful exploration as the gateway to understanding, Dr Swanepoel instilled a profound passion for learning that promised to resonate throughout students' educational journeys. The energetic sessions unveiled a newfound appreciation for the beauty of mathematics.



▲ Dr Kayla Willemse and Ms Busisiwe Hadebe at the Sci-Enza

Venturing beyond the confines of the classroom, science education took on an exciting dimension with an excursion to Sci-Enza. Here, students explored the captivating realm of nitrogen, unravelling

its properties and witnessing its interactions with diverse materials. The JST 320 students, led by Dr Willemse, also embarked on a hands-on exploration of STEAM activities, honing their critical thinking prowess and engaging in discussions on the intricate nuances of technological design processes.



▲ Students Exploring STEAM Activities





# Orientation Sets The Stage For Success

Authors: Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Dr Susan Thuketana, and Orientation Stars 2024

The Department of Early Childhood Education's Orientation week, 12 – 16 February, was marked by colourful displays, friendly faces, and informative discussions. This year, there was yet another group of Orientation Stars who lit the way for the new first-year students.

Ms Dominique Cook, Mr Mankale Madigoe, and Ms Surika Strydom led the Orientation Stars Team. Dr Ronel de Villiers addressed the students as part of the welcoming and introduction session. What a delight to see a lecture room filled with first-year students dancing to the song "Whoop, I Feel Good!" by James Brown.

What stood out this year was the manner in which the Orientation Stars took it upon themselves to guide the first-year students and enlighten them on the finer nuances of setting up their timetables. A group of dedicated students presented the timetable session under the watchful eye of Ms Cook. This was a major contribution to the success of the orientation week. Some of the Orientation Stars shared their experiences and perceptions of the day:

## **Dominique Cook**

Orientation week at the University of Pretoria buzzed with anticipation, as fresh-faced students flooded the campus grounds, eager to embark on their academic journey. In lecture halls filled with enthusiastic voices, it was delightful to hear some students' rationales for wanting to become ECE teachers: "There's something magical about witnessing the spark of understanding in a child's eyes," one student explained, echoing the sentiments of many. Orientation week had not only provided them with essential knowledge and guidance but had also ignited a flame of passion that would fuel their dedication to shaping the future generations.

## **Jowilmi de Villiers**

During the orientation session, I introduced the modules to first-year students through an interactive presentation. Thereafter, we supported the students as they registered for all their core, fundamental, and elective modules. Seeing all the first-year students made me nostalgic about my own first year and excited to see them bloom into their full potential.

## **Molebogeng Mokoena**

At the orientation session for first-year students of ECE, I introduced first-year students to the requirements for taking Psychology as an additional module. The presentation was short and simple to understand; students who needed additional assistance were accommodated in the IT labs where they received this assistance. One of the highlights was to see how students made use of all the assistance offered to them. I even assisted students in other phases too. This service was very sentimental for me as I had no one to assist me in my own first year.

## **Sandra Mpyana**

I assisted the first years with drafting their timetables and online registration. I helped them with choosing their modules and explained the importance of registering for the correct modules. During my first year, our orientation was done online and there was a lot of confusion among most of us. With the 2024 first years, the greatest confusion that I picked up was with the CC and language modules. When it was all said and done, I felt like I was also part of the first-year students as this experience was also new for me. I also ended up making a new friend that is now one of my best friends and is so dear to me. Imagine – I was in class with this girl for four years and I had no idea she existed... This orientation was as much for me as it was for the first-year students.

## **Mankale Brian Madigoe**

I was one of the 'Ask-Me' assistants, helping the students to navigate through academic resources and to register their modules,

and guiding them on how to familiarize themselves with their campus so as to succeed in their studies. Later on, I was able to engage with the first-year students again as a tutor, where I helped to facilitate ice-breaker activities and provided information on the support systems that are available to them. My engagement with the new students was so satisfying as I was able to offer them study tips and advice on how to get involved in campus activities to help them feel comfortable and confident as they began their academic journey. It really felt great to offer someone support when they needed it, both academically and basically just to acclimatize to the campus/varsity life.



▲ Dominique Cook and Surika Strydom



▲ Left to Right: Ms Bongsi Cwayi, Mrs Scholastica Mamogale, Dr Francinah Masola, Dr Nadia Swanepoel and Dr Susan Thuketana



▲ Students dancing to the music in Aldoel 1



# Currency And Agency Of Assessment As A Vehicle For Realising The Envisaged Learner

Author: Gabriel Mokoena

The Department of Basic Education (DBE), led by Mrs Angie Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education, hosted its ninth Basic Education Sector hybrid Lekgotla at the Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg from 14 - 16 March 2024. The lekgotla aimed at fostering critical discussions and strategies to move the Basic Education sector forward. The 2024 Lekgotla took place under the theme "Equipping learners with knowledge and skills for a changing world". Stakeholders who attended the gathering included officials such as Members of the Executive Council (MECs); Heads of Departments (HoDs); representatives of teacher, parent, and learner organisations; local and international academics; and experts from post-school education sectors.

Prof. Funke Omidire, the Director of the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), along with Dr Rufus Poliah from the DBE, participated in a moderated discussion with the theme "The currency and agency of assessment as a vehicle for realising the envisaged

learner", which was chaired by Prof. Mary Metcalfe of the University of Johannesburg. In unpacking this theme for the panel discussion, Dr Poliah referred to the three components of the theme: firstly, the envisaged learner, who is a learner who can think critically and creatively, and is able to solve problems. This is the 21st century learner, who must be digital and entrepreneurial in terms of the skills they possess. Secondly, the use of assessment as the agent, the driver, the point of intervention and action. In light of this view of assessment, Dr Poliah asked how do we use assessment appropriately so that assessment brings actualization to the learner that we want to see in the South African system? Thirdly, assessment as a vehicle; Dr Poliah maintained that assessment must be used to evaluate learning.

Prof. Omidire was introduced as a Professor at the University of Pretoria and an Educational Psychologist with a deep interest in multilingualism and multilingual education. Prof. Omidire

emphasized the importance of teacher development to teach reading, in the wake of the PIRLS 2021 results, which revealed that 81 percent of learners in South Africa did not reach the PIRLS CenterPoint of 500. Prof. Omidire emphasized that the purpose of the assessment, in terms of high stakes assessments, is to enable the government to pinpoint where the emphasis should be placed.



From Left: Prof. Funke Omidire (CEA), Prof. Mary Metcalfe (UJ) and Dr Rufus Poliah (DBE) at the Basic Education Sector hybrid Lekgotla

# The New Faces In ECE

Authors: Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Dr Kayla Willemse, Prof. Marien Graham and Ms Mercy Masuelele

The Department of Early Childhood Education is growing! Early in 2024, our dynamic department welcomed a number of esteemed lecturers home.

Prof. Marien Graham joined the department on 1 March 2024. We are thrilled to have an academic of her calibre in our midst and look forward to working with her on research endeavours. Her research journey spans numerous sole-authored publications and collaborative endeavours with esteemed international and South African scholars. Her research sheds light on critical issues within South Africa's educational landscape, utilising novel and sophisticated statistical techniques to generate a more comprehensive understanding of how learning and assessment opportunities for students at all levels of the formal education system (early learning, primary, secondary and tertiary) and their overall mental health and well-being can be improved. In terms of academic recognition, she has been awarded a Y1-rating from

the NRF and awarded the 2023 Research Medal by the Education Association of South Africa.

