



10th SAERA CONFERENCE

Hosted by Rhodes University

30 October – 3 November 2023
East London, South Africa

ABSTRACT & PROGRAMME BOOK

Message: Professor Maureen Robinson,

SAERA President

Dear Delegates

On behalf of the SAERA executive, I welcome you warmly to the SAERA conference of 2023. Much work has gone into planning this conference and we are sure it will prove to be a fruitful and stimulating time for you.

SAERA was launched in January 2013 and this year therefore constitutes a historic moment, as we celebrate a decade of existence. Yet, what many of you may not know is that the launch at Bela Bela in the North-West province was preceded by three years of discussions and workshops with different research associations, Deans of Faculties of Education, the national Department of Education, and others. The goal here was to ensure that the new association would be characterized by maximum inclusivity and engagement; a principle that we continue to value.

In the early years of SAERA, the main challenge was to establish the building blocks of an organization, such as a Constitution, a website, portfolios, recruitment, etc. As we have gained strength and confidence, the association has expanded to key strategic activities, including supporting early career researchers, linking with the Journal of Education, and promoting special interest groups. The annual conference is a key moment in grounding our intellectual contribution, as we listen to established researchers, welcome new researchers, and participate in panels and debates on contemporary issues.

What about the next decade for SAERA? Looking back, we have identified that an archive of our history is much needed. Looking forward, we will consolidate the path we have established for ourselves, strengthening the quality and contribution of our current activities. Looking ahead, it will be important to promote the visibility of SAERA in the public sphere, so that research becomes more valued for its role in addressing the significant educational challenges of our country and society at large.

Finally, my thanks to the local organising committee in the Faculty of Education at Rhodes University for the months of preparation for this conference. Your absolute commitment, thoughtfulness, professionalism, and teamwork have been highly impressive, and we salute you for this.

Please enjoy the conference!

Maureen Robinson (SAERA President, 2023)



Message: LoC Chair & Dean of Education at Rhodes, Prof Eureka Rosenberg

Dear Delegates,

What is a conference?

Earlier this year I met with an Early Career Researcher about a funding request; she wanted to attend three conferences and had funds for only one. She explained that a conference was an important opportunity for her to meet her aims as a newly appointed academic: to present papers and notch up 'Research Returns' for a possible promotion; to find collaborators for new projects; and identify external examiners. However, when I asked how the three conferences differed, so that we could choose the best two to attend if I found her more funding - she could not do so. She did not know their respective themes, although she knew the registration fees. For the purposes she identified, these conferences were all pretty much the same.

This meeting stayed with me. Among other things I wonder whether a neo-liberal focus on outputs is blurring our sight on conferencing as a scholarly process. It is for that reason that I wish to reflect not only on what a conference is but on the role of the SAERA conference - and why it has a theme.

The first educational conference I attended was hosted by the Kenton Association, one of the educational research associations that later combined to form the South African Educational Research Association (SAERA) which hosts the conference you are attending today. I left my first Kenton conference with a sense that there was only one kind of scholarship that was very highly regarded and that since I did not find it that appealing, I would never succeed as an educational researcher. Thirty years later, SAERA has built a home for a variety of educational research genres, theories and foci. Established in 2013, it aimed to bring together education academics and researchers from all over South Africa, from different organisations, with roots in the racialised academy of the pre-democratic past, into a unified educational research organisation (<https://www.saera.co.za/about/>). This meant that a variety of research approaches had to be accommodated, and playing fields had to be levelled so that everyone could find a space and a foothold for themselves as educational researchers. The Early Career Researchers programme has been vital, as has the hosting of the *Journal of Education* that publishes a range of topics and theories. SAERA has been accommodating and welcoming, and I find myself at home within it, with my particular subject focus and my particular approach to research. Does this 'accommodatory' approach not run the risk, though, of encouraging a scholarship that is so



diverse and dispersed that as a collective, a scholarly *field*, we cannot cohere or create sufficient depth so as to guide important policy (or practice) decisions?

SAERA *also* has the aim to strengthen academic educational research. How do we do that, while still being accommodating? This, dear Delegates, is surely where a conference has a critical role to play. From the Latin for 'bringing together', and 16th century English for 'having a conversation', a con-fer-ence is *the* space and time for coming together and conversing about our shared focus of educational research. This conversation has to accommodate differences, and everyone - no matter the stage of their career, the shape of their theory or the size of their methodology - should be encouraged to join it. *But* - it needs to be a critically reflexive conversation, in which we ask ourselves how our scholarship is or is not meeting requirements - not of a small group of top published researchers or promotions administrators, but the requirements laid down for us by the 'greater good' - what our society needs from us.

The organisers of SAERA2023 selected this year's theme - *Education(al) Foundations, Education(al) Futures* - to capture that 'greater social good', and this is the role of a conference theme: it give us the critical lens through which to look at our work - my work, your work, and our collective field - to see how well we match up. Does our scholarship help us to understand and shape the foundations of learning in diverse contexts and associated practices like teaching, assessment, educational planning? Does our scholarship help us to understand educational futures, and to draw explanatory lines between foundations and futures, futures and foundations?

On behalf of the LoC I invite you to start this conversation, to join this conversation, and to transform it, at SAERA2023. We hope you can find, in the spaces we have aimed to create for you, opportunities to share your research, relax with and learn from others, engage, ask questions and shape something new; to meet all your aims and to do justice to all that an academic conference can and should be.

Welcome ... let's confer!

Prof Eureka Rosenberg

Chair: Local Organising Committee (LoC)
SAERA2023

THE BELOW CONFERENCE PROGRAMME IS HYPERLINKED TO THE INDIVIDUAL ABSTRACTS . JUST CLICK ON THE TITLES AND IT WILL TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THAT ABSTRACT

SAERA 2023 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME					
BLUE LAGOON HOTEL 30 OCTOBER 2023					
Time					
11:30	Conference Registration and ECR Pre Conference Registration @ Blue Lagoon Hotel				
PRE-CONFERENCE PROGRAMME					
PRE-CONFERENCE PLENARY : Sunset 1					Lagoon 4: 5 hour workshop starting at 12:00 SIG Workshop on Assessment Activating Formative Assessment to improve pedagogy in ITE Programmes Anil Kanjee Jeanette Ramollo Please register for the workshop using the link below https://forms.gle/XHt7jX5svWuF13nt6
14:00 - 15:00	Session Chair: Heila Lotz-Sisitka ECR Session Welcome: Mpho-Entle Modise ECR Keynote: Mthobisi Ndaba - The public good of a doctoral qualification				
15:00 - 15:25	TEA				
PRE-CONFERENCE PARALLEL SESSION					
	Room 1: Sunset 1	Room 2: Lagoon 1	Room 3: Lagoon 2	Room 4: Lagoon 3	
15:30-17:30		Session Chair: Sidney Muhangi ECR WORKSHOP: Academic writing and choosing a good journal: Carol Bertram with contribution from Rudo Hwami	Session Chair: Phindile Sithole ECR WORKSHOP: Conceptualising your contribution to knowledge: Kirstin Wilmot with contribution from John Bhurukheni	Session Chair: Keneilwe Mathaba ECR WORKSHOP: Research Design Workshop – some recent trends: Heila Lotz-Sisitka Rene Oosthuizen with contribution from Yrjo Engestrom Annalisa Sannino	
17:30 - 19:30	ECR Meet and Greet in Sunset 1 hosted by Mpho-Entle Modise Keneilwe Mathaba Sidney Muhangi Phindile Sithole				
Please note the venue change tomorrow to Premier Hotel Regent					

PREMIER HOTEL REGENT Tuesday 31 OCTOBER 2023

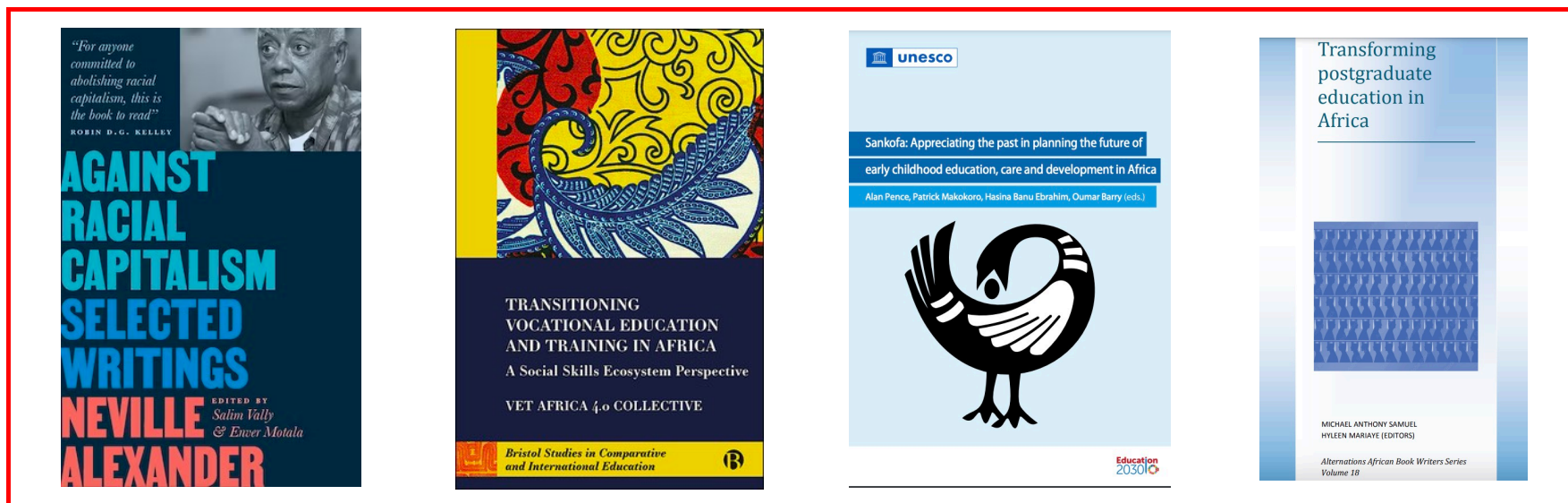
07:00 -	Registration @ Premier Hotel Regency					
PLENARY SESSION 1: Regency 2-4						
08:30 - 09:00	Session Chair: Eureta Rosenberg Welcome and Conference Overview: Eureta Rosenberg Maureen Robinson					
09:00 - 09:45	Opening Panel: From Diagnosis to Understanding – A national view on teacher pedagogy: Panel Chair and Moderator: Anil Kanjee Panellists: Godwin Khosa Cina Mosito Tinti Enoch Rabotapi					
09:45 - 10:00	Looking back, looking forward - brief introduction to 'Against Racial Capitalism: The selected works of Neville Alexander' Salim Vally					
10:00 - 10:20	TEA					
PARALLEL SESSION 1						
	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Azeem Badroodien	Session Chair : Madeyi' Mbelani	Session Chair: Robin Ferguson	Session Chair: Siphesihle Pearl Ngubane	Session Chair: Ayanda Simayi	Session Chair: Aretha Mposa
10:30 - 10:50	Panel: Understanding teacher pedagogy in South Africa Panel Chair and Moderator: Godwin Khosa	SIG Panel: Learning from our personal histories: A collaborative self-study of university tutors mentoring students during work integrated (WIL) placements Zanele Dube-Xaba Duduzile Mzindle Zanele Masuku	Paper: Towards flexible qualifications and curricula for addressing future complexities Colette Tennison	Paper: COVID-19 and the closure of early childhood development centres in South Africa: Implications for social justice Lindsey Godfrey Thomas	Paper: Understanding Emergent Mathematics: The Implementation of a Blended Approach to Supporting 1st Year Pre-Service Teachers Rosemary Brien	Paper: Gender and sexual diversity: inclusion in the Namibian education context Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu
10:50 - 11:10	Panellists : Teaching, Teacher and Teacher Education for Equitable and Quality Learning (TTTEQL) Consortium Representatives		SIG Paper: Hybridised Assessment Models in Occupational Qualifications – Challenges and Possibilities Marco MacFarlane	Paper: Towards inclusive, integrated ECD services for young children with disabilities in South Africa Robyn Beere Tatiana Kazim	Paper: Exploring the possible enablers of a numeracy and literacy integrated Family Maths Storytime Programme Tabisa Boo Roxanne Long	Paper: The teaching of sexuality education: a conversation with parents of LGBT learners in Eastern Cape primary schools Obakeng Kagola Doh Nubia Walters

11:10 - 11:30	CPUT/CITE: Joshua Bell DUT: Anita Hiralaal NMU: Cina Mosito Obakeng Kagola TUT: Anil Kanjee Patricia Mokgosi Jeanette Ramollo UFH: Mzuyanda Mavuso University of Limpopo: Joel Mamabolo Thinavhudzulo Mafumo UFS: Maria Tsakeni UNISA WSU		Paper: Occupational boundaries: dental curricula and preparation for work in South Africa Glynnis Vergotine	Paper: The foundations for future learning: Are the three R's (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic) enough? Nthabeleng Lepota	Paper: Exploring the extent of STEM education research through bibliometric analysis: How far are we from the 4IR sphere? Kudakwashe Mamutse	Paper: Anti-xenophobia education in South Africa: from official marginalisation to counter-hegemonic practices Jeanne Bouyat
11:30 - 11:50			Paper: A social skills ecosystem approach to curriculum innovation for climate resilience in TVET colleges: A case of Eastern, South Africa Sidney Muhangi	Paper: Embedding 21st century competencies into scripted foundation phase literacy lessons Semoni Cancelliere Sarita Ramsaroop Nadine Petersen	Paper: Variations in South African novice teachers' lived experiences and reflections on multiple solutions problem solving in Euclidean geometry Sfiso Mahlaba	Paper: Teachers' Perspectives on the Management of gang violence in a South African secondary school Sekitla Daniel Makhasane
11:50 - 12:10		Paper: A history of the concept of technological rationality and its implications for understanding universities in South Africa Ian Moll	Paper: Investigating skills systems for advancing and supporting aquaculture in the local food economy Phindile Sithole	Paper: Revisiting educational childhood memories to inform our future teaching practices: Teacher educators' self-study Makie Kortjass Ntokozi Mkhize-Mthembu	Paper: Perceptions of Mathematics Teachers on Integrating Computational Thinking into Mathematics Education Muhammad Zuhair Zahid	Paper: A Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) study towards the co-construction of a process model for School-Based Support Teams (SBST) in community schools Sanet Deysel Tulsi Morar
12:10 - 12:30	SIG Paper: <i>"I know a cross means I am wrong"</i> . Grade 3 learners perceptions and understanding of their teachers' written feedback Jeanette Ramollo Anil Kanjee	Paper: Exploring the perceptions of first year pre-service teachers on work integrated learning and its impact on professional development Matelile Augeal	SIG Paper: Empowering farmer training through vocational adult education approaches in vulnerable communities Mzuhleli Makapela Molaodi Tshelane Cregg Alexander	Paper: Exploring the visual representations in South African Foundation phase textbooks Tammy Booysen Lise Westaway Mellony Graven	Paper: Holistic digital mathematics laboratory Learning: Representations, symbols, and language used to learn number sense in primary schools Msebenzi Rabaza	Paper: Social inequalities that affect transition processes from Grade 7 to Grade 8 within an inclusive South African education system Julialet Rens Hannelie Louw Petra Engelbrecht
12:30 - 13:00	Paper: An Untouchable Truth: Punishment as the pedagogy of the 21st century Azeem Badroodien Keshia Arendse	Paper: Exploring the lived experiences of PGCE students during Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and their use of technology in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning Moshe Moses Makoa	Paper: Pedagogy of Possibility: Exploring the TVET of southern African workers on foreign vessels mediated by ubiquitous Google and Microsoft apps Robin Ferguson Marius Joubert	Paper: Training conceptions and processes for the implementation of the CAPS in primary schools Sipheshile Pearl Ngubane Devika Naidoo	Paper: Interactive Natural Science School-Based Learning (NSSBL) on the menstrual cycle using IK and ICT during Covid-19 pandemic Ayanda Simayi	Paper: Bridging the Gap: Leveraging Educational Research for Evidence-Informed Policies and Transformative Education Aretha M. Maposa
13:00 - 13:50	LUNCH					

PARALLEL SESSION 2

	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Logan Govendor	Session Chair Tatiana Kazim	Session Chair Anja Phillip	Session Chair: Bella Vilikazi	Session Chair: Michael Naidoo	Session Chair Sara Black
14:00 - 14:20	Paper: Funding sustainable student access to and success in higher education and training: policy instability and the search for solutions Thandi Lewin	Panel: Realising the right to nutrition for early learning Tatiana Kazim Laura Droomer Anna-Marie Müller Donela Besada	Paper: South African Higher Education and Repairing of Injustices for a Sustainable Future Tiffany Banda Melanie Walker Bheki Zungu	Paper: Is it about crossing borders? Understanding lecturers' narratives on surviving educational crises Hlogologo Climant Khoza	Paper: Engaged Research and Community-University Partnerships: A case study of Rhodes University Community Engagement Knowledge for Change (K4C) Hub Monica Canca	Paper: Unpacking Foreign Aid to Education Joel Samoff
14:20 - 14:40	Paper: What funding model features support grounded research and development interventions to go to scale? The case of the Mental Starters Assessment Programme Mellony Graven		Paper: Conversations with university students: a quest for African-student agency - Placing students from historically disadvantaged communities at the centre Desiree Pearl Larey	Paper: Mental fluencies amongst first year Bachelor of Education students Emmanuel Libusha Nicky Roberts	Paper: Universities as anchor institutions: community based participatory research and the knowledge project's contribution to 'anchoring' Rhodes University in Makhanda Diana Hornby	Paper: Is Higher Education a Public Good? A Critical Look at Financing Access to Higher Education in South Africa Mthobisi Ndaba Shireen Motala
14:40- 15:00	Paper: Re-imagining Integrated Digital Strategies for Organising and Recruitment of Young Emerging Teachers in Selected South African Teachers' Unions David Matsepe		Paper: Nine Tenths Mentoring Programme, a Solution for Education (In) Justice in South Africa?: Laying Foundations for Higher Education Access and Catalysing Local Entrants Anna Lindiwe Prest Talbot Kinsler	Paper: Learning Analytics: A data-driven approach to enhancing Grade 10 programming learning Mashite Tshidi	Paper: Our dialectic relationship between lecturers and students: Industry Expertise Diana Robertson Warda Abrahams	Paper: Sustainable Curriculum Practices and the entrenched artificial intelligence: Navigating the Intensified Application of neo liberal Logic in Universities Molaodi Tshelane
15:00 - 15:30	Paper: Teacher Unions in South Africa: Past, Present and Future Logan Govender		Paper: How well prepared are Chemical Engineering students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution? Results of a document analysis on skills trained in at undergraduate level at a selected university Anja Phillip	SIG Paper: Students experiences of powerful feedback in HE - scaffolding epistemic access Bella Vilikazi Sioux McKenna	Paper: A leadership model for the enactment of Twenty First Century Learning: South African Private Secondary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal Michael Naidoo	Paper: Mapping curriculum opportunities in the National Senior Certificate— (uneven) spatialities in the marketized field of basic education Sara Black

15:30 - 15:55	TEA
PLENARY SESSION 2: Regency 2-4	
16:00 - 17:30	<p>Session Chair: Amanda Hlengwa</p> <p>SAERA Mandela Lecture: Commodification, Corporatization, Complicity and Crisis: The University in Contemporary South Africa. Saleem Badat</p>
18:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Welcome Event : Ocean Terrace Room</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Welcome by the DVC, Research Innovation and Strategic Partnerships, at Rhodes University: Kwezi Mzilikazi Rhodes Faculty of Education Overview: Eureta Rosenberg</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Book Launches : (Chair: Heila Lotz-Sisitka) Presha Ramsarup Michael Samuel Hasina Ebrahim Salim Vally & Brian Ramadiro</p>



Books that will be launched

PREMIER HOTEL REGENT Wednesday 1 November 2023

07:00 -	Registration @ Premier Hotel Regency
PLENARY SESSION 3: Regency 2-4	
08:30 - 09:15	Session Chair: Amanda Hlengwa Keynote 1: Hasina Ebrahim : Education Foundations Troubling Early Childhood Foundations for Better Futures
09:15 - 10:00	Panel Dialogue: Educational Foundations – moderated panel response and thoughts on the conference theme from diverse research perspectives Nhlanhla Mpofo Mlamuli Hlatshwayo Michael Samuel
10:00 - 10:20	TEA

PARALLEL SESSION 3

	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Lesley le Grange	Session Chair: Daisy Pillay	Session Chair: Alton Dewa	Session Chair: Nokwanda Mbusi	Session Chair: Kathija Yassim	Session Chair: Silindile Malangeni
10:30 - 10:50	Panel: The National Education Coordinating Committee's (NECC) Education(al) Foundations and Futures (1985-1995) Linda Chisholm Charissa Shay Terri Maggott Yogesh Narsing Elaine Unterhalter Shireen Motala	Panel: Working with adults towards systemic change, to meet learners' needs at various phases of education Cora van Vuuren Anneliese Maritz Antoinette Human Jacqueline Akhurst	Paper: The fourth industrial revolution: A literature study of challenges associated with access to education in rural schools in Zimbabwe Zvisinei Moyo	Paper: The silencing of structural racism in the ESD for 2030 framework Brita Phuthi Tom G. Griffiths	Paper: The use of teacher development intervention workshops to enhance the efficacy of rural STEM teachers Magdeline Mmapaseka Stephen	Paper: The preparation of heads of departments in secondary schools as effective educational leaders Grizelda du Plessis Kobus Mentz
10:50 - 11:10			Paper: Rethinking ICT integration in teacher education curricula at Diploma Level in Zimbabwe Tendayi Dzinoreva Govender Logan George Mavunga	Paper: South African and Swedish children on the human being, sustainability and the future Karin Sporre	Paper: Collaborative Initiatives for Sustainable Leadership in a Rural Secondary School in the Eastern Cape Ntombizandile Gcelu	Paper: Leadership foundations for inclusive futures: A case study of school leadership socialisation in the Eastern Cape Callie Grant

11:10 - 11:30			Paper: Reading the contours of the extent of artificial intelligence research in education: A bibliometric research using Scopus Database Kudakwashe Mamutse	Paper: Embracing love pedagogy as a foundation to enable access and success in teaching and learning Vuyokazi Makubalo	Paper: The power of insider-formative interventionist research approach in advancing research on a complex object Robson Mukwambo	Paper: In-service Teacher Learning Experiences: Encountered, given and transmitted for the Future Heide Khuhlane
11:30 - 11:50			Paper: Creating music with digital technologies - Opportunities and challenges of inclusion in Sweden's lower secondary schools' music education Jonas Nilsson	Paper: Embracing learners' cultural identity in the early years to enhance education for sustainable development Appolonia Masunungure Prosper Lunga Pateka Jama	Paper: Into the Wild: Facilitating resonant praxis building encounters to enable an ecologically literate generation Preven Chetty	Paper: Where is the human in curriculum? Reflecting on applying a humanizing pedagogy in the teacher education curriculum Heloise Sathorar
11:50 - 12:10			Paper: Gender-based equity and ICT integration in the English Language curriculum: a South African teacher education perspective Micheal van Wyk	Paper: The application of the Froebelian approach in South African early childhood education settings: Practitioner reflections Trevor Moodley	Paper: Raising ecological awareness and creating critical consciousness regarding earth stewardship in BEd Programmes Deidre Geduld	Paper: Lecturers' Experience and Perceptions in Creating Inclusive Spaces to Prepare Pre-service Teachers for Inclusive Classrooms Zandisile Mawethu Sitoyi
12:10 - 12:30	Paper: The battle over South Africa's post-apartheid public education system Pagiel Joshua Chetty	Paper: The stories we tell: mapping education discourses, voices and theories of change in online journalism in South Africa Sara Black	Paper: Effect of smartphone integration method of teaching on secondary school students' performance and affective learning in English composition writing in Gweru Zimbabwe Alice Dhiwayo	Paper: Re-imagining pedagogy exploring the ecological relevance of students study experiences in the pandemic context Kirk Sullivan Niclas Lindström Hannah Lindfors Lukas Oskarsson Gustav Surting Nils Vestring	Paper: Using Poetic Enquiry to Improve our Practice Larissa Hassim Anita Hiralaal	Paper: Exploring teacher involvement and participation in continuing professional development at a public-private partnership school Lynne Johns
12:30 - 13:00	Paper: The paradox of 'quality education' within the public-private education debate in South Africa Helen Day Azeem Badroodien	Paper: Learning from our artmaking: Embodying transgressive movements for our intellectual becoming and creative scholarship as women academics Marguerite Müller Daisy Pillay	Paper: Position of the Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities and Its relevance in the South African school system Alton Dewa	Paper: Designing stories for integrated learning to support the development of children's numeracy and literacy skills Nokwanda Princess Mbusi	Paper: School food gardens as third spaces for learning: Towards leading education for sustainable futures Kathija Yassim	Paper: Reimagining School Functionality: Exploring the Potential of the Community School Model in the South African Context Silindile Malangeni
13:00 - 13:50	LUNCH					

PARALLEL SESSION 4

	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Yunus Omar	Session Chair: Verona Davids	Session Chair: Makhosi Madimabe	Session Chair: Edmore Mutekwe	Session Chair: Mags Blackie	Session Chair: Injairu Kulundu-Bolus
14:00 - 14:20	Panel: The Illusion of systemic identity forms-education transformation in South Africa Azeem Badroodien Yunus Omar Isha Dilraj Ashley Visagie Helga Jansen Cecile Sackeyfio	Panel: A 'right' to lead? Laying solid foundations for the leadership development of primary school learners Verona Davids Callie Grant Sebenzile Ngonini Hlakanipha Gxekwa Tholakele Ratazayo Mandilake Mbiko Akhona Mtebele Lulekwa Faith Manyozi Zandile Gxaba Ntombekhaya Bili Vuyolwethu Kepe Fezile Madikizela Zama Dastile Zikhona Faku Zuzeka Ndumiso Nasiphi Sam Thando Mnamatha Bongiwe Batyi	Paper: The art of teaching in remote teaching Simon Skog	Paper: Democratic citizenship education in South African schools: teachers' practices and perspectives Chrischar Rock	Paper: From Quality Assurance to Quality Enhancement: Implications for Teacher Education in a Higher Education Institution in Mauritius-The Mauritius Institute of Education Nazeerah Sheik Abbass	Arts-based session: Be (longing): Reconciliation through our own decolonial rites Injairu Kulundu-Bolus
14:20 - 14:40			Paper: Exploring the extent of online assessment research in education: A bibliometric analysis using Scopus Alfred Machingambi Kudakwashe Mamutse	Paper: Educational access and success: The challenges faced by children of widows Ratidzai Shoko	Paper: Reshaping Educational Futures in Teacher Education Towards Inclusive Education through ESD Praxis in Tanzania and Eswatini Ben de Souza	
14:40- 15:00			Paper: Pedagogical innovations during COVID-19 lockdowns: Learner (in) accessibility to radio lessons in poorly resourced African countries Godsend T. Chimbi	Paper: Framework for holistic transformation of township primary schools Regan Berry Rica Viljoen Kgamaka Mike Thobejane	Paper: Examining the professional development opportunities afforded to teachers during the implementation of History 2166 syllabus reforms in Zimbabwe Walter Sengai Matseliso Lineo Mokhele-Makgalwa	
15:00 - 15:30			Paper: Digital Mathematics Pedagogy: A case study on Professional Development in a South African Township School Makhosi Princess Madimabe-Mofokeng Ayanda Simayi	Paper: Unmasking the influence of the hidden curriculum on the educational futures of South African students: Insights from Foundation studies higher education students in a University in Cape Town Edmore Mutekwe	Paper: Transdisciplinarity: ensuring quality education beyond the hype Mags Blackie	
15:30 - 15:55	TEA					

PARALLEL SESSION 5						
	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Zukiswa Nhase	Session Chair: Neil Kramm	Session Chair: Mlamuli Hlatshwayo	Session Chair: Mbali Mabaso	Session Chair: Appolonia Masunungure	Session Chair: Nikki Green
16:00 - 16:20	Panel: Sustainability of libraries in rural schools: An Achilles Heel? Lulama Mdozana-Zide Zukiswa Nhase Ntombizandile Gcelu Buhle Nhlumayo J Molpyane D Mashiyane	Panel: The need for critical responses to Artificial Intelligence (AI) within and by Higher Education Neil Kramm Nichola Pallitt Mags Blackie Sioux McKenna	Paper: Theorising Teaching and Learning from a decolonial lens: A view from the South Emmanuel Mqwashu	Paper: Forced opportunities for adaptive and sustainable leadership for ICT implementation in the VUCA era Parvathy Mumsie Naidoo Megan Narasimman	Paper: A Conceptual Framework for Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in Basic Education in South Africa Rene Oosthuizen	Paper: A Group Randomized Controlled Study of Critical Thinking Disposition of Children Aged 4 to 12 Years Enrolled in Cognitive-Behavioural Reflective Training Programme Chinedu Ifedi Okeke
16:20 - 16:40			Paper: Is pedagogical translanguaging a panacea to the colonial monoglossic language ideology in the classroom? Proposing a new language framework in higher education in Lesotho Sekoai Elliot Nkhi	Paper: Students' Perceptions of Hybrid Learning beyond the Covid-19 times Lerato Hlengiwe Sokhulu	Paper: Self-authorship: a pedagogical tool for pre-service teachers to develop (pre)professional identity Carolina Botha Elma Marais Maryna Reyneke	Paper: Professional development opportunities for early childhood education practitioners in disadvantaged communities Chinedu Ifedi Okeke
16:40 - 17:00			Paper: The significance of code switching in two mathematical literacy classrooms in the Durban region, South Africa Quintus Dawson Sarah Bansilal	Paper: Grappling with online learning and artificial intelligence amid a widening digital divide among university students from poorer backgrounds in South Africa Nyoni Phefumula Tabe Hennades	Paper: Producing knowledge differently: Methodological inventiveness in education leadership research Inbanathan Naicker	Paper: An investigation into how mature women ECD practitioners access higher education through the B.Ed Foundation Phase programme Kaylianne Aploon-Zokufa
17:00 - 17:30			Paper: Reclaiming academic freedom in the time of neoliberal colonisation: A decolonial meditation Mlamuli Hlatshwayo	Paper: Understanding curriculum implementation during times of crisis: The Business Studies Curriculum Recovery Plan (CRP) case in South Africa Mbali Mabaso Devika Naidoo	Paper: Investigating the inclusive instructional practices in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in selected secondary schools in South Africa Appolonia Masunungure Thabo Makhalemele	Paper: The ECD Ambassadors Intervention: How young unemployed youth are alleviating learning losses in Early Childhood Centres in Makhandla Nikki Green Noluthando Shelle
17:30-18:30			SAERA AGM (in Regency 2-4)			
19:00	Free evening					

PREMIER HOTEL REGENT Thursday 2 November 2023

07:30 -	Registration @ Premier Regent Hotel					
PLENARY SESSION 3: Regency 2-4						
08:30 - 09:15	Session Chair: Heila Lotz-Sisitka Keynote 2: Lesley Le Grange : Educational Futures The many sides to performativity					
09:15 - 10:00	Panel Session: Educational Futures – moderated panel response to this aspect of conference theme from diverse research perspectives <i>Presha Ramsarup Injairu Kulundu-Bolus Nuraan Davids Mpho-Entle Modise</i>					
10:00 - 10:20	TEA					
PARALLEL SESSION 6						
	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Maureen Robinson	Session Chair: Sarah Bansilal	Session Chair: Ashne Billings-Padiachey	Session Chair: Sylvia Hannan	Session Chair: Madeyi' Andile Mbelani	Session Chair: Kendall Petersen
10:30 - 10:50	Panel: New research from the Early Grade Reading Study (SA) <i>Brahm Fleisch Nompumelelo Mohohlwane Stephen Taylor</i>	Panel: Teachers' beliefs about changing the content and teaching of statistics and mathematics given emerging societal crises and knowledge demands <i>Sarah Bansilal Delia North Iddo Gal</i>	Paper: Reimagining Curriculum Leadership: Towards an Integration of Curriculum Theory and Critical Approaches to Educational Leadership : An Overview of the Literature <i>Farhana Kajee</i>	Paper: Connecting citizenship and mathematics education in a time of disruptive events: A 'layers of influence' framework <i>Iddo Gal Mellony Graven Vince Geiger</i>	Paper: The Impact of Eurocentric Curriculum on Marginalized Students: A Comparison of Contemporary Education in South Africa and the U.S.A <i>Karen L. Biraimah</i>	Paper: Re-imagining curriculum practices on accounting in secondary schools in the post covid-19 world <i>Lineo Mphatsoane Molaodi Tshelane</i>
10:50 - 11:10			Paper: A cross-curricular approach to reflexive practice: academics in collaboration <i>Shannon Bishop-Swart Chrischar Rock</i>	Paper: Physics Difficulty and Problem-Solving: Exploration of Mathematics and Mathematical Symbols <i>Olalekan Taofeek Badmus Loyiso C. Jita</i>	Paper: A future generation unable to construct a CV: Reading interventions of teachers of English <i>Chané Denton Salomé Romylos Matthys Uys</i>	Paper: Rethinking Teaching and Learning in Higher Education beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic <i>Otilia Chiramba Shireen Motala</i>

11:10 - 11:30			Paper: Conceptualizing Change Management Strategies for Successful Implementation of Educational Reforms in South Africa Sekitla Daniel Makasane Oluwasola Babatunde Sasere	Paper: Believing you can: Understanding South African Grade 9 learners' confidence in their mathematics abilities Sylvia Hannan Andrea Juan Jaqueline Harvey	Paper: Investigating changes for the intermediate phase language teaching curriculum Annemie Grobler	Paper: Student-Facing: MS Teams as a Pedagogical Tool during Pandemics and Student Unrest Reuben Dlamini Fatima Makda
11:30 - 11:50	SIG Panel: The complexity of learning to teach: Advancing the debates Maureen Robinson Carol Bertram Melanie Luckay Heloise Sathorar Thelma Mort Nicky Roberts	Paper: Teachers' preparedness on the implementation of Educational Coding and Robotics curriculum in South Africa. A case study of pilot schools William Zivanayi Serah Malinga	Paper: Building school-university partnerships in a school-based student teacher programme Sarita Ramsaroop Nadine Petersen Sarah Gravett	Paper: The gap in preservice primary school mathematics teachers' knowledge and understanding of the order of operations Azwidowi Emmanuel Libusha	Paper: Teachers perceptions of using English as a medium of instruction to teach first additional language learners in a selected ex-coloured secondary school in Kariega Gouwvaa Ravat Atifa Jan Bhat	Paper: Digital Competency: A Framework for Innovative Virtual Teaching for Academics Millicent Motheogane
11:50 - 12:10		Paper: Why is mathematics performance so poor in South Africa? A diagnostic analysis of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Grade 9 and 5 data Andrea Juan .	Paper: Crafting Socially Conscious Leaders: A Case Study of a School Engagement Project in KwaZulu-Natal Zwakele Ngubane Berenice de La Croix	Paper: Teaching strategies to enhance understanding of common fractions in primary schools Nokwanda Princess Mbusi Zoleka Gula	Paper: The role of exploratory talk in conceptualizing Science through Groupwork Rochelle Thorne Eileen Scheckle	Paper: Conceptualising a Model for Digitally Transforming University Teacher Education through the doctoral curriculum in the South African Context Orhe Arek-Bawa Saras Reddy
12:10 - 12:30		Paper: Social Time as a Pedagogical Tool for Meaningful Mathematics Teaching and Deeper Learning Mzamani Mdaka	Paper: Undergraduate student teacher's prospects for employment Meameno Shiweda Julia Lamek	Paper: The development of pre-service teachers' competence to teach mental calculation strategies Pamela Vale Lise Westaway	Paper: Using poetry teaching to explore possibilities and constraints in pre-service English teacher education Sibongile Melody Dlamini Madey'Andile Mbelani	Paper: Capacity development for inclusive education at a distance learning institution in South Africa Shakira Akabor

12:30 - 13:00		SIG Paper: Using a Rasch analysis to investigate differential item functioning in the TIMSS 2019 mathematics test Sarah Bansilal Cathrine Kazunga Andrea Juan	Paper: Discussing methods of increasing or maintaining tracking response rates: A South African pre-university programme tracking study Ashne Billings-Padiachey	Paper: Psychosocial factors influencing Grade 7 learners' performance in Mathematics Classrooms at primary schools in the Frances Baard District, Northern Cape, South Africa Kananga Robert Mukuna Fatima Ajimudin	Paper: Film-making for promoting multi-literacies and playfulness amongst staff : Reflecting on our journey Logamurthie Athiemoolam Thato Moshesh Bruce Gordon	Paper: The Importance of the Biographical Questionnaire in Facilitating Access to Higher Education Zena Richards Kendall Petersen
13:00 - 13:50	LUNCH					
PARALLEL SESSION 7						
	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Jeanette Ramollo	Session Chair: Karin Sporre	Session Chair: Shakira Akabor	Session Chair: Roné Vorster-de Wet	Session Chair: Johannes Buthelezi	Session Chair: Makie Kortjass
14:00 - 14:20	SIG Panel: Assessing mathematics and English language competencies in Initial Teacher Education programmes in South Africa Qetelo Moloi Thelma Mort Monica Mawoyo Jeanette Ramollo Nicky Roberts	Panel: Education for the common good and a new social contract for education: ethical and pedagogical dimensions Karin Sporre Heila Lotz Sisitka John Bhurekeni Angela Chappel Kirk Sullivan Bjorn Norlin Ms Keneilwe Mathaba Anna Westin Jonas Nilsson	Paper: Careership: Exploring the Perspectives of South African Public TVET Colleges Lecturers on their Career Development Lucky Maluleke	Paper: Providing South Africa with the teachers it needs - Too much to ask? Researching supply, demand and quality dynamics Eureta Rosenberg	Paper: "We are somewhat forgotten" – a study of how school meal staff describe and approach their role and responsibilities in relation to the school meal Susanna Sandberg	SIG Arts based session: Self reflective research methods Makie Kortjass Ntokozi Mkhize-Mthembu
14:20 - 14:40			Paper: What do pre-service teachers learn about inclusive education from the TCIA module? Melanie Martin Carol Bertram	Paper: Towards disentangling the extent and dynamics of the access to education dilemma: A bibliometric analysis Alfred Machingambi Kudakwashe Mamutse	Paper: Who cares for the Carers? Cina P Mosito Zandisile Mawethu Sitoyi	
14:40- 15:00			Paper: Problematisation of Inclusive Education in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Policy Documents and Implications for Social Justice Elzahn Rinquest Precious Simba	Paper: Experiences of first year students from a rural South African University Jeffrey Sipiwe Mkhize	Paper: Talking from "hands on" experience: Secondary school principals' proposed measures to undo underperformance Zamokwakhe Thandinkosi Ncokwana Thulani Thamsanqa Bhengu Mduduzi Simelane	

15:00 - 15:30			Paper: Rethinking Visible Rewards for Academic Achievement: An Inclusive Education perspective Shakira Akabor	Paper: Instrument development to measure student self-efficacy in the teaching and learning environment Roné Vorster-de Wet	Paper: Inclusive Pedagogy implementation to create inclusive education in diverse classrooms Johannes Buthelezi	
15:30 - 15:55	TEA					
PARALLEL SESSION 8						
	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Mpho-Entle Modise	Session Chair: Celestine Mayombe	Session Chair: Logamurthie Atheirmoolam	Session Chair: Robin Ferguson	Session Chair: Sibusiso Sotsaka	Session Chair: Liezl Dick
16:00 - 16:20	Meet the editors: Callie Grant & Editors / Co-editors from <i>inter alia</i>, the following journals: South African Journal of Education (Carol Bertram), Southern African Journal of Environmental Education (Eureta Rosenberg), South African Journal of Transformation in Higher Education (Shan Simmonds), Education as Change (Na-iem Dollie), Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the South (Michael Samuel), SA Journal of Higher Education (Lesley le Grange) - other journal editors are welcome to join	Paper: Deep Collaborative Interdisciplinarity” as a Decolonising Strategy: Towards Epistemic Equity Oscar Koopman	Paper: Configuring Chronotopes: Pre-service teachers' understanding of space and time in a hybrid curriculum delivery Joshua Jacobs Jacqueline Batchelor	Paper: The development of TVET lecturers digital competences: Preservice teacher's perspectives Siphokazi Vimbelo	Paper: The quality of Physical Sciences formative assessments administered at selected high schools in South Africa Monde Kazeni Thabang Molise	Arts-based Session: Arts-based pedagogy for self-reflective leadership in complex education futures Marguerite Muller Liezl Dick
16:20 - 16:40		Paper: Community Engagement and the language question: A case study of Rhodes University Mazvita Mollin Thondhlana	Paper: Exploring successes and challenges in implementing inclusive education in early learning: Teachers' views Lintle Maraisane	Paper: E-learning Platforms at ODeL Institutions: Creating a Real-world Learning Cedric Bheki Mpungose	Paper: Life Sciences teaching for the future: tensions and possibilities Marie-Louise Botha	

16:40 - 17:00	<p>Paper: Building a next generation of scholars: the approach of the South African Education Research Association Mpho-Entle Modise Maureen Robinson</p>	<p>Paper: Applying Experiential Learning Theory in Non-School-Based Technical and Vocational Training for Unemployed Youths in South Africa Celestin Mayombe</p>	<p>Paper: Strategies to promote creativity among PGCE English methodology students Logamurthie Athiemoolam</p>	<p>Paper: A Year On: Reflections on building a global south educational knowledge commons collection on the sematic web using a fluid ontology methodology Heila Lotz Sisitka Robin Ferguson</p>	<p>Paper: A closer look at teaching of Engineering Graphics and Design pre-service teachers Sibusiso Sotsaka</p>	
17:00 - 17:20		<p>Paper: Knotworking: facilitating transformational agency in teachers to overcome constraints to inclusive teaching in post-pandemic classrooms. Douglas Andrews</p>	<p>Paper: Cultural capital in the wrong currency': the reflective accounts of scholarship students attending elite secondary schools Jennifer Feldman</p>	<p>Paper: Unlocking Achievement: The Role of Working Memory Capacity in Academic Reading Jaqueline Harvey</p>		
18:30 for 19:00	Gala Evening Function, Music and SAERA Awards					



Premier Hotel Regent Friday 3 November 2023

07:30 -	Registration					
PLENARY SESSION 4: in Regency 2-4						
08:30 - 10:00	Session Chair: Michael Samuel Introduction to SAERA's SIGs: Petro du Preez Brief introduction from each SIG, followed by opportunity to interact with SIGs					
10:00 - 10:20	TEA					
PARALLEL SESSION 9						
	Regency 2-4	Regency 1	Marine 5	Terrace Room	Marine 1	Marine 2
	Session Chair: Shan Simmonds	Session Chair: Lynne Johns	Session Chair: Nonjabulo Madondo	Session Chair: Zamokwakhe Ncokwana	Session Chair: Moshe Moses Makoa	Session Chair: Anil Kanjee
10:30 - 11:00	SIG Panel: Troubling the notion of boundaries: Transgressivism in curriculum studies scholarship	Panel: Reflecting Sustainable Development Goals in teacher development and quality for transformative changes in educational research in Sub-Saharan Africa	Paper: The impact of vocabulary knowledge on Grade 12 English First Additional language learners' creative writing in the Seshego circuit Phuti Daniel Phofele	Paper: Why are EC teachers in marginalised classrooms not integrating ICT in their classrooms? Fortunate Gunzo	Paper: A sense of belonging: children labelled with intellectual disability Anna Westin	SIG Panel: Large-scale assessment studies in South Africa: Reviewing Foundations and Exploring Futures for researchers, academics, policy makers and teachers
11:00- 11:30	Suriamurthee Maistry Lesley le Grange Petro du Preez Shan Simmonds Sylvan Blignaut Chris Reddy Labby Ramathan	Lynne Johns Yohana William Joshua Bell	Paper: Reverse Code-Switching in Teaching First Language at Grade 4: A Study in Selected Urban Schools in Namibia Linus Nekondo Meameno Shiweda	Paper: The impact of Online learning on Epistemological Access during the Covid-19 period at a South African University Lerato Lesenyeho	Paper: Sources of educator directed violence in high schools in Soweto, South Africa Thuto Polonyana Moeniera Moosa	Anil Kanjee Crain Soudien Jo-Anne Baird Mark Chetty Leslie Rutkowski Respondent: Radhika Gorur
11:30 - 12:00			Paper: Instructional leadership in promoting learner reading competency: practices of Primary School Principals in uMlazi District Nonjabulo Madonda Sibonelo Blose Sindisiwe Msani	Paper: From the insiders' mouth: Principals' narratives of outwrestling underperformance pressure in secondary schools Zamokwakhe Thandinkosi Ncokwana Thulani Thamsanqa Bhengu Mduduzi Simelane	Paper: Exploring the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ Educators in South Africa to develop a policy framework Moshe Moses Makoa	

The departure for the optional excursion to Makahanda will be at 10:15 for those who pre-booked

12:00 - 12:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Session Chair: Heila Lotz-Sisitka</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONFERENCE CLOSURE: Regency 2-4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reflections on SAERA 2023 & Moving towards SAERA 2024</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Short summative reflections on SAERA 2023: Presha Ramsarup Shan Simmonds Madeyi' Mbelani Sidney Muhangi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VOTE OF THANKS:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conference Chair: Eureta Rosenberg</p>
12:45 - 14:00	DEPARTURE

Special thanks to the:

LOC: Eureta Rosenberg (Conference Chair); Callie Grant (Logistics Chair); Heila Lotz-Sisitka (Programme Chair); Fortunate Gunzo (Treasurer); Fezeka Mkhwane (Conference logistics support and venues); Clement Simuja (Technology Support); Ma'Deyi Mbelani & Sidney Muhangi (Programme Committee); Ulisha van der Merwe (Conference Secretary); Carlene Royle (Transport and logistics support).

Programme Committee: Mellony Graven, Ingrid Schudel, Mags Blackie, Labby Ramrathan, Kristin van der Merwe, Heide Kuhlane, Shan Simmonds, Robson Mukwambo, Sean Nkosi

SAERA Mandela Lecture Speaker 2023



Saleem Badat (UFS) :

Saleem Badat is Research Professor in the History Department at the University of the Free State. He began his academic career in 1989 at the University of the Western Cape, eventually becoming the Director of its Education Policy Unit. In 1999, he was appointed the first CEO of the Council on Higher Education, the advisory body to the Minister of Higher Education & Training. Following that, he served as vice-chancellor of Rhodes University from 2006 to 2014. Between 2014 and 2019, he was the first Program Director of International Higher Education & Strategic Projects at the Mellon Foundation in New York, directing grantmaking in the humanities to African and Middle East universities and institutions. Saleem holds qualifications from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Boston University, and a PhD in Sociology from the University of York. Combining critical theory and practice, scholarship and activism, his concerns are structure and agency, reproduction and transformation, equity, redress, and social justice in and through universities, and the decolonization and transformation of universities. His books include *Tennis, Apartheid and Social Justice* (2023), *The Forgotten People: Political Banishment under Apartheid* (2012), *Black Man, You are on Your Own* (2009), and *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid* (2000). He is the author of some 60 book chapters, journal articles and research reports, and over 40 magazine and media opinion pieces. Currently he is researching books on a history of universities in South Africa and on his tenure as Rhodes University's first black vice-chancellor. Also in progress, are edited collections on the University of Durban-Westville and on Research and Activism. Awards include honorary doctorates from the universities of the Free State, York and Rhodes, the Inyathelo *Exceptional Philanthropy Award* and the HSRC-USAF award for research excellence in social justice scholarship. He is a board member of the International Consortium of Critical Theory Programs and of Our Compelling Interest, a trustee of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, and a former chair of Universities South Africa and of the Association of African Universities Scientific Committee on Higher Education.

