



*30 Years of Democracy in* **South Africa**



# Table of Contents

2024 EASA Conference hosted by the Department of Educational Psychology	3
Visit by the Canadian High Commissioner hosted by the Department of Childhood Education	4
Centre for Neurodiversity launched the Mpedi Family Scholarship for Neurodevelopmental Studies	5
Successful Events hosted within the Faculty in the First Quarter of 2024	6
Updates from the Department Of Science and Technology Education and CALTSTEAM	10
Updates from The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT)	13
Notable Achievements	13



**011 559 3251**  
Auckland Park Kingsway  
Campus  
**011 559 5562**  
Soweto Campus

## FACULTY OF EDUCATION CONTACT DETAILS:



[www.uj.ac.za/edu](http://www.uj.ac.za/edu)



[eduqueries@uj.ac.za](mailto:eduqueries@uj.ac.za)



[Education@UJ](https://www.facebook.com/Education@UJ)



[@EduFacultyUJ](https://twitter.com/EduFacultyUJ)



## 2024 EASA Conference hosted by UJ's Department of Education Psychology

The Education Association of South Africa (EASA)'s Annual Conference for 2024, organised by the Department of Educational Psychology, stands as a testament to the department's commitment to advancing education practices. Against the stunning backdrop of the Mount Grace Hotel & Spa, the conference showcased a diverse range of themes that captivated participants from various corners of the globe.

Presentations at the conference explored crucial thematic areas, including neurodiversity and social justice in education; the impact of ICTs and the Fourth Industrial Revolution on educational landscapes; and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the educational sphere. Additional discussions on trauma, school violence, safety, lifelong learning, community partnerships, future-fit leadership, and ethical considerations in education further emphasised the academics' dedication to shaping the future of education.



*Left: Chairperson of the Organising Committee, Prof Maximus Sefotho; the Executive Dean in the Faculty of Education, Prof Nadine Petersen; Delegate from UNISA; Acting DVC: Research & Internationalisation; Professor of Teacher Education and Development: Faculty of Education, Prof Sarah Gravett; with the keynote speaker at the opening of the conference, Dr Pali Lehohla (on the right)*



*Left: Staff Members from UJ's Faculty of Education's Departments of Education Psychology and Education Leadership and Management at the 2024 EASA conference. Dr Fumane Khanare; Prof Boitumelo Diale; Prof Kathija Yassim; Dr Suraya Naicker; Ms Athena Clayton; Prof Veronica Dwarika; and Prof Maximus Sefotho.*

The success of the conference, as organised by the Department of Educational Psychology, lies not only in its diverse thematic explorations but also in fostering a platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration. As participants return to their respective institutions, the insights gained from these transformative discussions will certainly influence innovative strategies and approaches in the ever-evolving field of education.



A big thank you to committee members from UJ who played pivotal roles in making this conference a success: Profs Maximus Sefotho; Boitumelo Diale; Veronica Dwarika; Joseph Divala; Uleanya Chinasa; Candice Livingstone (CPUT); Drs Suraya Naicker; Kathleen Fonseca; Fumane Khanare; Roxanne Bailey; and Mr. Linford Molaodi. Thank you to the Postdoctoral Research Fellows at UJ that were involved with organising this conference: Drs Chiedu Eseadi; Vera Victor; Charity Onyishi; Ossita Osai; Jabulani Mpofu.

On the first day of the conference, the roles and responsibilities of the incoming chairperson of EASA was officially handed over to Dr Fumane Khanare from UJ at the time of her election.

*Left: Dr Fumane Khanare*

## Strengthening Education Partnerships: The Department of Childhood Education Hosts Canadian High Commissioner to Mark 30 Years of Democracy



On 29 February the Department of Childhood Education assisted in hosting a momentous occasion, welcoming the Canadian High Commissioner to commemorate 30 years of South African democracy. The event, aptly named “Marking 30 years of democracy: Looking Back and Forging Ahead,” served as a platform to celebrate achievements, discuss challenges, and chart a path forward in empowering the youth through education and strategic collaborations.

The Imbizo Hall at UJ’s Soweto Campus buzzed with enthusiasm as educators, policymakers, and stakeholders gathered to underscore the pivotal role of education in shaping the future of South Africa. Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UJ, set the tone with a compelling welcome address, emphasising the transformative power of education and the promise held by the youth of the nation.