Dr Kayla Willemse is also new to the department. Her academic journey began in the Department of Early Childhood Education in 2014. With the guidance of Professor Keshni Bipath, she began her postgraduate studies, exploring the field of indigenous knowledge in the early years. Following the completion of her BEd Hons, Dr Willemse's thirst for knowledge led her to pursue further academic endeavours. In 2020, she proudly attained her Master's degree, a testament to her unwavering commitment to advancing education. Her research during this period focused on supporting Grade 3 teachers in effectively assisting learners with dyscalculia. Under the guidance of Prof. Roy Venketsamy and Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Dr Willemse delved into the intricacies of this learning challenge, seeking innovative solutions to empower teachers. In 2023, she reached the pinnacle of academic achievement by obtaining her

PhD in Computer-integrated Education. Guided by the esteemed Prof. Ronel Callaghan, her doctoral research delved into the transformative potential of integrating coding and robotics into the curriculum, particularly with a focus on enhancing mathematical understanding. This underscored Dr Willemse's unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of educational innovation, paving the way for transformative change within the field. Dr Willemse's path has come full circle, having started as a student and concluded as a lecturer in the Department of Early Childhood Education. Dr Willemse fully embraces the principles of the "UP-Way" and takes great pride in being part of the UP community.



▲ Dr Kayla Willemse



▲ Ms Phindile Mboane



▲ Mr Siyakudumisa Mbele

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We are pleased to welcome Mr Siyakudumisa Mbele as a new member of our department. His profound understanding of and intense enthusiasm for isiZulu promise to greatly enhance our department. In addition to his dedication to conventional teaching techniques, Mr Mbele is a supporter of the investigation of novel ways, particularly those that use technology, to improve the educational process. Mr Mbele is well known for his happiness and positivity. He has a contagious energy that makes those around him feel stronger. He is the epitome of a committed lecturer, constantly working to provide his students with unwavering support and dedication.

Ms Mercy Masuelele is a distinguished educator with a profound focus on transformative pedagogy in the teaching of the Setswana language. Her innovative teaching philosophy emphasises collaborative knowledge generation and the decolonisation of educational content, making her a valuable addition to our department. Ms Masuelele brings a wealth of experience in integrating diverse teaching methods and strategies, actively engaging students in the mastery of their language skills. She also places a significant emphasis on community engagement programmes, highlighting her commitment to holistic education. We are thrilled to welcome Ms Masuelele to our team, where her expertise and passion for education will undoubtedly enrich our department's offerings.

Ms Phindile Mboane is one of the friendliest faces that you will see as you enter the department. While standing in as one of the

departmental administrators, she shines a very bright light in our midst. She is an asset to the department and a joy to work with.



▲ **Front row, left to right: Ms Tholakele Nyathi, Prof. Marien Graham, Dr Nadia Swanepoel**  
**Second row, left to right: Ms Mercy Masuelele, Mrs Mariska Ellis, Dr Joyce West, Dr Kayla Willemse, Mr Matthews Matlala**  
**Third row, left to right: Mrs Scholastica Mamogale, Dr Tuelo Matjokana, Dr Francinah Masola, Ms Phindile Zondo, Mr Siyakudumisa Mbele, Dr Susan Thuketana**

## Human Rights Commemoration Celebration

Author: Busi Makena

Human Rights Day is celebrated annually in South Africa to commemorate and honour the Heroes who fought and died for the liberation and the rights we enjoy today. As part of our culture at the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Education Transformation Steering Committee had an event to celebrate Human Rights Day on 20 March 2024.

Among the attendees were the Tuks House Education Representatives; the Head of the Department of Education Policy and Management Studies in the Faculty of Education, Professor Simphiwe Mthiyane, who directed the programme of the day; the Faculty Dean, Professor

Chika Sehoole; and former Dean of the Faculty, Professor Johan Beckmann, who was the main guest speaker for the day.

Prof. Chika Sehoole was pleased to welcome everyone to the event, as he emphasized how privileged the students born after 1994 were; since they have the right to education without any hindrance, he stated that they must use the opportunity to their advantage.

Prof. Johan Beckmann gave a keynote address about how human rights play an important role in our lives. Some of the key points that he highlighted were that a human right is only a human right if it is within the law; that everyone has a right

to equality and fairness; that all citizens are equally entitled to human dignity, which is the achievement of equality and freedom; and that all citizens have an equal right to education, meaning that students have a right to be protected and a right to privacy.

The event presented a platform of robust networking and engagement among attendees as they dwelled on their own meaning of what Human Rights Day means to them, how they internalize this meaning based on the historical events of this day, and how far the country has come to be able to commemorate this day. This well-attended event prompted some thought-provoking ideologies.



▲ **Attendees at the Commemoration of Human Rights Celebration**



▲ **Prof. Chika Sehoole, Dean of the Faculty of Education, giving a welcome address**



▲ **Prof. Johan Beckmann giving a keynote address**



# Teamwork Makes Dreams Work

Authors: Dr Nadia Swanepoel and ECE Tutors, Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants

The Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is very fortunate to have a dedicated group of students who serve as tutors and teaching assistants in the department. Since the introduction of tutors and teaching assistants into the department, there has been a positive shift in student performance. Undergraduate students now have the opportunity to seek assistance from the tutors. This approach has been welcomed by both lecturers and students. The teaching assistants support lecturers in their teaching and learning endeavours by assisting with minor administrative details. The success of ECE is due to the commitment and passion shown by each of the tutors and teaching assistants. In this issue, we will briefly introduce some members of the dream team. Be on the lookout for the stars in the department.

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS

### **Esté Nel**

I am a second-year student and a teaching assistant for the Department of ECE. I am a Teaching Assistant for the Department of Early Childhood Education, providing extra support and guidance for students, specifically in the module JVK 130. I aim to earn my honours in Educational Psychology. This aligns with my teaching philosophy as I want to create a democratic environment where students feel comfortable and have the necessary support to succeed and overcome difficulties. This has given me the opportunity to share my expertise, become more confident, and be reassured of my goals and future. I want to create a democratic environment where students have the support to reach the stars.

### **Jowilmi de Villiers**

I am a third-year student and a teaching assistant for the Department of ECE

for the module JGS 212, foundation phase mathematics. I love assisting the students, as it not only teaches me more about the specific module but also helps me grow as a student myself. My teaching philosophy is that every child or student can learn; they only need the correct support to achieve this. I am also a firm believer in learning through play.

### **Tihologelo Tlaka**

I am a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree in Foundation Phase. A few years ago, if someone had told me that I would one day be on a journey to becoming a teacher, I would have laughed. It was never something that I had considered, because I thought I did not have the qualities of a teacher. But here I am now. I believe nothing is impossible, and with this mindset I aim to change students' minds about every negative thought they have ever had. My teaching philosophy is that we can all thrive and make it if we ask for help where it is needed – and, fortunately, I am here to assist.