Keynote Speakers

Hasina Ebrahim (UNISA) : College of Education, School of Education, Early Childhood Education



Hasina Banu Ebrahim is a full professor at the University of South Africa and holds the UNESCO Co-chair in Early Education Care and Development. Her research interests cohere around the theme Early Childhood at the Margins. This theme is developed in policy, practice and teacher education in the early years. She is the Institutional Lead for a European Union Funded Project entitled Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education (PIECCE). She won the UNISA 2017 Women in Research Award in the category of Leadership. Her latest book (in press) is a co-edited volume entitled Early Childhood At the Margins: African Perspectives on Birth to Three. In 2007 Prof Ebrahim completed her PhD on the Constructions of Early Childhood. Her research has largely been directed at addressing marginalised issues in early childhood policy, practice and teacher development. She was involved in research projects both internationally and nationally. The Knowledge Transfer Project was developed through a partnership with the University of East London and University of Warwick. She was involved in the Barriers to Learning Project funded by the National Research Association in South Africa. She received merit awards for both her leadership in research and capacity building of emerging researchers in early childhood education. She served as the Deputy President and the President for the South African Research Association for Early Childhood Education (2011-2016). She also serves on editorial boards of international journals such as the European Early Childhood Education Research Association Journal and Early Years.



Lesley le Grange (US) : Professor of Curriculum Studies (Environmental & Science Education)

Lesley Le Grange is a Distinguished Professor in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University. He has 249 publications to his credit, is recipient of multiple academic awards (including the SAERA honours award) and serves on editorial boards of 12 peer reviewed journals. He has delivered more than 180 academic presentations (80+ as invited speaker) and has presented many professional development courses/workshops for university academics. In 2015 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology (UK) and in 2019 elected member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). In 2018 he was appointed a member of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology and reappointed to a second term in 2023. He has also been appointed by the Minister of Basic Education as a South African Council for Educators (SACE) Councillor in 2021. After serving two terms as Vice-President, he was elected President of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS) in 2020. In 2022 he was appointed to the Council of Stellenbosch University. Lesley Le Grange is rated as an internationally acclaimed researcher by the NRF and has also been appointed chairperson of the NRF rating and evaluation panels. This year he has been invited to the membership of the Professors of Curriculum of the American Education Research Association (AERA).

Guest Presenter: Early Career Researcher Speaker 2023



Mthobisi Ndaba (University of Johannesburg)

Guest Presenter: The public good of a doctoral qualification.

We welcome **Dr Mthobisi Ndaba (University of Johannesburg)** as guest lecture presenter at the 2023 SAERA Early Career Researchers Pre-Conference Session.

Mthobisi Ndaba is a Post-doctoral Research fellow with SARChi Chair for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg. His research is located in the field of higher education studies, focused on higher education and the public good, inequalities, access and success, and student well-being and academic development. He holds a Bachelor of Social Work, a Master of Arts in Sociology, and a PhD in Education. Mthobisi is also an alumnus of the Wits Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF). He has worked in various tutoring and teaching roles in Education, Sociology, and Social Work. His 2022 journal article titled *The Other Side of the Story: The Costs of Being a Public Good Academic*, published in the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, has also been published as an op-ed in the African Edition of the *University World News* publication.

Conference theme: Educational Foundation(s), Educational Future(s)

Conference strands

1. **Education for the early years** - What do we know? What is the research agenda now?
2. **Language, Mathematics, Academic Literacy, Access and other Foundations for Learning** - What have we learnt? What is necessary and possible?
3. **Dialectics of post-school education and training, community and youth learning, livelihoods and work at this time** - Implications for universities, colleges, SETAs and other PSET role players in wider education and learning systems.
4. **Information and Communication Technologies in Education:** Online learning, Artificial Intelligence, digital devices and more - from practical considerations to new theory gaps. What theory is helpful to shape online learning systems and practices specially, and the use of ICTs in education more broadly?
5. **Planning for and resourcing access into and quality of education at all levels** - what is the research saying? How have policy makers been using educational research? What is needed?
6. **Transformative change(s); temporalitie(s), movement(s) and transgression(s) in contemporary educational research** – engaged and regenerative educational research for new social contracts that are inclusive, socially just, decolonially inspired and transgressive theory and praxis.
7. **Special Interest Groups (SIG)** are invited to draw on the conference theme to generate new forms of debate in the SIG thematic areas of SAERA. SIG Chairs and members are encouraged to put together panel presentations on their thematic areas.



Panelists: Education(al) Foundations



Michael Samuel
Professor, School of
Education
University of Kwa-Zulu
Natal



Nhlanhla Mpofo
Chair: Curriculum Studies
& Associate Professor,
Languages
University of Stellenbosch



Mlamuli Hlatshwayo
Associate Professor, Ali
Mazrui Centre for Higher
Education
University of Johannesburg



Michael Samuel

Professor Michael Samuel (School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal) is currently involved in designing and supporting postgraduate studies and mentoring capacity development of supervisors in a range of contexts nationally and across the continent. His research interests include higher education studies, curriculum development and professional development. His books, (1) *Changing patterns of teacher education in South Africa* and (2) *Continuity, complexity and change: Teacher education in Mauritius* explore the challenges of (inter)national reform initiatives in teacher education policy development. His methodological insights are captured in his book (3) *Lifeshistory research: Epistemology, methodology and representation*. (4) *Disrupting higher education curriculum: Undoing cognitive damage* explores options for imaginative curriculum redirection. He is the 2022 recipient of the South African Education Research Association (SAERA) Research Recognition Award for his distinctive contribution to educational research. He is the recipient of the Turquoise Harmony Institute's National Ubuntu Award for Contribution to Education.

Nhlanhla Mpofo

Nhlanhla Mpofo is the Chair of Curriculum Studies and an Associate Professor of Language Education at Stellenbosch University. She is also a Visiting Professor at University of Antwerp in Belgium. Nhlanhla is a rated researcher with the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) as well as a member of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS). Her scholarship focuses on the difficulties associated with English as a second language and the language of instruction (ELI) across various disciplines and within multicultural environments. She seeks innovative methodologies extracted from current pedagogy and combines a strategic, epistemological, and pragmatic understanding of nuanced discourse within multilingual education systems. Her departure point is the framework of an epistemological repertoire, bound by contextual linguistic resources, which are all controlled by the practitioner. Her conclusions, which incorporate successful collaborations from both the global South and global North, have played a vital role in re-orienting second language education research by re-establishing and empowering the language teacher as a knower in the multilingual, multicultural, and superdiverse secondary school classrooms. Nhlanhla is co-editor of *Per Linguam* as well as an editorial board member of *Journal of Language Teaching*.

Mlamuli Hlatshwayo

Mlamuli Nkosingphile Hlatshwayo is an Associate Professor at Ali Mazrui's Centre for Higher Education Studies at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His research interests largely center on theorising the higher education transformation and decolonisation, including rethinking curricula, teaching and learning as well as the explicating the colonizing institutional cultures at university. Prof Hlatshwayo has over 25 peer reviewed research publications, over 32 national/international conference presentations, and has delivered over 40 invited seminars/public lectures. He holds a PhD in Higher Education Studies and a Masters' Degree (Cum Laude) in Political Studies from Rhodes University. Prof Hlatshwayo was a visiting scholar at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education for 2018-2019. He was one of the 2020 Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans, the 2020-2022 Andrew W. Mellon Early Career Fellow and the current Jakes Gerwel Distinguished Fellow in Education. He served as a panel member of the Council on Higher Education (CHE)'s 25 Year Review of Higher Education in South Africa in 2019-2022. Prof Hlatshwayo sits on the editorial board for the Journal of Education (JoE), the Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning (CriStal), Journal of Curriculum Studies, and the Journal of Educational Studies. He is a member of the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) and the South African Education Research Association (SAERA). Prof Hlatshwayo's co-edited book, *Decolonising Knowledge and Knowers: Struggles for University Transformation in South Africa*, was published with Routledge in 2022.



Panelists: Education(al) Futures



Presha Ramsarup
Director: Centre for
Researching Education and
Labour (REAL)
University of Witwatersrand



Nuraan Davids
Professor: Philosophy of
Education
Chair: Department of
Education Policy Studies
Stellenbosch University



Injairu Kulundu-Bolus
Senior Lecturer
Department of Secondary and
Post-Schooling Education
Rhodes University



Mpho-Entle Modise
Associate Professor:
Department of Curriculum and
Instructional Studies
University of South Africa



Presha Ramsarup

Dr Presha Ramsarup is Director at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She is a Senior Research Associate at the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University and Honorary Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham. Her research work focuses on learning pathways for sustainable development and sustainability and her work is focused on skills for a just transition. She is currently engaged in several research programmes focused on transitioning the Vocational Education and Training in Africa. She is the current President of Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa.

Nuraan Davids

Nuraan Davids is Professor of Philosophy of Education and the Chair of the Department of Education Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University. Her primary research interests are philosophy of higher education; democratic citizenship education; and Islamic philosophy of education. She was a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University (2020 -2021). She is a Co-Editor of the Routledge series, World Issues in the Philosophy and Theory of Higher Education; and the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Education in Muslim Societies. Her most recent books are *Out of place: An autoethnography of postcolonial citizenship* (2022), and *Democratic education as inclusion* (2022, with Y. Waghid).

Injairu Kulundu-Bolus

Injairu is a decolonial scholar, writer, musician and trickster practitioner that is learning how to alchemise binary based logics towards a paradigm of non-duality. She is interested in fugitive ways of re-imagining and re-sourcing the ambit and lived practice of decolonial love and a paradigm of peace. Her current work focuses of dancing with the decolonial impulse in ways that proliferate regenerative futures by whatever creative means necessary. Her pedagogical experiments include musical inquiries bent on attuning to and singing out the transgressive learning and rising cultures of African Change Drivers currently underway. She is a senior lecturer at the Environmental Learning Research centre, in the Department of Educational Futures at Rhodes University, South Africa.

Mpho-Entle Modise

Mpho-Entle Puleng Modise (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, College of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She is also a graduate of the University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC). Mpho-Entle's research areas include faculty and student support in distance education, open distance e-learning (ODeL), academic professional development, and the use of open education resources (OERs) and e-portfolios in teaching and learning. She is also a member of the South Africa Education Research Association (SAERA) executive committee, representing the needs and interests of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in South Africa and other African countries. She received two prestigious awards for her outstanding PhD thesis from SAERA and the Education Association of South Africa (EASA) in 2022. Mpho-Entle also received the Women in Research Emerging Researcher Award for Excellence in Research 2023 at UNISA.

ABSTRACTS (organised by day and session in the programme)

Workshop: Activating Formative Assessment to improve pedagogy in ITE Programmes

Prof A Kanjee | Dr J Ramollo | TUT

Applying and modelling appropriate pedagogical practices is critical for Teacher Educators to 'better prepare' student teachers to enter the world of teaching.

Research evidence indicates that the application of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach has the potential to improve learning by supporting teacher educators and student teachers to identify, and thereafter, address the specific learning needs of, respectively, their students and learners. However, this requires teacher educators to: (i) possess the necessary knowledge, skills and experience in the effective use of the AfL approach; and (ii) model and support student teachers to integrate the AfL approach into their pedagogical practices.

In this workshop, the facilitators will draw on latest research findings to introduce different AfL strategies and techniques that can be applied for supporting both Teacher Educators and Student Teachers to improve their pedagogical practices.

During the workshop participants will collaborate to share ideas as they reflect on their pedagogical experiences, review specific strategies and techniques, engage in practical exercises and evaluate different classroom scenarios.

At the end of the workshop, participants will gain a deeper understanding and/or practical skills regarding:

- different interpretations and applications of assessment;
- integration of key strategies and techniques into their pedagogical practices;
- modelling different AfL strategies and techniques to students;
- options for reviewing teaching practicum assessments/evaluations.

Keywords: Assessment for Learning, Pedagogical practices, Initial Teacher Education, Teacher educators

Plenary Panel Discussion: From Diagnosis to Understanding

Cina P Mosito | Anil Kanjee | Tinti Enoch Rabotapi| Godwin Khosa | Nelson Mandela University | Tshwane University of Technology | NECT | DBE

South African society has been invariably impacted by the country's history of colonialism, beginning in 1652, and Apartheid (from 1948 to its formal end in 1994) which have fundamentally underpinned the South African education system with racialised and spatial inequalities. For this reason, scholars such as Waghid (2007) have argued that critical learning cannot be blind to prescriptiveness and that education holds the responsibility of democratic justice. This understanding of the responsibility of education, which extends significantly beyond the formal curriculum to instead bolster the foundation of the democratic dispensation within a globalised world, locates the role of the teacher as not only an intermediary between learning content and learners but positions the teacher as a driver of social change. In highlighting the importance of teachers as societal actors, the Teaching, Teacher and Teacher Education for Equitable and Quality Learning (TTTEQL) consortium has undertaken a national project towards understanding how teachers transact pedagogy in South African classrooms. While the TTTEQL consortium consists of nine South African universities, the consortium works closely with civil actors such as the National Education Collaboration Trust, Department of Basic Education among other key action partners. The plenary discussion will allow a platform for an overarching consideration of teacher pedagogy in South Africa. This discussion will entail a discussion of the policy implications, significance and macro cross-provincial findings emerging from the study.

Panel Chair: Anil Kanjee is a Research Professor at the Tshwane University of Technology whose work focuses on addressing the challenge of equity and quality in education. He also serves as a Research Fellow at the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment, and at the Centre for International Teacher Education (Cape Peninsula University of Technology). Currently he is supporting the DBE and Teacher Unions to implement the national Assessment for Learning Pedagogical Strategy in South African schools.

His areas of research focuses on:

- Enhancing the use of classroom and large-scale assessments to improve learning for ALL.
- Learner rights, learner voice and learning across schools in different poverty quintiles.
- Developing models of teacher professional development to address equity gaps in schools.
- Monitoring and evaluation of education systems, programmes and projects.
- Item response theory for enhancing the reporting and use of assessment results.

Previously, he was an Executive Director at the Human Sciences Research Council, where he headed the Centre for Education Quality Improvement. He has served as a technical advisor to education ministries in Africa and Asia, UNICEF, UNESCO, the United National Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, as well as to the Department of Basic Education, JET Education Services, UMALUSI and the National Educational Collaborative Trust.

Professor Cina Mosito is an associate Professor of Inclusive Education at Nelson Mandela University. She was previously a Head of Department, Intermediate and Foundation Phase at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Her research, teaching and community engagement concern mainstreaming inclusive education in initial teacher education and continuing professional development of teachers. She is currently a co-PI in a study titled Understanding Teacher Pedagogy in South Africa. The study is being conducted by the Teaching, Teacher, and Teacher Education for Equitable and Quality Learning consortium (TTTEQL) in partnership with the National Collaboration Education Trust. Dr Maria Tsakeni is a senior lecturer and head of the Department of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education at the University of the Free State. She holds an NRF Rating Track Thuthuka grant. Currently working on the preparation of science pre-service teachers in the implementation of inquiry-based practical work in multiple-deprived environments for sustainable development.

Dr Godwin Khosa is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Education Collaboration Trust. A teacher by profession, Dr Khosa has worked as a policy analyst and senior manager at the Centre for Education Policy Development in the 1990s before joining the Human Sciences Research Council as a research manager and proceeding to JET Education Services. There he served initially as a team leader on an education transformation programme in Limpopo and then as the organisation's Programme Director before being appointed CEO in 2009. He holds doctorate in Education and Social Work from the University of Sussex.

Mr T E Rabotapi is currently employed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as Chief Director responsible for the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development Unit

since 2018. Mr Rabotapi joined the DBE in 2005 as Deputy Chief Education Specialist responsible for Teacher Conditions of Service. He was appointed as Director, Educator Performance Management and Whole School Evaluation in 2007. In 2014, He was appointed to act as Chief Director, Education Human Resources Development, where he was overseeing School Management and Governance. Initial Teacher Education as well as Continuing Professional Teacher Development. During the same period, he was tasked with overseeing the establishment of the NICPD until he was permanently appointed as Chief Director in 2018. Mr Rabotapi has previously served as a high school teacher for 6 years and a college lecturer for 5 years. Mr Rabotapi has also served as a Union official, where he lead negotiations in the bargaining councils for 5 years before joining the DBE in 2005. Key achievements within the DBE includes, amongst others, establishing the new Directorate on IQMS and WSE, conceptualizing the current Quality Management System (QMS) which is used to evaluate the performance of Teachers, facilitated the establishment of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) as well as the NICPD. Since Covid 19 Pandemic in 2019, Mr Rabotapi has led the DBE's Remote and Digital Learning Strategy in collaboration with the ETDP SETA, NECT, UNICEF and other structures. He has also facilitated the establishment of the DBE TV on OVHD Channel 122. Locally, Mr Rabotapi has served as a board member of the ETDP SETA as well as a council member of the South African Council for Educators. Internationally, Mr Rabotapi is currently the Co-chairperson of the UNESCO International Teacher Task Force for Education 2030.

Keywords: Classroom Dynamics, Teacher Pedagogy, Policy, Teacher and Social Change

Plenary Panel: From diagnosis to understanding A national view on teacher pedagogy



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Understanding Teacher Pedagogy in South Africa

**CPUT/CITE: Joshua Bell | DUT: Anita Hiralal | NMU: Cina Mosito | Obakeng Kagola |
TUT: Anil Kanjee | Patricia Mokgosi | Jeanette Ramollo | UFH: Mzuyanda Mavuso |
University of Limpopo: Joel Mamabolo | Thinavhudzulo Mafumo | UFS: Maria Tsakeni |
UNISA | WSU**

The South African context is one that has been inextricably defined by histories of colonial oppression and institutionalised racism that has permeated systemically through societal structures over time. A sector of South African society that has been emblematic of the systemic inequalities that have defined South African society is the education system, which infamously hierarchically segregated education in terms of racialised identity markers in a manner that favoured white people and epistemically harmed black people. The history of colonisation and Apartheid has left an undeniable mark on teacher identity, teacher development and teacher skills.

In 1994, the landscape of South African education fundamentally changed with the introduction of the democratic dispensation. While South Africa's democratic dispensation has been heralded by a single education system, far removed from the racialised distinctions which characterised education under Apartheid, variations in the delivery of educational content are noted to occur as a result of socio-political context, teacher characteristics, pedagogical practices, teacher training and district/school profiles. In light of the complexity and nuance which encompasses the South African education system, the Teaching, Teacher and Teacher Education for Equitable and Quality Learning (TTTEQL) consortium has undertaken a project towards understanding teacher pedagogy in South Africa. While there is a vast body of literature on South African pedagogy, it is in addressing the question of how teachers transact pedagogy in South African classroom in which this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature.

The specific aim of this study is to explore routines and processes in South African classrooms by examining teacher pedagogy and its influences on learning in relation to teacher beliefs and values, teacher identity, teacher development, teachers support mechanisms. This aim will be realised through the following objectives:

1. To understand teacher pedagogic enactment and how it influences learning.
2. To examine teacher identity and beliefs and its influences on teacher pedagogy.
3. To examine teacher development and its effects on teacher pedagogy.
4. Teacher support mechanisms and its relation to teacher pedagogy.

Through engaging in a panel discussion, the TTTEQL consortium seeks to connect with researchers, institutions, and stakeholders throughout the landscape of South African education in highlighting and creating a dialogue around the work towards the above objectives and the project which seeks to realise these aims. The TTTEQL consortium comprises the Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Durban University of Technology; Nelson Mandela University; Tshwane University of Technology; UNISA; University of Fort Hare; University of Free State, University of Limpopo; Walter Sisulu University. The consortium has undertaken this project in partnership with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), who will join the panel discussion alongside members of the Department for Basic Education, teacher unions and an international expert in the field of teacher pedagogy. The panel discussion will explore provincial reports and case studies which have been undertaken in the effort towards pilot studies for the project.

‘I know a cross means I am wrong’ Grade 3 learners’ perceptions and understanding of their teachers’ written feedback

Jeanette Khabonina Ramollo | Anil Kanjee | Tshwane University of Technology

Teachers provide learners with different types of written feedback daily in the teaching and learning process. However, few studies reported on learners’ knowledge, understanding and the meaning of written feedback allotted to them. To obtain more detailed insights on how to support teachers improve learners’ learning capabilities, this study investigated Grade 3 learners’ perceptions and understanding of the written feedback received on their classwork. This study adopted the student interaction model (Lipnevich, Berg & Smith, 2016) as a theoretical framework and the teacher written feedback typology (Kanjee, 2018) as the analytical framework. Focus group interviews and book reviews were conducted with 148 learners from twenty six schools in one province. Learners’ responses were analysed to understand their knowledge, understanding and perceptions before and after teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and skills to use feedback were mediated through the Assessment for Learning capacity development programme. The results revealed that written feedback provided limited information to support learners to address their specific learning needs. Moreover, no differences were found between learners from schools in the different quintile categories. The paper concludes by listing implications for policy and professional development for teachers.

Keywords: descriptive feedback, evaluative feedback, feedback, formative assessment, foundation phase

An Untouchable Truth: Punishment as the pedagogy of the 21st century

Azeem Badroodien | University of Cape Town

The year 1994 was touted as 'new beginnings' within the discourse of education policy development and provision in South Africa post-apartheid. Various policies and processes were enacted that sought to transform the experience of the black body within the South African educational landscape. This was also particularly visible within the social development sector space and within childcare legislation, sectors that run alongside that of education.

In particular, the revamp of child-care legislation was meant to reconfigure not only the educational and social life experience of South African children, but also insert languages of restoration and transformation that disrupted previous apartheid practices. This was particularly evident in the various childcare institutions that dealt with the needs of youth.

This paper argues that many of these changes in the noted sectors did not materialise due to important shifts in the political economy of education and the influence of overall neoliberal discourse. The paper asserts that instead of the above, the idea of 'disposable futures' has emerged in the 2020s in South Africa as the main rallying cry for policy makers, neoliberal structural planners, and funders, with paradoxical seduction to languages of punishment, deficit, and violence that have sought to legitimise the turning the majority of learners in marginalized communities into 'disposability' interns.

Keywords: Punishment reconceptualised, Youth Care Centres, child care legislation, education marginality

Learning from our personal histories: A collaborative self-study of university tutors mentoring students during work integrated (WIL) placements

Zanele Dube-Xaba | Duduzile Mzindle | Zanele Masuku | University of KwaZulu-Natal
| Durban University of Technology | Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is a critical component of initial teacher education and offered as a credit-bearing module in all initial teacher education programmes in South African universities. Student teachers are placed in schools for varying amounts of time in each year of their study, as part of inducting them into the practical component of the teaching profession. During the WIL placements, students are mentored by school and university tutors. While the WIL in initial teacher practice is one of the most widely studied areas in teacher education, very few studies have focused on the role and practices of university tutors in mentoring students during WIL. This paper intends to examine the role and practices of university tutors in (dis)enabling students' professional learning and shape educational futures.

This is a collaborative self-study which involve three women academics from three universities in South Africa who aim to develop their scholarship and improve their teaching capacities and mentorship skills. The three university tutors are engaged in mentoring student undertaking WIL. This paper explores how education foundations and teaching practices such as mentorship (not) shape educational futures of students undertaking WIL. The study is significant for identifying the break-through insights in order to build students' capacities through mentorship while undertaking the WIL. This collaborative self-study approach uses personal histories to learn from experiences as student teachers in order to improve our teaching and student mentoring during their WIL placements.

We created our individual collages, analysed them as individuals and later as a collective, reflected on our experiences of work integrated learning while we were student teachers. The findings indicate that we had positive experiences such as developing confidence to delivering quality teaching. At the same time, however, we experienced some negative experiences ranging from fear, anxiety to lack of feedback. The analysis of the findings emphasised how our personal experiences might have influenced how we think about and practice our WIL mentoring. These findings are informative to mentors of student teachers undertaking WIL to better understand their roles in designing supportive and developmental spaces for students.

Keywords: work integrated learning (WIL), initial teacher education, university tutors, student mentorship, collaborative self-study, SRMeth SIG

A history of the concept of technological rationality and its implications for understanding universities in South Africa

Ian Moll | Centre for Researching Education and Labour
University of the Witwatersrand,

Technological rationality (technical rationality, technical reason, techno-rationality) is a concept initially proposed by members of the Frankfurt School in the 1940s, and developed in various ways since then. Its history straddles technical domination in pre- and post-war Europe that “fashions everyday life into a world of instrumentalities” (Marcuse) to the “modern technological rationality of algorithmic capitalism” (Bilić). This paper examines the concept as articulated by: thinkers of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and later Habermas); Alain Touraine in relation to the May 1968 uprisings in Paris; the techno-scientific paradigm in evolutionary economics; and various contemporary conceptions of techno-rational domination by converged ICT networks in a supposedly new ‘4IR’ or ‘AI era’. At every moment in this history, particular forms of domination are imposed on universities as institutions and as producers of knowledge, and corresponding struggles arise against this domination. The general pattern seems to be that the ideology of scientific and technical rationality compels institutional transformation of the university to conform to the structure of scientific-technical progress. While forms of technology might change to a greater or lesser degree, the general imperative to transform knowledge into technically solvable tasks remains relatively constant. A close examination of this history suggests that, rather than technological rationality being something that has changed substantially over time, it might best be understood as a series of events (including university ‘transformations’) that cycle around “an inevitable pattern of core principles” (as Abbott puts in in *Chaos of Disciplines*). While these claims are mostly general, the paper illustrates them throughout with examples drawn from South African universities. It ends with speculation about what aspects of domination by technological rationality might be specific to local institutions.

Key Words: Frankfurt School; technological rationality, South Africa; Touraine, university

Exploring the perceptions of first-year pre-service teachers on work - integrated learning and its impact on Professional Development

Matelile Augeal | IIE MSA

The purpose of this research study is to investigate how first-year pre-service teachers perceive work-integrated learning (WIL) and how it affects their professional development. WIL, an educational approach integrating practical work experiences into the curriculum, has been acknowledged for its benefits. However, the complex and varied nature of pre-service teachers' perceptions towards WIL necessitates a comprehensive exploration. The research will use a qualitative approach, with semi-structured interviews conducted with a focus group of pre-service teachers currently participating in a WIL programme. The research aims to address concerns such as lack of assistance among pre-service teachers, while identifying factors that contribute to positive or negative perceptions of WIL. The research will be guided by Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which emphasizes the direct impact of WIL perceptions on professional development, thematic coding will be employed to analyze interview data. The overall goal of the research is to enhance the implementation and outcomes of WIL programmes in teacher education by utilising the experiences and perceptions of first-year pre-service teachers.

Keywords: Work-integrated learning (WIL), Pre-service teachers, Perceptions, Professional development

Exploring the lived experiences of PGCE students during Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and their use of technology in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning

Moshe Moses Makoa | STADIO Higher Education (School of Education)

The aim of this research was to explore the lived experiences of PGCE students during work integrated learning (WIL) – commonly referred to as teaching practice (TP) or experiential learning and their use of technology in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning. Work integrated learning is described as an initiative that exposes university students to the world of work in different industries which link to their field of study. In South Africa, it is a prerequisite for all students who are engaged in initial teacher education programmes to be placed in schools of their choice to gain practical teaching experience before they graduate and gain recognition as qualified teachers. Work integrated learning is important as it serves as a two-dimensional process for teachers in training to integrate their pedagogical knowledge in the context of a classroom and to create effective teaching and learning environments. The experiential learning theory or the Kolb's learning styles model was used to argue for the integration of technologies to enhance effective teaching and learning in schools. How, teachers employ different technologies in their classroom could be a trailblazer to how learners reciprocate content knowledge in a specific subject matter. An interpretive qualitative research approach was used to gain knowledge into the lived experiences of students. A purposive sample of one hundred (100) students was used. The sampled student teachers were from a private institution of higher learning which is a major provider of teacher education programmes across four contact campuses and through distance learning in South Africa. Sixty (60) female and forty (40) male student teachers in the PGCE programme who did both teaching practice components in different schools. A semi-structured interview schedule and a focus group discussion was used to collect data which was thematically analysed. The findings revealed that even though resources and training were provided by the department of education, educators were not adequately prepared to develop their own approaches that could embrace ICT into the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Lived experiences; learning; Work Integrated Learning; Post– Graduate Certificate in Education; technology; teaching

Towards flexible qualifications and curricula for addressing future complexities

Colette Tennison | Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

The design of vocational qualifications and curricula has begun to receive attention over the last few years, particularly with regard to how they should be designed to address the increasing complexities and challenges presented by issues such as rapidly changing technologies and the need to formalise occupations in the green economy (C. Tennison, N.S. Alphonsus, D. Bezuidenhout, 2022). Alphonsus' (2023) work builds on that of Gamble (2021) and Wheelahan, Moodie and Buchanan (2012) to make the argument for broad-based occupational qualifications that are flexible enough to adapt to these complexities and challenges. With this in mind, the challenge for those in the policy and qualification development sphere is to conceptualise what this looks like for those who need to implement these qualifications. This paper draws on the author's work with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (the entity responsible for vocational qualifications and curricula in South Africa), to propose how vocational curricula, as espoused in a qualification's curriculum document, can be transformed into a curriculum that can be enacted by the skills development providers and TVET colleges who are tasked with implementing it.

Keywords: Curriculum, TVET, Vocational Education

Hybridised Assessment Models in Occupational Qualifications— Challenges and Possibilities

Marco MacFarlane | Quality Council for Trades & Occupations

Vocational education occupies the nexus between Educational Foundations and Educational Futures. Fundamental skills required for the workplace and future employment are at the heart of vocational training, but it also represents an ever-evolving space that must respond not only to innovations in educational research and pedagogy, but also to rapidly changing needs in the labour market. There are perhaps no better examples of the dynamism required in the vocational education space than the diversity of assessments and assessment models that must be employed in the space. Traditionally assessment models fall into two main categories: norm-referenced assessments and criterion-referenced assessments (Shepard, 1979; Bond, 1996). In Occupational Qualifications overseen by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) the overall model is espoused to be Competency-Based Assessment (Cano et. Al., 2023) (in the main a criterion-referenced approach to assessment) – but this paper argues that in fact the assessment model is thoroughly hybridised and contains a mix of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced elements. The final assessments of every Occupational Qualification are termed External Integrated Summative Assessments (EISA). These EISAs are, naturally, derived from the curricula of the various qualifications; however, the model on which Occupational Qualifications are built is in itself hybridised between Knowledge Modules, Practical Modules, and Workplace Modules. The intended mode of delivery for Occupational Qualifications is integrated in its approach, with practical skills intermingled with knowledge training, potentially while learning in a real workplace. This integrated/hybridised model of tuition is employed throughout the training process and continues on into the final assessments. While integrated forms of training are fairly commonplace in both academic and vocational disciplines, summative assessments that are nominally competency-based while running the gamut of assessment techniques are less so (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Boud & Soler, 2016). Drawing on an empirical analysis of a selection of Qualification Assessment Specifications (QAS), QAS Addenda, and EISAs for several different Occupational Qualifications, this paper argues that the diversity of training and assessment needs in workplace-based qualifications necessitate similarly diverse assessment techniques. It also highlights the challenge of marrying criterion-referenced tasks and norm-referenced tasks within a single assessment instrument, and provides both examples of such practices as well as a tentative assessment framework for working with such hybridised assessments.

Keywords: TVET&HEd SIG; Competency-Based Assessment; Norm-Referenced Assessment; Criterion-Referenced Assessment; Occupational Qualifications

Occupational Boundaries: Dental curricula and preparation for work in South Africa

Glynnis Vergotine | REAL Centre: University of Witwatersrand

In South Africa occupations such as dentists, dental therapists and oral hygienists offer dental services directly to the public. Changes to regulations have allowed mid-level dental occupations such as oral hygienists independence and increased their scope of practice. These changes have implications for preparing oral hygienists for the world of work and have resulted in boundary contestations among dental occupations. The study aimed to examine how regulations have influenced perceptions of mid-level dental professionals' advancement through their education and training. Sociology of Education theories underpinned the study and four central concepts provided a framework to interrogate the advancement of the mid-level dental occupation, oral hygiene. The concepts are division of labour, autonomy, jurisdiction, and specialised knowledge. Data collection involved semi- structured interviews and analyses of dental curricula. Various stakeholders were interviewed from within the dental profession and intended curricula from different dental schools were analysed for their knowledge types. The study describes the way dental occupations relate to each other in training institutions and how boundaries are maintained within the dental profession. Queries about the common scope (local anesthesia and restorations) are described and reveal contestations about how these procedures are taught and reproduced in the workplace. The analysis of the intended curriculum outlines differences in how knowledge is valued by dental occupations. This study explored how the expanded scope and autonomy of the practice of the oral hygiene occupation affected perceptions regarding the preparation for their daily work. The paper exposes boundary contestations emanating from the preparation for work and curricula in dental schools in South Africa.

Keywords: Dental curricular, occupational boundaries, preparation for work

A social skills ecosystem approach to curriculum innovation for climate resilience in TVET colleges: A case of Eastern, South Africa

Sidney Muhangi | Rhodes University

Climate-induced impacts such as drought and water shortages are wrecking work and livelihoods in South Africa, particularly the most vulnerable poor smallholder farmers in rural areas of the Eastern Cape. The South African government has ramped up efforts to build a resilient and green economy and developed policy tools such as the framework for a just transition. However, these efforts are yet to impact extension education. Extension officers would be well-positioned to support farmers in adapting and mitigating climate risks. However, they lack this expertise because it is not part of their study curriculum in TVET colleges. Using a social skills ecosystem (SEM) analytical framework, this study was conducted at an agricultural TVET college in Eastern Cape to assess the Diploma in Agriculture's curriculum's climate responsiveness, the primary study programme for training extension officers. The study employed a Climate Resilience Assessment Tool to assess the curriculum's climate responsiveness and Key-informant interviews. The tool was completed by 11 final-year students and three lecturers, followed by interviews with lecturers and extension officers for their perspectives on the curriculum's climate responsiveness. The study findings indicate that the curriculum does not meet the requirements for climate resilience responsiveness and needs innovation to integrate climate resilience expertise. The historical rootedness of South Africa's skills ecosystem also was found to impede the social actors in the skills ecosystem from reviewing the curriculum for climate resilience.

Keywords: Climate resilience, Curriculum Studies SIG, Curriculum innovation, Extension education, Skills ecosystems, Smallholders farmers

Investigating skills systems for advancing and supporting aquaculture in the local food economy

Phindile Sithole | Rhodes University

There have been calls for bold solutions to food systems challenges (poverty, hunger, malnutrition, food insecurity, inequality, exclusive economy) in southern Africa (UN Secretary General, 2019; FAO, 2022) Amongst key priority areas identified is the need to promote indigenous and aquatic foods in the food basket and to produce these at household level, and to promote of marine and inland fresh-water species and aquatic farming to address challenges faced by small fishers, harvesters and farmers. However there is no clear path or plan on how to promote aquaculture as this sub-sector has been criticized for being highly technical and high skills driven and mainly producing for international markets rather than the local food economy. Not enough is known of, or said about the kinds of skills development that are needed if we are to promote aquaculture in the food basket. Given the poor track record of aquaculture projects particularly in rural areas points to the problem in development approaches that have been applied so far. The transition to aquatic farming/foods will require deep structural changes across many societal subsystem including the **skills system**.

Drawing on the conceptual framing of Social Ecosystem for skills, this research seeks to explore how the skills systems can advance and or support aquaculture in the local food economy in two case contexts in Southern Africa (EC, SA & Manogchi, Malawi). In particular, the study will focus on a critical realist analysis of “position practice systems” of the involved agents towards understanding the ways in which ‘agents’ position practice system can enable or constrain the promotion of aquaculture skills development in the local food economy. The social skills ecosystem brings to the fore the mediating role of various position practice system (vertical and horizontal networks) as they enable or constrain transitioning aquaculture into a more locally ‘just’ and inclusive food economy. The research will be conducted as two case studies (not comparative) using contextual profiling, key informant interviews, document analysis and observations. It seeks to surface insights for developing social skills ecosystems approaches that serve local food commons and food economy in more inclusive, socially just and sustainable ways.

Keywords: Social ecosystems for skills, Aquaculture, Just Transitions, Food systems

Empowering farmer training through vocational adult education approaches in vulnerable communities

Mzuhleli Makapela | Cregg Alexander | Molaodi Tshelane | Central University of Technology | Sol Plaatje University

Recent studies reveal that almost half of the South African citizens live below the poverty line. There is a widespread view throughout Southern Africa that, farmer training has underperformed, especially concerning resource-poor communities. Despite interventions and innovations by the government in emerging farmer training, illiteracy and poverty increased. This paper seeks to understand the contribution of farmer training through adult education approaches in vulnerable communities. The paper further aims to analyse how vocational adult education strategies can be engineered to innovate farmer training methodologies aimed at empowering emerging farmers. Farmers in vulnerable communities often lack the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. This can lead to poverty, food insecurity, and other social problems. Vocational adult education (VAE) can help to empower farmers by providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to improve their livelihoods. The study will focus on the following research questions:

1. What are the short-term and long-term effects of VAE on farmers' knowledge, skills, and livelihoods?
2. How does VAE empower farmers to improve their livelihoods?
3. What are the challenges and barriers to implementing VAE in vulnerable communities?

Consequently, studies revealed that management problems, rather than individual competence, are the major factors responsible for the mediocre performance of farmer training. The Eastern Cape Province is an example of a predominantly rural and one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, with high adult illiteracy and poverty. The study adopts ubuntu as a lens for the study which encourages societal development as redress and restorative justice. The research will be undertaken in the form of a qualitative research in a participatory action research (PAR) approach. PAR is a qualitative research method that active and embraces action research's spiral of planning, action observation and reflection and it advocates empowerment and emancipation which are central to all participants and applicable to the chosen lens. The data will be generated through stakeholder discussions, observations of team meetings and dialogues. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a form of science in adult education strategies, challenges the issues of power in management and identifies dependence by emerging farmers on government grants as a predictor for lack of development and failure of existing projects. In conclusion the paper

acknowledges that rural individuals have acquired an efficient understanding that through the acquisition of education and training, emerging farmer will be able to promote better livelihood opportunities.

The findings of the study will be used to argue that VAE is an effective way to empower farmers in vulnerable communities. The study will also identify the challenges and barriers to implementing VAE in these communities. The findings will be used to inform the development of policies and programs that can help to improve the lives of farmers in vulnerable communities.

The participants in the study will be emerging farmers who have participated in VAE programs in vulnerable communities. The participants will be selected from a variety of vulnerable communities, including rural communities, urban communities, and communities with high rates of poverty.

This study is relevant to the conference theme of "educational foundation, educational future" because it investigates the role of VAE in empowering farmers in vulnerable communities. VAE can help to provide farmers with the skills and knowledge they need to improve their livelihoods and contribute to the economic development of their communities.

Keywords: Action Research, farmer training, vulnerable communities, Critical discourse analysis, adult education and training

Pedagogy of Possibility: Exploring the TVET of southern African workers on foreign vessels mediated by ubiquitous Google and Microsoft apps

Robin Ferguson | Marius Joubert | Future People (Pty) Ltd

The **context** which this paper explores is the provision of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) of southern African workers at sea on foreign vessels using a blended learning approach. The pedagogical challenge of providing quality education in this context is that multiple African and foreign languages and cultural norms are found amongst the all-male crew; and there are widely differing levels of education, low levels of digital literacy and limited connectivity.

The **methodology** used is a nested case study. The study describes the mechanisms used to provide ongoing, real-time workplace TVET on two foreign vessels. Some training was done in person when the vessels came into port, however, the majority of the TVET was achieved from shore to ship using a combination of commonly available Google and Microsoft Apps. Voice, video and text in multiple languages were used to accommodate different learning styles. The learning was supported by the development of learning networks using social media. This paper also reflects on the shore-based organisational change processes required to support @sea learning. The **conceptual framework** used is the Theory of Practice Architectures (TPA) as it provides a site-ontological perspective of the sayings/thinkings, doings and relating of this workplace training which is multiplanar as it plays out at sea and ashore, in-person and on-line. Using TPA, the overarching practice architectures which confound or enable these learning practices are revealed. Further insights are evoked by the application of an extension of TPA known as the *Trellis of Practices that Support Learning* (Francisco, 2020).

The **contribution** which this paper makes is an insight into the affordances which ICT-mediated learning can offer workers who suffer from low levels of literacies and limited ICT-access, and who work and live in remote places. It is a pedagogy of possibility which crosses the digital divide.

Keywords: Theory of Practice Architecture, Microsoft, Google, TVET, mariners, distributed workplaces

COVID-19 and the closure of early childhood development centres in South Africa: Implications for social justice

Lindsey Godfrey Thomas | Stellenbosch University

Globally, COVID-19 pandemic brought an unprecedented educational challenge to early childhood development (ECD) centres (UNESCO, 2020). In South Africa, the mandatory closure of ECD centres has not only affected children's educational progress but also disrupted additional other social services that ECD centres fulfil. The mandatory closure of ECD centres in South Africa had negative effects that go beyond the direct loss of education. To date, no research has focused on the effects of the long-term closure of ECD centres on young children, who are already at risk in impoverished communities. This study sought (1) To investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the functionality of ECD centres in Cape Town South Africa (2) To investigate the implications for teachers when ECD centres were closed in Cape Town (3) To investigate the educational and social implications for children during COVID-19 (4) To ascertain the importance to access ECD as a matter of social justice (4) To ascertain the importance to access ECD as a matter of social justice (5) To analyse a foregrounding of social justice that can assist policy-makers and politicians in (re) prioritising ECD. Data collection is ongoing. The finding of this study will be made available prior to the conference date.

Keywords: COVID-19, Early Childhood Development Centres, South Africa

Towards inclusive, integrated ECD services for young children with disabilities in South Africa

Robyn Beere | Tatiana Kazim | Equal Education Law Centre

Young children with disabilities in South Africa continue to be marginalised, discriminated against, and excluded from inclusive, integrated early childhood development ('ECD') services. Yet the vulnerable position of young children with disabilities means that access to such services is crucial. Early identification of barriers to learning and development, combined with appropriate interventions, allow children with disabilities an equitable opportunity to realise their full potential.

South Africa was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and is a party to multiple international and African treaties that seek to provide some measure of protection of the socioeconomic rights of children with disabilities. But how well do South Africa's international commitments translate into provision of inclusive, integrated ECD services on the ground? This is the question this paper seeks to address.

In this paper, we set out findings from interviews conducted with parents of young children with disabilities and ECD practitioners. Based on these findings, we argue that the failures to translate international commitments into lived realities are two-fold. First, domestic law and policies – especially the Children's Act – are not sufficiently inclusive. Not only do they contain gaps, they also, in some cases, actively create barriers to the realisation of rights. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the inclusive laws and policies that do exist are not properly implemented.

We conclude by outlining some possibilities to strengthen and improve the implementation of the regulatory framework to better serve young children with disabilities and their families.

Keywords: ECD, Inclusion, disabilities, integrated services, early identification, early intervention

The foundations for future learning: Are the three R's (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic) enough?

Nthabeleng Lepota | QCTO

There is general agreement that reading, writing, and arithmetic, also known as the “three Rs” are the fundamentals and basic skills of education, however now, more than ever, the relevance of other skills is being recognised. This paper shows the critical role of other skills and competencies beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and how equipping learners with these competencies enhances their employability and empowers them to adapt to evolving workplace demands and pursue lifelong learning. This paper takes a systematic literature review approach to make an argument that reading, writing, and arithmetic alone are no longer enough but they should be combined with other skills and competencies to enable the candidate to be successful in their academic career. This paper identifies the other fundamental skills including soft skills like a positive attitude, effective communication, problem-solving skills, teamwork, critical thinking and digital literacy and integration of these skills and competencies in Vocational Education and Training.

Keywords: VET, arithmetic, competencies, foundations, reading, skills, writing

Embedding 21st century competencies into scripted foundation phase literacy lessons

Semoni Cancelliere | Sarita Ramsaroop | Nadine Petersen | University of Johannesburg

Despite large-scale interventions aimed at developing literacy skills, children's reading competence levels in South Africa continue to remain an area of concern. In addition, the need to simultaneously prepare learners for the fast-changing world of learning and working in the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world is equally important. This paper aims to explore teachers' understanding and enactment of scripted home language literacy lessons that are designed to promote 21st-century competencies. Using a qualitative multi-site case study research design, data were generated in two phases across three teaching cycles involving five Grade 1 teachers in a peri-urban and township area. In the first phase, lessons were observed and recorded on video. The second phase consisted of stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) in which teachers commented on their recorded lessons. The findings indicate that when teachers had prior knowledge of competencies, they were better able to include these in their lessons. Despite this, the foundation phase teachers' entrenched methods and thinking were obstacles to change. Due to this, recommendations include training and development programs that focus attention to the practicalities of changing pedagogies and using scripted lesson plans.

Keywords: scripted lesson plans, competency-based lessons, 21st-century competencies, foundation phase, literacy

Revisiting educational childhood memories to inform our future teaching practices: Teacher educators' self-study

Makie Kortjass | Ntokozo Mkhize-Mthembu | University of KwaZulu-Natal

The paper explores the revisiting of childhood memories to inform educational teaching practices. In the South African context, childhoods are inundated with different challenges which have negative effects in the teaching and learning process. As teacher educators with a keen interest in childhood education and improving our teaching practice by valuing children's voices, we illuminate how we examined children's and pre-service teacher educators' drawings to recognise their experiences to inform foundations for our future teaching practices. In this self-study project, we combined the memory drawings and our narratives to make sense of individual and collective discoveries. We explored learning from a sociocultural theoretical perspective, emphasising the importance of working together in educational settings. This perspective provided an impetus to transform our understanding and help us realise the moral and ethical need to complement our endeavours in teaching spaces. The drawings helped us better understand the inevitability of embracing children's emotions and feelings and thinking carefully about our methodological approaches. Furthermore, the drawings assisted in gaining pre-service teachers' insights into their encounters with learning as young children. The findings affirm that children's voices must be foregrounded to improve teaching and learning practices as they are the key contributors to and recipients of educational processes. In this paper, we show how revisiting educational childhood memories may assist teachers and teacher educators in acknowledging children's dignity and perspectives for future teaching practices.

Keywords: early childhood, memory drawings, narrative inquiry, self-study, sociocultural theory

Exploring the visual representations in South African Foundation phase textbooks

Tammy Booysen | Lise Westaway | Mellony Graven | Rhodes University

Teachers and learners make use of Foundation phase mathematical textbooks are important as they contain visuals that communicate and clarify mathematical concepts. The textbooks are intended to standardise the content learners cover in each grade. The research equation that led this paper is: *What is the nature of visual representations of multiplication and division mathematics textbooks in South Africa?* The documents analysis analysed the multiplication and division visual representations in textbooks (Grade 1-3). The framework used to analyse the visual representations was the Visual Representation Framework by Fotakoupoulou and Spiliotopoulou (2008). The framework looked to analyse 1) the type of visual representation, 2) the visual representations relation to content and 3) reality, 4) function and 5) dimensionality of the textbooks. The findings indicate that the most dominant type of visual representations across all three textbook series and all three grades are images followed by array representations. These visual representations were realistic and had a strong relation to content. The majority of visual representations have an exemplifying (type b) function. A VR with an exemplifying function (type b) is a VR that has an example that the learners need to complete. The government-provided textbook (Textbook A) has the most visual representations and reflects a greater variety of visual representations. Textbook B and C are the most popular textbooks in South Africa, yet they have very few visual representations to support learners.

