

# 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 Schoole

## Advancing Education in Complexity

Welcome to the second edition of the Intuition for 2023. 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 Faculty of Education now being the biggest faculty in the University, (ii) the University of Pretoria (UP) Pre-University Academy and its location in the Faculty of Education, (iii) the research and international strategy, and (iv) the annual review of the faculty and its performance in 2023.

### Faculty of Education is now the biggest Faculty in the University

The Faculty of Education continues to grow in leaps and bounds, and this year, we have been able to bypass all the other faculties to become the largest in terms of student numbers (both contact and distance enrolments). This is thanks to the innovative recruitment strategies the faculty continues to implement. However, this comes at a cost in terms of staff workload and the availability of facilities, as the increased numbers are not accompanied by the supply of additional resources. As part of the management of this situation, the faculty is planning to enrol fewer students in 2024 to bring the numbers in line with the enrolment targets. The introduction of a ranking system for admission will not only help us to achieve this goal but also ensure that we are able to reserve places for top achievers who want to become teachers.

How did a faculty that was threatened with removal from the Groenkloof Campus in 2017 because it had low enrolment manage to turn the corner to become the biggest faculty? The faculty is distinguished by its responsiveness and contribution to advancing education in complex landscapes beset with inequality, systemic challenges, structural disparity, and uncertainty. A defining feature of its approach is the strong humanistic focus and outlook of the faculty and its members and the pursuit of meaningful engagement with people and their lived experiences. We are in touch with the societal pulse and society's dynamically changing nature and needs.

The faculty continues to respond to the plight of indigent students by providing food parcels and basic needs such as toiletries, transport money, and clothing for teaching practice when they go to schools so they can concentrate on the core business that brought them to the University, namely teaching and learning and ensuring that they leave the University with qualifications. This support has made ours a faculty of choice for many students who want to pursue their academic aspirations. The quality of education students receive from dedicated staff, combined with the extra-curricular and psycho-social care they receive

from the faculty, make the beneficiaries of these services ambassadors of the faculty when they go back to their communities. As a result, more and more students want to be associated with us.

As an example of the broad support, the faculty's responsiveness to student hunger (SDG2) for disadvantaged students has been seen as a leading practice in the University and beyond. During the closing ceremony of the recent Uni20 conference of university leaders from G20 countries, the faculty's innovations in admitting indigent students to the University of Pretoria and supporting them until they graduate were acknowledged by a World Bank official as an example for other institutions to learn from.

### The University of Pretoria Pre-University Academy (UPPUA)

The above initiatives are supported by an 'ecosystem' view, exemplified by identifying pre-university talent from disadvantaged communities through the UPPUA, partnering with key stakeholders across discipline and sectoral boundaries, providing broad and multidimensional support for students through their academic journey, and enabling their meaningful contribution to host communities on their return.

UP established the UPPUA in response to the need to interrogate the link between basic and higher education, as the future of higher education depends on the quality of the students produced by the basic education sector. Its academic home in the Faculty of Education was approved by the University Executive and noted by Senate at its May 2023 meeting. The UPPUA plays a key role in encouraging learners to pursue tertiary education in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM) fields. It targets talented learners and those with potential from different socio-economic classes. Through the UPPUA, learners' high school learning is enriched, not only academically but also in terms of acquiring 4IR skills, learning how to integrate knowledge from different contexts, and exposure to university facilities and teaching by academic staff who are experts in the subject they would like to study. In this way, UPPUA graduates stand a good chance of not only gaining access to university but also thriving and excelling at the undergraduate level.

### Research and internationalisation strategy

While the faculty's successes have largely been in teaching and learning, over the past five to six years, there has been an increased focus on research as we intentionally shift on a maturity pathway from focusing on research administration to being research-active and ultimately research-intensive. This has been demonstrated in the faculty's performance in 2022, which shows that it has increased its research



productivity in terms of publication output units from 0.77 in 2018 to 1.19 in 2022 from a high of 1.26 in 2021. Key building blocks have been put in place to strengthen research capability and enable the shift. In this regard, a research and internationalisation strategy, in response to the recommendations of the Quinquennial Review Committee, has been developed and adopted by the faculty.

This strategy sets a clear understanding of the faculty research agenda across the inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary spectrum, with coherence and mutual reinforcement of work between the different levels of research complexity.

Faculty themes are anchored on advancing education in complexity and strike a balance between the pedagogy of care and compassion and Society 5.0. Within our integrated approach, disciplinary research is at the frontier of knowledge and connects to transdisciplinary research.

Collectively, they position the faculty as a leader with

transformative societal impact.

### Annual performance of the faculty (2022)

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. I would like to thank all staff for their contributions to the performance and success of the faculty. The first semester of 2023 started and concluded well. I would like to wish all staff well as we start the second semester and look forward to another good semester of successful student learning and research productivity.

Happy Dean

*Chika Sehoole*

Professor Chika Sehoole

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# The teaching of literacy modules in African languages in ECE

Authors: Dr Susan Thuketana, Dr Makwalete Malatji, and Mrs Matshediso Lekgetho

Dr Susan Thuketana, Dr Makwalete Malatji, and Mrs Matshediso Lekgetho, accompanied by Brian Madigoe, a fourth-year student in the Department of Early Childhood Education (ECE), gave an outstanding presentation at the University of Pretoria's Senate Conference recently at Future Africa. The presentation showcased the department's curriculum transformation initiatives in teaching African languages to Foundation Phase teacher-training students. Initially, the department offered the Literacy Practices (JGL 461) module in Afrikaans to all students, regardless of the community they would serve as in-service teachers. This practice was contrary to the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS), which states that Foundation Phase learners should be taught in their home languages.

Responding to the transformation agenda at the University, Dr Thuketana, Dr Malatji, and Ms Lekgetho reviewed the

ECE programme to align it with the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), CAPS (2011), and the University of Pretoria's Language Policy (2017). The department is offering the teaching of Sepedi, Setswana, and IsiZulu in the JGL 461 module for seven weeks in the first quarter before the students go for teaching practice. However, the initiative is insufficient; hence, the African Languages Committee submitted a proposal for teaching African languages (Sepedi, Setswana, and IsiZulu) from the first year of the programme, starting in 2024.

The Teaching and Learning Committee approved the proposal, which awaits further approval from the Senate. Teaching the proposed African languages in the Foundation Phase teacher training programme will skill students to teach at least one home language of choice and a first additional language, including English and Afrikaans, as qualified teachers.



Dr Thuketana, Dr Malatji, Mrs Lekgetho, and Mr Madigoe ▲

## Making mental health a priority in ECE

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

Mental health is at the core of our well-being and affects everything we do. Lately, a lot of emphasis has been placed on maintaining a balance between work and life while accommodating measures to support and maintain mental health. Members of staff in the Department of Early Childhood Education have added their voices to the conversation. As a result, a fun rejuvenation walk was planned for Monday, 3 April 2023, where

the department got active and engaged in a fun walking activity around the beautiful grounds of the Groenkloof Campus.

After the walk, Mrs Shirley Masemola from the Employee Well-being Programme addressed members of staff on measures to enhance and maintain good mental health. The social event was concluded with a picnic where members of staff could talk freely about matters

relating to mental health and learn how best to support each other in the workplace. One of the core tenets of the ECE department is that 'sharing is caring'. This event highlighted the importance of sharing each other's struggles as a means to support and encourage collegiality in the dynamic department.



▲ From left to right: Ms Tholakele Nyathi, Prof Azwi Muthivhi, Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Ms Matshediso Lekgetho, Dr Tuelo Matjokana, Ms Francinah Masola, and Ms Bongyi Cwayi



▲ Mrs Masemola addressing the ECE department on the importance of mental health in the workplace



▲ The ECE department walking on the beautiful grounds of the Groenkloof Campus



# Nurturing excellence: Cultivating collaboration and academic growth— Humanities Education’s monthly cohort sessions

Authors: Dr Nthembe Mbewe and Ms Dorothy Mokgoko

▼ *Harnessing academic artistry: Dr Gerhard Genis inspires candidates to illuminate their studies through poetry*



In the dynamic sphere of the Department of Humanities Education, the final Saturday of every month carries immense significance. It is during this time that supervisors, academic staff, and first-year master's and PhD candidates come together for a transformative cohort session, sparking a collective journey of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and academic growth.

The monthly cohort sessions have become instrumental in nurturing excellence within the department. By providing a platform for networking, idea exchange, and personal and professional development, these sessions have become an indispensable part of the department's fabric.

The sessions commence with excitement and anticipation as participants gather with a shared passion for humanities education. Warm smiles and friendly chats cultivate a sense of companionship and openness, transforming the room into a haven of collaboration and intellectual curiosity. Department lecturers take turns presenting different aspects of proposal writing and their experiences to eager minds, inspiring our candidates to push the boundaries beyond traditional education and reach their intellectual capabilities.

One of the highlights of the monthly cohort sessions is the chance for master's degree students and PhD candidates to showcase their progress in their creative projects. These sessions foster a supportive environment that encourages captivating presentations, sparks discussions, and facilitates fruitful exchanges, imbuing the

room with vibrant intellectual energy. To fuel academic growth and cultivate essential skills, the cohort sessions incorporate interactive sessions tailored to unique sections of humanities education. These engaging sessions delve into areas such as methodology and theory advancements in the fields, where participants acquire new tools and approaches to enhance their research and scholarship.

The monthly cohort gatherings extend far beyond the structured sessions, offering a wealth of valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration. Participants seize each moment to forge meaningful connections, not only with their peers but also with esteemed professionals in their fields of interest.

The day culminates with dynamic candidates' sessions, where candidates present their work in their respective department sections. They engage in lively discussions, seeking guidance and advice from fellow scholars and mentors, inspiring new approaches, and invigorating participants' outlooks. With each passing 'Illuminating Saturday', the Department of Humanities Education continues to nurture collaboration, knowledge sharing, and academic

growth. The monthly cohort sessions serve as a testament to the department's dedication to excellence, recognising that true progress lies not in isolation but in the power of collective endeavours.

Cheers to the dynamic leadership of Prof Wassermann, Dr Woest, Dr Maluleke, and Dr Du Plessis, whose innovative organisation brings these sessions to life. Applause to the dedicated staff members who provide invaluable expertise, guiding the candidates towards excellence. And a resounding hurrah to the postgraduate candidates, whose unwavering commitment and active participation foster collaboration within these sessions.

In a significant milestone for the Afrikaans scholarly community, Dr Alta Vos has been named the new editor of LitNet, the esteemed independent Afrikaans online journal. This appointment is a testament to Dr Vos's profound expertise and extensive contributions to the scholarly landscape of education.

Dr Alta Vos brings a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of educational scholarship to her new role. As editor of LitNet, Dr Vos will be responsible for overseeing the journal's pedagogical content, fostering a diverse range of voices, and driving forward its mission to promote Afrikaans as an academic language. LitNet, with its rich history of 25 years of commitment to the development of scholarly work, has established itself as a prominent platform for cultural expression and intellectual discourse. Dr Vos's dedication, expertise, and fresh perspective promise to invigorate the journal and contribute to the ongoing vitality of the Afrikaans literary community. With Dr Vos at the helm, LitNet is poised to continue its tradition of excellence while embracing new possibilities and exploring the untapped potential of the digital age.