### **Bongi Prestige Mahlangu**

I am an undergraduate student currently studying a bachelor's degree in Education (foundation phase). I am a firm believer in making good quality education accessible to all communities while being inclusive. Like Macro Bizzarri said, diversity and inclusion are the grounds for creativity and must remain the centre of what we do. It was during my period as a teaching assistant for JGS 211 where I saw the importance of flexibility and creating an individualised approach that is relevant to each student's context.

### **Lerato Letsaba**

I am a teaching assistant in the ECE Department for JFP 111 (Professional Practice). Being a teaching assistant has been a good experience. I gained knowledge and experience by assisting

lecturers and students. The more I assist, the more I learn. It also made me understand and get an idea of what lecturers deal with. The other thing is that I got to see my own capabilities and gained good skills (time management, teamwork, and working hard).

## TUTORS

### **Dominique Cook**

As a first-year master's student, I am passionately immersed in the realm of digital safety and digital safety education. My journey in academia began during my honours studies, where I specialised in learning support, delving into the intricacies of the EGRA and exploring teachers' perceptions of its implementation. Guided by humanism and cognitive constructivism, my teaching philosophy emphasises comprehension over mere memorisation. I firmly believe in fostering understanding rather than rote learning.

### **Zenande Masuku**

I'm Zenande Masuku, nearing 21 and pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree in Foundation Phase. Teaching discovered me, and now it's my calling. Every child has the potential to thrive. With dedication and empathy, I aim to unlock their abilities. Working as a tutor in the Department of ECE shaped my approach, sparking joy in guiding students to "aha" moments. My philosophy? Every child deserves to excel, and it's my duty to empower them. With passion as my guide, I'm committed to making a lasting impact on future generations.

### **Mogotsi More**

I am Mogotsi More, a young South African man and a tutor in the Department of Early Childhood Education. I am in my third year of BEd studies, specialising in Foundation

*continue on page 11...*



Phase teaching. Inspired by Ron Clark's transformative journey, I aim to shatter the stereotype that men can't teach young minds. Mathematics, language, culture, music, and art are my passions, with Nasty C and Billie Holiday as my favourite artists. Supported by UP's ECE department, I have embraced big dreams and discovered my best self. Each lecturer has empowered me to be authentic, reinforcing that, despite the challenges, pursuing my dreams is both daunting and rewarding.

#### **Kagiso Mabuse**

My name is Kagiso Mabuse, a third-year student doing my Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase. I am a tutor in the Department of Early Childhood Education for second-year modules (JGS 212 and JGL 200). My experience as a tutor started off as overwhelming because I had no idea how I was going

to juggle being a student and being a tutor at the same time. However, after my first week of tutoring I quickly got the hang of it. I realized that I really enjoy working with the students, because as much as they come to me for help and inspiration, they also give me hope. It brings me joy knowing that I am able to help someone with their work. I also got the opportunity to work with incredible lecturers who have helped me better my teaching skills. Tutoring has been an incredible journey with many learning opportunities for me.

#### **RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

##### **Tamika Roopsingh**

As I complete my journey as a final-year Master's candidate, I reflect on the many opportunities I have had to support lecturers and guide

students. I am a dynamic 21st century woman who believes teaching is a life-long learning career. I have just completed my dissertation with the title "Reciprocal and responsive relationships between teachers and toddlers in Dibber Preschools". Serving in the ECE department is rewarding; I thoroughly enjoy working with different lecturers daily and assisting with minor research endeavours. It challenges me in new ways and helps me hone my problem-solving skills. Additionally, assisting students with their academic performance allows me to honour my calling as a teacher whilst simultaneously building new relationships. I believe that teachers affect eternity as we never know where our influence stops. We do not fill a pail but rather light a fire!



▲ The entrance to the consultation rooms of the tutors and teaching assistants



▲ The dream team: ECE Tutors, Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants

## **SMTE Seminar On Project-Based Learning With Mr Sizwe Nxasana And Ms Mampho Langa**

*Author: Dr Climant Khoza*

As a department, our interest in Project-Based Learning (PjBL) was fueled by our visit to Future Nation Schools in January this year. The school in the south-western suburbs of Johannesburg focuses on the integration of the CAPS curriculum, from primary school through to Grade 12, with PjBL, in order to produce outcomes related to real-world problems.

The school was founded by industrialist and visionary, Mr Sizwe Nxasana, with active learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of knowledge in practical contexts as guiding principles. He is a former Chief Executive Officer of Telkom South Africa Limited and was responsible for its listing on the Johannesburg and New York Stock exchanges. He was also the CEO of FirstRand Banking Group from 2005 until he retired in September 2015.

He serves as chairman of various foundations and trusts and is a member of the Joint Advisory Board of Carnegie Mellon University – Africa as well as a board member of the Independent Examinations Board. He is the Co-founder and Chairman of the South African National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). With this as the background, our department was privileged to host an online seminar on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (STEM) with Mr Nxasana and Ms Mampho Langa as presenters. The seminar was attended by 53 delegates from different professional backgrounds and contexts. The presenters addressed questions about the problems that exist in

our current educational system, what needs to change, and whether PjBL might be part of the solution. Mr Nxasana and Ms Mampho explained how PjBL can be implemented with a view to facilitate the development of the top 10 skills of 2025 as outlined in the Future of Jobs Report 2020 by the World Economic Forum. One of the key aspects of PjBL that was emphasized by the presenters is the interdisciplinary nature of PjBL as a teaching and learning approach. The examples they presented confirmed the necessity of bringing the real world into the classroom.

Along with a description of the theoretical basis of PjBL, the design elements of PjBL were explained in detail to the attendees. The seminar was brought to a close with animated discussion as attendees spoke of the need for change within their contexts and what the possibilities were for PjBL implementation. One of the key takeaway questions from the discussion – and one which was of particular relevance to our department specifically, and our faculty in general – was how initial teacher education programmes can incorporate PjBL in pre-service teachers' training.



▲ Mr Sizwe Nxasana



## Department of Humanities Education Hosts Fulbright Global Scholar Professor Judy Pace

Author: Judy Pace

It was an honour and a pleasure to visit the Groenkloof Campus in March-April 2024 as a Fulbright Global Scholar. Hosted by Prof. Johan Wassermann and the Department of Humanities Education, I taught a module and conducted research on teaching controversial issues for the PGCE in History. I am a professor at the University of San Francisco in California and my work revolves around classroom teaching and curriculum and their relationship to democracy, diversity, and sociopolitical and cultural contexts.

The purpose of my Fulbright project is to contextualize a framework I developed for teaching controversial issues that guides teachers in a reflective "contained risk-taking" approach. To my delight, the PGCE students were brilliant, open, and eager to learn. We experimented with different discussion activities, addressing questions related to controversial public art, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and classroom teaching itself. Students relished opportunities to listen to one another and express different perspectives on issues in a learner-centred, safe space. The next step for them will be to design a discussion-based lesson on a controversial issue related to the history curriculum. Many thanks to Prof. Wassermann and Dr Pranitha Bharat for making such a rewarding teaching experience possible.

Staying on the lovely, peaceful, and musical Groenkloof campus was delightful and gave me a unique view of university life and the young people being educated to build South Africa's future. Walks from Ikaheng to the athletics fields were enlivened by the singing of birds and student friend groups, patches of morning glories and Mexican sunflowers, and friendly greetings. Prof. Wassermann and I co-planned an innovative simulation of the TRC while walking laps around the cricket field and enjoying intermittent worship songs from the church next door.