Highlighting the significance of international partnerships, His Excellency Mr. Chris Cooter, the Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa, elaborated on Canada’s commitment to collaborating with the South African government and educational institutions. His insights shed light on Canada’s strategy to empower and create opportunities for South African youth through initiatives spanning education, research, and strategic alliances. A notable announcement came from the High Commissioner, outlining plans for a comprehensive partnership between the Canadian High Commission and UJ. This partnership extends beyond student-focused initiatives to encompass joint projects, research endeavours, and strategic collaborations with Canadian universities. Such partnerships hold the promise of advancing knowledge exchange, fostering innovation, and addressing pressing societal challenges.

A highlight of the event was the Education Masterclass, designed to equip students with the skills and insights needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Discussions spanned various domains, including innovative education, early childhood development, leadership, research methodologies, and technological advancements. By engaging students in dialogue and hands-on learning experiences, the masterclass aimed to inspire and empower the next generation of leaders and change-makers.

As South Africa commemorates three decades of democracy, events like these serve as poignant reminders of the progress made and the challenges that lie ahead. By fostering cross-border collaborations and investing in education, we pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future. The UJ-Canadian partnership exemplifies this commitment, offering a beacon of hope for generations to come.

In conclusion, the Department of Childhood Education at UJ remains steadfast in its mission to cultivate excellence, foster innovation, and drive positive change in South Africa and beyond. Through strategic partnerships and collaborative efforts, we continue to unlock the potential of our youth and build a better tomorrow for all.



*The VC, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi opening the event*



*His Excellency Mr. Chris Cooter engaging with Education students: Queen Spencer, Lindumusa Sikhakhane, and Sphokazi Mtolo*



*The Vice-Dean, Prof Jacqueline Batchelor with members from the Faculty of Education*



## Centre for Neurodiversity launched the Mpedi Family Scholarship for Neurodevelopmental Studies

In a remarkable stride towards inclusivity and understanding, the Centre for Neurodiversity@UJ proudly announced the launch of the Mpedi Family Scholarship, a groundbreaking initiative spearheaded and privately-funded by UJ's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Letlhokwa Mpedi, and his family. Unveiled on 4 March 2024, this scholarship underscores a commitment to fostering inclusive research and addressing the distinctive challenges encountered by individuals with neurodiverse conditions.

The Mpedi Family Scholarship is a beacon of hope for those dedicated to unstanding the complexities of neurodevelopmental learning needs in children and youth. By supporting full-time Master's students engaged in research within this domain, the scholarship aims to bolster the ranks of professionals equipped to tackle the multifaceted aspects of neurodiversity.

At the heart of this endeavour lies the Centre for Neurodiversity@UJ, steered by Professor Maximus Sefotho. This hub of excellence endeavours to champion research focusing on the neurodevelopmental learning needs of children and youth, with particular attention to the health and well-being of those with Down Syndrome. The Mpedi Family's visionary act reflects a profound dedication to reshaping societal perceptions of neurodiversity and underscores the imperative of responding to the educational needs of neurodiverse individuals with empathy and inclusivity.



*Opening and Welcome by the Executive Dean in the Faculty of Education, Prof Nadine Petersen*



*Co-ordinator Centre for Neurodiversity, Prof Maximus Sefotho introduced the Scholarship Awardees*

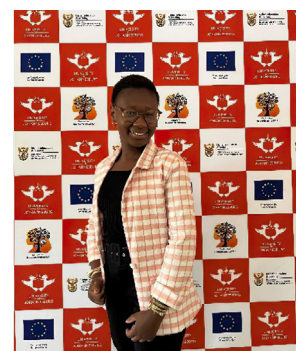
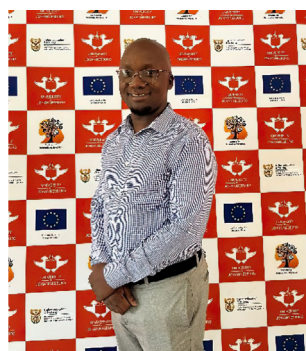


*The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi sharing his personal journey with Neurodiversity.*

Professor Mpedi's personal journey serves as a poignant testament to the transformative power of embracing neurodiversity. Drawing from his experience as a parent to a neurodivergent child, he advocates for a paradigm shift—one that celebrates the unique cognitive landscapes of individuals like his son Daniel. Through his advocacy, Prof Mpedi encourages society to recognize neurodivergent differences as enriching variations of the human experience, fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding.

