

ēducātiō

Faculty of Education



Stellenbosch
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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe

April 2026



Stellenbosch
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ēducātiō

Faculty of Education Publication

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The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editor, the Faculty of Education or Stellenbosch University.

FROM THE EDITOR



Choosing to become a teacher is an important decision that should never be taken lightly, because it carries a profound responsibility to shape the minds, values, and futures of others.

Teaching involves more than delivering content; it is about forming connections, reflecting and continuous growth, like Bridget Botha said (p.20).

With passionate, creative staff members like Agatha Lebethé and Dr Chrischar Rock (p.8) and new opportunities for learning such as the planned Innovation Hub (p.32), the future of education holds exciting promise, with learning becoming more accessible, personalised, and engaging than ever before.

May this edition of *Educatio* serve as a source of inspiration for prospective students, as well as current students and alumni.

Elbie Els

Faculty of Education Marketing & Communication

Available in English and Afrikaans on
Faculty of Education's website.



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Photos: Stefan Els



MESSAGE from the Dean

The strategic groundwork laid in 2025, has strongly positioned our Faculty for an ambitious and transformative 2026. We are poised not merely to respond to the evolving landscape of education, but to actively shape it. Our collective efforts continue to advance our vision of becoming a leading faculty recognised globally for excellence, innovation and inclusivity.

A major priority this year is the official launch of the **Faculty Digital Innovation Hub**, which will serve as a central platform for digital pedagogy, AI-enabled teaching, and 21st-century teacher education. Under the leadership of Prof Bayaga, the Hub has moved decisively from concept to planning. A steering committee is in place, a comprehensive business plan has been developed, and funding applications have been submitted. As the Hub transitions into implementation this year, it is poised to become the epicentre of our digital transformation and innovation in teaching and learning.

We are also **expanding our academic offers** to meet emerging educational needs and strengthen our academic profile. We will continue to implement our new qualifications (Honours in Educational Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in AI in Education), developed in collaboration with the School for Data Science, as well as short courses in AI in Education. We will continue exploring the introduction of a BEd (Senior Phase) qualification and new programmes in early childhood development, thereby ensuring that our Faculty remains responsive to national priorities and educational needs across all levels.

Our commitment to **transdisciplinary innovation** continues to grow through strategic collaborations, including joint initiatives with the School for Data Science and expanded international partnerships. A particularly exciting development is our collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering on robotics for education. Together, we are working towards the development of a humanoid robot designed specifically for educational contexts, with the goal of having a fully developed prototype by the end of 2026 or early 2027. This initiative represents a bold step into the future of AI-integrated teaching and learning.

Advancing our research vision remains central to our mission. Our aspiration to be recognised as a globally leading research-intensive faculty continues to guide our work. I am pleased that, through your dedication and scholarly excellence, the Faculty continues to perform strongly in international rankings, including the Times Higher Education World University Rankings by Subject, where we retained our position within the top 200 globally and the third place nationally.

Financial sustainability is a key pillar of our long-term strategy. The Faculty successfully operated within its approved 2025 budget, laying a strong foundation for continued strategic development. Beyond prudent financial management, we have made meaningful progress in expanding third-stream income. Our flagship units, SUNCEP and the CHAE, continue to play a vital role in income generation and social impact. SUNCEP's success in securing multi-year funding from major partners such as the SIOC, Eskom and Sanlam reflects the continued confidence in the quality, relevance and impact of our programmes.

Supporting our students remains at the heart of our mission. We will be filling the vacant post of Academic Advisor to provide targeted academic support and guidance. We will also intensify our efforts to address socioeconomic barriers facing our students. Initiatives such as the "Dress for Success" project, which provides professional attire for students entering the job market, will be supported. We have also secured funding from the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) to support PGCE students during their teaching practice, fostering an inclusive, supportive and enabling learning environment.

Ensuring **academic excellence and programme quality** continues to be a core priority. Following the Faculty review, the Faculty successfully completed its two-year improvement plans, which have now been approved by Senate. Concurrently, we are engaged in the programme review process of the Council on Higher Education. I extend my sincere appreciation to Prof Koopman and the Self-evaluation teams for their leadership in completing the first draft reports. This work is essential to ensuring that all our teacher education programmes remain fully accredited and aligned with rigorous national standards.

Our **external engagements** have also strengthened the Faculty's voice and influence within the broader education sector. Through active participation in national bodies such as Universities South Africa and Umalusi, and through SUNCEP's expanding partnerships, our Faculty continues to contribute meaningfully to shaping national education priorities and advancing educational excellence.

This year promises to be one of innovation, growth and continued excellence. Together, we are building a Faculty that not only responds to change but leads it – shaping the future of education in South Africa and beyond.

Prof Mbulungeni Madiba
Dean

FACULTY MANAGEMENT & STAFF



Prof Mbulungeni Madiba
Dean



Prof Liezel Frick
Vice Dean: Research



Prof Oscar Koopman
Acting Vice Dean:
Teaching & Learning



Mr Robert van Staden
Faculty Manager



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Davids**
Chairperson:
Department
Education Policy
Studies



Prof Melanie Moen
Chairperson:
Department
Educational
Psychology



**Ms Nokwanda
Siyengo**
Acting Director:
SUNCEP
Programme
Manager:
SciMathUS

The Faculty of Education aspires to be a leading research-intensive institution recognised nationally and globally for its excellence, inclusivity, and innovation.

Central to its aspiration of being a leading research-intensive education faculty, are the following goals:

- to deliver excellent teaching and learning based on sound research that will have a positive social impact on our environment
- to promote high quality research into key educational issues and to be the first go-to-voice on educational issues in the South African context
- to support SU as the leading university in education on the African continent



TEACHING THAT INSPIRES:

Lecturers of the year

Behind every inspiring classroom is a lecturer who knows how to bring ideas to life. In this article, we highlight the faculty's top lecturers (as voted by the students) who have made a lasting impact through their teaching, passion, and dedication to student learning.



Ms Agatha Lebeth
Lecturer: Mathematics

I am inspired by the fact that I have the opportunity each day and am deeply invested in contributing to the development of mathematics educators who think critically, question deeply, and are competent and confident in contributing to the field of mathematics education.

The most difficult part of lecturing is balancing high expectations with developmental support – holding students to rigorous scholarly standards while acknowledging that they're at the beginning of their academic journey. Also, the contextual complexity: This means navigating between what should be, what could be and what is. I feel torn between aspirational visions and systemic constraints. Helping students hold this complexity without becoming overwhelmed or cynical is demanding.

"Wanderer, your footsteps are the road, and nothing more; wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking." (Antonio Machado)

During Covid, one of my students attempted suicide. My name was in her contacts because she was living in the residence, and I made sure she had access to medication and food. I immediately rushed to her. The best moment was when she later on graduated with honours. I am not sure who cried more that day. She now has a daughter, and I am the honorary Gogo. I am immensely proud of her achievements.

The best moment was when one of my students invited her parents to class. They travelled far, and I nearly died when I realised they were in my class. The reason was that she loved her maths modules, and her dad did not like maths. She brought him along to experience mathematics in a different way.



Dr Chrischar Rock
Coordinator: Practical Learning

It is really inspiring that every aspect of my work influences our future generation of educators and, by default, learners in schools across the globe. This comes with a huge responsibility to deliver quality teaching and learning, and a commitment to doing so with kindness, humility and in collaboration with others.

