

Annual International Conference

Theme for 2025: Future-Proofing Education: Strategic Leadership for a Rapidly Changing World

EMASA in partnership with Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance

ABSTRACT BOOKLET 2025



We are delighted to invite you to the Annual EMASA Conference, a premier gathering of academics, education leaders, and practitioners dedicated to bridging the gap between theory and practice in education leadership and management. This conference provides a dynamic platform to engage in thought-provoking discussions, forge meaningful partnerships and explore innovative solutions to the pressing challenges facing education in South Africa. As we navigate an evolving educational landscape, now is the time to take bold steps, rethink our approaches, and collectively work towards a system rooted in excellence, social justice and meaningful transformation. Join us as we shape the future of education leadership - together.



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EMASA

Session 1: 10h00 - 10h20



Author (s): Mr Dumisani Maphanga

Title: [District Support for sustainable School Improvement.](#)

Keywords: [teacher trust](#), [teacher support](#), [teacher development](#), [district support](#).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the support that districts need to offer for sustainable school improvement. The role played by districts in supporting schools cannot be underestimated: to implement high quality teaching and learning and provide relevant support to schools (DBE, 2013). To support schools, district officials need to be capacitated to (1) support one another through collaboration and across directorates in the district and (2) support their

teachers and schools (Ancho, 2021). I have used the theory of change because there exists tension between traditional leadership practices that emphasise top-down dictatorial support and contemporary leadership practices emphasising bottom-up collaborative support. In this analytical research paper, I align myself with the latter. The key question I seek to respond to is: What contemporary leadership practices that are required to heighten the

effectiveness of support dispensed by districts? To provide insights into this question, through analytical methods, I conducted a critical examination of the relevant literature on district support to schools and synthesised it to answer the current question. I examined 24 published peer reviewed article focusing on school district support. I sourced these articles from google scholar and DBE website.

Author (s): Ms Nomase Majong & Dr Sekitla Makhasane

Title: [Exploring the nature of SMTs' leadership practices in addressing bullying among learners: An invitational leadership perspective.](#)

Keywords: [School Management Team](#), [Bullying](#), [Leadership](#), [Practices](#).

Bullying remains a social issue that is central to disciplinary agendas in schools around the world. Despite extensive research conducted over the decades, various School Management Teams (SMT) continue to encounter different forms of bullying, particularly among learners. SMTs bear the formal responsibility of ensuring school safety, which includes addressing all manifestations of bullying among students. Although numerous measures

have been implemented to tackle bullying and SMTs demonstrate commitment and willingness to confront the issue, several gaps persist, complicating their efforts to address bullying effectively. This study used a two-pronged theoretical framework, incorporating Invitational Leadership Theory (ILT) and Social Learning Theory (SLT). The study adopted a qualitative approach, and a multiple case study design was used. Data was collected



through semi-structured interviews with SMT members, alongside focus group interviews with School-Based Support Team (SBST) and disciplinary committee members. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. Findings revealed that some SMTs struggle to address bullying among learners due to a lack of understanding of the issue, and relevant stakeholders not committing but interfering with discipline processes.

Author (s): Mr Anele Mkungela

Title: **Disrupting South African Education: A Case Study of ORT SA's Let Kidz Code and Digital Literacy Innovation.**

Keywords: **Digital Literacy, Digital Transformation, Teacher Development.**



South Africa's education system continues to grapple with structural inequalities, historical disadvantages, and traditional teaching practices that hinder equitable access to quality learning. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges, but also highlighted the urgent need, and potential, for digital transformation. This paper presents a project-driven case study of ORT South Africa's Let Kidz Code initiative to explore how digital literacy can serve as a gateway for meaningful innovation in teaching and

learning. The study adopts a qualitative research design, using semi-structured interviews with ten educators who participated in the initiative, complemented by an analysis of national education policy documents and ORT SA's implementation materials. The paper aims to address two key questions: (1) How can digital literacy and technology be integrated effectively into under-resourced South African classrooms? (2) What barriers and enablers shape the implementation of such innovations? Findings reveal

that while infrastructure gaps, limited teacher training, and socio-economic inequalities remain significant obstacles, targeted teacher development, curriculum alignment, and strategic partnerships offer viable pathways forward. Ethical protocols, including informed consent, were strictly followed. This case offers practical insight into how grassroots innovation can disrupt the status quo and advance more inclusive, future-ready public education.

Author (s): Mr Paul Kgobe & Ms Lucy Ramaube

Title: **Promoting social and emotional well-being in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in poorer socio-economic communities**

Keywords: **Early Childhood Development, Social and emotional well-being Low-income communities.**



Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in South Africa play a vital role in fostering children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth, particularly in low-income communities. Access to quality ECD services is associated with improved academic performance and enhanced emotional and social well-being (Mbarathi et al.,

2016; Department of Basic Education, 2022), laying the foundation for lifelong learning (Matlala & Malokwane, 2024). However, many centres operate under severe constraints, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and restricted access to essential services. This study investigates how

ECD centres in under-resourced communities promote children's social and emotional well-being despite systemic challenges. It examines the strategies employed by ECD practitioners and assesses their effectiveness in enhancing social and emotional development. A multiple-case

study design was used, focusing on five centres in Ekurhuleni (Daveyton and Etwatwa). Data were collected through interviews, focus groups, and structured observations, and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework.