◀ ▲ *Discussions in the section sessions*



## UP/Utrecht virtual exchange project

Author: Dr Sarina de Jager



▲ Dr Sarina de Jager from Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, and Dr Peter Mesker from Utrecht University

During the week of 15 to 20 May 2023, the Department of Humanities Education hosted Dr Peter Mesker from Utrecht University. Dr Mesker, a senior lecturer and expert in international cross-cultural education, visited the department to collaborate with Dr Sarina de Jager on a virtual exchange programme between the University of Pretoria and Utrecht University. This programme involves collaboration between third-year students in the Life Orientation module at UP and students from Utrecht University's U-teach programme, enabling them to form professional learning communities (PLCs) over a three-week virtual exchange period.

The virtual exchange programme originated in 2020 following a renegotiation of the memorandum of agreement between the two institutions. It sought to enhance internationalisation efforts and was formally conceptualised in 2021. The inaugural round of engagement took place during the first semester of 2022, marking the beginning of an exciting academic collaboration.

The focus of the PLC discussions revolves around pertinent topics such as well-being in education, courageous classroom conversations, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Throughout the programme, students are encouraged to employ challenge-based learning, designing unique solutions to address various issues within these thematic areas. Following three weeks of intense engagement, students present their innovative solutions in a group presentation format. These presentations have showcased stimulating and interesting examples of problem-solving that transcend cultural and geographical barriers. Furthermore, creative reflection plays a pivotal role in the virtual exchange programme. Students are encouraged to engage in reflective practices, stimulating new conversations about the potential of creative reflection in both professional and personal student-teacher development.

This aspect of the programme has yielded valuable insights and fostered meaningful discussions among participants. The collaboration between the Life Orientation module at UP and the Internationalise Your Classroom module at Utrecht University has been a resounding success. Dr Mesker and Dr De Jager, who completed the second year of this project in 2023, are committed to continuing this initiative for the foreseeable future. Their dedication to promoting cross-cultural education and international collaboration is evident in the positive outcomes achieved thus far.

During Dr Mesker's visit, he and Dr De Jager facilitated a thought-provoking lunchtime seminar in the HE department. They shared their experiences and reflected on the implementation of the virtual exchange programme, shedding light on the challenges and factors contributing to the success of such an international collaboration. This seminar provided a valuable platform for academic exchange. Looking ahead, Dr De Jager is scheduled to visit Utrecht University in September 2023 to continue her work on this collaborative project. The future holds promising opportunities for further cross-cultural engagement and the exploration of innovative pedagogical practices.

## CEA reveals the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2021) results

Author: Dr Karen Roux

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is a trend study undertaken every five years to measure trends in reading comprehension of children in year four of formal education. International large-scale assessments, such as PIRLS, allow participating countries to make international comparisons across education systems and monitor trends and indicators of growth in the early phases of children's education.

South Africa first participated in PIRLS in 2006 and has subsequently participated in the 2011, 2016, and 2021 studies. The South African studies were conducted by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria. The South African PIRLS 2021 study has a nationally represented sample of Grade 4 (all 11 official languages) and Grade 6 learners (English and Afrikaans only) across all provinces.

PIRLS 2021 has found that 81% of South African Grade 4 learners are struggling to read for comprehension at age 10. Its findings, which also highlighted a drop in South Africa's score point average since the previous report in 2016, were recently presented to Minister Angie Motshekga. They show that South Africa ranks the lowest of the 57 countries that participated in PIRLS 2021.

During the National Seminar on Reading Literacy, held on 16 May 2023 under the theme 'Understanding literacy levels in the South African context—taking a deeper dive', Minister Motshekga said it was worth noting that South Africa was one of only three African countries that had participated in the study, along with

Egypt and Morocco, which also scored below the study's international centre point. It should be noted that PIRLS 2021 represents the first international large-scale assessment report after successfully collecting data during the COVID-19 pandemic. The PIRLS trends in Grade 4 reading show a negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prof Surette van Staden and Dr Karen Roux from the CEA presented the findings of the PIRLS 2021. The study found that South African Grade 4 learners obtained an average of 288 score points, which is significantly below the PIRLS centre point of 500. Learners who were tested in English (382) and Afrikaans (387) scored above the national average (288). Learners who completed the assessment in African languages scored below the national average, for example, Xitsonga (223), Sepedi (216), and Setswana (211).

This finding highlighted historical factors—such as the socio-economic environment of the learner, limitations on resources at home and/or at school, and guardians' interest in reading books—that could explain the better performance in Afrikaans and English. It was also found that for Grade 6 learners who were tested in English (377) and Afrikaans (456), 56% struggled to read for comprehension. A total of 12 426 Grade 4 learners from 321 schools and 9 317 Grade 6 learners from 253 schools participated in the PIRLS 2021.

Prof Funke Omidire, the CEA director, says that the way forward is to focus on supporting teachers and learners and looking at innovative ways of improving reading literacy and developing a reading culture among our children.



▲ From left: Prof Surette van Staden, Mr Mishack Tshela, Prof Chika Sehoole, Mr Gabriel Mokoena, Prof Funke Omidire, Minister Angie Motshekga, Dr Joyce West, Prof Ronel Callaghan, Dr Karen Roux, and Prof Ruth Mampame



## ECE department reaches for the stars

Authors: Dr Nadia Swanepoel and Ms Anke Strydom

During the Autumn Graduation ceremony, yet another ECE student was awarded the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Medal as the top-achieving student in the Faculty of Education. Ms Anke Strydom was the recipient of this prestigious award. Dr Nadia Swanepoel asked Anke to share her education journey with the current undergraduate students. Anke responded with a motivational message to each education student and motivated students never to give up on their dreams.

*Good day, silent heroes!*

*My four-year educational journey has been filled with challenges, celebrations, and lessons. I have developed immensely as a teacher, and it is hard to summarise my professional growth in only a few sentences, but here goes nothing. At the start of my journey, I found myself so nervous about the impact I can have on a learner's life inside and outside of the classroom. Wonderful*

*lecturers projected a positive attitude from the get-go. The belief that all students can learn to become teachers went a long way in helping me to reduce my fears.*

*In the blink of an eye, you will be a silent hero standing in front of the classroom. Remember, making mistakes is part of the true life of a teacher. Learn from your mistakes and move on. Work hard because the learner's tomorrow is worth it!*

*What lies ahead? Well, the future is unknown. I am currently a Grade 2 teacher at Laerskool Elarduspark; however, I applied for a degree in medicine. Make no mistake, being a teacher will forever be a part of me.*

*Best of luck to you all!*

*Kind regards  
Anke Strydom*

Ms Anke Strydom ►



## Breaking boundaries: Quadriplegic mouth painters inspire art students to think beyond conventional techniques

Author: Dr Raita Steyn

On 19 May 2023, the Department of Humanities Education organised a unique event that aimed to challenge stereotypical ideas about artists and their creativity. Dr Steyn invited Anton van den Berg and Chris Opperman, two mouth painters with quadriplegia, to demonstrate alternative painting methods to second-year art education students.

During the event, Anton van den Berg and Chris Opperman showcased their remarkable talent and expertise by demonstrating unconventional techniques for creating beautiful artwork using their mouths. Their demonstration aimed to break the misconception that artists can only be creative using their hands.

After the inspiring demonstration, the art education students were given the opportunity to apply the alternative techniques introduced by the experts. Anton van den Berg and Chris Opperman generously shared their knowledge and guided the students in painting using their mouths.

This event provided a valuable learning experience for the students, allowing them to explore and appreciate different forms of artistic expression. It challenged their preconceived notions about creativity and encouraged them to think outside the box regarding artistic practices.

The initiative taken by Dr Steyn and the involvement of Anton van den Berg and Chris Opperman created an inclusive and empowering environment where students could learn from individuals who have overcome physical challenges to pursue

their artistic passions. This event serves as a reminder that creativity knows no boundaries and can be expressed through various methods and techniques.

During the learning process, the students, guided by the experts, gained an insight into the limitless human capabilities and acknowledged Anton van den Berg and Chris Opperman as professional artists. The students observed first-hand the skill, precision, and creativity of mouth painting. The artists' resilience and determination in overcoming physical challenges deeply inspired the students. As a result, the students gained a newfound appreciation for the power of art and the ability to overcome obstacles. They were motivated to approach their own artistic endeavours with a fresh perspective and a willingness to explore unconventional techniques.



▲ Art education students Pheletso Mota (left) and Pabalelo Makgamatha (right) engaging actively in the exploration and appreciation of various artistic forms of expression



▲ Anton van den Berg showcasing his mouth-painting technique



▲ Chris Opperman showcasing his mouth-painting technique to a gathering of art education students



## Researchers and PhD students from Michigan State University visit the Faculty of Education

Author: Prof Saloshna Vandeyar



▲ MSU members visiting primary schools across Pretoria

On 25 May 2023, a research group from Michigan State University (MSU) visited the Faculty of Education. The group consisted of Professor Dorinda Carter Andrews, Chairperson of the Department of Teacher Education, Professor Terry Flenbaugh, Interim Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Ms Lakya Goss, Graduate Research Assistant and Student Program Coordinator, and fourteen doctoral students. Professor Dorinda Carter Andrews is a professor of race, culture, and equity. Her research is broadly focused on racial justice and educational

equity. Professor Terry Flenbaugh, an associate professor, specialises in race, culture, and equity in education. His research focuses primarily on the educational experiences of Black males and other students of colour in urban contexts.

The purpose of their visit was an exploratory attempt to promote transdisciplinary research, networking, and collaborative opportunities between the two institutions, with a focus on examining race, colonisation, and social inequity

in a South African context. To provide a contextual and lived understanding of this focus, Prof Ruth Mampone arranged a visit for the research group from Michigan State University to a primary school in Pretoria (Pretoria Primary School). This was followed by a panel discussion hosted at the Faculty of Education on 'Examining race, colonisation, and social inequity in a South African context', arranged by Prof Saloshna Vandeyar. The panel comprised the following staff members: Dr Connie Makgabo, Dr Philip Mirkin, Dr Francinah Masola, Dr Joyce West, and Dr Bontle Kgopa. Dr Gerhard Genis and Dr Raita Steyn provided inputs in writing (presented in absentia). Prof Schoole also briefly shared some insights on this focus. The visit was coordinated by Dr Rakgadi Phatlane.

The researchers and doctoral students were impressed by the panel discussions and posed many questions. It created an opportunity for the panel members to network and collaborate with the visitors, with the intention of creating a transdisciplinary research project on this focus.

## 'Supervision in colours: Using different frames of mind'

Author: Prof Saloshna Vandeyar

Professor Saloshna Vandeyar, Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies, hosted the 6th Academic Support Session of 2023 on 6 June. This session, titled 'Supervision in colours: Using different frames of mind', was presented by Prof Pieter du Toit to staff in the Faculty of Education.

Making new meaning beyond what supervisors already know about learning and what they must unlearn gave impetus to the workshop. Some extrapolations were foregrounded. If we agree that a student-centred approach to teaching and learning is essential, a candidate-centred approach to master's and PhD supervision should be followed. This approach advances using the principles of several learning theories relevant to any postgraduate research supervision context. One such learning theory is self-regulated learning. Any postgraduate candidate should enact self-regulatedness as an attribute of the 21st century.

