

# NEWSLETTER

## Unlocking the lockdown through educational renewal

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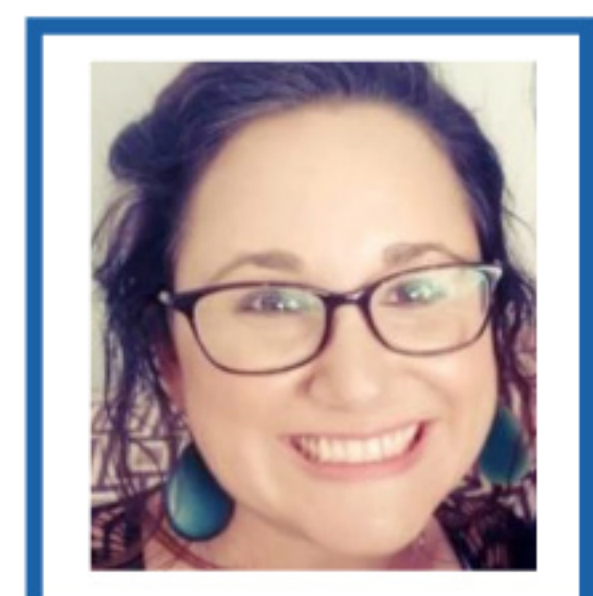
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# FOREWORD - VOORWOORD



**Prof Michael le Cordeur**

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world as we know it irrevocably. Universities had to make huge changes to their tuition methods overnight. Lecturers had to adapt their modules and programmes within a few days so that teaching, which had taken face to face up to that point, changed to online tuition.

Due to a lack of facilities such as the internet, computers and data, many students initially did not have access to online teaching. Thousands of computers had to be acquired hastily and transported over the length and breadth of our country while the university made data available to students. Eventually online tuition started on 20 April: just to collapse within one hour. No-one could have foreseen what would happen as 30 000 students went online simultaneously. But thanks to the efficient IT engineers of SU the network was repaired the same day and teaching could continue. It was, however, not without problems. Load-shedding complicated matters. Many lecturers were not ready for online classes and had to be trained, a process which still continues.

Although there are still hitches, and many aspects must still be refined, we can look back after ten weeks on a term of online tuition and assessment. This **Newsletter** documents how the Department of Curriculum Studies in the Faculty of Education responded to the challenge of online tuition, and successfully converted it to an opportunity for renewal of teaching. In this way the first steps to the new normal were taken.

**Prof Michael le Cordeur (Chair)**

“This Newsletter documents how the Department Curriculum Studies in the Education Faculty responded to the challenge of online tuition, and successfully converted it to an opportunity for renewal of teaching..”

Die Covid-19 pandemie het die wêreld soos ons dit ken onherroepelik verander. Universiteite moes oornag reuse veranderinge maak aan hul onderrig-modus. Dosente moes binne enkele dae hul modules en programme aanpas sodat onderrig wat tot op hede uitsluitlik van aangesig tot aangesig geskied het, verander is na aanlynonderrig.

Weens 'n gebrek aan geriewe soos die internet, rekenars en data kon baie studente aanvanklik nie toegang kry tot aanlynonderrig nie. Duisende rekenars moes inderhaas aangeskaf en versend word oor die lengte en breedte van ons land terwyl die universiteit data aan studente beskikbaar gestel het. Uiteindelik kon die aanlynonderrig op 20 April begin: net om binne die eerste uur in duie te stort.

Niemand kon voorsien wat sou gebeur as 30 000 studente op een slag aanlyn gaan nie. Maar danksy die flinke en bekwame IT-ingenieurs van die US is die netwerk dieselfde dag herstel en kon onderrig voortgaan. Dit was egter nie sonder probleme nie. Beurtkrag het sake bemoeilik. Baie dosente was nie gereed vir aanlynklasse nie en moes opleiding ondergaan; 'n proses wat steeds voortduur

Alhoewel daar steeds haakplekke is, en baie aspekte nog verfyn moet word, kan ons na tien weke terugkyk na 'n kwartaal van aanlynonderrig en assessering. Hierdie **Nuusbrief** dokumenteer hoe die Departement van Kurrikulumstudies in die Fakulteit Opvoedkunde die uitdaging van aanlynonderrig aanvaar het, en dit suksesvol omskep het na 'n geleentheid van onderrigvernuwing. Op dié manier is die eerste tree gegee na die nuwe normaal.

**Prof Michael le Cordeur (Voorsitter)**



## Message from the dean



**Prof Mbulu Madiba**

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is full of turmoil and loss. As students and as educators, we are being asked to find ways to process and address the resulting educational, physical and emotional challenges. We are all grappling with how teaching and learning should proceed amid the pandemic.

Our university has taken a decision to ensure business continuity amidst the pandemic. While acknowledging disrupted classes as a reality, our university worked hard to prevent disrupted learning. These efforts led to the successful completion of the first semester. Thanks to staff for all the hard work they have put into adapting their learning and teaching support material and course frameworks to online environment. As the second semester begins, we continue to learn as we go along. The major challenge faced by our Faculty this semester was with regards to teaching practice as schools have not been accessible due to the shut down and increasing rates of COVID-19 infections.

Our faculty worked hard to develop innovative teaching practice frameworks for BEd and PGCE students. These frameworks were submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for approval. In approving these frameworks, DHET recommended that final year students do minimum time of teaching practice in school. Our faculty has taken a decision to continue with remote online teaching until the end of the year. The year-end assessments will also be done online. Accordingly, no student is expected to return to campus unless they have been given permission to do so.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all staff and students of our faculty for the commitment and dedication they have shown during this difficult time. It is quite pleasing that the number of COVID-19 infections is beginning to go down. But please continue to exercise all precautions as the pandemic is still very much with us.

**Forward together/ Saam Vorentoe/ Masiye Phambili.**  
**Prof Mbulu Madiba (Dean)**

## Covid-19's impact on research and publications - Christa van der Walt



**Prof C van der Walt**

I suppose there are many reasons why we will one day (a friend of mine says it will be on New Year's eve 2020) laugh hysterically about the past few months, possibly bursting out in tears along the way.

I remember the ridiculous expectation in March: *now* we are going to have time to write articles like never before, only to realize mid-April how demanding online teaching is proving to be. Meetings with other Vice-Deans Research brought the full extent of lockdown home, particularly regarding data collection, not to mention its implications for ethical clearance. In the whirlwind of online meetings (I didn't know if I was Skyping, Zooming or Teaming), decisions were taken hastily, requiring extensive e-mail clarifications and repairs afterwards.

I certainly underestimated the effect on our postgraduate students. Although most of them are part-time, they are also teachers who had to (still have to) cope with their research as well as emergency 'teaching' solutions, not to mention coping with their own children at home. Some of them assured me that they were free for online support sessions, but the very next week the situation would have changed and they had to go back to school.

Maybe the unpredictability is the worst problem in these times, because one's time is never one's own. My sense is that most of my colleagues involved in undergraduate and PGCE teaching had little time to do the extensive writing they had dreamed of and the effect will probably only become evident towards the end of 2021 and 2022. This will have an impact on the financial health of the department because our income through subsidy will be reduced. This will also be the situation should fewer of our postgraduate students complete their studies in the minimum time.

What we should not forget, is that the online materials and resources that we created this year, will be available next year. So yes, I'm sure, *then* we are going to have time to write articles like never before!

**(Prof van der Walt is Vice Dean (Research) and teaches English in the Department.)**





# What would we have done without them?

The role that the administrative staff is playing in the success of any organisation is often overlooked. We asked two special ladies about their experiences during the lockdown.



Lorraine van As

Senior Sekretaresse

*Departement Kurrikulumstudie*

**1. Hou jy nog kop bo water? Indien wel, hoe doen jy dit?** Ja nogal. Sommige dae meer as ander. Ek moet meer dink en oplossings vind vir sekere take.

**2. Wat was vir jou die moeilikste aanpassing tydens die inperking?** Tydsindeling vir werk.

**3. Hoe het jy hierdie uitdagings oorkom?** Ek moes leer om beter te beplan en 'n beter roetine saam te stel.

**4. Onder moeilike omstandighede maak mens maar foute. As jy terugkyk, wat sou jy graag anders wou doen?** Ek sou wou dokumente kopieer van my werksrekenaar, maar dit kon ek vroeër ook gedoen het.

**5. Watter lesse het jy geleer uit die inperking betreffende (1) jouself, en (2) wat betref jou werksaamhede. (1)** Ek kan beter beplan vir persoonlike take en veral baie meer aanlyn doen, bv. aankope doen en rekeninge betaal. **(2)** Wat betref kantoorwerk moes ek nuwe vaardighede ontwikkel want baie probleme moes uitgeredeneer word. Deur baie op te lees, en 'n saak deeglik te oordink kon ek dit regkry.

**6. Watter advies het jy vir ander personeellede in jou posisie.** Volhard, bid en steek 'n kers aan, daar sal iewers hulp vandaan kom.

**7. Sien jy uit om terug te keer na die kantoor? Hoekom?** So 50%. Daar is heelwat werkstake wat ek by die kantoor moet doen en met mense kommunikeer – as sekretaresse kan mens nie net per epos en Teams kommunikeer nie.



Jeannie Saffier

Senior Departmental Officer

*Department Curriculum Studies*

**Are you still coping? If so, how on earth are you doing it?** Yes, I am. I am keeping to my routine and I also spent time on my crafts. My faith also contributes in a very big way.

**What was the biggest challenge that you had to adapt to during lockdown?** To wait on IT to set up my system to still do payments on the SUN-E-HR system.

**How did you overcome these challenges?** Constantly following up via emails until a technician could log onto my laptop for assistance.

**Given the difficult circumstances, mistakes are inevitable. On hindsight, what would you do differently?** Keeping a manual diary to remind me when and where I need to do follow-ups and not to only rely on my electronic support.

**What lessons did you learn from the lockdown period so far (1) regarding yourself and (2) regarding your work?** (1) It is a good reminder of how resilient we are. I also have had a very deep and meaningful spiritual growth throughout this lockdown period. (2) It is very possible for me to work from home with the electronic support system I have set up.

**What advice do you have for other staff members in a similar position?** Do not panic. Keep to your routine. Faith and hobbies also help a lot.

**Are you looking forward to return to the office?**

**Why?** I honestly do not mind working from home. I do not miss the hours stuck in traffic at all and I am still productive. However, I do miss the interaction with colleagues at times.



# PhD for Pumla despite lockdown



Pumla Kese recently completed her PhD in Curriculum Studies by articles. Her articles are in the process of publication in national and international academic journals. She said she was disappointed that she could not physically attend the graduation ceremony which she and her family were looking forward to. They do however, understand. The title of her dissertation is: Academic literacy practices of African-language-speaking, first-year Private Law students at a multilingual university.

“I want my study to have a positive impact towards transformative Private Law education, particularly a first-year module where African-language-speaking students co-exist,” she said. Dr Kese joined Stellenbosch University in 2009 as lecturer in isiXhosa Education in the Department of Curriculum Studies. She is a registered assessor in the Education and Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Authority (ETDP SETA). With her sound background in curriculum studies, literacy and drama education, she has designed and taught Teaching Creative Writing and isiXhosa Education modules with distinction. Below is a copy of Pumla’s poem published in the Cape Times on 24 June during the lockdown period.

## Beyond our cry, hope for the homecoming of a classroom - Pumla Kese, 24 June 2020

I might not know the precise driver of this conduct  
but Conductor, if it is for securing your position,  
I understand

Please secure my sanity  
Tone down my teacher, please harmonise and I,  
in tenor would improvise in saving of my sanity

I for one, don’t want to break down  
Don’t want to black out  
Don’t wanna burn out  
Don’t wanna go down into the mental dense  
during the lockdown

In your attempt to maintain the reputation of the system  
in the name of “saving the academic year”  
Of course, you won’t humanise what is already human  
Wisdom lies around who to save first, the human or the  
academic syllabus - that which is intellectually adjustable in  
nature

Please slow down my Teach  
We learn along as we go in the digital mode arena  
It is a new age, new times, but this!  
Who does not miss the bump dance, jakaranda, kwasa-kwasa,  
nay-nae, e-vosho, pantsula, family time, curdles, those hugs, the  
high 5s “bosso ke mang” and, and-and, you know!