Preliminary findings indicate that practitioners use resourceful, empathetic approaches to create safe, nurturing environments. Responsive engagement, culturally relevant practices, and targeted training contribute to children's

emotional resilience and social development. The study underscores the need for government to embed systematic support mechanisms in national frameworks.

Author (s): Ms Yvette Hardie

Title: [From Hierarchy to Harmony: How Arts-rich schools can foster inclusive learning environments and centre well-being.](#)

Keywords: [Creativity, collaboration, well-being, mindfulness.](#)



In South African classrooms, characterised by stress, overcrowding, and hierarchy, the prioritisation of STEM subjects over arts perpetuates an educational imbalance. This paper draws on the findings of global studies revealing that quality arts programs enhance academic achievement and foster socio-cultural wellbeing, particularly benefiting vulnerable students. ASSITEJ South Africa's Kickstarter Educational Empowerment programme exemplifies how arts-based learning can transform classroom dynamics, promoting collaboration and engagement. Concurrently, the work of various NGOs in SA schools underscores the arts' positive impact on youth wellbeing. Recognizing these

benefits, the Department of Basic Education has partnered with ASSITEJ SA to establish "Arts-rich schools," aiming to celebrate and support schools integrating arts across five dimensions. This paper advocates for arts integration in schools as a catalyst for transforming learning environments and hierarchical relationships. By embedding arts into education, South African schools can enhance learner and teacher wellbeing, fostering a more holistic and inclusive learning process. Drawing on local and global research, including studies by Anne Bamford and insights from the ACP "Shaping Futures" study, this paper seeks to engage with the transformative potential of

arts education in South Africa, and advocates for policy and pedagogical shifts to prioritise the arts as essential to comprehensive education reform. A qualitative research approach will allow for in-depth exploration of how arts-rich schools operate in practice, based on interviews with arts champions working in 30 schools from 6 provinces, capturing context-specific insights after interventions from ASSITEJ SA. This will be integrated with document analysis and desktop research to provide the broader context in which this work is being done, and to track the international trends identified in the abstract above.



Author (s): Prof Mfanelo Ntsobi & Dr Bongani June Mwale

Title: [A Study on the Impact of STREAM Education on South African Students' Engagement and Creativity: Exploring a Holistic Educational Pathway.](#)

Keywords: [Multidisciplinary](#), [Student Engagement](#), [STREAM education](#), [Creative Thinking](#).

The transforming power of STREAM (Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education on student involvement and creativity within South African schools is examined in this paper. Integrating research, reading and arts components into the curriculum fits global pedagogical changes meant to promote holistic learning as traditional STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) frameworks change. Inspired by projects like Sci-Bono Discovery Centre and the Schools of Specialisation (SOS) by the Gauteng Department of Education, the study stresses the need for developing creativity, critical thinking, and research skills alongside technical ability. Constructivist learning theory, which supports experiential and inquiry-based learning and thereby helps to synthesise multidisciplinary elements

inside the STREAM framework, provides the theoretical basis. By use of qualitative techniques comprising interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations, the study seeks to investigate how the incorporation of research, reading and arts shapes student involvement and creative output. Global experiences show how well multidisciplinary approaches integrate research and arts into curricula to increase engagement and real-world preparedness, therefore highlighting their advantages. According to the study, in line with African philosophical concepts like Ubuntu, indigenous knowledge systems and culturally relevant pedagogies are also very important in helping students to feel belonging and actively participate. The study also explores how reading could inspire research and multidisciplinary knowledge

and emphasises how artists help to develop soft skills, emotional intelligence, and creativity, which are fundamental qualities vital for Industry 4.0. The study provides legislators, teachers, and curriculum experts with practical insights and recommendations to improve instructional methods, thereby assuring that the learning environment is inclusive, interesting, and fit for producing graduates with flexible, creative, and social consciences. The study concludes by highlighting the importance of integrating and implementing the STREAM model to equip South African students with the multidimensional skills required to resolve complex societal challenges while stimulating innovation and significantly contributing to the growth of the economy.



Author (s): Ms Nelisiwe Malinga, Dr Sekitla Makhasane & Dr Michael Mahume

Title: [School Management Teams strategies in preventing and addressing learner-on-learner violence in two public secondary schools.](#)

Keywords: [School Management Teams; learner-on-learner violence; public secondary Schools.](#)

Learner-on-learner violence is a serious concern in South African schools and globally that requires effective strategies address. School management teams have a responsibility towards efforts to eliminate violence in schools, and failure to do so may result in high failure rates, dropout, suicide and trauma. This study aimed to explore the school management teams' strategies in preventing and addressing learner-on-learner violence in two South African public secondary schools. This study was grounded on the

distributed leadership theory, and adopted a qualitative approach, embedded within an interpretivist paradigm, and a multiple case study research design. The sample consisted of ten SMT members who were purposefully selected, from which data were generated through individual semi-structured interviews and triangulated through the document analysis. The amassed data were thematically analysed. The study found that school management teams respond to learner-on-learner violence

incidents per the learner code of conduct, punishment and police visits. However, the findings revealed that all these strategies seem insufficient to stop the prevalence of the phenomenon. The study recommends SMT to develop a coalition involving parents, educators and all community members to address learner-on-learner violence. The DBE must provide workshops to train the SMTs on how to address learner-on-learner violence.