The focus of the workshop was on the notion of one's preferences for different modes of thinking. The thinking preferences of a supervisor might differ from those of their postgraduate candidate, or they might be (more or less) the same. Where there is a difference, the supervision might be enriched. When the supervisor and candidate think in similar ways, it might not promote diversity and creative thinking. Creative and innovative thinking was highlighted as part of the process of making new meaning—a constructivist approach to be followed by both the supervisor and the candidate. Delegates could each identify a hypothetical thinking profile that gave an indication of how they would approach their supervision.

A display of artefacts complementing the theory

on thinking preferences and the creative work of master's and PhD graduates was erected, as illustrated in the images below. A discussion was initiated on how supervisors can become more innovative in their thinking about their candidates' research and documenting the outcome. Exemplars of how metaphoric thinking could contribute to changing the traditional moulding of dissertations and theses were shared. A master's student in sports education did a study titled 'Lived experiences of first-year physical education students learning to swim'. Of note is the making of new meaning regarding how a dissertation can be structured: Chapter 1—Dipping a toe into the water; Chapter 2—Diving into the water; Chapter 3—Kick and pull; Chapter 4—Flowing through the water; Chapter 5—Making every lap count.

A PhD student reports on her research on 'Self-regulated professionalism: A whole brain® participatory action research design in a pre-service teacher mentoring context'. She used 'tree' as a metaphoric symbol and titled her chapters as follows: Chapter 1—A sprouting introduction to our professional growth stages; Chapter 2—Seedling: Rooted in the theory and literature; Chapter 3—Sapling: The stems of my research

design; Chapter 4—Budding: Harvesting the findings; Chapter 5—Blossoming: Untangling the meaning; Chapter 6—Bearing fruit: The comprehensive whole brain® mentoring model; Chapter 7—Ripening: Celebrating the self as researcher and practitioner.

As alluded to above, one of the professional learning outcomes of the workshop indicated that everyone involved in supervision needs to 'unlearn'. This is exactly what Prof Du Toit wanted from the workshop, and he urges the reader to find at least one thing from the text that should form part of their unlearning. True to what he advocates, in a reciprocal fashion, he learned from the delegates—and unlearned.

Prof Du Toit's wish is that we all start transforming our supervision—starting with the self. One way of doing so is to embark on scholarship of research supervision (SoRS), similar to what one would find in scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Anyone interested in researching their supervision practice with a view to researching such a scholarly trajectory that will contribute to one's supervisor identity is invited to contact him at pieter.dutoit@up.ac.za.



▲ Prof Du Toit and members of Student Support



## Staff members of the Faculty of Education participated in the Erasmus+ Exchange Programme between the University of Pretoria and the Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, Romania

Author: Prof Marien Graham



▲ Prof Marien Graham shares some of South Africa's rich culture with undergraduate students at the Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau before formally lecturing on statistics and mathematics

Prof Marien Graham, Dr Mia Abrie, and Mr David Mahapane were active participants in the Erasmus+ Exchange Programme between Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, Romania, and the University of Pretoria from 3 to 7 April 2023. The Erasmus+ Exchange Programme is a European Union-sponsored initiative designed to foster education, training, youth, and sports activities in Europe. Additional information regarding this programme can be obtained by visiting <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/about-erasmus/what-is-erasmus>.

Prof Graham and Dr Abrie undertook a teaching assignment mobility, while Mr Mahapane participated in a staff training mobility. On Monday, 3 April 2023, an introductory session was held, during which the three UP staff members presented an overview of the University and the Faculty of Education. As part of the duties associated with the teaching assignment mobility, Prof Graham delivered lectures on statistics and mathematics to undergraduate students, as demonstrated in the image below.

As part of Dr Abrie's teaching assignment mobility, she presented lectures on the teaching of Life Sciences in under-resourced classrooms and the use of cooperative learning strategies for the teaching of complex topics such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (see the image below). The students and their lecturers were interested and participated enthusiastically in the classroom activities. Students were very interested to hear that you could make your own microscopes using simple materials, hand lenses, and cell phones. The staff also expressed their curiosity and appreciation for the strategies for teaching effectively with simple,



▲ Dr Mia Abrie (third from the left) and Mr David Mahapane, who attended the class (fourth from the left) with students from Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau

inexpensive resources. The GMO lesson was very interactive, as students had to combine de Bono's well-known six thinking hats with a modified Jigsaw strategy to learn more about these crops.

As part of Mr Mahapane's staff training mobility, the programme was organised with the aim of sharing his expertise, experiencing the laboratory environment, acquiring new innovation methods, exchanging good practices, and enhancing cooperation between higher education institutions. Mr Mahapane was able to visit some of the practical laboratories (see the photograph below), which allowed him to sharpen his skills and knowledge in his area of expertise. The laboratories boasted exceptional equipment and infrastructure, and Mr Mahapane enjoyed working in well-lit and spacious laboratories. The practical facilities not only facilitated hands-on experience but also facilitated meaningful interactions with fellow staff members.

Furthermore, all three UP staff members also participated in a session where the Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau staff demonstrated game-based learning approaches utilising board games they had designed.

The three UP staff members expressed appreciation for the Erasmus+ Exchange Programme, citing it as an enriching experience that fosters cooperation between UP and the Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau. This collaboration resulted in the mutual enhancement of the educational environments, facilitating knowledge transfer and good teaching practices.



▲ Left to right: Mrs Silvia Leonte (International Office, Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau, Romania), Prof Marien Graham, Mr David Mahapane, Dr Mia Abrie



▲ Mr David Mahapane visiting a laboratory at the Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau



▲ Prof Mariene Graham, Dr Mia Abrie, and Mr David Mahapane playing educational board games with staff members from the Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacau



## Life-long learning at its best!

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

The Department of Early Childhood Education is affiliated with the Unit for Distance Education (UDE). The honours degree in learning support is presented in contact teaching and learning mode by the lectures in the ECE department. Dr West is the coordinator of the contact honours programme.

The same honours degree is also presented in the distance mode of education, where lectures from the ECE department join hands with the UDE. This honours programme is coordinated by Dr Nadia Swanepoel. As part of professional development, Ms Jaquoline Maroga and Mrs Gretchen Jacobs from Education Innovation came to our beautiful campus and provided clickUP training with a specific focus on

UDE modules.

The training was divided into two sessions. The first took place on 19 May and focused on the general background of clickUP. The second took place on 21 June and was predominantly focused on Turnitin. These two sessions provided wonderful opportunities for learning and brushing up on knowledge. A special thanks to Jaquoline and Gretchen for their enthusiasm and guidance. We appreciate all that they do for us.



▲ **Second ECE/UDE clickUP training session**  
Front row (from left to right): Mrs Scholastica Mamogale, Mrs Gretchen Jacobs, Dr Francinah Masola, Mrs Chandré Theunissen  
Middle row (from left to right): Mrs Mariska Ellis, Dr Elsa Etokabeka, Ms Jaquoline Maroga, and Dr Nadia Swanepoel



► **First ECE/UDE clickUP training session**  
Front row (from left to right): Ms Matshediso Lekgetho, Mrs Mariska Ellis, Mrs Gretchen Jacobs, Dr Elsa Etokabeka  
Middle row (from left to right): Mrs Scholastica Mamogale, Mrs Hanlie Swanepoel, Dr Francinah Masola, Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Ms Jaquoline Maroga  
Back row: Dr Tuelo Matjokana

## Uni20 hosted by Symbiosis International University

Author: Prof Chika Sehoole

From 19 to 21 June, Professor Chika Sehoole participated in the Uni20 conference for university leaders from the Group of Twenty (G20) countries, which was hosted by Symbiosis International University in Pune, India.

The G20 is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. It plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues. Member countries include India, South Africa, Russia, and the United States.

The conference was attended by 400

delegates, including university leaders, industry leaders, and students from 46 countries. The theme of the conference was 'The future of universities: Making the world a better place to live in—the transformative role of universities'. In his plenary session, Professor Sehoole gave a presentation on the innovations the University of Pretoria has implemented in granting access to indigent students from poor backgrounds, supporting them throughout their studies to ensure that they leave the University with qualifications. The University prides itself on its rigorous commitment to student outreach; it is a valuable way the University can use its innovation and willingness to create

opportunities for those living in scarcity.

Using the Faculty of Education as a case study, he argued that it is not enough to grant admission to these kinds of students, but you need to further ensure that they turn up at the University for registration. This includes the transport money sent to these students so they can reach the University, making sure that accommodation is prepared for them on arrival, and providing start-up support in the form of toiletries and food until the government bursaries are paid out. This innovation was acknowledged by a World Bank official as an example for others to learn from.



▲ **Panel of leaders presenting at the Uni20 event**



▲ **Prof Chika Sehoole presented with an award in recognition of his efforts**



## READ Education Trust and the University of Pretoria join hands to improve reading in the Foundation Phase

Authors: Prof Funke Omidire and Dr Joyce West



The University of Pretoria and the READ Education Trust have joined hands in a ground-breaking reading and translanguaging project. Over the next year, Professor Funke Omidire and Dr Joyce West are 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 a body of 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 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!



▲ Image: Prof Funke Omidire and Dr Joyce West

## South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT) Conference 2023: Drs Joyce West and Connie Makgabo selected as executive committee members

Author: Dr Joyce West

The annual South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT) Conference took place from 19 to 21 June 2023 at the Maslow Hotel in Time Square Casino, Pretoria. At this prestigious conference, close to 80 delegates presented their research relating to this year's theme: 'Advancing multilingualism—mining the wealth of our languages'. This was the first year post-COVID-19 that delegates met in person and that SAALT hosted the conference independently. During the conference, Drs West and Makgabo (Deputy Chair) were elected to the executive committee of SAALT.

Dr West presented on the 'Intricacies involved in quality assuring African language readers for the Foundation Phase'. Dr Makgabo and Mr Thulani Mthembu presented on 'Teaching African languages using digital technologies: A case study of the fourth-year pre-service teachers'. Distinguished keynote speakers included Dr Theuns Eloff (Chairman of the Dagbreek Trust, Trust vir Afrikaanse Onderwys, Trust vir Afrikaanse Kuns, Kultuur en Erfenis, and Astral Foods), Prof Langa Khumalo (Director of the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources), Prof Pamela Maseko (Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities

at Nelson Mandela University), Prof Piet van Avermaet (Professor in Language and Diversity in the Linguistics Department of Ghent University, Belgium), and Prof Christa van der Walt (Emerita professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University).

At the conference, Dr Joyce West also facilitated a panel discussion regarding 'Concerns and considerations when teaching reading in African languages'. Among the members of this panel was Siân Rees from Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy, who presented on 'Teaching phonics progressively in African languages'. The second panel member was Jenny Katz, also from the Molteno Institute, who presented on

'The development of African language graded readers using a phonics-based approach'. The third panel member was Dr Connie Makgabo, who presented on 'Translating English readers into African languages—the positives and negatives'. Finally, Dr Joyce West concluded the panel discussion with a conversation on 'Measuring the readability of readers in African languages'.