I discovered the Groenkloof Gospel Choir on my first (hot) Sunday when I heard beautiful voices singing captivating harmonies about 50 metres from the residence. I watched and listened to the

choir, led by Honours student Mpho Molamu, on a few occasions, and Mpho kindly arranged a special gathering with some choir members so I could try drumming with them. I have carried this experience home with me to the U.S. and have just found a world music chorus to sing with.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking with academic staff and students about their research. Through many conversations with people both on and off campus, my understanding of South Africa's political, economic, social, cultural, and historical complexities deepened every day. I visited one of the most elite private schools with alumnus Callan Moore (MEd, 2023), where I enjoyed seeing the Philosophy for Children approach to class discussion. Three days later, Dr Connie Magkabo took me to visit an under-resourced school in Mamelodi, where the extremely difficult conditions contrasted with the indomitable spirit of a group of learners I spoke to. On two exciting occasions, I went to the legendary city of Johannesburg and had the opportunity to visit the Apartheid Museum (twice), Constitution Hill, and the University of Johannesburg's Department of Education and Curriculum Studies. In Pretoria, we spent a fascinating day visiting the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park.

Many thanks to Prof. Wasserman and his wonderful wife, Annette, for taking my husband, Sam, and me on a memorable trip that included three magical days in Kruger National Park. Sam had the birdwatching experience of a lifetime during our stay and was taken out several times by highly skilled local birders.

Sincere thanks as well to Zama Khumalo, Dinah Ngobeni, and Aidan Lawrence for their helpful assistance, and to all staff and students, who treated me with kindness and hospitality. The entire Fulbright year in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Cape Town, and Pretoria, was truly a peak experience, enriched by meeting so many wonderful people who are making a positive difference in the world.



▲ First session on teaching controversial issues with the History PGCE



▲ Joining the circle at the Groenkloof Gospel Choir rehearsal



## Strengthening Partnership Between The University Of Illinois At Urbana-Champaign, Michigan State University, And The Faculty Of Education, University Of Pretoria.

Author: Dr Mary Ooko

The University of Pretoria was represented by the Dean, Professor Sehoole, Prof. Siphwe Mthiyane, Prof. Samuel Adeyemo and Dr Mary Ooko. The main purpose of the visit was to deepen Illinois' engagement with partners from the Global South, and specifically with the University of Pretoria as one of the strategic partners of the University of Illinois. We engaged with faculty, students, and staff to further advance mutually beneficial collaboration between the University of Illinois and the University of Pretoria.

At Michigan State University, we were hosted by the Co-Director of the Alliance

for African Partnership, the Office of International Studies in Education staff, and the African Studies Centre. We engaged in various discussion groups, including a roundtable session on supporting vulnerable and low-income student populations. A session on Collaborative Online and International Learning gave us the chance to meet with visiting students from Egerton University, who were there to showcase their accomplishments in collaboration with the Michigan University students. COIL is a learning process where faculty members in any discipline use online technology to facilitate sustained student

collaboration to increase intercultural competence.

Before we departed from Michigan State University, we got the chance to meet with the Dean of the College of Education, all members of the Faculty of Education, the chair of the Department of Educational Administration, and members of the Office of Undergraduate Education.

All in all, we learned that higher education challenges are similar globally, and that through collaboration initiatives, we may gather synergy and intellectual partnerships to solve such challenges.



▲ Dr Mary Ooko, the Manager of UDE, at the Michigan State University



▲ The Dean, Professor Chika Sehoole, Prof. Siphwe Mthiyane, Prof. Samuel Adeyemo and Dr Mary Ooko at the University of Illinois

## 3 Mathematics Play Sessions For Foundation Phase Students

Author: Jowilmi de Villiers and Dr Nadia Swanepoel

One of the modules in foundation phase, JGS 212, is aimed at helping student-teachers develop a deeper understanding of the most critical elements of Mathematics. The methodology enables students to develop not only confidence but also a much-needed sense of agency for the future foundation phase classroom. As part of making mathematics practical for students, they were allowed to play in the model classroom, also known as the BMW classroom. Here, students were given building blocks, dolls, and recyclable items to play with. The instruction given to the students was to play with the resources and tell a story with their resources to support a mathematical concept.

The idea behind going to the playroom was to have students experience the interactive nature of learning through play. Students' feedback on the play sessions included the following realisation: "I think I will focus more on learning through play because it's allowed children to use critical thinking skills and communication". Another response that stood out was: "Mathematics is not all about numbers... it can be integrated with everyday things such as structures".

An interesting observation from students' responses is that students commented that they are able to teach mathematics better now that they have experienced mathematics from a learner's perspective.

When students were asked how they would apply learning through play to teach mathematics, they responded that they would integrate more hands-on objects to help learners understand what they are working on, they would let the learners

have fun and let them work in groups to share ideas, and they would let children collaborate to share ideas and solve problems. The success of the play sessions is further demonstrated by students' realisation that it is not suitable to let learners learn mathematics through the use of worksheets: "By allowing learners to do creative thinking by manipulating the resources and asking questions is far more effective to teach mathematics".

To conclude, the playroom experience's main outcome was to show students that mathematics can be fun and can be presented in a more concrete and play-based manner.



▲ Block play in the BMW class



▲ Groupwork is very important for fostering problem-solving



## R-NEET Engaging the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)

Author: Joyce L. Jakavula

The R-NEET study (Wellcome-funded, 5-year study on resilience to depression among youth who are NEET) recently convened a kick-off meeting for the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). This was done in collaboration with R-NEET community partners, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), and Regional Psychosocial Support Initiatives (REPSSI). The core objective of the meeting was to explore the concept of resilience among young people who are not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET) with the committee members, through their lived experiences.

Central to the meeting's agenda was the formation and engagement of the YAC, which is crucial for the success of the project. The role of the YAC is to contribute to the study by sharing their own lived experiences of being NEET, as well as those of other young people. As youth champions in their communities, they will also provide guidance on appropriate processes, help with recruiting study participants, and serve as a communication link between local communities and the research team.

The project leader, Professor Linda Theron (Department of Educational Psychology), opened with an overview of the project and expected milestones to be reached. Then, the project coordinator, Joyce Jakavula, explained the roles and responsibilities of the YAC. These included agreeing to collaborate as study partners in this first-of-its-kind African study to look at resilience to depression among young people who are NEET – a role they enthusiastically accepted. The two project master's students, Madeeha Hazarvi and Maritha van Wyk (Department of Educational Psychology), engaged the participants in arts-based activities centred around understanding resilience in relation to people, faith-based supports, places, and spaces – a key cornerstone of the project.

The meeting was a success and a great introduction to the quarterly YAC meetings. Looking ahead, we are thrilled to have this ongoing collaboration and dialogue with this dedicated team of young people. Through this sustained engagement, we anticipate the development of invaluable insights into resilience for meaningful impact.