Author (s): Dr Thanesha Rajo

Title: **Smart technologies: useful and sustainable or outdated in enhancing pedagogical teaching practices?**

Keywords: **Smartboard technology, teacher creativity, commerce classrooms.**



Over the years, schools have been equipped with smartboards through a Department of Education initiative to embrace the technological era and to support teacher education. Likewise higher education organisations specialising in teacher education have responded by supporting technology inclusions through investing in the infrastructure and equipping teacher campuses with the necessary smart technologies. The literature though suggests that users still experience barriers embracing technology. Semi-structured interviews,

focus group discussions and observations were designed to capture the events, successes and setbacks highlighted from a teaching methodology course set out to equip preservice commerce teachers embedding technology as a mediating tool in classroom pedagogy. Using a change management framework and Roger's diffusion of innovation theory, an action research approach is used to understand the pedagogical enhancement experiences in commerce preservice teacher classroom preparation. Five participants have embarked on a practice/play journey to

recognise the successes, lessons and challenges experienced by these participants. Other challenges have surfaced by not only documenting these experiences but also by using an enquiry-based approach to gain insight into similar teacher preparation practices. This is in an initial phase of enquiry. As an ongoing initiative, preliminary analysis suggests that documenting experiences are a necessary component towards a sustainable solution- driven endeavour to align pedagogy with technology use.

Author (s): Dr Mukatuni Gumani Enos

Title: **Parents' and Guardians' Experiences of Grade 1 and 8 Online Admission in Gauteng Public Schools: South Africa.**

Keywords: **Online admission, school enrolment, digital divide, administrative efficiency, equitable access, Gauteng education system..**



The introduction of online admission systems in Gauteng schools marks a significant transformation in the education sector, aimed at enhancing efficiency, transparency, and fairness in the enrolment process. While designed to streamline admissions and minimise human error, the system has faced various challenges, including accessibility barriers, technical inefficiencies, and stakeholder dissatisfaction. This study explores the impact of online admission on school enrolment, equitable access to education, and administrative effectiveness within Gauteng

schools. A mixed-methods research approach was utilised, combining qualitative and quantitative data collected from parents. Surveys and interviews were used to capture users' experiences, while an analysis of official enrolment data identify trends and disparities. The study assessed the system's effectiveness in promoting equal educational opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged communities. Additionally, it investigated technical challenges such as system malfunctions, delays, and usability concerns that may hinder its overall success.

The findings offer insights into whether digital admissions have met their intended objectives or inadvertently deepened existing educational inequalities. This research also addressed key concerns raised by stakeholders and provided recommendations for enhancing the system's inclusivity, efficiency, and user experience. By critically evaluating the impact of online admissions, the study aims to contribute to policy development and the digital transformation of the education sector.



Author (s): Dr Ghanchi-Badasie

Title: [From Parent to Governor: Level Up and Get REAL!](#)

Keywords: [Values](#). [Governance](#). [Community](#). [Partnerships](#).

(n a rapidly changing world, future-proofing education requires governance models that are inclusive, value-driven, and community-powered. This 20-minute presentation, "From Parent to Governor: Level Up and Get REAL!", offers a practical model for strengthening parent-school partnerships through ethical leadership and shared accountability. It begins with the motivational framework: Start up, Show up, Step up, Level up — a staged pathway

that encourages parents to grow from supporters at home to confident and capable governors. Informed by Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning theory, this model sees governance participation as a journey from peripheral involvement to full leadership within a community of practice. The R.E.A.L. values model — Respect, Enthusiasm, Active Involvement, Lifelong Learning — provides a strong ethical and relational foundation for school governance, rooted in

communal Ubuntu values (Mbiti, 1969) and aligned with Epstein's (2018) theory of school-family-community partnerships. The session concludes with engaging "ball quotes" metaphors (e.g., "Play the ball, not the man"; "Don't drop the glass ball") to make governance principles memorable and actionable. Participants will leave with a fresh framework for mobilising parent leadership and a renewed sense of shared responsibility for educational transformation].



Author (s): Dr TT Tapala

Title: [The efficiency of induction as a training and development mode for newly appointed middle managers in schools.](#)

Keywords: Induction and orientation, middle leaders, professional development, training and development.

Inductions are widely used as a form of easing the newly appointed personnel into their new roles. The appointees also gain from the inductions in the form of training and development. Inductions usually happen at the beginning of the managers' careers. In most times they happen as a once off occasion. They are not specific to the middle managers but to all who are new appointees. They take place over a short period of time mostly over one to

three days. This raises the question: "What is the efficiency of inductions as a training and development mode for newly appointed middle managers in schools"? The research followed a qualitative approach with an interpretative paradigm. Purposive sampling was used to select departmental heads who are middle managers in schools. Data were gathered using semi-structured individual interviews, and themes that emerged from the

analyses were grouped to help with data interpretation. The data analysis revealed that formalizing the inductions and presenting them over time is necessary. An assessment of their efficacy is necessary. Additionally, there's evidence that the service providers require training in order to successfully contextualize middle leader induction and fulfil their supervisory roles.