Professor Adelia Carstens, a former HoD in our faculty, was awarded a Lifetime Achievement award in recognition of her sterling contribution to the field of applied linguistics and language teaching.

For more information on SAALT, please go to: <http://www.saalt.org.za/>.



▲ Drs Joyce West and Connie Makgabo



▲ SAALT Conference taking place



## Professor Linda Theron delivers keynote at the 3rd Haruv International Conference

Author: Linda Theron

The Haruv Institute, which is affiliated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is an international leader in conducting research and training practitioners to empower children exposed to abuse and neglect. Professor Asher Ben-Arieh (Director of Haruv) and Professor Carmit Katz (Research Director, Haruv) invited Linda Theron (Professor, Department of Educational Psychology) to deliver a resilience-focused keynote at Haruv's 3rd international conference. The conference, which was attended by close to 200 people (from Israel, the USA, Canada, South Africa, Germany, Finland, Italy, Spain, the UK, the United Arab Emirates, and more), focused on 'Child maltreatment in context'.

Aligned with this focus, Prof Theron drew on her extensive resilience research in African contexts to speak about the differentially impactful protective mechanisms that co-facilitate

resilience to child maltreatment relative to a child's situational and cultural context. As is traditionally done by Haruv, a two-and-a-half-day international PhD workshop preceded the conference; it was attended by 14 PhD students from across the globe, who were all completing research studies focused on child maltreatment. Along with Professor Carmit Katz (Professor of Social Work at Tel Aviv University), Professor Ivar Frønes (Senior Researcher at the National Development Centre for Children and Young People; professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Oslo), and Professor Yochay Nadan (Paul Baerwald School of Social Work, Hebrew University), Prof Theron was invited to act as a mentor to the PhD candidates attending the workshop. The workshop and conference were outstanding opportunities to network and develop new research collaborations with diverse partners, including emerging scholars from the Middle East.



▲ Linda Theron (far left, front row) and Ivar Frønes (far left, back row) with the PhD students at the 8th International Haruv PhD mentoring workshop



▲ Linda Theron and Mayada Karjawlly (Haruv Coordinator of Health Programmes)

## The Reading Literacy Crisis in South Africa, What Can the Academy of Science Do?

Author: Gabriel Mokoena



▲ Prof Funke Omidire, Director of the CEA

Two representatives from the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), Prof Funke Omidire and Mr Gabriel Mokoena, attended a roundtable discussion at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies on 19 June. Professor Jonathan Jansen invited academics to the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF) presidential roundtable discussion on reading literacy in South Africa.

The discussion, with the theme 'The reading literacy crisis in South Africa—what can the Academy of Science do?', was chaired by ASSAF President Prof Jonathan Jansen. The discussion follows the recent release of the PIRLS 2021 results. The study, which was conducted by the CEA, showed that 81% of South Africa's Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning.

Presenters included Prof Crain Soudien, a sociologist and emeritus professor in education and African studies at the University of Cape Town, and Ms Nangamso Mtsatse, the current CEO of Funda Wandé and an experienced education leader. Presenters pointed to some of the challenges facing education in South Africa and referred to factors such as poor teaching practice, massive inequality in education with a massive gap between the highest and lowest achievers, and children changing their language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4 without proper transition mechanisms in Grade 3.

Among the proposed solutions to the literacy problem in the country were

addressing structural inequalities; addressing the literacy problem as a holistic challenge and building mother-tongue literacy culture since there is very little publishing of mother-tongue fiction and non-fiction literature; raising the level of content that learners are exposed to; improving the skills and knowledge that teachers bring to that content; and increasing the level of student-active learning content.

The Director of the CEA, Prof Funke Omidire, added that 'While support is required across the grades in the different phases, additional efforts and resources have to be invested in the Foundation Phase. We have to get teaching and learning right in the Foundation Phase, as success in future learning depends on that. The teachers have to be supported to develop the competencies required to teach reading, especially in the home languages. It is also important that only teachers whose first choice of career is teaching and who are passionate about teaching are the ones posted to the Foundation Phase.'



## Department of Early Childhood Education welcomes Mr David Kumador: Visiting Scholar from Ghana

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel

A warm welcome to Mr David Kumador in the Department of Early Childhood Education. Mr Kumador is a visiting scholar from Ghana who is currently busy completing his PhD under the guidance of Professor Azwi Muthivhi. Although Mr Kumador is from Ghana, he is no stranger to South Africa. In 2011, he completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Ghana, where he specialised in home science. After that, he completed his MPhil degree in 2015, focusing on family and child studies, also at the University of Ghana. He started with his PhD in 2021 and is a proud Tukkier. Mr Kumador has won multiple awards, starting with the JW Centenary Scholarship Award at the University of Cape Town (2018), then the Foundation Contingency Scholarship Award at the University of Cape Town (2020), and most recently, he was awarded the UP Postgraduate Research Bursary (2021–2023).

When asked about his research interests, Mr Kumador explained that he is particularly interested in constructing child vulnerabilities as tools for learning and development and for developing culturally appropriate models of teaching and learning in inclusive early childhood education. He continued to explain that his pedagogical approach to teaching offers real-life scaffolds that support learners' experiences and worldviews within a humanist model. It is hoped that such scaffolding would help students reflect on policies and practices, identify bottlenecks, and collectively develop sustainable models for solving today's problems. Mr Kumador published several articles between 2013 and 2018.

The ECE department wishes to extend a warm welcome to Mr Kumador, who also serves as a very knowledgeable colleague when it comes to updating the ECE

website. Thank you for your willingness to always assist us, David. You truly are an asset to our department. David can be reached at [dkumador@ug.edu.gh](mailto:dkumador@ug.edu.gh).



▲ Mr David Kumador

### STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

## Mr Khungile Hobongwana's hard work yields fruit as his paper on 'The impact of domestic investment on economic growth in South Africa: A sectoral approach' is accepted by IBSS and SCOPUS

Author: Khungile Hobongwana



▲ Mr Khungile Hobongwana

Mr Khungile Hobongwana, a PhD EMPS student in the Faculty of Education, holds several qualifications, including a PGCE-FET, MCom, BComHons, BCom, National Diploma in Administrative Management, and various leadership

and communication certificates. His love for education and passion for mentoring young people led him to join the University of Pretoria's Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme in 2020, despite already having a postgraduate qualification in commerce.

Recognising the value of mentorship, Mr Hobongwana sought out a selfless mentor in his economics methodology lecturer, Ms Madonda. When the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies (EMPS) needed an assistant lecturer for economics and other commerce methodology modules, his mentor introduced him to the former departmental HoD, Prof Hartell, as a suitable candidate for the position. Thanks to his intense dedication to scholarship and education, Mr Hobongwana became a part-time lecturer for both undergraduate and PGCE commerce methodology in 2021. He also joined the Faculty of Education's STARS Mentorship programme, where he mentored a number of students who still maintain their mentor-mentee relationship with him. He encourages his students to pursue postgraduate studies,

and he is currently mentoring students pursuing honours and MEd qualifications. Mr Hobongwana finds fulfilment and encouragement in seeing his mentees graduate.

He credits UP and the Faculty of Education for his academic growth early in his career. The departments of Research and Innovation and Postgraduate Studies and Research provided him with invaluable guidance and support. As a research-intensive university, UP's research department often facilitates writing retreats for scholars and postgraduate students led by seasoned professionals. After a break due to the pandemic, Mr Hobongwana attended his first writing retreat in 2022. Thanks to the guidance of a seasoned scholar, he was able to submit a paper in October 2022, which was accepted and published by an international journal that is IBSS- and SCOPUS-accredited. The article is available at <https://sobiad.org/manuscript/index.php/ijefs/article/view/1528>. He will be attending writing retreats organised by UP with the goal of publishing more articles and reading literature for his PhD research. It is safe to say that we FLY @UP!



## Dr Connie Makgabo Achieves New Milestone as Deputy Chair of SAALT

Author: Dr Connie Makgabo

In a remarkable display of dedication and expertise, Dr Connie Makgabo, who has served as the secretary for the SAALT Executive Committee (EXCO) since July 2019, has recently been voted and appointed as the Deputy Chair of the prestigious organisation. This significant achievement occurred during the annual SAALT Conference held from 19 to 21 June 2023 at the Maslow Hotel in the Time Square Casino, Pretoria.

The SAALT Conference, a gathering of language teaching professionals from across South Africa, proved to be the ideal setting for Dr Makgabo's well-deserved recognition. The conference, organised under the theme 'Advancing multilingualism—mining the wealth of our languages', aimed to explore the diverse linguistic landscape of the nation and foster the development of effective language teaching strategies.

Dr Makgabo's election as Deputy Chair of SAALT reflects her exceptional contributions and commitment to language teaching. Over the past four years, she has served as the secretary for the SAALT EXCO, diligently managing administrative tasks and supporting the organisation's initiatives. Her efforts

have been instrumental in advancing the objectives of SAALT and promoting language education in South Africa.

As the newly appointed Deputy Chair, Dr Makgabo will assume a more prominent role within SAALT, working alongside the Chair to guide the organisation's activities and advocate for the importance of multilingualism. Her experience and expertise in language teaching make her well-suited for this position, as she continues to contribute her valuable insights to shape the future of language education in the country. Dr Makgabo's achievement not only showcases her excellence but also highlights the remarkable strides being made in language education in South Africa. With her appointment, SAALT reinforces its commitment to fostering an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that celebrates linguistic diversity and harnesses the rich linguistic heritage of the nation.

As we congratulate Dr Makgabo on this exceptional achievement, we look forward to witnessing the positive influence she will exert in her new position. Her leadership, passion for promoting multilingualism, and expertise

will undoubtedly contribute to the advancement of language teaching and the continued growth of SAALT, solidifying its status as a leading authority in language education in Africa.



Dr Connie Makgabo

## Early Childhood Education obtains another lecturer with a PhD

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel



Dr Swanepoel

The Department of Early Childhood Education is very proud to have obtained another lecturer who has graduated with a PhD. Many students have come to know Dr Nadia Swanepoel as a lecturer who coordinates and teaches multiple

modules in the department but is predominantly focused on Mathematics teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase. Dr Swanepoel is well-known to students as she is one of the package coordinators in the department and is associated with the Unit for Distance Education. Dr Swanepoel kindly shared her story of where her journey in academia started and gave insight into what her doctorate is about.

Dr Swanepoel obtained her Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Development and Foundation Phase from the University of Pretoria. This was followed by a Bachelor of Education Honours degree in Learning Support and a master's degree in education from the University of Pretoria. She is a lecturer in the Department of Early Childhood Education and has worked in this department since 2017. She was promoted to the position of permanent lecturer at the beginning of 2023. Dr Swanepoel recently attained her PhD in Education from the University of Johannesburg. The title of her thesis was 'Enhancing Grade 3 teachers'

mathematics word-problem-solving instruction through professional development initiatives'. She was supervised by Professor K Luneta.

Using participatory action research as a research design, this study was dedicated to enhancing Grade 3 teachers' mathematics word-problem-solving instruction through professional development initiatives. The results of the data showed that by introducing aspects of play, creativity, and movement and incorporating reading comprehension strategies in the teaching of mathematics word problems, teachers have an increased understanding of mathematics word-problem-solving instruction and are thus more comfortable teaching mathematics word problems. Likewise, with teachers' increased confidence and competence, learners also perform better in mathematics word-problem-solving. As a contribution to the discourse, a successful intervention manual was generated that provides strategies and guidance to enhance teachers' mathematics word problem-solving instruction.