Keywords: Visual representation, textbooks, foundation phase

Training conceptions and processes for the implementation of the CAPS in primary schools

Siphesihle Pearl Ngubane | Devika Naidoo | University of Johannesburg

The so-called training of educators for post-apartheid curriculum reform implementation has been shown to be inadequate in content, time duration, follow-up and process. The aim of this study was to investigate how trainers conceive of training of educators for the implementation of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in primary schools. This study is framed by the theory of curriculum policy change which implies that curriculum policy change, changes nothing of significance unless it changes educators' beliefs and aspirations (Stenhouse, 1975). A qualitative case study approach informed this study. An interpretive paradigm was used, where the trainers' conceptualization of training was investigated and interpreted. Purposive sampling was used to sample the participants. Qualitative data was gathered using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The common conception of training reflected the attributes of the training transfer model. Data analysis revealed that all trainers held a belief that training is about the passing on and reading of circulars and policies to educators. Educators were not prepared cognitively nor psychologically to understand and 'buy-in' to the changes concerning the curriculum. The educator participants in this study revealed that the training they received from the trainers was insufficient, lacked enough depth to change beliefs and geared towards monitoring and not developing them. However, they did indicate that a transition to online training during the Covid-19 pandemic assisted them to reach out to the trainers and receive the training directly from the trainers. Educator participants in this study suggested follow-up support by the trainers.

Keywords: Post-apartheid reform, training, implementation, training transfer model, and Covid-19 pandemic

Understanding Emergent Mathematics: The Implementation of a Blended Approach to Supporting 1st Year Pre- Service Teachers

Rosemary Brien | Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Building strong foundations in emergent mathematics is becoming increasingly evident as a necessity in preparing learners for later mathematical achievement. Students in initial teacher education need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully engage with learners in promoting emergent mathematical thinking. This paper reflects on two questions: what prior mathematical knowledge do 1st year Bachelor of Foundation Phase pre-service teachers bring with them when commencing their studies and how can the Maths4Primary Teachers Intervention Project build on these skills to ensure that pre-service teachers teach emergent mathematics effectively? To answer the questions, 250 pre -service teachers from a comprehensive university took part in a pre – test before commencing with the intervention. They participated in weekly classes, online mental fluency tasks, task – based work and completed an Emergent number sense booklet over a 3 – month period. They then participated in a post – test to ascertain whether the intervention successfully built on their knowledge and skills. The data provided insight into how the pre – service teachers made use of the multiple platforms and how, through doing so, improvements in their mathematical fluencies and overall understanding of emerging mathematical thinking and acting were evident. There is potential to build on, improve and support pre-service teachers' knowledge through blended – learning using a variety of platforms including active class engagement, hands- on resources coupled with the use of online interactive tools.

Keywords: Knowledge Building in Education Practice , emergent mathematics, Initial Teacher Education, blended – learning, Maths 4 Primary Teachers

Exploring the possible enablers of a numeracy and literacy integrated Family Maths Storytime Programme

Tabisa Booï | Roxanne Long | Rhodes University

In this presentation, we provide preliminary findings from running the South African Numeracy Chair's Family Maths Storytime Programme (FMSP) with Grade R families in 2 schools. The programme merges literacy and numeracy learning in the early years (pre-Grade 1) and involves parents/caregivers participating in the programme run by the teacher. The FMSP is centred around three 'early number' storybooks, written and designed implicitly to encourage 'dialogic reading' (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006); and to create opportunities to recognise numerals and number names, subitise, count, and perform basic calculations at an age-appropriate level. These books are supported by numeracy and literacy integrated activities and resources, such as card games and flash cards.

Initial findings from data generated through participating parent interviews will be shared, framed by a sociocultural theoretical perspective, and we draw on the work of Graven & Jorgensen (in press) who explore "the re-constitution of the primary habitus into a secondary habitus that integrates school numeracy/literacy practices" (n.p.).

Findings from preliminary analysis of data will form the focus of this presentation, with insights offered in terms of the possible enablers afforded by participation in the FMSP, looking specifically at the nature of the learning described by parents, and in turn, exploring the potential for the integration of home and school practices, and numeracy and literacy learning practices.

Keywords: Early years; Grade R teaching and learning; integration of numeracy and literacy; home-school partnerships

Exploring the extent of STEM education research through bibliometric analysis: How far are we from the 4IR sphere?

Kudakwashe Mamutse | Stadio Higher Education

This bibliometric paper explores the extent of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education research using Scopus as the primary data source. STEM education plays a critical role in preparing students for careers in these fields and fostering scientific literacy. The study aims to identify key trends and patterns in STEM education research, including the number of publications, the most productive institutions and countries, and the influential authors and journals. Through bibliometric techniques such as citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, and network analysis, the data is comprehensively analysed. The findings reveal a substantial body of STEM education research, indicating a growing interest in the field. Leading countries contributing to this research domain include the United States, China, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The study identifies influential authors and journals, shedding light on the intellectual landscape of STEM education research. Additionally, emerging research areas within STEM education are identified, highlighting potential future directions for scholars and practitioners. This bibliometric research provides a comprehensive overview of the extent of STEM education research, uncovering key players, trends, and potential avenues for further exploration. The findings contribute to the advancement of STEM education practices by informing educators, policymakers, and researchers working towards enhancing STEM learning outcomes and addressing the challenges and opportunities in this field.

Keywords: STEM, patterns, potential future directions, further exploration, challenges and opportunities

Variations in South African novice teachers' lived experiences and reflections on multiple solutions problem solving in Euclidean geometry

Sfiso Mahlaba | North West University

The utilization of multiple solution tasks in the teaching and learning of mathematics is not widespread in South African schools, despite their potential in enhancing learners' problem-solving competence. Thus, there is an increasing need to investigate novice teachers' experiences with MSTs problem-solving and their reflections on the matter to comprehend the value of MSTs in South African mathematics education. This exploratory study examined novice teachers' experiences and reflections after immersing themselves in MSTs problem solving. Four novice mathematics teachers from village schools in South Africa were selected to participate in this study. A multiple solution task sheet and in-depth semi-structured interviews were utilized to gather data. The combination of *Embodied, Situated, and Distributed* approaches to cognition and Mezirow's theory of *Critical Reflections* was employed as a lens to understand novice teachers' experiences and reflections. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the data. The findings indicate that the novice teachers who participated in the study had positive experiences with MST geometry problem-solving and believed it was a critical skill to possess. However, they encountered difficulties in generating complete and accurate multiple solutions. The sampled novice teachers cited various obstacles, such as limited Euclidean geometry knowledge, inadequate experiences with engaging in multiple solution problem-solving, and resistance to change, that hindered them from generating complete multiple solutions to Euclidean geometry problems. This highlights the need for teacher training institutions in South Africa to integrate multiple solution problem-solving in the training of pre-service mathematics teachers to enhance their competence as problem solvers.

Keywords: Multiple solution tasks, problem-solving, creativity, Euclidean geometry, memorization and regurgitation, TeacherED SIG

Perceptions of Mathematics Teachers on Integrating Computational Thinking into Mathematics Education

Muhammad Zuhair Zahid | Umeå University

This study aims at exploring mathematics teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of computational thinking aspects into mathematics education and what challenges they may encounter when the notion is included in teaching mathematics. Eight mathematics teachers were interviewed; four teachers teach in Indonesian lower secondary schools (grades 7-9), and the remaining in upper secondary schools (grades 10-12). The interview focused on how teachers perceive the notion of computational thinking and its aspects (abstraction, algorithmic thinking, automation, debugging, decomposition, and generalization), their challenges in bringing the aspects into their teaching, and what support they need to integrate them into their classroom. Preliminary analysis of the data reveals that computational thinking is predominantly associated with problem-solving. Some aspects of computational thinking, such as generalization and decomposition, were already familiar within mathematics education, allowing teachers to comprehend the concepts easily. However, abstraction is an exception. Grasping abstraction is an obstacle for teachers since they preconceive the aspect associated with the abstract nature of mathematical objects. When discussing the challenges they may encounter, teachers are concerned about the competence of teachers in bringing the notion into mathematics teaching. A targeted development program for teachers is considered helpful for enhancing teachers' understanding of computational thinking and tackling the competence issue.

Keywords: computational thinking, integration, mathematics education, teachers' perception

Holistic digital mathematics laboratory Learning: Representations, symbols, and language used to learn number sense in primary schools

Msebenzi Rabaza | University of the Free State

Learners in primary schools globally and in South Africa experience the challenge of making a holistic sense of number concepts presented to them separately. The issues relating to holistic number sense-making are not new in the education spectrum though digital mathematics laboratories are currently considered in primary mathematics learning. A sight into the holistic use of representations, symbols, and language highlights the segregation of learning number concepts to it more abstract. This suggests that representations, symbols, and language should complement one another when learners are learning number concepts. Payne and Rathmell's triangle (1975) serve as the conceptual framework for this study in using whole and parts of the three aspects language, representations, and symbols. The process of learning number concepts for number sense represents the space to address some questions. Is the holistic digital mathematics laboratory involving representations, symbols, and language ability to help learners learn number concepts to improve primary learners' number sense? How is it possible to improve primary learners' number sense when using a digital mathematics laboratory? Reviewing related literature may help answer these questions. Documents analysis in the form of research articles on mathematics laboratories with a focus on each or a combination of digital representations, symbols, and languages for number sense are being looked at. The thematic analysis through Yin's (2016) framework of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding seem relevant for analyzing the research articles to be collected. Nonetheless, several studies have separately investigated representations, symbols, and language when looking at mathematics laboratories.

Keywords: Digital mathematics laboratory, Language, Number sense, Representations, Symbols

Interactive Natural Science School-Based Learning (NSSBL) on the menstrual cycle using IK and ICT during Covid-19 pandemic

Ayanda Simayi | Nelson Mandela University

The resultant Covid-19 shift presented unique challenges for pre-service teachers, lecturers and school learners, particularly in science subjects that require hands-on and interactive instruction as in the field of Natural Sciences in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). The study aimed to model School-Based Learning (SBL) of Natural Science (NSSBL) through Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) adaptive pedagogies by exploring the effectiveness of NSSBL in enhancing teacher practice knowledge and providing an interactive learning experience for pre-service teachers during the pandemic. The paper presents the reflections of a Natural Science lecturer in the Eastern Cape, teaching the menstrual cycle to 85 Grade 7 learners face-to-face while 11 third year Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) students interacted remotely with the presentation through Microsoft Teams. This is a qualitative study that utilized a critical paradigm and journaling, Microsoft Team's transcriptions and the lecturer's video-recorded teaching were used to generate data that underwent thematic analysis to develop emerging themes. Using Cognitive Argumentation Theory, this study explores the dichotomy between culture, language and scientific sexual concepts. A claim is made that the use of IK-ICT helped beginning teachers gain essential Natural Science teacher practice knowledge through modelled-NSSBL based on learners' directly observed engagements, attitudes observed, discipline and classroom management. Although no generalisations could be inferred, the study suggests that IK-ICT integrated pedagogies are useful for diverse students as they offer practical opportunities and interactive displays of teacher practice for teaching sensitive sexual content through inclusive, culturally sensitive adaptive pedagogies.

Keywords: Natural Science School-Based Learning (NSSBL); indigenous knowledge, menstruation, pre- service teachers

Gender and sexual diversity: inclusion in the Namibian education context

Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu | University of Namibia, Rundu Campus

Despite efforts to address all forms of diversity among learners and promote inclusion in education, and much research done on inclusive education in Namibia, there remains a scarcity of empirical evidence of the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity in the Namibian education context. The objective of this study was to explore the level of inclusion in Namibian education context regarding gender and sexuality diversity. The study employed a qualitative descriptive case study design guided by a transformative paradigm to provide an in-depth exploration of gender and sexual diversity and inclusion in the Namibian education system. An in-depth semi-structured interview and a questionnaire were used to collect data from four education officers selected through a total population sampling and one hundred and eighty-two teachers purposive selected. The thematic analysis revealed minimal inclusion of gender and sexual diversity in the Namibian education context. The Life Skills curriculum contains gender and sexual diversity content, and the Life Skills teachers receive training on the subject content. However, the teacher training program lacks content on gender and sexual diversity. The topics on gender and sexual diversity are not taught during the Life Skills lessons. The lack of responses to gender and sexual diversity in schools led to heteronormative functioning as the default norm. This study suggested for educational frameworks to address gender and sexual diversity, inclusion of gender and sexual diversity content in the teacher training programs, and school rules, as well as for monitoring of the Life Skills subject teaching.

Keywords: diversity, gender and sexual diversity, inclusive education, inclusive education in Namibia, inclusion in the Namibian education context

The teaching of sexuality education: a conversation with parents of LGBT learners in Eastern Cape primary schools

Obakeng Kagola | Doh Nubia Walters | Nelson Mandela University

The teaching of Sexuality Education in South African primary schools is currently experiencing contestations between what should be age-appropriately taught and who should teach it. This has created an artificial barrier a responsive curriculum implementation because some parents and teachers raise concerns regarding moral issues arising from cultural norms and conformity to religious beliefs. This study embarked on creating spaces for a conversation with parents of LGBT learners on their perception of the teaching of SE in primary schools. A focus group conversation was used to understand their perception of SE and how it should be taught at primary schools. The parents were selected from areas typically known for a strong allegiance to cultural and religious practices in the Eastern Cape province. With the help of a feminist post-structural lens, a thematic analysis was used to analyse the generated data. The findings showed that participants view the teaching of SE to be important in helping learners to make healthy sexual and reproductive choices and the teaching of SE should be the responsibility of any professional teacher. However, heteronormative and gendered sociocultural practices shaped participants' perceptions in terms of the practice of sexual reproductive health issues. The study recommends a collaborative relationship between parents and teachers as cocreators of the curriculum in fostering the teaching of SE in primary schools.

Keywords: Life orientation, collaborative approaches, curriculum, focus group conversations, parents, sexuality education

Anti-xenophobia education in South Africa: from official marginalisation to counter-hegemonic practices

Jeanne Bouyat | University of Johannesburg

South Africa has become a paradigmatic case for the study of xenophobia, given its exceptionally intense manifestation in the post-apartheid years. However, the contribution of the schooling institution both in averting and in reinforcing this intensification of xenophobia has remained underexplored, despite the official centrality of the anti-discriminatory mandate of the post-apartheid school. In this paper, I focus on the pedagogic responses and non-responses to this rise of xenophobia in South Africa. I first show that there is an official marginalisation of anti-xenophobia education in policies and curricula based on a documentary and public communication analysis. I further submit that anti-xenophobia education is not only avoided but also taboo in parts of the Department of Basic Education, based on interviews with officials in charge of devising and implementing extra-curriculum programmes. I then analyse how this constrains the actual anti-xenophobia pedagogic practices of teachers and may even lead to the validation of xenophobic attitudes and behaviours at school. I draw on interviews and focus groups with teachers and learners in seven high schools located in four low-income areas of Johannesburg: Soweto, Alexandra, Denver, Yeoville. Lastly, I look at counter-hegemonic forms of pedagogy and identify three approaches to anti-xenophobia education that were codeveloped with teachers and artists in a Sowetan school over a two-year action research collaboration, namely: teaching reflexivity on own social bias and specific knowledge, teaching through the use of counter-narrative, and teaching critical argumentation.

Teachers' Perspectives on the Management of gang violence in a South African secondary school

Sekitla Daniel Makhasane | University of the Free State

Gang violence is a significant concern in many countries, including South Africa. It harms both the perpetrators of violence as well as its victims. The disruption of the teaching and learning process, learner drop-out, fear, harm are some of the consequences of gang violence in schools. This qualitative study explores teachers' perspectives about managing gang violence in a South African secondary school. semi-structured interviews were used to generate data. The case is one school where gang violence exists. Purposive and convenience sampling were used to select a principal and two teachers, as participants in this study. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The findings reveal a territorial nature of gang violence in the school, identified a need for those learners who recruit into gangs, and for teachers and school managers to be trained to manage gang violence in the school. The paper recommends that the school strengthens and unifies its identity and suggests collaborative instead of hierarchical management strategies from the teachers, learners, the community, and the school management team.

Keywords: Collaboration, Discipline, Gangsterism, Management, violence

A Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) study towards the co-construction of a process model for School-Based Support Teams (SBST) in community schools

Sanet Deysel | Tulsi Morar | Nelson Mandela University

South African schools are mandated to establish a School-based Support Team (SBST) to support teachers and learners. Although many schools have an SBST, not all of them are functioning. Thirteen community schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole established an SBST in their respective schools to address various challenges experienced. The SBST coordinators of the thirteen community schools were the study's participants. This study responded to the question: *What are the fundamental elements required towards the co-construction of a sustainable process model for School-based Support Teams in community schools in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole?*

The study employed a genre of Action Research, Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR), where data was generated through engagement with the participants, following the cyclic nature of PALAR. A multiparadigmatic approach included the participatory, critical, and interpretive paradigms as a lens to interpret data. The researcher, together with the participants, analysed the data and identified emerging themes. Through the PALAR methodology, the participants of the study co-constructed a process model for the establishment of SBSTs in community schools. The model symbolises the image of a flower and consists of four phases, namely, initiating, designing, implementing, and monitoring and sustainability. Each phase represents a specific colour with a significant meaning. As the PALAR methodology foregrounds the voice of all participants, the participants collectively identified specific guiding principles; passion, commitment, responsibility, accountability, patience, and willingness to learn, that form part of the flower model.

In conclusion, this study shows that structure (flower model), principles, and an inclusive methodology (PALAR) are the fundamental elements of a sustainable SBST model.

Keywords: School-based Support Teams (SBST), Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR), co-construction, community schools, "flower" model

Social inequalities that affect transition processes from Grade 7 to Grade 8 within an inclusive South African education system

Julialet Rens | Hannelie Louw | Petra Engelbrecht | North West University

Globally the importance of school transitions and its possible impact on short term as well as longer term social wellbeing is increasingly emphasised by researchers. This paper focuses on exploring the major transition South African learners make from Grade 7 to Grade 8 with an emphasis on available and effective educational opportunities in two specific schooling cultures during this transition phase.

This qualitative exploratory research project, that will be followed up by a longer term research project, was placed within a constructivist research paradigm. The data was analysed in an exploratory and interpretative way by identifying segments in our data set that were responsive to our research questions.

The participants in the two purposively selected South African schools included a voluntary sample of teachers, parents, and learners in Grade 8. Using the draw-and write technique learners were requested to make symbolic drawings of their transition experiences as well as write descriptive paragraphs. A focus group interview based on the interpretation of their drawings with each learner group was then held. Focus group interviews were also held with a small group of the parents as well as the teachers of the Grade 8 learners in the two schools and individual interviews were conducted with the school principals. Our findings indicate some common ground but also qualitative differences between the two schools with specific reference to the quality of educational opportunities and socio-emotional challenges that could influence social inequalities.

Keywords: education inequalities, inclusive education, school dropout, secondary schools, social inequalities, transition

Bridging the Gap: Leveraging Educational Research for Evidence-Informed Policies and Transformative Education

Aretha M. Maposa | Wits University

Educational leaders confront complex challenges navigating a changing education landscape, striving to integrate research into policies for equitable access and better quality. This study focuses on the relationship between educational foundations, futures, leadership, and the research-policy nexus. It critically examines higher education access and quality in Southern Africa, highlighting hindrances and opportunities. Policymakers' utilisation of educational research, its impact on policy, and addressing gaps are central. The literature review employs document analysis of policy frameworks, research studies, and implementation reports to uncover education foundations and futures. It underscores the importance of leadership in translating research into practical policies. The key objectives are bridging the gap between research and policy, advocating collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, and promoting evidence-based policies. The paper calls for the comprehensive use of academic research in policymaking, emphasizing collaborative efforts to address gaps and promote evidence-informed policies. A transformative future in education, a focused perspective on the interplay between educational foundations, leadership, research-policy nexus, and the need for evidence-informed policies is showcased. The study concludes with vital insights and recommendations, holding the potential to drive positive change in global education systems. The study reveals complex realities, emphasising factors that hinder or facilitate equitable access and improved educational quality. It stresses the significance of evidence-based policies informed by research and advocates for enhanced research dissemination, uptake, and research-informed decision-making. By addressing challenges, leveraging successes, and promoting research-policy coherence, a more inclusive and transformative future in education can be achieved

Keywords: Education(al) Foundations, Educational Futures, Resourcing, Access, Leadership, Research-Policy Nexus, Transformative Change

Funding sustainable student access to and success in higher education and training: policy instability and the search for solutions

Thandi Lewin | University of Johannesburg

South African student funding policy, implemented as financial support for students unable to afford higher education and training, is fundamental to supporting access and student success in the context of a transforming society and continuing educational inequality. However, the search for a stable and sustainable funding policy remains elusive.

Large-scale policy change was implemented in 2018, supported by substantial additional funding from the State. However, this has not led to policy stability, nor solved the problems of higher education access. Student protest has continued, student debt has grown, and the sustainability of the funding policy remains uncertain.

While there is research on #feesmustfall and the social and political significance of the protests of 2015/6, there has been limited reflection on actual policy implementation and its multiple effects. The presentation outlines several policy implementation challenges, including disbursement mechanisms, decisions about levels of support and appropriate planning for introduction of policy changes.

Through critical analysis of literature and public documentation (including parliamentary proceedings, media articles, and government reports), this research explores the causes of policy instability in higher education funding in South Africa. These include institutional weaknesses; a lack of effective planning for policy changes; and postponing difficult political decisions around medium and long-term resourcing.

The research provides a perspective on the choices available for sustainability and stability. Solutions include making difficult political decisions on resourcing within and across government, joined-up policy making on social spending, reflecting on the impact of sudden policy change, and improved institutional capacity at all levels.

Keywords: student funding policy, policy (in)stability, higher education policy, student access and success

What funding model features support grounded research and development interventions to go to scale? The case of the Mental Starters Assessment Programme

Mellony Graven | Rhodes University

In this presentation we interrogate the funding model features that have supported our work as the South African Numeracy Chairs at Rhodes and Wits University since 2011 to go to scale. These Chairs were established to merge development with research for sustainable solutions to primary mathematics challenges. The funding model suggested partnering with local primary schools in mathematics professional development (PD) programmes. It allowed for up to three five-year terms —following evaluation of each term. This long-term, relatively flexible Research and Development (R&D) Chair model enabled a grounded, organically emerging network of research-informed projects with multiple iterations enabling continual strengthening and gradual up-scaling. Here, we share the emergence, and subsequent going to scale, of the Mental Starters Assessment Programme (MSAP) that we jointly developed, along with collaborators, to address poor number sense and pervasive unit counting for calculating. Resources are available on the DBE platform www.education.gov.za/MSAP2022.aspx. Multiple iterations of design, implementation, and research, with key partners, enabled us to establish the feasibility of national expansion of the program (requiring it to be administered and run by teachers, subject advisers and provincial coordinators within the system) and to develop quality (widely tested) support materials. We share the data from these studies and show how gradual upscaling, accompanied by larger scale research, led to the current Grade 3 roll-out with the Department of Basic Education. We use the case of MSAP to challenge dominant funding models that separate research from development and highlight the advantages of long-term, flexible merged research with development models. We argue that such models support the development of an ever improving and expanding set of programmes, informed by school partnerships and, through these, build capacity within the system while scaling up.

Keywords: Mental starters; numeracy interventions; research with development; scalability; research funding models

Re-imagining Integrated Digital Strategies for Organising and Recruitment of Young Emerging Teachers in Selected South African Teachers' Unions

David Matsepe | SADTU

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), trade union membership has been dropping sharply over the last decades with a density of less than 20 % of the employed in a majority of member countries. Some of the research conducted around this matter concede, without any equivocation, that the inability to mobilise, organise and service members leads to low membership turnover and therefore declining trade union densities. This study explores the kind of integrated digital strategies for organising, recruiting, and training of young emerging teachers in order to increase the membership density in the union. Using the qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews with 10 organisers selected at SADTU and 10 students in selected South African universities. The grounded (thematic) data analysis was used to analyse the data. The overall findings of the study indicate that digital technologies are an important way to attract younger generations of trade union members.

Keywords: Integrated digital strategies, organising, recruitment, young emerging teachers

Teacher Unions' in South Africa: Past, Present and Future

Logan Govender | University of Johannesburg

This paper provides a reflexive historical account of the role and contribution of teacher unions to education development in South Africa from the 1980s to the present, with specific focus on the last 10 years. Drawing on research conducted over a 30-year period, it provides a critical analysis of teacher unions in South Africa in the context of their struggles for professional unionism, arguing for a 'relative autonomy', 'social movement' and 'decolonial' approach in teacher union-state relations in the present local and global conjuncture if teacher unions are to remain relevant in pursuing the public good. Considering the future, teacher unions are exhorted to expand their alliances beyond political parties and union federations to include civil society organisations, especially those representing the poor and marginalised in society.

Simultaneously, teacher unions must rise above narrow sectoral interests and teachers' economic concerns to confront broader issues affecting society, including, the re-visioning of education prompted by global pandemics, climate change effects, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the national reading and literacy crisis, and the deepening scourge of gender-based violence and xenophobia. To do this, teacher unions and the state need to reset the broad parameters of their relationship: recognising education provision as a broader societal enterprise, jointly crafting a broader 'decolonial' policymaking lens, underpinned by a pluriversal canvas of understanding the world in the pursuit of education as a public good.

Keywords: teacher unions, policymaking, social movement, pluriversal, public good

Realizing the right to nutrition for early learning

Anna-Marie Müller | Tatiana Kazim | Laura Droomer | Donela Besada | Equal Education Law Centre | Ilifa Labantwana | DG Murray Trust | SAMRC

Chair: Tshepo Mantjé, Equality Collective

The South African government has committed to ensuring universal access to quality early childhood development (ECD) services for all young children in South Africa by 2030. As recognized in the National Integrated ECD Policy 2015, the holistic package of ECD services is not limited to early learning but also includes a range of other components. One important component is nutrition. Not only is nutrition important in its own right, it is well-established that adequate nutrition during early childhood contributes to a child's ability to learn, develop and thrive. Yet, currently, there is no national programme in South Africa to ensure that meals are provided to all children attending ECD programmes. This panel considers three broad questions: What is the law on nutrition for early learning and is the state currently meeting its legal obligations in this regard? What constitutes adequate nutrition and what is the current state of nutrition for early learning? What implementation models could be used to realise the right to nutrition for early learning? The South African Constitution provides a strong legal foundation for the right of young children to nutrition. Section 28(1)(c) clearly and explicitly gives every child the right to basic nutrition. Section 29(1)(a) gives everyone the right to basic education. Although it does not explicitly mention nutrition, it can - in light of South African jurisprudence and international law - be interpreted to include a right to the nutrition required for early learning and development.

We discuss whether these rights are 'immediately realisable', the nature of the steps the state must take to fulfill them, and the adequacy of existing measures. Currently, the main mechanism by which the state provides nutrition to young children at ECD programmes is the ECD subsidy. We discuss why this mechanism is not sufficient. We note in particular that the value is too low at just R17 per eligible child per day. Further, its reach is too limited with just 33% of ECD programmes reporting that they receive the subsidy. Finally, eligibility to receive the subsidy is contingent on the ECD programme meeting onerous regulatory requirements, leaving the majority of poor children excluded. We also discuss the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), noting that, while the NSNP does provide meals for children in Grade R in primary schools, it does not extend to children attending ECD programmes. Finally, we consider the extent to which the existing legal and policy framework provides an enabling environment for more robust measures

to be taken, and we set out some possible improvements that could be made. What does nutrition for early learning look like in practice? Although there is no national ECD nutrition programme in South Africa, there is detailed guidance for what nutrition for early learning should look like.

The Department of Health's Nutrition Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Centres, updated in 2019, and the Road to Health Booklet both encourage exclusive breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months of their child's life, and provide recommendations for nutrition for children 6 to 12 months and 12 months plus. A training manual to accompany the Nutrition Guidelines was finalised in 2021, but as at June 2023, it has not been rolled out. This manual would provide practitioners with resources on how to operationalise the Nutrition Guidelines, including sections on healthy eating, menus and recipes, health promotion services and maintaining a safe food environment. We discuss the adequacy of this guidance and whether, if the guidance were followed, children would receive the basic nutrition they need to learn and develop.

We also discuss the current state of nutrition in South Africa, noting in particular that stunting remains a persistent problem, and we outline some of the ways that private providers have tried to fill the gaps in existing nutrition provision. What implementation models could be used to realise the right to nutrition for early learning?

We explore three possible implementation models, through which government could provide nutrition support to children attending ECD programmes:

1. Centralised procurement and provision, including through possible extension of the NSNP;
2. A digital voucher system; and
3. A direct transfer to ECD programmes, including through possible expansion of the existing ECD subsidy.

We look at the logistics of each model and discuss their potential advantages and disadvantages. In doing so, we take account of the circumstances of different ECD programmes, including whether they are registered or unregistered; whether they have kitchen facilities; and their proximity to a public school. We compare the three models on a number of metrics, including complexity of implementation mechanism, level of choice and diversity in foods that can be offered, and cost efficiency. Finally, we discuss the likely economic costs and benefits of an ECD nutrition programme, depending on which implementation model is used.

Keywords: ECD, ECD subsidy, National School Nutrition Programme, basic nutrition, early learning, right to nutrition

South African Higher Education and Repairing of Injustices for a Sustainable Future

Tiffany Banda | Bheki Zungu | University of the Free State | Wits University

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) considers education as key in preparing citizens to tackle challenges of the present and the future through skills, knowledge and value transmission. (UNESCO, 2021) calls for a reimagining the future where each sector plays a role in contributing towards the future that we all envisage. It is within this context that the paper focuses on how higher education institutions in South Africa are actualizing this call through repairing injustices of the past. Sriprakash, Nally, Meyers and Ramos-Pinto (2021) make an argument for the need to go back to the past and repair injustices of the past to avoid a replication of these as we move towards the future. The paper is part of an ongoing project on sustainable universities in South Africa that focuses on among other aspects, universities' perspectives towards repairing injustices of the past in creating sustainable institutions. Data is generated from analysing policies and through semi-structured interviews with senior management teams and directors as well as focus group discussions with lecturers, students, and non-academic staff at selected universities. The underlying argument is that the injustices such as colonialism, apartheid, racism and social inequality that have occurred in the country's history have in some ways negatively impacted on access, throughput and success in higher education. Part of realizing a sustainable future of universities would thus involve looking back and making efforts to redress the past if the future that we hope for along the stipulations of SDG 4 would become a reality.

Keywords: Higher education, Repair, Injustice, Future, Sustainable, Development

Conversations with university students: A quest for African-Student Agency: Placing students from historically disadvantaged communities at the centre

Desiree Pearl Larey | University of the Free State

In the national universities of South Africa, various events during the past years indicate that students suffer under different kinds of oppression. It is widely acknowledged that students from poor, rural geographical areas find the university space as alienating and not speaking to their life worlds. The problem to be addressed in this paper is the misalignment between the critical horizontal knowledge of historically disadvantaged students and the knowledge codes of the university relating to learning, curriculum and pedagogical practices. I therefore argue that if university institutional practices recognise, embrace and align with students' agency, resilience and adaption, a reframed institutional platform could possibly engage students in their intellectual becoming. I locate my arguments in African-student agency, which argues for a dialectical acknowledgement of the historical disadvantaged student living in the shadows of the university. The paper is qualitative in nature where questionnaires and interviews were used to generate data for the study. Fifteen undergraduate education students in two national universities and one university of technology participated in the study. The study found that the misrecognition of the humanness of the historically disadvantaged student in her/his educational "becoming" should be foregrounded by a strong appeal for a more accurate and less distorted account of humans. Furthermore, it was found that students display certain knowledge and attributes which they cultivated in historically disadvantaged places that warrant them academic success in the university.

Keywords: African-student agency, South Africa, critical horizontal knowledge, historically disadvantaged student

Nine Tenths Mentoring Programme, a Solution for Education (In)Justice in South Africa?: Laying

Anna Lindiwe Prest Talbot Kinsler | Rhodes University

South Africa's education crisis poses significant challenges to the nation's development (Spreen & Vally, 2006). In light of government limitations, exploring alternative approaches to improving the education system becomes imperative. This paper focuses on the Nine Tenths Mentoring Programme, a community-based effort aimed at addressing educational injustice in South Africa and establishing the foundations for matric learners to access higher education (Talbot, 2020). Drawing upon social capital theory (Ansari et al., 2012), this study investigates how the Nine Tenths Mentoring Programme cultivates the necessary human capabilities within the local community, paving the way for increased access to higher education. By analysing the impact of the intervention on pass rates and tracking the number of local entrants to Rhodes University over five years, this paper presents a compelling narrative of the program's exponential influence on higher education accessibility. The results demonstrate that the Nine Tenths Mentoring Programme, through its community engagement model, nurtures social capital, empowering matric learners and catalysing their journey towards higher education. The program's impact is exemplified by the substantial increase in local entrants to Rhodes University, indicating a positive shift in educational opportunities for previously marginalized students (McCann et al., 2021). This research contributes to the discourse on alternative approaches to education reform in South Africa. The findings underscore the importance of harnessing social capital to create sustainable solutions that empower individuals and communities, ultimately leading to a more equitable and prosperous society.

Keywords: Keywords: education crisis, Rhodes University, South Africa, community engagement, education Injustice, foundations for learning, higher education access, human capabilities, local entrants, mentoring programme, social capital theory, social change.

How well prepared are Chemical Engineering students for the Fourth Industrial Revolution? Results of a document analysis on skills trained at undergraduate level at a selected university

Anja Philipp | P. Ndlovu | ET Marondedze | A Stark | University of KwaZulu-Natal

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is changing how we work in the future. Universities need to prepare students for the 4IR by training specific 4IR-relevant skills. One of the disciplines that is already affected by the 4IR and will become even more affected is Engineering. Thus, in a project conducted at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), we examine how the current curriculum prepares undergraduate Chemical Engineering students for the 4IR. The project is based on a mixed-method design (including analysis of module documents, questionnaires and focus group interviews with stakeholders from industry). In this presentation, initial results from the document analysis are presented with the aim to identify which skills are incorporated in the undergraduate curriculum in Chemical Engineering at UKZN. Data in the form of Handbook information, module templates and blank assessment documents available on modules offered to Chemical Engineering students is analysed using a hybrid content analysis approach (mix of inductive and deductive techniques). Initial results indicate that a range of different skills are incorporated in the curriculum including relevant 4IR skills. A detailed analysis of skills trained will be presented as well as compared to relevant 4IR-related skills of Chemical Engineers which have been identified from the literature in a previous step of the project. Conclusions on further curriculum development toward the 4IR will be drawn. These results are pertinent because in order to prepare future Chemical Engineers for the 4IR it is crucial to offer high-quality education which focuses on relevant skills.

Keywords: 4IR Skills, Chemical Engineering, Curriculum transformation, Fourth Industrial Revolution

Is it about crossing borders? Understanding lecturers' narratives on surviving educational crises

Hlologelo Climant Khoza | University of Pretoria

COVID-19, like the 2015 #FeesMustFall movement, affected the education sector in the sense that all higher education institutions had to close in order to curb the spread. Institutions had to come up with strategies for teaching and learning to continue. Some institutions resumed teaching and learning activities earlier than others. This might be attributed to the financial and organisational statuses of those institutions. However, the resumptions of teaching and learning activities also required lecturers to learn by unlearning old and re-learning new ways of teaching their courses. In this study, using a narrative approach, I analysed five lecturers' narratives on their experiences of closure of institutions, planning for resumptions of teaching and learning activities and teaching during the COVID-19. I particularly looked at the process of learning, defined in this study by; unlearning and relearning. Using vignettes, I reveal the five lecturers' trajectories of this process and discuss their similarities and differences. It appears that the lecturers' process of learning was a non-linear path characterised by rocky, sloppy, bumpy and smooth moments. I discuss the implications of understanding these paths from the border crossing perspective in dealing with educational crises contextually.

Keywords: Unlearning, border crossing, educational crises, re-learning

Mental fluencies amongst first year Bachelor of Education students

Emmanuel Libusha | Nicky Roberts | University of Johannesburg | Kelello Consulting

The Primary Teacher Education (PrimTEd) knowledge and practice standards for initial teacher education in South Africa include the development of mental fluencies relating to rational numbers, but do not explicitly mention mental fluencies relating to whole numbers. It is assumed that students enrolled in Bachelor of Education programmes to become primary school teachers will be able to conduct mental calculations involving whole numbers fluently, but require support for such calculation in involving rational numbers. As ITE lecturers we were curious as to whether this assumption held for the students at a comprehensive university. We therefore wanted to know their mental fluency for whole number calculations when they entered the B.Ed foundation Phase programme. We designed and administered a timed test with first year students in both 2022 and 2023. The results were poor mental fluencies involving whole numbers. Addition and subtraction calculations were poorer than the multiplication and division calculations (limited to $\times 2$, 10 and 5). Addition and subtraction whole number fluencies amongst the first year student teachers were below those published for grade 3 children. The assumption that student teachers in Bachelor of Education programmes (Foundation Phase) are fluent in whole number mental calculations is not true. As such the PrimTEd standards ought to make explicit the need to develop whole number mental calculation fluencies for additive relations and multiplicative reasoning. In addition, mathematics courses in the Bachelor of Education programmes should deliberately attend to developing whole number fluencies.

Keywords: Initial teacher education, PrimTEd, mathematics, mental fluencies

Learning Analytics: A data-driven approach to enhancing Grade 10 programming learning

Mashite Tshidi | University of the Witwatersrand

In the realm of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education, the effective shaping of learning experiences with the supplementary usage of ICTs holds significant importance. In South African schools, programming teachers lack adequate applications that pointed to the learners' needs in terms of understanding programming concepts. This paper addresses the problem by proposing an application that could identify programming concepts that pose challenges for learners. The application of Learning Analytics, an ICT-enabled process of measuring, gathering, analyzing, and reporting data on learners and their learning environment to better understand and improve learning and the environments in which it takes place, serves as a valuable tool to tackle this problem. By leveraging Learning Analytics, teachers could proactively intervene and support learners who struggle with programming concepts. The study utilized a mixed-method approach, incorporating semi-structured interviews with four experienced programming teachers, to explore how they shape their teaching and learning experiences in the domain of programming concepts. Additionally, a forecasting model was developed using previous examination marks to identify programming concepts that were challenging for learners. The findings shed light on the prevalent use of project and problem-based learning methodologies, revealing the practical considerations in designing effective learning experiences within programming education. Furthermore, the results from the forecasting model derived from Learning Analytics ensured the accurate identification of programming concepts that required attention: conditional statements, problem conceptualization and solution design, debugging and exception handling, abstraction/pattern recognition, and differentiation between classes and objects.

Keywords: Forecasting model, Information Communication Technologies, Learners, Learning Analytics, Programming concepts

Students' experiences of powerful feedback in Higher Education: Scaffolding epistemic access

Bella Vilakazi | Sioux McKenna | UNISA | Rhodes University

Feedback is a valued pedagogic practice in Higher Education because it can make the norms and values of the discipline or field students are studying explicit and enable students to gain epistemic access. Feedback then should scaffold epistemic access rather than stifle it. Feedback can achieve this if students are able to make sense of the feedback they receive. This study took place at one university in South Africa in the Faculty of Education. The Five undergraduate student teachers who participated in this study were studying to become Foundation Phase teachers. The research question is how undergraduate student teachers experience feedback. This paper then focuses on the power that feedback potentially exerts on students, which can cause epistemic injustice. Fricker argues that we can only have epistemic justice if we take students as knowers seriously. Feedback then is a space where academics and students share their knowledge and experiences. Narrative inquiry was used to study the students' experiences of feedback. Extensive data was collected using group and individual conversations. Data show that the power that participants experienced at times undermined them as epistemic agents. Consequently, feedback did not encourage students to participate in their capacity as knowers. Data also indicates that some feedback signals the student as 'other,' as if they do not belong in the academy. In contrast, effective feedback that encouraged students to draw on their knowledge and experiences enabled them to make meaning of the various academic literacy practices they are expected to take on for success in their studies.

Keywords: Epistemic access, Epistemic injustice, Feedback, Participation, Power

Engaged Research and Community-University Partnerships: A case study of Rhodes University Community Engagement Knowledge for Change (K4C) Hub

Monica Canca | Rhodes University

The K4C International Consortium was established in 2016 by the UNESCO Co- chairs in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, Drs Hall (University of Victoria, Canada) and Tandon [Participatory Research in Asia), a civil society organisation based in India. The Consortium aims to develop the next generation of community-based participatory researchers and the research capacities of universities and community actors for the solution of critical community issues within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Rhodes University is one of the 26 K4C hubs established in 15 countries of the world. Each hub is a partnership between an academic research institution and local practitioner organisation. The Consortium offers a 21 week Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Mentor Training Programme (MTP) for the co-creation of knowledge and research capacity building. The mentors are required to use their learning to train university students, staff and community partners in CBPR. Three of RUCE's staff and I, as a community organisation partner successfully completed the MTP in 2021 hosted by the University of Victoria in Canada. In my presentation as a community organisation partner, I discuss the nature of the partnership with RUCE, my experience as a mentor, the notions of knowledge democracy and the co-creation of knowledge through engaged research, participatory curriculum development of the CBPR course and the process undertaken with community organisations in Makhanda to determine how the course should be delivered to them. My presentation highlights the differences between conventional and engaged research and the significance of engaged research for community-university partnerships and the developmental role of universities.

Keywords: knowledge for change hub, engaged research, community based participatory research, community-university partnership, knowledge democracy, co- creation of knowledge

Universities as anchor institutions: community based participatory research and the knowledge project's contribution to 'anchoring' Rhodes University in Makhanda

Diana Hornby | Rhodes University

Universities as anchor institutions: community based participatory research and the knowledge project's contribution to 'anchoring' Rhodes University in Makhanda Until relatively recently by the very nature of colonial and apartheid design of education and educational institutions, most universities were seen as separate from their local communities and specifically the poor black communities. With the change of leadership at Rhodes University in the early 2000s, much has been said and done to effect the developmental role and transformative agenda of the university through its three core functions: teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. It has been acknowledged by the current vice chancellor of Rhodes University that the university is not only located in Makhanda, it is for the community of Makhanda. Community engagement is given tremendous support to develop meaningful relationships with civil society organisations and other stakeholders to collaboratively contribute to the social and economic development of Makhanda. This research based paper focuses on and problematises the notion of universities as anchor institutions in and for South Africa and the development of partnership relationships between local communities and the universities. Despite the challenges, I present two avenues through which individual and collective agency of both the university and community may be promoted and contribute to the 'anchoring' of Rhodes University in Makhanda. These avenues are community based participatory research and Rhodes University Community Engagement knowledge project.

Keywords: community based participatory research, community university partnership relationships, knowledge wheel, universities as anchor institutions

Our dialectic relationship between lecturers and students: Industry Experience

Diana Roberts | Warda Abrahams | IIE Varsity College

This study examines the significance of dialectic relationships between lecturers and students within private higher education, with a specific focus on the impact of industry-experienced lecturers on student learning and engagement. Sharing real-life examples creates a relatable and authentic learning environment. Furthermore

The research aims to explore the multifaceted benefits that arise when lecturers share their industry experiences and engage students in interactive discussions. Lowrie (2019) states “engaging students interpersonally increases student learning and increases the impact of the teaching”. It is evident that engaging students on a personal level fosters their learning and enhances the overall impact of teaching. Furthermore, by connecting theoretical concepts with practical applications, students can grasp complex ideas effectively and engage with the material on a deeper level. Through a comprehensive literature review and qualitative analysis of interviews and surveys, the study investigates the enhanced learning experiences, bridging of theory and practice, exposure to diverse perspectives, engagement, and networking opportunities facilitated by meaningful relationships between lecturers and students. The findings will shed light on the valuable contributions of industry-experienced lecturers in creating dynamic learning environments that promote critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and practical understanding of the subject matter. This research provides insights for lecturers, administrators, and policymakers on the importance of fostering dialectic relationships to enhance student learning outcomes and prepare them for successful transitions from institutions into their respective industries.

Keywords: Dialect relationships, lecturers, higher education, industry experience

A leadership model for the enactment of Twenty First Century Learning: South African Private Secondary Schools in KwaZulu-Natal

Michael Naidoo | Mancosa

There have been significant and rapid improvements in information and communication technology (ICT), since the early 1990's. Subsequent global changes have increased with the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and have dictated pedagogical transformation. Many countries have moved from traditional approaches to education, to 21st Century Learning (21 CL). 21 CL is ICT aligned and inquiry based.

School leadership directly influences all structures and individuals within a school. It has the potential to be one of the cornerstones of the paradigm shift to 21 CL. This research investigated the relationship between school leadership and ICT driven 21 CL, with the aim of developing a leadership model. Quantitative and qualitative data was required to achieve the research objectives. The research therefore adopted a mixed methods research approach and is underpinned by the positivist and interpretivist paradigms. A multiple case study design was used. The data collection methods employed were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews.

The research findings show that four of the dominant leadership theories which have proven to be critical facets of 21 CL, are ecological leadership, system leadership, transformational leadership, and strategic leadership. The results also show that school leadership training, specifically designed for 21 CL, is limited in South Africa. The study produced a leadership model for the enactment of 21 CL. It is recommended that further research be conducted in, both private and public schools, in other South African provinces.

Keywords: 21st Century Learning, Information and Communication Technology, Leadership

Unpacking Foreign Aid to Education

Joel Samoff | Stanford University and University of Johannesburg

Selected and carefully studied, perhaps a good deal.

Here, I use the analysis of a single aid-funded activity—Swedish technology support to Tanzania for teacher education—as a window onto the broader aid relationship. Embedded in that activity are the complex interactions, layers, and tensions of foreign aid. This synthetic approach permits observations about and analysis of the aid-funded activity, informal and formal assessments of that activity, and the aid relationship more generally. In developing its findings, this analysis explores both the aid relationship and how to study the aid relationship. What do we learn by studying technology support from the inside out, that is, by unpacking foreign aid?

Differing, perhaps incompatible, objectives come into sharp focus. The pressures of organizational behavior regularly overwhelm ostensibly shared objectives and negotiated agreements. The aid relationship itself undermines transparency and accountability. Insistence on detailed plans is not associated with improved outcomes. Aid agencies operate on a cycle that is much shorter than education innovation and reform require. Attention to context and complexity is more informative than focusing on dissection and discrete variables. Statistical significance is less important than analytic significance. How an outcome is achieved is more important than the outcome itself. The details of one small aid project become a window onto the large world of aid as process and aid as relationship. Attention to the small scale permits exploring potentially productive operating spaces at the largest scale.

Keywords: Africa, education, foreign aid, knowledge, research, social justice What do a few computers, cords, and surge suppressors tell us about the aid relationship?

Is Higher Education a Public Good? A Critical Look at Financing Access to Higher Education in South Africa

Mthobisi Ndaba | Shireen Motala | University of Johannesburg

How university students are funded is inextricably linked to the sector's sustainability, and crucial to achieving just and equitable access higher education for all. Whatever the choices have been around student funding, the implications have stretched far beyond the walls of campuses. Despite the strongly articulated global and national-level policy commitments to achieving equity in and through higher education, the sector's well documented complicity in reproducing intersectional forms of inequalities and alienation of the marginalised has weakened its transformative and redress potential. It has also raised questions about the public good role of higher education in society. Therefore, in this paper, we argue that the social inequalities that higher education is aims to address, together with issues of commodification, massification, insufficient student funding and social and historical injustices in the broader society, limit access to higher education for the poor majority, which ultimately interferes the ability of higher education to address inequality. This argument is based on a critical engagement with the literature on higher education funding and inequalities in South Africa, particularly journal articles in student funding in South Africa published between 2015 and 2023. A case for higher education as a public good is infused into current debates on equity in higher education and society. We propose a multi-stakeholder approach addressing the funding challenges of higher education.