The scholarship not only serves as a financial lifeline for aspiring researchers but also propels the Centre for Neurodiversity@UJ towards its mission of addressing global challenges in the realm of neurodiversity. By facilitating meaningful research endeavours, the scholarship aspires to cultivate a more inclusive and enlightened society—one that celebrates the diversity of human cognition.

During the scholarship launch, three of the four pioneering scholars presented their research topics, each inspired by a deep personal connection to neurodiversity. Nthabiseng Molebatsi's 9-year-old niece living with Down Syndrome inspired her studies in neurodiversity. "My studies are looking at the socio-economic backgrounds in mining communities and possibly hypothesising the link between parental factors that have a manifestation in Down Syndrome." Ntokozi Zwane's research study is based on parents' experience with providing learning support to children with Down Syndrome. Mohamed Mosala's research is based on strategies for the successful transition for learners with Down Syndrome from home to school. From exploring socio-economic factors in mining communities to delving into strategies for successful transitions for learners with Down Syndrome, these scholars exemplify the dedication and passion driving neurodiversity research forward.



*Three of the four recipients of the Scholarship: Nthabiseng Molebatsi, Mohamed Mosala, and Ntokozi Zwane*





Honoured guests along with the UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Letlhokwa Mpedi and his wife.



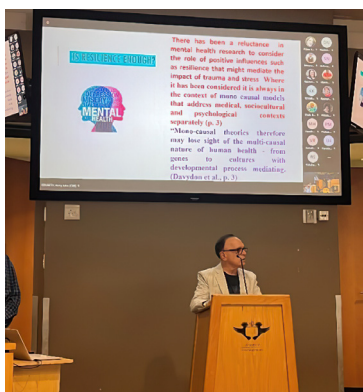
The launch of the Mpedi Neurodiversity Studies Scholarship marks not merely a singular event but the dawn of a transformative vision for inclusive research. UJ envisions a future where this scholarship serves as a beacon, illuminating the path towards a global community committed to understanding and embracing neurodiversity.

Headed by the Department of Educational Psychology within the Faculty of Education, the Neurodiversity@UJ Centre stands poised to lead the charge in fostering an inclusive research landscape—one where diversity is celebrated, barriers are dismantled, and empathy reigns supreme.

The launch coincided with the observation of World Down Syndrome Day, and during the launch, Prof Engela Magdalena Honey from the University of Pretoria, an experienced paediatric professional with 25 years in the field, delivered an insightful talk on Down Syndrome. Prof Honey covered various aspects, elucidating the genetic aspects and overall development of individuals with Down Syndrome. She emphasised that while the experience may differ, it remains a wonderful journey. Prof Honey reassured that treating a child with Down Syndrome similarly to any other, with a lot of love and support, is key, stating, "As long as the heart is normal, you can treat this child like any other with a lot of life, and we will be there to help."

Here's a video snippet of the launch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRuO8xDsr2Y>

## Successful Events hosted within the Faculty in the First Quarter of 2024



During the months of February and March the Faculty of Education hosted several Public Lectures and Seminars.

The Department of Education and Curriculum Studies hosted a public lecture, presented by Distinguished Visiting Professor, Kerry J Kennedy on 26 February 2024 about: Disruptions as the "New Normal": How should young people be prepared for an uncertain future?

*Left: Distinguished Visiting Professor, Kerry J Kennedy*



The Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES) hosted a virtual public lecture presented by Prof Sioux McKenna from Rhodes University on 27 February 2024. She discussed: Gaming the system: how ranking brings out the worst in universities. More than 100 guest joined in.

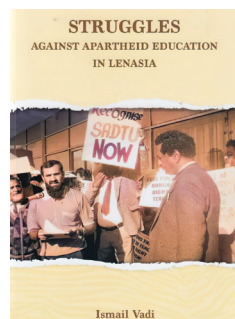


Above: Prof Sioux McKenna from Rhodes University on screen with members from AMCHES, Prof Emnet Woldegiorgis, Dr Tshepo Mvulane Molo, and Prof Mlamuli Hlatshwayo.