## FLY@UP exam activation

Author: Oreratile Kau

The winter season is one of doom and gloom in the eyes of all associated with the University, but especially for students. This time of year is pivotal as exams are fast approaching, signifying an end to the first half of the academic year. As daunting as it is, FLY@UP always seems to foster solutions and bring the students some peace of mind—this time with the exam activation campaign.

This is an initiative that helps students refocus their energy on the upcoming exam period. The event took place in the early days of May, giving students time to pick up study habits to complete the last round of semester tests and ease into exam preparations. Multiple internal organisations took part in the activation, including UP Careers and Student Affairs. In addition, the City of Tshwane Sexual Education Initiative attended the event. Their campaign was to raise awareness of the pros and cons of sexual activity, how to deal with them, and how to take care of your health in the process. The fact that these issues were being communicated by both Student Affairs and the City of Tshwane during exam season shows how much sexual activity could affect study focus.

The UP Museum was also part of the event. Their focus was on making students more aware of its services, its dual venues, and its upcoming events. Sharon Thenga, a student on the Groenkloof Campus, exalted in how beautiful the museum and gallery were, announcing that the stall was her favourite. Her main reason for this was her deep interest in history.

Other campaigns were involved, such as those of Security Services and the Disability Unit—both crucial on every campus. Security Services play a vital role as they not only ensure the safety of all campus occupants but are also responsible for contacting first responders when emergencies occur. The Disability Unit ensures the safety of students with disabilities and also plays a vital role in facilitating integration. They offer basic South African Sign Language



▲ SRC students attending and ushering students

Students exploring the Career Services gazebo ▼



training for students who would like to learn the language.

Altogether, the turnout was satisfactory, and the engagement was superb.

## Face of Education

Author: Thabang Phiri

On 19 May 2023, the House Education Vice-Chairperson (Sanele Sibeko), in collaboration with the Internal Culture Officer (Nosipho Khumalo), hosted a pageant with the titles Ms, Mr, Mx and Plus size to accommodate every student who wished to participate in the pageant. The event was marketed using digital posters that were posted on WhatsApp and emailed to the students. Contestants were given a link to a WhatsApp group chat to join so that we knew how many models would participate. We ended up having two contestants in the Mx category and ten in the Ms category.

Every education student was given a chance to RSVP for the event, and other student leaders from UP structures were invited. The reason students had to RSVP was that it was a free-entry event, so we needed to know how many students to prepare for. The theme of the event was 'The Red Carpet', and most of the attendees adhered to the theme.

The event was held on the Groenkloof Campus at the Normal Hall under the supervision of facility manager Lucille Weyer. The event commenced at 16:30

and ended later than anticipated. We managed to get everyone back to their residences safely. The pageant was honoured by the presence of the faculty's dean (Mr Chika Sehoole), who gave a speech in which he stated that the last time an event like this was held was back in 2019 before COVID-19 struck.

The pageant consisted of five rounds for the Ms category and four for the Mx category, namely, introductions, swimwear & sportswear, cultural attire, formal attire, and a Q&A round.



Contestants participating in the Face of Education competition



## Centre of Health Science hosts wellness day for Groenkloof Campus

Author: Oreratile Kau

On 11 May 2023, the Centre of Health Sciences hosted a wellness day aimed at giving all Groenkloof staff free health screenings. The programme included four screening tests, namely blood pressure, heart health, glucose and cholesterol, and hearing.

In addition to the screening, a pre-screening body mass index evaluation was taken at the beginning of the programme for every member who participated. Blood pressure screening was the first on the list. A standard blood pressure monitor was used. After this, the staff members were ushered to the next stall, where their glucose and cholesterol were measured with a cholesterol meter. The machine required a drop of blood to evaluate the patients' levels of glucose. One of the most interesting tests that was done was the hearing screening test,

which included pure tone testing and otoscopy.

There was a high turnout, which demonstrates that the UP staff are serious about taking care of their

health. It sets a good example for students, showcasing that your health status is something you should know and keep tabs on.



▲ Medical students and staff interacting on Wellness Day

▲ Doctors-in-training on Wellness Day

## The Faculty of Education cares: Nurturing and supporting the intellectual development of our postgraduate students

Author: Prof Saloshna Vandeyar

The Office of the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies hosted the second three-day edition of the Postgraduate Support Sessions from 3 to 5 July 2023. The sessions were well attended by postgraduate students. The following aspects were covered in these sessions:

On 3 July 2023, Dr Celeste Combrinck began the session with a presentation on 'Quantitative data analysis theory'. This was followed by a presentation on 'Action research (ethnography and autoethnography)' presented by Professor Pieter du Toit. During Professor Du Toit's presentation, an electrical fault in the auditorium plunged the venue into darkness. The presenters of this session were unfazed, however, and Professor Du Toit reacted by reassuring students and calmly switching to a different mode of presentation.

Dr Nthembe Mbewe drew from her extensive repertoire of teaching strategies and decided to use the natural light and setting of the outdoors to conduct her presentation on 'Phenomenology research and design research methodologies'. What is admirable about these colleagues is that students were provided with

an opportunity not only to learn outside of the 'traditional classroom', taking in the freshness of the outdoors, but also to learn how to adapt and teach to accommodate unforeseen circumstances.

Ms Tholakele Nyathi, the administrator of the Office of the Deputy Dean, immediately set about looking for an alternative venue. She informed students of the change of venue via the online portal and put up posters at the auditorium and on the boom gate at the entrance to the Groenkloof Campus. These colleagues demonstrated their sheer determination to provide quality education to our postgraduate students, despite this setback. They could so easily have taken the easy route and 'dismissed the class', but they did not—that is not what staff in the Faculty of Education do. Staff in the Faculty of Education care—they care about their students.

The following day, 4 July, was devoted to data capture methods, quantitative data analysis methods and a session on research methodologies. Prof Nthonto Maitumeleng presented a session on 'Interview protocols',

followed by a session by Dr Sarina de Jager on 'Photovoice'. The session presented by Dr Karen Roux addressed 'Quantitative analysis', specifically on SPSS. The day's concluding session was on 'Research methodologies: Searching for information sources in support of methodologies' and was presented by Ms Sonja Delpont, Ms Liesl Stieger, and Ms Clara Ngobeni from the Groenkloof Library.

The Postgraduate Support Session on 'Qualitative data analysis methods' held on 5 July related specifically to ATLAS.ti and was presented by Dr Rene Beyers and Dr Andre du Plessis. The three-day event concluded with departmental support initiatives and opportunities for postgraduate students to meet with their respective supervisors.

These sessions presented valuable learning opportunities for postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education. Thank you to all the presenters for nurturing and supporting the intellectual development of our postgraduate students. Copies of the PowerPoint presentations are available on Google Drive for postgraduate students.



▲ Dr De Jager presenting



▲ Students engaged and engrossed



▲ Dr Mwebe (alternative teaching)



# The first Mathematics Teaching and Learning Colloquium

Author: Dr Nadia Swanepoel



▲ **The second-year ECE students designing a problem-solving activity using recyclable materials**

The Mathematics Teaching and Learning Colloquium was hosted by Dr Nadia Swanepoel and took place on Wednesday, 28 June 2023. This event was part of the deliverables of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grant. The focus of the SoTL project is on enhancing pre-service teachers' mathematics word-problem-solving instruction through a lesson-study approach.

The colloquium was focused on enhancing problem-solving through play-based approaches. Different perspectives on problem-solving were explored, including from the perspective of research and practice. Strategies for enhancing problem-solving in mathematics were discussed, along with ways in which learning through play could be incorporated into mathematics teaching and learning.

It was important to highlight the



▲ **The second-year ECE students designing a problem-solving activity using recyclable materials**

relationship language has with problem-solving. The last topic of discussion was the essential element required to make learning through play available in the classroom. The discussions were prompted by six panellists who were all involved in problem-solving in some form. The audience consisted of second-year Early Childhood Education students.

The first panellist, Dr Kayla Willemse, works in the area of STEM education and has extensive experience and knowledge in coding and robotics. She shared her experiences with integrating coding and robotics in early mathematics. Dr Elsa Etokabeka was the second panellist. She shared her understanding of problem-solving, making reference to executive functions. Ms Obakeng Moropa is a practising Grade 2 teacher who was able to provide the audience with practical experiences and examples of what it is like

to teach problem-solving to learners.

Mrs Scholastica Mamogale is a lecturer on early mathematics in the Department of Early Childhood Education. She has many years of experience in teaching, coordination, and researching mathematics in early childhood education. The fifth panellist was Mrs Erna Erasmus, an MEd student investigating the integration of coding and robotics in mathematics. As a mother of two boys and a teacher, she was able to share valuable practical experiences and techniques of how to implement play and problem-solving using everyday materials, activities, and resources.

The last panellist was Ms Karen Pienaar, who recently completed her MEd. As a preschool teacher, she was able to share practical tips and techniques for fostering play and problem-solving in the classroom.

Each person invited to the colloquium was asked to bring recyclable items as an entry ticket. These items were later used in a practical activity. The attendees divided themselves into groups and were tasked with creating a problem-solving activity using recyclable materials. The objective of the activity was to initiate play and problem-solving.

The Mathematics Teaching and Learning Colloquium was a huge success. Attendees walked away feeling inspired to implement play by providing learners with a variety of non-expensive recyclable items. Many attendees mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with experts and gain some perspective from them. It was also mentioned that it was refreshing to hear about how teachers are able to solve the challenges they experience in the workplace. The highlight of the event was the audience's realisation that mathematics can be fun and that problem-solving does not have to be frightening.



▲ **The panellists: Dr Elsa Etokabeka, Ms Obakeng Moropa, Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Dr Kayla Willemse, Mrs Erna Erasmus, Ms Karen Pienaar, and Mrs Scholastica Mamogale**



▲ **The panellists: Dr Kayla Willemse, Mrs Scholastica Mamogale, Ms Obakeng Moropa, Dr Nadia Swanepoel, Mrs Erna Erasmus, Ms Karen Pienaar, and Dr Elsa Etokabeka**



# Writing Retreat Workshop: Investing in the research development of academics in the Faculty of Education

Author: Prof Saloshna Vandeyar

On 6 and 7 July 2023, academics from the Faculty of Education attended an article-writing workshop presented by Professor Ronel Ferreira. The workshop was arranged by Professor Saloshna Vandeyar, the Deputy Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies.

The writing retreat served as a professional development opportunity for both experienced and early-career academics from the faculty. This group of academics was joined by an international visiting scholar from the Philippines. During the interactive workshop, various aspects and components of a manuscript were discussed before participants worked on these sections of their manuscripts. The interactive format ensured that all were engaged in the respective aspects of writing scholarly work and reciprocal professional learning was promoted. Adequate time was allowed for writing different sections—theory could immediately be put into practice. Manuscripts that were prepared in advance could be refined and enriched.