Author (s): Dr Stanley Maphosa

Title: [Tackling Gun Violence in Schools: Leadership, Accountability, and Firearm-Free Zones for Safer Learning Environments.](#)

Keywords: Gun violence, school safety, leadership accountability, firearm-free zones.

Gun violence in schools undermines safety, learning, and wellbeing. Drawing from 30 years of literature review and community engagement by Gun Free South Africa, this study explores the drivers, actors, and impact of gun violence in and around school settings. The rationale stems from an alarming increase in firearm-related incidents involving learners, community members, and criminal networks on school grounds. The key research questions are: Who are the main perpetrators and victims of gun violence in

schools? What systemic gaps allow firearms into these spaces? How can school leadership respond more effectively? Using a qualitative methodology, the paper synthesizes policy reviews, case studies, and interviews with educators, community members, and safety stakeholders. The findings reveal a lack of enforcement of the Firearms Control Act, weak leadership accountability, and minimal involvement of school management in safety strategies. The study advocates

for urgent implementation of Firearm-Free Zones and proposes that school leaders and management bodies not only enforce safety policies but also hold the Minister of Police accountable for protecting schools. Contributions include a practical leadership framework for firearm prevention, community partnership models, and policy accountability mechanisms to reimagine schools as sanctuaries of safety and learning.



Author (s): Ms Lisa Wingham

Title: [Empowering Educators Through Coding: Transforming Teacher Confidence and Classroom Innovation.](#)

Keywords: [Coding, teacher empowerment, accessibility, mindset.](#)

ORT SA CAPE embarked on a mission to demystify coding and robotics for teachers, recognising both the growing demand for digital literacy and the significant barriers posed by cost, infrastructure, and teacher confidence. Our solution, The Dory Code — an unplugged, device-free approach — was developed to provide an affordable and accessible entry point into computational thinking. The original aim was to equip teachers with practical strategies to introduce coding, regardless of technological

access. What emerged, however, was an unexpected and powerful secondary outcome: profound teacher transformation. Through training that emphasised growth mindset, problem-solving, iteration, and risk-taking, educators reported becoming more comfortable with ambiguity, more confident in making mistakes, and more skilled at creating inclusive classroom environments where learners feel safe to explore. Pedagogical shifts, such as improved clarity of instruction

and valuing diverse perspectives, extended far beyond coding lessons into teachers' broader practice. This paper shares insights from teacher reflections and course evaluations, showing that when coding is reframed as accessible and non-threatening, it becomes a catalyst for mindset change. In future-proofing education, the key innovation may not be the technology itself, but the empowered teachers who model bold, adaptive learning for the next generation.

Author (s): Ms Sibongile Winnie Baloyi

Title: [Exploring the perception of educators on the implementation of the secondary school improvement programme in Gauteng East District](#)

Keywords: [Educator perceptions, school improvement, programme implementation, Support, Continuing Professional Development, Gauteng East](#)

This paper explores the perceptions of Grade 12 educators regarding the implementation of the Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP) in the Gauteng East District of South Africa. Despite substantial investment and the strategic intent to enhance learner

outcomes, the SSIP has delivered uneven results, raising critical questions about its practical impact on teaching and learning. Underpinned by an interpretative qualitative, exploratory research design, purposeful sampling, this study generated data from one District through online



semi structured interviews. Data was analysed thematically by the interpretative qualitative approach using Braun and Clarkes thematic framework. Findings revealed that teacher attitudes toward SSIP range from optimism to scepticism, shaped by factors such as the relevance of training content, institutional

support, and the presence or absence of structured peer collaboration. While many teachers reported gains in subject knowledge and instructional confidence, persistent concerns include the sustainability of improvements, limited mentorship, and uneven systemic support. The study highlights that SSIP's

effectiveness depends not only on the quality of its professional development content but also on fostering a collaborative culture, ensuring contextual relevance, and empowering teacher agency. The study recommends professional development for SSIP should include embedded peer-lead learning opportunities, strengthening

of school-based support structures, and alignment of professional development activities with educational needs and best international teaching practices. Implications for continuing professional development for teacher's inputs on the design and implementation of professional were identified in this study (paper).



Author (s): Dr Belinda van der Westhuizen

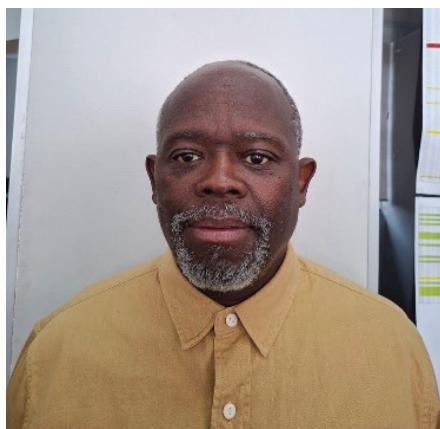
Title: [Beyond the Clock: Reconceptualising Instructional Time Through Learner Engagement in South African Education.](#)

Keywords: [Online admission, school enrolment, digital divide, administrative efficiency, equitable access, Gauteng education system.](#)

Instructional time in South African education is traditionally quantified through policy-mandated seat-time, yet such measures fail to account for the quality of learner engagement. With growing attention to multimodal teaching and learning, there is a need to reconceptualise instructional time beyond physical presence. This conceptual paper addresses the question: How can instructional time be redefined through an engagement-based lens to enhance policy relevance and learning effectiveness?