Keywords: Higher Education, Public Good, Inequality, Equity, Funding

Sustainable Curriculum Practices and the entrenched artificial intelligence: Navigating the Intensified Application of neo liberal Logic in Universities

Molaodi Tshelane | Sol Plaatje University

This theoretical paper documents sustainable curriculum practices in the context of the persistent influence of artificial intelligence (AI) and the deepened application of neo-liberal reasoning in universities. As AI technologies become progressively added into scholastic settings, there is an increasing apprehension about the consequences for curriculum design in higher learning institutions. This study employs cyborg theory to make sense of logic in the management and organisation of universities. The cyborg organic human emanates from curriculum practices that led to a methodical look of human and machine. The paper critically reflects on the challenges and prospects presented by the entrenched presence of AI and the neo-liberal agenda in shaping curriculum practices. The paper attempts to respond to the following question “how AI technologies, driven by market-oriented logics, influence the management and organization of universities, affecting curriculum urgencies, pedagogical approaches, and assessment process. With the application of critical discourse analysis on the prevailing literature the study amplifies alternative approaches that challenge the hegemony of AI and neo-liberal logic in universities. The study further explores strategies and initiatives that prioritize human agency, critical thinking, and ethical engagement in the face of increasing automation and standardization. By foregrounding the importance of reflexive capacity and socially just educational outcomes, this research argues in favour of sustainable curriculum practices to navigate and resist the influences of AI and neo-liberal logic. It advocates for the cultivation of curriculum designs that foster human-centered learning, critical consciousness, and ethical decision-making in the era of AI-driven education.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Neo-liberal, curriculum practice, sustainable

Mapping curriculum opportunities in the National Senior Certificate— (uneven) spatialities in the marketized field of basic education

Sara Black | King's College London/University of Johannesburg

As 'public' South African secondary schools face increasing austerity in the absence of private financial supplementation, decision makers in school senior management teams face trade offs on how to organise local resources within given constraints in a marketized schooling system. One of these trade offs includes curriculum offering at the level of the National Senior Certificate, with NSC subject choices being bundled or truncated to match staffing and rooming availability, or timetabling constraints (Black, 2020; EE, 2021). As with most axes of inequality in the system, these trade offs are spatialised, aggregating around contours of historical and contemporary fortification and exposure (Black, 2020; Black, Spreen and Vally, 2020).

This paper explores empirical evidence of this spatialised distribution of curriculum opportunity by leveraging datasets of NSC results aggregated against Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data from the Department of Basic Education's Centralised Education Management Information System (CEMIS). The resulting mappings provide further evidence of how South Africa's two-tiered system reproduces education (dis)advantage. The maps further texture the spatial unevenness of curriculum choice, offering insights into what forms of cultural and symbolic capital are locally perceived as strategically important in the field of schooling when seeking to maximise market signals via NSC results, and how the interests of schools as organisations might align with, or be antagonistic to, the interests of individual students seeking to maximise their own symbolic capital on the education/labour market. Implications of curriculum narrowing in the face of scarce resources are explored, both for students' education experience as well as for nascent DBE policy initiatives such as the Three Stream Model and the introduction of Coding/Robotics.

Keywords: curriculum opportunity, NSC, spatialities, marketized education field, ECR

The National Education Coordinating Committee's (NECC) Education(al) Foundations and Futures (1985-1995)

Linda Chisholm | Charissa Shay | Terri Maggott | Yogesh Narsing | Elaine Unterhalter | University of Johannesburg

Chair: **Linda Chisholm**

Ask: How did we get here? What pasts are present and what futures are forming? What connections exist that (we) didn't see before? (Lesley Green, *Rock-Water-Life: Ecology and Humanities for a Decolonial Future*, 2020) The Conference theme asks us to grapple with the dialectical movement between educational foundations and educational futures. Critical to such an investigation must be movements that in the past saw themselves as working towards a better future, for their future is with us now. Understanding how the foundations of that future were laid might help to enable a dialectical perspective on our present in relation to the future. No future exists without a past and no past does not have a future. Both are in the present. This panel intends to tackle this knotty interrelationship with reference to aspects of the National Education Coordinating Committee that operated between 1985 and 1995. It was a movement in its context searching for a new social contract that aimed to be inclusive, socially just, and transgressive. Although not inspired by contemporary decolonial movements it was aimed at a transformation/de-racialisation/decolonisation/Africanisation of society and its educational structures. Examining the past enables a sober perspective on the futures anticipated now, as some aspects vividly contested at one time remain alive today while others have passed into oblivion. The same will apply to futures perspectives anticipated today.

We hope to stimulate debate on this interrelationship by focusing on four key dimensions of the history of NECC activism at school, university and non-formal level through four papers: the role of nationally-based, school students, university students, academics and activists and international networks.

1. Chairssa Shay, University of Johannesburg: High School SRCs and PTAs: Foundations of the NECC examines the complex relationship between SRCs, PTAs and the national structure. This paper details contributions of high school actors within local structures of SRCs and PTAs, which helped actualize and shape the NECC project.

2. Terri Maggott, University of Johannesburg: Using the “social movement landscape” concept to situate the NECC within the broader anti-apartheid movement draws on the concept of a social movement landscape to analyse the significance of the NECC at a theoretical level as well as to extract possible lessons for building a strong social movement in education, one that transcends the limitations of university-centred student movements. The paper explores the national-local dialects and politics that underpinned the NECC to argue that it was an organization of organizations, and, in addition, that its colourful array of civic organisations, unionists, teacher and student bodies are necessary for forging a truly radical social movement in education.

3. Shireen Motala and Yogesh Narsing, University of Johannesburg: Intellectuals and activism in the NECC – exploring the tensions explore distinctions between civic/political work and activist/intellectual work, in the Education Policy Units EPUs, when universities were pursuing traditional science for research and development and the NECC activists were pushing for the EPUs to produce ideas for struggle as well as the issue of class mobility and class privilege and the binaries that existed at that time and are relevant today.

4. Linda Chisholm (University of Johannesburg) and Elaine Unterhalter (University College London): Decolonisation, transnationalism, the anti-apartheid movement and ‘peoples ducation’ (1985-1990) explore the transnational dimensions of the genesis and circulation of the idea of peoples education and asks whether it was a unique South African formulation or shared broad features with similar ideas and initiatives in other parts of the world, including ideas inscribed by ‘international development.’

Part of an ongoing project, all the papers draw on archival sources in the UWC Mayibuye Archives, the Wits SAHA collection, as well as interviews conducted with NECC and other education activists of the 1985-1995 period in South Africa.

Keywords: NECC, PTSAs, activism, decolonisation, peoples’ education, scholarship, transnationalisation

The battle over South Africa's post-apartheid public education system

Pagiel Joshua Chetty | UCT

This article discusses the importance of the public good in South African education and its significance for democracy. Drawing on theoretical and empirical research, the author argues that the provision of quality public education is crucial for promoting social cohesion, addressing inequalities, and advancing democratic values. The article highlights several findings from the author's Master's dissertation and highlights the fundamental need for public education and education as a public good. The article also notes several challenges facing the South African education system, including the persistence of structural inequalities and inadequate funding, and makes a case for the need to prioritise the public good in education policy and practice. The article concludes by suggesting a range of strategies for enhancing the public good in South African education, including increased investment, improved parliamentary oversight, and greater community engagement.

Keywords: Capitalism, Constitution, Freedom Charter, Neoliberalism, Privatisation, Public good, democracy, free education, funding models, parliament, public education

The paradox of ‘quality education’ within the public-private education debate in South Africa

Helen Day | Azeem Badroodien | UCT

By engaging with the nuances, conflicts, and challenges that private philanthropy brings to current debates about public schooling in South Africa, this paper teases out the unfolding impact of increasing levels of private provision on how education provision for South African students in challenging and marginalised contexts is being reconceptualised over the 21st century. In doing so, the paper focuses on discourses about quality education in the contemporary period, namely what the notion of quality entails for students and the kinds of education that is understood to serve most students best. Key assertions are that the debate on quality education has tended to be flattened into a curriculum discussion (what students know) rather than an overall political economy challenge (Novelli, Higgins, Ugur and Valiente, 2014). Also, that the debate on ‘quality education for all’ has paradoxically become a rallying call by which private education providers have sought to get greater access to the overall educational landscape. The paper suggests that the focus on ‘for all’ has not only been about providing for all the different students scattered across the entire educational landscape but about giving all education providers in both private and public sectors the opportunity to provide support for them. The paper utilises the voices and stories of scholarship recipients tied to a particular private philanthropy and scattered across the South African geographical landscape to spotlight the variety of opportunities, contradictions, struggles, and constraints that students have had to confront as they navigate what is thought to constitute ‘quality education’ in different educational spaces.

Keywords: political economy, private provision, public schooling, scholarship recipients

Working with adults towards systemic change, to meet learners' needs at various phases of education

Anneliese Maritz | Jacqueline Akhurst | Cora van Vuuren | Antoinette Human | Rhodes University

The purpose of this panel is to reflect upon research done in Eastern Cape school settings by three recent PhD graduates, in order to motivate for changes that are possible within the system, to better meet learners' needs. Although the graduates each worked in different phases of education, with different foci, all of their research drew from eco-systemic models, based upon the constructivist paradigm. They worked collaboratively alongside educators, parents and district officials, to explore possibilities for changes in practice. The first presentation will highlight the challenges in the system for learners with special educational needs, from the perspectives of different stakeholders, illustrating these in a complex eco-systemic diagram. The second will describe a parent - practitioner partnership approach that was trialled in an ECD centre, in order to promote parental involvement in and communication with education providers. The third moves to the FET phase to illustrate an intervention to address the little emphasised but important focus on career education in Life Orientation (LO), in collaboration with educators. After a brief presentation of the background to and findings of each of the projects outlined below, the panel will explore the common themes that emerge from the work and the potentials for systemic change illustrated by the research evidence.

1. Gathering the views of educators, district officials and parents in three diverse mainstream Eastern Cape rural schools, this study probed the impact and effects of the inclusive system on the development and social wellbeing of learners with special needs in grade one, considering their human rights and constitutional imperatives. The study found that whilst policies promote inclusion, this is not being successfully realised due to numerous systemic constraints. This study makes a unique contribution by theorising a broader multi-level networked system, with greater interactions between different elements, to better support children with barriers to learning.

2. This modest research project was situated in a multilingual ECD setting in the Eastern Cape to explore how the team might communicate more effectively with the parents to encourage early stimulation practices of benefit to children's development. Research has shown that parental involvement and creating parent school partnerships can assist children to progress at school. The project adapted the Netherlands-based approach, 'Thuis in School', based upon an education

partnership. An action research approach guided workshop sessions, to enable mutual capacity-building of parents and practitioners. Pre- and post-interviews and workshop data were analysed by template analysis. The findings illustrate the thoughts and feelings of parents pre- and post-the sessions, topics they found most meaningful, and potential changes in home-based practices. These findings illustrate ways that educational partnership elements can influence practice and policy, to improve home and school environments.

3. Recent research developments using more holistic approaches suggest that career education needs to move towards contextualized approaches to understanding and informing career development. This study was conducted in disadvantaged high schools in the Northern Areas of Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape, with LO educators in the FET-phase and the LO subject advisor. The overall aim was to co-construct and explore a customised career education programme, suitable for FET-phase learners from disadvantaged public schools. The study illustrated that the career education of FET-phase learners in public high schools is lacking and that LO educators are not adequately trained in careers topics. It underlined the impact of contextual factors on career decision-making and the need for inclusion of these, particularly with learners from disadvantaged environments.

Underpinned by Action Research, during a series of meetings over a six-month period, an applicable and relevant programme of career-related activities were planned and evaluated by educators. The resultant customised programme could potentially address the career development needs of learners from disadvantaged public schools, in partnership with educators. Recommendations are made for implementation and further development.

Keywords: Ecosystemic models, KBEP SIG, collaborations and partnerships, systemic change

The stories we tell: mapping education discourses, voices and theories of change in online journalism in South Africa

Sara Black | Heather Jacklin King's College London/University of Johannesburg | UCT

The South African education systems (basic and higher) are often said to be in 'crisis'. How the general public conceives of this 'crisis' is strongly mediated by the mode, discourse and frequency of education reporting by media outlets on issues in the sector. This paper explores education reporting in South Africa; how stories are framed, whose voices are foregrounded, and what discourses are deployed to overtly or tacitly infer theories of change.

To explore these foci, we generated a corpus of online media articles on education issues using data scraping technology. This database was then coded for focus, scope, voice, as well as thematic trends which were then mapped onto prevailing discourses and theories of change from education literature. We also mapped units of publication onto 'triggers' to explore how education stories reacted to and/or analysed events and developments in education.

Our research suggests that education issues in South Africa are often treated in an a-historical, disconnected and reactive manner, with the media offering circumscribed descriptions without analysis or synthesis. We also found that the balance of voices foregrounded in education media is biased towards more powerful sectors of society (NGOs, academics, government, private sector) with teacher and student voices relatively neglected. We suggest that these characteristics of education story-telling in the public sphere stunt imaginaries for alternative approaches to education change, constraining and condemning broader education discussions and their underpinning ideals to a-historical repetition and a barren frame of 'perma-crisis'.

Keywords: education media, public sphere, social imaginaries, theories of change, discourse analysis, ECR

Learning from our artmaking: Embodying transgressive movements for our intellectual becoming and creative scholarship as women academics

Marguerite Müller | Daisy Pillay | Kings College, London-UK | UKZN

The conceptualisation of academics as experiencing embodied beings is especially significant when our workspaces are becoming increasingly competitive, and the draw of prestige and desirability for scholarly positionings perpetuate unproductive binaries and individualistic ways of thinking. Higher education's administrative and professional pressures are disembodied, often increasing the anxiety associated with work demands that thwart intellectual well-being. The need to claim time for doing intellectually meaningful work to transform our fast-paced lives and work under restrictive conditions is desirable. This paper explores visual art as a material knowledge-making ABER practice for freeing-up thinking for co-creative scholarship as academics. Drawing on the concept of diffraction, we work with practising freedom as both a methodological and theoretical approach. The question driving our work is: "How can the process of doing and sharing visual art amplify transgressive opportunities for embodying becoming as creative academics?" We worked for over ten months, celebrating our deep writing, sharing, reflecting, and thinking with our artworks. We use these meditative opportunities as co-creative entanglements for exploring our becoming as experiencing embodied academics.

Visual art-making allows for ambiguous shifts and transgressive boundary-crossing moments in academic lives and scholarship. We offer visual art as a practice of freedom to rename, resist, and revise boundaries that conceptualise academics as (dis)membered producers that fulfil a consumerist agenda.

Keywords: co-creativity, creative scholarship, embodied becoming, transgressive, visual art

The fourth industrial revolution: A literature study of challenges associated with access to education in rural schools in Zimbabwe

Zvisinei Moyo | University of Johannesburg

Research on access to education in Africa has resulted in the revealing of impediments working against the advancement of marginalised groups. Indeed, research shows that Africa lags behind the rest of the world in skills development. This paper reflects on the factors perpetuating hierarchies in the fourth industrial revolution, with particular attention on rural schools in Zimbabwe. It seeks to unearth challenges perpetuating inequalities in access to education. Utilising Fraser's model of social justice, this paper contributes to the unmasking of the potential disparities manifested by the fourth industrial revolution. At the core of social justice is challenging structural procedures and practices arising from imbalanced power hierarchies. Of significance to social justice is distributive justice – procedures and processes used to subvert cultural and socio-economic disparities. Therefore, by exposing the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution, this paper highlights the complexity of achieving equal access to education. The findings point to the fourth industrial revolution as a global system that has been created over time and which is unfortunately not ready to meet the needs of rural schools in a developing country like Zimbabwe. The fourth industrial revolution escalates the subjugation of rural schools, complicating the exclusionary power structures. The fourth industrial revolution has brought about social colonisation, further widening deep-rooted status gaps. This paper argues for a shift in epistemological focus to achieve social change. There is need for a collective confrontation of the second coming of colonisation embedded in globalisation in order to create, in the Zimbabwean society, a strong cultural foundation that takes cognisance of the history and context of education. This paper explores some gaps in the literature that can be investigated further and may guide research to open avenues of social transformation.

Keywords: social justice, rural schools, access, Zimbabwe, fourth industrial revolution, education

Rethinking ICT integration in teacher education curricula at Diploma Level in Zimbabwe

Tendayi Dzinoreva | Govender Logan | George Mavunga | University of Johannesburg

This paper uses critical realism, critical theory and the change readiness model at national, institutional and individual levels to problematize the implementation of ICT integration in pre-service teacher education diploma programmes at four Zimbabwean secondary school teachers' colleges. The research methods included lecture observations, focus group discussions, interviews and document analysis. The results revealed weak integration in subjects such as English, Geography and Mathematics on the part of teacher educators. Consequently pre-service teachers' capacity for knowledge transfer post-training is negatively affected. Accounting for this is lack of prioritisation of critical ICT resources and lack of continued in-service training provision at multiple levels. These challenges, it is argued, impact readiness for implementation of ICT integration in pre-service teacher education curricula, with implications for learning effectiveness of students and efficacy of service delivery on the part of educators, policy makers and technical support staff. The paper thus explores ICT readiness in relation to its implications beyond the teacher education training colleges. Considering global, national and institutional political, economic and individual dynamics, the paper recommends more focused teacher educator and pre-service teachers' ICT integration training and development, targeted training of curriculum advisors as well as enhancement of knowledge for policymakers and implementers for a context-relevant education system in Zimbabwe. The paper reflects on the importance of ICT readiness for implementation, taking account of key contextual, both African and global, as well as the political dynamics that characterise change processes, for a reimagined and sustainable twenty-first century education system.

Keywords: ICT integration, change readiness, critical theory, implementation, teacher education

Reading the contours of the extent of artificial intelligence research in education: A bibliometric research using Scopus Database

Kudakwashe Mamutse | Stadio Higher Education

This bibliometric paper investigates the extent of online assessment research in education using Scopus as the primary data source. As online assessment gains prominence in educational settings, this study aims to identify the key trends and patterns in research related to online assessment. The paper examines the number of publications, the most productive institutions and countries, and the influential authors and journals in online assessment research in education. By utilizing bibliometric techniques such as citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, and network analysis, the data is comprehensively analysed. The findings reveal a significant increase in online assessment research in recent years, with contributions from a wide range of countries worldwide. Notable countries in this research domain include the United States, Australia, China, and the United Kingdom.

The study highlights influential authors and journals, providing insights into the intellectual landscape of online assessment research in education. Additionally, emerging research areas within online assessment are identified, shedding light on potential future directions for scholars and practitioners. This bibliometric research offers a comprehensive overview of the extent of online assessment research, uncovering key players, trends, and potential avenues for further exploration. The findings contribute to the advancement of online assessment practices by informing educators, policymakers, and researchers working towards enhancing assessment methodologies in digital learning environments.

Keywords: bibliometric techniques, bibliometric techniques, comprehensive overview, intellectual landscape, online assessment

Creating music with digital technologies - Opportunities and challenges of inclusion in Sweden's lower secondary schools' music education

Jonas Nilsson | Umeå University

The aim of this ongoing PhD-thesis is to examine what conditions digitalization creates within music education in Sweden's lower secondary schools with a specific focus on its compositional activities. Previous research has shown that digital technology can have a 'democratizing' effect on music composition and increase pupil's motivation. On the other hand, the digital environment can pose all sort of pedagogical challenges and even enhance gender inequalities. This study uses a media ecological perspective as its theoretical framework. Through this perspective the music subject can be seen as an ecological system connected to other systems such as the school system or even society at large and when new technologies, or species, are introduced to this ecosystem it can be argued that they will change the environment, re-shape thinking, perception, roles and possible actions. The study is divided into two stages; the first includes interviews with music teachers, and the second, observations at three different schools, where the pupils composed music using digital technology. The study highlights how the activity of music composition is being re-shaped as the use of digital technology in these activities are becoming more common in Sweden's lower secondary school's music education and how this poses both opportunities and challenges of inclusion.

Keywords: Music education, digitalization, digital technologies, music composition, media ecology, inclusion

Online learning: a changing public schooling social imaginary

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This paper examines the drivers used to try to institutionalise an educational Public-Private Partnership providing online learning at one school in the Western Cape. The ePPP, situated at a school located in a previously disadvantaged area, is a pilot project between the Western Cape Education Department and a private online school where the private provider offers online schooling to 27 learners in one grade at the school. The drivers and explanations to operationalise the pilot project will be examined using a cultural political economy analysis. The analysis asserts that the concept of ePPP's as envisaged through the pilot project may increasingly 'normalise' neoliberal agendas and discourses that focus on greater collaboration between private providers and public schools, where the establishment of such school-based initiatives may shift the public educational landscape in harmful ways to the provision of quality education to learners across a myriad of public educational spaces across the Western Cape. It suggests that the pilot project reveals ways in which alternative embodiments and educational imaginations are recast for public schools in disadvantaged areas in the Western Cape, and that online teaching is used as a conduit not to improve quality learning but for financial and operational reasons. The data for the analysis conducted in the paper comes from qualitative work (focus groups and semi-structured interviews) with various important stakeholders associated with the online programme at the designated school.

Keywords: Cultural Political Economy, Educational Public-Private Partnerships, Online Learning, Quality Education

Effect of smartphone integration method of teaching on secondary school students' performance and affective learning in English composition writing in Gweru Zimbabwe

Alice Dhliwayo and Thuthukile Jita | University of the Free State

ICT, Integration This study, actuated by low performance in English composition writing at Ordinary Level in Zimbabwe, explored the effect of integrating smartphones as a method on secondary school students' affective learning and performance in English composition writing through the lens of the network society theory. Data was collected through a mixed methods quasiexperimental design where 104 learners, first wrote a pre-test, responded to a questionnaire on attitude, were split into experimental and control groups for administering the smart phone method and wrote a post-test. The experiment group provided qualitative data through diary reflections on the smart phone integrated lessons. ANCOVA, two-way ANOVA and t-tests were used for statistical data and a thematic approach for qualitative data. Findings indicated that smart phone integration positively impacted affective learning during composition writing lessons and improved performance regardless of gender. In view of these findings, we suggest that teachers of English composition integrate lessons through smartphones to mitigate the acute dearth in ICT tools. This paper also suggests a model for successful integration of the smart phone for composition teaching and learning and strategies for developing creativity in learners.

Keywords: Affective, Attitude, Gender neutral,

Position of the Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities and Its relevance in the South African school system

Alton Dewa | University of the Witwatersrand

Artificial intelligence (AI) is primarily concerned with the development of computers capable of performing cognitive activities commonly associated with human minds, such as learning and problem-solving. Deep learning capabilities in machine and artificial intelligence have had significant disruptive and enabling effects on education and its surrounding societies. They also have an influence on broader global sustainability trends. When the AI revolution influences our education, it may usher in a utopian future in which humans and machines coexist happily. The research employs a conceptual analysis and a review of the literature on the impact of artificial intelligence on education. AI, as recently demonstrated, is fundamentally reshaping every aspect of industrial society, including its geopolitical and technological strata. Through literature, AI helps education in a variety of ways, including the educational process, support and adaptations to pedagogy and educator regular functions, as well as the educational ambit and materials required. Learners using AI technologies can be able to tailor their learning to their own needs due to significant breakthroughs in the creation of novel educational technology. The platform adapts and assists learners by focusing on their specific learning styles. AI has the potential to advance the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This is the time and moment in which the South African school system must endeavour to address the most difficult educational literacy obstacles. Poverty, social isolation, economic inequality, and environmental deterioration are common most South Africans face, and hope is pinned on AI to minimise. The study finished by examining what AI offers and its benefits, such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and the expansion of integrated 5G connection, virtual classrooms and their potential to someday replace traditional classrooms.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence (AI), curriculum, digital integration, education, opportunities, sustainable development goals

The silencing of structural racism as a cause to unsustainability and injustices in the ESD for 2030 framework

Brita Phuthi | Tom G. Griffiths | Oslo Metropolitan University / University of Johannesburg

UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030 framework positions education as a key mechanism for realising the Sustainable Development Goals. ESD requires education that engages with the multiple and complex challenges confronting the world, and that contributes to the official ambition to 'transform the world'. ESD has the potential to engage directly with the intersection of social, environmental, economic, and political relations, as part of efforts to identify and transform structural inequities and inequalities. Drawing on critical, intersectional theorising, we explore structural racism as a major source of inequality in the world, within and between nation-states, working to maintain, normalise, and justify broader structural inequalities. From this position, we analyse UNESCO's (2020) Education for Sustainable Development - A roadmap document, as an important paper for educational policy makers and practitioners engaged in ESD. Our analysis argues that while there is some acknowledgement of structural and inter-related nature of inequalities, these are limited and lean toward individualised solutions. The need to understand and overcome structural racism, and its connection to the economic structures of capitalism, is absent in the document. We argue that if ESD is to contribute to transforming the world, it must critically analyse the root causes, the systems, and processes that need to be transformed to achieve a just, more equal, and sustainable future for all.

Keywords: ESD for 2030, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), intersectionality, structural inequalities, structural racism, transformation

South African and Swedish children on the human being, sustainability and the future

Karin Sporre | Umeå University, Sweden

In an interview study carried out in 2019, 41 South African and Swedish children aged ten to twelve years, were individually interviewed. Studying at eight different schools, five children from each class took part. Their schools were all located in communities where scarcity of water had been experienced – schools chosen to open for talk on matters of sustainability in the interviews. A Swedish method, developed over decades, was used to ask children about their reflections. Their responses were recorded both orally and in writing. The questioning format of the method is open, allowing for answers to be formulated freely, at the same time as the consistent following of the interview guide gives opportunities for comparison of answers. The interviews lasted from seventeen to forty one minutes. In the interpretive framework Wall (2010) has been used (see Sporre, 2021) and the concept of children's 'moral authorship' (Sporre et al., 2022). In this particular presentation a few themes from the interviews are in focus. The earnest way the children respond to the interview themes raises questions as to how education can be transformed to take on the children's ethical and existential concerns.

Keywords: childism, children's existential questions, moral authorship, sustainability

Embracing love pedagogy as a foundation to enable access and success in teaching and learning

Vuyokazi Makubalo | Sol Plaatje University

While the Norms and Standards for educators call for a graduating teacher who will perform community, citizen and pastoral roles, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum emphasizes timed and timely knowledge and skill acquisition for learners. As a result, teachers are then pressurized to achieve the stipulated outcomes within set time with little to no attention to affective domain such as love. Pedagogy of Love is crucial in connecting the subject matter to the learners as it brings care, compassion and patience while breeding interest and positive attitude towards teaching and learning.

Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationalist and Nel Nodding's notion of educating the whole child and nurturing a caring classroom environment, this conceptual paper argues that a pedagogy of love is a necessary foundation to enable access and maximize success in teaching and learning. The need to draw from affective domains such as love in teaching and learning is very critical and relevant in South African context with high alarming statistics of learners who grow up in dysfunctional families where they feel less loved and appreciated. The results of this study suggest that when learners feel loved, cared for, and appreciated, they are motivated and encouraged to succeed. The paper recommends that teachers should not only succumb to the pressures of completing the content but draw from affective domain to maximize successful teaching and learning. Drawing from affective domain recognizes the humanity of both teachers and learners and creates an environment that is inclusive, supportive and nurturing. Through embracing this approach to teaching, teachers can help to build a more equitable and just teaching environments grounded in care, compassion and love.

Keywords: TeacherEd SIG Affective domains, Care, Love pedagogy Nurturing, Positive emotions

Embracing learners' cultural identity in the early years to enhance education for sustainable development

Appolonia Masunungure | Prosper Lunga | Pateka Jama | North West University

Sustainable development considering learners' cultural identity in teaching and learning processes in the early years is imperative as it boosts their self-esteem leading to the development of important attributes for their ongoing lifelong learning. It is argued that teachers should implement teaching approaches that aminate learners' positive identities and inclinations. In southern African countries, the continuous migration of people creates an identity crisis for young learners. This study is aimed at promoting education for sustainable development in the early years by incorporating children's cultural identity during teaching and learning. We utilised John Ogbu (1978)'s cultural-ecological theory as the theoretical framework for the study. Methodologically, the study was conducted following the principles of the participatory transformative paradigm. We adopted Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) design for the current study because of its inclusive and participatory form of community-based research, to explore how learners' cultural identities can be embraced to promote education for sustainable development in early years in three Southern African countries. We found that many teachers who teach in the early years are not well-versed in the learners' culture hence they spent more than a reasonable amount of time trying to make learners understand foreign cultures. In this study, we explained how teachers in their early years can cater for the culture of learners in the processes of teaching and learning. We concluded that understanding learners' cultures not only improves their learning outcomes but also enhances education for sustainable development among them.

Keywords: Cultural identity, Early years, Education, Identity crises, Learning processes, Lifelong Learning

The application of the Froebelian approach in South African early childhood education settings: Practitioner reflections

Trevor Moodley | University of Western Cape

This study explores the views of South African early childhood education teachers who had attended an online short course, focussing on the application of Froebelian theory in 2021. The study aligns with the SAERA conference theme of education(al) foundations since it focusses on pedagogical practice in the early years. This exploratory qualitative study probes their reflections regarding the theory and application of Froebelian theory in early childhood education settings. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. The sample of five participants comprised early childhood education practitioners as well as teacher educators from the Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews . The study found that (i) Froebelian principles and pedagogical approach aligns with those of the NCF (0-4) curriculum; (ii) that there are potentially many benefits in incorporating Froebelian pedagogical practice which is child-centric and views young children as being, in a diverse South African early childhood education context (iii) potential challenges in implementing Froebelian pedagogy included teacher readiness, a very structured NCF curriculum schedule, and a culture of prioritising the academic development of young learners with the aim of achieving school readiness.

Keywords: Early childhood education, Froebelian theory, early childhood development, practitioner reflections

Reimagining Pedagogy: Exploring the Ecological Relevance of Students' Study Experiences in the Pandemic Context

Kirk SULLIVAN | Niclas Lindström | Hannah Lindfors | Lukas Oskarsson | Gustav Surting | Nils Vestring | Umeå University

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the removal of 'normal' university pedagogy with its many controlling and scaffolding features. This paper considers what university educators can learn from students who experienced emergency remote teaching. Unlike most countries, Sweden, the context of the study presented in this paper, was neither subjected to a lockdown nor a curfew. Swedish students were allowed to congregate in small groups on university campuses although their teaching was online. This hybrid situation increases the ecological relevance of this paper's findings for the post-pandemic context. Using a socio-cultural perspective on learning together with agency for learning lens, we apply a participatory research methodology. Two teacher educators collaborated with four first- year teacher education students (co-authors of this paper) in a case study to co-construct experiences of being a new student during COVID-19. The research questions investigated how the students' socio-cultural context and their lived university experiences created a learning experience, and what this group's experiences might tell us about how students' study and gain agency for learning. Together, we discussed informally on a weekly basis and formally in a recorded focus group discussion towards the end of the students first year of study, and analysed our discussions to create themes, and linked these with study experiences. Our findings show that students formed tight study groups, developed a strong sense of agency for learning, became self-directed learners, and provided each other mutual learning support. In sum, we concluded students are resilient, there is a value in informal and spontaneous collaborative learning groups, students have a high degree of agency, and some would benefit greatly from a less controlled and scaffolded pedagogy that allows spontaneous, creative, and enquiry directed learning as opposed to thwarting their creativity for their educational futures. Future research might investigate if collaborative learning groups are stronger if there is less compulsory presence required in the classroom?

Keywords: Collaborative learning, hybrid education, learning groups, participatory research, self-directed learning, student resilience

Designing stories for integrated learning to support the development of children's numeracy and literacy skills

Nokwanda Mbusi | Thembisa Kosi | University of the Western Cape

Language development in early years, mathematical problem-solving Children's inadequate acquisition of mathematical competences has been linked to challenges in the development of their language skills, including lack of understanding of text they are engaged with in the early years. Evidence shows that the use of storybooks can offer a meaningful context to promote children's language and mathematical problem-solving skills. In post-apartheid South Africa, there is a need for the development of storybooks that provide contexts involving indigenous languages and cultures. In this paper we describe the process of designing isiXhosa stories to provide epistemological access for learning mathematical concepts and developing language competences in the early years. Zan's Context and Demand Model was used to create synergy between narrative and logico-mathematical relevance of the stories. The story design incorporated pedagogical features of storytelling to develop Foundation Phase teachers' and Early Childhood Development practitioners' pedagogical content knowledge. The developed stories, characterised by textual, graphic and numeric modes of representation, drew from the integrated approach of the South African curriculum. Using children's familiar contexts, problem-solving demands extended to unfamiliar contexts, as well as social issues. Teachers were provided with opportunities to scaffold learning, promote mathematical thinking, address misconceptions and facilitate effective communication in IsiXhosa. The stories allowed teachers to transfer conceptual, linguistic, and procedural knowledge between contexts, using a variety of instructional strategies. Given the need for teachers to create their own story-centric problem-solving activities, a clear model for designing integrated stories is needed to enhance numeracy and literacy skills in the early years.

Keywords: Context and Demand Model, IsiXhosa storybooks, epistemological access, integrated approach

The use of teacher development intervention workshops to enhance the efficacy of rural STEM teachers

Magdeline Mmapaseka Stephen | Wits school of Education

Matric learner performance in these subjects has not been satisfactory in the past five years. Whereas more learners passed Life science and Physical science since 2018, the number of learners who obtained 40% and above in all the three subjects has been very low. The challenges of poor performance in STEM subjects is more in rural schools, amidst many years of democracy and attempts to provide quality education in all South African schools. The challenges faced by STEM teachers in rural schools indicate that they require support and development in their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and topic specific pedagogical content knowledge (TSPCK) in order for them to guide learners to success. A qualitative approach will be used to collect data from twelve grade 12 STEM teachers (2 for each subject) in the disciplines of Mathematics, Physical science and Life science. One facilitator will be utilised for professional intervention workshops in each speciality. Prior to the intervention workshops, the researcher will administer needs analysis questionnaires for teachers in each discipline where they will indicate their areas of need. The intervention program includes exploring the efficacy of STEM teachers before the program through pre- tests, as well as to improve their efficacy through content workshops that incorporate the use of ICT resources during lectures, lesson planning, microteaching, discussions and post- tests. These are aimed at equipping teachers on how to use their environment and available electronic gadgets such as their cell phones to teach STEM subjects in order to improve their PCK and TSPCK. Thematic data analysis will be used to formulate findings and conclusion for this study from data collected from the pre-tests, post-tests and evaluation forms for the content workshops from 2/3 workshops planned for this study.

Keywords: STEM subjects, efficacy, intervention workshops, rural STEM teachers, teacher development Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subject stream in South African schools includes: Mathematics, Physical science and Life science

Collaborative Initiatives for Sustainable Leadership in a Rural Secondary School in the Eastern Cape

Ntombizandile Gcelu | University of the Free State

This study discusses the outcomes of a project that was carried out in a single Eastern Cape rural school between 2019 and 2021. Four schools were originally intended to participate in the project; however, due to various difficulties encountered during COVID-19, only one school carried it out. Collaborative leadership and asset-based theory were used as the lens of this study. A transformative paradigm that places a strong emphasis on the empowerment of all stakeholders, both inside and outside the school community was used. To incorporate all the resources in the school communities and to better understand how collaborative efforts were used for sustainable leadership in rural secondary schools in the Eastern Cape, participatory research design (PAR) was employed. A principal, a member of the school management team (SMT), a post-level one teacher, two learners (female and male), a parent on the school governing body (SGB), a parent from the same community with an interest in the development of the school, and the headman or chief from the same community were among the participants who were purposively chosen. Audio and video recordings were used to collect data, which was then transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. The project's findings showed that the school's stakeholders were able to maintain sustainable leadership since they all shared the same objectives. The data also demonstrated that tracking and assessing the development of the schools was an ongoing activity. The school's stakeholders also placed an emphasis on mobilizing and utilizing resources while also emphasizing compassionate intervention. The researchers who participated in the study recommended that the school create a model that may be implemented in the same and other schools to assess its effectiveness.

Keywords: Collaborative Initiatives, rural school stakeholder, secondary school, sustainable leadership

The power of insider-formative interventionist research approach in advancing research on a complex object.

Robson Mukwambo | Rhodes University

There is much critique of ‘outsider research’ in Southern Africa, yet little proactive articulation of what insider research may look like. Colonial models of research left a legacy of extractivist, leaving most communities with sophisticated descriptions of problems, but without proper co-engaged approaches to advance alternative futures. This paper expands on the “*Insider Formative Interventionist Researchers' Experiences of Co-generating Reparative Futures*” paper. It explores vantage points of the insider formative interventionist approach in educational research. It provides an in-depth description of the Insider Formative Interventionist Approach using a case study of the Nyanyadzi irrigation scheme in Ward 8 of Chimanimani in the Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe. The study was conducted qualitatively, underpinned by an insider formative interventionist approach in a case study design. Fifteen face-to-face interviews with three generations of farmers were done to build historical ethnography; four focus group discussions and an expansive learning process were mediated in eight change laboratory workshops to generate contemporary ethnography data. The findings reveal that the approach renders “value added” to transformative research if the kind of knowledge apprehended by the insider or native researcher is not neglected or overlooked. The practically acquired knowledge and experience of the knowers (insider(s)) can enhance the theoretical and epistemological understanding necessary for overcoming the deep split between “theory and practice”. The approach can help to address multidimensional complex issues not only limited to smallholder irrigation farmers as it was in the case of the Nyanyadzi irrigation scheme but also across deep-social tensions in communal natural resources management in the Global South at large.

Keywords: Insider formative interventionist; mediation; expansive learning process; household food security; irrigation scheme

Into the Wild: Facilitating resonant praxis building encounters to enable an ecologically literate generation

Preven Chetty | Rhodes University

The era that we are in of late capitalism has created three forms of social acceleration: technical change, the shrinkage of the present and changes in the forms of practice. This acceleration leads to alienation if it cannot be halted and if relationships with communities and nature are continuously eroded. Resonance thus becomes a beacon for responding to the growing sense of alienation that is distinctly felt by the youth of this era. Thus this study hopes to revive interest in fieldwork in environmental education in Southern Africa and it looks at the importance of ecological literacy in the current school curriculum.

Five schools and community groups, across the social strata of South Africa, along with an archive of river walks and education initiatives along the Umgeni River catchment are the case studies that contributes to the findings of this study. Critical theory and resonance praxis will be used to examine the effect that fieldwork has on students when they engage with the natural environment. It may be that through reconnecting and resonating with nature again that we will be able to navigate a way out of a burning planet. The rationale and methods needed to create an ecologically literate generation of youth, learners, scholars and teachers alike for a sustainable future is thus the focus of this study. With this as a background, the main research question guiding this study is: How to facilitate resonance praxis building encounters that enable ecologically literate learners and teachers through fieldwork activities.

Keywords: KBEP SIG, sustainability, resonance, fieldwork, ecological literacy

Raising ecological awareness and creating critical consciousness regarding earth stewardship in BEd Programmes

Deidre Geduld | Nelson Mandela University

This paper is the result of critical reflective inquiry into the BEd curriculum – specifically the education theory modules offered by the Faculty of Education (FoE) at Nelson Mandela University. The BEd curriculum is underpinned by a humanizing pedagogy (HP) within a critical paradigm. The dialectical relationship between institutionalized education and ecological consciousness is central to this paper's inquiry. This journeying into ecological consciousness has led to the following questions: Does any of the education theory modules in the current BEd programmes focus on raising ecological awareness and how can this topic be included in the programmes and delivered in a way that nurtures ecological intelligence, ecological consciousness, and more importantly, ecological activism amongst our undergraduate student teachers?

South Africa's poor record in basic environmental literacies and practices begs for an intervention through teacher education and encourages us to investigate how ecological awareness can be addressed through the education theory modules in our BEd programmes.

This paper concludes that the application of an ecopedagogy, that is highly experiential by design and delivery is a necessary imperative in teacher education to address the ecological crisis threatening South Africa and the world. This inquiry cultivates and develop an appreciation of stewardship for earth and the next generations. It shapes and encourages an ecological consciousness by posing knowledge not as a device to the government or the corporate, but to the earth.

Keywords: Teacher education, dialectical relationship, ecological consciousness, ecopedagogy

Using poetic enquiry to improve our practice

Anita Hiralaal | Larissa Hassim | DUT |

Poetic inquiry is today accepted as a legitimate methodology of research in social science, humanities, and education because this mode of research unlike other standard and hegemonic forms of research is not defined by the power of constants of descriptions, arguments, analyses, and interpretation which pretend to be a scientific or hermeneutic activity. Also, before people narrated their experiences in a written format, poetry was a fundamental part of communities' oral cultures, used to pass knowledge, history, and stories between generations and condense human experiences. Because of the innate resonance of poetry to the human condition, poems feature within higher education. In this regard, we want to show how we used poetic enquiry to improve our different practices. Anita, a teacher educator of accounting at a university of technology shows how she transgressed conventional ways of teaching accounting and used arts-based methods of poetry to get her students to better understand accounting concepts and procedures. Larissa, a doctoral student practising as an independent educational life coach, shows how she used poetry to get her students to overcome barriers in their learning. This paper adopted an arts-based autobiographical self-study methodology firmly rooted in the interpretivist paradigm and is underpinned by a social constructivist theoretical framework. Greater academic successes for both Larissa and Anita's students bears testimony to their efforts of adopting poetic enquiry in their respective practice.

Keywords: Autobiographical self-study, arts-based research, poetic enquiry

School food gardens as third spaces for learning: Towards leading education for sustainable futures

Kathija Yassim | University of Johannesburg

This participatory research is led by the Southern Sotho phrase Hlokomela lefatše 'me le tla hlokomela bana (meaning – take care of the earth and it will take care of the children). It began as a forced opportunity when food security became a central and shared concern in three rural schools in Hoedspruit, Limpopo South Africa. What started off as a space for growing food during a crisis has expanded its relevance towards social resilience. Together with complementing the food nutrition program, the school food garden has also become a third space for learning. With teachers overwhelmed with teaching cohorts of likely to drop out learners, this study tells a story of seven teachers and their learners who dared to take the classroom into the garden and the garden into the classroom. Metaphor drawings, photovoice and digital stories offer a rich tapestry of insights into how each school repurposed curriculum towards the core intent of education for sustainable futures. The findings highlight green pedagogical approaches through project-based learning and the incorporation of indigenous learning as well as the development of a scientific play world in which emergent science and sustainability were explored. The constructed educational approaches shared through this study are value-oriented challenging learners to address sustainability issues with the future in mind.

Keywords: Education for Sustainable Futures, Green Pedagogies, IKS, Project-Based Learning, SRMeth

The preparation of heads of departments in secondary schools as effective educational leaders

Grizelda du Plessis | Kobus Mentz | North-West University | North-West University

The effectiveness of the education system is regarded as being a challenge in South Africa, and the system affects the quality of education received by every young South African. The serious nature of dysfunctionality could (i.e.) be attributed to the lack of competent leadership in schools. The main purpose of this investigation was to identify the gaps in the preparation of department heads as middle-level managers. The following question emerged: Do department heads have the required knowledge and skills to prepare them for their leadership and management role in a secondary school? Furthermore, the investigation aimed to determine how department heads see their competence, to identify the gaps regarding the preparation of department heads as effective educational leaders, and to submit proposals for improving the preparation of department heads. The research methodology was based on quantitative research strategies according to which the research question could be answered through a once-off cross-sectional survey obtained from a random cluster sampling of secondary schools in the Free State. Approximately 70 schools with a variety of needs in the Lejweleputswa district in the Free State were approached to collect data. Self-designed questionnaires, which had to be completed by all the department heads at the schools, were used. A total of 186 department heads participated in the investigation. Heads of departments indicated that training should focus more on teacher leadership and motivation, but they also indicated that they receive little to none in-service training.

Keywords: development, effectiveness., heads of department, learner performance, preparation, training

Leadership foundations for inclusive futures: A case study of school leadership socialisation in the Eastern Cape

Callie Grant | Rhodes University

The moral purpose of educational leadership must be to promote in schools the core values of social justice, democracy, and equity. However, educational leadership which promotes these core values – the foundations of leadership - is acknowledged to be transgressive work. This necessitates a transformative approach, involving dialogue, trusting relationships and the capacity to enable critical inquiry. But how do we in South Africa, prepare our school leaders for this difficult work? This paper shares the findings of a South African case study which examined experiences of school leaders' socialisation into the principalship role. It draws on leadership socialisation theory and uses interview data generated from 29 school leaders in one purposely selected education district in the Eastern Cape. Findings show that the foundations of leadership are sown in early childhood, albeit unconsciously, and continue to be accrued through schooling, teacher training and initial teaching experiences, primarily through the influence of authority figures and learner and teacher leadership experiences. These foundations are then reinforced (or disrupted) when up against academic school leadership programmes which challenge (or not) these foundations.

This mix of formal and informal leadership experiences can, but does not always, lead to the development of a leadership identity which is sufficiently robust to challenge discrimination and inequality in the hope of a just future. The paper argues for the inclusion of leadership into the curriculum from the ECD years and throughout schooling. It further argues the importance of a school leadership preparatory programme which educates about this transgressive work.

Keywords: Leadership socialisation, core values, leadership preparation programmes, moral purpose

In-service Teacher Learning Experiences: Encountered, given and transmitted for the Future

Heide Khuhlane | Rhodes University

Dominant traditions of learning research present teacher learning as a relatively independent field of enquiry, minimally married to the wider social, economic and political contexts in which it occurs. The development and understanding of teacher learning is described with little attempt to unpack the historical and present sociocultural contexts of which it forms a part. Any attempt to understand learning for South African teachers that ignores the unwritten assumptions and effects of historical and present educational contexts, or that does not locate teacher learning within the broader economic and political contexts and change – runs the risk of irrelevance. The study which employed Sociocultural theory and a narrative methodology – focused predominantly on previously disadvantaged in-service teachers pursuing an undergraduate degree, reflective of the Bachelor of Education in-service student population in two higher education institutions in the Eastern Cape province. The use of the two higher education institutions is premised on seeking to contribute towards the formation of sustainable and systemic cross-institutional connections. Further, the research is a call to higher education to interrogate and redesign traditional structures and ways of operating – to find more productive means of preparing in-service teachers capable of serving and helping the majority of South African children, regardless of background.

Findings suggest that in-service teacher shape their own learning experiences, but they do not shape their learning under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from South Africa's history and the sociocultural contexts in which the teachers learn and practice.

Keywords: Sociocultural Theory, Teacher Education, Teacher Learning, in-service teachers

Where is the human in curriculum? Reflecting on applying a humanizing pedagogy in the teacher education curriculum.

Heloise Sathorar | Nelson Mandela University

At Nelson Mandela University we have gone through a rigorous curriculum renewal process to develop a teacher education curriculum that is underpinned by humanizing pedagogy principles. Humanizing pedagogy refers to teaching practices that intentionally utilize the histories, knowledges, and realities of students as an integral part of educational practice and cast students as critically engaged, active participants in the co-construction of knowledge. Our curriculum renewal process and the development of modules and course material was guided by a set of fundamental questions. These questions were: who our students are; what we need to teach them; how we will do so; where this learning and teaching will take place; and how do we know that learning has taken place. In 2022 we completed the full cycle of implementing the revised curriculum. This paper provides a reflection of student feedback on how they experienced the revised humanized curriculum. A selection of students who completed the revised curriculum were organized in a focus group and were provided with questions enquiring about their experience of the curriculum. They responded to set questions using narrative free writing and then discussed their responses in the focus group. The data that was generated through the free writing as well as the discussion notes of the focus group were analyzed in a thematic analysis using humanizing pedagogy principles as guide. The findings showed that students generally had positive experiences of the curriculum. However, there were some challenges highlighted, including the misinterpretation of the concept humanizing pedagogy as well as not understanding the responsibility of co-creating knowledge.