In addition to facilitating general discussions with the group, Professor Ronel Ferreira engaged with some of the participants on an individual basis to provide guidance and feedback on their writing. Participants also benefited from bouncing their ideas off peers and learning from and with academics in their field. Professor Pieter du Toit and Professor Saloshna Vandeyar contributed to discussions by sharing their valuable experience and expertise in writing articles for publication. This opportunity contributed to the formation of the delegates' scholarly identities.

The workshop was received very positively, and participants expressed their sincere appreciation for the opportunity. The feedback provided by the participants included the following:

*'I would just like to extend my gratitude for the postgraduate writing retreat that you organised. Before attending the retreat, I did not know where to start with reference to writing an article. But now, I leave the retreat with a wealth of knowledge that I will*

*put towards my academic writing. Thank you for all the knowledge that you and Prof Ferreira shared with us. It will not go in vain.'*

*'Gen and I would like to express our gratitude for organising this retreat. We benefited much from it, and we are equipped with the skills to go and write since we now know what and how to include content in each section of the article.'*

*'This was a refresher course for us, and yet we learned more, especially in improving the content and structure of the articles we are writing. It was indeed a privilege and opportunity for us to be part of this retreat. Thank you so much.'*

*'Thank you for the opportunity to participate in such an informative writing retreat. I gained a thorough comprehension of article writing in two days. Amongst others, one of the skills acquired was the ability to concisely extract information from a thesis.'*



Discussions at the writing retreat



Writing panel members



Prof Saloshna Vandeyar and the panel



# Introducing our newest LLITUPian, Kabelo Mahlase

With insights shared by Kabelo Mahlase

In 2023, we welcome Kabelo as LLITUPian, reflect on LLITUP's ability to ignite new possibilities in terms of research focus, module planning, events, and the use of tools. This edition is filled with stories of creativity and enthusiasm that celebrate the new that often erupts from LLITUP.



With 2023 almost halfway through, Kabelo Mahlase has found her feet in the LLITUP Collaboratorium. Annèl van Rooyen inquired into her background, aspirations, and study focus to introduce and welcome her to the team formally.

## **What is your teaching and postgraduate background?**

I am an Economics, Business and Accounting teacher. I started teaching at an under-resourced school and could not imagine integrating technology in my classroom other than through a projector and Google Classroom maybe. This changed when I started doing my CIE Honours at UP. I was exposed to a world of apps and mobile learning that I could not even think existed. The course forced me to ask:

- Why are you not integrating technology into your classroom?
- Are you doing it effectively?
- Is it engaging learners?
- Are they learning as well as having fun?
- Are they motivated to learn?

- How does it connect what they are learning to the larger context, the real world?

Then I worked at an online school and the same questions persisted. I found this to be truly intriguing - a mind explosion moment. It occurred to me that the issue was around the technological confidence of educators and how they felt the technology contributed to their practice, and of course the adjustment from a physical classroom to an online classroom.

## **How did you become involved in LLITUP?**

I saw an opportunity to be part of a unit that changed my perspective of what teaching could be. I imagined it to be a learning opportunity that would greatly contribute to my future teaching as well as research in education.

## **What do you hope to contribute to LLITUP?**

I had never thought of my possible contribution. I went into LLITUP as an

empty vessel, hoping to learn as much as I can. If I had to contribute, it would be an awareness of how much ordinary South African classrooms could benefit from the ideas of technology that solves classroom-level problems. This is such an underappreciated perspective. Often teachers, pressured of time, have to give up their creativity and sometimes the quality they bring in order to get through the year.

## **How has your research focus developed during your Honours, and being busy with your Masters?**

In my Honours I was interested in the experiences of online teachers. It was the environment I was working in and it was such a novel experience for me. I wondered if my colleagues shared my thoughts or whether I was overthinking my experience. In my research, it turned out I was not.

In my Masters, my focus is relatively the same. I want to determine what online teachers 'do' with the issues of engagement; how they do it; and hope that it can enlighten other online teachers, but my deep drive is not necessarily that. I wanted to find out what happens with engagement in online classes and how lessons from online teaching can help teachers in physical spaces navigate technology. My thought was that online teachers interact with technology all the time and they build their skills and knowledge faster than educators who do not. So, their current skills and knowledge can help other educators in physical classes to find interesting ways to teach learners. I am looking forward to seeing what my Master's study will reveal.

## Reflecting on how LLITUP realises dreams for innovative teaching with technology

With insights shared by Annèl van Rooyen

I have the privilege of being part of LLITUP since 2020. I love how everything the LLITUPians do, is done as team effort. Our modules, from planning, preparing and presenting, are a team effort I love how we team-teach, the younger colleagues together, and especially with Prof Callaghan who brings rich experience and expert knowledge to the mix. I love how doing things together gives us wings to fly.

Being part of LLITUP provides us with opportunities to expand our knowledge, understanding and experiences related to innovative teaching with the support of technological devices, amongst others. What LLITUP does well, is to ignite possibilities. Our involvement in the lab guides us in discovering and experiencing so many

new and exciting things. It also has the wonderful ability to help us identify a niche for ourselves, specifically related to our research interests. Thanks to the Honours module CIT720 presented by LLITUP, I was introduced to Bee-bots in 2019. Soon after, the world of Coding and Robotics started to reveal itself as an intriguing, educationally rich field that interested me tremendously.

Being a LLITUPian has further sparked and nurtured my growing interest. I have particularly befriended the Bee-bots. Yet, LLITUP also sustains my appetite with new robotics tools added to the collaboratorium's collection. With apps like Boats and Tanks, the cute Coding Critter floor robot, board games like Scotty Go, other apps and software (like Scratch), there is so much to play with.

*continue on page 20...*



This playing is built on inquiry-based learning; on making one's own discoveries; on constructing one's knowledge while designing; on sharing and thinking collaboratively; on working through ill-structured problems.

LLITUP has caressed my Coding and Robotics interest all the way. We had the privilege of presenting the Coding and Robotics symposium in 2022. The connections made with people and experts in the field at this event, opened up new connections and collaborative opportunities for us. LLITUP further hosts coding club events, one of my favourite events to guide staff and students in their personalised journeys into the world of Coding and Robotics. LLITUP was also involved in the development of the Early Childhood Education department's module development aimed at third year students' experiences of the teaching and learning of Coding and Robotics. All of these opportunities provide us with hands-on experiences to apply our belief in the educational value of integrating Coding and Robotics for the sake of the Coding and Robotics learning, but also for the sake of problem-solving; for the development of 21st century skills; for resilience building; and for

a growing attitude that is willing to try, perhaps fail and not give up, but to rather try again.

With Coding and Robotics as my focus, the variety of wonderful encounters with people, tools, events, and opportunities initiated by LLITUP excites me. I thoroughly enjoy my exploration into the training of Foundation Phase teachers for the integration of Coding and Robotics in their classrooms. I have encountered the intriguing network of aspects that constitute such teaching and learning. This includes an understanding of who the Coding and Robotics teachers are; how they acquire their knowledge; how and which Coding and Robotics tools suit the Foundation Phase context; and what the process of play can entail. I hope to contribute valuable building blocks required for an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Coding and Robotics. I am deeply under the impression of how LLITUP caresses my field of interest and sparks my enthusiasm and further learning. This truly is a space that fosters innovative teaching and learning at the University of Pretoria, and far beyond its borders.

## DREAM2TEACH ICT310 module redesigned for 2023's PGCE programme

*With insights shared by Jody Joubert and Farihah Jaffer*

ICT310 is a PGCE module that equips postgraduate students with relevant knowledge and skills to implement and effectively utilise digital tools and resources in their teaching practice. This module was redesigned by Jody Joubert and Farihah in 2023. Starting in January, Jody and Farihah headed the module redesign process as the module lecturers. In the process, they also had Gontse Mthlebofu and Nelé Loubser on board with their respective computer-integrated education and curriculum design expertise.

The module designers were cognisant of the module requirements, but also added their own desired outcomes. Specifically, this meant that the teacher digital competencies as presented in the current Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning of South African teachers found a central place of incorporation in the PGCE programme. The module intends to increase future teachers' employability. The module was transformed in focus. It now not only equips aspiring teachers with basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills, but also creates competent, employable teachers. These teachers' competence is built during the module's self-development programme, where students have the opportunity to address their weaknesses and work at attaining all thirteen teacher digital competencies.

The learning endeavour is called **The journey to digital competency and beyond**. The road markers include the following:

1. Arriving at evaluation
2. On the way to integration
3. Stopping for social media integration
4. Exploring assessment and records

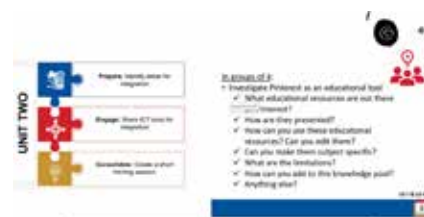
5. Exploring ICTs for professional duties
6. To competency and beyond

Student teachers compile an evidence-based portfolio. It is format free, and students can choose which of their assignments adequately demonstrate all thirteen of their digital competencies and then include these in the portfolio. This is seen in students' skills, knowledge and values as envisioned in the framework. Students complete six assignments, all mapped to match and address the various teacher digital competencies. Assignment topics include a professional biography, students' design of a relevant educational technology evaluation tool and the design of a how-to video guide of edtech for teachers. An innovative assignment includes the use of Pinterest as a Learning Management System. This entails that student teachers curate resources that are shared in a central place, and then share these in a planned educational pathway. The two final assignments focus on assessment and professional duties of teachers and then require students to consider tools fit for these purposes.

The module follows **Teaching the UP way**, with its Prepare-Engage-Consolidate approach. Teacher digital competencies are initially introduced in lecture-style, but students soon consider their own goals and current stance through a SWOT-analysis. Reflection, in a journal and at the end, plays a key role in supporting students to keep track of their learning and progression. Students are also encouraged to develop and participate in a professional development community.

For Farihah, module design for the first time felt like swimming in the deep end,

but she enjoyed to "learn by doing". For Jody, the required generic nature of the module was a challenge and a motivator.



▲ Teaching the UP way as visually illustrated for ICT310



▲ A proficient student showcases her digital portfolio using Visme



▲ Activities captured in the digital portfolio



OpenAI

ChatGPT 4.0

# LET'S CHAT(ABOUT)GPT *LLITUP adds its voice to the ChatGPT conversation*

With insights shared by Jody Joubert and Kabelo Mahlase

Already towards the end of 2022, Jody Joubert started investigating the use of AI in education. Academia are worried, but also excited and nervous. Plagiarism and letting the machine work for you are some of the reasonable concerns. Perhaps we should assess differently now. Consider to design assessments in such a way that Google or ChatGPT cannot provide the answer. Another aspect to consider is the hands into which the tool will fall. While its use can be advantageous, will it not further widen the digital divide?

Before we Chat(about)GPT, first read this AI-generated formal letter of resignation to coffee.

The prompt: "Write a formal letter with the correct formatting to inform coffee that I will no longer be drinking it."

The output:

Dear [Coffee Company Name],

I am writing to inform you that I have made the decision to no longer consume coffee. While I have enjoyed the taste and energy boost that coffee has provided me in the past, I have come to realize that it is no longer a drink that I would like to continue to have in my life.