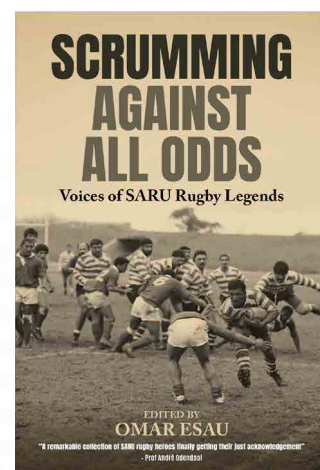
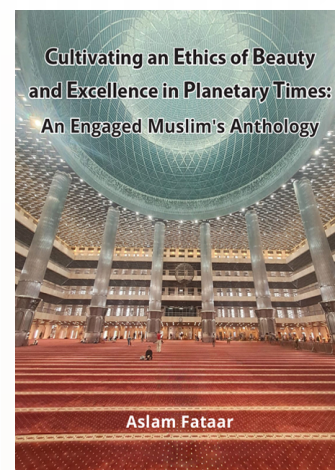
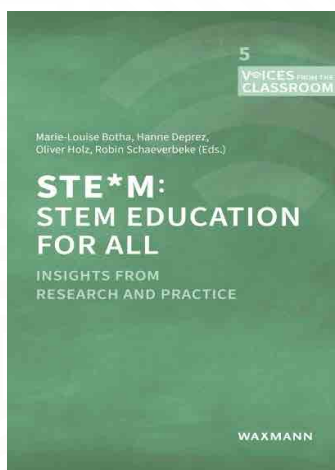
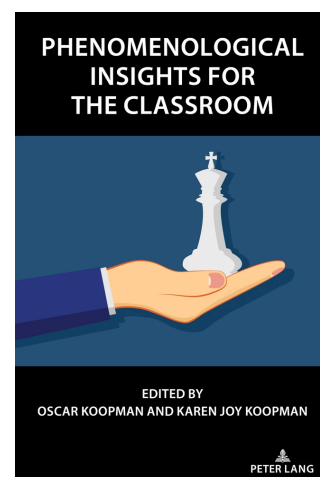
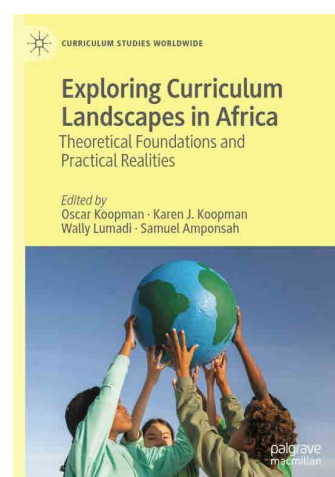
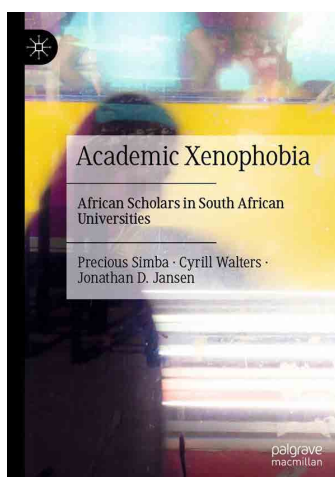
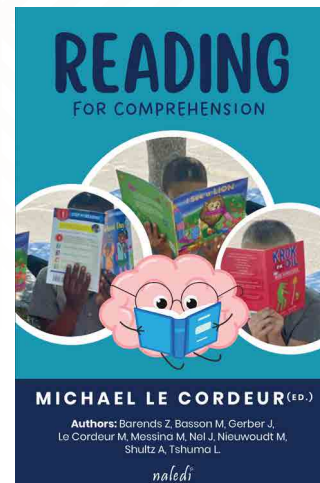
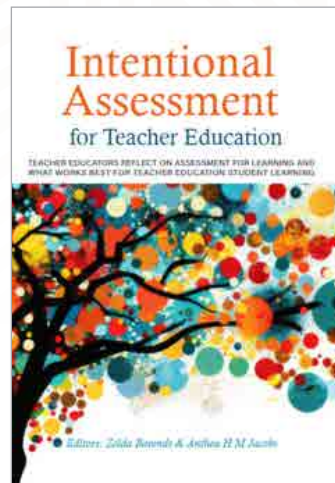
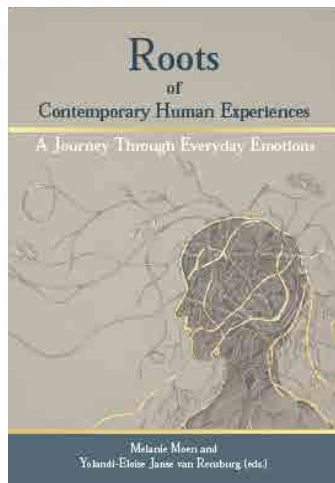
The most difficult part of lecturing is all the marking. Every student who comes into our Faculty has a story. And in this story, there will be people and experiences that have influenced their decision to become a teacher. With large class sizes it is difficult to get to know your cohort so that you can understand their lived realities and be responsive through your teaching, thereby really connecting with your students.

"Make every effort to be the best for the world rather than the best in the world."

Every year, I am blessed and rewarded by being able to sit on the graduation stage and watch hard work and resilience pay off for every single one of my students; all while knowing how many have had to struggle through financial difficulties, challenges during school-based practicum and even just navigating higher education in a post-Covid era.

I often have to teach my classes in different buildings. As a result, at times, students may wander into my lecture either because they are lost, or who knows, maybe they stayed up late studying (not!). Last year a first-year student had arrived early and proceeded to sit right in front of what is his usual lecture venue. At the end of the lecture (which was a BEd IV class), he approached me and shared that he was actually in the wrong class, but that he found the lecture so interesting that he decided to stay for the two hours!

2025/2026 Published Books by Faculty of Education staff



Social Impact Award for Dr Barends' project 'I can read'

Dr Zelda Barends was awarded a Stellenbosch University Social Impact Award (2025) in the SU Individual Award category at a ceremony on 25 November 2025. The SU Social Impact Award is the highest form of honour granted by the University to staff for achievements in relation to social impact and is awarded to recognise remarkable achievements in social impact. This award was granted based on the 'I can read' project run by Dr Barends. She shared about the project and how it all started.

The challenge we face

I began this journey with a sobering reality: eight out of ten South African learners cannot read at an appropriate grade level by Grade 4. That's 82% of our children struggling with the most fundamental skill that unlocks all future learning. This wasn't just a statistic to me; it was a call to action.

A response: Read to serve, serve to read

In 2018, I started small with 77 student teachers working in one school as an after-school programme. Today, 118 pre-service teachers work across more than 30 schools in Stellenbosch and surrounding communities every Thursday morning, providing home language support in phonics and word building to foundation phase learners.

But this project is about more than numbers. It's about reciprocity, as it has its foundation in service-learning, a model where everyone benefits. Our student teachers don't just volunteer; they engage in meaningful service that deepens their professional learning. They gain concrete experience, reflect on their practice, develop theoretical understanding, and experiment with teaching strategies, all while making a real difference in children's lives.



Photo: Stefan Els

Dr Barends at the Award Ceremony with the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof Madiba.

The schools and teachers we partner with receive vital support at a time when resources are stretched thin. Foundation phase teachers get additional hands in the classroom, enabling more individualised attention for struggling readers.

Our young learners get the gift of time, attention and evidence-based instruction that helps them crack the code of reading.

Impact that matters

The impact has been profound at every level:

- Our young learners have shown enhanced phonemic awareness and word-building skills. More importantly, we've witnessed a transformation in their attitudes toward reading – they're falling in love with stories.

- Our pre-service teachers are being transformed as they gain a deeper understanding by immediately applying theoretical knowledge in diverse classroom contexts. They're developing culturally responsive teaching practices that will serve them and their future learners for years to come.
- Our in-service teachers benefit from professional development opportunities through our reflection sessions, engaging with contemporary literacy teaching strategies.
- Our community partnerships have strengthened, extending the University's footprint and commitment to addressing the literacy crisis. Through this project we are demonstrating that the University isn't separate from the community – we're part of it, committed to helping it flourish.

Living our values

This project embodies our University's vision of advancing knowledge in service of society. It demonstrates excellence through rigorous, research-based methodology. It shows compassion through support for students, teachers and learners. It pursues equity by prioritising underserved schools. It practices respect through collaborative partnerships. And it maintains accountability through transparent reporting and ongoing community engagement.

A vision for the future

What drives me most is knowing that we're not just teaching children to read today – we're training the teachers who will address South Africa's literacy crisis tomorrow. Each student teacher who participates in I CAN READ will carry these skills,

this passion and this commitment into classrooms across our country.

This work is grounded in substantial research on reading and literacy instruction. But it's energised by something much more powerful: the belief that every child deserves the gift of literacy, and every community deserves educators who are prepared to deliver it.

Gratitude

This achievement belongs to many people: my dedicated pre-service teachers who show up week after week; the in-service teachers and school leaders who opened their doors; the Rupert Foundation for believing in us from the beginning and the learners who inspire us with their progress.

Since 2018, we've grown year after year, reaching more schools, more teachers and, most importantly, more children. This sustainability speaks to the value and necessity of this work.

Moving forward

Receiving this award is not a finish line; it's fuel for the journey ahead. Every child who learns to read with understanding becomes empowered to learn anything. Every teacher we develop becomes a catalyst for change in their future classroom. Every partnership we build strengthens our collective capacity to transform education in South Africa.

Through this project we've proven that universities can be powerful partners in transformation. When we integrate community engagement into professional training, we create a multiplier effect. We don't just serve communities today; we prepare professionals who will serve communities for decades to come.

Thank you for recognising that literacy is not just about words on a page, it's about opening doors, creating opportunities, and building a future where every child can say with confidence: I CAN READ.



EDUCATION STUDENT COMMITTEE

Leading students with integrity,
accountability and respect



Chairperson:
Sisipho Maliwa



Vice-Chairperson:
Ilne Von Weilligh



Secretary:
DK Mgcineni



Treasurer:
Meagan Ross



Student Relations:
Lonwabo Ngedle



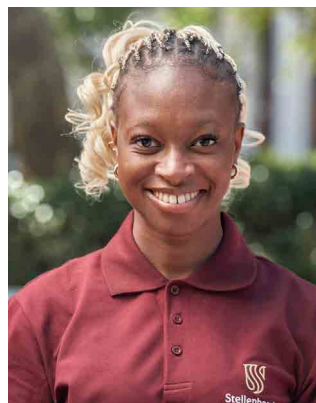
Events:
Imma Nyanyatsi



Marketing Officer:
Aphiwe Mgzulwa



Social Impact:
Janema Boltney



Transformation:
Molly Mashishi



Professional
Development:
Wandile Mqadi



PGCE:
Courtney du Plessis

The Education Student Committee (ESC) for the 2025/2026 term entered this academic year grounded in reflection, strategic alignment and a renewed commitment to the students of the Faculty of Education.

As the academic representative body of the Faculty, we recognise both the privilege and responsibility entrusted to us.

Guided by the outcomes of our Strategic Conference, we have aligned our vision and plans with the broader values of Stellenbosch University – excellence, accountability, integrity, respect and compassion – to ensure that our leadership reflects not only Faculty priorities but also institutional principles.

Stellenbosch University calls us to pursue excellence in all that we do. For the ESC, excellence means more than performance; it means intentional leadership, thoughtful planning and meaningful student impact. Our vision for this term is to strengthen student engagement and participation within the Faculty, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared purpose between students, lecturers, Faculty management and support staff. We aim to cultivate an environment where every student feels confident to contribute, where communication is transparent and constructive, and where leadership is accessible and responsive.

