

SARChI RESEARCH CHAIR HOLDER PROFILE

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Do not exceed a maximum of 510 Words

Full names	Elizabeth Henning
Name of Research Chair	Integrated Studies of Learning Language, Science and Mathematics in the Primary School
Primary research discipline	Education
Level of Chair	Tier 1
Institution	University of Johannesburg, Soweto Campus
Chair commencement date	January 2016

Chair holder's Biosketch	<p>Elizabeth Henning is professor of Educational Linguistics and director of the Centre for Education Practice Research in the Flagship Programme Area of Childhood Education at the University of Johannesburg. She is a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association, where she has been recognised for development of research capacity in South Africa.</p> <p>She studied with Shirley Brice Heath (Stanford) in a postdoctoral fellowship of the Spencer Foundation, facilitated by the National Academy of Education in the US.</p> <p>She is founding editor of the journal, <i>Education as Change</i>, which achieved listing status on the Web of Science (Social Sciences Citation Index, Thomsen Reuters) and Scopus (Elsevier) in 2006. She is also founding editor of the <i>South African Journal of Childhood Education</i>.</p> <p>Elizabeth is founding participant of the Funda UJabule primary school on UJ's Soweto campus, where she conducts research in children's mathematical cognition in the early grades and how language features in concept development in science and mathematics. Collaborating with the Department of Childhood Education at the University of Johannesburg, she has been instrumental in establishing the first teaching school research agenda. This is coupled with instructional films, the first of which is known by its hashtag #Taximaths.</p> <p>Her first venture into childhood learning research was as visiting student at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Bonn, Germany, and at the Gripps Kindertheater in Berlin in the late 1970s.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Do not exceed a maximum of 210 words</i></p>
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Web Site Links	
Website	www.uj.ac.za/cepr

<p>Current Research Interests</p>	<p>The team of researchers working with Henning investigates mathematical cognition in childhood, including mathematical learning difficulties and how language is partner in concept development of number, time and space.</p> <p>Another group that she leads conducts inquiries into the reading of science texts, integrated with cognitive academic language skills in the writing composition of mathematics and science in the primary school.</p> <p>Bringing these fields of inquiry together, Henning aims to model integrated learning of language, mathematics, and science in the childhood years. This includes the reading of science and maths texts, including, for example, 'word problems' in mathematics and inquiries in science learning.</p> <p>Henning's overall research aim is to bring together current theories of conceptual development, reading, language development and writing in the primary school years. To this end she has been instrumental in producing instructional films, based on research, one of which is currently used in teacher education.</p> <p><i>#Taximaths: How children make their world mathematical</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3VZVF4UsoQ</p> <p><i>#Taxiscience: How children learn to see their world scientifically (in progress)</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Do not exceed a maximum of 180 words</i></p>
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<p>Relevance of research</p>	<p>Evidence from South African research, as well as regional and international assessments in which South African learners have participated, shows unequivocally that there is cause for concern about the competence of children and youth in reading and writing, as well as mathematical competence and understanding of science. There is a realisation that early learning, including the learning of specific discourses of learning areas, is crucial in the primary school years, when the foundations of concepts are laid.</p> <p>South African research of learning and literacy in childhood has not explored children's learning at the interface of language, literacy, mathematical competence and science understanding. There is a need for small descriptive studies and large-scale studies that can yield usable results for policy.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Do not exceed a maximum of 120 words</i></p>
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