I have appreciated the convenience and quality of your coffee products and have been a loyal customer for many years. However, it is time for me to move on and try new things.

I would like to express my gratitude for the memories and experiences that I have had with your coffee and for the role it has played in my life. I will always look back fondly on my time as a coffee drinker.

Thank you for your understanding and for the great products that you have provided to me and to many others.

Sincerely, [Your Name]

▲ **Formal letter of resignation to coffee**

After seeing the initial output, Jody prompted ChatGPT to "make it much shorter", "Do it in Sepedi", "Afrikaans this time" and "French?" with varying success levels.

In speaking on the topic in both the SMTE and Humanities departments, Jody tried to guide staff through the unfamiliar, possibly threatening terrain of AI. He did this by breaking down the unfamiliar into familiar parts. His questions to address included: **What is AI?**; **What is GPT?**; **How does it work?**; **Why is AI a threat?** (from literature and in his opinion); and **How can AI be a mindtool?**

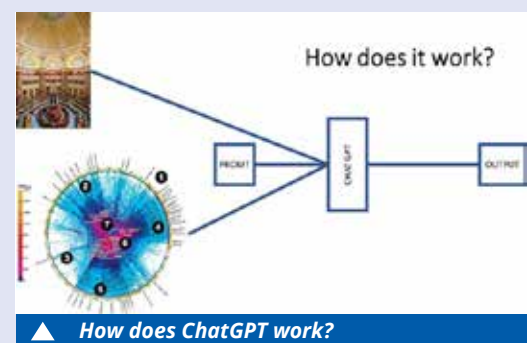
Let's chat about the questions.

## 1. What is AI?

AI is defined as intelligence displayed by machines (hardware and software) that can interact by perception, synthesis, inference and/or prediction. Jody states that AI answers from its big memory, without deep understanding and cognition.

## 2. How does it work?

Jody explains it in clear terms: AI has a memory of many, many knowledge sources. Once prompted, it can generate a response from memory. The more it is used, the more the system is trained (i.e. machine learning). While it is "not necessarily intelligent, it remembers more than we can." Below is a simple flow diagram depicting the workings of ChatGPT as designed by Jody.



## 3. Why is AI a threat?

Jody focused on the dangers of plagiarism associated with the tool, deep faking, information security, and lethal autonomous robots. To counteract its threats, Jody believes that the tool needs to be used ethically and as a mindtool.

## 4. What can we do with AI as a mindtool?

Using ChatGPT as a mindtool, requires that three characteristics of mindtools need to be adhered to as defined by Pakdaman-Savoji, Nesbit, and Gajdamaschko (2019). The first is **interaction**: The quality of the inputs, and the thinking behind the inputs provided by the user while interacting with ChatGPT, determines the type of output generated. Secondly is **representation**. In this regard, the tool has the ability to produce products as per the user's request. The question, however, is whether the tool manages to represent the user's own thinking, which is often not the case. In this way, the use of ChatGPT needs to be approached well to see whether it really can be used by people as a mindtool to represent their thinking. The last mindtool characteristic



is that of **distributed cognition**. This tool carries many aspects of the task burden, with specialisation in memory tasks and format. The extent to which the tool supports the user's cognition, thereby allowing for distributed cognition, can be further explored.

Jody is of the opinion that ChatGPT is, after all, a type of chatbot, making it more social and effective in a conversational sense. It avoids explicit language because it has been ethically trained, and will also not provide risky information like how to commit suicide or a murder. Since the tool is open for public use, people's use is adding to the tool's training as they explore different topics and ideas. Users can teach the system, especially because it does not have a mind of its own. It functions on the lowest levels of Bloom's taxonomy, combining things from memory without true cognition or higher-level thinking. There is not application, for it only remembers without understanding. It cannot analyse because someone

provided it with its limitations. Even when it synthesises, it is without understanding and without making its own inferences. It simply uses people's inputs to function.

### 5. How can we remove the threat?

Think of it in this way, Jody suggests: This is like the synonym finder in MS Word. It simply requires a right click, and the choosing of a synonym. With every human interaction, the tool is developing. We humans need to keep on doing what we do best: Thinking, and then at a metacognitive level. While ChatGPT can compose a resignation letter to coffee, we have the ability to decompose what inputs the tool used to actually compile the letter: From the correct tone of voice, to letter formats, to knowledge about people's feelings about coffee...we have the ability to consider the thinking behind the thinking. Then we can decide whether we agree with it, how it can be changed and used, and whether it can be

accepted or not. That human autonomy no machine can replicate!

### What is our message and current stance about ChatGPT then?

"If it were intelligent, it could fly a plane" - ChatGPT, that is, said Jody. Don't blindly embrace or reject the tool. Be critical on the use of **any** technology, ChatGPT included. Ask yourself: What can ChatGPT do? Is that ethical, safe, and based in good educational principles?

Dr Fru Akuma from the SMTE department, as retold by Jody, describes it well: Humans are still in cave mode. Anything new entering the cave opening, is at first regarded as dangerous. Sometimes it is a non-threatening turtle; sometimes it is a bear." Explore ChatGPT, consider its possibilities and limitations, and keep on learning! Soon enough, you will come to know whether you have met a turtle or a bear.

## E-VENTS *Exploring Artificial Intelligence through Appreciative Inquiry (AI through AI)*

*With inputs shared by Prof Ronel Callaghan*

On Thursday, 15 June 2023 LLITUP presented a campus-wide event focused on ChatGPT and its text outputs. We were excited to welcome round about 70 attendees, representing most of UP's faculties, and even support services. We enjoyed the company of our Dean, Prof Chika Sehoole, and also appreciated the attendance of staff from legal services and IT support.

Prof Callaghan, as host of the event, indicated that the aim was to introduce attendees to the possibilities of using ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence as a mindtool. This allowed for a hands-on exploration to discover how we can learn **with** the tool, and not **from** it (which would tread in dangerous plagiarism waters).

The workshop was guided by Appreciative Inquiry. During 30 minute sessions, participants were allowed to Define, Discover, Dream, and even Design with their own contexts in mind. Prof Gerrit Stols was the guest speaker for the day and focused on the Destiny of a tool such as ChatGPT. During the **defining** stages, Prof Callaghan introduced attendees to "five seconds of some big words", focused on the theory of using computers as mindtools. Attendees **discovered** ChatGPT with the

help of a LLITUP-designed how-to-guide, while also answering to teaching-related questions.

The **Dream** session gave attendees the chance to "share their mad possibilities for education", said Prof Callaghan, and indeed, many mind-blowing thoughts were shared. Attendees then **designed** an activity for use in their own classes. This design was supported by a few ChatGPT prompt ideas, and the Backward Design process of Outcome - Assessment - Teaching.

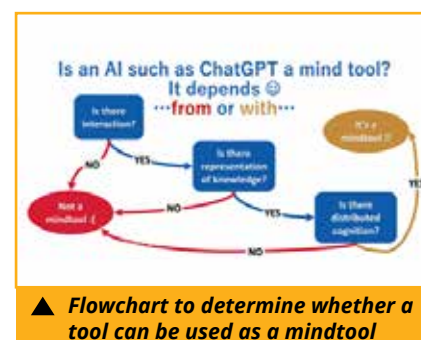
In conclusion, Prof Stols formally provided lecturers with guidance for teaching, and provided some practical ideas of how ChatGPT can be incorporated e.g. making the tool's settings safer and considering practicalities such as study guide plagiarism guidelines.

Since those who attended this workshop in general wanted to know "What can I do with this tool?", it was LLITUP's drive to not focus on the bad, the fears, or ways of outsmarting the students that is often associated with such technological advancements. Instead, we aimed for a hands-on session that moved beyond the issues. By playing with the tool, people's fears of the unknown were removed. In

general, the mood of the workshop was very positive, and the room was filled with laughter and enjoyment.

Programme		
08:30	Registration and Chat GPT-ing	
09:00	Define: Introductions and orientation	Prof Ronel Callaghan (LLITUP)
09:15	Discover: What is AI and what can it do?	Jody (student, LLITUP)
09:45	Dream: If we know this about AI - What are the possibilities? All participants	
10:15	Design My module - My AI	6,8 participants
11:30	Destiny: In this world with AI, what should we keep in mind?	Prof Gerrit Stols (ED)
12:45	Conclusions	Prof Ronel Callaghan

### ▲ Programme for the AI workshop



### ▲ Flowchart to determine whether a tool can be used as a mindtool





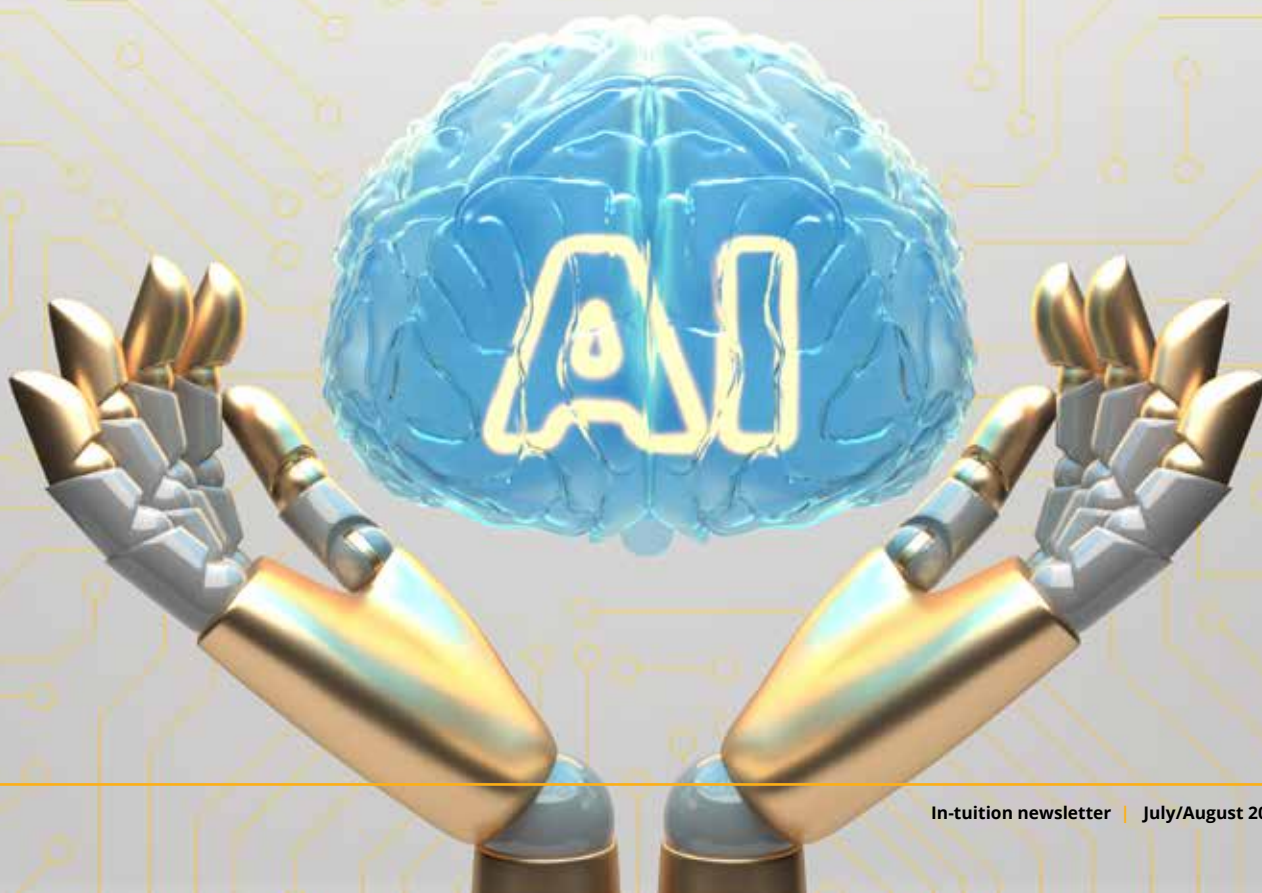
◀ *Exploration of Artificial Intelligence through Appreciative Inquiry in our F-lab filled with attendees*

▼ *ChatGPT How to guide prepared by LLITUP; Prof Chika Sehoole joined us too; joyful interaction among attendees*



◀ *Many different technologies allow for F-lab interactions; LLITUP's host, Prof Ronel Callaghan*

▼ *The value of computers as mindtools was explored; guest speaker Prof Gerrit Stols in conversation*





# FROGGY'S TECH CORNER

## *Farihah explored apps for OPV312 teaching and learning* With inputs shared by Farihah Jaffer

Farihah Jaffer is the newest lecturer member of the OPV312 teaching team in 2023. Inspired by her own OPV312 experiences in 2018, she realised that this module stimulated her interest in 4D, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) apps.