Drawing on theoretical frameworks including Kahu's (2013) Engagement Theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural constructivism, the study analyses behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and contextual dimensions of engagement. Methodologically, the paper adopts a conceptual analysis of policy documents (e.g., DBE, UMALUSI) and synthesises empirical studies on active learning, such as the ICAP framework (Chi & Wylie, 2014). Findings suggest that instructional time should be measured through

demonstrable engagement rather than attendance alone, especially in hybrid, synchronous, and asynchronous contexts. The paper proposes an engagement-based definition of instructional time and offers a framework for policy reform and teacher professional development. This reconceptualisation aligns with international shifts toward learner-centred, competency-based education and provides a path toward more equitable and effective learning systems in South Africa.



Author (s): Dr Lindiwe Ginya, Dr Vuyisile Khumalo & Mr David Bapela

Title: [School Districts as centres of service delivery: A conduit for School Improvement Leading to High Learner Achievement.](#)

Keywords: [Leadership](#); [School improvement](#); [High learner outcomes](#).

Literature suggests that district leadership is crucial for improving learner achievement in schools across various contexts. However, a vast majority of district leadership practices studies tend to be from international contexts, with limited documented studies that were conducted in South Africa. There is a noticeable lacuna in documented effective district leadership practices that foster improved learner achievement, which necessitated this study. The aim of this single-case

study, drawn from a larger multiple-case study, was to explore the leadership practices that enhance learner achievement across different school contexts in one School District in Johannesburg. Framed within the qualitative approach, this case study utilised purposeful sampling to collect interview data and focus group discussion to gain in-depth and elaborative understanding of the district practices deployed to improve learner achievement. The study sample consisted of one

District Director, and four other District Executive Management Team members. Thematic analysis revealed that district leadership practices that can reconfigure contextual dynamics not only enhance but also may sustain leaner achievement over time. Thus, district leadership practitioners not only need to have a firm grasp of their working contexts but also be bold in reshaping these contexts to support improved learner achievement in their districts



Author (s): Ms Salma Seedat & Ms Sakeena Elloker

Title: [Seeing, Doing, Leading: A Behavioural Approach to Transforming Instructional Leadership in Schools.](#)

Keywords: [instructional, leadership, instructional practices, teaching time, behaviour management.](#)

Despite national priorities to improve learner outcomes, school leadership in South Africa remains overly focused on administrative compliance. The Instructional Leadership Development Programme, developed by the Instructional Leadership Institute, reframes leadership around a structured model of Planning, Instruction and Culture, anchored in actionable practices aligned to the DBE's roles for principals and Quality Management standards. Deployed in over 50 quintile 1–5 schools since

2022, the model addresses the persistent "know-do" gap by equipping leaders with an execution roadmap and embedded coaching support. Using a mixed methods design grounded in Bambrick-Santoyo's leadership practices and Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework, the study draws on timing data, classroom observations, surveys and focus group discussions. Findings show that reducing post-interval transition time from 25 to 5 minutes yields an additional

week of instruction per term. Schools that combined staff training with coaching reported more consistent classroom management, with school-wide behaviour routines fostering psychologically safe environments that prioritise teaching. Early results indicate that regular coaching for newly qualified teachers helped maintain, and in some cases improve, learner outcomes by up to 10% in the WCED's systemic assessments.

Author (s): Mr Xolani Noyile & Dr Beverley Blake

Title: [Reshaping Business Studies for a Digital Future: Insights into ICT Integration in Johannesburg Classrooms.](#)

Keywords: [ICT integration; Business studies education; Digital Transformation, Innovative Pedagogy.](#)

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education is globally recognised for enhancing teaching and learning. In South Africa, ICT is seen as a tool to improve engagement, support diverse learning needs, and equip learners with skills for the digital economy. This paper investigates how Business Studies teachers in the

Johannesburg Central District understand, implement, and experience ICT integration in their classrooms. A qualitative research design was employed, using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Six Business Studies educators from six purposively selected secondary schools participated. The SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation,

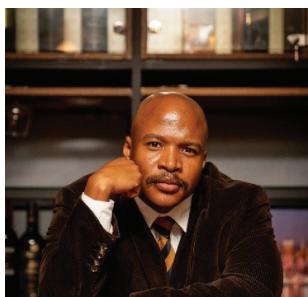


Modification, Redefinition) model served as the theoretical framework for analysing levels of ICT integration among educators. Findings reveal that while educators value the benefits of ICT, effective implementation is often constrained by unequal access to resources, inadequate training, poor technical support and educator resistance to change.

Infrastructure disparities further widen the digital divide. Despite these challenges, best practices such as using interactive web applications, digital collaboration tools, and virtual simulations are identified.

Targeted professional development, increased investment in infrastructure, and stronger policy support are proposed as recommendations. This paper contributes to the discourse on digital transformation by

demonstrating how innovative ICT integration can disrupt traditional pedagogies and cultivate dynamic, future-ready Business Studies classrooms.