Above: Dr Nazreen Dasoo with Prof Terence Lovat and Ms Kgomoatso Motlotle from Botswana,

On 5 March, the UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair in Values Education, Dr Nazreen Dasoo, along with the Department of Education and Curriculum Studies hosted a public lecture presented by Emeritus Professor Terence Lovat from the University of Newcastle (Australia). The topic was: Values Education and Best Practice Pedagogy. Notable guests included Ms Kgomoatso Motlotle, that joined all the way from Botswana's Presidential Office, as well as guests from the Living Values Association of South Africa (LVASA) and the UNESCO Office in Paris, France.



The SARCHI Teaching and Learning, Prof Shireen Motala, hosted a hybrid seminar on 6 March 2024 presented by Dr Ismail Vadi, where he spoke about his book: Struggles against Apartheid Education in Lenasia.



Some guests along with Prof Shireen Motala and presenter, Dr Ismail Vadi.





*All the Speakers at the International Women's Day Event*

On 7 March the Faculty of Education joined forces with UJ's Library; Transformation Unit; and Community Engagement to observe International Women's Day. The event featured prominent figures discussing the current state of women in academia and the corporate world. Professor Thandi Lewin from the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies addressed gender equity in education, acknowledging the positive strides made through legislation. She highlighted the ongoing impact of gendered ideologies and cultures despite existing policies for women in leadership roles. Prof Lewin emphasised the importance of maintaining gender equity as a policy focus at all levels, and the need for early-career support for female academics.



Dr Sadi Seyama, Senior Lecturer in Education Leadership and Management, served as the event's MC. She urged women to embrace self-awareness, ethical leadership, and utilise opportunities offered by their institutions. Professor Zakhele Mkhize, CEO of Entsika Group and adjunct professor at Unisa, spoke as an advocate for women. He highlighted the challenges women face despite having higher education levels, including higher unemployment rates and economic inactivity due to societal expectations. The event also featured a range of speakers, including Dr Naadhira Seedat, who shared her experiences as a young woman of colour in STEM, and Authenticity Coach Thato Belang, who encouraged cultivating courageous conversations to foster inclusion through women's leadership.



The CALTSTEAM Research Centre of the Department of Science and Technology Education held a public lecture presented by Professor Daniel Capps from the University of Georgia on: Collaborating with teachers to drive innovation in instruction and research on 13 March 2024.



*Prof Daniel Capps handing over a T-shirt of University of Georgia, promising to invite Prof Umesh Ramnarain to his institution.*

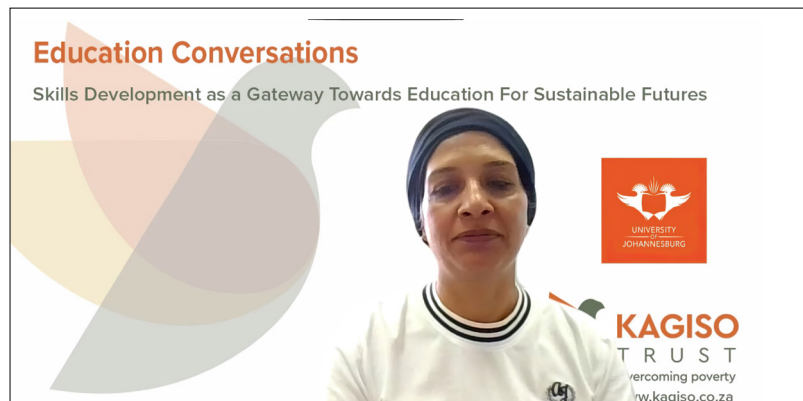


*Prof Daniel Capps with some students that attended the Public Lecture.*



The Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies (AMCHES) also held another online public lecture on 20 March 2024. The speaker was Prof Saleem Badat from the University of Free-State and the topic was: The University in Contemporary South Africa: Commodification, Corporatisation, Complicity and Crisis.

Finally, on 27 March the first Education Conversation, in collaboration with the Kagiso Trust, took place. The focus was on Skills Development as a Gateway Towards Education for Sustainable Futures.



*Prof Kathija Yassim introducing the speakers.*

## Updates from The Department Of Science and Technology and CALTSTEAM

*Information Supplied by Dr Roxanne Bailey and Dr Viren Ramdhany*

The Department of Science and Technology Education (SciTechEd) has had a blistering start to the 2024 academic year.