Porting the heavy load while I still try to carry one and  
another one over another  
Baggage, bombarding and swamping tons  
Like violent river streams  
Flooding without sympathy of the drowning and lost

Pondering about how meaningless-without-a-clue it can  
be sometimes Cold and lonely as I wrestle with reason  
How it could empower me as I figure out progression

As I find myself delving into a steamy pressure-based  
classroom  
Perhaps it is about time to re-capacitate in pursuit of fairness  
and empathy  
Custom-making human-sensitive online pedagogies Rather  
than a syllabus-orientated design ticking the box  
Learnable moments with inadequate prevail I don’t want to  
crack in passing out

Come on, be realistic! Care about the rushed  
How to be empathetic towards us, Feel it, there’s so  
much to take in, television, radio, the nation, siblings  
Imagine the maybe, the what if, In their most inner being, what  
potentially has occurred

Should we really debate this?  
I leave the debate to your consciousness my T  
Think about the gear and speed  
Whole day screen fatigue accompanied by dozens of  
homework  
I’ve never been stretched this tired  
Feel like being in bed until the next virtual class  
Please ease up my Teach

Can’t you see?  
I admit, these are different times, not normal, new season,  
new atmosphere  
but the genius in me struggles to get the tone of this pitch  
right In my frame of thought, the type of questions I ask do  
not make me a problem child, do they?

Some are called, others invited while some are by chance to  
the profession  
Such a price for reflexivity against legacy of “education”  
Observing the demise of enjoyment of learning  
Beyond our cry, hope for the homecoming  
of a productive classroom





# Our staff members let their voices be heard during lockdown



## The writing is on the wall - Zelda Barends

We find ourselves in a time where we are fighting a global pandemic. Responses to the pandemic have really baffled me. We are isolated, some in comfort with access to books, computers, Wi-Fi accessibility to go about our normal daily tasks and some not. Daily tasks for some include the continuation of work responsibilities and education, while some use this time to catch up on recreational activities such as reading. We have seen how a sector such as Basic Education is able to continue its function by engaging in online learning. Media reports include references to online engagements of some sort and social media posts are filled with parents and/or caregivers documenting their home-schooling initiatives.

Contingency plans are put in place assuming parents and/or caregivers can simply continue to do what professionals are trained to do. A business as usual approach seems to be advocated by all, but how can we continue to operate “normally” in these highly unusual circumstances? Why the rush for learning to continue the way it happened pre-COVID-19? If we need to think differently about our daily habits in this time, why are we not thinking differently about education in this time? Fighting this pandemic has yet again reminded us of the deep disparities that exist in our society. In fact, managing these disparities in the education sector has been and continues to be a heated debate, and rightfully so, as again the question of access is put on the table. Not all learners have access to tablets, personal computers, smart phones and the internet, which would allow them to engage in the proposed online learning initiatives. However, most learners would be able to draw on one particular skill for learning at this time, namely their ability to write and scribble.

Research has shown repeatedly that writing and the teaching of writing not only enhance learners’ comprehension and fluency when reading, but also improve their word recognition and decoding skills. Writing and the teaching of writing contributes to learners’ growth as readers. This makes writing an essential part of learning to read. This is an opportunity to reimagine the learning trajectory as learners have the opportunity to create their own text, based on personal, authentic experiences. It’s an opportunity for learners to awaken their imagination, which could have become so clouded by the use of technology. Why don’t we use this time to reinvent how we develop learners’ reading skills? This lockdown could surely be so productive. **Shortened. The Cape Argus, 29 April, 2020.**

(Dr Zelda Barends lectures in the Foundation Phase with a particular focus on reading literacy.)



## Fix imbalances for the sake of our children - Simbethele Xeketwana

“Cabinet has decided today that all public schools should take a break for the next four weeks,” said President Ramaphosa on Thursday, 23 July 2020. Listening to the president and learning it was only public schools that would close, I cringed. It is again the poorest, especially in rural areas, who will suffer. Essentially, the president told us that his grandchildren, and those of his colleagues whose children benefit from private education, will continue their schooling uninterrupted. This, while the children of the poor and of those who voted for him would have to stay at home.

Hendrik Verwoerd would be over the moon if he knew that, all these years later, the privileged minority continues to benefit. I am not arguing the case for whether closing schools during Covid-19 is right or wrong. I simply wish to highlight how sad it is that our children continue to experience inequality in education. When public schools were in lockdown, private schools continued their lessons online. Rural and township learners were left out in the cold with little or no access to education. The decision does not mean the immune systems of learners at private schools are stronger than their counterparts at public schools. It means is that the rich continue to benefit while the majority, and the poor, continue to suffer.

This decision means the government acknowledges that public schools are overcrowded and therefore physical distancing will be impossible. Mr President, you and your Cabinet know that some public schools in the rural areas have no running water — there is no water for them to wash their hands. The issue of proper sanitation remains unresolved, with many learners having to relieve themselves outside. Just another reason why you have to close public schools. Mr President, would it be too much if we asked for funds to be channelled in the right direction? Will you commit to work tirelessly to ensure that the infrastructure in public schools is one day on a par with that of private schools? **Shortened. Read the full article on Daily Maverick:**

**27 July 2020: [www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-07-28-please-mr-president-fix-these-imbalances](http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-07-28-please-mr-president-fix-these-imbalances).**

(Simbethele Xeketwana lectures IsiXhosa Education in the Department.)



# What and how should we teach our children?

## Teach children to drink responsibly - Michael le Cordeur

Daily Maverick, 22 July, 2020

When I was still in primary school, we had Health Studies as a subject. Handwashing and a healthy diet became part of our daily life. We were taught from an early age that smoking and alcohol abuse were unhealthy. Another subject of yesteryear, Physical Education, ensured regular exercise. We were taught to look after our health since day one.

A nationwide debate currently prevails because the liquor ban has been instituted again. This industry provides work for 300,000 people and contributes R50 billion to the gross domestic product. About 350 wine producers and 80 wineries will have to close their doors and 18,000 people will lose their jobs if the ban remains in place. A valid case indeed, but there is also the other side to be considered.

A medical doctor revealed that numerous women are assaulted by their drunken husbands. Some are admitted with broken limbs. The doctor must also treat patients suffering from diabetes, hypertension, heart attacks and strokes. All in the midst of a pandemic. These revelations are confirmed by data from the trauma units of five big hospitals in the Western Cape. It indicates a decrease in trauma cases of 40% to 50% during the alcohol ban. Before the ban, there was a daily need for 2.7 beds for trauma cases. This increased to 10 beds a week after the ban was lifted. That amounts to seven beds which could have been utilised by Covid-19 patients. When the ban on liquor sales was lifted, daily trauma cases increased by 62% and trauma deaths increased substantially. The effect of alcohol on hospitals is thus undeniable. The president had no choice but to ban the sale of liquor.

But this is only a temporary measure. In the long term, we require a sustainable solution to the abuse of alcohol, which was a major problem even before the pandemic. For me, the solution lies in education. We have no alternative but to teach children at school, not just about the responsible use of liquor, but also about all health aspects and diseases. The lack of meaningful health education in the curriculum has been ignored for too long.

**(Also published in Daily Maverick by this author:** Exams should not be our main focus now, 2 April; We are still two nations in a divided country, 22 April; Chance to save school year gets slimmer, 13 May; There is a school near each of us that needs our help, 26 May; Youth faced with mammoth task, 24 June; Prepare children for life, 10 July; Practical Teaching part of schools' DNA, 3 September.

## Entrepreneurskap beveg jeugwerkloosheid - Michael le Cordeur

Die Burger, 7 Julie, 2020

Die traak-my-nie-agtige houding van sommige landsburgers teenoor COVID-19 ontstel. Orals verskyn mense op straat of staan in toue by winkelsentrums: sonder maskers. Dit terwyl infeksies daagliks styg. Jeugdige van skoolgaande ouderdom dwaal doelloos rond of hang rond op winkelstoepe sonder om sosiale afstande te handhaaf. Dat hulle die virus kan opdoen, pla hulle blykbaar nie. 'n Ooglopende teken van oningeligte jeug. Inligting wat hulle by die skool sal kry.

Intussen is hoërskole hard besig om matrieks vir die eindeksamen voor te berei. Aanvanklik sou meer grade teruggekeer, maar Minister Motshekga moes toegee aan die druk van vakbonde en ouers dat sommige skole nog nie gereed is om leerlinge terug te verwelkom nie. Heelwat skole het grondige uitdagings waarvoor oplossings gevind móet word. Almal moet op dieselfde bladsy wees en begryp waarom die regering volhard met die standpunt van wetenskaplikes wêreldwyd dat daar geen bewys is dat die risiko by skole groter is as tuis nie.

Oor eksamens: Syfers wat pas bekend gemaak is, toon die werkloosheidsyfer het tot bo 30% gestyg. Bykans 11 miljoen Suid-Afrikaners is werkloos, terwyl slegs 16 miljoen mense 'n werk het. Uit 10,3 miljoen jongmense tussen 15 en 24 is 41,7% oftewel 3,5 miljoen jeugdige werkloos en ook nie besig met studie nie. Met COVID-19 gaan dié syfer verder styg. Matrieks se reg tot eksamen is dus 'n prioriteit. Dit is baie jongmense se enigste paspoort tot 'n werk en 'n beter toekoms. Die alternatief is om deel te word van die werkloosheidstatistiek. Onderwysers en ouers is dus tereg bekommerd. Wat kan skole doen?

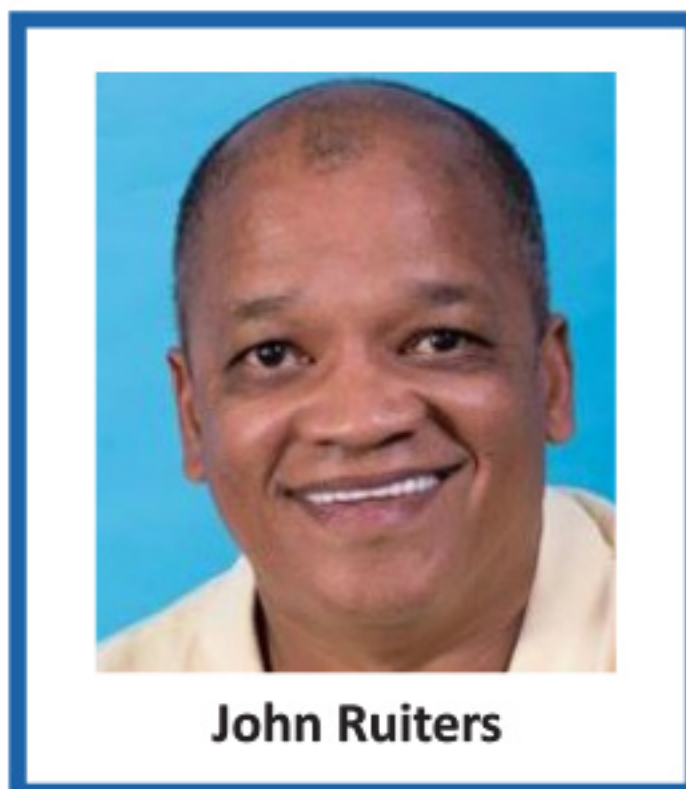
Leerlinge moet opgelei word in vaardighede soos entrepreneurskap wat werkloosheid kan omkeer en van jeugdige waardige landsburgers sal maak. Soos toe jeugdige onlangs watertenke by skole opgerig het sodat leerlinge hande kan was. So word waarde en dienste geskep wat jongmense in staat stel om 'n bydrae te maak tot die sukkelende ekonomie én selfversorgend te wees. Na alles is dít die doel van onderwys: om ons kinders voor te berei vir die lewe.

**(Ook in Die Burger en Netwerk24 deur dieselfde skrywer:** Covid-19 is 'n geleentheid vir selfontwikkeling, 17 Maart; Ouers herontdek hul rol as primêre opvoeder, 31 Maart; Covid-19 wys ons is nie gereed vir 4IR, 14 April; Eenheid nodig as skole heropen, 26 Mei; Tuisonderrig is nie speletjies, 9 Junie; Motshekga volg middeweg, 23 Julie; Doeltreffende Onderwys veel meer as eksamens, 18 Aug.





# Pandemic Pedagogy: Pedagogies of Discomfort



- by John Ruiters

“My tutor has died of Covid-19. I hope he marked my essay. I really worked hard on that essay...” (Anon)

“I cannot make class today. The president said that we should not be more than fifty in a class. Our class has 280 students. I’m really scared because I live with my grandparents, and older people are more at risk of dying. I hope you understand.” (B Ed 1st year)

“I’m extremely sorry for my late submission. My family and I went through a lot during this pandemic. I am so grateful that God spared us and carried us through. We suffered great losses in both families as well.” (Honours Student who tested positive for Covid-19)

The recent edition of the Journal of Science headlined the contribution of the Humanities and Social Sciences to the current debate on Covid-19. A noticeable absence was the contribution of Psychology. In this short piece, I will attempt to introduce some work in psychology, and how this relates to the quotations in the introduction. It is trite to say that Covid-19 caused significant disruption to life as we know it. The assumption that students adapt easily, and lecturers are battle-hardened and resistant to the demands the current situation has placed on them, has proven to be untrue. Large numbers of teachers have died because of Covid-19. Others are affected through suffering from anxiety and depression. It cannot be easy, living, working and learning, in circumstances where people live in fear or die daily.