Keywords: Curriculum Transformation, Humanizing Pedagogy, Teacher Education, Transformative Learning

Lecturers' Experience and Perceptions in Creating Inclusive Spaces to Prepare Pre-service Teachers for Inclusive Classrooms

Zandisile Mawethu Sitoyi | CPUT

The study aims to ascertain experiences and perceptions of lecturers in teacher education programmes toward graduating new teachers who are skilled with inclusive education. The motivation stems from the Minimum Requirements for Teacher's Education Qualifications requirement that teachers across different phases and specialisations possess essential skills to support effective learning. The study aims to examine two key aspects: (i) the extent to which different subject curricula prioritise inclusive pedagogy, and (ii) the beliefs and knowledge of lecturers regarding inclusive education. The study aims to investigate how lecturers incorporate inclusion in pre-service teacher programs. It also examines whether faculty management has implemented programmes to enhance lecturers' skills and knowledge, ensuring effective promotion of inclusive pedagogy in their teaching. This study adopts Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Planned Behaviour Theory by Ajzen and the reflective practice theory by Schon as the main theoretical frameworks of the study. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory will be used to guide the study as the main theoretical point of departure, while the other two theories will provide theoretical constructs that will add to the broader goal of the study. This research is conducted within the context of the training of pre-service teachers at the Faculty of Education in a Western Cape University. Data will be sought from lecturers and students through document analysis and interviews with both groups. The interviews with lecturers and pre-service teachers will establish their attitudes towards inclusive education policies and their understanding of inclusion in the classroom.

Keywords: Higher education, inclusion, inclusive education, lecturers, policies, pre-service teachers

Exploring teacher involvement and participation in continuing professional development at a public-private partnership school

Lynne Johns | Zilungile Lungi Sosibo | CITE(CPUT)/UWC | CPUT

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) schools in the Western Cape, South Africa are known as collaboration schools. The management of these schools are out-sourced to private entities known as School Operating Partners (SOPs). SOPs are also contracted to provide support to teachers through continuing professional development (CPD). CPD is regarded as key to teachers gaining essential pedagogical-content knowledge needed for the 21st century. Existing research posits, that in order for CPD to be effective teachers, need to be actively involved in the identification of developmental needs. In addition, teachers need to participate in discussions with school management regarding CPD activities offered at the school. Despite suggestions by researchers, in practice teachers are still being excluded and their individual developmental needs being ignored. This qualitative interpretive research utilises a case study design which explores the involvement and participation of teachers in CPD at one public-private partnership school (collaboration school). The data generation process follows the use of questionnaires and semi-structured individual interviews with school principals and teachers. Results revealed that teachers were not involved in the identification of developmental needs nor did they participate in CPD discussions with management. A conclusion could be drawn that any determination of education futures crucially requires teacher involvement as key agents of change and delivery.

Keywords: collaboration schools, developmental needs, public-private partnerships schools, teacher involvement, teacher participation, continuing professional development

Reimagining School Functionality: Exploring the Potential of the Community School Model in the South African Context

Silindile Malangeni | Nelson Mandela University

Access to quality education remains a significant challenge in socio-economically marginalised South African communities. The Community School Model is a promising strategy to address these challenges through the collective participation of multisystemic education stakeholders. This study explored the conceptualisation of basic school functionality for quality education in socioeconomically disadvantaged South African communities to advance a conceptual framework for a community school model that could be responsive to this co-construction.

The study employed a Critical Participatory Action Research design and through non-probability purposive sampling recruited an action learning set (ALS) of seventeen education stakeholders of parents, school principals, teachers, community members and external stakeholder from four schools in Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The study used Complementary Learning Systems Framework (CLSF) and Social Constructionism Theory in Education (SCTE) as theoretical lenses.

Data were generated through dialogues with the ALS using collage-making, drawings, personal reflective journals, and document analysis. Thematic data analysis resulted in the following co-generated themes: the key requirements for basic school functioning; multi-stakeholders' conceptualisation of what constitutes a community school; the key role players and the contextual factors in community schools that affect the achievement of basic school functioning and quality education; the successes that can be achieved in a community school; its benefits and key strategies required for this process. The resultant building blocks of the conceptual framework includes revisiting who constitutes the stakeholder community school, foregrounding relationship building and the complexity and values of a contextually relevant community school.

Keywords: community school model, critical participatory action research, school functionality, quality education, low-income communities

The Illusion of systemic identity forms- education transformation in South Africa

Azeem Badroodien | Yunus Omar | Isha Dilraj | Ashley Visagie | Helga Jansen-Daugbjerg | Cecile Sackeyio | University of Cape Town

Chairpersons: **Azeem Badroodien | Yunus Omar**

Understanding the dynamic political, social, and economic environments of South Africa is essential to gaining perspective on how the education sector operates, and how it is repositioning in current political economy settings. It is particularly necessary in a landscape that is unsettlingly stagnant for marginalised communities, and where historical inequalities continue to cast a violent and looming shadow on the quality and type of accesses possible. This panel is built around 4 papers that offer viewpoints on a variety of continuities and discontinuities across educational sectors that impact on transformation in education and that arguably reinforce inequality, alienation, and new forms of 'racialisation'. The goal of the panel is to point to a variety of political, economic, and policy processes that offer formative views on newly forming power relations and forms of resource-distribution emerging across the South African education system.

Paper 1: TEACHER WORK AS ALIENATION

This paper focuses on three haunting questions. How might the relative absence of large-scale and organised teacher social movements in contemporary South Africa be understood, especially given the severe inequalities and inadequacies which continue to characterise the field of education? Why do teachers appear to be captured by a 'game' of schooling? What kinds of analysis would offer better insight into this. Through the (re)construction and analysis of the life trajectories of four teachers, whose collective activism emerged within the theatre of apartheid, the paper asserts that a neoliberal common-sense has subsumed understandings of the role of the teacher as intellectual, critic, or politico, and shifted how teacher work has been reconstructed within an environment dominated by competitive individualism and market-ideology. Drawing on Bourdieu's notion of 'doxa' and 'illusio', as well as the concept of 'alienation' as developed by Marx, the paper questions how the apartheid state's effort to control teachers' work in contrast is often ironically reinterpreted as unalienating in the current environment.

PAPER 2: IDENTITIES OF RACE AND SOCIAL CLASS AT THE INTERSECTION OF VET AND WORK

The economic premise of the VET system is to provide skills and labour in service of the economy. VET education is also a particular kind of education embedding identities of race and class in a world of work that is more than a century in the making, where the black body and its value and worth is intimately connected to a political economy of race, class and historically entrenched inequality. It is argued that older links between education, labour, and the world of work is what has helped reproduce and replicate inequality over time. The paper questions the conceptual underpinnings of race, class and the world of work that has in various ways continued to organise how policy thinks about VET. It questions the role of the De Villiers Commission on Technical and Vocational Education Report (1948), the Wiehann Commission Report, 1977), the Riekert Commission (1979), and the De Lange Commission (1980) in embedding many of the narratives of race, class, and identities of labour and skill that continue to shape the story of VET in the contemporary moment.

PAPER 3: HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION AND ACCESS

Post-1994 much attention was given to providing equal access to students and transforming and decolonising South African public universities. This was heavily constrained however by what Nancy Fraser describes as 'the cannibalistic nature of capitalism that engulfs the system within which universities exist'. Part of the neoliberal project has been to position higher education in ways that speak more directly to future economic challenges, rapidly changing job markets, and the need to foster innovation and entrepreneurship across all education sectors.

This has made South African public universities sites of precarity, conflict, and alienation that stifle them as inclusive spaces and threaten to unravel the gains made in addressing the inequality challenges of previously marginalised students. This paper explores the illusion of inclusion and non-discrimination in the structures of access to public universities, and asserts that, caught in a web of marketisation and funding challenges, the preoccupation of the public higher education system with the game of chasing funds is paradoxically reproducing similar past inequalities and forms of violence against students that it arguably sought to jettison after 1994. A consequence of this new neoliberal landscape is that students entering HE are more easily invisibilised, as are their challenges around the costs of accessing public HE, the requirement for financial loans, and student housing and living. This has placed attempts at decolonising the curriculum, and the continued access and equality concerns of previously marginalised students at serious risk.

PAPER 4: RACE WEAPONISED IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

This paper asserts that while democratic South Africa has rid itself of codified racism, legacies of advantage have continued to be generational and is observable in the public education system. It points out that the limited reach of economic empowerment, the failure of redistribution efforts to reach the majority of disadvantaged learners, a bifurcated educational system, and slow job creation has led to South Africa remaining one of the most unequal democracies in the world. The paper offers an analysis that unpacks the variety of ways that race as discourse has contributed to the current status quo. It argues that because the South African state retained the racial discourse of apartheid after 1994, that this allowed race to be utilised as a form of violence through which the South African state reinforced its power and garnered legitimacy as a modern state. Policies that were intended to redress past atrocities helped instead to entrench new forms of homogenised identity located in the normativity of whiteness. The paper explores how this played out within different policies against an historical backdrop where white supremacy normalised and racialised social hierarchies and limited, ignored, and safeguarded the access of different groups to resources and power. Through endogenous and exogenous endowment, as illustrated by Bourdieu's 'Reproduction of Attributes within Educational Institutions', equality before the law and race neutrality took a particular form within the education system that was wholly predicated on notions of whiteness. Discussing methods of increasing or maintaining tracking response rates: A South African pre-university programme tracking study.

Keywords: Educational illusions, education transformation, political economy of education systems, precarity

The need for critical responses to AI within and by Higher Education

Neil Kramm | Nicola Pallitt | Mags Blackie | Sioux McKenna | Rhodes University

If students can get any form of assessment, from personal biography to scientific experiment, written for them by a free online program in seconds, how will the university survive? Such questions follow the expansion of publicly available artificial intelligence (AI), particularly Large Language Models, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google Bard. Many have decried these as an existential threat to higher education (HE). This panel of four speakers considers the relationship between AI and higher education from two directions. The first two speakers reflect on how AI changes what happens within higher education, and both argue that AI should force us to engage more deeply in deliberations about what a higher education is for. The second two presenters look at how universities, as important intellectual hubs nurturing critical citizens, should contribute to conversations about the implications of AI for society at large.

1. The complex relationship between HE and AI: Rethinking assessment practices

Various ethical and practical aspects of AI implementation in HE, specifically how this disruptive technology enables student dishonesty and negatively influences assessment security, have become the focus of conversations online and across campuses. But deliberations about the purpose of higher education are largely absent. AI is arguably primarily a threat to instrumentalist understandings of higher education, which emphasise attaining credentials through completing assessments. If knowledge is seen as a commodity and if we view teaching, learning and assessment as 'knowledge transfer' then AI is indeed a significant threat. But if we view knowledge as powerful and if we see a crucial purpose of universities as nurturing a transformational relationship with knowledge, our understanding of HE and assessment shifts. If fostering knowledge and, more specifically, a transformational relationship with knowledge is the purpose, then the way we view AI changes. The development of AI provides higher education with an opportunity to ask deep questions about the purpose of higher education and the role of assessment – and we need to engage with these questions before we can decide on appropriate responses to AI.

2. Understanding knowledge stratification for assessment design

Every field draws on a different kind of knowledge to build disciplinary expertise. In many instances, the distinctions are implicit, but in a world where AI tools generate essays, lab reports and other artefacts which may previously be seen to be evidence of learning, a stratification of knowledges can provide the foundation for developing assessments that encourage the forms of knowing required. Distinguishing between 'knowing the fact', 'knowing how', 'knowing why', 'powerful knowledge' and other forms of knowing provide the foundation for employing the 'taxonomy of restrictions'. The taxonomy of restrictions (Dawson et al., 2023) refers to when and how we should limit access to tools, information, and people in the assessment process. For example, if one is testing 'knowing the fact', a closed book, in-person, invigilated setting may be appropriate. But this would not be an appropriate way to assess powerful knowledge, where collaboration and full access to all potential resources make more sense. In a single course, different kinds of assessment are needed to nurture and assess the individual student's level of engagement with disciplinary knowledge. Such understandings can guide the development of the ethical use of AI tools in assessment.

3. Fostering critical AI literacy: Moving beyond generative AI writing tools

It is crucial that we not only educate students about the use of generative AI writing tools but also cultivate critical AI literacy. Ng et al. (2021) propose a comprehensive framework encompassing four aspects: knowledge and understanding, application and usage, evaluation and creation, and ethical considerations. These apply to educators and students, emphasising the need for a holistic approach. A fundamental element of AI literacy is the ability to challenge AI systems and recognise instances when they produce unreliable or 'hallucinatory' outputs. Fostering critical AI literacy involves understanding how and why biases may be present in outputs generated by AI systems. Generative AI tools typically rely on data scraped from public internet sources, predominantly from the Global North. AI-generated texts may thus reflect and perpetuate biases, including individualistic ideologies.

By integrating AI literacy into curricula, educators can equip students to critically assess AI-generated content, comprehend biases, and navigate the ethical implications associated with the technology. Ultimately, this can foster comprehensive AI literacy that empowers students to become the critical thinkers and active participants needed in today's world.

4. HE should be driving discussions about unregulated AI

Making sense of the societal implications of AI requires understanding its connections to the Universities are well-placed to interrogate the profound effects of AI advancements. For example, AI-related job losses will be unequally felt along socioeconomic lines. We need to reflect on how the widespread implementation of AI brings responsibilities to those whose labour will be replaced. We also need conversations about how AI increases science scepticism and anti-intellectualism through its so-called 'hallucinations'. AI is here to stay - but universities need both critical pedagogy and public awareness raising to prevent it from becoming another tool of hyper capitalist mechanization, so that we can marshal the wonders of AI to benefit the planet and all its people.

Keywords: A&T SIG, ChatGPT, Curr SIG, KBEP SIG, artificial intelligence, assessment

The art of teaching in remote teaching

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The aim of this proposed study is to explore how remote teachers carry out their teaching using ICT and how they collaborate with the onsite facilitator that are with the students at their school unit. Therefore, the study seeks to explore the usage of digital tools, the ways of communication, how to bridge the distance and how to engage the facilitator in the teaching situation.

Remote teaching refers to a synchronous teaching practice that have emerged, in Sweden and international, foremost due to urbanization and a need for qualified teachers in sparsely populated areas. In remote teaching teachers and students are separated in space, but not time, and communicates via ICT, and in the Swedish case, a facilitator must be together with the students to oversee them. Remote teaching has foremost concerned language teaching and small students' groups. As a pedagogical practice remote teaching can bring students located at several separate school units together and thus make education or certain subjects accessible to students.

Theoretically the study will employ general didactics to analyse the teaching situation focusing on pedagogical interaction and teacher's methods in teaching. As to empirical data, the study will rest on 17 interviews conducted with remote teachers (n=9) and facilitators (n=8) besides field notes from teachers collegial meetings (n>15). Anticipated contribution of the study has to do with practical methodological considerations regarding how to teach as a remote teacher and how the facilitator can be engaged in the teaching situation.

Keywords: didactics, digital solutions, online learning, remote teaching

Exploring the extent of online assessment research in education: A bibliometric analysis using Scopus

Alfred Machingambi | Kudakwashe Mamutse | Rosebank College | Stadio Higher Education

This bibliometric paper investigates the extent of online assessment research in education using Scopus as the primary data source. As online assessment gains prominence in educational settings, this study aims to identify the key trends and patterns in research related to online assessment. The paper examines the number of publications, the most productive institutions and countries, and the influential authors and journals in online assessment research in education. By utilizing bibliometric techniques such as citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, and network analysis, the data is comprehensively analysed. The findings reveal a significant increase in online assessment research in recent years, with contributions from a wide range of countries worldwide. Notable countries in this research domain include the United States, Australia, China, and the United Kingdom. The study highlights influential authors and journals, providing insights into the intellectual landscape of online assessment research in education. Additionally, emerging research areas within online assessment are identified, shedding light on potential future directions for scholars and practitioners. This bibliometric research offers a comprehensive overview of the extent of online assessment research, uncovering key players, trends, and potential avenues for further exploration. The findings contribute to the advancement of online assessment practices by informing educators, policymakers, and researchers working towards enhancing assessment methodologies in digital learning environments.

Keywords: online assessment, bibliometric techniques, intellectual landscape, comprehensive overview, bibliometric techniques

Pedagogical innovations during COVID-19 lockdowns: Learner (in)accessibility to radio lessons in poorly resourced African countries

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The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges in education globally. This article explores how learners in poorly resourced African countries accessed education during national lockdowns, if at all. With schools closed, how could learners in households without electricity, televisions, computers and internet connectivity continue learning? Policy makers saw radio school as the only viable option. This comparative qualitative study on learner (in)accessibility to radio lessons in poorly resourced African countries during COVID 19-induced lockdown is informed by the social justice theory. Data were obtained from online media, primary and secondary sources to generate insights into how radio lessons were conducted in six selected African countries – South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Sudan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Findings indicate that learner experiences with radio lessons were heterogeneous. In countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia and Kenya, where lesson broadcasts started soon after school shutdowns, worthwhile learning experiences were observed. Where radio school was introduced late, as was the case in Zimbabwe, learner uptake of this innovation was low. In countries ravaged by poverty and toxic leadership, like Zimbabwe and South Sudan, most poor families could not afford radios, making radio lessons a charade. COVID-19 necessitated school shutdowns were a clarion call to African governments to take livelihoods improvement for the subaltern populations seriously. Compared to their peers from privileged backgrounds (who engaged in technology-driven online learning), learners from poor families lost irrecoverable learning time in 2020 and 2021 - perpetuating already existing educational inequalities and scuttling the drive for social justice.

Keywords: COVID-19, pedagogical innovation, poorly resourced countries, radio lessons, school shutdown

Digital Mathematics Pedagogy: A case study on Professional Development in a South African Township School

Makhosi Princess Madimabe-Mofokeng | Nelson Mandela University

Background: Digital Mathematics Pedagogy is a technological approach to teaching and learning Mathematics that can improve the effectiveness of education in South African secondary schools in the Northern Cape township areas. In the 21st century, adopting digital pedagogy has a global acceleration. Nevertheless, enhancing Teacher Education and Professional Development poses a critical challenge for secondary education, specifically in South Africa, where improving technology integration in Mathematical instruction remains an issue of concern. Noting studies citing the absence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources such as laptops, tablets, reliable wireless fidelity (Wi-fi) connectivity, and power supply within township schools, this study acknowledges that certain township schools possess secure facilities equipped with ICT infrastructure. However, teachers in these educational institutions lack proficiency in employing digital pedagogies to facilitate enhanced teaching of Mathematics through advanced ICT techniques and devices.

Method: This qualitative study is underpinned by an interpretivism paradigm and is framed on Cooperative Theory within a Participatory Reflection research design. Data generation methods included semi-structured interviews and observations of eight teachers. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected.

Conclusion: A claim is made that providing Professional Development opportunities for mathematics teachers on digital applications and software such as MathU is essential in enhancing their teaching skills and pedagogies.

Keywords: digital Mathematics pedagogy, Wi-fi, MathU, township schools, ICT

Democratic citizenship education in South African schools: teachers' practices and perspectives

Chrischar Rock | Stellenbosch University

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, policy documents and curriculum guides have attempted to shape and provide a framework for democratic citizenship education in schools. Even with such policies being in place, this paper works from the premise that through teachers' practices, perspectives, and lived experiences in classrooms and schools, policy endeavours and ideals for democratic citizenship education can be given meaning. Drawing on practice theory, where the emphasis lies on examining practices *in practice*, this paper sheds light on some teachers' conceptualisation of democratic citizenship education and how it is implemented, organised, and practiced across different classrooms in different schools.

This paper will show how, conceptually and empirically, there exists a gap between how curriculum policy in South Africa articulates the values and strategies of democratic citizenship education and teachers' understanding and interpretations of these ideas. What will be highlighted is the importance of the relationship between the teacher as the individual sense-maker, the situational context, and external policy representations on teachers' conceptualisation and implementation of democratic citizenship education. It will be argued that unless we, amongst other recommendations, create opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to develop pedagogical approaches to explore, implement and promote democratic citizenship education as intended, we may not see the education (al) futures we endeavoured. To build on our education(al) foundations, we need to develop a better understanding of the teacher (self), the profession, and the practice for the realisation of democratic citizenship education in schools in South Africa.

Keywords: democratic citizenship education, practices

Educational access and success: The challenges faced by children of widows

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It has been established that widowhood has detrimental impacts on both the widow and the children. Extreme poverty and widowhood are linked, and this has a big impact on children. The claim made is that the absence of the father reduces the financial resources available to the children, which has an adverse effect on their ability to access and succeed in school. This paper explores how widowhood affects children's achievement in school and access to it. Intersectionality will serve as the theoretical foundation for this investigation. Descriptive research will be used in this conceptual work. Information was gathered from e-books, academic papers, and research articles on the topic. The gathered information was examined, and the conclusions were stated. The results of the study showed that the children's academic progress and access are influenced by the widow's financial situation. It was shown that children whose mothers come from stable financial backgrounds are more likely to have access to educational facilities and excel in their studies, whereas those whose mothers' income is unpredictable are more likely to have difficulties getting to and succeeding in school. For widows and children to succeed in their academic work, it consequently asks for the provision of resources to them. To help widows care for their children without experiencing any issues, it also suggests rules that support widows' immediate access to their husband's property.

Keywords: Access, children's education, success, widowhood

Framework for holistic transformation of township primary schools Business School

Regan Berry | Rica Viljoen | Kgamaka Mike Thobejane | Da Vinci Business School

Despite the vision of quality education for all, our basic education system remains saturated with residual effects of apartheid. There is something amiss in the foundation of most South African schools. We hold on to a vain hope that our crumbling foundations will yield different results, if different methods, curricula or sterner accountability measures are built on these inadequate foundations. However, there is hope and this paper shares the journey of a primary school in Alexandra township that underwent significant transformation from an underperforming school to one being lauded as a stellar example both in Alexandra and further afield. The paper is based on a grounded theory doctoral study which aims to construct a framework for holistic transformation ensuring better foundations for our township schools. The study blends three systems theories into a theoretical framework. Bioecological Systems Theory offers an efficacious understanding of the complexity of township schools. Spiral Dynamics Theory honours different worldviews and value systems and provides understanding of the communalising pedagogy still so entrenched. Systems Psychodynamic Theory provides insights into the unconscious dynamics and could help resolve the conundrum of township school education. The presenters have collaborated for almost a decade, building new social contracts between township schools and other parties and cultivating an intentional support network for this arduous transformation journey. They transgressed traditional methods of training and equipping that take into account the predominant collectivist worldviews present in township schools and instituted various measures of containment to ensure that learning and teaching are prioritised.

Keywords: collective worldviews, containment, holistic transformation, learning and teaching, township schools, unconscious dynamics

Unmasking the influence of the hidden curriculum on the educational futures of South African students: Insights from Foundation studies higher education students in a University in Cape Town

Edmore Mutekwe | University of the Western Cape

Contemporary higher education practitioners always grapple with the extent to which the hidden curriculum affects not only their students' educational progress but also their general future life chances. This research seeks to explore the influence of the hidden curriculum on the future of South Africa's University students. Coupled with conceptualizations of the hidden curriculum, how the world works and the narrative about the envisaged university students' direction in life, the main argument advanced is that on the educational front these notions are somehow disruptive on account of the most commonly peddled narrative about the future of students, which assumes that they will continue to have economic growth with sporadic inequalities being resolved by the assumed economic growth. The discourse proceeds by examining these narratives and ideas while questioning the assumptions upon which they are built. Underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, the study adopts a qualitative approach utilizing a phenomenological design with the population being Higher Education Foundation studies students from where a sample of 50 participants are conveniently sampled. The key research question is, how does the hidden curriculum influence South African University students' educational futures? Data generation follows the use of focus group discussion interviews (FGDIs) with Bowles and Gintis' correspondence principle being the conceptual framework for the study. Data analysis follows a thematic approach with the emerging super ordinate themes forming the basis of the discussion of findings. It is envisaged that among the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study will be strategies through which South African Universities can foster the capacity to create and imagine the educational futures that they will ultimately cherish in their students.

Keywords: correspondence principle, covert curriculum, educational futures, overt curriculum, tacit learning, teacher education SIG

From Quality Assurance to Quality Enhancement: Implications for Teacher Education in a Higher Education Institution in Mauritius-The Mauritius Institute of Education

Nazeerah Sheik Abbass | Mauritius Institute of Education

This qualitative study explores the implications of transitioning from a quality assurance approach to a quality enhancement framework in the context of teacher education at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE). The aim is to investigate the potential benefits and challenges associated with this shift, focusing on the impact it has on teacher preparation programs, pedagogical practices, and the overall quality of education.

The study employs a qualitative methodology, incorporating interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis to gather data from key stakeholders, including faculty members, administrators, and teacher education graduates. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns and themes within the data, providing rich insights into the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of participants.

Findings reveal that the transition from quality assurance to quality enhancement in teacher education at MIE has several implications. Firstly, it emphasizes a proactive and collaborative approach to continuous improvement, encouraging reflective practice and innovation among faculty members. This shift empowers educators to adapt their pedagogical strategies and curriculum design to meet the evolving needs of students and the education sector.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of fostering a culture of engagement and professional development, as well as the need for ongoing support mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of quality enhancement initiatives. The findings also shed light on the challenges faced during this transition, such as resistance to change, resource constraints, and the need for capacity building.

The findings provide valuable insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and practitioners seeking to improve the quality of teacher education programs and enhance the overall educational landscape in Mauritius.

Keywords: Quality assurance, Quality enhancement, Continuous improvement, Teacher education

Reshaping Educational Futures in Teacher Education Towards Inclusive Education through ESD Praxis in Tanzania and Eswatini

Ben de Souza | Rhodes University

How education has been conducted has led to absurd exclusions in the contemporary landscape. Nonetheless, education systems still hold onto the boundaries that the new school of thought (inclusive education) aspire to transgress. Past studies in southern Africa have reported that inclusive education is largely by saying; doing has been elusive. These studies have, however, argued that education systems need to proffer ways to mainstream inclusive education. International reports such as the Global Education Monitoring Report (2020) identified teacher education as one way to foster inclusive education. However, practical strategies that could translate the mainstreaming of inclusive education via teacher education have yet to be proffered. I did insider formative interventionist research with teacher educators involved in UNESCO's Sustainability Starts with Teachers (SST) programme in Tanzania and Eswatini. I worked with teacher educators implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Change Projects focused on inclusive education. The SST teacher educators worked with ESD strategies such as community of practice, whole institution approach and co-learning that could be augmented for developing inclusive pedagogical proficiency. Therefore, I argue that the ESD strategies present viable trajectories for reshaping the future of education towards inclusivity in southern Africa. However, this endeavour has to be implemented in the context of the region's educational realities, such as the lack of inclusive teaching and learning resources. Put differently, ESD is potentially a viable platform to reorient the educational landscape towards inclusivity (for example, recycling waste materials for inclusive lessons), with teacher education as a stepping stone.

Keywords: Change Project, Education for Sustainable Development, Eswatini, Inclusive Education, Tanzania, Teacher Education

Examining the professional development opportunities afforded to teachers during the implementation of History 2166 syllabus reforms in Zimbabwe

Walter Sengai | Matseliso Lineo | University of Free State

Teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) has been a perpetual priority for education systems throughout the world. It is considered as an effective way to prepare teachers to improve their instructional practices especially during syllabus changes. It appears that many CPD programmes have yet to be implemented and understood from the perspective of the teachers. The present study seeks to turn research back to the beneficiaries of professional development – the teachers. It explores teachers' perspectives of CPD in the context of preparing teachers to deal with a syllabus reform. In 1990, Zimbabwe underwent its first major post-colonial syllabus reform in the teaching of history at secondary school level. This qualitative study explores the professional development opportunities that were extended to history teachers during the implementation of the History 2166 syllabus reform. The researchers listened to the voice of the voiceless, as teachers expressed their perspectives, views, understanding, and interpretations on the CPD opportunities that they were either afforded or denied during in-depth interviews with five purposively sampled history teachers from five different schools within the Glen View/Mufakose district. This study appreciates that teachers are the chalk-face implementers of syllabus reforms in any given context of change and their views matter. The key finding was that the absence of CPD initiatives during this syllabus reform proved disastrous, ultimately producing a teacher-proof syllabus that deskilled and disempowered teachers thereby leading to tissue-rejection and its ultimate failure to effectively address key expectations.

Keywords: continuous professional development, teachers' perspectives, 2166 history syllabus

Experience with rolling out online teaching to “unconnected” students in South Africa: A Pre-university Access programme initiative

Linah Sesheba | Zena Richards | Tebatso Phala | Wits University

The surge of globalisation and popularity of social media would lead many to think the world is more connected now than it has ever been in its history. In many ways, this is true. However, the transition to online learning globally, as necessitated by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, has highlighted the disparity between those with access to resources, and those without access. Evidently, online learning has been especially difficult for disadvantaged communities as these communities already experience many inequalities despite a more equitable allocation of resources across South African schools' post 1994. The University of the Witwatersrand has an access programme called the Targeting Talent Programme (TTP) since 2007 which seeks to develop interventions that will increase eligibility and access for disadvantaged youths to higher education through identifying and building on existing academic potential in young people, and to encourage and support studies in the STEM fields. As a pre-university access programme, the TTP has had to navigate the ways that access, and engagement can be blocked in online learning for the groups of learners that are often left behind in the discussion about online learning. This paper aims to share the lessons and unanticipated learnings that should be included when rolling out online teaching to “unconnected” students in secondary schools. This paper also focuses on the human mediation interface between technology and the learner as the recipient and the authors argue that this should be best practice for technology – based youth initiatives.

Keywords: Digital devices, ICT, Learning management systems, Online learning, Technology

Be(longing): Reconciliation Through Our Own Decolonial Rites

Injairu Kulundu-Bolus | Rhodes University

"Be(longing): Reconciliation Through Our Own Decolonial Rites" is a performative exploration of healing and reconnection with our inherent nature, one another, and the environment as a commentary on the possible futures for education. This offering emphasizes the need to address the cracks created by modernity's imperial spell of enchantment whilst regenerating our futures from within these crevices. The work proposes the gentle suturing of disconnections and separations exploited by modernity's capitalistic tendencies as important landscape for educational futures.

This performance and public engagement aims to present and embody the spirit of credible alternatives in motion. It calls for and demonstrates the struggle to embody alternative ways of being, detached from conventional mercantile logics, and in doing so advocates for relentless experiments in learning, reconciliation and freedom as a public offering, commentary and living dialogue.

Through the medium of song, drama and poetry this work prompts the recognition of our profound connection to life's intricate symphony, urging us to envision alternative African Futures in ways that challenge mainstream constructs. The performance seeks to provoke thought, facilitate conversations, and collectively regenerate the cultural archives that restore our sense(s) of belonging.

Keywords: belonging, Reconciliation, decoloniality, modernity, song, drama, poetry, educational futures

Sustainability of libraries in rural schools: An Achilles Heel?

Lulama Mdogana-Zide | Zukiswa Nhase | Ntombizandile Gcelu | Buhle Nhlumayo | J Molpyane | D Mashiyane | University of Free State

Generally, school libraries exist to promote a reading culture for users and create literate environments by offering relevant and attractive reading material for all ages. Further, school libraries also serve as a learning space for learners to do independent work, use computers, access the internet, use equipment and research materials, and improve their academic outcomes. Therefore, the sustainability of school libraries is one of the emphasized aspects in the evolving education system in an attempt to address the complex and dynamic challenges facing many schools worldwide, particularly rural schools. Sustainability is a developing phenomenon that brings new advances, opportunities, and feelings of insecurity and fear of an uncertain future. Research has provided compelling evidence that school libraries have on the provision of quality teaching and learning and therefore a positive impact on learner achievement. As the custodians of knowledge and information, school libraries are responsible for creating and sustaining literate environments for lifelong use.

There is a plethora of challenges that school libraries in rural contexts are confronted with, some of these challenges include but are not limited to the lack of a national policy and funding for school libraries, a limited understanding of information literacy, and the role of the school librarian in facilitating this, and a lack of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) for learners to use thus limiting opportunities for learners to use them. These challenges have a negative impact on the establishment and the physical and human resources of school libraries.

Based in the rural outskirts of the Eastern Cape, South Africa, this research examined the overall sustainability of school libraries to provide information literacy in rural schools. The purpose of this research was to investigate how rural school libraries can be used to enhance quality teaching and learning, promote a reading culture, provide opportunities for building a library collection, what collaborative strategies can school principals use to sustain libraries that have been established in their schools and further to this, explore the challenges and opportunities of establishing libraries in rural schools. Grounded in the interpretive paradigm and aligned to the

qualitative approach, using an ethnographic qualitative approach and participatory research as a mode of inquiry, this research generated data from three primary schools and three secondary schools in the rural Eastern Cape with the aim of producing four articles. The broad findings potentially indicate that the sustainability of rural school libraries may lead to enhancing quality teaching and learning and promoting a reading culture among learners. The findings further indicate that

school collection development should begin with identifying existing gaps and how filling them will contribute to positive learner outcomes. This research recommends that the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the private sector, the local government, and non-profit organizations collaborate in urgently addressing these challenges. These partnerships and collaborations can ultimately advance good school library practice, quality education, and research. During the panel discussion, we would like to explore and report on the sustainability of libraries in rural schools. The panel discussion will consist of four papers and a discussion on how rural school stakeholders could contribute towards the sustainability of libraries as well as enhancing, maintaining, promoting, and managing rural school libraries for quality teaching and learning. Below are the different papers and abstracts that emanate from the theme of the panel abstract.

- Paper 1: Enhancing quality teaching and Learning: Impact of school libraries on Eastern Cape rural schools.
- Paper 2: The Role of school libraries in promoting a reading culture in Eastern Cape primary schools.
- Paper 3: Building school library collections one donation at a time: Challenges and opportunities
- Paper 4: Collaborative Strategies used

Keywords: Rural Schools, Sustainable development, School libraries, Quality Teaching and learning

A 'right' to lead? Laying solid foundations for the leadership development of primary school learners

Verona Davids, Callie Grant & ELM Honours Group 2023 | Rhodes University

Globally, leadership has often been regarded as an adult phenomenon. Learners have largely been excluded from school leadership and decision-making regarding matters affecting them. Effective leadership, the literature argues, plays a vital role in creating positive educational environments and shaping the future of young learners. Primary schools act as crucial spaces for nurturing leadership skills and fostering a sense of agency and leadership among children. However, in a country like South Africa with its history of colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy, the leadership potential of learners, particularly primary school learners, has often been neglected. The South African Schools' Act makes provision for learner leadership through the structure of the Representative Council of Learners (RCLs) in all public schools in the eighth grade and higher. However, the Act is silent on what this leadership entails and how it can be developed in high school learners. It is also silent on learner leadership in primary schools, leading one to assume that primary school learners are too young to lead. The concept of a 'right' to lead, however, raises questions about the nature and foundation of leadership development in primary school learners. This study recognises that leadership is not limited to adults or formal positions of authority. It asserts that primary school learners possess the inherent right to lead and should be actively involved in decision making processes within their primary schools. By creating spaces for learner leadership and empowering learners to participate in shaping their educational experiences, solid foundations for leadership development can be laid. In so doing, a more inclusive and democratic future can be envisaged.

We are a group of 20 Honours students involved in a collaborative research programme entitled "Learner leadership in primary schools: An interventionist case study in the Eastern Cape". Our research is framed by a 'rights' discourse and draws on Lundy's (2007) model of child participation; space voice audience and influence. The model provides a valuable framework for understanding and promoting children's rights in research, particularly as co-researchers. This model emphasizes the importance of viewing children as active participants in decision-making processes that affect their lives. It recognizes that children have the right to be heard and to have their views considered, regardless of their age or level of maturity. This perspective acknowledges

that children are rights holders and should be treated as such, rather than being seen as passive subjects or objects of research. By framing our leadership research within a 'rights' discourse, we are acknowledging and promoting the fundamental rights of children. The rights of learners to be heard and express their views on matters that affect them and for these views to be taken into consideration is enshrined in the United Nations Children's Rights Commission (UNCRC), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the South African Human Rights Commission. The UNCRC recognises that children are not merely passive recipients, entitled to adult protective care. Rather, they are subjects of rights who are entitled to be involved, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions that affect them, and are entitled to exercise growing responsibility for decisions they are competent to make for themselves. Lundy's model is embedded in South Africa's National Child Participation Framework (2018). This framework provides guidelines and principles for promoting and supporting children's active involvement in decision-making processes, including research. By aligning our research with Lundy's model of child participation and South Africa's National Child Participation Framework, we are hoping to contribute to the broader effort of empowering children, amplifying their voices, and ensuring their influence in matters that affect them. This approach recognises children as capable social actors and aims to create spaces where their perspectives and experiences are valued and integrated into decision-making processes. Our study situates itself within the global South, particularly South Africa, where historical and social contexts have influenced educational practices and policies. In this regard, the Eastern Cape serves as the geographical case context, offering valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by primary school learners in this region. The aim of our research is to offer primary school learners a space to have a voice and participate in learner-led decision-making activities. In so doing, we hope to stimulate and develop leadership in young learners (Grades 4 – 6) so that they can learn to become active, responsible citizens and social agents for positive change. The collaborative research programme involves case studies of learner leadership in 20 Eastern Cape primary schools. The study adopts participatory methods including group discussions, games, story-telling, participatory audio and video and other child-friendly activities. In this conference panel discussion, we will present some of our findings from across the 20 case studies.

Keywords: belonging, Reconciliation, decoloniality, modernity, song, drama, poetry, educational futures

Theorising Teaching and Learning from a decolonial lens: A view from the South

Emmanuel Mgqwashu | North-West University

The notion that it is only by making explicit disciplinary literacies to all students that we will enable epistemological access is challenged in this paper. The perennial challenge of low and racialised throughput, pass and graduation rates that continue to undermine our commitment to democratising learning and reverse these trends challenge us to ask a different set of questions: to whose epistemology are we so committed to enable access? Epistemologies that are influenced and shaped by whose worldviews? In whose language is such access facilitated?

Whose interests will be served by successfully enabling such access? Finally, since written texts (to the exclusion of oral ones) are seen within 'Western hegemony' as the only medium for curriculum knowledge, what price are the students whose backgrounds are predominantly oral paying as we are enabling epistemological access? In responding to these questions, I argue for a need to develop scholarship on theorising teaching and learning from a decolonial lens. I do this by drawing from the research project named The influence of rurality on student trajectories through higher education: a view from the South. Among other things, the presentation reveals the need to undo a 'Western worldview' of theorising teaching and learning in way that construct critical aspects of human life as separate. Using the empirical data, the paper suggests a theorisation of teaching and learning that sees knowledge and its generation as inseparable from the gender, race, social class, location, the day-to-day, contextual, cultural and linguistic elements of those generating knowledge.

Keywords: Decoloniality, Place-based biographical participatory study, Rurality, Teaching and Learning.

Is pedagogical translanguaging a panacea to the colonial monoglossic language ideology in the classroom? Proposing a new language framework in higher education in Lesotho

Sekoai Elliot Nkhi | Limkokwing University-Lesotho

Translanguaging is an approach to language aimed at promoting diversity and plurality of languages in the classroom. In this approach, students are taught in two or more languages, and literature suggests that they tend to participate more in the classroom when concepts are explained in their mother tongue. However, higher learning institutions in most countries still practice a colonial monoglossic language approach in the classroom wherein native languages are not included as languages of instruction alongside colonial languages. In the case of Lesotho, English is the language of instruction while Sesotho and other minority languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa and Siputhi are relegated to just languages spoken outside the classroom. The aim of the proposed study is therefore to explore if pedagogical translanguaging as a heteroglossic language ideology can be adopted in order to promote social justice and plurality of languages in the classroom. The study will thus adopt a qualitative approach confined within an exploratory design. Data will be collected through face-to-face interviews with lecturers and focus group discussions with students in the three selected tertiary institutions in Lesotho. Recommendations will therefore be made in relation to the findings of the study.

Keywords: Bilingualism; Language ideology; Mother tongue; Multilingualism; Translanguaging

The significance of code switching in two mathematical literacy classrooms in the Durban region, South Africa

Quintus Dawson | Sarah Bansilal | UKZN

The subject Mathematical Literacy (ML) was introduced in South African schools in 2006 and is compulsory for learners who do not study mathematics in Grade 10-12. ML tasks are different from the typical mathematical ones and include contextual scenarios and questions of a high linguistic level which require sufficient English (or Afrikaans) proficiency on the part of learners.

In this study we look at the ways in which ML teachers use codeswitching to help mediate these ML tasks with their learners who are English second language speakers. There were three teacher participants in the study, all of whom used codeswitching in their ML classes. The data collection methods were questionnaires, lesson observations and interviews. The analysis of the data was guided by the Markedness model (Myers-Scotton, 1993) which distinguishes between marked and unmarked choices of the language to be used, based on whether the selected language code was unexpected or expected, respectively. It was observed that the participants used their professional discretion when making a marked choice to use isiZulu to support their learners in learning ML. Codeswitching was used to mediate tasks which had high English language demands for learners whose English proficiency was limited. Teachers also used codeswitching to help learners identify and unpack key words or phrases in the ML tasks. Furthermore, codeswitching was used to help them understand the instructions of the task and the various contextual settings within which the tasks were set. The study recommends that assessment tasks need to take cognisance of the high language demands and provide information and instructions in accessible formats.

Keywords: Codeswitching, Department of Education, Mathematical Literacy, Language, English, isiZulu, markedness

Reclaiming academic freedom in the time of neoliberal colonisation: A decolonial meditation

Mlamuli Hlatshwayo | University of Johannesburg

I attempt to do two things. Firstly, I critique the emergence of the colonizing and neoliberal logics in higher education in the global South. I read this neoliberalism in the academy as capitalistic, market fundamentalist, deeply damaging, alienating and designed to turn academics into Mamdani (2007)'s scholars at the marketplace. I suggest that neoliberalism is inherently in tension and incompatibly with true and meaningful academic freedom, and that one cannot exist with the other. Secondly, I propose a radical conception of academic freedom, one that takes into account the challenges facing us in the public university. Drawing from the decolonial scholarship, I propose that academic freedom needs to be anchored through three dialectical and interconnected arenas in the academy- that is, the epistemic arena (that is, curriculum and knowledge questions), the social arena (that is, being, becoming and belonging in the university) and finally the pedagogic arenas (that is, teaching and learning, and assessments practices). I end this paper with some parting shots on the future of academic freedom in the global South, and the challenges and possibilities that await us.

Keywords: Academic freedom; neoliberalism; colonisation; higher education In this paper

Forced opportunities for adaptive and sustainable leadership for ICT implementation in the VUCA era

Parvathy Mumsie Naidoo | Megan Narasimman | University of Johannesburg

The COVID-19 pandemic in an era of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA), presented school leadership teams with a forced opportunity for adaptive leadership. In this study we examined the implications of forced opportunities for adaptive leadership and explored the sustainability of such leadership post pandemic.

Utilizing a qualitative comparative multiple case study, we scrutinized school leaders' experiences regarding ICT implementation at three schools by examining the similarities and differences among the school leaders' experiences of leading ICT before, during and post COVID-19 pandemic. This provided insights into the shift in leadership practices and as a comparative multiple case study, it reflected the experiences of South African school leaders from polarizing realities. We employed two data collection tools, open-ended face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and observations of the three school leaders.

Our research emphasized that school leaders demonstrated a varying understanding of practicing sustainable leadership in ICT implementation, two school leaders clearly exhibited evidence of sustainable leadership practice pre, during and post COVID-19, while the third displayed noteworthy growth because of disruptors like the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the adaptive leadership practices adopted had a limited time frame and were only intended to ensure continuity of leadership practices through the COVID-19 pandemic. There is evidence of professional and personal growth arising in emotional intelligence, technological ability, and innovative thinking. The readiness of school leadership to drive digital and technological transformation within their respective schools was raised, with socio-economic realities as the most prominent inhibitor or propellant. Our study recommends for the Department of Basic Education, South Africa to consider ways to intentionally build capacity among school leaders' use of digital and technological tools. This can be explored by considering tools like the Microsoft package for education or Google Classroom. Such testing for suitability is vital before one considers introducing digital and technological tools at a whole-school level.

Keywords: Adaptive leadership, COVID-19, leadership sustainability, technology, VUCA

Students' Perceptions of Hybrid Learning beyond the Covid-19 times

Lerato Hlengiwe Sokhulu | University of KwaZulu-Natal

The global higher education landscape continues to transform, adopting hybrid teaching and learning, combining traditional face-to-face and online learning elements. Hybrid learning has thus gained significant prominence in universities' teaching and learning practices. This study explores university students' perceptions of hybrid learning beyond the Covid-19 times. Drawing upon a mixed-methods approach, the study collected data using the online survey questionnaire method from a sample of 227 first-year students from the School of Education found in a university in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The preliminary results from the study show that students had various perceptions regarding hybrid learning in higher education. These perceptions were influenced by factors such as available platforms for hybrid learning, individual learning needs, preparedness for using hybrid learning, and ease of use of educational technologies. By investigating university students' perceptions of hybrid learning, this research study adds to the expanding body of knowledge in this field. The intention is that the study findings provide valuable insights to Higher Education Institutions, enabling them to improve curriculum design, prepare for future disruptions and pandemics and effectively implement hybrid learning. This is useful for meeting student expectations and optimises their learning.

Keywords: Higher education, Hybrid, Students, perceptions

Grappling with online learning and artificial intelligence amid a widening digital divide among university students from poorer backgrounds in South Africa

Nyoni, Phefumula | Tabe, Hennades | University of Johannesburg

The paper focuses on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed online learning among poorer students and the implication for epistemic access and success. The transition to online platforms has revealed stark disparities in access, particularly among students from poor backgrounds. South Africa, with its history of socio-economic inequality, provides a pertinent context to examine the challenges faced by university students from poorer backgrounds in navigating online learning platforms. By drawing on existing literature and empirical data, the study highlights the extent to which these barriers hinder the educational advancement of marginalized students. The qualitative paper involved conducting in-depth interviews with a group of ten purposively selected undergraduate students who are in their first year of studying at an urban South African university. The theory of resilience and its relationality in particular is used to explore how students from poorer backgrounds navigate the epistemic experiences of AI and how the strategies they have adopted have defined their academic success.

The paper thus responds to pertinent questions on how the use of AI has shaped the pedagogic experiences of students from poorer backgrounds and with what effects on their epistemic access and success. The expected outcome would inform the development of strategies, policies, and interventions aimed at reducing the digital divide and promoting equitable access to education. It also provides insights into the specific needs of marginalized students and highlights the potential of AI technologies in addressing these needs. By shedding light on the barriers faced by marginalized students and exploring the potential of AI in bridging these gaps, this study contributes to the discourse on inclusive education and informs efforts to promote equitable access to quality education for all.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, epistemic access and success, pedagogic experiences, marginalised students, inclusive education

Understanding curriculum implementation during times of crisis: The Business Studies Curriculum Recovery Plan (CRP) case in South Africa.

Mbali Mabaso | Devika Naidoo | University of Johannesburg

UNICEF (2020) reported that the Covid-19 pandemic cost most South African schools 54% of learning time. The department of basic education (DBE) designed a curriculum recovery plan (CRP) for all subjects to address the loss of learning time. This qualitative study examined Business Studies teachers' attention to conceptual learning in the implementation of the CRP. The research focused on "How are principals, departmental heads (DHs), grade ten teachers, DBE curriculum designers, and subject advisors, in diverse contexts, enabling conceptual learning of the Business Studies CRP during times of crisis?" Rogan & Grayson's (2003) theory of curriculum implementation in developing countries framed the study. Data was collected through, semi-structured interviews, and observations. The data analysis demonstrated that teachers' pedagogical methods shifted slightly after the CRP's implementation. While, curriculum designers, subject advisors, DHs, and principals remarked that the crisis compelled them to elevate their practices and remain abreast of global trends in educational transformation. Insufficient information and communication technologies (ICT) resources, inadequate online instructional training for teachers, limited teacher involvement in CRP development processes, excessive workloads, and overcrowding hindered CRP implementation in grade ten classrooms. The study found that the school's management team's motivation decreased during a crisis due to the increased management workload. DHs and principals reportedly received insufficient training to effectively oversee the implementation process amid the crisis. The findings indicated Business Studies teachers, DHs, and principals need ongoing professional development. This study provides the crisis curriculum implementation model for education stakeholders.