### UJ's Science and Technology Education Department Shines at SAARMSTE 2024

The Southern African Association of Research in Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education (SAARMSTE) recently convened its 32nd annual conference at The International University of Management (IUM) in Windhoek, Namibia, from January 16 to 18, 2024. This gathering proved to be a hallmark event, showcasing the prowess and research contributions of the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) Science and Technology Education department.

With a formidable contingent of 16 colleagues in attendance, UJ's SciTechEd department made a resounding impact at SAARMSTE 2024. Serving as a hub for educators and researchers alike, the conference provided a fertile ground for the exchange of insights and the exploration of innovative strategies to enrich STEM education.

The Mathematics Education unit, the Science Education unit, and the Learning Technologies unit all made significant contributions, underscoring UJ's multifaceted approach to advancing science and technology education.

Among the standout participants were our colleagues from UJ, who showcased their pioneering research in the dynamic field of science education. Their presentations spanned a spectrum of topics, ranging from novel teaching methodologies to cutting-edge advancements in educational technology. Through insightful discussions and thought-provoking presentations, they left an indelible impression on fellow conference attendees, sparking conversations that promise to shape the future of science education.

However, their engagement transcended academic discourse. Our colleagues seized the opportunity to connect with educators and researchers from around the world, fostering collaborative relationships aimed at driving meaningful change in science education. This spirit of collaboration was at the heart of their experience, as they exchanged ideas, shared best practices, and forged partnerships to push the boundaries of knowledge forward.

Following the enriching conference, our Science Unit colleagues embarked on an exhilarating journey to explore the natural wonders and vibrant culture of Namibia. Venturing beyond the confines of academia, they immersed themselves in the breathtaking landscapes of Walvis Bay and the awe-inspiring Namib Desert, creating memories that will last a lifetime.



*The CALTSTEAM Symposium team at SAARMSTE*



*Our HoD's attempt at sandboarding*



*Dr Ogegbo; Prof Krajcik; Ms Mdalose; Dr Penn; Prof Mavuru; Prof Ramnarain (Science Education Unit)*



*SciTechEd's lovely ladies; Dr Bailey; Dr Ogegbo; Mrs Raban; Prof Mavuru; Dr Dhurumraj*



*Dr Ramdhany; Dr Mahlaba; Mr Moloi*



*An exhilarating excursion to the beautifully stark west coast – Swakopmund*



As trailblazers in their field, UJ's Science and Technology Education department continues to lead the charge in redefining the landscape of science education. Their unwavering commitment to excellence and passion for innovation serves as an inspiration to educators and researchers alike, reaffirming UJ's position as a beacon of knowledge and progress in the realm of STEM education.

The CALTSTEAM Research Centre of the Department of Science and Technology Education further organised and hosted a symposium titled "AI for STEM Education: Exploring Perspectives and Advancements" at the conference. The primary objective of the symposium was to provide a platform for scholars to share their insights, research findings, and best practices, and to explore collaborative opportunities in leveraging AI for enhancing STEM education. The symposium included presentations by UJ researchers, Dr Mafor Penn, Prof Christo van der Westhuizen, Dr Roxanne Bailey, Dr Herman Myburgh, Ms Noluthando Mdlalose, Mr Teboho Moloi, and Prof Umesh Ramnarain who also acted as the facilitator and discussant. The UJ team was joined by international experts, Prof Joseph Krajcik (Michigan State University) and Prof Tataleni Asino (Oklahoma State University). The presenters engaged the audience in a range of topics pertinent to the conversation on AI in STEM Education that included Machine Learning for Student Assessment; Data-driven Insights and Predictive Analytics; Intelligent Tutoring Systems; AI and Virtual Reality for Immersive Learning; Cooperative Learning and AI; and Ethical Considerations and Responsible AI in STEM Education.

The research being done at CALTSTEAM generated much interest amongst delegates, and plans are now in place to upscale some of this work to involve other Southern African universities. Prof Ramnarain is heading discussions with one of the SAARMSTE host universities of Namibia in establishing a memorandum of understanding.