As teacher educators, we are faced with the question of how we provide guidance in these complex times. In my own field of Applied Linguistics, there is an established tradition of dealing with new or novel problems: it stems from a definition that reads, “Applied linguistics is what applied linguists do”, and what they do is to find answers in the research literature when confronted with new and complex problems.

In the current context, a body of research that has been useful is the work on feelings, emotions and discomfort. Key authors in this field are Megan Boler, Michalinos Zembylas, Viv Bolezalek, the late Brenda Leibowitz, and Ronelle Carolissen. Boler argues that, in order for us to deal with emotions like fear and discomfort, we need:

“to provide creative spaces to develop flexible and creative modes of resistance involving emotional breadth and exploration that are not prescriptive. In *Feeling Power*, I call for collectively self-reflective, historically-traced understandings of our emotions as part of a public process—a project that involves the educator as well as the student undertaking the risky process of change.” (Boler 2005)

Our role in this pandemic is two-fold: to educate students about emotions and how discomfort is negotiated in class, to provide creative spaces for students to deal with their own discomfort. It is a form of teaching that is therapeutic, but not in a deficit way (where the student is seen as broken and therefore needs to be fixed).

The introductory quotes all speak to some form of emotional discomfort; Boler’s idea of providing spaces for dealing with these in an educational setting provides us with a foundation for exploring emotion in a pedagogical way. This work and the complementary work around providing hope will become increasingly more important, and is certainly worth exploring. **(John Ruiters teaches English and chairs the B.Ed. committee.)**

## Evidence of students’ emotions and discomfort

B.Ed. Intermediate Phase 2nd year student writes: Please be aware that from Monday the 5th of May 2020 I will be subjected to mandated quarantine for 7-14 days, due to Covid-19. I do not yet know which facility I will be quarantined at nor do I know what I have access to or will be allowed to take into quarantine with me. I will try to the best of my ability to complete work, and will submit any assignments the moment that I am able to. Later she wrote again: “I have access to internet while in quarantine. I will complete all of the work and submit it on time. I will be supplied with a Department of Health certificate proving that I was in quarantine and will supply you with this once I am allowed to leave.” And then the good news: “I am fine now and back home with my family. Thank God.”





# Research Outputs in 2020

## Department of Curriculum Studies

### Journal articles accredited

**CLIFT M.** Three high-fee independent secondary schools in the Western Cape conceptualising language support for international duty: *Journal for Language Teaching*, Vol.54, Nr. 1, pp. 175 – 193.

**DEVILLIERS MD.** An interesting theorem related to a hexagon with opposite sides that are parallel. *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology* 2020.

**DE JAGER R & BITZER EM.** '#Fees must fall' – students in Economic Sciences' perceptions of free university education. *SA Journal of Higher Education*.

**ESAU O. 2020.** Towards safer and enriched schools in an emerging South Africa: a pre-service teachers' project. *Educational Research for Social Change*.

**ESAU O & JONES D.** Decolonising dance as a teacher-performer: an action research approach. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research (CJAR)*.

**FRICK BL & BRODIN EM.** A return to Wonderland: Exploring the links between academic identity and creativity during doctoral education. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 2020; 57.

**GIERDIEN F, SMITH C & JULIE C.** Repairing indexicality: conversations with teachers about the design of mathematics problem sets. (Under review)

**HOPWOOD N & JENSEN K.** Shadow organizing and imitation: new foci for research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management* 15(??).

**HOPWOOD N, BLOMBERG M, DAHLBERG.** Three principles informing simulation-based continuing education to promote effective inter-professional collaboration: reorganizing, reframing, and decontextualizing. *Journal of Continuing Education in Health Professions* 2020; 40(2): 81-88.

**JONES D, ESAU O, GIERDIEN F.** Breaking the silence as a 'trained' dancer in Post-Apartheid South Africa! *South African Journal of Higher Education* 2020.

**LESHAM S.** Identity formations of doctoral students on the route to achieving their doctorate. *Issues in Educational Research* 2020; 30(1).

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**LE CORDEUR, M. & TSHUMA, L.** Intermediate phase mathematics teachers' proficiency in the language of learning and teaching. *Per Linguam* :Vol.35.

**OWUSU-AGYEMANY & FOURIE-MALHERBE M.** Students as partners in civic engagement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 2020; 45.

**PEDRO M & VAN DER MERWE M.** 'n Kritiese blik op 21ste-eeuse onderrig en leer deur 'n onderwyser- en

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**PETERSEN M, BITZER E & VAN SCHALKWYK SC.** How academics view and use student feedback: *Journal for New Generational Sciences (JNGS)* 2020.

**RODRIGUES C, PAYNE PG, LE GRANGE L, CARVALHO ICM, STEIL CA, LOTZ-SISITKA H & LINDE-LOUBSER H.** Introduction: "New" theory, "post" North-South representations, praxis. *The Journal of Environmental Education* 2020; 51(2): 97-112.

**ROBINSON, MAUREEN & LEE RUSZNYAK:** Learning to teach without school-based experience: Conundrums and possibilities in a South African context. Pages: 1-11 | DOI: 10.1080/02607476.2020.

**SELMER S, LINDSTROM D & LAMPEN E.** Prospective teachers' professional noticing in pieces of students' mathematical written work. *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*. (in press)

**SMITH C, JULIE C & GIERDIEN F.** The integration of semiotic resources and modalities in the teaching of geometry in a Grade 9 class in a South African high school: The four cases of congruency. *South African Journal of Education* 2020; 40(2).

**VAN DER MERWE M.** Reflections on scaffolding for content knowledge of home language learning by collaborative student activities with online dictionaries. *Per Linguam* 2020 (forthcoming).

**WESSELS, D, WESSELS, H, SCOTT-WILSON, R, HEARNE, L.** Planning Mathematical modelling tasks from neurobiological data and principles. *Journal for Christian Scholarship*, 2020 (1st Quarter).

**WITHERING M & BITZER EM.** Graduate attributes: How some university students experience and learn them. *South African Journal of Higher Education*.

### Doctoral completed

**KESE PP.** Academic literacy practices of African-language-speaking, first-year Private Law students at a multilingual university. PhD, 2020. Promotor: Prof C van der Walt.

**LUWANGO L.** The development of Namibian pre-service teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching flexible mental computation. PhD, 2020. Promotor: Dr E Lampen.

**SIMASIKU FS.** Contributions of education for sustainable development (ESD) to quality education: An action research study on the implementation of fieldwork in the school Geography curriculum. PhD, 2020. Promotor: Prof L le Grange.

**VAN WYK JM.** Primary school principals' lived experiences of their roles as instructional leaders in selected primary schools. PhD, 2020. Promotor: Prof AE Carl. Co-promotor: Prof L Le Grange.





# Research 2020 in the Department Curriculum Studies (continued)

## Masters completed

**CHILUNGO-JANA, D.** Exploring Place-Based Education in Geography as a Means to Re-engage Students in Malawi. 2020. Supervisor: Dr K Ontong.

**JACOBS L.** Cohort supervision as an approach at post-graduate level: A conceptual framework for an open distance e-learning university. MPhil, Co-Supervisor: Prof PN Rule, Supervisor: Prof BL Frick.

**KANIITA, PN.** The decline in geography learner numbers in the secondary phase: a Namibian, Khomas Region: Windhoek case study. Supervisor: Dr K Ontong. Co-supervisor: Prof L Le Grange.

**LE ROUX, J.P.A** case study of secondary school mathematics teachers evaluating their classroom-based assessments for the purpose of teaching for mathematical proficiency. Supervisor: Dr E Lampen.

**MAREKA, LD.** The role of informal learning in the small to medium enterprise construction workplace. Supervisor: Prof B Frick. Co-Supervisor: Prof PN Rule.

**MKUZANGWE, SA.** Interaction between internal and external quality assurance: An institutional case study. 2020. Supervisor: Prof M Fourie-Malherbe.

**NEL, T.** Generasie: Die gepastheid van die natuur-wetenskaponderrig- en leeromgewing binne 'n tersiêre instelling. MEd Studieleier: Dr ML Botha. Mede-studieleier: Dr Roodman-La Grange.

**ROELOFSE, C.** Differentiation in the senior phase visual arts classroom to address knowledge GAPS: A case study of three high school teachers. MEd, 2020. Supervisor: Prof AE Carl.

**SESHOKA, MA.** Participants' perceptions of the training received during the Waste Management Extended Public Works Programme in Mamelodi. MPhil. Supervisor: Prof BL Frick.

**TEMBWE, ML.** A Study of Possibilities for Trans-languaging in Vocational Training: Student Perceptions at Okararara Vocational Training Centre. M.Ed. Supervisor: Prof C van der Walt. Co-Supervisor: Dr V Pfeiffer.

**VILJOEN, PJ.** Possible risks related to student academic success in Income Tax N6 at two TVET colleges in the Western Cape. Supervisor: Prof EM Bitzer.

**WESSELS L.** How South African universities can contribute to prepare future workforce for the 4IR. MPhil. Supervisor: Prof M Fourie-Malherbe.

## Book chapters

**FOURIE-MALHERBE & MÜLLER A.** Student protests and higher education transformation: a South African case study in: Leasa Weimer & Terhi Nokkala (eds.) Universities as political institutions. Brill / Sense Publishers, 2020: 165-188.

**FOURIE-MALHERBE M.** Research and scholarship. In: UNESCO. Student Affairs and Services in Higher

Education – Global foundations, issues and best practices. Paris, UNESCO

**FOURIE-MALHERBE M & STRYDOM S.** Pluralism as a vehicle for theory-building in educational technology research. In: Huisman J, Tight M (eds.) Theory and Method in Higher Education Research, Emerald Publishing, West Yorkshire, UK, 2019. 173-191.

**FRICK BL & MOUTON J.** Doctoral education as a field of global scholarship. In: P Rule, E Bitzer & BL Frick (Eds): The global scholar: postgraduate studies and supervision. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.

**JULIE C & GIERDIEN F.** Reflections on Realistic Mathematics Education from a South African Perspective. In: Blum W & Mariotti MA (eds.) ICME- 13th International Congress on Mathematical Education, Springer Switzerland: 71-81.

**LE CORDEUR ML.** "Waarom het julle ons nie gesê nie?" Onderwyseropleiding onder die loep. In: Van der Westhuizen J. 'n Reisgids vir onderwysleiers: Tip Africa Publishing, Cape Town, 2020.

**RULE P, BITZER E & FRICK BL. 2020.** The global scholar: Three conceptual lenses – trajectory, horizon, currency. In P Rule, E Bitzer & BL Frick (Eds): The global scholar: Implications for postgraduate studies and supervision. Stellenbosch: Sun Media.

**WESSELS E, BARENDSE Z, LININGTON V & EXCELL L.** From babbles to books: Literacy and the young child. In: Excell L & Linington V. Playful Early Childhood Care and Education, Juta, Cape Town, 344-377.

**WISKER G, ROBINSON G & LESHEM S.** 2020. Working together beyond the PhD. In P Rule, E Bitzer & BL Frick (Eds): The global scholar: Implications for postgraduate studies and supervision. Sun Media.

**CLIFT M., DEVILLIERS M, BURGER JM.** Using the Moodle workshop tool turning assessments into learning opportunities during COVID-19: A case study from the English 177/179 class. In Responding to the necessity for change: Stellenbosch University.

## Webinars

**Le Cordeur, Michael.** What does the future of schools look like post COVID-19? Symphonia's School Leadership Forum. 14 May.

**Robinson, Maureen.** Enhancing teaching and learning through connecting educational theory, teaching methods, social context and students' lives. TSIBA Business School. 17 June.

**Le Cordeur, Michael.** Die wenslikheid van die insluiting van Afrikaans se variëteite in die skoolkurrikulum; Afrikaanse Taalraad, 9 Julie.

**Robinson, M; Reddy, C.; Rusznyak, L; Bertram, C.** Work-integrated learning for student teachers: A research-led approach during Covid-19 and beyond, SAERA Curriculum Studies SIG; 9 September.





# Making an impact in society with literacy and numeracy



**Zelda Barends**

## **I Can Read - Ek Kan Lees - Project improves literacy levels**

The “I CAN Read” literacy project aims to improve the literacy levels of Foundation Phase learners and to alert pre-service teachers how context can influence their approach to teaching. This project, also a service learning component of the module Afrikaans 484, allows pre-service teachers to merge theory and practice through explicit teaching and learning opportunities created for them.

This project commenced in February this year (for its second iteration). As participants in the project, pre-service student teachers provide Afrikaans Home Language support activities focusing on phonics and word building (two of the core components for reading skill development) to learners in certain aftercare facilities in the Stellenbosch community.