Keywords: Business Studies, crisis, curriculum recovery plan, epistemological shift

Self-authorship: a pedagogical tool for pre-service teachers to develop (pre)professional identity

Carolina Botha, Elma Marais, Maryna Reyneke | North-West University

This paper reports on the use of self-authorship as a pedagogical tool to develop pre-service teachers' professional identities. Pre-professional identity is considered a dynamic, less mature version of professional identity. Such a notion of fluidity of the professional self, necessitates the integration of both personal and professional life experiences in the process of becoming, rather than already being, teachers. A random sample of 56 pre-service teachers from a population of first-year students at a South African university was selected for this qualitative interpretivist study. Thematic analysis of personal reflections after a professional orientation programme indicates that the pre-professional identity of first-year pre-service teachers is mostly based on external cues and naïve perceptions, rather than on well-thought-through personal ideology. The authors draw on Baxter-Magolda's theory of self-authorship to highlight this influence of past life experiences that shape the pre-professional identity that first-year pre-service teachers bring to initial teacher training programs. Self-authorship is defined as a person's ability to conceptualise and apply their own beliefs, identity and social relations in various contexts. Findings confirm that most first-year pre-service teachers place within the first phase of self-authorship. It is postulated that higher education institutions could, through platforms such as Work Integrated Learning, shift the structure and focus of pre-service teacher training programmes away from passive observation and instruction to active partnership, engaged reflection and critical thinking. Such an approach can then contribute to professional and personal development through the remainder of the pre-service teacher programme. It is further argued that a longitudinal study is needed to explore this required movement towards and through the three phases of self-authorship.

Keywords: apprenticeship of observation, lived experience, pre-professional identity, pre-service teachers, professional development, self-authorship

Producing knowledge differently: Methodological inventiveness in education leadership research

Inbanathan Naicker | University of KwaZulu-Natal

Over the last decade, the production of research in educational leadership and management (ELM) has flourished. Even developing countries have quite substantially increased their output of ELM scholarship. While this is a step in the right direction, critical leadership scholars' criticism of ELM research is that it primarily draws on traditional methods regarding how we come to know, thereby constraining the possibility of producing knowledge differently. Producing knowledge differently is about engaging in methodological inventiveness. Methodological inventiveness refers to researchers adopting an unconventional, innovative direction in their research. To study ELM, this paper explores two novel methods, collage and object inquiry. It seeks to clarify what these methods offer ELM theory and practice by asking what might be learnt from reflecting on my publications and supervised postgraduate research projects about methodologically inventive knowledge production in ELM. Adopting a narrative approach, I draw on four purposively selected book chapters and four recently completed PhD studies as data sources. Two vignettes were constructed based on Pollkinghorne's (1995) notions of narrative analysis. The findings illustrate how productive ambiguity in collage and object inquiry contribute to opening up multiple perspectives to theorising ELM practice. Thus, new epistemological vantages in ELM may emerge by engaging in methodologically innovative practices.

Keywords: Collage Inquiry, Education Leadership, Methodological Inventiveness, Object Inquiry

A Conceptual Framework for Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in Basic Education in South Africa

Rene Oosthuizen | Rhodes University

This abstract provides a conceptual framework for understanding and implementing Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in Basic Education in South Africa. This framework includes critical pedagogy, participatory research, democratic principles and expected outcomes. The conceptual framework consists of four main components that highlight the key principles and expected outcomes of CBPR.

The first aspect focuses on building a critical pedagogy and equitable learning environment. CBPR challenges popular narratives and power relations, encourages critical dialogue and acknowledges the socio-political context of education. The second aspect focuses on participatory research, positioning community members as active actors in the research process. Collaborative partnerships aim to build knowledge together, acknowledge different perspectives and serve the needs of the community. The third aspect focuses on democratic principles and aims to empower marginalized communities by raising their voices and removing systemic barriers. Continuous dialogue and reflexivity are critical to managing power relationships and ensuring meaningful community engagement. The fourth aspect focusses on explores anticipated outcomes of CBPR in education, including culturally appropriate curricula, improved learner choice and participation, socially responsible learners, increased parental and community involvement and informed policymaking.

This CBPR framework for Basic Education in South Africa emphasizes critical pedagogy, participatory research, democratic principles and empowerment. It provides an overview of CBPR in education, but also takes into consideration challenges such as resource constraints and power disparities. This conceptual framework highlights the potential of CBPR to strengthen learning communities, reduce educational inequalities and promote equity. It also highlights the need to think critically about power dynamics, methodological rigor and long-term sustainability.

Keywords: Community Based Participatory Research, Education, Conceptual Framework, Equity

Transdisciplinarity: ensuring quality education beyond the hype

Mags Blackie | Rhodes University

Transdisciplinarity seems to be a word on the rise in higher education at the moment. It can be understood in several different ways. In one understanding it refers to the interface between the academy and practitioners in the field (Sense 1). In another understanding it refers to the emergence of knowledge at the interface of two or more academic disciplines (Sense 2). In institutional rhetoric where transdisciplinarity is used it is not carefully defined.

This is potentially enormously problematic in undergraduate education. Sense 1 transdisciplinarity may be partially achievable through service learning and authentic assessment activities. This could substantially enable students to develop entrepreneurial practices and create important avenues for co-creation of knowledge and knowledge transfer between the community and the academy. Sense 2 transdisciplinarity however needs careful thought. Rather than enabling new possibilities, a transdisciplinary curriculum could end up being a shallow mix.

In this paper I use Wilber's integral theory to make visible different ways of thinking about transdisciplinarity.

Keywords: Integral theory, transdisciplinarity, emergence

A Group Randomized Controlled Study of Critical Thinking Disposition of Children Aged 4 to 2 Years Enrolled in Cognitive-Behavioural Reflective Training Programme

Chinedu Ifedi Okeke | University of the Free State

Efforts to find ways to help school children develop critical thinking seem to have not yielded enough impact and that there are few scientific studies that focused on said population, especially in underdeveloped and developing nations. In light of this, we used a group-randomized control trial with a three-month follow-up to investigate the role of a cognitive-behavioural reflective training program (CBRT-P) in improving critical thinking disposition in schoolchildren. To do this, 64 students were divided into four groups. CBRT-P was given to half of the subjects who were recruited. The results of the repeated-measures analysis demonstrate that the mean critical thinking disposition scores of the schoolchildren enrolled in the CBRT-program (treatment group) were considerably higher at the post-test than the counterpart group (comparison group). The experimental group's mean score of the dependent measure remained consistently higher at the third assessment. Based on the findings, it can be stated that the treatment program enhances schoolchildren's critical thinking disposition over time.

Keywords: Cognitive-Behavioural Reflective Training Programme, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Critical Thinking Disposition, Education for the Early Years, School Children

Professional development opportunities for early childhood education practitioners in disadvantaged communities

Chinedu Ifedi Okeke | University of the Free State

The dearth of empirical knowledge on available professional development opportunities for early childhood care and education (ECCE) practitioners could stall intervention initiatives aimed at capacitating this workforce. This paper attempts to increase understanding of the professional development opportunities available, to aid transformative capacitation of ECCE practitioners. The setting was communities in Motheo District, Free State province. A convergent mixed methods design facilitated the concurrent collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The sample size was $n = 211$; the participants were recruited through convenience sampling. I tested two hypotheses to establish if significant relationships existed between education qualifications and years of teaching, and the awareness of the professional development opportunities available to ECCE practitioners. Qualitative data was analysed thematically, while SPSS version 25 software enabled the analysis of quantitative data. Both data set show that the practitioners were aware of numerous untapped professional development opportunities. Hypotheses testing found that professional development opportunities available to practitioners were independent of their education qualifications and years of experience. Practitioners who took part in the study seemed poorly prepared to deliver quality service. This situation could change if relevant professional development opportunities that are available, are harnessed. This study adds to the growing body of knowledge by providing insight into how ECCE practitioners felt about the untapped opportunities that would help them to gain the skills necessary for effective service delivery. This contributes to supporting the stimulation of ideas towards professionalism in childhood education.

Keywords: Community-based centres, Disadvantaged communities, ECCE practitioners, Professional development opportunities, Sustainable community development, Transformative learning

An investigation into how mature women ECD practitioners access higher education through the B.Ed Foundation Phase programme

Kaylianne Aploon-Zokufa | University of the Western Cape

The purpose of my study was to document the learning pathways of mature women Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners in the Western Cape, from Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges into higher education. Research indicates that mature women students experience an educational foundation exemplified by disadvantage in access, participation and success in higher education. Through the life history method, the project aimed to generate knowledge of routes mature women ECD practitioners take into the B. Ed (Foundation Phase) programme. A feminist decolonization perspective in adult education was used to not only understand routes of access; but also, to describe the barriers which deter access and the efforts exerted, to gain access. The theoretical perspectives used enable a lens which takes into consideration the ways in which race, class and gender shape mature women's learning pathways, as well as, how these intersections impact on lived experience. My project aims to produce new understandings on access routes between TVET and higher education, and the learning pathways of mature women. In my study, I critically reflect on a socially just, educational future for mature women by using theoretical framings of feminism and decolonization in adult education to describe the lived experience of marginalisation in higher education of mature women.

Keywords: Higher Education and Work SIG, TVET access, learning pathways, post school education and training, mature women, Feminist Decolonization

The ECD Ambassadors Intervention: How young unemployed youth are alleviating learning losses in Early Childhood Centres in Makhanda

Nikki Green | Noluthando Shelle | Vatiswa Joni | Boni Msimango | Coordinator: Community Centred Programmes

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is a critically important step for preparing children for their schooling years. However, recent reports in South Africa indicate that many children are not accessing Early Learning Programmes and those that are, are not meeting the learning standards expected of children their age. Many children are not On Track for cognitive and/or physical development due to several reasons including the disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this paper we report on a nine months intervention we implemented in ECD centres in Makhanda, South Africa to assist ECD practitioners in this post pandemic era. The intervention involves 50 unemployed youth from within the community who have been trained to support ECD practitioners in the classroom. Training was given in teaching basic numeracy, making resources from recyclable materials, strategies for enhancing Learning through play and curriculum delivery based on the Early Learning Development Areas. These 50 young people we call ECD Ambassadors, each allocated to an ECD Centre, assist ECD practitioners in learning delivery, classroom management and giving one on one attention to learners with developmental challenges. While the ECD practitioners have commended this programme and appreciated the extra help in the classrooms, they have also shared several challenges with the implementation of the programme. In this paper we share lessons learnt from implementing this programme, such as the importance of relationship building, monitoring and support required when working with young people with no qualifications in the field of Education. We are learning that there is a growing interest in the field from the ECD Ambassadors who are now considering a career in Early Childhood Development and Education.

Keywords: ECD; the After School Catch Up Coalition; Youth-led initiatives

New research from the early grade reading study (South Africa)

Brahm Fleisch | Nompumelelo Mohohlwane | Stephen Taylor | University of the Witwatersrand | Department of Basic Education

Foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills have gained significant interest from the international donor community in recent years. These skills are seen as crucial building blocks for higher-order cognitive abilities. For instance, Sustainable Development Goal 4.4 aims to achieve universal literacy and numeracy, and the World Bank now regularly tracks “learning poverty”—the number of children who cannot read with comprehension by age 10.

Several large initiatives sponsored by donor agencies, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Global Education Program, prioritize basic literacy and numeracy skills. The international education donor community also coalesced around support for FLN as their top priority for advocacy at the United Nations’ Transforming Education Summit held in September 2022. Building on the global commitment to early grade learning and the Department of Basic Education’s commitment to improving early grade learning in reading and mathematics, the Early Grade Reading Study, a multiyear collaborative research initiative, aimed to provide policy makers with robust evidence for improving reading outcomes system-wide. The two papers in this panel are designed to show-case the latest research from this EGRS research programme.

PAPER 1: Long-term impact of the Early Grade Reading Study in South Africa

Jonathan M. B. Sterna*, Matthew C. H. Jukes, Jacobus Cilliers^b, Brahm Fleisch^c, Stephen Taylord, and Nompumelelo Mohohlwaned aRTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC, USA; bGeorgetown University, Washington, DC, USA; University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; National Department of Basic Education, Pretoria, South Africa.

Although it is plausible that investments in early grade reading interventions during early childhood may yield higher returns in the long run, it is also possible that early gains fade over time without complementary investments at a later age (Cunha et al., 2006; Johnson & Jackson, 2019;). Additionally, although empirical evidence has established a correlation between FLN at a young age and subsequent cognitive skills and earnings (Carter et al., 2020; Valerio et al., 2016), it remains unclear whether this association is driven by other factors, such as ability, a supportive home environment, or school quality. And socioeconomic status is a much stronger determinant

of college attendance than are primary school test scores (Das et al., 2022). In fact, a recent review by Evans and Hares (2021) concluded that causal evidence in developing countries is lacking on the long-term impact of early investments in basic numeracy and literacy skills.

This paper contributes to this literature by presenting findings from a long-term follow-up of a randomized evaluation of a structured pedagogy program implemented in South Africa between 2015 and 2017. The program provided teachers with a combination of lesson plans, teaching materials, and one-on-one coaching, to improve their teaching of early grade home language (Setswana) literacy. The Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS I) intervention was implemented over a period of 3 years, targeting consecutive grades each year (grade 1 in 2015, grade 2 in 2016, and grade 3 in 2017). Prior studies of EGRS I found a 0.24 standard deviation (SD) increase in learner literacy after 2 years (Cilliers et al., 2021), sustained impacts through the end of grade 4, and also some sustained impacts on teaching practices (Cilliers et al., 2022a).

Importantly, our current study has now tracked and assessed the same group of learners over a period of 7 years, from the start of grade 1 in 2015 into grade 7 in 2021. We found that the learning gains from the original cohort of learners—who participated in the interventions from grades 1 through 3—were sustained into grade 7, 4 years after participating in the program (albeit with smaller effect sizes). When comparing the same group of learners who were assessed in both 2018 and 2021 (grades 4 and 7), we found a 45 percent reduction in effect size for basic literacy skills, suggesting substantial fadeout over time. However, effect size expanded significantly over time in English literacy, which was not prioritized in the original intervention. This suggests the possibility of spillover of FLN into higher-order cognitive skills.

PAPER 2: Reading skills transfer best from home language to a second language:

Policy lessons from two field experiments in South Africa Nompumelelo Mohohlwane, Stephen Taylor, Jacobus Cilliers*, and Brahm Fleisch Department of Basic Education, Pretoria, South Africa; Georgetown University, Washington DC, United States; University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

In many countries children need to become proficient in both their home language (L1) and an international language, such as English (L2). Governments face trade-offs in how to prioritize these two objectives. We provide empirical evidence on cross-linguistic transfer between L1 and L2, using results of two randomized evaluations of Structured Pedagogy Programs implemented in South Africa. The programs had the same design, implementing organization, and duration.

The key difference is that one program targeted the teaching of reading in L1, while the other targeted L2. We find that both interventions had positive effects on the languages they targeted. The L1 intervention also had a positive effect on L2 reading proficiency. In contrast, the L2 intervention had a negative effect on L1 outcomes, for the lower-performing learners. These results are consistent with the Simple View of Reading and show that decoding skills are best learned in L1. It is thus cost-effective to prioritize learning to read in L1, as well as supporting teachers in this subject, even if becoming proficient in L2 is also regarded as an important policy objective.

Keywords: impact evaluation, language policy, language transfer, long-term impact, mother-tongue

The complexity of learning to teach: Advancing the debates

Maureen Robinson | Carol Bertram | Melanie Luckay | Heloise Sathorar | Thelma Mort | Nicky Roberts|

During this panel of the SIG in Teacher Education, the editorial team will outline the rationale for the Special Issue published in the Journal of Education No 90 (2023): Special Issue on The Complexities of Learning to Teach | Journal of Education (ukzn.ac.za) on the complexities of preparing teachers.

Various authors who contributed to the special issue will discuss how their papers addressed the theme of complexity in teacher education. Two discourses on teacher education have recently become prevalent in South Africa. The first is concerned with the supply and demand of teachers and looks at graduation and attrition rates in the system (van der Berg et al., 2020). The second is a small, but growing, argument for school-based internships as an effective way to improve teacher education (e.g. Shiohira, et al., 2022). Our concern is that what is often missing here is a full appreciation of the complexity of learning to teach; even though national teacher education policy itself is premised on a reflexive view of knowledge for teaching. Despite the active engagement of teacher educators in advancing a scholarly-praxis agenda (Brennan, 2020), a strong notion of teaching as a craft-occupation that privileges tacit practical knowledge (Winch, 2017) continues to circulate amongst various interest groups in education, with a concomitant risk of simplifying praxis and undermining the profession at large. The question then becomes how an appreciation of complexity and depth can be infused into prevalent discourses, so that expectations of competency are fundamentally premised on teacher knowledge, professional judgement, ethics and agency.

The panel session will be chaired by Melanie Luckay (UWC) and Heloise Sathorar (NMU)

Maureen Robinson (SU): The complexity of learning to teach: Advancing the debates
Thelma Mort (PrimTEd English language co-ordinator) and Nicky Roberts (independent): Designing a language and literacies knowledge and skills test for ITE students in South Africa.
Carol Bertram (UKZN): A systems approach to understanding novice teachers experiences and professional learning

The panel discussion will be followed by a short business meeting of the SIG to discuss the activities and focus for 2024.

Teachers' beliefs about changing the content and teaching of statistics and mathematics given emerging societal crises and knowledge demands

Sarah Bansilal | Delia North | Iddo Gal | University of KwaZulu-Natal | University of Haifa

Citizens and young adults from all walks of life are continuously flooded with statistical and mathematical information flowing via diverse media channels, which they need to critically understand in order to keep abreast of ongoing national and global developments and disruptions, such as regarding public health or environmental and climate change issues which have many correlates and impact economic and civic issues. However, educational foundations are slow to change, and few studies have examined how school systems and in particular teachers adapt teaching content and methods or what barriers exist in this regard. This talk emanates from a jointly organized exploration by researchers from four countries (Brazil, Australia, South Africa, Israel) concerning teachers' perceptions about statistics and mathematics content in print and digital media regarding a health pandemic (COVID-19), taking this as a case study that has ramifications for needed adaptations in future statistics and mathematics education in light of other emerging disruptions. The talk will focus on findings pertaining to the sample of South African teachers. Data were generated from an online survey completed by 60 participants followed by two focus group interviews and these were analysed using a mixed-methods design. The findings highlight teachers' views of new topics that could or should be added to the curriculum (e.g., statistical comparisons, modelling), teachers' perceptions of their autonomy to make changes, tensions regarding teaching methods that can be used to implement new needed content, and related topics. The study has numerous implications regarding the links between curricula, teaching practices, teachers' views and identity, and future societal needs for statistics and mathematics knowledge. Among other recommendations based on the study, future teacher development programmes could consider focusing on more understanding of and confidence with content related to mathematical and statistical ideas in the media (e.g., related to modelling), alongside more autonomy to adapt teaching content and methods in ways that connect with societal processes to allow them to critically comprehend foundational ideas encountered in diverse media and civic contexts.

Keywords: mathematics education; curriculum; statistics; COVID 19; media information; TeacherEd SIG

Teachers' preparedness on the implementation of Educational Coding and Robotics curriculum in South Africa. A case study of pilot schools

William Zivanayi | Serah Malinga | Nelson Mandela University

Background: It is a significant step that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has integrated educational coding and robotics (ECR) into the school curricula in a world where technology is a normal element of everyday life. A deeper examination of the schools' and teachers' readiness to adopt this new curriculum is significant to improve learning and boost active teaching techniques

Objectives: The purpose of this article is to examine the teachers' preparedness, interest, knowledge, and self-confidence in teaching newly introduced subject, ECR in piloted schools.

Methods: To acquire information for a discussion in this review, several studies between the years 2000 and 2022 that include curriculum-related topics and educational coding, and robotics were searched. Most electronic bibliographical resources came from PubMed, Embase, and ERIC. The review analysed the abstracts, and data on important elements including country, sample sizes, study designs, duration of follow-up period, teachers' perspectives, and accessibility of teaching and learning resources.

Results: The study revealed two important points. Firstly, adequate time is needed to develop and validate tools and methodologies for teaching and learning ECR. Secondly, vigorous training and exposure of teachers to ECR through formal and informal engagements is required for successful implementation of the curriculum.

Conclusion: DBE needs to work closely with the teachers' training institutions and pedagogical experts to meet the needs of teachers and learners regarding ECR curriculum. The engagement with teachers may increase their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values for them to have a meaningful contribution to the ECR curriculum.

Keywords: educational coding and robotics; preparedness; teaching and learning resources; technology; pilot school

Gender-based equity and ICT integration in the English Language curriculum: a South African teacher education perspective

Micheal van Wyk | UNISA

Education is how it is possible to achieve gender equity and foster gender justice and fairness. One of the major commitments that the field of teacher education has assumed in the last decades worldwide is the incorporation of the gender perspective and ICT integration teaching across the curriculum. The aim of this South African teacher education single case study aimed to explore English Language academics and student teachers' views of gender-based equity and ICT integration in curriculum delivery. This exploratory qualitative design study is based on the Context Input Process and Product (CIPP) framework to investigate how English Language academics and student teachers applied gender-based equity and integrated ICT in the context of study at an open-distance learning university. For the qualitative design, a sample of seven academics and five student teachers were purposively selected for Microsoft Teams videoconferencing interviews. Thematic data analysis identified several emerging themes and subthemes related to the views of participants on gender-based equity and ICT integration in the subject. Findings reported that participants expressed views of promoting dignity in diversity, engendering social justice and fairness in teaching the subject, participating in continuous professional development training sessions to promote the integration of CT tools in teaching and learning into practical lessons sessions, and supporting student teachers to integrate the ICT tools in their learning during teaching practice placements. Further research is needed to investigate other factors that hinder the effective integration of gender-based and ICT in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Keywords: Context Input Process and Product (CIPP) framework; gender-based equity; ICT integration'; exploratory qualitative design study; Microsoft Teams videoconferencing interviews

Social Time as a Pedagogical Tool for Meaningful Mathematics Teaching and Deeper Learning

Mzamani Mdaka | SAERA member

The study reported in this paper was conducted to examine four South African grades 7 teachers' understanding of the importance of instructional time as a teaching resource to develop learners' relational understanding in mathematics. A constructivist philosophical approach, document analysis, lesson observations and interviews were used to collect data. The findings indicate that the four teachers faced, to varying degrees, challenges in using instructional time as expected. That is; they assist learners develop deep conceptual understanding in order to make sense of mathematics (DBE, 2011, p.8). The CAPS clarifies that the teaching and learning of mathematics aims to assist learners acquire specific knowledge and skills necessary for the study of related subject matter, thus becoming critically aware of how relational understandings in mathematics are used in social, environmental, cultural, and economic relations (DBE, 2011, p.8). Two did not help learners understand the relationship between the concepts taught and the examples selected to scaffold learning. They prioritised drawing learners' attention to correct responses to questions posed. Only two teachers used strategies that encouraged the learners to share experience, collectively reflect on individual taken-for granted conceptions, probe and identify how they could be used to explain mathematical concepts. The conclusion is that the teachers' lack of understanding the pedagogical significance of instructional time as social time highlighted inadequate curriculum and subject content expertise and supported the general concern about the quality of mathematics teaching within the country.

Keywords: instructional time; teaching; relational understanding, mathematics

Reimagining Curriculum Leadership: Towards an Integration of Curriculum Theory and Critical Approaches to Educational Leadership: An Overview of the Literature

Farhana Kajee | Rhodes University

Research internationally and nationally highlights that curriculum leadership as a field of study needs a carefully nuanced investment to provide a critical contribution to educational improvement. A meta-analysis of the literature reveals some of the challenges emanating from the conceptual elusiveness and functional approaches of the foundations and practices of curriculum leadership. There is a tendency for existing curriculum leadership research to predominantly focus on administrative and managerial aspects and there is a dearth of studies that explicitly include curriculum theory as a framework for understanding curriculum leadership practices more holistically. Against this backdrop, the purpose of this paper is to identify a crucial gap in curriculum leadership research and justify the inclusion of curriculum theory in advancing the field. With a call to re-think curriculum leadership and the need to strengthen the knowledge base, this paper argues for the field of curriculum leadership to position itself at the nexus between curriculum theory and a critical stance concerning educational leadership. By embracing curriculum theory, particularly Legitimation Code Theory and transformative contemporary educational leadership theories, a socially just field of curriculum leadership could emerge through the enhancement of deeper theoretical and practical sophistication. Drawing on literature that captures the foundations of curriculum leadership, this paper constructs a comprehensive definition of curriculum leadership by considering both dimensions of this multi-faceted phenomenon. The need for curriculum leadership, its current constructs, and its limitations will also be surfaced. The future possibilities and the development of this field of study will be envisioned by bridging the gap with the adoption of Legitimation Code Theory and leadership tenets that align with contemporary, critical, and socially just approaches.

Keywords: Curriculum leadership, Legitimation Code Theory, curriculum theory, socially just & transformative leadership

A cross-curricular approach to reflexive practice: academics in collaboration.

Ms Shannon Bishop-Swart | Dr Chrischar Rock | Stellenbosch University

This presentation explores the use of a reflexive approach for reflective practice in a case study of third year pre-service teachers reflecting on their teaching practice, with a focus on two academics working in collaboration. The academics, as subject specialists in Practical Learning and English Language and Literature, collaborated to study a cohort of third-year pre-service teachers at a South African tertiary institution. This presentation highlights that by collaborating as academics, it offers the opportunity to develop a Professional Learning Community (PLC) which provides for knowledge sharing, structured and purposeful interactions, and collective improvement (Antinluoma et al., 2018; Lomos, Hofman and Bosker, 2011; Spillane, Shirrell and Hopkins, 2016). The motivation for this study was to design and pilot a collaborative, cross-curricula, school-based teaching practice assessment, using a reflective practice tool. The aim was to guide pre-service teachers' development of reflective practices and feedback literacies. This was to assess whether pre-service teachers are able to self-identify areas that require attention and action in their growth as a teacher, thus promoting academic language proficiency, critical awareness, and a truly transformative student experience. The collaborative approach of the academics enriched the design of the cross-curricular assessment, enabled a more rigorous analysis of the findings, ultimately resulting in a transformative experience for the academics themselves. We argue, as academics working in collaboration, significant value has been added to our reflective and pedagogical practices for the future development and design of assessments in teacher education.

Keywords: Professional Learning Community (PLC), collaboration., reflective practice, reflexive practice, teaching practice

Conceptualizing Change Management Strategies for Successful Implementation of Educational Reforms in South Africa

Oluwasola Babatunde Sasere | Dr Sekitla Daniel Makasane | University of Free State

Implementing educational reforms effectively is a complex undertaking that requires careful planning and the application of suitable change management strategies. This conceptual article aims to explore and conceptualize change management strategies for the successful implementation of educational reforms in the South African context. The article advances a framework for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities associated with educational reforms. Drawing from the theory of organizational change and literature on change management in education. The literature review examines key factors influencing successful change implementation in the education sector and identifies gaps in the existing research specific to the South African context. By applying the insights from change management theories, such as Kotter's 8-Step Change Model and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, this article presents a conceptual framework for change management strategies tailored to the South African educational context. The conceptual framework emphasizes the importance of clear communication, stakeholder engagement, leadership, capacity building, and gradual implementation as core change management strategies. It also recognizes the significance of addressing cultural, contextual, and historical factors that shape the South African educational landscape. Moreso, the article highlights the need for change management strategies that are sensitive to the diverse needs, challenges, and inequalities present in South African schools. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration and partnerships between education stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of reforms. The article contributes to the understanding of effective change implementation by conceptualizing change management strategies for educational reform in the South African educational context. This explication will inform policymakers, school leaders, and educational practitioners in their efforts to navigate the complexities of educational reforms and facilitate positive and sustainable change in South African schools.

Keywords: Change management, educational reforms, South Africa, organizational change, stakeholder engagement

Building school-university partnerships in a school-based student teacher programme

Sarita Ramsaroop | Nadine Petersen | University of Johannesburg

We explore the processes of building school-university partnerships in order to implement a school-based student teacher (SBST) programme for initial teacher education for the placement of full-time student teachers who would complete their university coursework online while simultaneously engaging in practical learning at a specific school site/s. The SBST programme was intended to extend the 'teaching school' model of the Funda UJabule School established on the Soweto campus of the University of Johannesburg in 2010. We envisaged the SBST teacher education model operating as a hybrid between a teaching school and a professional practice school, as described in the Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011–2025 (DBE & DHET, 2011). This Framework proposes the strengthening of the teaching practice/school experience component of teacher education programmes through establishing teaching schools and professional practice schools. A secondary aim was to provide wider access to, and support for, in-service teacher development in selected schools with the aim of contributing to a model for viable alternative pathways for initial teacher education in South Africa.

Using data comprising participating partner input, as well as lecturer and student views we reflect on the challenges and lessons learned in the first two years of the implementation of this model. This meant developing shared understanding of both the demands of the academic programme and the practice component. It also meant finding ways to balance the varied expectations of stakeholders.

Keywords: School-university partnerships, teaching practice, initial teacher education

Crafting Socially Conscious Leaders: A Case Study of a School Engagement Project in KwaZulu-Natal

Zwakele Ngubane| Berenice de La Croix | Durban University of Technology

Alarming statistics such as the most recently published 2023 PIRLS report indicating that 81% of grade four learners can't read for understanding, continue to highlight the basic education crisis in South Africa. Concomitantly, we also read of reports that signify an apparent deterioration of values and moral decay in schools manifesting, inter alia, as violence, drug abuse and bullying. Troublingly, schools and learners in socio-economically marginalized communities are most affected, thus further deepening and entrenching social and economic inequality. This paper focuses on a values-driven School Engagement Project implemented by a University of Technology in KwaZulu-Natal, with the aim of positing a model for cultivating a schooling ecosystem that promotes the crafting socially conscious leaders. The project has been running since 2018 and is informed by Otto Scharmer's Theory of Change, Theory U, in which he posits that conscious, values-based leadership can give rise to strategic social change.

It is on this premise that the project seeks to impact young people in a holistic and multi-dimensional manner through the seven project pillars:

- Tuition in the gateway subjects
- Peace clubs
- Social entrepreneurship clubs
- Talent show
- Sports tournament
- Career guidance
- Health and wellbeing

The seven pillars of the project are points of leverage that support one another to create inclusive and invigorated educational environments where skilled, ethical leaders can emerge.

Keywords: Social, Conscious, Ethical learners, leadership

Undergraduate Student Teachers' Prospects for Employment

Meameno Shiweda | University of Namibia

Universities are supposed to generate academically literate graduates with the required skills, such as communication, writing, and critical thinking skills, to be employable in the workforce. However, there is a perception that Namibian institutions of higher education are not meeting market demands, which has contributed to an increase in the jobless rate of more than 40%. This impression necessitates a critical reflection on how the teacher education curriculum aligns with the written tests administered during interviews for teaching positions. Among other institutions in Namibia, the University of Namibia (UNAM) is the leading producer of teacher graduates through the School of Education. Hence, this paper seeks to address the following questions: are UNAM graduates who qualified as teachers, prepared for the fierce, competitive job market after the completion of their studies; does student teachers' academic literacy ensure them employment in their particular fields of specialization when they graduate? This qualitative study utilizes narrative inquiry whereby a written task will be administered to final year student teachers. The written task will be similar to the ones administered by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) during written interviews for teaching positions. Using content analysis to evaluate the academic literacy of UNAM student teachers, the Measuring the Academic Skills of University Students (MASUS) procedure will be employed. This study will shed light on the employability prospects of final year student teachers. Additionally, this study will determine whether teacher education curriculum is aligned with market requirements.

Keywords: MASUS, UNAM, academic literacy, employability, student teachers

Using a Rasch analysis to investigate differential item functioning in the TIMSS 2019 mathematics test

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The purpose of this study is to use Rasch measurement theory to investigate the extent of Differential item functioning (DIF) according to gender and language familiarity in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019. Differential item functioning occurs when different groups of individuals with similar abilities from different backgrounds or demographics respond differently to specific test items. DIF analysis can help identify potential bias in test items. The data considered in this study is from the 2019 TIMSS Mathematics assessment tests, which were written by Grade 9 learners in South Africa. Due to ambitious reporting aspirations in the TIMSS study, more assessment items are required than can be answered by any one learner in the amount of testing time available. The full sample of learners was required to answer one of the five different achievement booklets consisting of a mix of multiple-choice (MC), yes/no and constructed response (CR) item formats. In this paper, the responses of all of the 1499 learners to the 20 MC items in one of the booklets, were subjected to a Rasch analysis using the software program RUMM2030. The research question that is addressed is: To what extent do the MC items display DIF by gender and language familiarity? We hope that the results will help us identify possible sources of bias in the items with respect to these two factors.

Keywords: A&T SIG; Rasch, Differential Item functioning, TIMSS 2019; mathematics, gender, language

Discussing methods of increasing or maintaining tracking response rates: A South African pre-university programme tracking study

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The Targeting Talent Programme (TTP), a pre-university access programme, seeks to increase the academic, social, and psychological preparation of learners with academic potential from under-resourced schools, for admission to higher education. Post the completion of each cohort's journey in the programme, the trajectories of its alumni are tracked. In collecting this information, the programme has experienced various challenges which this paper will explore and contextualise using literature. This study also aims to see how the response rate fares in comparison to other tracking studies in national and international contexts. The highest response rate found in literature was approximately 50%. The TTP tracking response rate for 2022 was 65% (n=1911). Although the response rate was higher than that in the studies reviewed, it aims to further improve to a 70% response rate. To achieve this, a qualitative design will be employed utilizing a focus group with 6 TTP alumni, 3 who also are part of the Alumni network, and 3 who variably complete the TTP surveys. This research will directly seek out what motivates alumni to stay connected to TTP, factors that contribute to the current 35% attrition rate and methods to improve response rates. Thus far, a sample has been identified and focus group schedule questions have been drafted for the focus group. A thematic analysis will be employed to analyse the data obtained and, in this manner, hope to contribute an efficient method of data collection for tracking studies that various educational sectors can make use of.

Keywords: Targeting Talent Programme, data collection. TTP= Targeting Talent Programme, response rate, tracking study

Connecting citizenship and mathematics education in a time of disruptive events: A 'layers of influence' framework

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We live in a time of disruptive events – the result both of natural developments, human actions, policy decisions, and global processes. Examples are recent disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and short- and long-term crises associated with the ecology and climate, economic instability, ongoing wars, and political turmoil. Such disruptions make it imperative to re-examine how to prepare (future) citizens to be informed of emerging civic problems, understand their correlates and consequences (e.g., growing levels of poverty, large-scale migration, water and food shortage), interpret mathematical and statistical messages in a critical way, and promote visions regarding just, inclusive and prosperous societies.

The connections between mathematics education and citizenship education have been the focus of theoretical development and work by educators worldwide, and in South Africa as well, who are interested in citizen engagement with societal issues, across schools, universities, and adult education levels. However, given the above challenges, we raise new questions, based on our work on a survey paper that opens a forthcoming issue of the journal ZDM-Mathematics Education which examines such connections. We contribute towards the above issues, by presenting a new “layers of influence” framework that integrates multiple trends, systemic factors, and emerging processes and innovations. We examine all of these for their influences on the nexus between mathematics (and statistics) education and citizenship education, in terms of the actions of teachers and learners alike, classroom processes, and policy directions. The framework can be used to identify gaps and discontinuities in existing foundations, and guide future educational efforts, teacher preparation, and research directions that have the potential to promote fruitful connections between mathematics education and citizenship demands.

Keywords: Mathematical literacy; Mathematics curriculum; Adult numeracy; Statistical literacy; Criticality; Educational Praxis

Physics Difficulty and Problem-Solving: Exploration of Mathematics and Mathematical Symbols

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Symbols and Mathematical [mathematising] rigour are akin to real and standard problem-solving in physics. Mathematical limitations remain significant on why learners find physics difficult. Situated literature were explored in this study to aggregate the interlink, context and associated barriers to teaching and learning of physics, focusing on mathematics and mathematical symbols through a constructivist framework. An extensive literature search of barriers/hinderances/difficulty in physics as well as mathematics and mathematical symbols were keywords in literature search in ERIC, Google Scholar, EBSCO and other repository. Positions in the literature were aggregated on knowledge required to overcome physics difficulties, especially at senior secondary level through the knowledge and application of mathematics and mathematical symbols. We availed the rationale for mathematics and mathematical symbols in physics teaching and learning; competencies required for physics teaching and learning; what is known to date on the application of mathematics in physics; the aberration in the use of mathematical symbols in physics and other mathematical sciences. Through this manuscript we further establish a contextual difference in the application of mathematics and mathematical symbols in physics as against the usual mathematising. Competencies required of teachers/instructors as well as students/learners were brought to the fore with a view to provide extensive scholarly positions in this knowledge area. From the literature, it is imperative to improve competencies of both teachers and learners to overcome the barriers identified. We establish a rationale for collaboration by teachers of mathematics and physics to align the syllabi to avoid repetition and time wastage in covering mathematical concepts in physics classrooms. Finally, contextual knowledge transfer remains germane for learners to overcome the difficulty experienced.

Keywords: Mathematical symbols , Mathematics, Physics Difficulty, Problem-solving

The development of pre-service teachers' competence to teach mental calculation strategies

Pamela Vale | Lise Westaway | Rhodes University

Current research into teaching and learning mathematics in the primary school classroom shows that learners rely primarily on unit counting to calculate. As learners progress into the Intermediate Phase, they are taught formal procedures and rules for calculating which typically require knowledge of basic facts and procedures, while mental calculations are more complex as they focus on the structure of number and operations and their relationships as well as on basic facts. Pre-service teachers need to be able to identify and use the most efficient strategy for calculations and to learn how to develop this with their learners. Many researchers suggest that teacher education institutions are complicit in the poor performance of learners in South Africa as pre-service teachers are not prepared to teach mathematics in ways that develop flexibility, efficiency and accuracy when calculating. In the initial stages of this research project, we have worked to develop pre-service teachers' knowledge of a variety of mental calculation strategies and their ability to competently teach these strategies through engagement with the Mental Starters Assessment Project materials (Graven et al., 2020). These materials focus on the development of learners' mental calculation strategies. In this presentation we respond to the following questions, through data from interviews with pre-service teachers who have used the materials during their teaching practice: Do the Mental Starters support pre-service teachers in competently teaching mental mathematics? and What are the factors that enable or constrain the effective implementation of the Mental Starters for pre-service teachers during their teaching practice?

Keywords: TeacherEd SIG, foundation phase, mental mathematics, pre-service teachers

The gap in preservice primary school mathematics teachers' knowledge and understanding of the order of operations

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Error analysis plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning of mathematics. This paper aims to analyze common error patterns in the topic of order of operations, as observed among first-year university mathematics students. By conducting such an analysis, we gain valuable insights into the procedural mistakes frequently made by students in their calculations. Furthermore, this analysis sets the stage for discussing potential remedial measures to address specific error patterns. Consequently, this study focuses on examining misconceptions and associated errors exhibited by preservice teachers specializing in primary school mathematics teaching, specifically on the topic of order of operations. Employing a mixed methods approach, we analyzed the responses of 80 preservice teachers enrolled in a first-year mathematics module as part of their Bachelor of Education program. The results of our analysis revealed that 70% of the students encountered difficulties with the order of operations. Content analysis of their scripts provided noteworthy findings indicating that the preservice teachers had relied on the memory aid Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction (PEMDAS) to learn the order of operations. However, this approach led to the misconception that multiplication should always come before division and addition should always come before subtraction, without a deeper understanding of the underlying principles behind the mnemonic. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for the design of mathematics courses, not only in initial teacher development programs but also in inservice teacher development programmes for primary school mathematics education

Keywords: Errors; misconceptions; order of operations; preservice teachers; TeacherEd SIG

Teaching strategies to enhance understanding of common fractions in primary schools

Zoleka Gula |

Using the cultural lens to approach mathematics teaching, especially in primary schools, can disrupt its abstract nature and make it meaningful to our learners. Addition and subtraction are sections of fractions that provide critical awareness of how mathematical relationships are used in social, environmental, cultural, and economic relations. Grade 6 learners in the intermediate phase experience challenges in understanding the addition and subtraction of common fractions. This study explores how the use of models can enhance the learning of common fractions in rural situated primary schools. Underpinned by Vygotsky's socio-cultural constructivist theory, the study utilizes the Ubuntu philosophy to interrogate how learners in under-resourced primary schools can learn about common fractions. From an interpretive paradigm, using a phenomenological case study design, a qualitative approach in which classroom observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from four Grade 6 teachers who participated in the study. Results indicated teachers' use of models and games, and strategies promoted the understanding of fractions. It is recommended that mathematics teachers should be trained to use visual teaching aids that will vary as per learning style and strive to use a student-centered approach timeously, particularly in contextualizing mathematical addition and subtraction of common fractions learning.

Keywords: Fractions, models, enhance, Ubuntu, development, primary schools

Believing you can: Understanding South African Grade 9 learners' confidence in their mathematics abilities

Sylvia Hannan | Andrea Juan | Jaqueline Harvey | HSRC

In poor performing, resource constrained education systems, such as South Africa, solutions to improve academic achievement have tended to focus on resources and cognitive factors. An area which requires more attention is the role of non-cognitive, psychosocial factors and their association with academic performance. These factors have a strong impact on behaviour, through either facilitating or hindering the learning process. Understanding attitudes is therefore a key component of the interpretation of achievement results with a view to improve them. This article used data from the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study from 20 829 Grade 9 South African learners to investigate students' confidence in their mathematics ability (their self-efficacy) and the relationship with achievement. Linear regression analysis was used to address two key research questions: (1) What is the relationship between Grade 9 learners' self-efficacy and mathematics achievement in South Africa? and (2) What are the contextual factors associated with the self-efficacy of Grade 9 learners in South Africa? The findings reveal a positive relationship between self-efficacy and mathematics achievement. In addition, gender (being male), good teaching practices and parental involvement were associated with higher levels of students' mathematics self-efficacy.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, mathematics achievement, students' self-confidence, South Africa, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

Psychosocial factors influencing Grade 7 learners' performance in Mathematics Classrooms at primary schools in the Frances Baard District, Northern Cape, South Africa

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A careful observation of a grade 7 mathematics teacher indicated a distinct decline when learners transitioned from grade 6 to grade 7 in Northern Cape's South African schooling system. This might not be an isolated problem but a far-reaching issue worldwide. However, this study explores the psychosocial factors that influence grade 7 learners' performance in mathematics classrooms at primary schools in the Frances Baard District. It adopts a qualitative interpretive approach through a multiple case study design to yield the best data possible for the study. Six participants were teachers responsible for the mathematics subject at the grade 7 level. They were purposively selected from six schools, representing various backgrounds, such as rural and urban locations and lower to medium socioeconomic circumstances. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The thematic results showed that some learners were not fully engaged in mathematics classrooms, despite provisions of the necessary resources and qualified teachers. This study suggested that psychological factors could influence learners' academic performance in mathematics, including resilience, enthusiasm, disengagement, anxiety, misbehaviours of some learners, and confidence. It revealed the conditions of learners at home, family issues, and community issues as social factors that might affect their academic performance in mathematics classrooms. This study further found that some learners struggle to comprehend mathematical concepts and have mathematical learning difficulties, and teaching mathematics to learners who use English as a second language, is their barrier to learning. The study recommends that teachers enhance their teaching pedagogies to fit learners' home languages, locations, and socioeconomic circumstances. The schools should introduce digitalization in mathematics classrooms, upgrading them to technology usage. Teachers should improve their relationships with learners to increase their engagement in mathematics classrooms.

Keywords: Academic performance, Grade 7 learners, Mathematics classrooms, Mathematics teachers, Primary schools

The Impact of Eurocentric Curriculum on Marginalized Students: A Comparison of Contemporary Education in South Africa and the U.S.A.

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A vibrant and ongoing examination of the impact of a Eurocentric curriculum on students within emerging nations remains critical to understanding the challenges and achievements of learners in the Global South (Ndlangamandla & Chaka, 2022; Savo, 2018). However, in the U.S.A., comparative scholarship often addresses educational inequities based on quantitative analyses of attendance patterns, test scores, and the level of racial/ethnic integration within local neighborhoods and schools (Landsberg, 2022; Logan, Minca & Adar, 2012; Scott, 1987). The more challenging aspects regarding qualitative analyses of the content and appropriateness of the academic curriculum, particularly for marginalized students, while available (Bryant, 2021; Parrish, 2022), is more challenging and often requires sophisticated qualitative comparative research. To address this challenge, the paper begins with a brief quantitative comparison of learner attendance patterns by race, ethnicity and/or class in public schools during the past three decades in South Africa and the U.S.A., and how the academic performance of marginalized students often lags behind national expectations. (The timeline begins in 1994 with Mandela's presidency, the initial transformation of South Africa, and the maturation and impact of court ordered school integration in the U.S.A. which began in 1954.) The paper qualitatively analyzes a sample of Eurocentric curricular trends currently found within school systems in both countries and concludes with a brief discussion of how identified imbalances within the curriculum, if not corrected, might negatively impact the academic success of marginalized students.

Keywords: Education, Eurocentric Curriculum, Global South, South Africa, U.S.A.

A future generation unable to construct a CV: Reading interventions of teachers of English

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The teaching of reading remains one of a teacher's most demanding and complex tasks. After the COVID-19 pandemic school closures, it is projected that Intermediate Phase learners' reading skills have declined further since the 2016 PIRLS report already established that 87% of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension. Considering that Intermediate Phase learners must transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" to acquire knowledge. The transition proves challenging as learners lack the required reading skills which significantly influence the teaching practice of teachers. This study aimed to determine how English Home Language (EHL) and English First Additional Language (EFAL) Intermediate Phase teachers teach reading after the COVID-19 pandemic. An interpretivist qualitative approach grounded in a phenomenological research design was used to establish the reading teaching strategies and methods used in EHL and EFAL Intermediate Phase classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine how teachers addressed the development of reading skills of learners with varying levels of reading abilities. Moreover, the EHL and EFAL CAPS, along with the 2021-2023 Adjusted Teaching Plans (ATPs), were analysed to determine the extent to which these documents guide and support teachers in developing learners' reading skills. The findings of this study concluded that teachers must revert to teaching the basics of reading skills and that differentiation in the classroom is imperative as learners read on varying levels. The findings may contribute to future reading development plans and teacher training to ultimately support teachers in teaching reading in a differentiating and remedial manner.

Keywords: COVID-19, Intermediate Phase, learning to read, reading, reading skills, reading strategies, reading to learn

Investigating changes for the intermediate phase language teaching curriculum

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The changes brought about by the dual impact of the inevitable fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and the recent shock of the coronavirus pandemic have altered the landscape of teaching and learning. While tuition at tertiary institutions took on the face of emergency remote teaching (ERT), student teachers still need training to assume their places in the physical school environment as teachers. An investigation into the applicability and relevance of the teaching support offered in a language teaching module could shed light on the expectations and needs of students in a changing world.

The main research question concerns the perceptions of pre-service teachers on the relevance of the language education training offered in the intermediate phase of the undergraduate Bachelor of Education after the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, what are the gaps in the curriculum identified by preservice teachers and by language lecturers, and do these findings correlate?