Central to our strategic goals is the encouragement of active participation and meaningful involvement in Faculty life. Through strengthened class representative structures, interactive forums and a supported academic mentor programme, we seek to ensure that students' voices are not only heard but valued. Initiatives such as welcoming engagements, practicum support platforms and professional development workshops are designed to build connection, preparedness and confidence. In doing so, we uphold the University's commitment to excellence and innovation by creating spaces where students can grow academically, socially and professionally.

Equally important is our commitment to fostering a supportive and motivating academic environment. Stellenbosch University emphasises human dignity and respect as foundational values, and as the ESC, we are intentional about embedding these principles in our daily work. Through transformation dialogues, wellness initiatives and professional workshops, we

aim to create psychologically safe spaces where diverse lived experiences are acknowledged and respected. We believe that academic success flourishes in environments where dignity is upheld and compassion is practised.

At the core of our leadership are the internal values of respect and accountability. Respect shapes how we engage with students, Faculty members and one another. It calls us to listen actively, to communicate professionally and to honour the diversity that enriches our Faculty. Respect is demonstrated in our willingness to engage courageously, yet constructively, always upholding the dignity of those we serve.

Accountability anchors our service. In alignment with Stellenbosch University's emphasis on integrity and responsible citizenship, we commit to transparent communication, ethical decision making and consistent follow-through on our commitments. We understand that leadership is measured not only by intention but by action and delivery. As such, we pledge to report back, to remain accessible and to ensure that our initiatives reflect the needs and aspirations of our student body.

While our term includes a range of planned initiatives across academic support, professional development, social impact and transformation, our purpose extends beyond hosting events. Each initiative is strategically designed to strengthen community, enhance academic engagement and prepare education students to become reflective, ethical and socially conscious educators. In this way, our work aligns with the University's broader mission of advancing knowledge in service of society.

As we journey through this academic year, we remain committed to leading with integrity, serving with accountability and engaging with respect.

The ESC stands firm in its mission to cultivate a Faculty of Education that embodies the values of Stellenbosch University, a Faculty where excellence is pursued collectively, dignity is upheld consistently and every student feels seen, supported and empowered.

- Sisipho Zintle Maliwa (ESC Chairperson)



FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION: Becoming a Foundation Phase Teacher

BEd Foundation Phase

The Bachelor of Education (BEd) in Foundation Phase Teaching is a four-year undergraduate programme that prepares you to teach learners in Grades R to 3. Situated within the broader field of Early Childhood Education (ECE) (birth to nine years), the programme equips you with specialised disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and practical competencies required to navigate the informal nature of Grade R and the more formal foundational education of Grades 1–3.

Upon completion, you will be a professionally qualified Foundation Phase teacher, able to work in a wide range of educational settings, including public, independent, and special schools, and across diverse curriculum frameworks, both national and international. You will be equipped to respond to educational changes and challenges in an ethical, professional, and informed manner.

Career opportunities

In addition to Foundation Phase teaching, the following careers may be considered:

- Early Childhood Education (ECE): including Grade R classes, ECE centres, and roles in non-governmental and non-profit organisations (NGOs/NPOs) focused on early childhood, offering early learning programmes, practitioner training, parental support, and resource provision.
- Leadership and support roles in primary schools, such as Foundation Phase subject advisor, phase leader, or head of department, typically following relevant experience and further study.
- Roles within government (education departments) and education sectors, contributing to curriculum development, policy work, programme design, or teacher support initiatives.
- Self employment pathways, including establishing ECE centres, designing and offering stimulation programmes, developing educational materials, or working as an education consultant.
- Opportunities to specialise as a learning support teacher.
- Access to postgraduate study (BEd Honours, Master's, Doctoral programmes), opening careers in academia, educational research, and educational leadership.
- The programme is aligned with international qualifications in Early Childhood or Early Years Education, enabling graduates to pursue teaching opportunities in countries with comparable four-year initial teacher education programmes for kindergarten and elementary education.

Articulation

The BEd Foundation Phase Teaching programme is an initial teacher education qualification that exits at NQF Level 7.

The degree provides access to a range of Bachelor of Education Honours (NQF Level 8) programmes at Stellenbosch University and other institutions.

Successful completion of an Honours qualification enables progression to Master's studies (NQF Level 9), and thereafter to Doctoral studies (NQF Level 10).

Programme Content

The four year programme consists entirely of compulsory modules designed to develop both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills required to teach in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3).

Modules Included in the Programme

Information and Communication Technology

- Information Communication Technologies for Learning (ICT)

Languages

(Students select from)

- English
- Afrikaans
- isiXhosa
- South African Sign Language

Note: All students study two languages - selected from Afrikaans, English, or isiXhosa - at either a first or second language level for the full duration of the programme. In the third year, students also take a third additional communicative language.

Education Studies

- Becoming a Teacher
- Development and Learning
- Education Policy and Management
- Sociology of Education
- Addressing Diverse Learning Needs
- Philosophy of Education

Foundation Phase Teaching

- Mathematics Education (Foundation Phase)
- Language Education (Foundation Phase)
- Life Skills Education (Foundation Phase)
- Grade R Theory and Practice

Practical Learning

- Practical Learning is integrated throughout all four years, ensuring progressive, school based experience.

Selection

- Applications close on 30 July
- A total of 125 places are available for Foundation Phase students

Admission Requirements

- A minimum aggregate of 60% in the NSC, IEB, or an equivalent school-leaving certificate (excluding Life Orientation)
- Mathematics: at least 40% or Mathematical Literacy: at least 60%

Language Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements based on their language of learning and teaching:

Learners who received instruction through English medium:

- English Home Language: at least 60%
- Afrikaans or isiXhosa (Home Language or First Additional Language): at least 50%

Learners who received instruction through Afrikaans medium:

- Afrikaans Home Language: at least 60%
- English or isiXhosa (Home Language or First Additional Language): at least 50%

Learners who received instruction through isiXhosa medium:

- isiXhosa Home Language: at least 60%
- English or Afrikaans (Home Language or First Additional Language): at least 50%

Applicants with the old Matriculation Certificate (pre-2008):

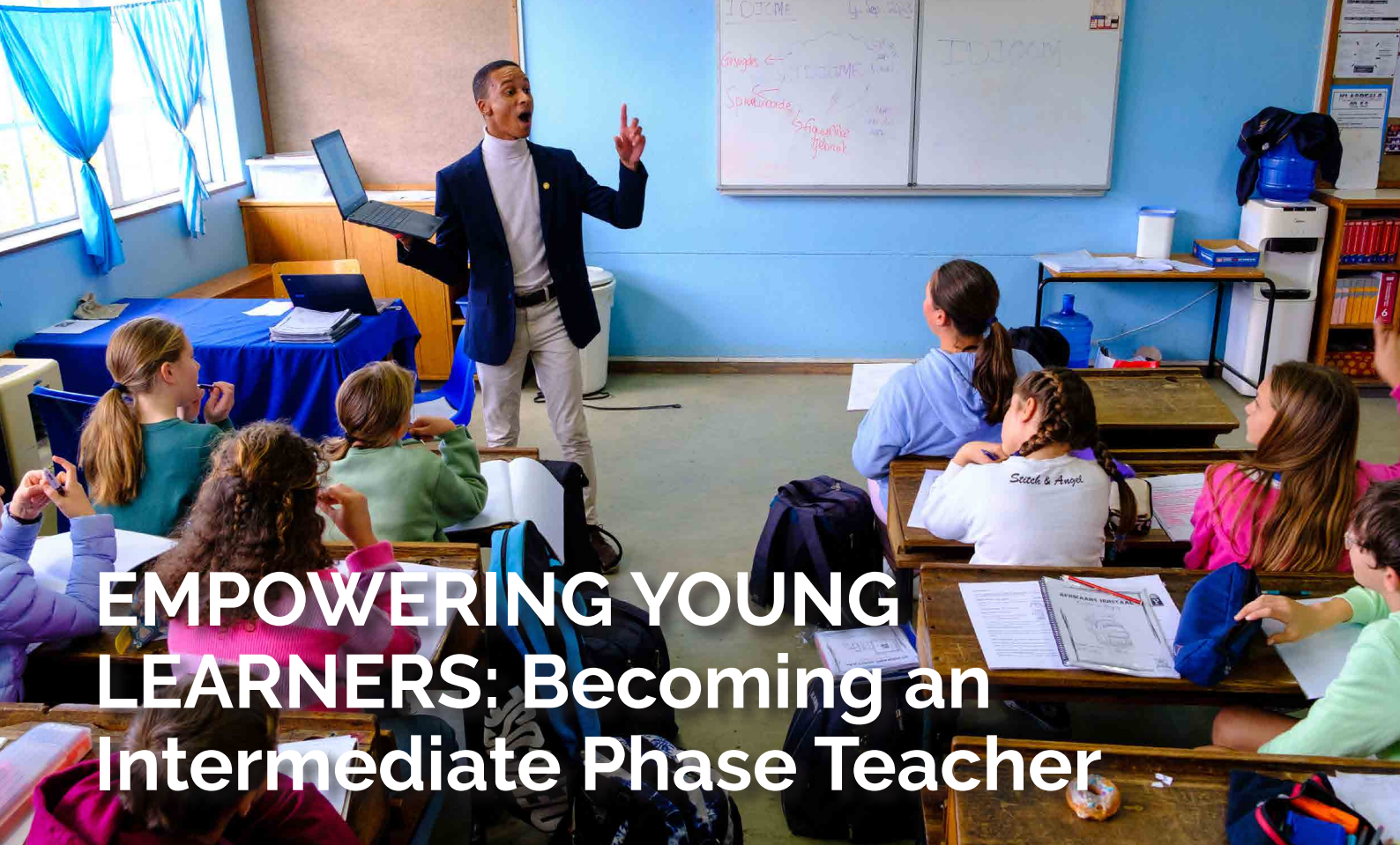
Please contact the Client Services Centre at 021 808 9111 for the relevant admission requirements.