## **Papers Presented at the Conference from The Mathematics Education Unit**

### ***A systematic review of computational thinking in STEM education in Africa: Dr Sfiso Mahlaba, Prof Umesh Ramnarain & Dr Ayodele Ogebo.***

Dr Sfiso Mahlaba presented a comprehensive paper titled 'A systematic review of computational thinking in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education in Africa.' The paper delved into the evolving landscape of computational thinking in the African educational context, providing valuable insights into its integration within STEM disciplines. Dr Mahlaba and colleagues, through meticulous research, explored current practices and identified potential strategies to foster computational thinking among students in STEM education. Furthermore, in collaboration with Professor Umesh Ramnarain and Dr Ayodele Ogebo, Dr Mahlaba spearheaded a symposium titled 'Computational thinking for STEM education: Exploring perspectives and strategies.' This symposium engaged participants in a dialogue about the multifaceted dimensions of computational thinking and proposed effective pedagogical approaches for its incorporation into STEM curricula.

### ***Learners' reflections on feedback from ChatGPT: Prof Erica Spangenberg***

Prof Erica Spangenberg contributed significantly to the conference with her paper titled 'Learners' reflections on feedback from ChatGPT and their teachers about their misconceptions in mathematics content.' This research focused on leveraging artificial intelligence, specifically ChatGPT, to provide personalized feedback to learners in mathematics. Prof Spangenberg examined how students reflected upon and benefited from feedback generated by ChatGPT, as well as the collaborative feedback from their teachers. This innovative approach showcased the University of Johannesburg's commitment to exploring cutting-edge technologies for educational improvement.

### ***"Grade 9 learners' errors in algebraic equations" and "The crisis of mathematics pre-service teachers' poor school content knowledge": Dr Viren Ramdhany.***

Dr Viren Ramdhany presented two insightful papers at the conference. The first, titled 'Grade 9 learners' errors when working with algebraic equations,' delved into the common pitfalls and misconceptions exhibited by Grade 9 learners when solving algebraic equations. This research sheds light on critical areas that demand targeted interventions to enhance understanding and performance in algebraic equations. In the second paper, Dr Ramdhany addressed 'The crisis of mathematics pre-service teachers' poor school content knowledge.' This research focused on the challenges faced by pre-service teachers in mastering foundational mathematics content. Dr Ramdhany's work underscored the urgent need for interventions in teacher education programs to address deficiencies in content knowledge, ensuring future educators are better equipped to deliver effective instruction.

The University of Johannesburg's active participation in the SAARMSTE conference reinforces its commitment to advancing STEM education and contributing valuable research to the global educational community. These presentations showcase the university's dedication to addressing challenges, embracing innovative approaches, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement in mathematics education.

From the Learning Technologies Unit, Prof Christo van der Westhuizen and Dr Roxanne Bailey participated in the SAARMSTE conference as part of a larger group presenting a symposium on AI in Education. This group consisted of colleagues from all the different units in SciTechEd.

## News from the Learning Technologies Unit (Dept. SciTechEd): A Recap of LTU's Recent Achievements

The Learning Technologies Unit (LTU) at the University of Johannesburg continues to spearhead innovations in education technology, making significant strides in advancing pedagogical practices and research endeavors. Here's a recap of LTU's recent achievements:



**DIS DIE EEN**

### Prof Christo van der Westhuizen's Interview on RSG

On November 26, 2023, Prof Christo van der Westhuizen represented the LTU in an invited interview on RSG's "Ons en die Onderwys" programme. His insights shed light on the intersection of technology and education, highlighting the LTU's commitment to shaping the future of learning through innovative approaches.

Listen to the Podcast here: [https://www.rsg.co.za/rsg/potgooi-resultaat/?\\_sft\\_category=ons-en-die-onderwys-potgooi](https://www.rsg.co.za/rsg/potgooi-resultaat/?_sft_category=ons-en-die-onderwys-potgooi)

### EDUTEL Conference Presentation by Dr Maglin Moodley

The LTU was prominently featured at the EDUTEL conference, where Dr Maglin Moodley delivered a presentation on technology integration in education, with a focus on coding and robotics in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education. Dr Moodley's presentation underscored the LTU's dedication to promoting interdisciplinary learning experiences and leveraging technology to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

### Welcoming of Dr Jameson Goto

A significant highlight for the LTU was the addition of Dr Jameson Goto to its ranks. Dr Goto joined the LTU on February 1 and has already made a substantial impact through his contributions to classes and his involvement in the CALSTEAM research center. His expertise and passion for learning technologies further strengthen the LTU's mission to drive innovation in educational practices.