Author (s): Mr Lesedi Kgasago & Dr Beverley Blake

Title: [Reforming the Grade 11 Economics Curriculum: Amplifying the Perspectives of Black Township School Teachers.](#)

Keywords: [epistemic decolonisation, neoclassical economic theory, social transformation, curriculum transformation.](#)

Since 1994, South Africa's democratic state has sought to develop a high school curriculum that redresses apartheid legacies and promotes social transformation. Despite numerous policy changes and curriculum reforms, the CAPS Economics curriculum remains closely aligned with apartheid-era content, largely grounded in mainstream neoclassical economic theory. This paper responds to the lack of pluralism in the curriculum by exploring what black economics teachers would like to see included or excluded in

the Grade 11 CAPS topic, "Economic Growth and Development," to support genuine social transformation. Using a qualitative methodology, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five black economics teachers from four secondary schools in Soweto. Insights, inspired by the work of the late Kwaito artist Mandoza and hip-hop artist Pantsula (HHP), proposes a culturally relevant theoretical lens for selecting content for inclusion in the curriculum topic. Findings reveal a desire for curriculum content that emphasises

wealth creation, support for local industries, and the production of proudly South African goods. These curricular shifts, it is argued, would better serve the transformative aims of education rooted in everyday lived experiences rather than dominant neoliberal discourses. The paper calls for reimagining economics education as a tool for empowerment and reform grounded in local realities and aimed at meaningful social transformation.

Author (s): Ms Ntebaleng Mlangeni & Dr Sekitla Makhasane
Title: **Exploring School Management Teams' inside-outside approach to addressingbullying among learners in South African schools.**

Keywords: **Bullying, leadership, assets, School Management Teams.**



Bullying among learners is acknowledged as a one of the major challenges in many countries. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education and other relevant stakeholders adopted policies and programmes to manage bullying. However, bullying among learners continue to occur. School Management Teams (SMTs) are expected to manage bullying and foster a conducive learning environment. Hence, this study will contribute knowledge regarding the inside and outside assets that SMTs use to

address bullying among learners in South African schools. The paper uses asset-based approach as a theoretical foundation to explain the SMTs' inside-outside strategy in addressing bullying among learners. The paper reports on qualitative research study in which individual semi-structured interviews were used to generate data from SMTs in two selected South African schools. The findings indicate that SMTs draw on assets within and outside the schools to address

bullying among learners. The assets within the schools include documents, people, assembly, talents, skills, RCL, SASAMS and processes to address bullying. To complement the assets within schools, SMTs sought support from parents, police, Department of Social Development, Department of Health and the Department of Education. The paper concludes that partnership with internal and external stakeholders can enhance the strategies of addressing bullying among learners.



Session 2 - 12h00 – 12h20



Author (s): Dr Solomon Chibaya

Title: [Leadership with Integrity: Examining Ethical Paradigms and Trust in South African Schools.](#)

Keywords: [Accountability, ethical leadership, trust.](#)

Due to increased interest in leadership accountability and integrity, there is a global focus on ethical leadership. This empirical paper reports on a qualitative study that delves into the nuances between ethical leadership and trust in four high schools in the Free State Province. The study is underpinned by Shapiro and Stefkovich's (2005) Multiple Ethical Paradigms theory, categorising ethical practices, and Castel Franchi and Falcone's (2010) model of Trust

theory, which were used as theoretical lenses to analyse the data critically. Using a qualitative approach, the study focused on the practices and experiences of principals, heads of department and teachers in the four purposively selected high schools to enhance school leadership. To generate data, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document reviews were used. From each of the four schools, the head of school,

two heads of departments, and three teachers, a total of 24 participants, were randomly selected for semi-structured interviews and asked to fill in questionnaires. Thematic analysis identified three broad themes that linked trust to professionalism, emphasised the impact of ethics and trust, and highlighted how trust relates to leadership and factors affecting trust in the selected school.



Author (s): Prof Seyama Sadi

Title: [Towards Locaglobality: Decolonial school leadership for food security and attainment of SDG 1, 2 and 4.](#)

Keywords: [Decolonial School leadership, Locaglobality, sustainable development goals, school gardens.](#)

This paper provides a decolonial leadership perspective on how school leadership could contribute to learners' food security and attainment of SDG1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 4 (Quality Education). Recognising the critique of the SDGs' failure to capture the imperative of African epistemologies, knowledges, and cultural

practices in pursuing the SDGs, the paper uses the concept of Locaglobality to enhance a conscientisation of the need to prioritise the local when engaging with the global. Food security is one of the major crises in Africa, worsening due to current geopolitical wars, which exacerbate poverty and inequalities. The participatory action research (PAR) was

focusing on Leadership for Sustainable Futures at six township schools that started vegetable gardens in schools to subsidise the nutrition scheme programme. The schools' principals committed themselves (6), departmental heads (6), school garden champions (6), grounds staff (6) to participate in six in-person workshops. The

study illuminates how the school leaders drew on Ubuntu principles to foster communitarianism in their schools, inspiring individual and collective responsibility towards food security. They

created spaces for equitable participation, enabling the sharing of local knowledges for gardening. They further built reciprocal relationships that are requisite in mobilising various resources. The school

leaders' commitment to the gardens demonstrates their regard for the equitable humanity of their stakeholders, requisite for enhancing sustainability consciousness towards action.