In the same vain, she wanted to inspire students to pursue a Computer-Integrated Education postgraduate journey as she herself experienced while having the module. Her main aim was to help students realise the following: "Not just using technology in class, but incorporating it within your lessons, and not just as an extra piece of stuff just lying there."

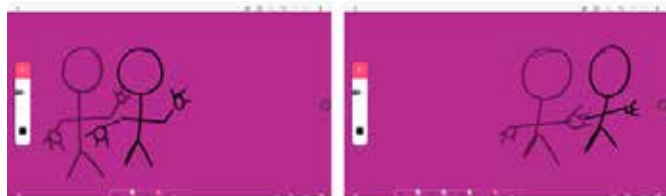
She decided to explore some apps to use in class. It was ideal to have students in the class venue, as this allowed for a real-life experience of the apps. By dimming the lights, students' visual experience of the apps was improved. The students really enjoyed the experience as a whole!

Farihah's focus was on finding 3D, 4D, VR and AR apps. After a thorough and joyful exploration, she decided to use FlipaClip, Anatomy 3D Atlas, Magic Plan, Bacteria Interactive Education, The Sun Interactive Educational and ARLoopa. These are all plug-and-play apps. She connected the tablet to Aldoel 1's camera which allowed students to experience real-time exploration of the app.

Farihah showcased different aspects with different apps

### 1. FlipaClip

She showed the students some examples and then made a simplified animation of a stick figure for the sake of the class demonstration. Some students already downloaded the app in class and started doodling on their own. Farihah found this to be inspiring.



*Stick figures used for FlipaClip animations*

### 2. Bacteria Interactive Education

This germ app showcases types of germs, and different cells. Indeed, this is a strange topic. "It just looked freaky, but they enjoyed it," Farihah commented.

### 3. Anatomy 3D Atlas

Farihah enjoyed using some skeleton apps. Students could explore the human nervous system. She did, however, also challenge students' thinking in terms of application possibilities beyond Life Sciences. Students suggested that the app can be used for Physical Education as well as English where students tell a story about the nervous system.

While reflecting on her lecturer and app exploration experience, Farihah indicated that she would place the tools in learners' hands in future for them to download and play with. She would like to involve students by using their own devices, while being

involved in the entire app exploration process (from finding, to downloading and finally playing with the apps). As students engage in the process, they can also explore additional apps based on the app store's suggestions. Farihah will make use of the same apps in future.

Overall, Farihah's teaching experience is summarised as inspiring. "Seeing the students light up when they make connections with things" inspires her to design even more activities.

### What does the app exploration process entail?

It was interesting to also explore Farihah's app exploration process. Here's how she went about:

- Do an app store search with the search term 'educational VR apps' for example
- Consider the options provided by reading about the apps' number of in-app purchases. She tries to avoid this entirely.
- Download quite a few viable options
- Choose apps to explore. While exploring, Farihah then identifies the apps' possibilities and limitations

The playing process involves a consideration of the app's ease of use. The app should not be complicated or figured out first, otherwise learners will not be able to easily use the app. Otherwise, effective tutorials need to be readily available on the app.

For the AR and VR apps, an important consideration is the on-screen appearance of the graphics.

The amount of interaction with the AR characters like a frog needs consideration too

- Go back to delete unnecessary apps e.g. those with paid versions that limits the amount of free content



*Germ in Bacteria app*



*Galaxy in Sunapp*



*Human face in Anatomy app*



*Sun in Sunapp*



# UP EDUCATION AT A GLANCE



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**82%**

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**20**

NRF rated  
researchers



**94.9%**

examination  
undergraduate  
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### STRONG INTERNATIONAL PROFILE



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Alumni worldwide

**QS Rankings (250-300)**



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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



# TEACH AND LEARN THE UP WAY

By striving for excellence

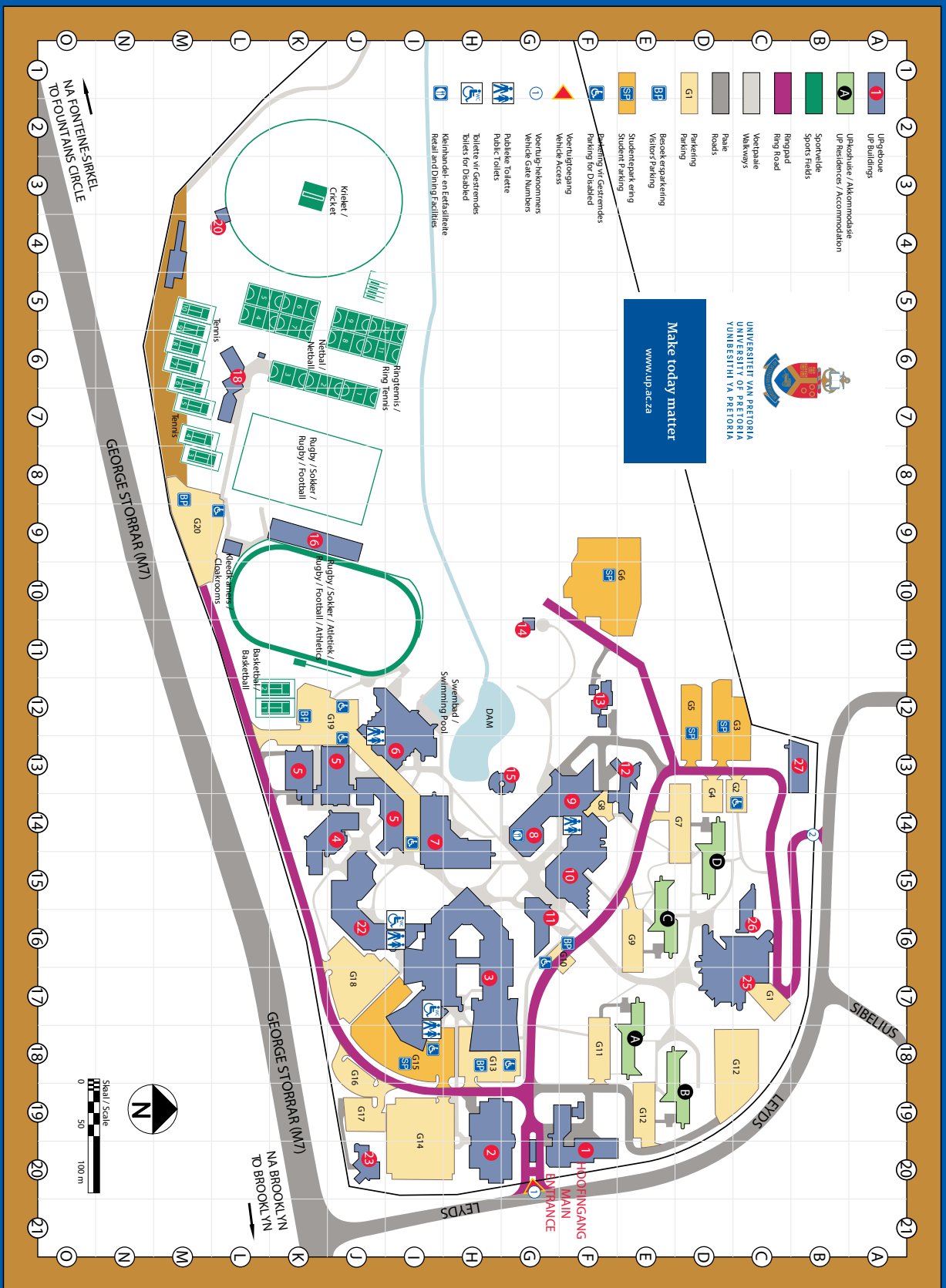


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Make today matter



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



GEBOUW			KOSHUISE		
11 Administrasie	G16	12 Gasteakkommodasie	E13	16 Pawiljoen	K9
3 Aldoel	H17	7 GK-biblioteek	H15	26 Personeelakkommodasie	C16
15 Boma	G13	13 Hoof: TuksRes	F12	6 Sportsentrum	I13
25 Duethuis	J20	14 Jakaranda-klubhuis	G11	8 Studentesentrum	G14
23 Eetsaal	C17	18 Kentucky-klubhuis	L6	1 Tegniese Dienste	F20
		27 Kiaat-klubhuis	B13	5 Tegnika	J13
BUILDINGS			RESIDENCES		
11 Administration	G16	25 Dining Hall	C17	9 Inca	E16
3 Aldoel	H17	23 Duet House	J20	6 Kiaat	D15
10 Auditorium	F15	7 GK Library	H15	26 Staff Accommodation	C16
15 Boma	G13	12 Guest Accommodation	E13	8 Student Centre	G14
20 Cricket Club House	L4	13 Head: TuksRes	F12	1 Technical Services	F20
		14 Jak aranda Club House	G11	5 Technika	J13
		18 Kentucky Club House	L6		
		27 Kiaat Club House	B13		
		22 Lecture Theatres	J16		
		4 Natural Sciences	F14		
		9 Normaals Hall	F14		
		2 Old SACTE	H20		

Kaart soos bygewerk in Oktober 2022

Wysings: 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 geen aanspreeklikheid vir inligting, dat al die inligting op die kaart akkuraat is nie. Die Universiteit van Pretoria aanvaar geen aanspreeklikheid vir inligting, dat al die inligting op die kaart akkuraat is nie. Die Universiteit van Pretoria aanvaar geen aanspreeklikheid vir inligting, dat al die inligting op die kaart akkuraat is nie.

gebruik word vir enige ander doel as wat spesifiek bedoel is, of vir enige ander doel as wat spesifiek bedoel is, of vir enige ander doel as wat spesifiek bedoel is.

Map updated October 2022

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