### Successful External Funding Acquisition

The LTU secured external funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) through a collaborative research project. This project, which involves collaboration with Dr Viren Ramdhany from the Mathematics Education Unit, as well as colleagues from other institutions such as NWU and WSU, exemplifies the LTU's commitment to interdisciplinary research and its ability to forge partnerships to advance the field of learning technologies.

As the LTU continues to push the boundaries of learning technologies, these achievements underscore its pivotal role in shaping the future of education. With a dedicated team of experts and a commitment to excellence, the LTU remains at the forefront of innovation, driving meaningful change in teaching and learning practices at UJ and beyond.

## News from the Mathematics Education Unit (Dept. SciTechEd):

Prof Erica Spangenberg was invited to participate in a panel discussion on the radio station Radio Sonder Grense (RSG), in December 2023. The programme, "Ons en die Onderwys" reflected on education matters during the 2023 academic year.



**DIS DIE EEN**

Prof Spangenberg was also asked to join the follow-up discussion in early January 2024, where the panel spoke to the forecast for the 2024 academic year.

Listen to the Podcasts here:

<https://omny.fm/shows/ons-en-die-onderwys/ons-en-die-onderwys-31-december-2023>

<https://omny.fm/shows/ons-en-die-onderwys/ons-en-die-onderwys-7-januarie-2024>

## News from the Science Education Unit (Dept. SciTechEd):

Several colleagues from Science Education had a strong media presence, thus increasing SciTechEd's national footprint.

Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj participated in a thought-provoking panel discussion hosted by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The discussion centred around the intriguing notion of merging Matric exams for both private and public school students. Dr Dhurumraj brought a unique blend of academic rigor and real-world experience to the dialogue. As a distinguished educator and advocate for equity in education, she articulated compelling arguments for the potential benefits and challenges associated with such a transformative initiative.

Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsjRZXft5ic>



Prof Sam Ramaila offered insights on the implications of the matriculation pass rate for skills development within ICT sector during a panel discussion on SABC TV channel.

Prof Mavuru had an interview on CII Radio (an Islamic Radio Station) on Life Sciences teaching and learning focussing on how to tackle controversial topics that have a bearing on culture and religion. The topic of discussion was "Beyond the Textbook: Life Sciences and the Real-World Impact of Socio-Scientific Issues in South Africa".

## Updates from The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT)

Prof Morgan Nkululeko Ndlovu who recently joined the Center for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) in Faculty of Education facilitated a two-day workshop on 'Theorizing Identities: Being and becoming African in Context' organized by African Research Universities Association's (ARUA) Centre of Excellence (CoE) at Makerere University, Uganda that took place on the 27th of February 2024 and 1 March 2024. The workshop whose focus was on making sense of African identities from a decolonial and Afrocentric perspectives was attended by doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and early career researchers from more than 8 universities. Prof Ndlovu is an International Advisory Board member for the ARUA Center of Excellence on Notions of Identities in Africa based at Makerere University.



Prof Mlamuli Hlatshwayo from CERT was appointed as a member of Ministerial Task Team to develop a comprehensive implementation plan in response to the outcomes of the Community Education and Training skills summit 2022 in October 2023. The task team's role is to redesign and repurpose the entire Community Education and Training Sector so that it is able to respond to the demands for skills and community education. The skills design is not just about skills for business but also skills for building working-class and poor communities. One of the key task of the task team is to map CET programmes that move away from the existing programmes dominated by academic qualifications and course (97%) to a programme mix of academic, skills and community education programme. As the task team was about to conclude its work last year, Professor Peliwe Lolwana, the chairperson of the task team, took her last breath on 17 December 2023. As a task team member I was privileged to work with her and she automatically became my mentor. Perhaps transforming the CET sector and community colleges in particular would be the best way to remember the late Professor. The report of the task team will be presented to Minister of Education and Training, Doctor Blade Nzimande, who will then process it.