The project thus aims to support the professional development of pre-service literacy and language teachers. Unfortunately, the National Lockdown and closure of schools brought the tacit activities and the intervention programme at the three project sites to a halt. However, we managed to add an innovative twist to the project by converting the activities and the remainder of the activities into material for parents and teachers to use as support material for learners. This has been compiled into grade books and should go to the printers by the end of July for distribution to project sites by the end of August.

The Project has become a laboratory to analyse the teaching of reading. The project created an opportunity to conceptualise a teaching and learning project where I will be researching and evaluating the affordances of service learning and how it can play a role to support the development of literacy pre-service teachers.

**(Dr Zelda Barends lectures languages in the Foundation Phase. She is also the convenor of this phase.)**



**Agatha Lebethe**

## **Count me in - Project develops learners' counting skills - Lydia Jacobs**

**The ‘Count Me In’ (CMI) project with project leaders Agatha Lebethe and Lydia Jacobs was founded in partnership with the Rupert Foundation. The aim is for Pre-service Foundation Phase students to develop learners’ counting skills during formal school practice.**

It allows student teachers to focus on establishing rapport with the learners, creating a positive environment; creative pedagogy; classroom management; planning and preparation of mathematic activities; inclusive education; critical reflection; self-efficacy; continuous assessment of learners’ abilities; and being part of the community.

Currently 26 schools in the greater Stellenbosch region are participating in the CMI project and the numbers are still growing. Foundation Phase Maths B.Ed. students established mathematics clubs in the after-school space. The Maths Clubs were located in church centres, school halls and playgrounds in the following areas: Pniel Primary School, Cloeteville Community Centre, Franschhoek Community Centre, and Pieter Langeveldt Primary School in Cloeteville. The Clubs offered learners the opportunity to improve their mathematical knowledge and skills free from assessment-driven practices.

One of the central aims of the Maths clubs is to change learner’s disposition towards mathematics, from a negative position to one of “I can do it”. Minimal teaching resources are used for recreational mathematics which included puzzles, investigations, challenges and games with a strong numbers focus. The pre-service students were presented with an opportunity to integrate theory, practice and work in an authentic learning space by teaching Mathematics to poor communities in the after-school space.

It is envisaged that this project will heighten students’ awareness of diversity which will enable them to become tolerant, responsive citizens and teachers. **(Agatha Lebethe and Lydia Jacobs (part time) are lecturing Mathematics in the Foundation Phase.)**







**Dr Erna Lampen**

## Met MatiesFM bevorder ons wiskunde tydens inperking - Erna Lampen

Elke Dinsdag en Donderdag om 11 uur kondig die DJ op **Maties FM** Breintyd aan. Vroeg in April, toe Breintyd die eerste keer oor die lug aangebied is, het die aankondiging luisteraars effe verbaas, want MFM is eintlik groot op musiek op daardie tyd van die dag. Breintyd het ontstaan om laerskoolleerders in Stellenbosch wat tydens die inperking tuis moes bly, in kontak te bring met 'n onderwyser en om hulle ouers of versorgers te ondersteun met tuisskooling. Mej. Ma-Soodah Rojan van Cloeteville Laerskool het in samewerking met dr. Erna Lampen van die Dept. Kurrikulumstudies twee keer per week oor wiskunde gesels op die radio. Die doel is om wiskundige denke te stimuleer, eerder as om skoolsomme te oefen. Ons kies probleme wat

geskik is vir Grade 5 tot 7 wat inhoud betref, maar geskik is vir almal wat hou van dink, sover dit probleemtypes betref. Leerders en ouers WhatsApp hulle oplossings na die ateljee, en ons bespreek hul denkpatrone. Ons hoop dat meer skole en onderwysers mettertyd sal meedoen om hulle denkvvaardighede te ontwikkel. Dalk neem alle leerders in Stellenbosch volgende jaar deel aan die Wiskunde-olimpiade van die Vereniging van Wiskunde Onderwysers (AMESA). Met MFM Breintyd is dit moontlik, en 'n eerste vir Suid-Afrika. **(Dr Lampen is lecturing Mathematics in the Intermediate and Senior Phase in the Department Curriculum Studies.)**



**Dr Carina America**

## Alternative plan for Practical Teaching due to Covid-19 - Maureen Robinson

The team of Maureen Robinson, Nazeem Edwards, Carina America, Bernard Rhodes and Jennifer Feldman has been working tirelessly with the Vice-Dean (Teaching and Learning) on a plan to replace the usual microteaching and Teaching Practice activities for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). They have constructed a set of alternative activities that include digital learning, reflective exercises, video lessons, etc. While arrangements are in place, the situation remains dependent on the Covid-19 situation in schools. COVID-19 necessitated a complete overhaul of the "normal programme". Under the auspices of Ronelle Carolissen (Vice-Dean) Zelda Barends, Juliet Paulse, Chrischar Rock and Annine Schultz (two part-time lecturers for Practical Learning), we have developed a revised plan for Practical Learning. The

new programme planned, required innovative thinking and includes topics and activities that make provision for students gaining an understanding into their teaching contexts as pre-service teachers and their practice. The revised programme makes provision for the development of professional skills. **(Prof Robinson is a Full professor in the Department Curriculum Studies and a former dean of the faculty).**



**Dr Nompilo Tshuma**

## Funding to re-develop our existing Writing for Publication short course - by Nompilo Tshuma

Academics are required to research and publish, yet some struggle to meet these requirements because they lack the publication capabilities needed to fulfil this academic role. In order to support academics in the development of these critical skills, the Centre for Higher and Adult Education (CHAE) has been offering support through their *writing for publication* short course. While this course has been run face-to-face for over 15 years, the current lockdown has necessitated a redevelopment of the course for the online space. CHAE staff, Prof Peter Rule and Dr Nompilo Tshuma, in collaboration with Dr Rose Richards in the Language Centre, will be embarking on an action research project to redesign the course and develop a fully-online

course to meet the needs of academics and other research professionals who are currently unable to attend the face-to-face course. CHAE has been awarded R30 000 by Subcommittee A for this project, which will be completed early next year.



# Teaching during lockdown: following the online route

## Rethinking Practical Learning - Annine Schultz



**Annine Schultz**

The global COVID-19 crisis has forced staff members to think of new and creative teaching methods that guarantee students still receive a meaningful learning experience. Practical Learning is designed to help students acquire professional and practical skills as well as academic and theoretical knowledge. Since practical activities and student engagement play such a large role in making it a rich learning experience, it was a challenge to recreate this in an online format. Challenges make room for opportunities to rethink our approach and better our practice and skills. Through collaboration as a team we were able to share our knowledge and expertise and develop a learning experience that will enable students to face the future. **(Annine Schultz is a part time lecturer in Practical Learning having successfully completed her Masters degree).**

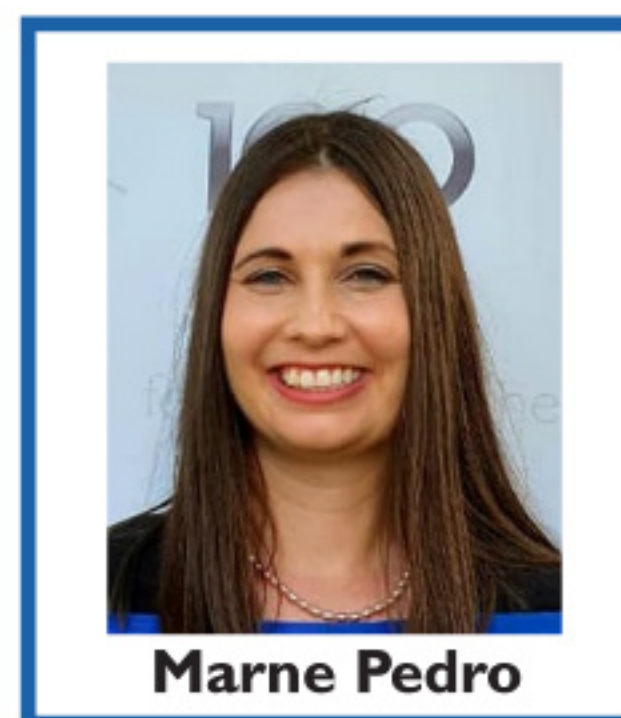
## Language education under lockdown: The power of media in developing agency – Mkululi Nompumza



**Mkululi Nompumza**

The swift adaptation to an online learning environment has yielded some unexpectedly fruitful lessons. From teaching isiXhosa (education) in the current context, I have learnt to take full advantage of my students' beloved social media platforms; introducing current news that showcase language education policy at play. Students are not only interested in and motivated to learn the content, but they also put tremendous work into assimilating the content with their own experiences of African languages in South African schools. **(MK Nompumza is a part time lecturer in isiXhosa whilst working on his masters)**

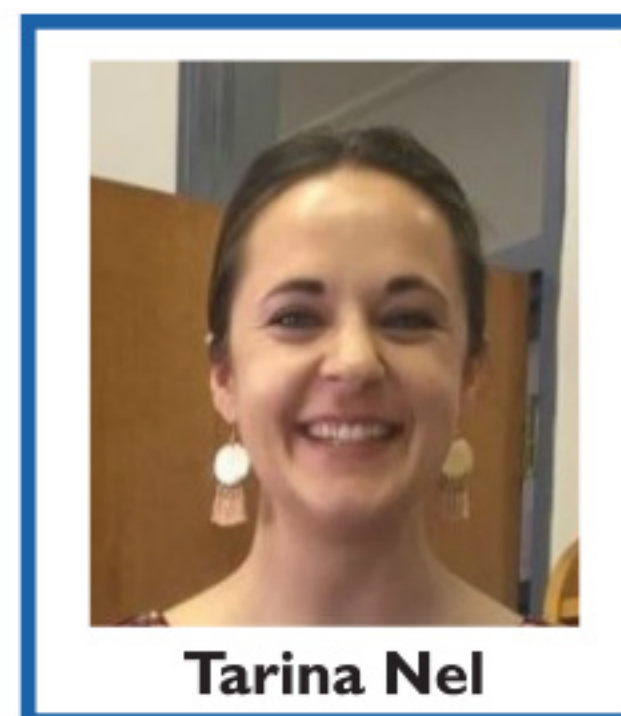
## Nasionale inperking: so kan onnies aanlyn onderrig - Marné Pedro



**Marné Pedro**

Die landswye inperking weens die COVID-19-virus dwing onderwysers om te besin oor hul wyse van taalonderrig te in hul soeke na vernuwendere onderrigleermetodes om tuisleer te vergemaklik. Dit is noodsaaklik om in gedagte te hou dat leer in die kuberruim vir sommige leerders 'n groter uitdaging is as vir ander. Daar moet duidelike riglyne wees hóé leer aanlyn gaan plaasvind en wat van leerders verwag word. Opvoeders moet onthou dat nie alle leerders gekondisioneer is om selfstandig te leer nie. Die meeste leerders is gewoond aan 'n tradisionele klaskameromgewing waar op die onderwyser as sentrale rolspeler staatgemaak word. Vir die suksesvolle implementering van e-leer-strategieë moet die nodige ondersteuningsmateriaal vir leerders beskikbaar gestel word. Voorts moet in ag geneem word dat nie alle leerders gelyke toegang tot die aanlynruimte het nie. Leerders wat wel toegang het tot die internet moet aangemoedig word om aanlynleermateriaal op hulle rekenaars of selfoon af te laai om die bronne te besigtig. **(Marné Pedro doseer Taalopvoeding deelyds na voltooiing van haar meestersgraad.)**

## Cum Laude ondanks inperking



**Tarina Nel**

Tarina Nel, (foto) het die MEd-graad met die tesis getiteld *iGenerasie: Die gepastheid van natuurwetenskap-onderrig en-leer-omgewing binne 'n tersiêre instelling* in absentia ontvang a.g.v. die inperking. Desondanks hierdie teleurstelling het dié deelydse dosent steeds Cum Laude geslaag! Tans werk sy en haar studieleier, dr. ML Botha, aan 'n artikel oor die onderwerp. **(Tarina Nel is 'n deelydse dosent in Lewenswetenskappe.)**





# Curriculum Studies' impact on the community and society

## Suncoi: A Chemistry Outreach Initiative supporting high schools - Nazeem Edwards

The Stellenbosch University Chemistry Outreach Initiative (SUNCOI) was founded in 2013 by Dr Rehana Malgas-Enus and it aims to assist high schools from less privileged areas to perform chemistry experiments as prescribed by the new CAPS curriculum. These schools do not have the infrastructure or the resources to offer practicals to the learners. Learners and teachers then do the experiments in one of the university's fully-equipped laboratories, with the assistance of postgraduate student volunteers. Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students specialising in Physical Sciences have been involved in some of the practical workshops over the years. This exposure has strengthened their level of preparedness for the classroom under the guidance of Dr Nazeem Edwards.