Group photo from the front left to the back: Jesica Mogano (YAC), Katlego Mame (YAC), Boitumelo Moroeng (YAC), Kgothatso Molepo (YAC), Prof. Linda Theron (UP), Vunda Demula (REPSSI), Madeeha Hazarvi (UP), Kudzayi Badisi (YAC), Lilly Magodi (REPSSI), Tumisho Phala (YAC), Mpumelelo Nkosi (YAC), Maritha van Wyk (UP), Joyce Jakavula (UP), Booiki Mabena (YAC) and Bongani Dube (YAC)

## The Faculty of Education was visible in KZN! Author: Dr Sibonelo Blose

Dr Sibonelo Blose, a senior lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies (EMPS), served as one of the organisers of the career exhibition that took place at Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal in April 2024. This event was aimed at exposing learners to different career paths they could explore, and was attended by grade 11 and 12 learners of schools in the Inanda area. Many institutions based in KwaZulu-Natal honoured

this event and exhibited their programmes. As a UP staff member, Dr Blose took the opportunity to exhibit programmes offered by the Faculty of Education, including the Bachelor of Education (BEd), the Higher Certificate in Sport Science, and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Apart from this, he shared different programmes offered through the Distance Education Unit with teachers who attended the event.



▲ Dr Sibonelo Blose addressing learners at the Inanda Career Expo in KZN.



▲ Learners at the Inanda Career Exhibition in KZN



## Professor Johan Wassermann Provides A Keynote Address At The 17th Annual National Conference For History Didactic Research

Author: Johan Wassermann



◀ Prof. Johan Wassermann

Uppsala University in Sweden hosted the 17th Annual National Conference for History Didactic Research on April 24-25, 2024. The theme of the conference was "Crisis in history education". In recent years, research in history education has become increasingly interested in how to approach and handle crises and challenges in society and the classroom. Attention has been given to a relatively wide variety of topics, ranging from political populism, controversial and/or morally challenging events in the past or present, and the historical, contemporary and future challenges posed to us through the proposed geological epoch Anthropocene. Examples of other related aspects that have been focused on are the difficulties or challenges history teachers face when teaching these or similar topics, how we should organise history education to deal with these difficulties or challenges, and what knowledge, abilities or attitudes we expect students to develop through teaching these topics. As

such, the conference provided a platform for scholars, educators, and researchers to discuss and share insights on the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in history education.

Against this backdrop, Professor Johan Wassermann was invited to deliver the keynote address. In his keynote, titled: "The post-apartheid South African State and School History -omnipresent, powerful and absent", Professor Wassermann mapped the evolution of the crisis in South African history education, starting with the pivotal moment of 1994 when South Africa transitioned into post-apartheid (democratic) governance, creating new opportunities and challenges for history education. He proceeded to analyse the immediate post-1994 period and how the state's involvement influenced the narrative and teaching of history in schools. He also unpacked the state's engagement with school history, from its revival to its challenges in recent years.

Prof. Wassermann examined the internal resistance within the state apparatus concerning teaching school history, especially in the post-2014 era, and how this influenced the subject. Here, he pinpointed the key aspects that emerged from the Ministerial Task Team report on the subject, focusing on the proposal for making school history compulsory and reforming the current curriculum to make it more Afrocentric. The keynote address comprehensively explored how historical narratives in South Africa intersect with state policies, educational practices, and societal shifts. In this South African state is in an ambiguous and contradictory manner, powerfully omnipresent, but also at times strangely absent.

## CEA Hosts Webinar On Instrument Development And Construction

Author: Gabriel Mokoena

The Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) invited experts in the field of instrument development to present their research at its first webinar in April 2024. In the opening remarks, Prof. Funke Omidire, the Director of the CEA, welcomed everyone who attended and expressed her delight with the centre's move to facilitate these kinds of conversations through the webinar. Prof. Omidire indicated that this was the first in a series of webinars planned by the CEA for the year 2024. Dr Celeste Combrinck, from the Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Department (SMTE), introduced the first presenter, Prof. Caroline Long of the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Prof. Long's presentation, entitled "Alignment of theory, measurement", covered the theoretical aspect of instrument development and used

the Rasch measurement theory as a theoretical basis. The presentation also drew from Poonam Batra's model for teacher education that privileges the notion of agency and the empowerment of teachers. The model's building blocks include A Creative Activity, Good Education, Teacher Education, Reform Mathematics Education, Assessment and Measurement, and a Research Approach.

In presenting on the aspect of good education, for example, Prof. Long used the scores obtained by the countries in the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Prof. Long argued that it would be short-sighted to rearrange the primary school curriculum to include more mathematics and less art and music based on the performance on TIMSS. With regard to Mathematics teacher education, the presentation

attempted to challenge the thinking around assessment and measurement while acknowledging the critical need for conceptualizing theory, constructing measures, and reflecting on outcomes.

Prof. Omidire introduced the second presenter, Dr Qetelo Moloi, who presented on "Constructing high quality data collection instrument for research: Advantages of using the Rasch measurement model". Dr Moloi's presentation gave an overview of popular research instruments, measurement, instrument validity and validation, the principles of Rasch measurement theory, instrument development, and instrument security. The question and answer session was facilitated by Mr Jody Joubert, a lecturer at the SMTE. Prof. Ugorji Ogbonnaya, Head of Department, gave the vote of thanks.



## 2025 Distance Education And Teacher Training In Africa (DETA) Pre-Conference Visit

Author: Dr Ruth Aluko

In May, a team led by Prof. Schoole, the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria (UP), had an opportunity to visit the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), Reduit, Mauritius. The team included Dr Ruth Aluko, the Chairperson of the Distance Education and Teacher Training in Africa (DETA) conference, and Mr Willem Cronje, the DETA Financial Officer from the University of Pretoria. As part of its practice, the Unit for Distance Education (UDE) co-hosts the biennial DETA conference in conjunction with identified African institutions.

The 2025 DETA conference was hosted by the MIE from 22 to 25 July 2025. During the visit, the team met with the senior management of the MIE, led by the Director, Dr Hemant Bessoondyal. Apart from the academic visit by the Dean, the team was able to assess the level of MIE's facilities and met with the MIE Local Organising Committee (led by the Chairperson, Dr Pritee Auckloo). Possible accommodation sites were also visited.

The Scientific Committee of the planned conference was made of faculty members of the Faculty of Education (UP) and the MIE, along with the South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide) – a long-standing partner of DETA.



▲ Mr Willem Cronje (UDE accountant) at the DETA 2025 pre-conference visit in Mauritius



▲ Prof. Schoole, Faculty of Education Dean, at the DETA 2025 pre-conference visit in Mauritius



▲ Dr Ruth Aluko and Willem Cronje at the DETA 2025 pre-conference visit in Mauritius

## Lunch-And-Learn With Prof. Leigh Wood At SMTE

Author: Prof. Sonja Van Putten

On Thursday 16 May, a lunch-and-learn was held in the SMTE department. The speaker was Prof. Leigh Wood from the University of Macquarie in Sydney, Australia. Prof. Wood was on a visit to SA and was invited to present a lecture to SMTE. The lecture was titled "Structuring an Exam Paper".