Using a qualitative research approach, a self-developed questionnaire was completed by students and the relevant lecturers and will be analysed using ATLAS.ti software. The questionnaires will be coded by the researcher to identify emergent themes. The themes from both lecturer and student categories will be compared to find common ground and to determine suggestions for management of these gaps. The research is framed by the sociocultural theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) which informs the conceptualization of the questionnaire and provides the theoretical lens to assess the outcomes.

Keywords: curriculum, language teaching, perceptions, preservice teachers, social responsiveness

Teachers perceptions of using English as a medium of instruction to teach first additional language learners in a selected ex-coloured secondary school in Kariega

Gouwwaa Ravat | Atifa Jan Bhat | Nelson Mandela University

South African schools face significant language challenges due to the multilingual nature which creates barriers for learners and negatively impacts their academic achievement. Numerous studies have emphasized the negative impact of enrolling English First Additional Language (FAL) learners in English medium schools. This study explored teachers' perspectives on utilizing English as the medium of instruction for teaching first additional language learners. It addressed the research questions: (i) What are teachers' perspectives on teaching first additional language learners in English? (ii) How do teachers experience using English as a medium of instruction for English FAL learners? (iii) What challenges do teachers experience when teaching English FAL learners? (iv) What strategies do teachers employ to support learners whose home language is not the medium of instruction? (v) What suggestions do teachers propose to assist learners whose home language is not the medium of instruction? This qualitative research study adopted a phenomenological design within the interpretive paradigm. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four teachers in an ex-Coloured secondary school in Kariega, Nelson Mandela Metropole. The interview data were transcribed, analysed, and organized using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that teachers believe utilizing English as the medium of instruction for learners acquiring their first additional language impedes their academic success. Despite employing various classroom strategies to accommodate FAL learners, teachers deemed them to be insufficient and often ineffective. All participants concluded that the language barrier between teacher and learner contributes to additional learning challenges. Undeniably, Language assumes a critical role in learners' academic success.

Keywords: EFAL, FAL, LOTL, MOI, TeacherLANG SIG

The role of exploratory talk in conceptualizing Science through Groupwork

Rochelle Thorne | Eileen Scheckle | Nelson Mandela University

The purpose of the study was to investigate learners' understandings of their linguistic resources as a basis for learning Natural Sciences. In particular, it explored whether group work offered an alternative linguistic space within English Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) contexts. The participants in the case study were Grade 9 learners from a variety of language backgrounds who attended three, formerly Afrikaans-medium, Senior Secondary schools in the Northern Areas of Gqeberha. Through classroom observations of group work interactions, using exploratory talk, we generated rich data around language use in the Natural Sciences class. This contributed to the case study of learners navigating learning Natural Sciences through the medium of English, while using their own linguistic resources. The results showed that learners drew on languages interchangeably as their languages seemed to be combined as a resource for learning. This challenges the understanding of languages as discrete linguistic units and suggests that multilinguals may not have a unitary 'home language' but instead can draw on varied languages as one resource. This paper focuses on the observations that formed part of this qualitative case study where the learners' cultural, multilingual, and dialogical responses were mobilised in the group work interactions as they worked together towards a shared goal or outcome. In conclusion, the study suggests that current language policies and practices need to be revisited to accommodate those multilinguals whose language repertoires avoid the 'home' and 'first additional language' labels that structure the school system.

Keywords: Linguistic Resources; Language of Learning and Teaching; Exploratory Talk; Home Language

Using poetry teaching to explore possibilities and constraints in pre-service English teacher education

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English language teacher educators (lecturers) play an important role in preparing pre-service teachers, but there is little research that is already done on this in South Africa. Despite the high quality of beginner teachers that is envisaged in the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, the release of the latest PIRLS results in May 2023 indicates that many SA Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning. Hence, PIRLS recommends a rigorous strengthening of language teacher education in SA. It is against this disjuncture that this paper, a part of an ongoing Ph.D. study, used poetry teaching as a window to explore the possibilities and constraints in pre-service teacher education at two SA universities. Specifically, data were collected through one-on-one interviews with lecturers, focus group discussions with students, document analysis, and lecture observations. Guided by Cultural Historical Activity Theory, Dutta's model, Critical Discourse Analysis, and knowledge domains for teaching, data analysis indicates that teacher educators either offer new possibilities or constrain the meaning making and critical teaching of poetry. All in all, this paper provides a space for pre-service teacher educators to reflect on how their educational foundations speak to pre-service teachers' future practices.

Keywords: Pre-service Teacher education, English Language Teaching, Poetry teaching, meaning making, and criticality

Re-imagining curriculum practices on accounting in secondary schools in the post covid-19 world

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Since 2020, curriculum practices have been characterized by disruptions to traditional teaching and learning methods brought on by COVID-19 pandemic. Curriculum practices in accounting were not unnoticed. Discussions about pedagogical changes, academic continuity, and the future of accounting teaching, learning, and assessment were sparked by these. The "future-focused" curricular approaches in accounting have generated debate regarding system-level and resource concerns, teaching techniques, and emerging e-learning ecologies. In order to better understand continuity and discontinuity in the new pedagogies and how these affects what accounting curriculum teachers may do differently moving forward, this study engages with these arguments. Due to the pandemic, hybrid teaching and learning approaches have been investigated, and traditional face-to-face instruction has undergone significant alterations. The theoretical framework used to guide the research process is connectivism. The theory is about forming connections between people and technology, and teaching and learning in a connectivist learning environment. The research is based on data collected from semi-structured interviews with five accounting teachers about how they navigated pedagogy while switching to remote teaching during a pandemic as well as digital teaching, learning and assessment in accounting classrooms. The findings indicate that accounting teachers are able to achieve considerable benefits in the shift to remote teaching, which might present new teaching and learning opportunities and possibilities to incorporate latest edition to accounting software.

Keywords: Pre-service Teacher education, English Language Teaching, Poetry teaching, meaning making, and criticality

Rethinking Teaching and Learning in Higher Education beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic

Otilia Chiramba | Shireen Motala | University of Johannesburg

Since South Africa embraced democracy, the primary focus of higher education has been to ensure equal access to knowledge, aiming to bridge existing disparities. Despite efforts made through redress policies, the goal of providing equal opportunities for all students remains unfulfilled. This conceptual paper explores potential strategies to promote access and success in teaching and learning, specifically for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The paper argues that higher education in South Africa has faced an ongoing crisis since the advent of democracy, and the challenges it already faced have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic, like any other crisis, caused significant disruptions. We witness a significant shift in integration of technology in education. This consequently result in a digital divide and trends of poor learning outcomes and low graduation rates, particularly among historically marginalised students who do not have access to technology. However, this period has also prompted substantial transformations in the epistemological foundations of higher education, curricula, and pedagogies and forced educators and institutions to rethink traditional teaching methods, paving the way for a more flexible and innovative approach to learning in the future. Consequently, universities are compelled to reassess and reimagine the present and future of teaching and learning. The fundamental question is: To what extent do significant shifts in delivery methods or pedagogic activities contribute to or hinder access and success in higher education? In addressing this question, we employ the theory of epistemic justice/injustice (Fricker, 2007). This theory provides a framework for reconsidering how to promote epistemological access in South African universities beyond crises and disruptions. The paper advocates for moving beyond continuity issues and prioritising the fostering of epistemological access for all students in South Africa. The literature review done for an ongoing research project for the South African Research Chair in teaching and learning focused on Epistemic Disruptions in higher education is employed. The objective is to create a framework that evaluates the impact of changes in delivery methods or pedagogic activities on access to education within South African universities. This framework is valuable as it offers recommendations for fostering epistemic justice both presently and in the long term.

Keywords: COVID-19, crises, disruptions, epistemic justice/injustice, epistemological access, teaching and learning

Student-Facing: MS Teams as a Pedagogical Tool during Pandemics and Student Unrest

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To create inclusive and accessible tertiary education, a key concern is the practicalities of remote teaching and online learning during student unrest and pandemics in an unequal society. During these times, academics shift away from conventional face-to-face teaching methods to remote teaching and online engagement. The complexities of this transition challenged the authors to reflect on their experiences to enhance students' experiences and better understand their actions on the use of virtual conferencing and digital learning platforms. Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) was focused on to ensure education continuity, provide ubiquitous access to lecture sessions and enhance interactivity and collaboration.

This paper is conceptual and exploratory; it shares the experiences of two lecturers. A reflective practice approach was adopted and data from the researchers' diary was presented and analysed. Also, to put this paper in perspective of relevant contemporary research and the triangulation of data sources, additional references were collected from trustworthy and reliable sources. It was found that MS Teams performs as an education enabler through affording lecturer-to-student engagement, student-to-student collaboration, and interaction, thus, increasing the overall social presence in an online environment. Given the affordances of MS Teams, it can be used as a pedagogical tool to promote an online interactive teaching and learning environment as it works well to complement the LMS used. This paper provides a contribution to literature by offering insight on the affordances of MS Teams and LMS, and how these tools can be used as pedagogical tools for remote teaching and online engagement.

Keywords: Affordances of MS Teams, Instructional Equity, Online Engagement, Pedagogical Tool, Remote Teaching, Ubiquitous Access

Digital Competency: A Framework for Innovative Virtual Teaching for Academics

Reuben Dlamini | Fatima Makda | Millicent Motheogane | University of the Witwatersrand

The expansion of new learning ecologies has led Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to transform their mode of instructional delivery from conventional teaching methods to more innovative digital approaches. This shift led to a need for new digital competencies and 21st century skills to promote effective teaching in a virtual ecosystem. Despite the emergence of digital competency frameworks within the landscape of higher education, there remains a dearth of digital competencies and innovative approaches to instructional delivery. Consequently, it is imperative to establish a digital competency framework or best practices that is suitable for its intended purpose and can provide direction to academics of higher education institutions in South Africa for effective instructional delivery. The purpose of this paper was to identify the needed academic's teaching competencies for successful implementation of virtual teaching. Academic staff (n=160) across three universities (one comprehensive, one rural and one ODeL) in South Africa were purposively selected using a simple random selection method. An online questionnaire containing open-ended questions was used to collect data. Thematic analysis was used to examine the responses. Some of the key competencies identified is the ability to apply instructional design principles to present and communicate the content effectively, employ UDL guidelines to ensure instructional equity, understand learning theories as it influences the pedagogical approach, expand knowledge of online platforms capabilities to utilise them efficiently to promote teaching and social presence. This paper provides a contribution to literature by offering insight on the digital competencies needed and how they can be used as best practices for virtual teaching.

Keywords: Digital Competence, Higher Education, Virtual Teaching

Conceptualising a Model for Digitally Transforming Teacher Education in the South African Context

Orhe Arek-Bawa | Saras Reddy | University of KwaZulu-Natal

In 2022, the authors embarked on a postdoctoral research project that focused on exploring how a School of Education (SoE) located in South Africa prepares future teachers for the digitized Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) classroom. Since then, diverse aspects of the digital pedagogical practices in the Bachelor of Education (BEd) have been investigated - digital curricular readiness of the SoE, its e-textbook capabilities, academics, and students' experiences of digital pedagogy. This paper draws on the empirical findings published in the papers stated above with the aim of conceptualising a model for the digital transformation of the BEd curriculum for shaping education(al) futures. It employs the Technology and Innovation Readiness Model by Akaslan and Law (2011) to explain the requirements for the digital transformation of teacher education in the South African context. This theoretical, qualitative case study will inform academics in enhancing their digital pedagogical drive toward preparing their students for the 4IR classrooms. Pre- service teachers will also acquire relevant digital and pedagogical skills to thrive in their future practice. Besides benefiting academics and students, the findings could guide policies in the SoE and other teacher education institutions in similar socioeconomic contexts. Even as many universities embrace a hybrid learning mode, the complex discourse around artificial intelligence in education makes a more compelling case for this timeous contribution to digital transformation and ICT scholarship.

Keywords: 4IR Classroom, Digital transformation, ICT, Teacher Education, Teacher-ED SIG

Capacity development for inclusive education at an ODeI institution in South Africa

Nareadi Phasha | Shakira Akabor | and Gloria Ledwaba | UNISA

UNISA has over 5000 students with disabilities registered in all of its colleges. The number could be higher, given that some disabilities remain undisclosed. The academic success of these students depends on the support received from the academic and non-academic staff at the university. Given the historical educational imbalances, and the students' constitutional rights to education, understanding the current support practices for students with disabilities is necessary to provide evidence to improve capacity development programmes for staff. Developing staff capacity in supporting students with disabilities at Unisa is a significant intervention to support the institutional, national and global agenda of widening access and educational success for all by 2030 (SDG 4).

In this paper, we report the findings of a DHET-funded project which investigated current practices in supporting students with disabilities at UNISA, in order to inform the development of materials that would be used to capacitate staff to support students with disabilities. Data were collected by means of focus interviews with groups of students with disabilities and staff recruited from various colleges at UNISA. The questions addressed were:

- How are students with disabilities supported at UNISA ?
- How can staff be capacitated to support students with disabilities to succeed academically at institutions of higher learning?

The project is based on a social model of disability which advocates for inclusive classrooms as providing the best possible learning environment for students with disabilities.

Keywords: Inclusive, education, capacity building , SDG

Film-making for promoting multi-literacies and playfulness amongst staff: reflecting on our journey

Logamurthie Athiemoolam | Thato Moshesh | Bruce Gordon | Nelson Mandela University

The making of short films, involving staff members, could not only contribute to skills development, but also to promoting creativity and playfulness amongst staff, with a view to enabling them to reflect on how such movies could be used for pedagogical purposes. It is with this background in mind that this paper provides an overview of how we worked collaboratively with the staff of a higher education institution to produce a short movie as a fun activity so that we could bring the element of play back into teaching and learning. The paper sheds light on the processes involved in the construction of the movie, the lessons that we learnt and how we experienced the process. In reflecting on our experiences, we provide insights into some of the highlights and challenges that we experienced, but also reflect on what we perceive to be the value of moviemaking through our experiences such as the development of creativity, multi-literacies, and playfulness among the participants. The latter seems to be neglected within teaching and learning at present, as the focus tends to be on teaching to the test, rushing to complete plans of work in preparation for tests and exams, with limited focus on enjoying learning through the incorporation of playful activities. We surmise that if staff are afforded opportunities to become more playful, this will have a ripple effect on the teaching strategies that they use in their classes.

Keywords: creativity, film-making, multi-literacies, playfulness, staff development, visual media

The Importance of the Biographical Questionnaire in Facilitating Access to Higher Education

Zena Richards | Kendall Petersen | University of the Witwatersrand

The increased use of the Biographical Questionnaire (BQ) is emblematic of what has been referred to as a 'biographical turn in social sciences', in which increased importance is allocated to individuals rather than traditional modes of social scientific inquiry (Rustin, 2000; Wengraf, Chamberlayne and Bornat, 2002; Enslin, Button, Chakane, de Groot and Dison, 2006). We examine the application and impact of the BQ in the context of the applications submitted for participation in the Targeting Talent Programme, which is a pre-university access programme hosted at the University of the Witwatersrand. We argue that sharing past experiences and narratives that detail the current lived realities of our youth allows for a better understanding of the identity of the individual and of ways to address issues they may be facing. This applies especially to the work done in the pre-university access space, in which the knowledge of the context of the learners as the central stakeholder is the key source of information.

Keywords: Biographical Questionnaire; Targeting Talent Programme; Higher Education; Pre-University Access.

Assessing mathematics and English language competencies in Initial Teacher Education programmes in South Africa

Nicky Roberts | Qetelo Moloi | Thelma Mort | Monica Mawoyo | Jeanette Ramollo | Kelello consulting, TUT

Chair: Prof Nicky Roberts (Kelello Consulting)

Initial teacher education in South Africa is moving towards greater professionalism, supported by several funding and policy processes. In primary teacher education (PrimTEd), academics have collaborated to establish curriculum standards for mathematics and languages. This panel proposal presents four papers that focus on the assessment of mathematics and English language competencies in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs in South Africa. The papers address the challenges in improving English language and mathematics courses and standards, assessing teacher knowledge and skills, and developing valid assessment instruments.

PAPER 1: English language learning and Teacher Education: A review of recent literature of language interventions in initial teacher education in South Africa. Thelma Mort (UNISA), Hayley van der Haar (University of Johannesburg), Monica Mawoyo (University of Johannesburg) & Duduzile Zwane (UNISA)

English First Additional Language learning at schools is uneven and still bears the legacy of apartheid's educational inequalities. This continues into universities where the standards are uneven. Without intervention, poor English results are repeated by producing new teachers who are unable to teach English to sufficient standard, or meaningfully express curriculum concepts in English. This paper offers a systematic literature review of what has been written with regard to language and English First Additional Language interventions and studies in Initial Teacher Education in South Africa since 2017, which finds there are scattered, disjointed and sporadic attempts to improve language courses and standards. The authors then go on to discuss the PrimTEd English language teacher standard setting and assessment strategy, and the drive to professionalise teacher education, as an intervention to disrupt the cycle of poor language education.

PAPER 2: Professionalizing Initial Teacher Education in South Africa: Assessing PrimTEd English Language Standards to Inform Curriculum Development Nicky Roberts (Kelello Consulting), Qetelo Moloi (University of Johannesburg) and Thelma Mort (UNISA)

Academics in initial teacher education designed and administered two common English assessments—Persuasive language and Authentic texts—to test the PrimTEd standards empirically. This study presents the results of these assessments and analyzes the similarities and differences between them. The student results for the English assessments were analyzed using basic statistics, focusing on the largest samples of first-year and fourth-year students who took both tests. The items in each test were coded according to the PrimTEd standards, and Rasch analysis was conducted to determine the difficulty level of each item relative to others and identify items assessing the same concepts at the same difficulty level. By combining expert opinions, item person, and differential analyses, the constructs assessed were mapped onto learning attainment levels. Standard-based reports allowed for sequencing the assessed constructs and categorizing the PrimTEd standards into four attainment levels. The research has implications for the test development team, and provides valuable insights for ITE lecturers, outlining detailed attainment categories and suggesting a potential teaching progression from first to fourth year.

PAPER 3: Assessing the mathematical proficiency of ITE students: Implications for curriculum development and curriculum standards

Qetelo Moloi (University of Johannesburg) and Nicky Roberts (Kelello Consulting)

This paper presents the results of a study assessing the mathematical proficiency of initial teacher education (ITE) students in South Africa and its implications for curriculum development. A PrimTEd mathematics test was designed and administered to assess ITE students' knowledge and skills in teaching mathematics. This paper presents the results of the PrimTEd mathematics test for both first and fourth-year B.Ed students, along with proposed competencies at four hierarchical levels of complexity, derived from empirical data and expert inputs. Analyzing the data collected from 2017 to 2020 using basic statistics and the Rasch Measurement Model, the study identifies four levels of mathematical proficiency. Notably, the findings reveal a concerning observation that a majority of first-year students (three out of every five) and a significant proportion of fourth-year students (one out of every five) function at a level below procedural fluency in primary school mathematics. The implications of this analysis are significant for ITE

institutions in terms of curriculum sequencing, differentiated teaching programs, and aligning mathematics content with the PrimTEd standards.

PAPER 4: Strengthening Assessment in Initial Teacher Education: Building an Item Bank for PrimTEd Mathematics

Qetelo Moloi (UJ) , Nicky Roberts (Kelello Consulting), Lyn Kok (uniZulu) , Msebenzi Rabaza (UFS), Zanele Ndhlovu (UKZN), Mziwoxolo Krexe (WSU) and Jeanette Ramollo (TUT)

The Primary teacher Education (PrimTEd) Assessment Workstream, comprised of collaborating academics from ITE institutions, developed initial PrimTEd language and mathematics tests. These tests have generated extensive data on the knowledge and skills of ITE teachers. The challenge faced in transforming ITE programs is to ensure the availability of a dynamic pool of valid, reliable, trustworthy, and standards-based assessment instruments that can monitor the quality of primary teacher education at different points in time. The PrimTEd mathematics and English language assessment provided a first attempt to address this challenge. However, it is expected that the initial test items will show item drift over time, potentially compromising the validity of the tests due to ceiling effects. To tackle this issue, lecturers from various universities volunteered to develop items for the PrimTEd item banks, with this paper focusing on the mathematics item development process, lessons learned, and outputs.

The development process involved mapping existing PrimTEd items to the PrimTEd mathematics standards, followed by the collaborative development of items based on agreed-upon interpretations of the standards. Peer reviews ensured the quality assurance of the items. Over 500 multiple-choice items were developed in two three-day retreats and refined remotely. The items were organized into six bins using a matrix design that spanned all the PrimTEd mathematics standards. The availability of validated test items will enable standardized national monitoring of ITE programs and provide universities with the means to evaluate their interventions. Furthermore, the item writing skills developed during this process will be shared through publications, conferences, and among mathematics professional learning communities (PLCs), contributing to the improvement of assessment practices and curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Initial teacher education (ITE), assessment, curriculum standards, English language, Mathematics

Education for the common good and a new social contract for education: ethical and pedagogical dimensions

Bjorn Norlin | Professor Kirk Sullivan | Jonas Nilsson | Angela Chappel | Keneilwe Mathaba | Heila Lotz Sisitka | John Bhurekeni | Anna Westin | Karin Sporre | Umeå University | Rhodes University

Panel Overview: This panel brings together an intergenerational team of researchers from South Africa and Sweden who share an interest in probing questions of education related to the 'common good'. It responds to a recent invitation from UNESCO's (2021) Futures of Education Report to deliberate the constitution of a new social contract for education. Professors **Karin Sporre (UmU) and Heila Lotz-Sisitka (RU)** will briefly introduce the challenges and questions guiding the session, with emphasis on ethical and pedagogical dimensions. We aim to create dialogical space for deliberating these questions across different contexts and forms of education, and to seek emerging insights that can both change practice and create further research questions. Panellists will address the topic from theoretical and methodological perspectives, different forms of education, and will address the following questions: What does education for the common good signify in a particular research project and context? What ethical and pedagogical dynamics are involved in establishing a new social contract for education in the particular research project and context?

1. **Jonas Nilsson, (UmU)** will focus on "The democratizing, and/or destabilizing effects of technology on music education" This panel contribution examines conditions digitalization creates within music education in Sweden's lower secondary schools with a specific focus on its compositional activities. It considers provision of equal education for all as 'common good' (Skollagen 2010:800, ch. 1 § 9), especially related to the current concern for development of digital competence and a Abstract ID: 557 for SAERA Conference (Auto-Generated October 17, 2023 8:14 pm) Copyright 2023 SAERA Conference powered by WPAbstracts Pro critical understanding of how digitalization affects the individual and the societal development (Skolverket 2022). The study points to ways in which use of digital technologies can contribute to the 'democratization' of music composition, with more pupils learning how to express themselves through music in a way relevant to the global, digital society they are a part of.

2. **Anna Westin, (UmU):** 'A sense of belonging: Children labelled with Intellectual Disability' In Swedish schools, all students have the right to support if there is a need for it. Education must create conditions must be provided so that the student reaches the school's goals, both social and knowledge goals, including inclusion, justice, cooperation and solidarity to create participation (UNESCO, 2021:2). This study focuses on ethics associated with exclusion and discrimination, and education of people with disabilities. Interviewing students between the ages of 9-14 with intellectual disability (ID) regarding sense of belonging and camaraderie in school and during leisure time, the study draws on the theory Politics of Belonging (YuvalDavis, 2011) and shares students' future dreams, and the importance of friendship and camaraderie in enabling a sense of belonging.

3. **Angela Chappel, (RU):** 'The social ecosystems for skills that are needed for school food gardens to be part of just transitioning of food systems in South Africa'. Food insecurity plagues many children in South African schools and communities, an issue which became more visible with COVID-19. This panel contribution will focus on the social ecosystems for skills towards Just Transitioning of food systems, in rural food systems in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The study focusses on the role of school food gardens, their interaction with surrounding communities and how these gardens can be supported to act as a stimulus for just transitioning into local food economies, and advancing the common good of children and their communities. Drawing on Sen's Capabilities Approach valued beings and doings are explored as a way of undertaking research for the common good.

4. **Keneilwe Mathaba, (RU):** 'Expanding learning and co-existence between communal and traditional rangeland management practices' This panel contribution focuses on the informal context of community education around expanding learning of communal rangelands management in Botswana. This is because these are important environmental issues here that are affecting ecosystem health and people's livelihoods, an area overlooked in education both formal and informal. The study draws on cultural historical activity theory (Engestrom, 1987) to explore how the cultural and historical practices of rural pastoralists in communal rangelands can be brought into focus on research on education for the common good. The study foregrounds relationality, co-learning and co-existence as ethics for a new social contract for education in this context.

5. **John Bhurekeni (RU):** 'Inclusion of heritage-based knowledge and practices in an Pro Afrophilic philosophy for children curriculum in postcolonial Zimbabwe' This study addresses the problem of cultural exclusion, which remains a legacy of colonial education in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. It shares results from an Afrophilic philosophy for children formative intervention study, offering ways of re-imagining a postcolonial education curriculum that expands to ideals of social cohesion and a just society. Features of this approach include advancing contextual relevance, activating moral and ethical agency, and centring of local heritage-based knowledges and practices in a learner-led inquiry work, advancing children's critical reflexive thinking skills and teachers' capabilities for working with heritage-based curriculum foundations.

6. **Björn Norlin (UmU):** TRC:s and education for the common good in the northern Nordic context The Nordic countries are currently undergoing changes when it comes to imparting knowledge about the national minorities in schools. Reasons include the impact of legislation and policies to support minorities in developing their languages and cultures, and to promote social sustainability. Truth and reconciliation commissions aimed at generating new knowledge about the relationship between the Sami minority and the Nordic majority societies (past as well as present), are spreading this knowledge via schools involving pedagogical and ethical dimensions as catalyst for change for the common good. Professor Kirk Sullivan (UmU) will summarise and draw into focus the diverse contributions and how they address the two core questions noted above, and point to the contributions of educational research to re-imagining the futures of education. Chairs: Professor Karin Sporre & Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka

Keywords: 'education for the common good', 'ethics', 'pedagogy', 'new social contract for education', 'transformation'

Careership: Exploring the Perspectives of South African Public TVET Colleges Lecturers on their Career Development

Lucky Maluleke | Nelson Mandela University

The TVET sector is crucial in equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to enter the workforce and contribute to economic growth. However, the sector has a significant skills gap, and the demand for qualified professional educators is increasing (DHET, 2013a). Despite the increasing demand for qualified lecturers in the TVET colleges, there is limited research on the career trajectories and development of lecturers who have completed an Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching programme. In particular, there is no research on the career trajectories of lecturers who have graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching at Nelson Mandela University. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the career trajectories of lecturers who graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching at Nelson Mandela University. It will explore the impact of the programme on their career development and examine the factors that have influenced their career paths within the public TVET College sector. By addressing this research gap, the study will provide insights into the programme's effectiveness in enhancing the career prospects of lecturers in TVET colleges. The study further aims to identify the key drivers of success for individuals in this field and any obstacles or barriers to career progression. It will adopt a qualitative methodology. Qualitative research methodology offers several advantages. Qualitative research allows for a deep understanding of the experiences of individuals. It focuses on the subjective experiences of individuals and allows for an exploration of their perspectives, experiences, and motivations. By using open-ended questions and allowing participants to share their stories in their own words, qualitative research can provide rich, detailed information about the career development of TVET college lecturers. It is a flexible methodology that allows researchers to adapt their approach to the unique needs of the research participants. (Fouché & Schurink, 2011). The main research question is: "What are the career trajectories of lecturers who graduated with an Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching at Nelson Mandela University?" The findings of this study will have significant implications for the development of TVET colleges in South Africa. Understanding the career trajectories and development of lecturers who have completed the Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching programme will provide insights into the programme's effectiveness in enhancing the career prospects of individuals in this field. Additionally, the study may identify areas for improvement in the programme, which could contribute to developing more effective educational programmes for TVT College lecturers.

Keywords: Careership, TVET college lecturers, Career trajectories

What do pre-service teachers learn about inclusive education from the TCIA module?

Carol Bertram | Melanie Martin | UKZN

Thousands of pre-service teachers completed the Teacher Choices in Action (TCIA) course, which included a module on inclusive education. In this paper we present the purpose of the unit on inclusive education and students' responses to a written task. Data were analysed from 176 B.Ed and PGCE students from UKZN. We adapted a framework from Skae et al. (2019) to analyse the data. This framework was structured around the macro categories of instructional and regulative discourses and teacher dispositions. The findings show that half of coded responses reflected instructional strategies such as scaffolding and participation, but with minimal emphasis on multilingualism, making connections, breaking down concepts and differentiated pacing. A quarter of the coded responses focused on the regulative discourse (a strong emphasis on participation and supportive classroom ethos) and the remaining quarter reflected teacher disposition (taking responsibility for inclusive teaching and being aware of the barriers to learning and diversity). Many students described an exemplar lesson, but not all were able to extrapolate the underpinning principles to a different case. We suggest that the participants had internalised the importance of teachers being responsible for inclusive teaching but would need further learning on teachers working with content knowledge, making connections, breaking down and building up concepts, and using multilingual strategies.

Keywords: TeacherEd SIG; inclusive education, pre-service teachers

Problematisation of Inclusive Education in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Policy Documents and Implications for Social Justice

Elzahn Rinquest | Precious Simba | Stellenbosch University

In South Africa, the practice of inclusive education was historically implemented as special needs education, influenced by racial and socioeconomic factors during the apartheid era. However, since 2001, the country has introduced inclusive education policies to transform the education system and address past inequalities. This article critically examines how the government frames the 'problem' of inclusive education through key policy documents. Drawing from an ongoing study on inclusive education leadership in full-service schools in the Western Cape, this submission presents the theoretical framework underpinning the research. Guided by a social justice perspective inspired by Nancy Fraser's 3Rs framework, we explore initial research questions that delve into various aspects of inclusive education in contemporary South Africa. To analyse the key policy documents, we adopt Bacchi and Godwin's (2016) post-structural policy analysis approach known as "What's the Problem Represented to be" (WPR). This presentation focuses on three significant policy documents: White Paper 6 of 2001, the Guidelines for Full Service/Inclusive Schools of 2010, and the policy on Screening, Identification and Support (SlaS) of 2014. By applying the WPR approach, we investigate how these documents shape the perception of inclusive education as a "problem" and establish a framework for potential government actions. Moreover, we critically examine the governmental posturing, discourse, and potential implications presented in these policy documents, utilising the concept of governmentality.

Through this analysis, we aim to deepen the understanding of the current state of inclusive education in South Africa. By examining how policy documents construct the discourse around inclusive education and influence governmental interventions, we seek to identify the ways in which social justice may be either facilitated or hindered. The findings from this study will contribute to informing future policy development and promoting social justice within the realm of inclusive education in South Africa.

Keywords: Inclusive education, full service schools, inclusive education policy, school managers, social justice

Rethinking Visible Rewards for Academic Achievement: An Inclusive Education perspective

Shakira Akabor | UNISA

Rewarding learners at school for excellence in academic achievement with badges, trophies, honour board listings and certificates is a fairly common practice in South African schools. Outwardly, the practice of visibly rewarding learners appears to recognise learner talent and motivate learners to achieve academically. As a result of this practice, schools are characterised by high levels of competitiveness, whilst simultaneously justifying and legitimising the meritocracy. Visible rewards appear to have far-reaching implications beyond school, and can be seen as a golden ticket in accessing limited opportunities and prospects for learners' post-school. Postcolonial countries are grappling with the implementation of inclusive education and South Africa is no exception. It is not difficult to see the disparity between the meritocratic environment within which our schools currently operate, and the ideals to which we aspire in terms of realizing quality education for all. Insights gleaned from a mixed methods doctoral study on the impact of rewards on high school learners at two schools reveal that visibly rewarding learners provides excellence in education that is available to a small number of learners, but largely excludes the majority of learners. This veneer of excellence is as a result of competitiveness at schools. Reducing the mechanisms supporting academic competition can encourage collaboration and cooperation, thereby creating inclusive schooling environments. In order to enable the implementation of inclusive education in schools, the ways in which learners are currently rewarded needs revisiting. This would require a shift in thinking not just about rewards and its effects on all aspects of learning, but what excellence in academic achievement means for all learners.

Keywords: academic achievement, rewards, inclusive education

Providing South Africa with the teachers it needs - Too much to ask? Researching supply, demand and quality dynamics

Eureta Rosenberg | Rhodes University

One of the enduring dilemmas in educational planning in South Africa, and perhaps more widely, is matching the 'supply' of qualified teachers with the 'demand' for such teachers. There are schools with too few teachers, and there are teacher graduates without jobs. Alignment between current supply and future demand is an issue for government and for teacher education institution, a vital dynamic between foundations laid today, and fruits we will or will not reap in future. Matching supply and demand is not a simple matter, and the concepts themselves may be inadequate to guide planning, particularly when we add the notion of quality to the equation, as we surely must. This synthesis paper will explore precisely why the reality is so complex, and what we can do despite of, and within, these complexities. It will address a key question pertinent for this conference, namely how we can research these realities and guide decision makers. The paper draws on a theory-mining review methodology using document analysis, including a review of a 2020 study described as the most ambitious of its kind to date, by Stellenbosch University's Research on Socio- Economic Policy unit, as well as the Initial Teacher Education Research Project by Jet Education Services. Findings will include the influence of, among others: rural-urban settings; provincial dynamics and socio-cultural practices; human resource management; and the experience of graduates when they arrive in schools. In conclusion, an attempt will be made to provide a framework for research and planning under conditions of complexity.

Keywords: Teacher education, complexity, demand, quality, research, supply

Towards disentangling the extent and dynamics of the access to education dilemma: A bibliometric analysis

Alfred Machingambi | Kudakwashe Mamutse | Stadio Higher Education

This bibliometric study aims to disentangle the extent and dynamics of the access to education dilemma through a comprehensive analysis of the scholarly literature. The study investigates the quantity, trends, and impact of research output related to access to education using bibliometric analysis. A full systematic search was conducted in the Scopus database. Bibliometric indicators, including publication counts, citation analysis, co-authorship networks, and keyword analysis, were utilized to analyse the collected data. The findings provide valuable insights into the research landscape of the access to education dilemma, including publication trends, citation patterns, and influential authors and articles. The analysis identifies key research themes and emerging trends, such as barriers to access, inequalities in education, policy interventions, educational opportunities, and educational outcomes. Furthermore, the study explores the geographic distribution of research and collaboration patterns within the field. It also highlights research gaps and future directions, such as the need for more studies on marginalized populations, the exploration of innovative strategies to address the access to education dilemma, and the investigation of the long-term impact of educational access on individuals and societies. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the findings for addressing the access to education dilemma, informing policy-making and practice, and guiding future research endeavours in this critical area.

Keywords: access to education, barriers, dilemma, marginalized populations, innovative strategies

Experiences of first year students from a rural South African University

Jeffrey Sipiwe Mkhize | Durban University of Technology

There is sufficient evidence that in the South African Higher Education fraternity that points to the effects of massification of students in the tertiary institutions. Evidence in literature and official government documents reveal that contrary to the good intentions of access to higher education, the drop-out rate of students in the first year of study in South African Universities remains above 40%. These alarming statistics suggest that there are challenges with students' epistemological access to universities' commodity which is the knowledge and skills. In 2017, the then sitting President of the Republic of South Africa announced at the ANC's elective conference that there will be free higher education to almost 90% of qualifying first year students from the poor and needy families. The announcement was welcomed by many citizens but worrying to most researchers and academics. Recent literature suggests pedagogical teaching and learning strategies that first seek to understand who the first year students are. Secondly, these strategies should also seek to use the understanding of who the students are and what the students' needs are to inform pedagogical practices. Finally, the teaching and learning strategies which put the students at the centre and as key members of the university community, promote students' sense of belonging. Using SASSE and institutional HEMIS, data was generated from a representative sample of students enrolled for the first year of study in a Bachelor of Education programme in a rural South African University. Findings suggests that there is correlation between students' first year experience in a university and their academic performance. Also, students have a view on the extent to which an institution contributes to knowledge and skills. Data further suggest that first-year students perform poorly in modules that are taught in English and are characterised by high linguistic demands. There was evidence that students perform better in a home language.

In this paper I argue that academics that teach first year students may benefit from specialized training that seek to encourage teaching strategies that promote student engagement and the formation of academic communities. Academic belonging can be fostered through collaborative learning in and out of class where students are free to make mistakes in less authoritative environments. Also, strategies that seek to view teaching and learning through the eyes of the students could contribute effectively to students' successful academic integration and engagements. Finally, there is a need to move the student from the margins and periphery of teaching and learning to the centre of knowledge.

Keywords: Rural University, access to knowledge, access to university, first year students, pedagogical teaching and learning strategies, student engagement, student integration.

"We are somewhat forgotten" – a study of how school meal staff describe and approach their role and responsibilities in relation to the school meal

Susanna Sandberg | Umeå University

Background: In Sweden, the school lunch is free of charge to pupils in compulsory school and promoted as an educational activity according to national guidelines. On school level, the responsibility for the school lunch is often a shared duty between the school's principal and the kitchen unit, however limited research has focused on the role of kitchen in the organisation. The aim is therefore to study how school kitchen workers view and describe their mission.

Method: Empirical material was collected by five months of participant observations and informal talks in school restaurants alongside with semi-structured interviews with kitchen staff members.

Results: The analysis generated a portrayal of the kitchen staff as a profession caught between demands and expectations. Obligations, rules and regulations were beyond their control and they were partly deprived information and decisions made. Despite this, they had to face comments, often negative, from pupils. Two different strategies were adopted by the staff to subsist. One approach was being committed and supportive, where the worker engaged in high level of interaction with pupils and strived to make the school restaurant a pleasant space. The other approach was distancing oneself, operating mostly from inside the kitchen with low interaction with pupils, assigning food education and fostering exclusively to teachers.

Conclusion: This paper highlights the school meal staff as an unacknowledged actor in the school lunch organisation and indicate a need of collaboration to strengthen the school lunch as an educational activity.

Keywords: Early career researchers, school lunch, school meal staff, food service, food education

Instrument development to measure student self-efficacy in the teaching and learning environment

Roné Vorster- de Wet | University of Free State

Introduction and aim: A study was conducted to determine the status of student self-efficacy and identify interrelated issues in the teaching and learning environment of undergraduate Natural Sciences students at the University of the Free State. Self-efficacy refers to people's beliefs in their capabilities to achieve. Students with high self-efficacy generally have adequate levels of academic achievement and use more effective learning strategies. Self-efficacy theory postulates a bi-directional influence between self-efficacy and achievement. This research originated in response to recognising a gap regarding the interrelated issues with student self-efficacy. In conjunction with the self-efficacy theory and the identified issues, the identified gap could be bridged.

Methodology: The study represents the quantitative phase of a mixed-methods study with a sequential explanatory research design. The research methods comprised a literature study to inform the instrument development (questionnaire) and implementation of the questionnaire to identify issues that are interrelated with self-efficacy. Internal consistency estimates of reliability were calculated for the questionnaires from which questionnaire development was done.

Results: The quantitative phase revealed the status of student self-efficacy with total scores, indicating overall low (43.4%) and high (56.6%) self-efficacy among participants, respectively. Participants demonstrated the lowest self-efficacy for the hypothetical construct of student engagement in class. The highest self-efficacy was demonstrated for hypothetical construct motivational strategies for learning in the teaching and learning environment.

Conclusion: This study generated comprehensive knowledge regarding student self-efficacy status and issues related to self-efficacy among undergraduate Natural Sciences students. Various hypothetical constructs were identified as issues influencing self-efficacy.

Keywords: cooperative learning, engagement, higher education, pedagogy, self-directed learning, transformative strategy

Who cares for Carers?

Cina P Mositi | Zandisile Mawethu Sitoyi | Nelson Mandela University | Cape Peninsula University of Technology

School violence, an escalating worldwide phenomenon, is widely cited as one of the challenges that plague education. The problem, as research has shown, is most prevalent and disruptive in poor communities. Many teachers are reportedly leaving the profession because they fear school violence or after being victims of violent attacks in their schools.

Because schools are seen as nodes of support and caring, this extends to teachers as carers and protective actors when learners are exposed to violent acts. What is not clear is how they, (teachers) are looked after when they are subjected to violent acts by learners, other teachers and the communities in which schools are situated. We therefore ask the question, who cares for the Carers? The research we conducted demonstrates that violence in schools can have a debilitating effect on teachers as experienced by the case of four teachers in two provinces in South Africa. An interpretative phenomenological design was used to examine closely the participants' experiences of school violence. The study was framed around the concepts of care and support to understand how sustainable development goals 3 (good health and wellbeing) and 4 (quality education) in relation to teachers' health are important pillars for inclusive teaching-learning environments for all school members. Data was collected through interviews which were thematically analysed. The findings reveal that school violence has a negative impact on the general wellbeing of teachers.

Keywords: Teachers; School violence; Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4; Care and Support, Inclusive Schools

Talking from “hands on” experience: Secondary school principals’ proposed measures to undo underperformance

Zamokwakhe Thandinkosi Ncokwana | Thulani Thamsanqa Bhengu | Mduduzi Simelane
University of Pretoria | UKZN | DBE

Underperforming schools place principals under immense internal and external pressures in different global contexts. In the South African context, being categorised as an underperforming school exposes the principal to unrelenting pressure to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners. It is this pressure that drives the principals to constantly think about how they could mitigate and possibly, eradicate underperformance. In this paper, based on their lived experiences, we explore the measures that principals of underperforming schools propose in the quest to undo underperformance in Ilembe District. We adopted narrative inquiry as a methodology and paradigmatically positioned the study within interpretivism. Narrative interviews generated field texts regarding the proposed measures to deal with underperformance. We deploy Context Responsive Leadership as a theoretical framework to analyse the findings. These field texts were analysed at two levels involving narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. This two-stage analysis process identified the following themes: Reconfiguring the funding model for school posts, *injobo ithungelwa ebandla* -“leveraging community stakeholderhood”, approval of teacher appointments aligned with school curriculum needs and convening meetings and workshops beyond prescribed school hours. We conclude that though some proposed solutions may require structural changes from the Department of Basic Education, some principals’ proposed measures suggest that they still expect parachuted intervention which exonerates them from fundamental accountability. Such expectation stunts the invoking of individual and stakeholderhood agency in the process of eliminating underperformance.

Keywords: Leadership, Context Responsive Leadership, Narrative Inquiry, Stakeholderhood

Inclusive Pedagogy implementation to create inclusive education in diverse classrooms

Johannes Buthelezi | Cape Peninsula University of Technology

This study explored the impact of Inclusive Pedagogies (IP) in diverse classrooms. It is significant to adopt inclusive pedagogy in diverse classrooms because it rejects the notion of learners as having a fixed ability or intelligence and that a child's current learning process can be used to envisage their future. But inclusive pedagogy views the intelligence or abilities of learners as changeable. Therefore, the teaching strategy used (or not used) in classrooms by teachers has an impact on learners' learning capacity for the future. This is a qualitative study that adopted an interpretive approach to explore how educators in two township schools use inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms. Inclusive education needs a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Hence, constructivist learning theory was utilized to analyze the realities of the participants. This theory was critical for this paper because it emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge. Teachers who acknowledge the knowledge learners bring in class adopt pedagogies that accommodate learners' needs. Ten participants were recruited through a purposive sampling method. Semi-structured interviews created a platform to have dialectical engagements with the participants and the thematic analysis produced the following themes:

1. Mindfulness in the learning space;
2. The significance of flexibility in the classroom;
3. Constrains in adopting Inclusive Pedagogy in the classroom.
- 4.

The findings outlined that experienced or senior educators struggle to implement inclusive pedagogies in their classrooms. While novice educators are open to inclusive pedagogy but they have insufficient knowledge.

Keywords: Inclusive Pedagogy; teacher-centred approach; teaching and learning; constructivist learning theory

Self Reflexive Research Method: Redefining the Foundations (al), Education (al) Futures through Poetic Inquiry

Makie Kortjass | Ntokozo Mkhize-Mthembu | UKZN

While Poetic inquiry (PI) is understood as a text-based source, it is also a creative source for narrating and sharing our personal and professional experiences. Poetic Inquiry allows researchers to examine their practice and inform their understanding of collaboration. The Self-Reflexive Research Methodologies SIG session will be a poetic performance. In exploring poetic inquiry, we honour inclusivity by listening to and respecting diverse experiences and ideas. Qualitative researchers echo how writing poetry was developed to encourage inclusive education, which enables everyone to participate fully in workshop activities. Moreover, everyone can respond imaginatively to incentives, build ideas, and create a poem. Qualitative researchers increasingly acknowledge poetry as a medium for evocative and reflexive writing. The existing body of knowledge highlights that poetry has the power to attract humanity because of its ability to convey nostalgia, musicality, rhythm, mystery, and indistinctness. It evokes our senses and releases our hearts and ears to different ways of seeing and knowing. Poetry has also been defined as a protest in community and literary spaces. The poetic inquirer employs the whole self to explore the entirety of the research topic from multiple perspectives, from looking within the self to the complexities of the voices and researcher-participants. This exploration cultivates professional learning, bringing forth self-insight, and introduces others to individual learning journeys. In this session, we are on a pursuit to contribute to scholarly conversations about relationships between poetry and research reflexivity. We will attend to the performative aspect of poetry-as-research by including the live enactment of poems and engagement with audience responses to excavate and encompass our research learning and knowing. Instead of asking for conventional abstracts for the panel session, we have invited interested presenters to respond to a prompt (“**Redefining Education (al) Foundations, Education (al) Futures through Poetic Inquiry**”) in the form of a short poem. A visual image will accompany each poem to illustrate it, and a brief reflection on what the poem says and why it is noteworthy. Our panel session will take the form of a performance of the poems and an interactive discussion in response to the performances. In this way, we will be performing poetics and producing poetic research. We will distribute a booklet of the poems, visual images, and reflections.

Keywords: Self Reflexive Research Methods SIG

“Deep Collaborative Interdisciplinarity” as a Decolonising Strategy: Towards Epistemic Equity

Oscar Koopman | Stellenbosch University

This paper argues for a shift from traditional “solo disciplinary” approaches to “deep collaborative interdisciplinarity” approaches, across departments and faculties as an effective as a decolonising strategy to promote epistemic equity. To this purpose, this paper is structured into three distinct integrated parts. The first part clarifies what is meant by the phrase “decolonisation” given the plurality of meaning in the sea of literature afforded to it. It also provide a brief summary on current national and international debates on the topic of decolonisation. The second part draws on transition theory, specifically the 4 Ss system of Schlossberg’s Theory, which focuses on the availability of resources (physical tools and/or intellectual knowledge) that could potentially assist the teacher or lecturer in transforming her practice to cope with the demands of change. The third part, advocates for departments and faculties across the university to shift from the traditional "solo mentality" to a “deep collaborative interdisciplinary mentality” as a decolonising strategy to move towards epistemic equity. Deep interdisciplinarity, when implemented effectively, could potentially forge new relationships between students and staff from other faculties and indigenous communities outside the university. Such an approach allows staff and students to critically reflect on the ideas, perceptions and theories of others. This approach is crucially significant to post-graduate studies, as deep collaborative interdisciplinarity could forge new relationships that could produce new knowledge, that is critically scrutinised by peers across faculties and disciplines. Such an approach the paper argues could disrupt the dominance of western knowledge by giving representivity to other knowledges to promote epistemic equity.

Keywords: Deep collaborative disciplinarity, decolonisation, epistemic, university curriculum

Community Engagement and the language question: A case study of Rhodes University

Mazvita Mollin Thondhlana | Rhodes University

As the awareness of the positive role of multilingualism in HE grows, questions are being asked as to how and where multilingualism can be nurtured and valued. This study looks at an under researched resource for multilingualism and that is Community Engagement (CE). Rhodes University is historically an English-medium white university although its geo-linguistic context is that it is located in Makhanda, Eastern Cape where isiXhosa is predominantly spoken. The university now attracts a linguistically diverse student body and English mother tongue speakers are a minority.