**Dr Nazeem Edwards, senior lecturer, Physical Science, supporting Grade 11 pupils from Kayamandi High.**



**A PGCE student assisting grade 12 learners from Kayamandi High School with their experiment.**

## #Amagama bevorder meertaligheid deur middel van isiXhosa - Jana Nel

Die opwindende #Amagama Projek het vir die derde keer hierdie jaar by die US Woordfees plaasgevind. Hierdie projek is gestig en gelei deur Jana Nel, 'n deeltydse dosent aan die Departement van Kurrikulumstudie by die Universiteit Stellenbosch. Die projek behels dat ons studente talle feesgangers gehelp het om nuwe en basiese isiXhosa woorde en sinne aan te leer. Die studente het daaglik tydens die Woordfees met groot entoesiasme en opwinding aan feesgangers hulp verleen met die fonetiese uitspraak van woorde, sinne en die drie klieks van die Xhosataal.



**IsiXhosa student met verteenwoordigers van die borg**

Daar is elke dag op 'n verskillende tema gefokus waar feesgangers daaglik twintig nuwe woorde en twee nuwe sinne kon aanleer. Dit het feesgangers in staat gestel om 'n honderd basiese isiXhosa woorde en tien isiXhosa sinne, slegs binne 'n week aan te leer. Die beste van alles: dit was absoluut gratis en feesgangers kon met 'n woordeskatboekie huis toe gaan om hul isiXhosa tuis verder te oefen. Die boekie het ook die fonetiese uitspraak ingesluit.



**Me Jana Nel met haar isiXhosa-studente betrokke by die Amagama-projek.**



# Curriculum Studies' foot print on the African continent

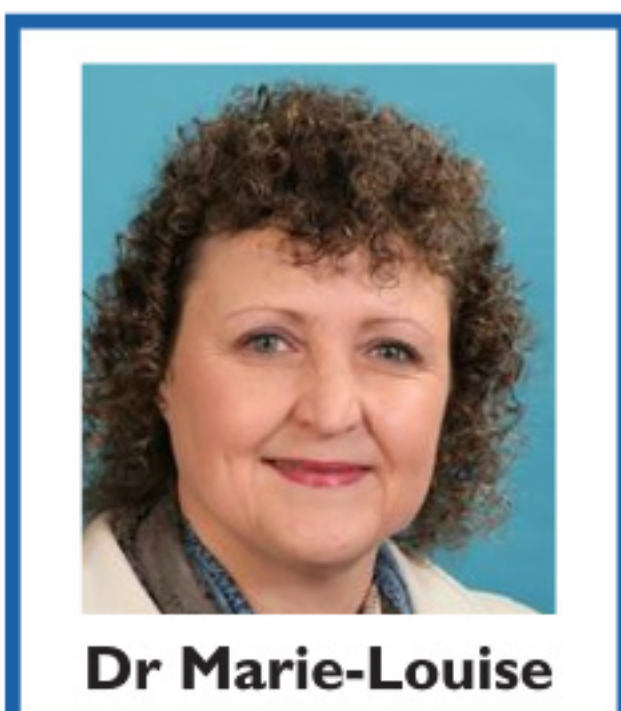
## Research on the African continent



Most South African and African universities have identified doctoral scholarship as a critical requirement for the development of higher education and research production in the continent. This serves as a unique resource to strengthening higher education and research in Africa. Stellenbosch University has over the past ten years established bilateral and multilateral relationships with many of Africa's leading institutions and academic networks. By offering opportunities to these partnerships and networks, we are effectively positioned to consolidate and expand SU's African networks.

One such student is **Ricardo Rodriques-Losada**, a Maths teacher from Windhoek in the north of **Namibia**. According to this doctoral student with promotor **Dr Faaiz Gierdien**, very few learners turn up for school due to Covid 19. Through his research he is trying to make sense of the severe challenges his community is facing with his main research question: What are high school mathematics teachers' learning experiences during a professional development intervention aimed at improving the understanding of functions using GeoGebra?

According to Dr Gierdien, Ricardo is finishing his thesis and hope to graduate at the December graduation. Dr Gierdien is also supervising another two Namibian students for their Master's degree: MN Shilamba and MNL Andjamba, both nearing the end of their studies.



**Shadreck Nkoya** is a **PhD** student from **Zambia** with promotor **Dr ML Botha**. With his research project, titled Translating Revised Secondary School Physical Science Curriculum into Classroom Practice, he investigates the implementation of

the revised curriculum (2014) in Zambia, with special emphasis on Physical Science. Mr Nkoya aims to address possible challenges for teachers translating the revised curriculum into classroom practice. It is intended that this study will revised physical science curriculum filling the knowledge gap for policymakers, schools and physical science teachers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, schools were closed and he could not collect data as planned. After some restrictions in Zambia were eased, classes reopened on 1st June, with the result that he could start to work with Grade 12 classes.

**Dr Lindiwe Tshuma**, a Mathematics advisor from **Zimbabwe**, was a PhD student with promotor Prof M le Cordeur (see picture below) at Stellenbosch University, in the Curriculum Studies Department. The title of her dissertation was: Multiple levels and aspects of language competency in English and intermediate phase mathematics teachers: An analysis of cases of the Eastern Cape Province.



In her study Lindiwe revealed that code switching, a practice which involves mediating between two languages, has been used widely in multilingual classrooms in South Africa. The study concludes that IP teachers are ill equipped to use language as a resource in mathematics teaching. After graduation, Dr Tshuma was appointed as lecturer to the Education Faculty at Wits University.

More research by students from Africa countries:

**CHILUNGO-JANA, D.** M.Ed. Exploring Place-Based Education in Geography as a Means to Re-engage Students in **Malawi**. 2020. Supervisor: Dr K Ontong.

**MOYO, NM.** Mathematical difficulties encountered by physics students in kinematics: a case study of form 4 classes in a high school in **Botswana**. M.Ed. 2020. Supervisor Prof M Ndlovu.

**SIMASIKU FS.** **Namibia**: Contributions of education for sustainable development to quality education: An action research study on the implementation of the Geography curriculum. PhD. 2020. Prof L le Grange.

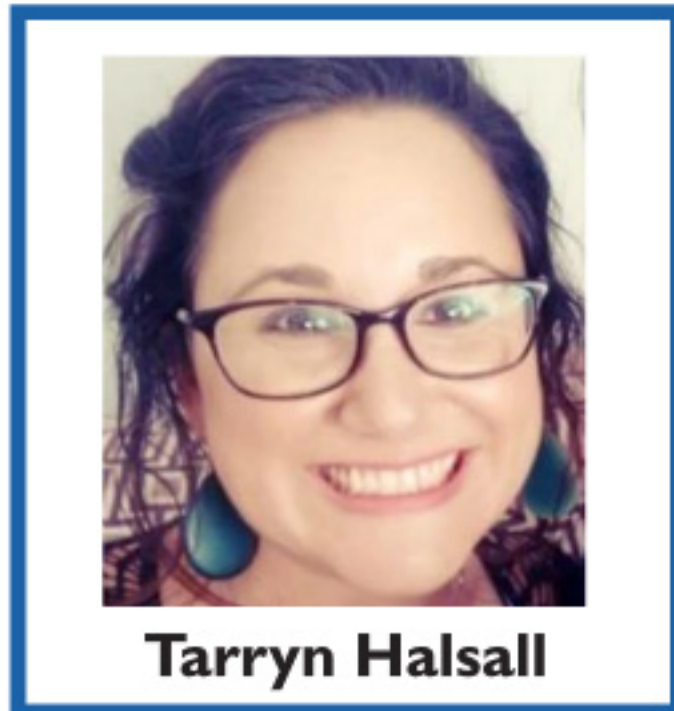
**LUWANGO L.** The development of **Namibian** pre-service teachers' mathematical knowledge for teaching flexible mental computation. PhD. 2020. Promotor: Dr E. Lampen.





# What a time to arrive, what a time to leave

## The challenges of starting a new job during a pandemic - Tarryn Halsall



**Tarryn Halsall**

On Sunday, 15 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that, due to the rapid spread of COVID-19, South Africa will enter a state of emergency. This resulted in the closure of schools and universities alike. On the same day as the announcement, I arrived in the Western Cape to commence my new job as a lecturer in History Education at Stellenbosch University. I must admit, the sudden change in trajectory provided doubt in terms of job stability and the expectations of it.

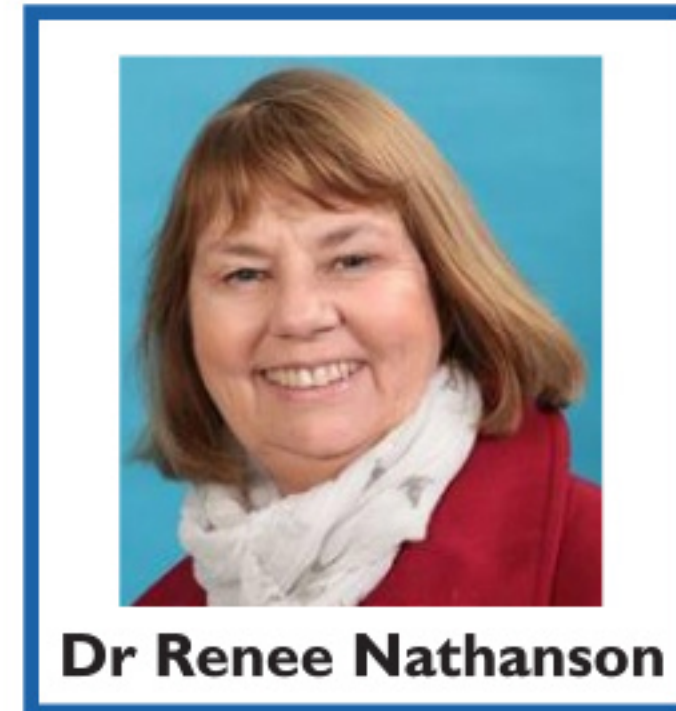
There were two main challenges experienced within the first four months of remote learning. Whilst I had substantial support from my HOD and other colleagues, arriving the day the University closed did allow for some disconnection to take place between my colleagues, the students, and the University environment. My main struggle was the dissociated nature of online learning and teaching. Adjusting to the new 'normal' of virtual interaction has been a challenge and further entrenches my appreciation for in-person teaching and social interaction.

Secondly, facilitating the online educative process was complex. Juggling between structuring the courses, the needs of the students and the new online platform, work was quite challenging in the beginning. This was quite overwhelming at the start of the term. Personally, how I coped was by accepting that the work needed to be done and allowing myself the necessary time to process these challenges and my shortcomings.

Given the transition to online learning, mistakes are inevitable, and I experienced teething issues. There are several lessons that I have taken away from this experience: it is acceptable to ask for help; establish clear working hours so one does not get sensory overload; and finally, accepting one's mistakes and subsequently learning from them is vital to both personal and professional growth.

**(Tarryn Halsall is newly appointed lecturer in the History of Education in the Department.)**

## Ending a career amidst lockdown builds faith - Renee Nathanson



**Dr Renee Nathanson**

When did you join the department? I joined the department 17 years ago in 2003. Before that I completed my degrees at Stellenbosch University. Consequently, I have a long and loyal history with Stellenbosch University.

What were your career highlights?

After my children left school, I returned to Stellenbosch University to study. My aim was to do a course in Special Needs Education so that I could give private lessons to children who struggle with reading. Obtaining a PhD and becoming a lecturer were definitely highlights, which superseded my original aims and expectations. Another highlight was partnering with Dr Duncan from Reading Recovery, New Zealand. We worked together for five years on a project in a local school where we implemented Reading Recovery principles to help young children become successful readers and writers. I remember receiving my first invite to speak at the Oxford Round Table in UK. I thought it was a hoax! Speaking at the conference and accepting their invite to become a member of the Advisory Panel for the London-Education-Research Symposia were memorable moments. Lastly, receiving funds to develop and implement digital, project-based modules for students was also a career highlight.

What setbacks did you experience and what would you have done differently? I regard setbacks as opportunities, to develop perseverance and self-control, to build character; therefore, I strive to learn from my mistakes and become a better person.

How do you feel ending your career in such a difficult time? I will be using this opportunity to work with parents on Bible-based home-schooling curricula supported by scientists, to refute evolution, study creation and build faith in our Creator. Finally, in these troublesome times, I wish to thank my colleagues for their kindness and support.