PROGRAMME COORDINATOR 2026:

Dr Zeldá Barends

foundationphase@sun.ac.za





EMPOWERING YOUNG LEARNERS: Becoming an Intermediate Phase Teacher

BEd Intermediate Phase

This four-year full-time BEd programme prepares you to teach learners in the Intermediate Phase. You specialise in two school subjects and two languages, and the programme covers the theory and practice of all learning programmes from Grade 4 to 6.

Programme content

The programme has a set structure consisting of academic and professional modules. Practical Learning forms an important part of the programme from the first year onwards. All students take two languages as teaching specialisations (chosen from Afrikaans, English or isiXhosa) on Home Language or Additional Language level throughout all four years of study. A third communicative language is taken in the third year of study.

In the first year of study, Mathematics Education is compulsory for all BEd students. You therefore take Mathematics Education together with Becoming a Teacher, Introduction to Language Education, and two other subject specialisations from the following:

Life Skills
Natural Sciences (Ed)
Social Sciences (Ed)

See the prerequisite requirements for these subjects below.

In the second to fourth years of study, you continue with only two specialisation areas. Please note: To continue with Mathematics as a subject specialisation from your second year, you must pass Mathematics Education with a final mark of at least 60% in your first year.

Other compulsory modules include:

- Information Communication Technologies for Learning (ICT)
- Language Education: Core Module
- Development and Learning
- Addressing Diverse Learning Needs
- Education Policy and Management
- Educational Evaluation and Research
- Sociology of Education
- Philosophy of Education

Since this programme culminates in a degree, it gives you access to the Faculty's postgraduate programmes up to doctoral level.

Further study opportunities

You may specialise further in curriculum inquiry, language education, educational support or education policy by completing one of the Faculty's BEdHons programmes:

BEdHons (Curriculum Inquiry)
BEdHons (Educational Support)
BEdHons (Education Development and Democracy)
BEdHons (Language Education)

From there, you can pursue further specialisation at MEd and doctoral level.

Prerequisite requirements for your chosen subject specialisations:

- Natural Sciences (Ed)
A minimum of 50% for Life Sciences OR Physical Sciences in Grade 12
- Social Sciences (Ed)
A minimum of 50% for History OR Geography in Grade 12
- Life Skills
No prerequisites apply (all students may follow this subject)

Selection

Applications close on 30 July.

Only a limited number of students are admitted to the programme. Admission requirements for applicants who wrote the NSC or IEB

An NSC or IEB average of at least 60%
(excluding Life Orientation)
Mathematics 40% OR Mathematical Literacy 60%

AND

Learners who were taught through the medium of Afrikaans:
Afrikaans Home Language 60% AND
English OR isiXhosa (Home Language or First Additional Language) 50%

OR

Learners who were taught through the medium of English:
English Home Language 60% AND
Afrikaans OR isiXhosa (Home Language or First Additional Language) 50%

OR

Learners who were taught through the medium of isiXhosa:
IsiXhosa Home Language 60% AND
English OR Afrikaans (Home Language or First Additional Language) 50%

The BEd (Intermediate Phase Education) has further admission requirements depending on the school subjects you wish to teach:

If you choose Natural Sciences (Ed):
Life Sciences or Physical Sciences 50%

If you choose Social Sciences (Ed):
History or Geography 50%

PROGRAMME COORDINATOR 2026:

Dr Elzahn Rinqest

intermediatephase@sun.ac.za



IDIOME

Further Education and Training (FET) (Grade 10 - 12)

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)



The aim of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) is to prepare educators for teaching at high school level (Grade 10 to 12).

Should you wish to become a high school teacher, your undergraduate studies at other faculties could be a basis for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). This one-year programme focuses on developing competencies in a subject-related field that the candidate can apply in the Senior Phase.

Students typically enter the programme after completing an appropriate Bachelor's degree, such as a BA, BSc, or BComm, or after obtaining a relevant Honours degree. To qualify for the PGCE, an undergraduate degree must include at least two subjects studied up to second- or third-year level, in accordance with yearbook requirements, and these subjects must be directly related to high school teaching areas. It is important for prospective students to carefully review the yearbook requirements for each subject specialisation.

As part of the programme, students also engage in teaching practice, which takes place during the third school term at selected secondary schools located within a 50 km radius of Stellenbosch University.

For more information consult our yearbook:

<https://files.su.ac.za/public/registrars-division/documents/2025-12/2026-education-yearbook-part.pdf>

Application Process:

- Apply online from 1 July.
- Applications close 30 September.

Programme Coordinator:

Dr Jennifer Feldman: pgce@sun.ac.za



FURTHER STUDIES: Postgraduate programmes

The Faculty's research programme focuses on relevant and strategically important themes in education to find solutions to educational matters of current concern and to promote the development of education in South Africa.

This research, which impacts on all of the teaching programmes, is concerned with local as well as international needs. In the light of its strategic importance, the development of human potential in a diverse community has been chosen as a central focus for applied research in the Faculty of Education. Its three departments each have a complementary focus that ties in with the broad research focus of the Faculty.

Stellenbosch University values postgraduate education highly. It is at postgraduate level that it becomes possible for students to do independent research.

The University is committed to promoting postgraduate education, since it is clear that the University can make a particular contribution in this field.

Useful contacts:

PGCE

Dr Jennifer Feldman: pgce@sun.ac.za

BED HONOURS

Curriculum Inquiry

Dr Louise Botha: lbot@sun.ac.za

Development & Democracy:

Dr P Simba: psimba@sun.ac.za

Educational Support

Dr LN Damons: ldamons@sun.ac.za

Foundation Phase

Dr L Bosman: lindabosman@sun.ac.za

Language Education

Dr S Bishop-Swart: sbishop@sun.ac.za

Department Educational Psychology:

MEd Educational Support Programme

Ms A Grootboom: grootbooma@sun.ac.za

MEd (PSYCH) Educational Psychology

Dr C Jacobs: carmelitaj32@sun.ac.za

Department Curriculum Studies:

Prof Michele van der Merwe: michelevdm@sun.ac.za

Department Education Policy Studies

Prof Nuraan Davids: nur@sun.ac.za



THE GRADUATE PERSPECTIVE:

Voices of our graduates

Graduation marks the end of one journey and the beginning of another. In this article, graduates reflect on their time at university, sharing the challenges they faced, the lessons they learned, and the moments that shaped their experience.



Bridget Botha

How did you experience your studies at the Faculty of Education?

My experience at the Faculty of Education was both challenging and rewarding. I graduated in December 2025 with a Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase teaching. The programme shaped me both academically and personally. It pushed me to think critically and teach with intention. I always place the learner at the centre of my practice. Today, as a Grade 2 teacher, I still reflect on and apply the teaching techniques my lecturers taught me. These strategies guide my classroom practice.

Highlights during your studies?

Some of the biggest highlights were my teaching practices and service-learning experiences. I was placed in diverse school contexts, including a quintile 1 school. This gave me valuable insight into South African classrooms. Building relationships with learners and seeing their progress was fulfilling. Applying theory in practice was also rewarding. Group projects, interdisciplinary planning, and reflective writing were important experiences.

Challenges or difficulties?

Yes, there were challenges. Balancing academic demands with teaching practice and lesson planning was not easy. The emotional investment required with young learners is added to this. Teaching in multilingual classrooms with limited resources requires adaptability. These experiences strengthened my problem-solving skills and showed the importance of empathy, flexibility and reflection.

What are you doing now (2026)?

I am a Grade 2 teacher at Wolraad Woltemade Primary School in Bothasig, Cape Town. This is my first teaching year. I use my training daily and keep learning professionally. Teaching strengthens my passion for foundation phase education and for supporting learners academically, socially and emotionally.

Advice to current students?

Embrace every opportunity, even the overwhelming ones. Teaching involves more than delivering content; it is about forming connections, reflecting and continuous growth. Absorb all the knowledge and guidance offered. Learn from mentor teachers and lecturers, and maintain contact with them, as they will be valuable resources when you begin teaching. Engage with your peers and build a community of practice – this has greatly supported me in my first year. Stay passionate and curious.

Stefney-Rose de Vries



How did you experience your studies at the Faculty of Education?

It was challenging, growth-shaping and ultimately rewarding. I graduated in December 2025 with a Bachelor of Education (Intermediate Phase).

The programme pushed me academically and personally, but it also helped me discover my voice as a future teacher. I learned that teaching is not only about content knowledge, but about

empathy, resilience and showing up for learners in meaningful ways.

Highlights during your studies?

Some of the biggest highlights were my teaching practicals, where theory finally met reality. Standing in front of a classroom confirmed my passion for teaching and working with young people. Being involved in Faculty leadership and student structures was also a highlight, as it allowed me to grow as a leader, collaborate with others, and contribute to student life beyond the classroom. Another big highlight was to be part of the ESC and the head of marketing and media in my final year. Through this I met amazing people who became part of my community and some even becoming family. It was an experience I will cherish forever!