## Notable Achievements

RECIPIENT	ACHIEVEMENT	GEOGRAPHIC STATUS
<b>Prof Mlamuli Hlatshwayo</b>	Prof Mlamuli Hlatshwayo has been appointed as a member of the Research, Monitoring, and Advice Committee (RMAC) by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). Prof Hlatshwayo's term will span from 12 March 2024 to 11 March 2027.	National
<b>Prof Jacqueline Batchelor</b>	Prof Jacqueline Batchelor was invited to speak at the Department of Basic Education's Lekgotla 2024. She spoke on the topic: Opportunities and Challenges for Digital Education in Teacher Training and Teacher Support.	National
<b>Prof Shafika Isaacs</b>	Professor of Practice at UJ, Shafika Isaacs, was one of the speakers at the 14th Policy Dialogue Forum hosted by UNESCO. The Policy Dialogue Forum is a global platform for education stakeholders, which aims to foster advocacy, knowledge exchange, peer learning and monitoring of progress towards target 4.c of SDG 4 on teachers and teaching.	International

<b>Prof Nadine Petersen</b>	The Department of Basic Education (DBE) along with UNESCO invited Prof Nadine Petersen, Executive Dean of UJ's Faculty of Education to speak at the 14th Policy Dialogue Forum at the Capital on the Park in Sandton on 27 February 2024. Prof Petersen was part of Plenary 2 which discussed the topic: "Strengthening policies for the professionalisation of the teacher workforce."	International
<b>Prof Jace Pillay</b>	Prof Jace Pillay, holder of the South African Research Chair: Education and Care in Childhood made a submission to attend the Global Inclusive Schools' Forum and commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Salamanca Statement of Principles. He was then selected as one of the delegates to make his way to the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France in March 2024.	International
<b>Prof Kakoma Luneta</b>	The journal started by Prof Kakoma Luneta in 2021, the African Journal of Teacher Education and Development (AJOTED), has successfully secured a spot in the DHET-approved index, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). This significant milestone opens up new avenues for visibility and collaboration, marking a pivotal moment in AJOTED's commitment to scholarly excellence.	National
<b>Dr Fumane Khanare</b>	Dr Fumane Khanare from the Faculty of Education was recently appointed as the incoming Chairperson of the Education Association of South Africa (EASA). Dr Khanare was awarded the Post Graduate Medal for her Doctoral research in 2016 and since then has gone through the ranks to become the Chairperson of this esteemed academic association in South Africa.	National
<b>Prof Emnet Woldegiorgis</b>	The Ali Mazrui Centre of Higher Education Studies (AMCHES) at the University of Johannesburg has been granted a prestigious role in the Finnish National Agency for Education's (FNAE) Higher Education Partnership Programme (HEP) for the years 2023-2026. Prof Emnet Woldegiorgis has been invited to join the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), serving as one of the foreign representatives, specifically representing Africa. As the sole African member, AMCHES will contribute valuable insights to this international initiative, fostering collaboration and strengthening ties in the realm of higher education.	International
<b>Prof Thandi Lewin</b>	Prof Thandi Lewin, an Associate Professor at the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies and the Department of Education Leadership and Management in the Faculty of Education at UJ, joined the JET (Joint Education Trust) board of directors in January 2024. Prof Lewin will certainly add value to this organisation in continuing their commitment to their vision of improving education for disadvantaged South Africans, and expanding their reach further, particularly on the African continent.	National
<b>Prof Linda Chisholm Prof Raj Mestry Prof Salim Vally Prof Jace Pillay Prof Sarah Gravett Prof Umesh Ramnarain Prof Shireen Motala Prof Nadine Petersen Dr Chiedu Eseadi (PDRF)</b>	Nine distinguished researchers from the Faculty of Education have been recognized among the Africa Top 100 Education Scientists for 2024. This is according to the AD Scientific Index (Alper-Doger Scientific Index), that is a ranking and analysis system based on the scientific performance and the added value of the scientific productivity of individual scientists, unlike other systems that evaluate journals and universities. This new index was developed in 2021. See the full list here: <a href="https://www.adscientificindex.com/top-100-scientist/?tit=Educatation&amp;con=Africa">https://www.adscientificindex.com/top-100-scientist/?tit=Educatation&amp;con=Africa</a>	International



## **Do you have exciting news or updates from your domain that you would like to feature in the next issue of EduBrief?**

Please share your stories and accomplishments to be highlighted in the next publication. Whether it's a new research breakthrough, student achievements, collaborative projects, or upcoming events, we want to hear from you!

Submit a brief write-up detailing the news or update, include relevant pictures or visuals to accompany your submission. Email your submission and pictures to [edumarketing@uj.ac.za](mailto:edumarketing@uj.ac.za).

Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your achievements in EduBrief!