**(Dr Nathanson is retiring as lecturer in English having joined the Department 17 years ago.)**



# The fourth industrial revolution: Technological unemployment and the response from education



New technologies are advancing at a rapid pace and changing how we live and learn. The current wave of technological advancement has made the Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Klaus Schwab, posit a new industrial revolution, the fourth industrial revolution (4IR), characterised by disruptive technologies that are fundamentally changing the way in which people live, work and interact with one another. In South Africa, 4IR is discussed by almost everyone: teachers, politicians, policymakers, academics, etc., with some glorifying and others demonising it. The 4IR is touted to bring about many opportunities but also holds potential threats such as job losses.

The 4IR has provoked several criticisms. Whether the 4IR is in fact 'industrial' has been questioned because its scale is global and its systems chaotic and unpredictable and not as linear and tightly coupled as industrial systems of the early 1900s. Whether the current wave of technological innovation is a revolutionary or evolutionary process is also debatable. It is said that the mode of transport in the 4IR would be electric cars and fast-trains. The former is not new. I remember learning about electric cars when I was at primary schools in the early 1970s and recall milk being delivered to homes by battery powered vehicles at the time. Data storage in cell phones is based on the mathematical achievements of the 19th century Frenchman Joseph Fourier. This points to an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process. Other criticisms are that 4IR marginalises women, that it typifies technological determinism and that it aims to serve the elite of society.

There is not much space here to discuss 4IR in detail, so I shall briefly focus on 4IR and (un)employment. When 4IR is invoked in conversations, reference is often made to how the nature

of work will change, that job losses are inevitable and that the jobs of many entering the job market today will not exist when they retire. Whether the current wave of technological change will result in net job losses remains an open question because all waves of technological change are accompanied by job losses and gains. However, should disruptive technologies and increasing automation that accompanies it result in technological unemployment, then education alone cannot be the solution. Societal change would be needed. Society would have to be reorganised: shortening the working week to 3 or 4 days so that more people can be employed; supporting small businesses so that more people become self-employed; putting in place safety nets so that more unemployed adults become involved in activities that give meaning to their lives and derive some income benefit from the state.

What will not help much is knee-jerk reactions to this potential crisis such as the introduction of coding and robotics into the school curriculum, as is currently the case in South Africa. It will not help much to introduce coding and robotics into a schooling system where the architecture of many classrooms resembles that of medieval times and the approach to curriculum is based on that of the 'second' industrial revolution with its tightly coupled elements of aims, teaching, learning and assessment. In fact, the current school curriculum in South Africa is so rigid that it prescribes what must be taught/learned, when, and for how long, leaving very little room for creativity and innovation. Moreover, the introduction of coding and robotics will advantage elite schools.

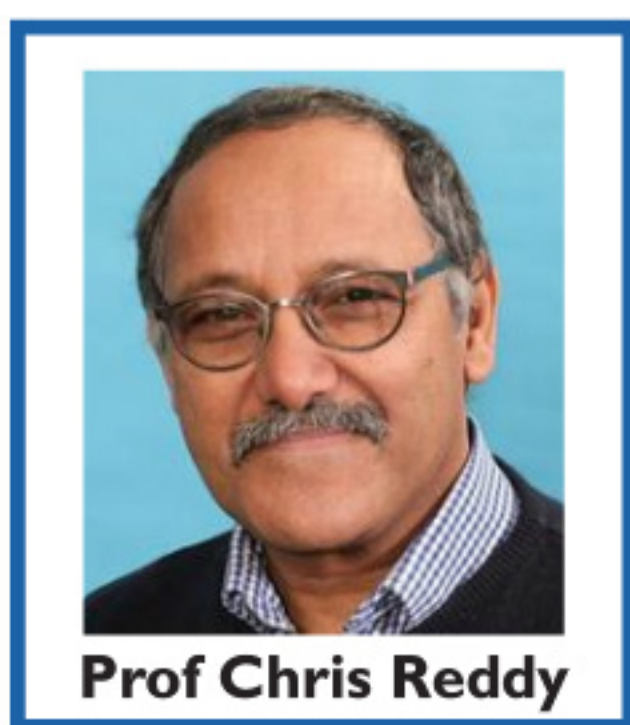
The migration to online learning during the pandemic laid bare the underbelly of South Africa's unequal schooling system. With the euphoria around 4IR, we seem to forget that literacy and numeracy remain important and provide the foundation for all further learning. Literacy and numeracy skills might have to be acquired in more innovative ways but such skills remain indispensable. Introducing coding and robotics into South Africa's current bimodal schooling system will not improve the quality of education of all children, on the contrary it will widen education inequalities.

**(Prof Le Grange is distinguished professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies)**





# Schools post covid-19: viewpoint on a local context



So, what will schools look like post Covid-19? Nobody knows and it's difficult to risk a prediction off-hand since the Coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented occurrence we have never been required to deal with hitherto. What we do know is what schools and what the education system looked like before this pandemic and we can probably speculate on what we might want things to be like, based on the revelations that the virus and the resultant pandemic have left in its wake. This think piece is based on such speculation, working from where we were and are to where we want to go and be in education and schooling.

The education crisis, like the economic crisis, is an old problem that predates the Covid-19 pandemic. In the late 1990s the South African education and thus the schooling system underwent a major overhaul. Right from the start, the shifts in education were in line with global trends and policies sweeping the world, and these had a big influence on the policy decisions made in the country. In South Africa, neo-liberal approaches to education became the dominant discourse. Giroux (2005) suggests that neoliberal discourses manifested in public schooling has taken the education system backward and dehumanised learning and educational experiences through testing, examinations and projects evaluated by predetermined standards. Essentially, education was reduced to a technical process governed by technocratic, rationality, performativity, business-like arrangements for school management.

Then Covid-19, the big leveller, came along and subjected everyone to the same conditions and risks but some (schools) predictably coped better than others. Some of the schools in certain contexts were able to continue operating as normal, while others in other / different contexts came to a complete standstill. This pandemic, however, has alerted us to a number of deeper issues that have been hidden under the narratives of performativity as highlighted by Davids (2020) and Le Cordeur (2020). Deep inequalities in resource provisions, historical backlogs, poor infrastructure and the realities of the digital divide we just gloss over in our daily rushing also reared their ugly head. The complexity of schools and how

they operate in different ecologies while negotiating the CAPS document with its one size fits all, high intensity of testing and knowledge often far from the realities of children who live in hopeless situations wondering where their next meal will come from, was also brought into focus. Schools are responsible, usually with families and communities, for passing on the 'grand narratives' of society, the frameworks for thinking and being. Education / schooling has also been viewed as a passage to better life chances and opportunities. The turmoil resulting from the pandemic begs the question: what might schools / education systems look like post Covid-19? Some basic thoughts are presented, more as a wish list rather than a set of recommendations.

- Education departments should develop systems which provide space for growth and development of individual potential.
- Education departments should ensure that the necessary protective and sanitary equipment is provided to all schools.
- Efforts should be made to reduce the considerable digital divide through proportional funding.
- More opportunities for remote teaching and access to such services.
- Food security need to be alleviated through suitable policies and funding.
- A dedicated (trained) person for Covid-19 related matters (currently) and other possible health scenarios in the future needs to be stationed at all schools.
- Links must be set up with primary health care centres such as day hospitals.
- Health protocols that are nationally mandated need to be provided for education institutions.
- Curriculum space needs to be allocated to topics that can ensure ongoing education about risks and health issues

In short, schools need to become community places of education that provide more than just passing on of knowledge and cultural traditions. Education is really about entrusting the future to the next generations by equipping them with capacities to survive, to organize, to think, to plan and act. The post Covid-19 period is a space that can be used to enable these processes. So, let's not miss the boat.

**(Prof Reddy is full professor in Environmental Studies in our Department)**



# Transforming the curriculum through scholarships and technology

## MobiLex: improving academic literacy - Michele van der Merwe



**Dr Michele vd Merwe**

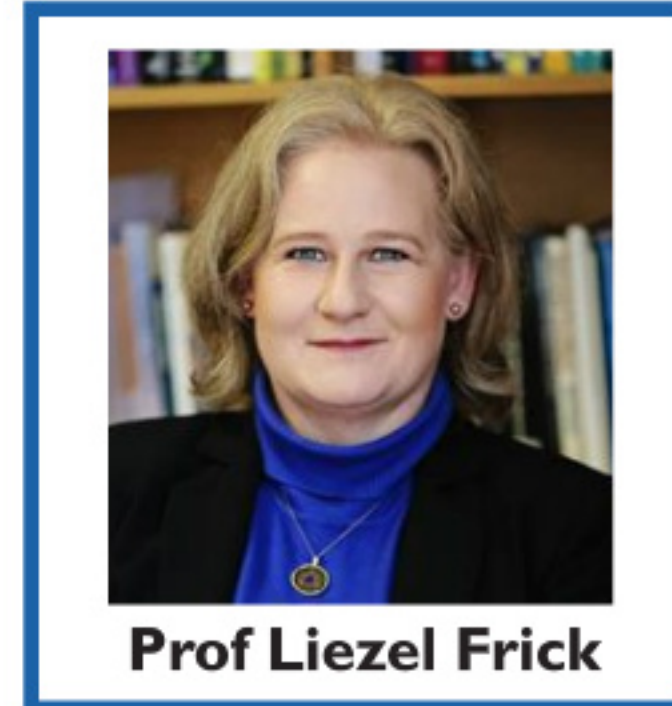
The SU Faculty of Education's glossary project resulted in an open-access cell phone application: MobiLex. The project received funding from FLIRT, the Department of Arts and Culture and UCDG. The project is an effort to improve academic literacy at undergraduate level by explaining subject vocabulary encountered at university in students' home language. As such, it forms part of the faculty's language plan in order to address multilingualism.

The glossary offers students the opportunity to look up terms that they find difficult to understand or that are unfamiliar to them in Afrikaans, English or isiXhosa. The glossary provides terms in all three languages as well as a short, subject-specific definition in the preferred language. MobiLex supplies terms in education-related subjects such as curriculum studies, mathematics, natural sciences, geography, history, economic sciences, educational psychology and language education.

The mobile application has been upgraded recently, with new features such as an enquiry page where questions could be posted on terms as well as a feedback page where feedback can be given to the compilers of the glossary. These innovations could ensure more interaction with users. The application is also open-access, available freely in the Apple App store, as well as Google Play, and can be downloaded to use offline.

The better your vocabulary, the better your writing skills. The feedback we've received is that it is user friendly and helpful. Students use it in class, and for studying. Mother-tongue speakers of all three languages have indicated that they make frequent use of MobiLex. The App is also used by lecturers for better comprehension of subject terminology, to introduce new concepts into a lecture, finding the appropriate term for a definition, as well as translations of terminology in other languages. In short: MobiLex has a functional role to play, and more so during the lockdown when lecturers are dependent on online teaching. **(Dr Van der Merwe is senior lecturer for Afrikaans Education.)**




## Funded PhD Scholarships available at Centre for Higher and Adult Education - Liezel Frick



**Prof Liezel Frick**

The Centre for Higher and Adult Education forms part of a consortium of universities that has successfully obtained grant funding from the partnership between the South African Department of Higher Education and Training and the British Council, to implement Phase 2 of the University Staff Doctoral Programme (USDP). This programme supports the Department of Higher Education and Training's University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) to achieve the goal of "Transforming teaching, learning, researching and leading towards enhanced quality, success and equity in universities". Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and the Centre for Global Learning: Education and Attainment at Coventry University (CU) are the other two partners in the consortium.

The focal themes covered in the project include:

-  Equality, diversity, inclusion and well-being
-  Transnationalisation, decolonisation and transformation of the curriculum
-  Developing creative spaces in higher education curricula.

A cohort of 14 doctoral students at the three partnering institutions will take part in a structured doctoral programme running over four years (starting in January 2021). The cohort will be supervised in a many-to-many supervision mode by a cohort of experienced supervisors from all three partnering institutions. The eventual doctoral degrees will be awarded under the existing agreement between SU and CU for offering joint doctorates. Expressions of interest are now open and will close on 31 August 2020.