Author (s): Ms Matjema Caroline Maeane & Dr Nokulunga Ndlovu

Title: [Fostering Teacher Innovation through ICT Professional Development in Low-Resourced Primary Schools: Challenges and Opportunities.](#)

Keywords: [Innovation, Communication Technologies \(ICT\), Teacher Professional Development \(TPD\), Low-Resourced Schools, Diffusion of Innovation \(DOI\).](#)



Promoting teacher innovation through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Teacher Professional Development (TPD) in low-resourced primary schools remains a critical challenge due to historical and recent systemic inequalities and resource constraints. This paper examines how ICT-TPD programmes can effectively foster teacher innovation in such contexts, focusing on a low-resourced primary school in Johannesburg, South Africa. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected

from six teachers participating in a structured ICT TPD programme designed to enhance their integration of technology into curriculum delivery. Findings indicate that while teachers demonstrated willingness to innovate, barriers such as unreliable devices or lack thereof, and limited internet connectivity hindered sustained engagement. Some participants exhibited resourcefulness by independently acquiring ICT devices, while others struggled to maintain participation, thus

highlighting the need for tailored support mechanisms. Grounded in the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, this study emphasises the importance of designing ICT TPD programmes that are contextually relevant and adaptable to the realities of low-resourced schools. By providing targeted strategies, ongoing support, and opportunities for experimentation, ICT-TPD initiatives can empower teachers to overcome systemic challenges and foster innovation in their curriculum delivery.



Author (s): Mr Mbulaheni Sithi & Prof Onoriode Potokri

Title: **Exploring the perception of educators on the implementation of the secondary school improvement programme in Gauteng East District.**

Keywords: **Education leaders, future relevant schools, fourth industrial revolution, South Africa.**

As global economies and societies rapidly evolve through technological advancements, the need to align educational systems with the demands of the 4IR has become increasingly urgent, at the center of this are education leaders. This study aims to explore opportunities and challenges in Implementing 4IR – relevant education, lessons for South African leaders. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study employed semi-structured individual interviews to gather in-depth insights from a purposive sample of 10 participants – education leaders from Johannesburg West District of

South Africa. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data and identify key themes relating to perceptions, readiness, and strategic responses to 4IR implementation. Findings reveal that 4IR education holds transformative potential, including bridging the digital divide, enhancing teaching and learning through personalized and data-driven methodologies, empowering teachers with innovative tools, and preparing learners with critical skills for a technologically advanced future. Participants identified stakeholder collaboration, curriculum alignment with industry needs, and leadership

commitment as essential enablers. However, significant challenges persist. These include disparities in resource allocation, inadequate technological infrastructure in schools especially in underserved areas, and insufficient training and readiness among educators. The study concludes by recommending strategic interventions such as investment in ICT infrastructure, comprehensive professional development for educators, modernized and interdisciplinary curricula, and collaborative governance models involving government, industry, and communities.

Author (s): Dr Mokgwathi Mathelela Steyn

Title: **Reimagining School Safety Through Collaborative Leadership: The Role of Principals and Teachers in South African Schools.**

Keywords: **School safety, constructive leadership, collaborative leadership, mathematics achievement, instructional leadership.**



School safety remains a major challenge in South Africa, particularly in under-resourced schools where violence and misconduct disrupt teaching and learning. While School Governing Bodies share legal responsibility, school principals and teachers carry the daily burden of ensuring safe and effective learning environments. This study explored how collaborative leadership encompassing constructive and instructional practices by principals and teachers enhances both school

safety and learner achievement in mathematics. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and surveys with 22 participants (7 principals and 15 mathematics teachers) across seven public high schools in Gauteng Province. Thematic analysis revealed that constructive leadership practices, such as mentoring, visibility, and curriculum guidance, supported disciplined learning environments. Simultaneously,

teacher-principal collaboration around classroom management and mathematics-focused interventions contributed to improved learner engagement and performance in mathematics. However, gaps in training and policy coherence hindered these efforts. The study highlights the value of shared leadership in cultivating safe, academically focused environments that support mathematics achievement.

Author (s): Dr Mukatuni Gumani Enos

Title: [Enhancing Life Science Teaching and Learning through Teacher Assistance: The Role of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative \(PYEI\) in Gauteng Province.](#)

Keywords:

Keywords: Teacher Assistance, policymakers, Life Sciences.



The article focuses on the introduction of Teacher Assistants (TAs) as a global initiative to alleviate teacher workload and improve education systems. Various countries have adopted TAs, and their presence has grown significantly over the years. In South Africa, TAs were introduced in public schools in 2020 through the Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI), part of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI). The research examines the impact of TAs on Life Sciences education in

Gauteng province using Sociocultural Theory and a quantitative research approach, with data collected via questionnaires from TAs in local schools. The findings highlight that TAs play a crucial role in enhancing Life Sciences education by creating interactive, personalized, and community-focused learning environments. TAs help foster critical thinking, provide timely feedback, and support students in acquiring scientific skills, which are essential for future success in the field. However, the research also

points to challenges such as insufficient resources, misaligned curricula, and variability in TA proficiency. The study concludes with recommendations for stronger collaboration among policymakers, school administrators, and educators to ensure that teachers receive the necessary support, resources, and professional development to overcome these challenges and improve the quality-of-Life Sciences education in South Africa.