This study sheds light on how CE can offer a specific liminal site that is neither fully academic nor fully social. CE is a space where language is utilised to enable CE activities and goals while also offering insights for language practices in teaching and learning. It is therefore a powerful space for celebrating and maximizing the power of multilingualism.

The study conducted at RU revealed that with regards to language and learning, if some students feel alienated from university spaces due to language, then it can be argued that we are not meeting the key goal of higher education, that is, to make sure there is equitable epistemic access. The potential space that CE offers as an interim space between academic setting and social setting could help with the transition to academic language. CE could also be a space through which to challenge some academic language norms and where the values of authentic, engaged learning which can enrich academic language can be fostered.

Keywords: Community Engagement, Multilingualism, higher education, transformation

Configuring chronotopes: Pre-service teachers' understanding of space and time in a hybrid curriculum delivery

Joshua Jacobs | Jacqueline Batchelor | Nelson Mandela University | University of Johannesburg

This study explores the configuration of chronotopes (the interplay of space and time) by undergraduate students in a hybrid mode of curriculum delivery within the South African higher education context. Drawing on the concept of Chronotope and its significance in understanding students' interaction with module-based outcomes supported by technology, the study examines how students negotiate their learning experiences and construct their realities in the digital age. Ultimately, the study aims to improve undergraduate programs by identifying the chronotope configurations that promote effective knowledge acquisition. The methodology employed in this study was qualitative, utilizing an exploratory approach. Interviews were employed to capture the experiences and perspectives of the participants, enabling the acquisition of rich and nuanced insights into their negotiation of educational activities in a hybrid mode of curriculum delivery. The study highlights the importance of integrating a spatial and temporal organization of technology-mediated collaborative learning while emphasizing the need for pedagogical theories and models to accompany technological advancements. This research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving educational landscape by exploring students' engagement with digital tools and their ability to shape their learning experiences in terms of space and time. Preliminary findings of this study hold implications for teacher education, particularly in equipping pre-service teachers with the necessary 21st-century skills and knowledge to effectively utilize digital tools. By investigating the semiotic, material, and contextual factors influencing students' chronotope configurations, this research provides insights into enhancing the hybrid delivery mode and supporting students' learning experiences in higher education.

Keywords: Chronotope, Hybrid mode of delivery, Technology-mediated, Higher education

Exploring successes and challenges in implementing inclusive education in early learning: Teachers' views

Lintle Maraisane | University of the Free State

Inclusive practices in Early Childhood Education significantly impact the overall development and prospects of all learners. Based on the concept of human rights, inclusion has been regarded as a nebulous and imaginable consequence of excessive promise. Teachers face difficulties in its implementation. Early childhood teachers are no exception to this phenomenon. Their inability to implement inclusive teaching has been a persistent problem. This research, therefore, sought to demystify early learning inclusion by examining the realities of what works and what does not work to inform policymaking mechanisms. In this qualitative study, data was inferred through semi-structured interviews and narratives from ten purposively sampled Foundation Phase teachers based in three public schools in Free State, South Africa. Through the lens of Ubuntu principles, we generated data that was further classified into themes. Thematic data analysis revealed three themes: contending with the meaning and implementation of inclusion, seeking critical support, and an intense desire for transformative practice. Participants had a general understanding of the concept of inclusion and positive attitudes towards it, however, they also admitted that they lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively implement inclusive education in their social and cultural contexts. Additionally, teachers' pedagogical practices marginalized some learners on the grounds of their inability to implement inclusive education and the lack of administrative support. Considering the new inclusive policy, recommendations are made for enhancing the inclusive teaching abilities of preschool teachers. Incorporating inclusive education training into traditional teacher preparation programs and cultivating advocacy skills among future teachers are just two of the numerous approaches being taken to address this issue.

Keywords: early learning, inclusion, inclusive education, successes and challenges, teachers

The development of TVET lecturers' digital competencies: Preservice teachers' perspectives

Siphokazi Vimbelo | Cape Peninsula University of Technology

There is a clear lack of preparation to be competitively immersed in the world of digital work, more especially in TVET teaching (Galindo, Ruiz, 2017). Some of the lecturers are not keen on integrating ICTs in their teaching and some are not encouraged to do so. Therefore, there is an urgent need to train in new skills adapted to the impact of technological innovation on economic activity, an impact that manifests itself not only in the professional sphere but also in a general sense, hence exploring students' perceptions of developing TVET digital competencies. The study uses connectivism as a conceptual framework that has been developed for e-learning. This framework views learning as a network phenomenon influenced by technology and socialization (Siemens, 2006). This qualitative study uses students' assessment task as a document analysed from twenty preservice students. The research question addressed: How can TVET college digital competencies be developed? The findings from the preservice teachers show several ways of developing digital competencies such as: providing professional development – focusing on enhancing educators' digital literacy skills, using different online platforms, collaborating, and networking with other lecturers and ICT companies. The researcher will use preservice' feedback for Teacher Professional Development and for the development of the preservice teachers in the faculty of education.

Keywords: TVET, TVET lecturers, digital competencies, preservice teachers

E-learning Platforms at ODeL Institutions: Creating Real-world Learning.

Cedric Bheki Mpungose | University of KwaZulu-Natal

Students are bound by South African Open Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) universities to only use the formal e-learning platforms at an expense of informal platforms. Recent studies outline that this creates challenges during the learning process, since students struggle to use formal e-learning platforms (LMS) owing to the digital divide; however, they are familiar with and good at using informal e-learning platforms (social media sites). While these studies have attempted to provide possible solutions, there is a need for an alternative intervention. This qualitative case study proposes alternatives and the possible use non- formal e-learning by exploring students' experiences on the use of e-learning platforms.

Twenty one postgraduates students doing B.Ed. Honours modules were purposively and conveniently sampled, and the data generated from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and emailed reflective activities were thematically coded to produce a model of e-learning platforms. and the theoretical framework of connectivism was used to direct the study and make sense of the data. The findings revealed that a non-formal e-learning platform which has been neglected in the past could be used to improve learning at ODeL institutions. The study concludes by arguing for the move to a non-formal e-learning platform that blends the use of LMS and SMS in order to create a real- world learning for ODeL institution to enhance a sustainable education.

Keywords: ODeL, e-learning, learning, platforms, students' experiences, university

The quality of Physical Sciences formative assessments administered at selected high schools in South Africa

Monde Kazeni | Thabang Molise | University of the Witwatersrand

The South African Physical Sciences curriculum prescribes frequent use of formative assessments in classrooms, to constantly monitor the acquisition of both content knowledge and the skills necessary for self-regulated learning. The use of formative assessments is particularly important in the study of Physical Sciences, where learners perform poorly because they find it difficult to comprehend. The quality of the formative assessments administered in South African Physical Sciences classrooms is not ascertained because educators design the assessments using their initiative and discretion, and curriculum assessment specialists rarely evaluate their quality. Consequently, the current study sought to determine and compare the quality of Physical Sciences formative assessments administered in selected South African schools, and to establish the factors that influenced educators' choices of formative assessment items. A qualitative multiple case study design was used to collect data, through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The sample comprised of three educators from three different schools in the Gauteng province, and nine formative assessments administered to Grades 10, 11 and 12 learners in 2019. Assessment quality was measured using content validity, authenticity, cognitive levels and alignment of assessment items with course objectives. The findings showed that most of the analysed formative assessments were of low quality, regardless of the level of education, and that educators rarely considered assessment quality indicators, when designing formative assessments. We recommend the training of Physical Sciences educators in designing quality formative assessments.

Keywords: Formative assessments, Physical Sciences quality

Life Sciences teaching for the future: tensions and possibilities.

Marie-Louise Botha | Stellenbosch University

“If we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow” (John Dewey in West, 2013). Critical thinking (CT) skills are valued by employers because employees who think critically and independently can be trusted (Doyle, 2020). Educators should endeavour to promote dynamic education, shaping informed, educated, well-rounded students/employees in preparation for a complex 21st century work market, not robbing them of the possibilities of tomorrow.

Based on Mezirow’s Transformative Theory (Kitchenham, 2008) as a conceptual lens, this paper intends to respond to the question of how to transform teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) from what we know and have been doing (foundation) to where we are heading (future). Through this lens the educator explores her own reflections and endeavors to enhance TLA praxis (Smith, 2001) in the Life Sciences teaching module, guiding students to enhance their own understanding of TLA processes within Life Sciences teaching through self-directed learning (SDL). SDL is an approach to teaching where students take responsibility for their own learning, become critical thinkers, and develop higher order thinking skills (Bosch, Mentz, & Goede, 2019).

SDL places students on a journey of critical engagement of their own TLA practices. Tensioned spaces are created when the educator guides students in considering their current positions, their intended goals, and how to reach their final goal as future teachers in an unpredictable era. The educator reflects on what was done, and what is being done to assist students in embracing these tensions, and possibilities as future Life Sciences teachers.

Keywords: Life Sciences, Reflections, Self-directed learning

Arts-based pedagogy for self-reflexive leadership in complex education futures

Marguerite Muller | Liezl Dick King's College London

In this arts-based discussion we explore how arts-based pedagogy can be used in education leadership development and promote self-reflexive practice. We both work in the field of education leadership and have collaborated previously to write about educators' subjectivity and arts-based research (Dick and Muller 2021). During a time of rapid change, we need to develop affective and social skills in leadership education (Kilic, 2023) to engage with complex experiences. Traditional leadership education which focusses on behavioural competencies for leaders are simply not sufficient to develop the innovation and new visions needed to equip education leaders for uncertain futures. When working with the theoretical concept of educator subjectivity as an assemblage (Deleuze, & Guattari, 1988) we understand leadership as relational, affective and responsive. Arts-based pedagogy is a useful tool to engage people in experiential learning, affirm personal experiences, and develop self-reflexivity. As research practitioners we experiment with the potential for arts-based methods as a pedagogical tool for self-reflexivity in education leadership. In our different global south/north contexts we both work with students and staff from diverse backgrounds as we try to develop common goals in education leadership and global citizenship. Our overarching collaborative research questions are:

- How can we use arts-based inquiry to understand and communicate the complex experiences of education leaders in different contexts?
- How can education leaders draw on own experiences as tools to navigate the challenges in a changing context?

In this arts-based discussion we invite participants to help us explore the overarching research questions through play with creative pedagogies. We will ask participants to respond questions: Who Am I? Where do I come from? What am I doing here? What difference can I make? What is different about me? What am I becoming? These are questions we have used to create a reflexive artwork of our own development can change as co-authors, academics and educators

(1). In this discussion we invite participants to a collaborative process of sharing their own experiences within education contexts to encourage self-reflexivity. We will facilitate the discussion through a series of arts-based prompts to encourage participants to express their educator subjectivity through an affirmative reflection on the ways in which they navigate complexity and provide guidance in their various contexts. An arts-based inquiry allows us to move beyond text to different forms of expression that might help us tap into affective dimensions of leadership for educational futures.

Keywords: Arts-based pedagogy, assembled subjectivity, educational futures, leadership development, self-reflexivity

Building a next generation of scholars: the approach of the South African Education Research Association

Mpho-Entle Modise | Maureen Robinson | UNISA | Stellenbosch University

This paper discusses how the South African Education Research Association (SAERA), has approached building the next generation of scholars. The paper briefly describes the inception of SAERA in 2013, with its specific aims of rupturing historical racial and institutional divisions and promoting socially relevant research. In seeking to advance scholarly inquiry in South Africa, a key goal of SAERA has been to lead the next generation of scholars. Drawing on interviews with key informants, the chapter describes how early career researchers have experienced the strategies towards this end. Such strategies include doctoral awards, public seminars, mentorships, support for writing for publication and – most importantly – establishing a community of critical and supportive engagement. Through fostering a collaborative culture, the organisation has sought to challenge dominant discourses of performativity and competition in academia, and the paper reflects on the successes and challenges of this endeavour.

Keywords: early career researchers, pedagogical discourse, peer learning, research capacity building

Applying Experiential Learning Theory in Non-School-Based Technical and Vocational Training for Unemployed Youths in South Africa

Celestin Mayombe | North-West University

Applying Experiential Learning Theory in Non-School-Based Technical and Vocational Training for Unemployed Youths in South Africa Youth unemployment is one of the major challenges facing Sub-Saharan African countries today. Although they may have held a general certificate of education (equivalent to Grade 12), they lack employable or marketable skills enabling them to become wage or self-employed in the informal sector at a low level. Evidence from studies shows that technical and vocational training programmes empower disadvantaged young people with marketable skills and competencies to be involved in economic activities. This paper examines the use of the application of experiential learning theory (ELT) in non-school-based technical and vocational training as a learning approach to develop job-related skills and competencies for the real world of the workplace. The study utilised self-completion questionnaires and one-on-one semi-structured interviews to collect data from 512 young trainees, 24 training managers and 32 trainers. The findings reveal that the facilitators used classroom-based and field-based experiential learning approaches to help students gain job-related skills and competencies required in the labour market. This paper provides new insights into the application of ELT to improve the effectiveness of technical and vocational training programmes for disadvantaged and unemployed youths. Its findings will motivate the providers of skills development for unemployed youths to use ELT in designing course materials, planning resources and directing their teaching-learning approaches in order to help students to acquire skills and competencies to perform tasks close to real work situations.

Keywords: Non-school-based training, South Africa, disadvantaged youths, experiential learning, vocational training

Strategies to promote creativity among PGCE English methodology students:

Logamurthie Athiemoolam | Nelson Mandela University

The preparation of PGCE students for school-based learning within the limited timeframes, poses challenges for methodology lecturers who, in addition to teaching pedagogical knowledge, may also need to teach the content knowledge that these students will require to be successful teachers. This could result in methodology lecturers neglecting to tap into the students' creativity so that they could become more creative teachers. It is with this background in mind that this paper provides an overview of the strategies that I implemented in my English methodology class such as choral recital, tableau vivant, plays, filmmaking, poetry writing and storytelling, amongst others, to tap into my students' creativity with a view to making them aware of the importance of being creative teachers. In focusing on the significance of promoting creativity among my students I also report on some of the creative work that they presented and how the class became aware of their peers' talents, which they would not have been aware of, had these creative strategies not been implemented in the methodology class. The crux of my argument, in this paper, is that if students are afforded opportunities to be creative in the English methodology class through the strategies that lecturers implement in their classes, they will be more conscientised to the significance of creativity in teaching and learning, how to tap into their learners' talents, and to design creative lessons.

Keywords: Creativity, language teaching, pre-service teachers, self-reflexive inquiry, teacher education, teaching approaches

Cultural capital in the wrong currency’: the reflective accounts of scholarship students attending elite secondary schools

Jennifer Feldman | Stellenbosch University

Situated within schooling in post-apartheid South Africa, this presentation draws on data from a research project and book titled ‘*Scholarship Students in Elite South African Schools: The Gift of a Scholarship*’ that problematised the awarding of scholarships to students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds to attend elite public and private schools in South Africa. Twenty former scholarship recipients between the ages of 19 and 24 took part in individual semi-structured interviews. The discussion draws on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to analyse the scholarship students' experiences in the elite secondary school context. For Bourdieu (1990), cultural capital refers to the accumulation of knowledge, skills and know-how that advantages an individual and gives them status in society. Thus, in relation to the discussion, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital provides a lens that highlights how the scholarship students' forms of capital from their primary schooling, homes and communities were different to, or not recognised, within the elite school context. Further, as stated by Bourdieu (1985), individuals are afforded power within a particular social setting or field depending on one's position within the field, which is in part determined by the amount and type of capital an individual possesses. What the research finds, therefore, is that success in one part of an educational field does not necessarily equate to success in another and that providing students with the financial means to access elite education does not mean that students enter into the school contexts as ‘equal players’.

Keywords: Scholarships; elite schools; cultural capital; Bourdieu; South African schooling

A closer look at teaching of Engineering Graphics and Design pre-service teachers

Sibusiso Sotsaka | Durban University of Technology

The study magnified the teaching of first year Pre-service teachers (PSTs) for Engineering Graphics and Design (EGD) in a Bachelor of Education Technology degree four-year programme at a university of technology. EGD is among modules at first level PSTs enrolled for the qualification. Majority of PSTs are admitted without the high school content knowledge of EGD. PSTs has an option of not continuing with EGD as their major at next levels they then drop it. Lectured it for ten years, trend has been noticed. Module is highly prioritised as a scarce subject in schools by Department of Basic Education and has a bursary funding called FUNZA LUSHAKA to attract PSTs.

The self-study has been conducted in teaching PSTs. Highlighted are the difficulties experienced by PSTs doing EGD. Study aimed to make explicit and validating the professional expertise and, contributing to the knowledge base of teacher education. Qualitative study was underpinned by Reflective theory and Constructivist theory of teaching and learning. Purposive sampling was used to generate data from two teacher educator video lessons, viewed and evaluated by three colleagues, individual semi-structured interviews and analyses of PSTs class activities. Data was analysed using a content analysis approach. Findings highlighted too much content covered at a short time. High velocity of teaching and learning for first time PSTs. A bridging course for EGD PSTs.

Keywords: Teacher Education practice, Theory of reflection and Constructive Theory of teaching and learning

Troubling the notion of boundaries: Transgressivism in curriculum studies scholarship

Labby Ramrathan | Suriamurthee Maistry | Lesley le Grange | Petro du Preez | Shan Simmonds | Sylvan Blignaut | Chris Reddy | University of KwaZulu-Natal

A defining feature of contemporary times, is the need to exist (and transgress) within conditionality (Stiegler, 2015). A remarkable manifestation of this conditionality is reflected in how power has given effect to a visibly discernible unevenness that permeates almost every sphere of society. South African society for example, typifies stark differentials, with culprit structures and agents (including education), oblivious to the violence (overt and covert) that is experienced by those at the receiving end of ‘institutions’ of power and their machinations – effecting policies and processes that maintain and sustain the status quo. But, subjects are (still) free to act and leverage in spaces that present opportunities for progressive change.

In this panel presentation we shall explore the concept of transgressivism vis-à-vis multiple educational discourses. We view transgressivism as a philosophical concept – a vital concept and not a concept of recognition. In other words, it does not have fixity but is created/generated to have transformative effects in the world (for us the immediate world of education). Transgressivism has been invoked in educational discourses since its first usage in critical pedagogy.

Transgressive teaching first emerged in bell hooks’ work of the nineties (see hooks 1994) to extend existing knowledge in the field of critical pedagogy. Teaching to transgress involves going against the pedagogical grain to challenge institutional norms and traditional forms of doing, knowing, and being in curriculum work. Within the current discourses of decolonising the curriculum (school and higher education), Fúnez-Flores (2021), extends Maldonado-Torres’s (2002: 183) notion of transgresstopic critical hermeneutics to illuminate “broader social totality of higher education institutions as simultaneously implicated in and reciprocally structured by local, regional, and global contexts”. Noting the deeply ingrained curriculum policies and processes of school and higher education, complicated by the intersectionality of, amongst others, race, gender, sexuality, geography, economics and politics within South Africa, transgressivism as both a philosophical stance and a methodological process opens up opportunities for border crossings, perhaps even the constrictures of identity politics.

In this symposium a panel of curriculum scholars will engage different philosophical perspectives (including phenomenology, critical theory, postmodernism and posthumanism) as they attempt to “perform philosophy as a method... as driving force to read and think, ...to have an ethical relationship with ... thought” (Tesar 2021: 544), with the view to troubling conditionality in its multiple manifestations.

The symposium will be facilitated by a chair who will frame transgressivism within educational discourses. The session will close with a discussant who will offer a critical response to the presentations.

Keywords: Curriculum studies, Transgressivism; critical pedagogy, border crossing, posthumanism, postmodernism

Reflecting Sustainable Development Goals in teacher development and quality for transformative changes in educational research in Sub-Saharan Africa

Lynne Johns | Joshua Bell | Yohanna William | CITE -CPUT & UWC | CITE, CPUT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed upon in September 2015 prioritise equality, quality and inclusive education for all by 2030. Target 4 intends to ensure an adequate supply of trained and motivated teachers. These quality teachers who teach effectively are key to providing equitable and quality education. And continuing professional development (CPD) for and by teachers is key to teacher knowledge, skills and dispositions, as the COVID-19 pandemic made evident. Yet, there seems to be a neglect of both research and policy response particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) regarding CPD to empower teachers to deal with the complexity of the educational experience in SSA and with crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, war, conflict and violence. This panel consists of three papers. The first paper draws on empirical data based on public private partnership (PPP) or collaboration schools in the Western Cape South Africa to examine the profiles of teachers in this form of schooling system. The second paper, premised in the important role of CPD for quality education, presents review of CPD practices, models, policies and governance in SSA. The third paper seeks to contextualise the experiences of Newly Qualified Teachers, who are tasked with navigating a complex and challenging transition from their initial teacher education to meeting the extensive demands of teaching in South Africa.

Paper One: Mapping teachers in public-private partnership schools in the Western Cape

Participants: Lynne Johns (CITE -CPUT & UWC), Joshua Bell (CITE, CPUT)

Keywords: Collaboration Schools; Teacher profiles; Public-private partnership schools; Global partnership in education.

Reflecting the SDG 17 that calls for global partnership for sustainable development, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) schools in the Western Cape, South Africa is an example of a new form of public schooling that fast track the provision of quality education in disadvantaged areas. The management of these collaboration schools is outsourced to private entities known as School Operating Partners (SOPs) or donors. SOPs and donors, together with School Governing Bodies

(SGBs) have the authority and responsibility to employ teachers. This paper explores who these teachers are in PPP schools. The data was collected through questionnaires completed by 164 teachers from eight schools. The findings indicated that, majority of teachers (78.9%) were employed by SOPs through School Governing Bodies (SBG), nearly half (46.2%) of the teachers had an overall teaching experience of 0-5 years, while 27% had less than a year experience in the current schools and 62% had 2-5 years of teaching experience in these schools. Majority of the teachers were female (64.6%), and 50% in age cohort of 20-30 years and 72% in 20-40 age cohort. Regarding academic qualifications 43.7% had Bachelor degree, 17.7% had Postgraduate certificate and 15.8% had Honours degree. For teaching qualifications, teachers with Bachelor degree in Education were 45.2% and 25.3% had postgraduate certificate in Education. The independent samples T-Test and ANOVA results indicated that the profiles of teachers were not different across the schools. These findings reveal that PPP schools are using qualified teachers that are young and in need of employment. The danger is that SOPs may abuse their powers because of the performativity framework applied in PPP schools. Therefore, the paper recommends that an employment and CPD guidelines be drawn up in collaboration with the SOP and WCED in order to protect and facilitate these teachers.

Paper Two: Continuing Teacher Professional Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Mapping Concepts, Models, Policies and Governance.

Participant: Yohana William (CITE - CPUT)

Keywords: Continuing Professional Development, CPD policy frameworks, CPD models, CPD programmes, sub-Saharan Africa.

This paper provides a scoping review of continuing professional development (CPD) practices in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The paper first conceptualises CPD in light of how its meanings has recently evolved from the narrower and traditional to the broader and modern perspectives, and then builds upon the existing CPD models to propose a heuristic typology of CPD models in the contemporary SSA context. Next, the paper examines how context and policy environment influence the implementation of various teachers' CPD activities in SSA. Finally, the paper concludes by underscoring the importance of teacher agency, supportive contexts, and the broader enabling policy frameworks for successfully planning, designing and implementing various CPD models and effective programmes in SSA.

Paper Three: Being an NQT in South Africa

Participants: Joshua Bell (CITE - CPUT)

Keywords: Newly Qualified Teachers, Equitable Teaching, Education Quality, Initial Teacher Education

In the context of increasing global inequalities and inequities, poverty, illness and political instability, the role of teachers has become more challenging. Thus, it is imperative that teaching force is given the support and voice to execute its role effectively. This paper focuses on the experiences of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in a South African context. This paper begins with a survey of the literature, both global and local, on the experiences of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) during their first years of teaching. Research towards the paper is drawn from a two-year semi-longitudinal project that followed student teachers in two ITE programmes: a Bachelor of Education specialising in Foundation Phase and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education specialising in the Further Education and Training Phase. The respondents came from four universities in South Africa, two traditional universities and two universities of technology. The study sought to investigate, firstly, student-teacher perceptions of how their initial teacher training programme prepared them to become qualified teachers; and, secondly, how their initial teacher training programme equipped them to deal with the daily demands of teaching in South Africa. The paper further discusses the relationship between ITE programmes and how NQTs teach, what it means to be prepared, what pedagogic enactment entails and the influence of the context in which NQTs teach.

Reverse Code-Switching in Teaching First Language at Grade 4: A Study in Selected Urban Schools in Namibia

Linus Nekondo | Meameno Shiweda | University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus)

Namibia has adopted English as the official language, leading to its prominence in education as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) from Grade 4 onwards. This heightened role of English has had unintended consequences for the relevance of indigenous languages (L1) because passing English (L2) has become a requirement for academic progression and access to higher education. It also has an impact on language instruction and content delivery during language lessons. Thus, in teaching English, especially in rural settings where exposure to English appears to be limited, teachers frequently resort to code-switching between English and the first language. Conversely, in urban schools where learners typically have a better grasp of English than their mother tongues, teachers find it necessary to engage in 'reverse code-switching,' whereby they transition from the learners' first language to English. This study, therefore, investigated the prevalence and implications of reverse code-switching in teaching first language at Grade 4 in four urban schools in Oshana Region, Namibia. Non-participatory observations were conducted to collect data, which was then analysed using the Semantic dimension of the legitimation code theory (LCT). Semantic waves were constructed for each observed lesson, illustrating each lesson's teaching and learning trajectory. The results indicate that both teachers and students frequently engaged in reverse code-switching as prompted by three aspects: lack of L1 knowledge, abstraction purposes, and incidental uses. These findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on first language instruction(s) in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: LCT, first language teaching, reverse code-switching, semantic waves, urban schools

Instructional leadership in promoting learner reading competency: practices of Primary School Principals in uMlazi District

Nonjabulo Madonda | Sibonelo Blose | Sindisiwe Msani | University of Pretoria| University of the Witwatersrand

One of the responsibilities of School Principals in South Africa is to provide leadership and management to enable high-quality teaching and learning. According to the PIRLS 2021 report, 81% of Grade 4 learners cannot read in any language. Similar findings were reported in the recent (2023) report by the Reading Panel which shows the persistence of the problem as 82% of grade 4 learners cannot read for comprehension to date. This raises great concern about the quality of education offered in schools. Given that principals are key stakeholders and instructional leaders in schools, their role in ensuring quality and effective teaching and learning is paramount. The study reported in this paper engaged with school principals to understand their practices of promoting reading in five successful primary schools in the uMlazi District. The Instructional Leadership Model proposed by Weber (1996) framed our thinking. The case study design was adopted to qualitatively understand the participating principals' experiences. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The data was thereafter analysed, using the thematic analysis method. The findings gave an indication that school principals do set aside some time for reading at the start of most days to ensure that at least there is some reading taking place. However, the reading is not monitored nor is it done intentionally to ensure that learners read for meaning. While principals seem to play a part in promoting reading in their schools, we believe that they can strengthen their instructional leadership role to realise more improvement.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Leadership, Management, School Principals, literacy, reading

The impact of Online learning on Epistemological Access during the Covid-19 period at a South African University

Lerato Lesenyeho | Wits University

Due to the sudden migration to online learning that was necessitated by the pandemic in South Africa, the literature offers contradictory findings about students' learning experiences during this period. Though some studies indicate that many students struggled to access education during the pandemic, others suggest that the shift to online learning presents significant opportunities to enhance students' access. To get clear results on the effects of online learning, the author of this paper believes that it is important to focus on whether students achieved epistemological access or the knowledge that the university distributes. It is also important to find out how the universities remedied inevitable inequalities to ensure equal opportunities even to the most disadvantaged students to promote social justice and success of all students as emphasized in transformation policies. Given this, my study investigated the impact of online learning on epistemological access at a South African University. Social Justice Theory served as a theoretical framework for this study. Within the interpretivism paradigm, a qualitative phenomenological study was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to select 24 students: 8 students from each of the second, third- and fourth-year cohorts of 2023 Education classes. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and were analysed thematically. The findings indicate that online learning affected the Higher Education landscape as students were not able to participate fully in academic practices due to a lack of access to online pedagogies for various reasons; as such, they struggled to gain knowledge and progress in their studies.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Epistemological access, Online learning, South African University

From the insiders' mouth: Principals' narratives of outwrestling underperformance pressure in secondary schools

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University of Pretoria | UKZN | DBE

Across the globe, underperformance of schools is a highly contentious, sensitive and complex issue. In the South African context, underperforming secondary schools are those that obtain less than 65% average pass in matric final examinations. Such underperformance invites media attention, external intervention and pressure from the Department of Basic Education. Being chief accounting officers, *inter alia*, regarding teaching and learning in schools, principals take the brunt of underperformance reality which culminates in principals having to wrestle with underperformance pressures. This paper narratively explores how six secondary school principals attempt to outwrestle underperformance pressure brought about by underperformance of their schools in Grade 12. This qualitative interpretive study deployed narrative inquiry as a methodology. Narrative interviews were utilised to generate field texts. Context-responsive leadership was used as a theoretical lens to frame the study. Analysis of data was double-pronged, featuring narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. Through this analysis, we identified four themes that capture measures/strategies that principals employed to outwrestle underperformance pressure: labouring beyond the prescribed hours, strategic collaborative school partnerships, "one cap fits one" professional staff development and assessment-driven teaching and learning. Conclusions suggest that the strategies devised and implemented by the principals turned around their schools' performances. Central to their strategy is an approach called 'intra-principal change', which encapsulates change that occurred within themselves, enabled them first to see the need to change, and thus, invoked agency that galvanised the quest to devise context responsive strategies, which were reflective of the contextual actualities of their schools.

Keywords: Underperformance, leadership, context-responsive leadership, narrative inquiry, intra-principal change

A sense of belonging: Children labelled with Intellectual Disability

Anna Westin | Umeå University

Background : The sense of belonging is a basic human need because people want to be socially connected to other people, to feel accepted and to be part of a group. The sense of belonging has been described as containing components such as inclusion, respect, acceptance, and support.

The aim : of this study is to listen to how children labelled with ID describe belonging in relation to school and friendships.

Method: in this ongoing study semi-structured interviews with four children labelled with ID in mainstream school and adapted school were conducted to examine their experiences of belonging in school and leisure time. The interviews were conducted with the students at their homes and with parental presence. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and categorized. The study was inspired by three theoretical levels of the politics of belonging: (1) social location; (2) identification and emotional attachment; and (3) ethical and political values, which were used in the analysis.

Results: When talking about dreams, they described their dream job, such as baker/chef, pilot, school nurse and hairdresser, but also things they look forward to and enjoy doing, such as cooking, visiting amusement parks, and planning their birthday party. All of them have friends at school, and all of them.

Keywords: Intellectual disability, belonging

Sources of educator directed violence in high schools in Soweto, South Africa

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Concern has spread throughout the country due to increased violent occurrences in South African schools. Studies on school violence typically place more emphasis on the learners as victims of violence than on educators. As such, incidents of violence against educators are both underreported and understudied. The main research question that guides this research is: What are educators' experiences with educator-directed violence (EDV) at secondary schools in Soweto, Gauteng? Identity, social learning, and ecological systems theories are the theoretical foundations for this research. This qualitative phenomenological research study included 100 purposively selected educators from eight secondary schools in Soweto. Open-ended questionnaires and unstructured interview schedules were employed to gather data. According to the findings, the sources of violence directed at educators vary. The gender of the victim or the perpetrator can have an impact on the grounds of violence. In addition, factors that contribute to the sources of educator-directed violence entail the socioeconomic status of the community around the school, drug abuse by learners, learners' age cohort, stress, jealousy, and detestation due to colleagues' promotions, poor classroom management and bullying from colleagues, learners, and their parents. These findings illustrate that, despite the precautions put in place by the Department of Education, educator-directed violence is on the rise in classrooms in Soweto. We recommend that the Department of Education reviews its approaches to addressing EDV in schools and that educators obtain systematic education to better their capacities and violence-mitigation strategies. Finally, some policies must be changed to reduce violent incidents, and better mechanisms for dealing with repeat offenders must be implemented.

Keywords: Aggression, violence, educators, experiences, Soweto, inclusion, exclusion, marginalization, victim, perpetrator, bystander

Exploring the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ Educators in South Africa to develop a policy framework

Moshe Moses Makoa | STADIO Higher Education (School of Education)

This study sought to explore the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ educators in South Africa in one selected education district of the Gauteng province, which the setting consists of urban and semi-urban areas. The aim of the study was to develop a policy framework that can address the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ educators. A Queer theory was adopted to explore the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ educators and how these educators responded to the established hypermasculinity values, that oppresses the rights of sexual minorities and in turn entrenches discrimination and unfair treatment in all frontiers of the workplace. Heteronormativity and heterosexism are serious concerns in South African schools. Educators who identify with LGBTQ+ community or are non-normative to heterosexual identities are often discriminated against and marginalised. Several studies on sexual diversity and identities have primarily been conducted on how educators handle sexual diversity, as opposed to how they live their own sexual preferences and have thus been victims of sexual silences. Participants in the study were ten (10) purposefully selected educators who identify as LGBTQ+ persons in the teaching profession. Five (5) participants were selected from urban areas and another (5) from semi-urban areas to balance the perspectives on the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ educators. The reason for choosing this sampling technique is because the participants come from a special population, and they had to adhere to the prescribed selection criteria. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to capture the experiences of the participants. The study further analysed the constitution of the republic of South Africa to determine ways in which a policy base can be developed to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ educators in schools. This study uncovers an ongoing dialogue about LGBTQ+ matters in South African schools. It was discovered that contextual factors such as personal, social, cultural, economic, political and the area in which people are located has an impact on how LGBTQ+ educators are perceived by their fellow colleagues and learners. The participants in the study presented divergent views with regards to their lived experiences as educators who identify as LGBTQ+ persons. People in urban areas are disposed to express less discrimination against gays and lesbians – as opposed to people in rural and semi-urban areas who expresses more discrimination against the community

Keywords: Lived experiences, educators, policy, framework, urban and semi-urban setting, LGBTQ+

A Year On: Reflections on building a global south educational knowledge commons collection on the semantic web using a fluid ontology methodology

Heila Lotz-Sisitka | Robin Ferguson | Rhodes University

This paper explores and reflects on the progress achieved over the last 12-months to co-create a global south educational knowledge commons collection(s). The project explores the processes involved in building a global south knowledge commons 'archive' that captures an emerging body of scholarly work produced by a collective of approximately 200 scholars in the field of environment and sustainability education in Africa over 30-years. This project has been done in partnership with the Rhodes University Library Digitisation Unit. This presentation focusses on the processes, roles and skills involved in creating a shared language (online dictionary or taxonomy) and organising or tagging (linked data). These processes are embedded in the semantic web which is regarded as a "development of the World Wide Web in which data in web pages is structured and tagged in such a way that it can be read directly by computers (AI)". In the instance of the Archive Project this meant building the global south archive primarily on the backbone of Wikidata and creating a global south dictionary. This global south dictionary takes its place amongst the global north dictionaries like the Library of Congress. The new dictionary enables the 'heavy lifting' epistemic work of decolonization and the transformation of the seat of the politics of modern knowledge structuring, access and flows. The concept of a 'fluid ontology' has been used to inform how data may be linked in the Archive. In the international literature, the concept of 'fluid ontology' refers to "flexible knowledge structures that evolve and adapt to communities' interest based on contextual information articulated by human contributors, curators, and viewers, as well as artificial bots ... Fluid ontologies allow for a tighter coupling between communities' interests and the browsing structure" (Srinivasan & Haung, 2005). We consider the implications for making global south educational knowledge available in ways that are non-static, grounded yet imaginative, generative of social learning, and the advancement of scholarly work.

Keywords: knowledge commons; decolonization; semantic web; global south; dictionary

Large-scale assessment studies in South Africa: Reviewing Foundations and Exploring Futures for researchers, academics, policy makers and teachers.

Anil Kanjee | Jeanette Ramollo | Tshwane University of Technology

The recent release of results from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Systemic Evaluation (SE) and Early Learning National Assessment (ELNA) once again highlighted several concerns regarding the impact of large-scale assessment studies in South Africa. How these concerns have been addressed has had a differential impact on the schooling system, while many of these concerns have remained unresolved since the implementation of the “new” system in the post-apartheid era. Key among these include:

- Developing a comprehensive national assessment framework;
- Improving the reporting and dissemination of assessment results;
- Enhancing capacity and skills for using assessment data to improve decision making by different roleplayers across the system;
- Aligning LSAs to the national Assessment for Learning pedagogical strategy;
- Addressing performativity and accountability regimes that impact on policy and practice of education officials, school leaders and teachers.

In addressing several sub-themes linked to the ‘Education(al) Foundations, Education(al) Futures’ conference theme, in this session, a panel of national and international experts will engage on the concerns noted above by reflecting on:

- international policy and practice regarding the use of LSAS;
- the implementation and use of large-LSAS in the post-apartheid era;
- the roles and contributions that that different role-players (especially researchers and academics) can, and should, make to current practices and debates; and
- options for improving the effective use of assessment results to contribute more meaningfully to addressing the challenge of equity and quality impacting schools in South Africa.

Chairperson/Moderator Qetelo Moloi: Research Fellow, University of Johannesburg

Panel members:

- Crain Soudien: Professor, UCT and Research Fellow: Centre for International Teacher Education, CPU
- Jo-Anne Baird: Professor, Department of Education, Oxford University
- Leslie Rutkowski: Professor, School of Education, Indiana University
- Mark Chetty: Director, Assessment and Examinations, Department of Basic Education
- Anil Kanjee, Research Professor, School of Education, Tshwane University of Technology

Respondent: Radhika Gorur: Professor, Deakin University & Director, Laboratory of International Assessment Studies

Knotworking: facilitating transformational agency in teachers to overcome constraints to inclusive teaching in post-pandemic classrooms

Douglas Andrews | Wits University

The issue of educational exclusion in South Africa is mired in complexity. Even before Covid-19, teachers found the challenge of being pedagogically responsive to learners with different learning needs problematic. Covid-19 ushered in additional challenges and shone a light on the inequalities in education in South Africa. The premise of this study is that educational exclusion cannot be seen as a simple problem to overcome, instead, it must be considered against the historical backdrop and manifested complexities that exist within a school. Complexities are identified as particularly vexing for teachers, as the origins of these new challenges are compounded by a multitude of complex factors that are non-linear, and difficult to define. This paper brings into conversation the challenges to inclusive teaching that teachers face in the post-pandemic classroom. These new challenges urgently require creative new solutions. Considering the historical backdrop of the pandemic, the paper focuses on teachers conceptualizing these new challenges to inclusive teaching and then finding concrete solutions. To achieve this, a nuanced, collaborative intervention strategy known as the knotworking heuristic, inspired by Cultural Historical Activity Theory, was implemented with a cohort of 10 intermediate-phase teachers at one independent school in Gauteng. Microsoft Teams was used as the operating platform for the knotworking moments, where it was envisioned that using technology to facilitate collaboration would accelerate decision-making. This was a qualitative study, where interview data from the knotworking moments were coded for emergent themes. What findings show, was that continuous knotworking moments facilitated teachers to identify constraints to inclusive teaching and then identify concrete solutions. The use of technology to support the knots led to more efficient and frequent collaborations and, recording of the collaborations enhanced reflection, which limited ruptures in the knots. This collaborative process demonstrated transformative and relational agency amongst the teachers, and expansive learning, where an abstract problem transformed into a concrete solution. I argue in this paper, that the potential of knotworking to facilitate transformative agency in teachers to overcome constraints to inclusive teaching offers powerful opportunities for finding concrete solutions to complex challenges.

Keywords: Knotworking, Inclusive Education, Cultural Historical Activity Theory, Complexity Technology, Transformative

Why are EC teachers in marginalized classrooms not integrating ICT in their classrooms?

Fortunate Gunzo | Rhodes University

Literature on ICT integration in marginalised classrooms often refers to three main barriers, the lack of ICT infrastructure, teachers' lack of or limited ICT skills and teachers' negative attitudes towards ICT in general and ICT integration specifically. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model and the Diffusion of Innovation models, findings from a study conducted in rural Eastern Cape Province schools show that these three usually stated barriers to ICT integration in the classroom are no longer the main obstacle to ICT integration in teaching. The study focused deliberately on the Eastern Cape province where investments have been made to mitigate the above-mentioned barriers. A well-maintained mobile computer lab was made available to teachers, teachers were trained to integrate ICT in their classroom over a three-year period and data from a survey showed that teachers generally held positive attitudes towards ICT. However, the teachers in this study still did not integrate ICT in their teaching. Using reflections and focus group discussions, teachers were able to identify time as the main reason they did not integrate ICT in their teaching. Time considerations require a radical shift in the way we have come to think of teachers' autonomy around self-learning and teaching in general as well as the need for support from the government to enable ICT integration in the classrooms.

Key Words: ICT, Eastern Cape, Model of Diffusion

The impact of vocabulary knowledge on Grade 12 English First Additional language learners' creative writing in the Seshego circuit

Phuti Daniel Phofele | UNISA

Knowledge of vocabulary enables learners to write meaningful texts. Grade 12 English First Additional Language (ENGFAL) learners are expected to be proficient in language skills since they would have been exposed to English from the primary school level for many years. Moreover, Grade 12 is the exit to tertiary education, where English is dominant. However, Grade 12 ENGFAL learners write texts which are difficult to comprehend often due to poor vocabulary. Therefore, this study investigated why the learners' written texts had traces of poor vocabulary despite Grade 12 being the highest grade in the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Furthermore, it investigated how vocabulary was taught during writing lessons. A qualitative research methodology was adopted to better understand participants' lived experiences in vocabulary teaching and learning during writing lessons. Twelve Grade 12 ENGFAL learners and two Grade 12 ENGFAL teachers participated in the study. Data were collected through classroom observation, teacher interviews and document analysis. Collected data were transcribed, coded, and analysed and triangulated according to the three data collection methods and data sources mentioned above to check for the validity and reliability of the study. Data revealed that teachers lacked strategies to teach vocabulary and did not teach vocabulary during writing lessons. The study recommended that vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) be included in the DBE policy handbook to improve learners' vocabulary, especially during writing.

Key Words: Vocabulary, vocabulary knowledge, writing, English First Additional Language, vocabulary learning strategies : Teacher Ed SIG

Investigating the inclusive instructional practices in linguistically diverse classrooms in selected secondary schools in South Africa

Appolonia Masunungure | Thabo Makhalemele | North West University

Literature on ICT integration in marginalised classrooms often refers to three main barriers, the lack of ICT infrastructure, teachers' lack of or limited ICT skills and teachers' negative attitudes towards ICT in general and ICT integration specifically. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model and the Diffusion of Innovation models, findings from a study conducted in rural Eastern Cape Province schools show that these three usually stated barriers to ICT integration in the classroom are no longer the main obstacle to ICT integration in teaching. The study focused deliberately on the Eastern Cape province where investments have been made to mitigate the above-mentioned barriers. A well-maintained mobile computer lab was made available to teachers, teachers were trained to integrate ICT in their classroom over a three-year period and data from a survey showed that teachers generally held positive attitudes towards ICT. However, the teachers in this study still did not integrate ICT in their teaching. Using reflections and focus group discussions, teachers were able to identify time as the main reason they did not integrate ICT in their teaching. Time considerations require a radical shift in the way we have come to think of teachers' autonomy around self-learning and teaching in general as well as the need for support from the government to enable ICT integration in the classrooms.

Key Words: Cultural diversity, Inclusive education. Instructional practices, Linguistic diversity, Mainstream schools

Why is mathematics performance so poor in South Africa? A diagnostic analysis of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) Grade 9 and 5 data

Andrea Juan | HSRC

The purpose of this study is to use Rasch measurement theory to investigate the extent of Differential item functioning (DIF) according to gender and language familiarity in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019. Differential item functioning occurs when different groups of individuals with similar abilities from different backgrounds or demographics respond differently to specific test items. DIF analysis can help identify potential bias in test items. The data considered in this study is from the 2019 TIMSS Mathematics assessment tests, which were written by Grade 9 learners in South Africa. Due to ambitious reporting aspirations in the TIMSS study, more assessment items are required than can be answered by any one learner in the amount of testing time available. The full sample of learners was required to answer one of the five different achievement booklets consisting of a mix of multiple-choice (MC), yes/no and constructed response (CR) item formats. In this paper, the responses of all of the 1499 learners to the 20 MC items in one of booklets, were subjected to a Rasch analysis using the software program RUMM2030. The research question that is addressed is: To what extent do the MC items display DIF by gender and language familiarity? We hope that the results will help us identify possible sources of bias in the items with respect to these two factors.

Key Words: Mathematics achievement, TIMSS, Item diagnostic, error analysis

Unlocking Achievement: The Role of Working Memory Capacity in Academic Reading

Jaqueline Harvey | HSRC

Academic reading is crucial for academic success, particularly for Online Distance e-Learning students who primarily access their learning experiences through reading. Previous literature has focused on the role played by working memory, a limited-capacity neural system with the ability to both store and process information, which has been associated with academic reading. These relationships, however, are under-researched within the South African context. The current study therefore explored the relationships between the capacity of working memory, academic reading, and academic achievement of 136 South African first-year tertiary students undertaking online studies. Weak positive significant relationships were identified between these variables: working memory capacity was significantly correlated with both academic reading and academic achievement, indicating that as working memory capacity increased so did academic reading and academic achievement scores. The study thus provided support that working memory capacity can act as a constraint on academic reading performance as well as academic achievement. Recommendations for course and content design are made that take the limit of working memory capacity into account, such as altering the nature of the textual information provided.

Key Words: academic reading, academic achievement, online distance e-learning, working memory



Panelists: Conference Closure



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Dr Presha Ramsarup is Director at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She is a Senior Research Associate at the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University and Honorary Associate Professor at the University of Nottingham. Her research work focuses on learning pathways for sustainable development and sustainability and her work is focused on skills for a just transition. She is currently engaged in several research programmes focused on transitioning the Vocational Education and Training in Africa. She is the current President of Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa.

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Shan Simmonds is a [Professor in Curriculum Studies and a member of the Edu-HRight Research Unit](#) (Education and Human Rights in Diversity) at the [North-West University](#), South Africa. The research sub-area “citizenship” also falls under her leadership within the Edu-HRight research unit. She is an NRF-rated researcher in curriculum studies, higher education and human rights education who publishes actively. She is also a member of the SAERA Executive, and editor of the Transformation in Higher Education Journal.

MaDey'Andile Mbelani

MaDey'Andile Mbelani is an Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for the Study of Englishes of Africa (ISEA) at Rhodes University's Faculty of Education. Before returning to the ISEA in February 2022, he was an Associate Professor, Head of the Language Education Department, and Project Manager for the Centre of African Language and Teaching at the University of the Western Cape. He has a rich and diverse teaching experience that started as a teacher at his Eastern Cape home district of Centane, at Walter Sisulu University, Rhodes University, and the University of the Western Cape. He believes that social justice and transformation should underpin teaching, learning, assessment, and research. His main research interests lie in teacher education, multilingualism, multiliteracies, critical literacy, textual analysis, and practice-based research methodologies.

Sidney Muhangi

Sidney Muhangi is a PhD scholar at the Environmental Learning Research Centre, Rhodes University, and a co-founder now serve as a Member Board Of Trustees United Social Ventures. Sidney has a demonstrated a history of working in the civic, research and entrepreneurship spaces. Has studied BBA(Makerere), BCOM(Hons), (Rhodes) and MSc. Global food security and Development (Nottingham Trent University). Sidney is a member of the SAERA 2030 LOC.