She presented ideas about structuring exam papers and offered insights into creating assessments for students whose home language is not English. With the influx of international students into Australia, up to half of the student intake at a university like Macquarie is made up of international students, and thus using understandable language

structures is a challenge. To this end, Macquarie has moved away from assessing to achieve results that form the expected bell curve. Instead, assessment tasks measure the achievement of learning outcomes against a predefined standard which, if reached, will allow a student to get a distinction.

Prof. Wood differentiated between the various presentations of questions: as a question, a command, or a statement. Questions, such as might start with words like what? or where? or why?, resulted in indications of levels of learning that usually fell into the two lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Commands could be presented as follows: "We

have studied 10 theorems and their proofs in this course. Select one theorem and proof that you consider important and explain why you have chosen this theorem. Your explanation should include at least three reasons." She said that statements were ideal for multiple choice or true/false items, or could be used to add contextual information to align with higher-level learning outcomes.

Evaluation, which is the second level from the top in Bloom's Taxonomy, is seldom used as part of an assessment item. She suggested something like this: "There are two differently structured proofs of Pythagoras'

theorem which are generally offered. Compare the proof structures and indicate your favourite. Explain why this is your favourite proof."

Assessment, according to Prof. Wood, can be fun! She described an assessment strategy in which managers in the corporate world, or from schools, are invited to present real problems (previously discussed with the lecturer) to the students, who are then required to solve those problems in groups. Their solutions are then assessed by both the lecturer and the manager. Many students have received job offers through such a strategy.



# Congratulatory Message From The Dean

Author: Prof. Chika Schoole

Faculty of Education April / May Graduations ►



The 8th of May 2024 marked the end of the Faculty of Education's Autumn graduation season, which started on the 19th of April. During this season, the Faculty had five graduation sessions, where 1445 students graduated. It was great to see the life-changing experiences and celebrations among our students as the various qualifications were conferred upon them. The breakdown of qualifications that were awarded is as follows:

## 1. Undergraduate qualifications:

- 457 B.Ed Senior and FET Phase Teaching; with 111 distinctions.
- 162 B.Ed Intermediate Phase Teaching; with 42 distinctions.
- 142 B.Ed Foundation Phase Teaching; with 66 distinctions.
- 172 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students; with 71 distinctions.

## 2. Postgraduate Qualifications:

- 28 PhDs
- 52 MEd with 13 distinctions
- 294 BEd Honours with 78 distinctions
- 44 PG Diploma TVET with five distinctions

## 3. Distance Education Unit

A total of 430 qualifications were awarded, which included BEd Honours, Advanced Diplomas in School Leadership, and Higher Certificates in Sports Science.

Allow me this opportunity to thank all of you for the hard work you put into making the dreams of these students come true. Thank you for shepherding them through their academic journey, from the first year of registration until their final year. I want to thank our Marketing and Recruitment office for the sterling work they do in recruiting some of these students, and the Student Administration staff for the behind-the-scenes work to ensure that these students are registered,

manual applications are captured, marks are recorded, and qualifications are awarded, together with the many other services they provide which cannot be mentioned here.

Thanks also go to the lecturers, supervisors, tutors, and academic coaches who guided and supported these students throughout their academic journey.

Thank you also to the graduation office and staff who helped prepare the graduation sessions, together with all the staff and supervisors who joined the academic processions.

It was a graduation season indeed!

Finally, thank you for your support and for keeping the faculty flag flying high.





## Vice-Chancellor And Principal's Award Winner – Annic Verryn

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

On Tuesday 30 April, the world as Annic Verryn knew it changed. During the graduation ceremony, Annic Verryn was awarded the highest acknowledgement for her academic achievement: the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Medal. Annic Verryn completed her studies in BEd Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase. Dr Nadia Swanepoel met with Annic and got to know this top-achieving student better. Annic answered a few questions and hopes to be a source of inspiration for upcoming top-achieving students.

### Who is Annic Verryn?

My name is Annic Verryn, and I recently graduated from the University of Pretoria with a Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase Teaching. I am honoured to have recently received the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Award for the top achievement in the Faculty of Education.

### Annic's philosophy in life

My life philosophy is deeply rooted in the principles of lifelong learning,

resilience, and compassion. I believe in approaching life with a growth mindset, recognising challenges as opportunities for learning and development. Setbacks and failures are inevitable on the path to success; therefore, it is important to cultivate resilience. Additionally, my philosophy revolves around the notion of empowerment through education. For me, teaching is not just a profession; it is a calling – a calling to empower, inspire, and uplift others.

### What are your plans for the future?

Looking ahead, I am eager to embark on my academic journey. I am currently completing my Honours degree in Learning Support, and I have my sights set on pursuing my Master's degree next year. My aspirations are guided by a commitment to advancing my knowledge and expertise in the field of inclusive education.

### Where does your heart lie in teaching?

My heart lies in creating inclusive and nurturing learning environments

where every learner feels valued and empowered. It lies in the moments of connection and understanding that unfold within the classroom. It lies in the transformative power of education to uplift individuals, families, and communities, breaking down barriers and opening doors to limitless opportunities. Most importantly, my heart lies in the profound belief that every learner has the potential to succeed. It is our privilege and responsibility as teachers to help our learners unlock that potential, guiding them on their journey of discovery and growth.

### Any words to encourage the readers?

As I reflect on my journey, I am reminded of the profound impact that education has had on my life and the lives of others. Nelson Mandela's words emphasise the transformative power of education: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."



Annic Verryn and Dr Nadia Swanepoel in the Procession Room before the Graduation Ceremony



Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Award Winner – Annic Verryn



# THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS 2023/24

## *The Faculty Congratulates Newly Promoted Academics and NRF Rated Academics*

*Author: Prof. Chika Sehoole*

The Faculty of Education wishes to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their contribution to making the 2023 academic

year a success. It is befitting to announce and congratulate the promotion of the following academics:

### Department of Humanities Education: Promotions to Senior Lecturer



**Dr. Cherese Jones Couto**  
(Senior Lecturer)



**Dr. Connie Makhabo**  
(Senior Lecturer)



**Dr. Sarina de Jager**  
(Senior Lecturer)

### Department of Humanities Education: Promotions to Associate Professor



**Prof. Alta Vos**  
(Associate Professor)



**Prof. Gerhard Genis**  
(Associate Professor)



**Prof. Raita Steyn**  
(Associate Professor)

### Department of Education Management and Policy Studies: Promotions to Associate Professor



**Prof. Andre du Plessis**  
(Associate Professor)

### Department of Educational Psychology: Promotion to Full Professor



**Prof. Ruth Mampane**  
(Full Professor)

Congratulations to the colleagues and their respective departments on attaining these milestones. We look forward to

your contributions to the work of the Faculty in your newly earned positions and levels.

### Congratulations to the following academics on the success of their NRF rating



**Prof. Urgoji Ogbonnaya**  
C3 rating



**Prof. Marien Graham**  
C3 rating



**Dr. Ruth Aluko**  
C2 rating

Well done, colleagues! We look forward to your contributions to the work of the Faculty in your newly earned status.



# The Faculty Of Education Participates In The University-Wide Student Recruitment Drives

Author: Dr Sharon Mashau

Every year, the University of Pretoria organises student recruitment initiatives and information sessions that take place at Hatfield Campus. These student recruitment initiatives and information sessions provide learners with the required information to assist

them in planning for their future careers.