Challenges or difficulties?

I faced challenges such as academic pressure, self-doubt and the emotional demands of teaching practice. Balancing expectations while navigating personal growth was not always easy but these challenges taught me perseverance, self-reflection and the importance of asking for support. I also lost my accommodation in my second year, but luckily, due to my participation in Maties Woman's Rugby, I managed to get into a residence. Overcoming these challenges strengthened my confidence and prepared me for the realities of my teaching profession.

What are you doing now (2026)?

I am continuing my journey in education by doing my postgraduate in development and democracy, gaining more experience and further developing my skills as an educator. I remain passionate about inclusive education, learner well-being and making a positive impact in the classroom and school community. I am also still playing rugby for the University.

Advice to current students?

My advice to current students is to trust the process and be patient with yourself. Teaching is a journey of continuous learning, and it is okay not to have all the answers yet. Stay committed, ask questions, lean on your support systems and remember WHY you chose education in the first place because your impact will reach far beyond the classroom.

Reece Beukes



How did you experience your studies at the Faculty of Education?

I began my tertiary education in 2021 during the global Covid-19 pandemic, enrolling in the Bachelor of Education (Intermediate Phase) under the Curriculum Studies Department. I completed this degree in 2024, graduating cum laude. Wanting to further deepen my academic understanding, I pursued an honours degree in curriculum inquiry (curriculum change), which I completed in 2025. I proudly graduated once again on 8 December 2025.

Highlights during your studies?

- Resided in a university residence from 2021 to 2023, where I was actively involved in academic and leadership initiatives.
- Served as an academic mentor for education students within the residence for two consecutive years (2022–2023).
- Awarded a Second-Place Certificate of Merit for Academic Excellence within my residence, recognising consistent academic performance.
- Placed in the top 10 students within the Faculty of Education in 2023.
- Selected for and completed a residence leadership programme in 2023, whereafter I was appointed as the programme coordinator, overseeing SUNLearn operations, scheduling and meetings.
- Worked with the WOW organisation (2023–2024), assisting with welcoming events, spelling bees, debates and other academic enrichment activities.
- Served as a Faculty academic mentor within the Faculty of Education in 2024.
- Appointed as a teaching and learning assistant (TA/LA) for Afrikaans EAT 177–477 during my honours year (2025).
- Selected as one of three students for an international teaching exchange programme in Argentina, following a competitive process that included interviews, psychometric testing, and follow-up evaluations.

(Reece Beukes continued)

Challenges or difficulties?

Yes, there were many challenges. Studying during the Covid era made my first year particularly difficult, with online learning affecting continuity and focus. Mathematics was another major hurdle throughout my degree. It required intense dedication, especially in the first and fourth years. One final mathematics exam brought me to tears, but I persevered and achieved one of the highest marks in the subsequent paper. This experience taught me that hard work must be consistent, not only driven by fear. Learning self-discipline, balance and accountability is also a key challenge to overcome.

What are you doing now (2026)?

I chose to take a brief pause from further studies and am working in Argentina as a teacher. At the same time, I am allowing myself to explore additional passions, such as modelling, while seeking God's guidance in every decision I make. I am content, hopeful and excited about what lies ahead.

Advice to current students?

Enjoy every moment of university life. Get involved, take opportunities and have fun – within reason. Hold yourself accountable for your choices and growth. If there is one principle to live by, it is this: strive to be at least 1% better every single day.

Highlights during your studies?

There were several highlights throughout my studies. One of the most rewarding moments each year was receiving my results and seeing the fruits of sustained effort reflected in strong pass marks. However, the most memorable milestones were undoubtedly my graduation ceremonies. Walking across the stage represented perseverance, sacrifice and personal growth.

A particularly significant highlight was receiving the Rector's Award for Excellence. That recognition affirmed not only my academic performance but also my commitment to excellence and discipline. It remains one of the proudest moments of my academic journey.

Challenges or difficulties?

Like many students, I encountered challenges along the way. Financial constraints were a major concern at certain stages of my studies. Fortunately, I was able to secure bursary funding, which alleviated the burden of tuition fees and allowed me to focus on my academic responsibilities.

Time management was another ongoing challenge, especially as I balanced multiple responsibilities. In addition to my studies, I was actively involved in training and occasionally competing abroad. This required careful planning, discipline and constant communication with lecturers. I am grateful that the Faculty and my lecturers were consistently understanding and supportive, allowing me to make the necessary arrangements without compromising academic standards.

These challenges ultimately strengthened my resilience, adaptability and determination – qualities that continue to serve me in my professional life.

What are you doing now (2026)?

In 2026, I am serving as the Deputy Principal at Lückhoff Secondary School, where I am actively involved in academic leadership, school governance and curriculum oversight. This leadership role allows me to apply the policy knowledge and research skills I developed during my postgraduate studies.

I am currently in the planning phase of my PhD studies. I remain committed to advancing my academic journey and contributing to research that strengthens inclusive education and policy implementation in South Africa.

Advice to current students?

My advice to current students is simple: remain committed to your academic goals. The journey may be demanding, but the reward is immeasurable. The sense of accomplishment when you receive your degree outweighs the long nights, hard work and sacrifices.



Dyan Buis

How did you experience your studies at the Faculty of Education?

I graduated in December 2025 with a Master of Education (MEd) in Education Policy Studies. My academic journey at the Faculty of Education has been both transformative and deeply meaningful. While completing my PGCE, honours (BEd), and MEd at the Faculty, I experienced academic growth at every stage of my development.

Studying at the Faculty shaped me not only intellectually but also professionally. It sharpened my critical thinking, strengthened my research capacity, and nurtured my identity as an academic and education leader. I had the privilege of being taught and mentored by world-class lecturers whose scholarship and commitment to educational transformation inspired me greatly. Being part of a globally recognised institution instilled in me a strong sense of pride and responsibility to contribute meaningfully to the education sector.

Believe in your potential. If your lecturer was able to complete a PhD, then so can you. Excellence is achievable through discipline, persistence and faith in your abilities. Keep pushing forward – your future self will thank you.



Mieke Smit

How did you experience your studies at the Faculty of Education?

My experience at the Faculty of Education was both enriching and transformative. I graduated in December with a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Curriculum Studies) specialising in science education. The programme helped me develop strong academic, professional and personal skills, while also preparing me to be reflective, all while I was doing research and working in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I especially appreciated the amazing lecturers, which made my studies so meaningful and relevant.

Highlights during your study?

One of the main highlights of my studies was learning from the amazing lecturers who were supportive, knowledgeable and genuinely invested in my growth as a future educator. Another highlight was being able to engage in meaningful research

in Science Education while applying what I was learning in real contexts. Studying while working in Argentina also enriched my experience, as it allowed me to gain international exposure and broaden my perspective on education and curriculum practice.

Challenges or difficulties?

A major challenge for me was balancing my postgraduate studies with full-time work and research while living in Argentina. Managing different responsibilities, time zones and academic deadlines was demanding at times. However, through careful time management, self-discipline and strong commitment to my studies, I was able to overcome these challenges and successfully complete the programme.

What are you doing now (2026)?

In 2026, I am teaching at Paarl Girls' High and furthering my studies as a master's student at Stellenbosch University. I am continuing to develop my skills and gain practical experience while contributing positively to learners and the wider education community.

Advice to current students?

My advice to current students is to remain focused, ask for help when you need it, and believe in your own abilities. Make use of the resources and support offered by the Faculty of Education because they have a lot to offer, build strong relationships with your lecturers, and remember that challenges are part of the learning journey. For every up, there is a down. Stay committed to your goals and trust that your hard work will pay off.



Photo: Stefan Els

Graduates December 2025

Back from left to right: Michael Lindokuhle Manzi, Ongeziwe Mali, Reece Beukes, Bridget Botha, Dyan Buis
Front from left to right: Mieke Smit, Prof Madiba, Stefney-Rose de Vries

The SciMathUS programme continues to **give hope** to students

Nokwanda Siyengo

The SciMathUS programme is a university preparation programme that operates within SUNCEP and is hosted by the Faculty of Education. The programme offers students the opportunity to improve their National Senior Certificate (NSC) marks in mathematics and physical science. This is a year-long programme that offers intensive tuition and allows students to show their potential in a space that is conducive to learning.

When students have improved their results, they can enrol at any higher education institution and pursue studies in science-related fields. The programme provides tuition, academic mentoring, hostel mentoring and psychosocial support to bridge the gap between school and university as well as prepare students to be successful in their studies. The programme started in 2001 with only 40 students and 25 years down the line, SciMathUS is still showcasing that where there is a will, there is a way.

In South Africa, good attainment in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects continues to be a challenge and hinders first-generation students from participation in highly selective fields of study that select students with top marks, who are regarded as academically ready for higher education studies. The perceived gateway subjects, mathematics and physical sciences, are still a focus of improvement as attainment continues to be unstable. Our 2025 student cohort's performance was a testimony to how resilience, determination and zeal can produce good results. The NSC national pass rate for mathematics in 2025 decreased from 69% to 64%, while for physical sciences it increased from 76% to 77%.