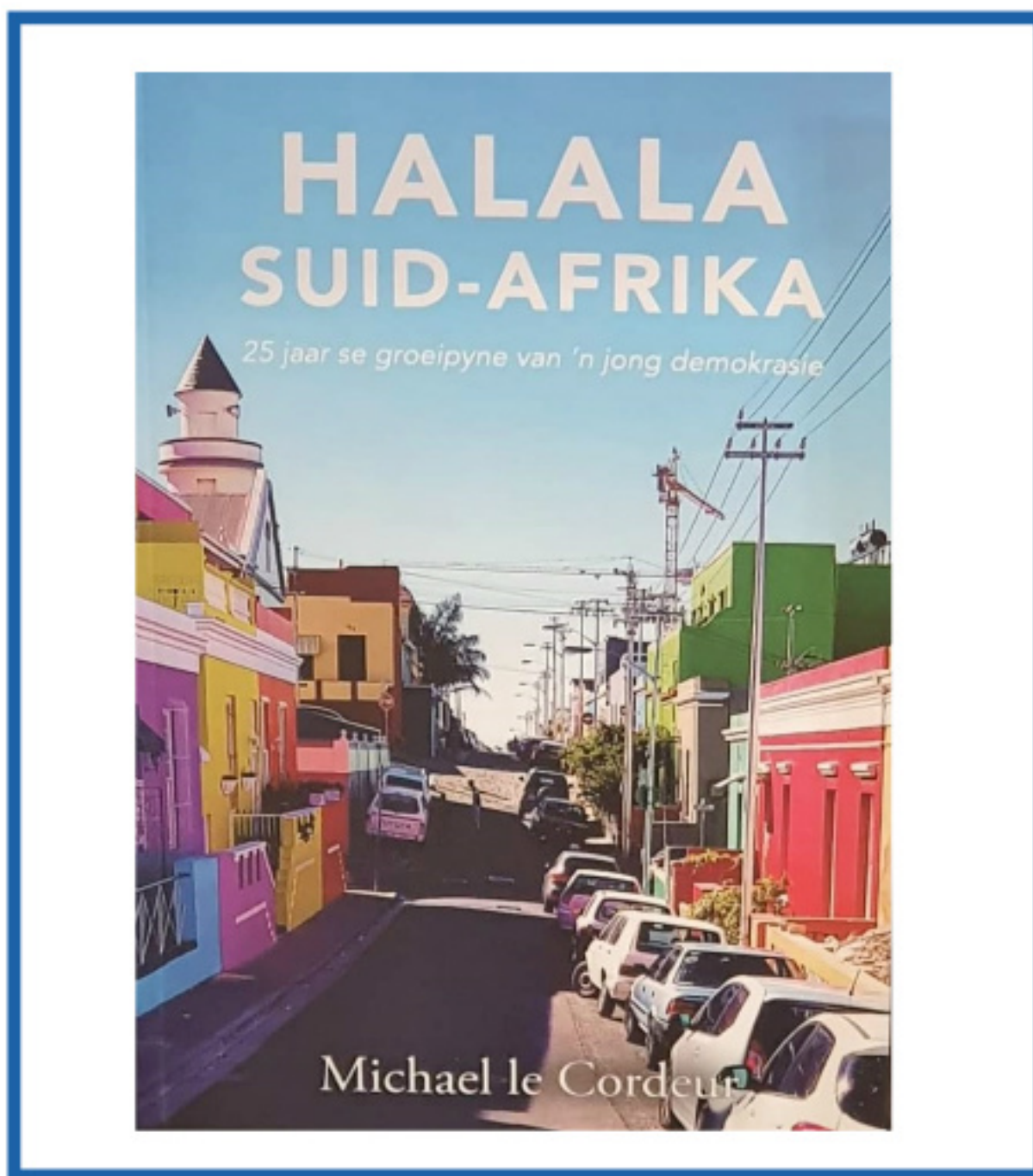
Contact Prof L. Frick (blf@sun.ac.za) or Go to: <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/directories/current-projects/2019/british-council-uk-sa-project/glea-dual-award/> for more information. **(Prof Liezel Frick is director of the Centre for Higher & Adult Education)**





## Halala Suid-Afrika – M le Cordeur

Die skryf van meningsartikels vir die openbare media is 'n veeleisende en dikwels ondankbare taak. Die vergoeding is minimaal en vergoed geensins vir die beledigings en haatpos wat jy moet verduur nie. Desondanks moet jy as rubriekskrywer jou staal, en voortgaan. Meer as een keer wou ek tou opgooi. Maar dan herinner ek myself aan wat Edmund Burke (1729 -1797) gesê het: **“It has been profoundly said, and how true it is, that the only thing necessary for evil to exist is for good people to remain silent...”**



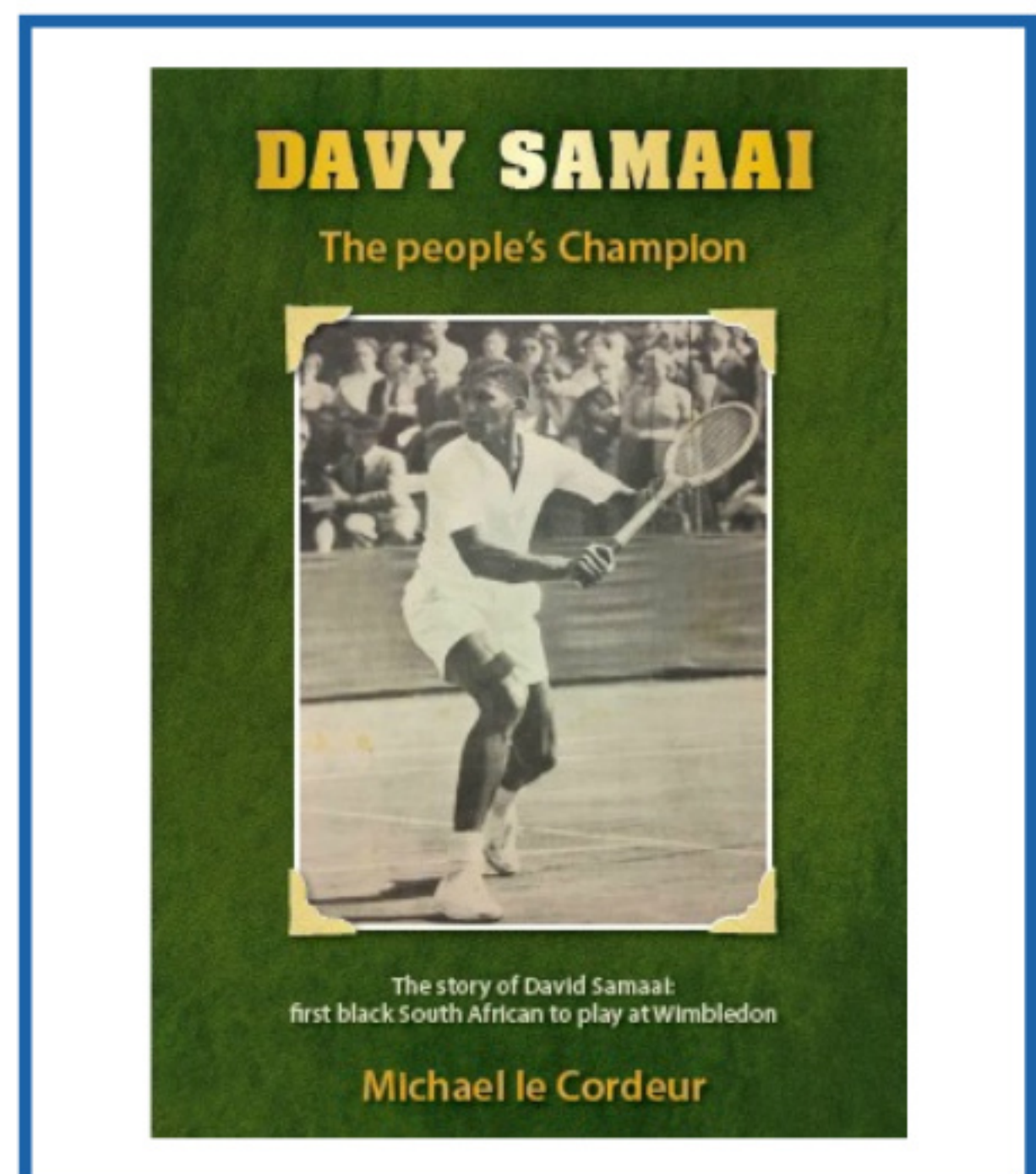
Hierdie bundel bevat 'n keur van my beste artikels oor 25 jaar en val saam met die 25ste herdenking van Suid-Afrika as demokrasie. As 'n historiese dokument is die bundel ook 'n besinning oor die belangrikste gebeure van die eerste kwarteeu van ons demokrasie: in wese dus 'n Halala, 'n ode aan Suid-Afrika. Soos die mense in die Bo-Kaap van alle kleure en kulture al 350 jaar in harmonie saam bestaan, so glo ek onwrikbaar dat Suid-Afrikaners in harmonie saam wil lewe, as die politici net wil ophou om in te meng. Om saam te val met my sestigste verjaarsdag het ek besluit om 60 artikels weer af te stof. Die bekendstelling op 12 Maart by die Woordfees (net voor die inperking) is deur heelwat van my studente bygewoon (foto onder).



## The people's champion – M le Cordeur

A talented music teacher for 45 years, a dedicated school principal for 25 years, choir leader for 50 years, church organist for 60 years, an exceptional tennis player and non-racial South African Tennis Champion for 21 years and the first black tennis player of South Africa to play at Wimbledon. So many talents in one man: Davy Samaai.

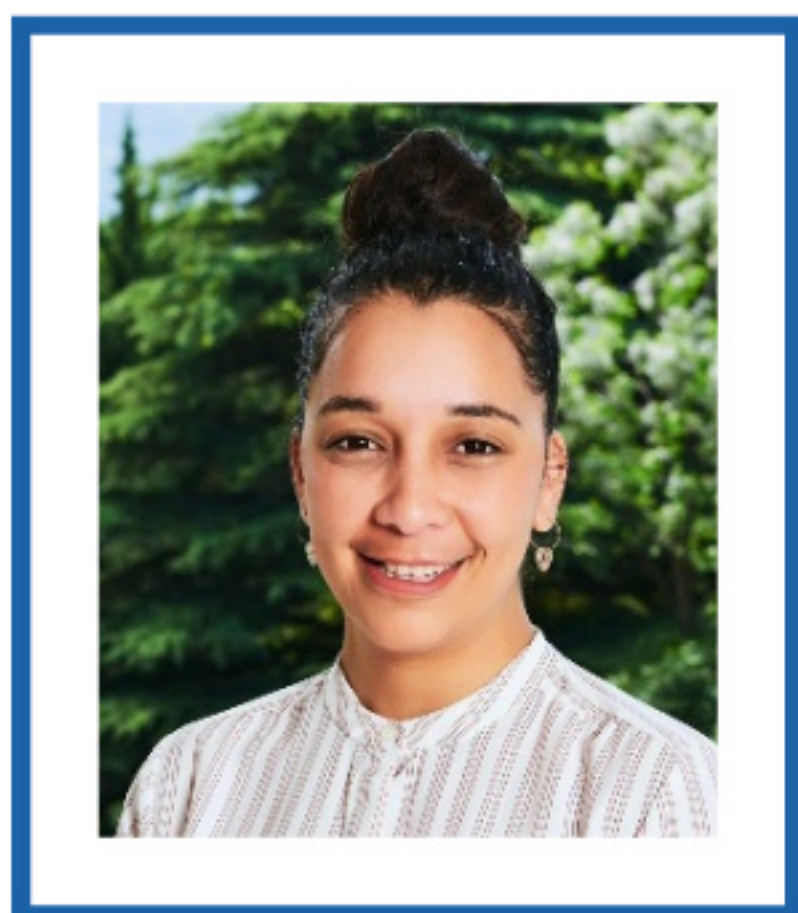
The book started off as a story about an exceptional man. But very soon I realised it is a story about an entire community that once lived on the banks of the picturesque Berg River in Paarl in this beautiful settlement called the Old Garden. In the 1960's they were forced to leave their neighbourhood by the Group Areas Act of the apartheid government. They had to move to the other side of the river to a new town called Paarl East. Painful as it was, they had to rebuild their lives. They built a new high school, new primary schools, a new church, a new mosque, new sport facilities and new tennis courts; one in David's own back yard. In fact, they rebuilt an entire town.



The people of Paarl East have managed to overcome apartheid. And they did so because of inspirational leaders like David Samaai, who refused to lie down submissively. Samaai set an example to all young people. He firmly believed the only way out of poverty for him and his people was through hard work and education. He could have ended up pitying himself, and blaming everything on apartheid. But he did not. Instead he chose to work hard and to persevere: the key to his success. This book serves as an artefact to recall the inequities of the past. **NB: Also available in Afrikaans by the same author.**



## Women are proclaiming: We belong here - Delecia Davids



The call for removal of statues and visual redress in public spaces have had a resurgence during the #Blacklivesmatter movement and the subsequent removal of statues in the USA and UK. This brought with it the debates around what should stay and go, who should replace them and even, whether we should be 'wasting our time' with this process at all.

A few years ago, I would have argued that the money spent on visual redress could be put to better use. Right now, I would contend that we should look at each of our visual symbols and ask what they represent and what we are commemorating by honouring these people in this way. Why? Statues, memorials, and names of places all evoke within us different feelings and memories and affect how we belong or develop attachment to places. Your sense of belonging is threatened when there are not only symbols, but policies, structures, and even people telling you that you do not belong, whether explicitly or not and whether intentionally or not.