During this special function, learners can experience a taste of student life through organised campus tours; engage with faculty staff; obtain

information regarding programmes; receive career planning advice; and learn how to obtain awards, bursaries, and loans. The faculty has participated in the Grade 11 top achievers event and the Final-Year Student Information Session.



Grade 11 top achievers' information sessions in pictures ▲



▲ Final-Year Student Information Session



## The Faculty of Education Joins the Department of Basic Education on a Funza Lushaka District-Based Student Recruitment Drive: The Initial Teacher Education Programme

Author: Dr Sharon Mashau

The filling of posts as a means of providing quality basic education has been challenging in different provinces. As a result, the Department of Basic Education partnered with universities to assist in developing a student cohort that will fulfill their priority areas.

The Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme is a multi-year programme to promote teaching as a profession. Bursaries are available to enable selected students to complete a teaching qualification in identified Subject priority areas. Recipients of these bursaries are required to teach at a public school for the same number of years that they received the bursary.

The Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria partnered with the Department of Basic Education to recruit qualifying and interested prospective students to take up education as a career and to teach in their provinces. This initiative has been running for over 5 years and is still growing, as priority areas are still increasing. Students must meet the University and FUNZA minimum academic criteria for to be considered for the bursary. In 2024, the minimum academic criteria are:

- An exemption, endorsement, or 'admission to bachelor's degree studies' pass at matric/Grade 12 level.
- At least a Level 4 pass at matric level in the two subjects which the applicant will specialise to teach.
- For students who wish to specialise in the Foundation Phase, a Level 2 pass in Mathematics or Level 4 pass in Mathematical Literacy at Grade 12

level is required. In addition, at least a Level 4 pass in the Home Language is required.

- For students who wish to specialise in the Intermediate Phase, a Level 4 pass in Mathematics at Grade 12 level is required. In addition, at least a Level 4 pass in the Home Language is required.
- Students with Mathematics can specialise in two of the following: Language, Natural Science, Technology, Physical Science, Life Science and
- Students with a Language, Physical Science, and Life Science Level 4 pass can specialise in Provincial Priority Language, Natural Science, and Technology.
- For students who wish to specialise in Senior FET, a Level 4 pass is required in one of the National and one of the Provincial Priority subjects or two of the Provincial Priority subjects.
- A Level 4 pass in a Provincial Priority Language and a National Priority subject or both Provincial Language and content subjects Students who wish to specialize in the teaching of Technical subjects, including Computer Applications Technology (CAT), and who do not have these subjects at matric level, must have at least a Level 4 pass in Mathematics or Technical Mathematics.
- If the institution's admission requirements are higher than the bursary requirement, or vice versa, then the higher requirement will apply.

From May 2024 through to the end of June, the faculty attended 7 districts, 1 in Mpumalanga and 6 in Limpopo. More than 300 applications were received from this cohort of students of which are already admitted.



Mpumalanga Bohlabela District





Waterberg and Mogalakwena Districts



Capricorn and Sekhukhune Districts



Mopane and Sekhukhune 2 Districts





UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## Faculty of Education

Fakulteit  
Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

## Department of Early Childhood Education

*Congratulations!*

Make today matter

Prof Keshni Bipath thrilled with her 3 PhD students:

- Dr D Bishop-Kapp;
- Dr D Mokotsi and
- Dr R Singh

She also produced a Masters student with distinction, Mrs S Bhoola.





# Vignette Research Book Published In Open Access

Author: Prof. Irma Eloff

The book "Vignette Research" has just been published as part of the Research Methods series by Bloomsbury Academic in London. Authored by Evi Agostini from the University of Vienna, Michael Schratz from the University of Innsbruck, and Irma Eloff from the University of Pretoria, the book presents the most comprehensive English text on the Innsbruck Vignette Research (IVR) method to date.

The book is published in open access through the generous support of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

"To enable researchers to collect and analyse data in an experiential way and to provide attention to detail," said Prof. Agostini when asked about the purpose of the book. This sentiment was echoed by Prof. Schratz, when he added, "Vignette research has opened up completely new insights into the living world for me".

Vignette researchers from around the globe will convene on the Groenkloof campus of the University of Pretoria on 24-25 October 2024 for the annual VignA symposium.

BLOOMSBURY  
OPEN ACCESS

## VIGNETTE RESEARCH

Research Methods

Evi Agostini, Michael Schratz  
and Irma Eloff

READ IT ONLINE







## Faculty Of Education Has Launched A Doctor Of Education In Educational Leadership And Management

The University of Pretoria's Department of Education Management and Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education will be introducing a first-of-its-kind professional doctorate degree (D Ed) in 2025, aimed at educational leaders, managers, and policy-makers seeking a professional, rather than an academic, doctorate qualification. This qualification aims to prepare graduates for advanced and specialised professional employment in both the basic and higher education sectors. It is expected to increase the responsiveness to the professional needs of the educational community, both in South Africa and internationally. Graduates will be highly employable in a wide variety of educational settings as educational leaders, managers and administrators, policy-makers, consultants, teachers, researchers, and educational planners.

The professional Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Management is oriented towards a professional rather than an academic engagement. The proposed qualification will enable educational professionals from within and outside the country to access and benefit from further training in this specialised field. It is designed around the development of high-level performance and innovation in a professional context and enhances the possibility of a professional career as a highly qualified and skilled education leader and change agent at any level in the education enterprise.

This new qualification was inspired by the need of the Faculty of Education to be responsive to the professional leadership

and management needs of the educational community. The development and accreditation process of this programme was initiated in 2018 in collaboration with South African and international experts, including Prof. Andre du Plessis and Prof. Johan Beckmann (University of Pretoria), Prof. Jukka Alava (former director of the Institute for Educational Leadership in Finland), Prof. Brian Perkins (College of Education, University of Columbia) and Prof. Derick de Jongh (Director, Albert Luthuli Institute for Responsible Leadership, UP).

The professional D Ed differs from a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in that it has a course component of four modules of 30 credits each, and a research component of 240 credits. The emphasis will be placed on bridging the gaps between theory and practice and/or the gaps between policy and practice by asking 'how' questions rather than 'why' and 'what' questions. Therefore, in their research students will be required to focus on the practical application of ideas by acting on them to actually test them in human experiences and/or to test and evaluate theories or beliefs in terms of the success of their practical application. Emphasis will be placed on innovation to provide better education for all learners, to address inequality, to promote social cohesion, and to improve leadership and management practice.

During the first year of study students will be expected to complete four modules of 30 credits each. The four modules are: Semester 1: Global Mega-trends and their Impact on Education (GME 900);

Opportunities, Challenges and Adversity in Education (OCA 900). Semester 2: Transformation and Change for Nation Building through and in Education (TCN 900); Leadership and Management of Learning Organisations (LBL 900). The research component of the professional D Ed has 240 credits consisting of the Research Plan (NMQ 900) and the Research Report (thesis) (NMQ 901). The Research Plan must be defended in Year 1. During the second year, students commence with their research project and the writing of a research report (thesis).

The professional D Ed programme follows an evidence-based, inquiry-led approach to instruction. This means that students will be required to be actively engaged in research endeavours and develop research skills and competencies commensurate to what is expected at doctorate level. Students will be expected to attend four 5-day contact sessions during Year 1.