In the SciMathUS programme, the top 10 students achieved between 80% and 90% in both mathematics and physical sciences. These improved marks created better opportunities for selection for the SciMathUS students in the highly



One of our latest alumni who graduated at the end of 2025 obtained her MBChB: Dr Keneilwe Mataboge

"I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the entire SciMathUS team for the invaluable support and guidance provided. Your work has played a significant role in helping us achieve our dreams and in transforming lives. Your dedication is truly valued and deeply appreciated." *(Dr Keneilwe Mataboge)*

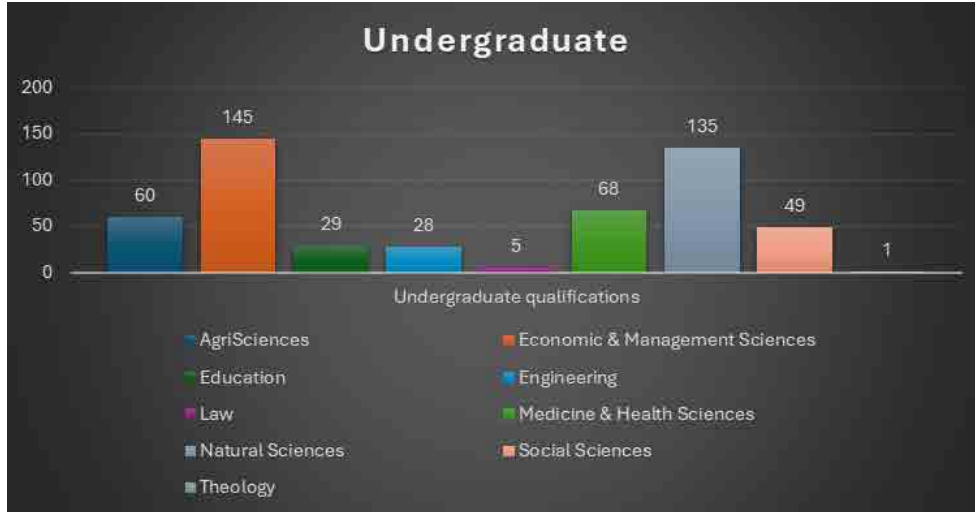
selective programmes, and 75% of the cohort were successfully selected for higher education studies. The SciMathUS programme mandate doesn't end at the end of the SciMathUS year. We continue to support our students in applying for university studies. We collaborate with other higher education institutions, so they have a broader scope of choice as to which institution they wish to attend.

We support those who choose to attend Stellenbosch University until they graduate.

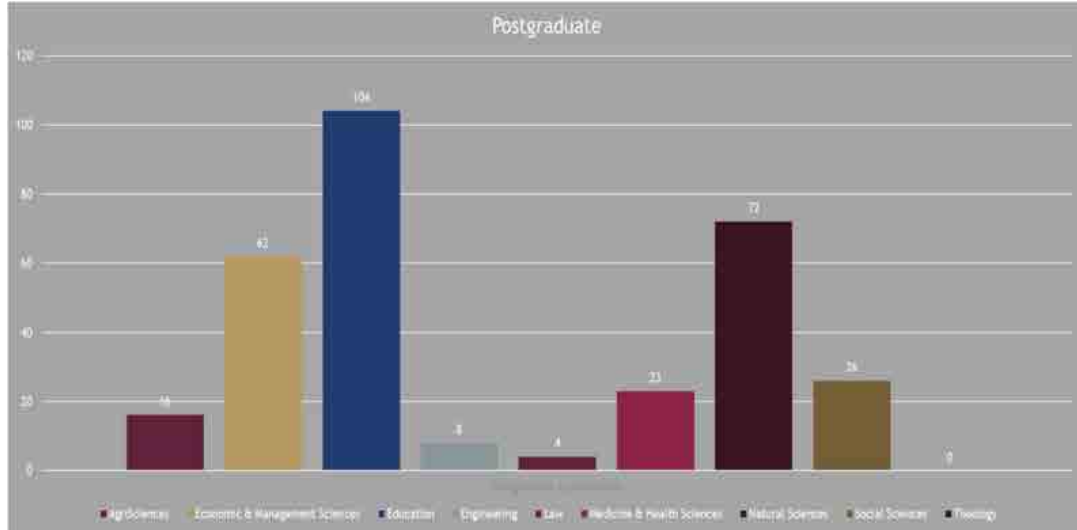
The SciMathUS programme is proof that resilience leads to positive outcomes. The American Psychological Association (APA) explains resilience

as “the psychological, emotional, and behavioral ability to adapt, recover, and ‘bounce back’ from adversity, allowing individuals to navigate life’s challenges without breaking”. We are very proud of ALL our Alumni as they continue to navigate the journey of life with HOPE.

The graph below shows former SciMathUS students who graduated at Stellenbosch University from 2004 until 2024.



The graph below shows former SciMathUS students who graduated with postgraduate degrees at Stellenbosch University. These degrees were awarded between 2005 and 2024:



“Locally competent and globally relevant”



Dr Chrischar Rock

A new international collaboration between the Faculty of Education and St George's College in Buenos Aires, Argentina, commenced in August 2025. Three of our BEd Honours students (Celine Lucas, Reece Beukes and Mieke Smit) were presented with an exciting opportunity to spend four months at St George's College to act as teaching assistants whilst also engaging in scholarly research for their postgraduate studies.

This international collaboration aims firstly to investigate the intercultural competencies of graduate teachers and secondly the role that mentor teachers play in the lives of novice teachers. Collaborations of this nature are important as they offer insights into classrooms in international and diverse settings, whilst shedding light on the extent to which our Stellenbosch teacher graduates are able to apply their teaching skills in different contexts. It goes without saying that a collaboration such as this naturally illuminates similarities and differences in teacher professional standards, whilst also offering valuable insights into the skills and competencies needed as a teacher in the 21st century.

Project leads, Dr Chrischar Rock and Dr Louise Botha, have worked tirelessly to cement this international collaboration with St George's College and it is intended that more students will be able to participate in this school-based placement in future. The first three graduates have since returned from their school-based placement; so, let's hear what they have to say about their experience!

Celine Lucas (BEd Honours: Foundation Phase)

What did you enjoy about your experience at St George's College?

“I enjoyed the international teaching practice opportunity in Buenos Aires, as it provided valuable exposure to a different curriculum and education system. Working with learners whose first language is Spanish required me to adapt my teaching approach, particularly as I do not speak Spanish. Navigating the language barrier challenged me to use alternative strategies such as visual aids and modelling. My BEd undergraduate degree, with its strong focus on differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching and learner-centred strategies, equipped me with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively to these challenges. This helped me further to enhance my flexibility, creativity and professional growth as an educator.”



Celine Lucas facilitating a group reading session

Mieke Smit (BEd Honours: Curriculum Inquiry)

What stood out for you during your time at St George's College?

“What I enjoyed most about the international teaching practice opportunity in Buenos Aires was experiencing a different cultural and linguistic context. I valued working with learners and teachers who approached learning in creative and collaborative ways, and I enjoyed being immersed in everyday school life in Argentina. The experience allowed me to grow a lot personally while gaining a deeper appreciation for global education and culturally responsive teaching practices.”



Mieke Smit, teaching a science lesson on different types of materials

What would you say were some of the skills you developed during your international placement?

"The skills I developed further were intercultural communication, flexible lesson planning and classroom management in multilingual settings. This made me more confident, reflective and resilient as a graduate teacher, and better prepared to create inclusive learning environments that support learners with different needs and experiences. I gained valuable insight into alternative teaching approaches and assessment practices, and how schools function in a different education system. This experience strengthened my professional identity and confidence, and broadened my understanding of what effective teaching can look like globally. There were many challenges during my international teaching practice in Buenos Aires, such as language barriers, unfamiliar school routines and adapting to a different curriculum. I was glad that I was able to rely on my adaptability, communication skills and supportive peers, and to navigate these challenges. The experience taught me to remain patient, open-minded and proactive, and to view challenges as opportunities for professional and personal growth."

Reece Beukes (BEd Honours: Curriculum Inquiry)

Please sum up your experience in a nutshell.

"Enjoyment intertwined with challenges – the double helix of life. That is what I would say. What I enjoyed most about the international teaching practice opportunity in Buenos Aires was being immersed in a new educational and cultural context while navigating real-world classroom challenges. These include adapting to language differences and unfamiliar school systems, and diverse learner needs pushed me beyond my comfort zone. I was grateful to rely on my resilience, adaptability and reflective practice to navigate these challenges meaningfully. I realised the deep-rooted differences between public and private schools as it was my first experience at a private school. I realised that the gap between public and private schools will always be wide, no matter the country you might find yourself in."



Reece Beukes, teaching a lesson on photosynthesis

What stood out most for you during your time at St George's College?

"I have always been on the fence when it came to the 'co-classroom' dynamic – having two teachers occupy the same classroom. I anticipated challenges such as disparities in authority, differences in classroom management etc. My view, however, changed and surprisingly, it really worked well. I enjoyed how the teachers could bounce ideas off one another; how they could support, guide and even assist one another, especially during crucial teaching and learning times.

I also fell in love with the essence of the St George's College curriculum – the fact that it is so learner-centred and holistic, and takes on a problem-solving approach to all teaching and learning aspects. Of course, with any curriculum implementation there are challenges. However, I will forever cherish the opportunity I was given to immerse myself as a BEd scholar and teacher to further explore my interests in curriculum inquiry and for this to have happened in an international South American classroom!"

What would you like other graduates to know?

"Something special about our time in Argentina was the opportunity to travel with the other teaching assistants from England and America. Small moments, such as planning our next trip or day outings, were just some of the absolute highlights.

However, sharing lessons with the other assistants, learning about St George's College school traditions and even just informal conversations with teachers and learners made the experience deeply meaningful. We learned that genuine connection, empathy and openness are just as important as subject knowledge, and that teaching is ultimately about building relationships that support learning across cultures."