If we are not intentionally including, we are probably accidentally excluding (assuming positive intent) and right now women in this country need to be intentionally included. It is not only about having a seat at the table, but it is about having a voice. A voice that is valued and respected for its contributions and for the different lived experience it brings. A voice that is listened to when it shares what it is like to live in constant fear for our lives; a voice that is not first questioned when speaking out against sexual violence, and a voice that is taken seriously when we tell you that enough is enough. Women's Day (9 August) and Women's Month would be a good place to start listening to these voices with greater intention.

The voice of women should also be heard in our conversations about visual redress if we're serious about inclusivity, reconciliation and the dismantling of patriarchy. This should happen in different forums and sectors of our society.

As we've seen over the last few years, our higher education institutions have become sites of contestation about the importance of and need for visual redress. At Stellenbosch

University (SU), we recently embarked on a much-anticipated renaming process of one of our prominent buildings, namely the RWWilcocks Building. At the height of the #Feesmust-fall movement in 2015, students who led and supported the movement at SU occupied this building and reclaimed it as the Lillian Ngoyi House, after the anti-apartheid activist and prominent woman leader of the 1950s. I only now fully realise the magnitude of that act. That reclamation and appropriation was a peaceful demonstration of collective power and agency, yet it was probably more damaging to the systems of oppression and patriarchy than any violent act ever could be. They were proclaiming that "we belong here!" and this collective shift in mindset will always be more powerful than any symbol or structure that tries to exclude.

I am of course not suggesting that renaming the aforementioned building or any statue or memorial after a woman will alone solve many of the gender-related challenges we face. What I do hope and believe is that it can spark conversations about a new and imagined future: one where women are not oppressed and killed but honoured, in the same way as their male counterparts.

If we take this as our point of departure, chances are we won't get stuck in endless debates about who sacrificed or achieved the most as this would be missing the point. When we engage in public spaces, we want cues that remind us of the values that hold our communities together, because we attach great meaning to these places. In 100 years from now it may not matter who (read which woman) exactly we replaced the current guy with. This is because our criteria for heroines and heroes change as our culture and values evolve, thus the meanings and emotions we attach to the symbols will subsequently change as well. Yet we will probably derive more meaning from the process of them changing, than we could from the fact that they ever adorned the outer walls of these buildings in the first place.

Deriving meaning from such a process will also ask of us to examine our positioning within historic systems of oppression and exclusion, and to do the uncomfortable work of identifying where we have been and still are complicit in maintaining these systems. We need to create opportunities for inclusion of others who continue to be excluded, especially women. Women belong here. They belong on concrete walls with fancy lettering too.

The time has come for men and systems created by men to extend the necklace of reconciliation when the renaming of buildings, statues, memorial or other public spaces is placed on the agenda and if women accept this gesture, it could be a move towards progress, inclusion, equality and safety.

**\* Delecia Davids is a Master's student in Education Policy Studies and a part-time lecturer in the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University. She is also a Mandela Rhodes Scholar.**





## Covid-19 and the (ill-)health of literacies education in South Africa - Peter Rule



Literacy is one of the cornerstones of the contemporary world. For most of recorded human history, it was the preserve of a tiny elite of priests, administrators and nobles. In the past 200 years, it has become the prerogative of the masses and nations to aspire to a 100% literacy rate, although Unesco estimates that 773 million adults worldwide still lack basic literacy skills. Literacy used to mean simply the ability to read and write a basic sentence. But now new literacies spring up almost overnight: Zoom literacy, Covid literacy, and all the literacies associated with social media. Covid-19 poses particular literacy challenges.

Although South Africa's official literacy rate is 95%, school children's performance in comparative international tests indicates that, as a functional capability, it is much lower. Literacy is especially important, both for individuals and for society, in a time of pandemic. The theme of this year's International Literacy Day is, "Literacy teaching and learning in the Covid-19 crisis and beyond." In our rapidly changing world, the meanings of "literacy" are also changing. Literacy used to mean simply the ability to read and write a basic sentence. It evolved to mean using literacy to function effectively in everyday life – using an ATM, filling in forms, reading and writing letters, reading and reciting from sacred books. It was linked to learning to read, write and count in a school or adult classroom. Paulo Freire transformed our understanding of literacy as a political act; as a means to overcome oppression: "reading the word in order to read the world."

Now literacy is understood as multiple: "literacies" rather than a single uniform "literacy" that is neutral and universal. These literacies are understood as social practices in particular contexts, not just education: the workplace, hospital, taxi commute, voting booth or WhatsApp group. New literacies can spring up almost overnight: for example, Zoom literacy, Covid literacy, and all the literacies associated with social media. Research indicates that when mothers are literate, there are positive spin-offs for their children's education and health. On the other hand, in a reversal of the traditional direction of literacy transmission, Millennials and Generation Z-ers teach

their parents and grandparents how to download the latest app, find their video face, and stop mouthing silently on Zoom. These various literacies are intricately related. As news, information, learning and social interaction shift to digital platforms, digital literacy has become essential: Reflecting this trend, new subjects such as robotics and coding are being introduced in our school curriculum.

Covid-19 poses particular literacy challenges. A year ago, we used the term "going viral" to refer to gifs and memes and video clips on social media. The virulent Covid-19 pandemic shows the provenance of this metaphor as it crosses over again from a figure of speech to grave biological threat, as well as how different literacies (epidemiological, digital) draw on each other.

Covid literacy has become a matter of life and death. Where, when and how to read the signs for protecting oneself and others is important for everyone. The messages are straightforward: wash hands often, wear a mask in public, sanitise surfaces, practice physical distancing, avoid crowds. It is amazing how rapidly this mantra has become part of our collective literacy, profoundly affecting our behaviour and interaction, and we have seen its efficacy in reducing rates of infection.

In countries where messages have been conflicting and politicised – for example, macho presidents refusing to wear masks in the US and Brazil – the results have been catastrophic. A similar debacle threatens to blight the effective roll-out of a vaccination when anti-vaxxers mobilise. Covid literacy is not just a matter of knowledge but also, crucially, of context and social justice. For people living in the shacklands of Khayelitsha, the favelas of Rio or the slums of Delhi, physical distancing and effective sanitisation are often impossible. Covid has exposed how social inequalities accentuate risk, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why South Africa is 6th highest in recorded Covid-19 cases at the time of writing.

As we celebrate International Literacy Day, we are acutely aware of the changing shapes of literacy in the 21st century, entering the Fourth Industrial Revolution. But literacy is not just a technical and pedagogical matter. It is also a matter of social justice and equity.

**(Prof Rule is Associate Professor at the Centre for Higher Education. The article was published in Daily Maverick for International Literacy Day on 8 September.)**



# Student teachers learn new resilience



Every year thousands of student teachers descend on schools for a few weeks of practical exposure to the classroom. They observe, prepare and teach lessons, and are mentored by teachers. This period is a highlight of their degree, as they find themselves experiencing first-hand the fulfilment and challenges of being a member of the profession. But what if the school is closed? And what if there are no teachers in front of learners? This is the conundrum that faced many student teachers earlier this year, because the Covid-19 pandemic led to many months of schools being closed. In a twist of irony, these aspirant teachers moved from nervousness and anxiety about standing in front of a class to nervousness and anxiety about not standing in front of a class.

Some months into the pandemic, schools started to open gradually, and student teachers were permitted to enter schools. But now the context for teaching and learning barely resembles the circumstances for which their university lectures had prepared them. Theories of teaching and learning had to take on a new shape and new questions challenged the student teachers. *For example, collaborative learning was not easy to arrange under conditions of social distancing, concerns about classroom disruptions were minimised in a masked situation, and learners' excitement for learning could not be relied on in an atmosphere of anxiety.* To quote two student teachers: "Being a student teacher during the Covid-19 period has been interesting. One cannot expect to have had a legitimate experience of school life as school life is completely different to what it was before;" and "Being a student teacher during this time is like experiencing the definition of adaptability and not necessarily experiencing the assumption of what we are taught in theory."

Over and above the challenges of classroom teaching, student teachers had to face the reality that teachers did not have time to give them much advice. One student teacher reported how school meetings are minimal and even staffrooms are empty because of the limited numbers of people that can gather in any given space. Another noted how teachers were working hard to complete the curriculum as well as provide learners with support for well-being and mental health. *Nevertheless, the students were thankful for the assistance the teachers were able to provide under difficult conditions. As one put it: "I cannot say with*

*confidence that I would be able to recognise most of the people I had the pleasure of encountering during my time as a student teacher, but I am extremely grateful that they accommodated me nonetheless, knowing that circumstances were beyond their control."*

Teacher educators from universities too had to suddenly re-think the support they could provide to the student teachers. Used to being on the road, visiting new neighbourhoods, sitting in crowded classrooms and having conversation with teachers, the teacher educators now found themselves largely isolated behind their computer screens. In record time they needed to develop revised activities that would live up to the required academic and professional integrity of teacher education. Those who had resisted the use of technology were thrust into acknowledging the usefulness of these tools, as videos of lessons replaced face-to-face teaching, WhatsApp groups replaced class discussions and online quizzes replaced sit-down tests.

Covid-19 has affected the lives of thousands of people. Yet there have been unanticipated learning experiences for many student teachers. They may not have observed much classroom teaching but they have confronted key educational considerations that they might have glossed over in the past. This includes addressing the realities of the digital divide among learners and acknowledging the intertwined effect of home and school life on learner achievement. Assignments during this time have expected of student teachers to provide well thought through motivations for how they plan their lessons, drawing on research, theory and professional conversations. In this way, rather than getting lost in the overwhelming demands of classroom management, there has been time for a considered and reflective approach to lesson construction.

A further development has been the rapid adaptation of student teachers to potential scenarios for education in the future. Commentators on the fourth industrial revolution have warned about the delivery of education becoming the preserve of machines and the resultant disappearance of the human teacher. But this period has shown that it is the teacher behind the machines that ensures effective processes of learning, because it is the teacher who has to make the crucial pedagogical decisions about what to teach, how to teach and why to teach in particular ways. Student teachers have recognised their place in education for the future. As one put it: "Experienced teachers themselves are learning to adapt to the new normal and system of education. However, in these trying times we are also learning valuable skills such as problem-solving, communication, innovative thinking — thus 21st century skills."

**(Published in the Mail & Guardian on 3 October 2020. Maureen Robinson is professor in the department of curriculum studies)**





# Keeping busy during Lockdown!

## Omar Esau: Our Chess Champion



**Dr Omar Esau**

Dr Omar Esau was recently promoted to senior lecturer in the Department of Curriculum Studies. Recently he was also acknowledged for his contribution to Sport and Community Interaction as an Academic. Speaking during an interview on Radio 786, Dr Esau alluded to his rich career in Chess.

Presently he is the Vice-President of Chess in South Africa; he was also granted the accolade of SA Schools Honorary Life President in 2017. He is also the President of the Manyani Chess Club (est. 1976) who recently hosted their first ever Online Championship on 16 June 2020. Back in 2011, he was awarded the Western Province Tim Noakes Award for Research in Excellence – Checkmating HIV/Aids. He is also a qualified FIDE ARBITER which equates to an International Referee in Chess.

Besides Chess activity, Dr Omar Esau's community interaction encompasses being a radio presenter and he assists community activists in writing their stories. Mr Sedick Crombie who recently launched his book – My Apartheid Diary (2020) – also thanked Dr Esau for his contribution in making his monograph a reality. Dr Esau has also written on a former SARU/WPRU forgotten hero, Salie Fredericks, in his quest to give voice to those people who have been silenced and excluded during South Africa's Apartheid history.



**(Dr Omar Esau is a senior lecturer of Life Orientation and Religious Studies in the Department)**

## Growing flowers: the best way to relax



**Prof Michael le Cordeur**

In 1917, five men met in Wellington and decided to form a society to stimulate interest in the cultivation of flowers, especially chrysanthemums. The small society held its first chrysanthemum show on Saturday 26 April 1916 in the Dutch Reformed Mission School, now Pauw Gedenk Primary School. Since then, the Chrysanthemum Flower Show on the first Saturday in May has become a standing feature on the Wellington Cultural Calendar. The society has never missed a show, not even during World War II.



When we were forced into lockdown, I had the unexpected opportunity to spend more time in the garden. This proved to be my saving grace. Albeit that we, for the first time in 103 years, could not host our Annual Chrysanthemum Show in the Autumn of 2020, I could devote quality time to my flowers. This kept me focused. In fact: the virtual show was as close to the real thing as one could have hoped for. After a long day at the office, this is where I can relax: In my garden talking to my flowers. It is very therapeutic! And they never talk back.

**(Prof le Cordeur is chair of the department)**