Admission requirements:

- Relevant MEd (or equivalent) degree
- A weighted average of at least 60% for the research component of the relevant master's degree
- Past or current employment in a leadership and management position in the education sector is highly recommended.

Closing date for applications for 2025: 31 August 2024

Enquiries: Prof. André du Plessis – [duplessis.andre@up.ac.za](mailto:duplessis.andre@up.ac.za)



# 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**

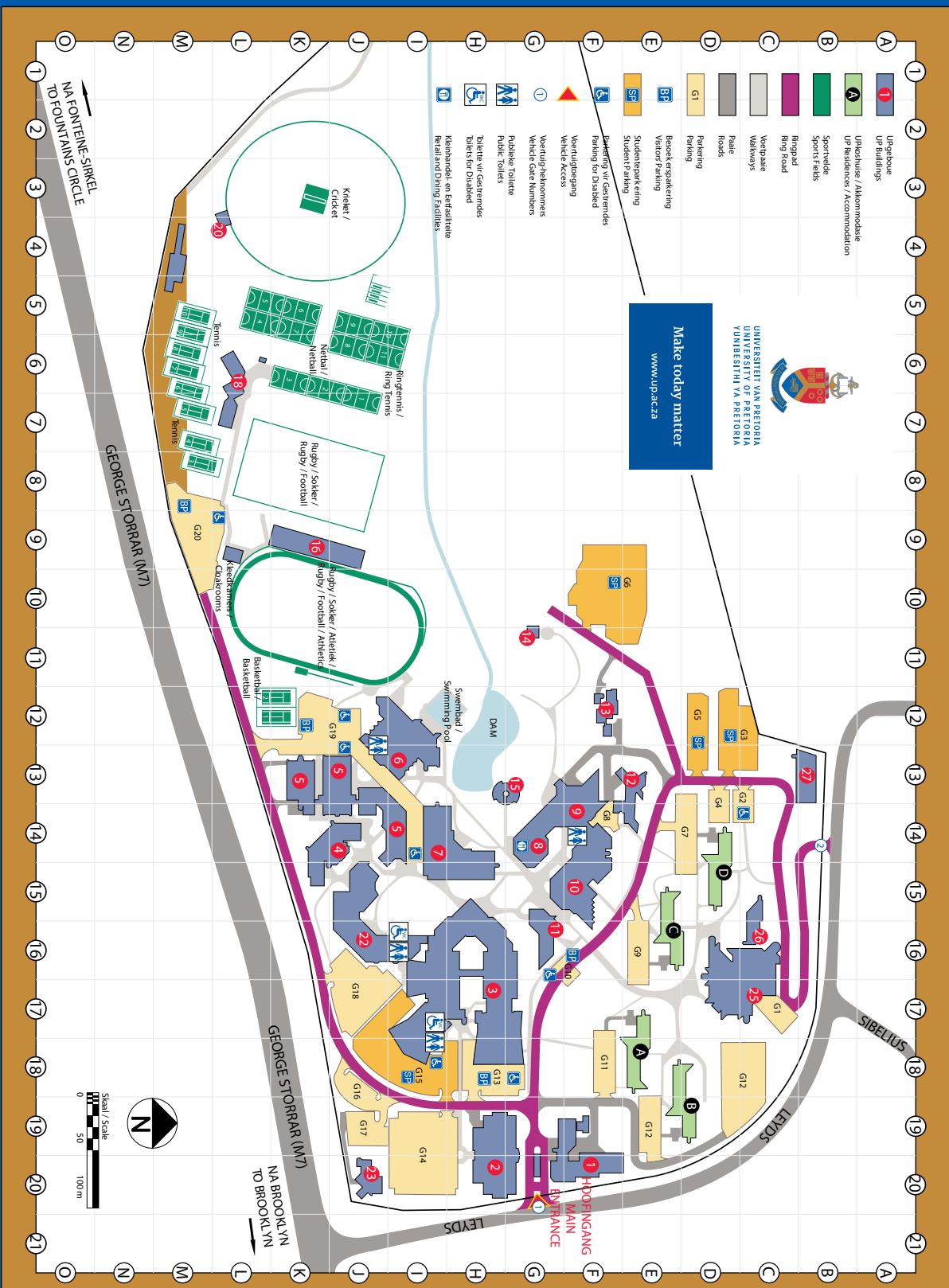
Total number of  
postgraduate students

**83.89%**

Percentage of  
international publications



# Groenkloofkampus / Groenkloof Campus / Khamphase ya Groenkloof S 25° 46' 10" E 28° 23' 56"



GEBOUE		12	Gasteakkommodasie	E13	20	Krieketklubhuis	L4	16	Pawiljoen	K9	KOSHUISE			
11	Administrasie	G16	7	GK-biblioteek	H15	22	Lesingteaters	J16	26	Personeelakkommodasie	C16	C	Inca	E16
3	Aldoel	H17	13	Hoof: TuksRes	F12	4	Natuurwetenskappe	J14	6	Sportsentrum	I13	D	Kiaat	D15
15	Boma	G13	14	Jakaranda-klubhuis	G11	9	Normaalsaal	F14	8	Studentesentrum	G14	A	Lilium	E18
23	Duethuis	J20	18	Kentucky-klubhuis	L6	10	Ouditorium	F15	1	Tegniese Dienste	F20	B	Zinnia	D19
25	Eetsaal	C17	27	Kiaat-klubhuis	B13	2	Ou SACTE	H20	5	Tegnika	J13	UP-noodnommer: 012 420 2310		
BUILDINGS		25	Dining Hall	C17	18	Kentucky Club House	L6	16	Pavilion	K9	RESIDENCES			
11	Administration	G16	23	Duet House	J20	27	Kiaat Club House	B13	6	Sports Centre	I13	C	Inca	E16
3	Aldoel	H17	7	GK Library	H15	22	Lecture Theatres	J16	26	Staff Accommodation	C16	D	Kiaat	D15
10	Auditorium	F15	12	Guest Accommodation	E13	4	Natural Sciences	J14	8	Student Centre	G14	A	Lilium	E18
15	Boma	G13	13	Head: TuksRes	F12	9	Normaal Hall	F14	1	Technical Services	F20	B	Zinnia	D19
20	Cricket Club House	L4	14	Jakaranda Club House	G11	2	Old SACTE	H20	5	Technika	J13	UP Emergency Number: 012 420 2310		

Kaart soos bygewerk in Oktober 2022.

Vyvaaring: Alhoewel elke moontlike poging aangewend is om te verseker dat dit wat op hierdie kaart verskyn die jongste akkurate inligting is, moet gebruikers nie aanvaar dat dit altyd die geval is nie. Die Universiteit van Pretoria aanvaar nie aanspreeklikheid vir enige skade, verlies of ander nadeel wat voortvloei uit die gebruik van hierdie kaart. Die Universiteit van Pretoria aanvaar nie aanspreeklikheid vir enige skade, verlies of ander nadeel wat voortvloei uit die gebruik van hierdie kaart. Die Universiteit van Pretoria aanvaar nie aanspreeklikheid vir enige skade, verlies of ander nadeel wat voortvloei uit die gebruik van hierdie kaart.

Map updated October 2022.

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