For more information on this collaboration and details about applying, please contact Dr Chrischar Rock or Dr Louise Botha.

Internationalisation Profile



Students and staff from all three universities participated in the mobility events.

Dr Pauline Hanekom

The Stellenbosch University Centre for Pedagogy (SUNCEP), established in 2013 within the Faculty of Education, is a strategic academic centre focused on strengthening teacher professional development and expanding access to quality education in South Africa. Its work is rooted in pedagogical innovation, research and collaborative partnerships that support improved teaching and learning.

SUNCEP comprises four integrated components, including the Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) unit, dedicated to expanding the quality and impact of professional learning for educators. Internationalisation has become a key pillar of TPL's mandate, enabling the unit to engage in global partnerships, collaborative research and mobility initiatives. These engagements position TPL as an active contributor to international educational discourse while enriching local professional learning ecosystems.

Strategic Positioning of the TPL Component

TPL delivers research-informed professional learning programmes designed to empower educators, strengthen teaching excellence and support improved learner outcomes. Its emphasis

on innovation, collaboration and responsiveness aligns with SUNCEP's mission to lead academic professional learning in South Africa and contribute to sustainable educational change.

Internationalisation amplifies this mission by facilitating the exchange of pedagogical approaches, models of professional learning and evidence-based practices across borders. Through global cooperation, TPL strengthens its capacity to advance educational improvement locally while sharing South African expertise within international networks.

DigiSTEAM: Collaboration in Digital STEAM Pedagogy

DigiSTEAM (2024–2025) is one of the internationalisation initiatives within the TPL portfolio, delivered in partnership with the Department of Curriculum Studies. The collaboration, involving the University of Helsinki, the University of Eastern Finland, and Stellenbosch University, focuses on promoting equity in education through digital STEAM pedagogy in teacher preparation and professional development.

Key international dimensions include:

- **Cross-country exchange of digital pedagogy** through virtual learning activities, collaborative workshops, and multilingual STEAM resources in English, Afrikaans and Xhosa;

- **Short-term mobility for educators and students** from South Africa and Finland, enhancing intercultural competencies and digital STEAM skills;
- **Joint research outputs**, including MA theses and scholarly publications advancing insights into effective digital STEAM teaching; and
- **Community-based collaboration**, such as school visits and engagements in underresourced South African communities, offering international partners direct exposure to local educational realities.

Through DigiSTEAM, TPL strengthened its international footprint while contributing to equitable, globally informed STEAM education practices.

ProTEEM: Strengthening Teacher Educator Professionalisation across Continents

ProTEEM (2024–2027) is another major international programme involving SUNCEP. The initiative brings together more than 30 teacher educators from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, South Africa, Belgium and Lithuania. Stellenbosch University contributes expertise particularly relevant to professional learning in low-resource contexts.

ProTEEM advances TPL's internationalisation agenda through:

- **Global capacity development**, training teacher educators through blended, inclusive, and autonomy-oriented models that enhance literacy and numeracy teaching across partner countries;
- **Gender-responsive and digitally supported learning materials**, including low-tech tools, flipped classroom resources, and blended learning tasks shared across institutions;

- **Doctoral research collaboration**, with four female PhD candidates from the DRC and Zambia investigating hybrid continuous professional development (CPD) approaches, thereby expanding long-term research capabilities; and
- **Institutional partnerships across Africa and Europe**, embedding SUNCEP within international knowledge-building networks and affirming the global relevance of its professional learning expertise.

Through ProTEEM, SUNCEP positions itself not only as a participant but as a contributor of context-rich, practice-grounded insights to global education reform.

Consolidating Internationalisation within TPL

With initiatives such as DigiSTEAM and ProTEEM, the TPL component actively advances SUNCEP's vision of internationally engaged, research-driven and socially responsive professional learning.

These projects reinforce TPL's commitment to:

- Building global partnerships that strengthen local educational innovation;
- Facilitating cross-cultural exchange that deepens professional learning perspectives;
- Engaging in collaborative research that enriches global evidence bases; and
- Developing adaptive practices that support both South African and international teacher development priorities.

By sustaining and expanding these partnerships, TPL consolidates its role as a significant contributor to international education networks and an influential partner in advancing equitable, high-quality teaching in diverse contexts.



Prof Sibusiso Moyo (DVC: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies) opened the South African ProTEEM CPD workshops with a keynote address.

MAKING HISTORY MOBILE: The local history project



An example of a student's museum in a box project for which students had to create a helpful and inexpensive resource to teach the Grade 4 history topic, "Local History".

Dr Tarryn Hallsall

My social impact project is anchored in local history and the importance of creating a usable past for learners. The question posed is: how do we create a usable past in underresourced schools? The project is an extension of the fourth-year local history project in which the students create a travelling exhibition or 'museum in a box' based on their chosen local area.

The final-year project is multi-faceted and involves a variety of research components centring on the local area selected by the students. However, at its core, the project is for students to create a museum in a box that specifically spotlights the history around them. The goal of this project is to create a helpful and inexpensive resource to teach the Grade 4 history topic, "Local History". Creating this box encourages students to look at history from below and to put the spotlight on the changing nature of history whilst capturing the history as a physical space through the buildings or monuments.

The premise of this project is the importance of teaching and learning local history; however, it is not always well-explored within the curriculum. As the introductory topic to history as a subject, local

history is supposed to introduce the learners to the concept of sources as well as the importance of community history and one's own individual identity that is tethered to that history.

However, due to resource constraints, it is not always possible to introduce learners to primary sources, thus impacting the development of their historical thinking. The travelling exhibition offers an inexpensive alternative to school excursions and also integrates history from below.

The social impact project plans to develop and duplicate the travelling exhibitions the students develop for underresourced schools in the surrounding Stellenbosch region. This will help the teachers with resource availability and primary source access for the Grade 4 learners. A second component of the project is for students to be able to take their research and present at conferences at both a national and international level. In 2025, I was able to take three students to the annual South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) conference in Cape Town, where they presented their research and their experiences with creating the travelling exhibitions.

The project goals are two-fold: practical resource development and academic. The students are creating valuable resources for Grade 4 learners and thus, encouraging the use of primary source engagement and exploring the importance of local history are central to this project. The second component focuses on the academic possibilities for the students themselves, once ethical clearance has been approved. Although the project is still in its infancy, the academic goals are for this to build up to a student-led project where students can present at conferences and also publish their research. These experiences can be valuable to pre-service teachers prior to their entry into teaching.



Dr Hallsall (second from the left) with some of the history students - Lauren Mulling, Emma Hammond, Kira van den Berg and Kalma Savage.

International Pi Day: Mathematics in action through engagement and social impact



Erika Potgieter & Tania Wait

International Pi Day, celebrated annually on 14 March (3/14), honours the mathematical constant π (pi), approximately equal to 3.14159. Within the Mathematics Education 177/179 module, this global celebration was transformed into a meaningful, public, and socially responsive learning experience for first-year students.

The MATH 177/179 student cohort engaged in a carefully designed project embedded within the International Day of Mathematics (IDM) on Monday, 16 March 2026, which foregrounds mathematical thinking, problem-solving, representation, and dialogue rather than rote memorisation. The culmination of this process was the creation of educational posters aimed at promoting mathematical literacy beyond the university classroom.

The project required students to translate theoretical knowledge into accessible, visually engaging representations of mathematical ideas. In doing so, they explored the properties and applications of π across various domains, including geometry, measurement, engineering, and data contexts. This process not only deepened conceptual understanding but also developed students' abilities to communicate mathematics clearly and meaningfully—an essential competency for future educators.

A central strength of the project lies in its emphasis on authentic engagement. Students were required to present and explain their work publicly, actively inviting dialogue with peers, faculty, and passers-by. This aligns with contemporary mathematics education research, which highlights that meaningful learning emerges through interaction, explanation, and justification in real-world contexts. The exhibition environment fostered a dynamic space where mathematics was not merely displayed, but discussed, questioned, and experienced.

Equally significant is the project's strong social impact component. Each group identified an under-resourced school within the surrounding community and committed to donating their posters as sustainable teaching resources. This process included formal communication with schools and documented handovers, ensuring that the materials could be meaningfully integrated into classroom practice. In this way, the project extended learning beyond institutional boundaries, positioning students as active contributors to educational equity. The Pi Day exhibition itself provided a vibrant platform for showcasing student work. Faculty members and peers engaged with the displays, celebrating both the creativity and the pedagogical value of the posters. The atmosphere was both intellectually stimulating and celebratory, reinforcing the relevance of mathematics in everyday life while highlighting the importance of accessible and engaging teaching practices.

The Faculty of Education's Digital Innovation and Learning Institute (Hub): A platform for future-fit teacher education

Prof Anass Bayaga

The Faculty of Education is establishing a Digital Innovation and Learning Institute (the Hub) to advance pedagogical innovation, digitally enabled teacher education, applied research, and community engagement. The Hub is a practical platform for modernising teacher preparation – consolidating simulation-based learning, makerspaces, media studios, and AI-in-education capability to strengthen graduate readiness and educational impact.

Mandate and focus areas

Digitally enabled learning and teaching: strengthening blended, hybrid and immersive learning approaches, including simulation-based practice and digital practicum support.

Responsible AI in education: building critical, ethical and pedagogical capacity for AI use in teaching, learning and assessment.

Applied research for impact: enabling interdisciplinary research, innovation pilots and evidence-informed decision making for teacher education.

Partnerships and engagement: collaborating with schools, NGOs, industry and peer institutions to extend the Hub's reach and relevance.

Progress to date

Since mid-2025, the Hub has advanced governance and planning work, including a Draft Strategy (2026–2030) and structured stakeholder engagements to align structures, programmes and funding pathways. Departmental consultations have commenced, highlighting priority needs such as high-engagement blended learning at scale, clear guidance on responsible AI, research enablement and readiness for uneven school contexts, supported by nominated 'digital champions'.

To build shared understanding across the Faculty, the Hub is running a faculty-wide scoping survey

("Navigating AI: Tools, Platforms, and Approaches") and convening an AI seminar series that combines expert input and moderated dialogue to surface policy needs, guide teaching practice and identify research opportunities.

Preliminary Faculty AI Scoping Report (2025): Emerging insights

The Faculty-wide AI scoping study, conducted from August to November 2025, gathered data through surveys, interviews and departmental dialogues to map readiness, perceptions and strategic needs related to AI adoption in teaching, learning and research.

Key themes identified

Readiness and Awareness: Most staff acknowledge the transformative potential of AI but express uncertainty regarding ethical use, pedagogical integration and institutional policy frameworks.

Capacity Gaps: Training needs were emphasised across assessment design, content generation and student engagement, especially for disciplines less exposed to digital pedagogy.

Infrastructure and Access: Uneven digital access – particularly in resource-constrained schools partnered with the Faculty – limits experimentation and sustainable AI integration.

Research and Innovation Opportunities: There is a strong interest in collaborative AI-in-education projects, focusing on data analytics for learning support, academic integrity monitoring and personalised learning.

Governance and Policy: Respondents highlighted the absence of consistent Faculty-level guidelines for responsible AI use. A dedicated AI Policy Working Group has been proposed to draft a governance framework in alignment with the **Stellenbosch University Responsible AI Charter**.

Next steps

The findings will feed into the **Digital Innovation & Learning Institute (Hub)** roadmap (2026–2030), informing its training clinics, ethics frameworks and



An artist's impression of what the Innovation & Learning Hub will look like.

applied research priorities. The scoping outcomes also support the design of the first **Faculty AI Maturity Dashboard**, scheduled for early 2026.

Learning from the sector

Benchmarking with the other national and international hubs have begun and informed the Hub's design choices, including high-impact practices such as a student-operator model for advanced labs, an industry-led advisory board, third-stream short learning programmes and a flagship girls-in-tech pipeline. These insights are shaping early implementation priorities such as a clear service catalogue, standard operating procedures (SOPs)/service level agreements (SLAs), and an impact dashboard.

Phase 1 deliverables (Nov 2025 – April 2026)

- Complete remaining departmental consultations and publish the Hub's initial service catalogue and SOPs.
- Launch quick-win clinics (e.g. AI policy literacy

and assessment design) and confirm Faculty digital champions.

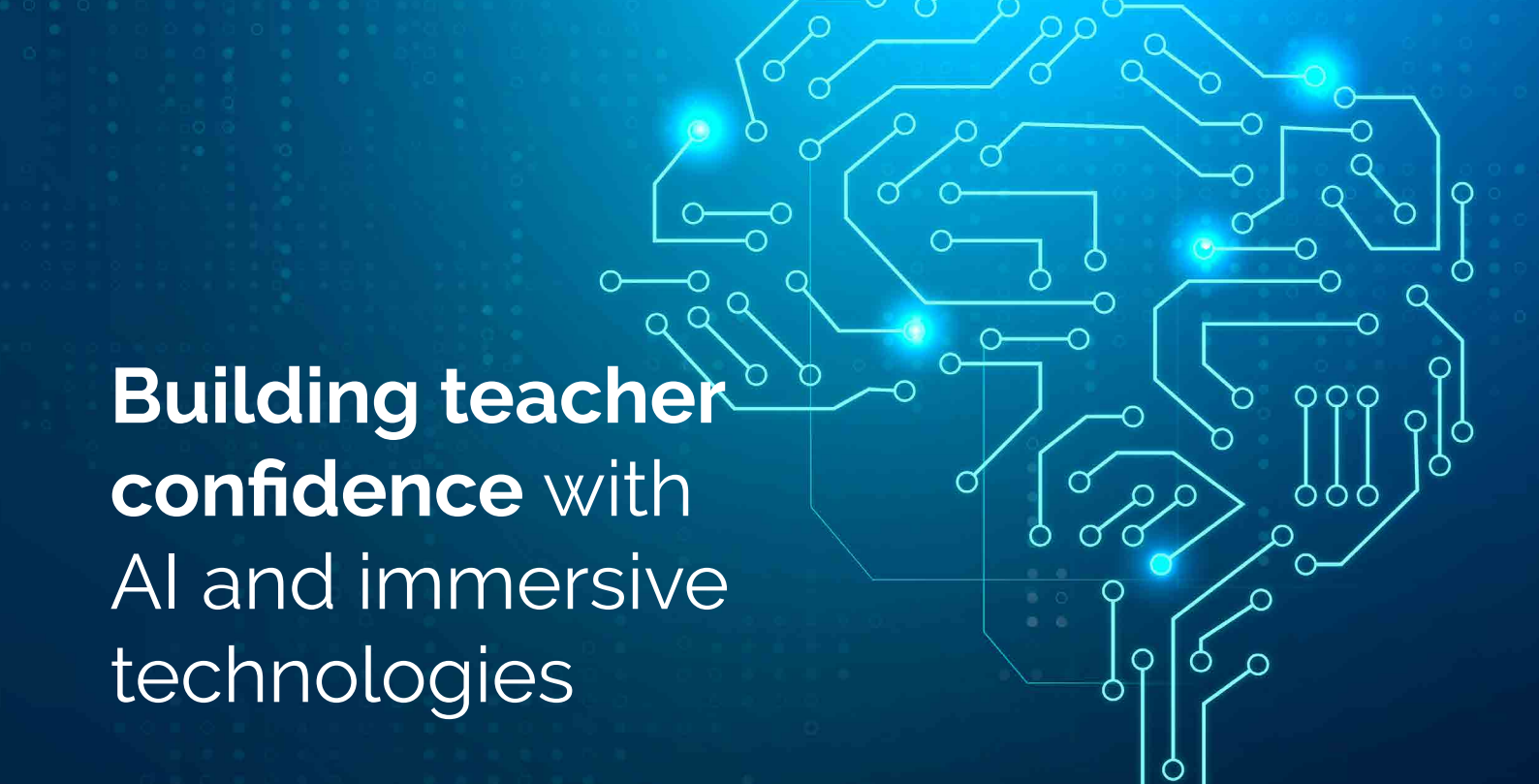
- Set up an impact dashboard and quarterly reporting (utilisation, equity reach, outputs and outcomes).
- Progress internal funding requirements and facilities integration through a phased space model (studios, robotics lab and a collaboration zone).

How colleagues can engage

The Hub is designed as an enabling platform for the whole Faculty. Staff can engage by proposing pilots, co-developing short learning offerings, participating in the seminar series, identifying priority needs for teaching and assessment, and contributing to research initiatives that explore digital innovation, learning analytics and responsible AI in education.

Enquiries

For enquiries and collaboration:
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Building teacher confidence with AI and immersive technologies

Prof Anass Bayaga

The Faculty of Education is launching a set of virtual short learning courses (SLCs) designed specifically for the basic education sector (Grades R–12), in South Africa and internationally. The aim is to support teachers with practical, classroom-ready approaches to artificial intelligence (AI) and immersive technologies – grounded in professional judgement, curriculum alignment and responsible practice.

What teachers can expect

Delivery mode:

100% asynchronous online learning over three weeks (approximately 15 hours total)

Weekly cadence:

Monday: module opening and checklist;

Monday–Wednesday: activities and artefact submission;

Thursday–Saturday: structured peer review;

Sunday: reflection

Fee: R8 000 per participant per SLC (payable to Stellenbosch University)

Course menu

- **AI in Education** – Turning everyday teaching tasks (planning, resources, feedback) into reliable AI-supported workflows, including verification checks and a 'responsible use' statement that can be shared with school leaders, parents and learners.
- **Using AI for Assessment** – Drafting and refining CAPS-aligned questions, tasks, rubrics and feedback while keeping professional judgement firmly in human hands, with a

POPIA-aware school assessment policy snapshot.

- **AI in Robotics and Coding** – Designing simple robotics/microcontroller activities where AI acts as a coding partner, including at least one AI-assisted 'miniproject' reusable with learners, and guidance on safe wiring and data practices.
- **Virtual and Augmented Reality (Immersive Technologies)** – Designing one CAPS-aligned immersive learning experience (with robust low-tech alternatives where devices are limited), including inclusion strategies, learner safety considerations, and simple assessment integration.

Why this matters now

Teachers are under pressure to respond to rapid technological change, while still delivering on curriculum requirements and safeguarding academic integrity and learner well-being. These SLCs are intentionally practical: they focus on what teachers can do immediately – how to plan, teach, assess and design learning experiences with the responsible use of emerging tools, even in uneven school contexts.

Looking ahead

In addition to offering these SLCs on a rolling basis, the Faculty plans to introduce multi-course programme pathways in areas such as an extended AI in Education sequence, AI in Robotics and Coding, and discipline-specific applications (e.g. Mathematics Education, Science Education, Language and Literacy, Social Studies and CAT), as well as classroom AI projects and data analysis for educational personalisation.

Enquiries and registration

Enquiries may be directed to Prof Anass Bayaga
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