Author (s): Dr Ghanchi-Badasie

Title: **The INNER CURRICULUM: Cultivating EQ, SQ and AQ for Resilient Education Leadership,**

Keywords: Emotional, Social, Adaptive Intelligences,

Background and Rationale: The emotional labour of education is real. Teachers and leaders navigate the complexities of teaching, learner behaviour, parental expectations and administration demands. Thus, they experience a range of intense emotions everyday [Tornio 2016]. High stress incidents are triggers that may result in emotional outbursts that negatively impact the safe environment of schools. These outbursts, as frequently observed, reveal the urgency of cultivating inner awareness and relational skills. Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Social

Intelligence (SQ), and Adaptive Intelligence (AQ) form a triad of competencies that can future-proof educators for resilient leadership. Research Aim and Question: This presentation explores how EQ, SQ, and AQ can be developed to build resilience and ethical responsiveness in educators and leaders. The central question is: How can teachers and school leaders use emotional and social intelligence as a foundation for adaptive leadership in changing school environments? Theoretical Framework and Methodology:

The presentation draws from Goleman's framework on Emotional and Social Intelligence and Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory. Using practitioner inquiry, real-life school scenarios, and emotional mapping tools, it introduces reflective and practical strategies to foster inner development. Contribution: Participants will engage in practical strategies to identify emotional triggers, improve relational trust, and build adaptive capacity for sustained wellbeing and leadership.

Author (s): Ms Nomsa Sibeko

Title: **Dynamics for accessibility of female academics to management and IThe Impact of Social Media Classroom Trends on Learning Time and Teacher Learner Relationships. Trending or Distracting?**

Keywords: Social media trends, Teacher-learner relationships, Learning time.

The world is constantly changing with new apps and social media trends. As these trends make their way into classrooms, teachers and learners must balance between fun and focus. This study looks at whether viral classroom activities on platforms like TikTok or Facebook reduce learning time or help build better teacher-learner relationships and a stronger classroom culture (Boyd, 2014; Manca &

Ranieri, 2016). This study explores both the pros and cons of using social media trends in teaching, focusing on time spent on learning, academic results and the realness of teacher-learner interactions (Junco, 2012; Rosen et al., 2013). A qualitative research method will be used, as it allows for deeper understanding of the experiences, attitudes, and concerns of teachers and learners. Data will be collected

through surveys and document analysis of school policies to explore the impact of social media trends in the classroom. The schools that will serve the research will be from Gauteng East, a sample of 100 teachers will be measured, who teach grades 10 to 12, with data collected over a short period. The goal is to guide schools in using social media responsibly and in a way that puts learners first.

Author (s): Dr Davies Phillip Manzini



Title: [Investigating teaching and learning Mandarin-Chinese as a feasible educational intervention. A case study of Madiba Comprehensive School in Gauteng-West, South Africa](#)

Keywords: [Mandarin-Chinese, megatrends, globalisation, entrepreneurship, digitalisation, and creative thinking.](#)

The South African government and the Chinese government have an agreement that Mandarin-Chinese will be taught in South African schools. The objective of the investigation is to find out how teaching and learning Mandarin-Chinese may help with the emerging megatrends including globalisation, entrepreneurship, digitalisation, and creative thinking. Essentially, the study broadens its focus by investigating how Mandarin-Chinese will be customised and instituted. The Language Acquisition Theory (LAT) has been chosen as the theoretical framework for the study to investigate Mandarin-Chinese instruction as a workable educational intervention that tackles

megatrends including globalisation, entrepreneurship, digitisation, and creative thinking. A variety of teaching and learning strategies for language acquisition will be investigated by the study using LAT. Additionally, the study will use an exploratory sequential design, collecting qualitative data via interviews, focus-groups and questionnaires prior to evaluating it quantitatively. This mixed method has the advantage of allowing the study to analyse participants' Mandarin-Chinese comprehension. Noting that, the qualitative methodology is used in this research a non-probability sampling strategy is chosen. The 20 participants in the sample will

include 10 learners, 2 district officials, 2 principals, 4 SGB members, and 2 Chinese nationals or educationists. Critically, the study hopes to yield findings that will help customise Mandarin-Chinese teaching and learning, which will lead to educational reform in its pursuit of delivering on the megatrends that have been identified. The study will conclude by providing qualitatively investigated results and recommendations for how Mandarin-Chinese instruction and learning could be beneficial in implementing megatrends including globalisation, entrepreneurship, digitalisation, and creative thinking.

15. Author (s): Ms Mpho Mofokeng & Dr Sekitla Makhasane

Title: [Challenges teachers encounter when implementing learner discipline policy in South African Schools.](#)

Keywords: [Challenges, Implementing, School-based learner discipline policy.](#)



Learner discipline challenges prevail in many countries. In South Africa, learner misbehaviour has been a problem from the past, during and post-apartheid era. During the apartheid era teachers used corporal punishment to enforce learner discipline. In the post-apartheid era, corporal punishment was abolished and the teachers found it challenging to maintain learner discipline without applying corporal punishment. The schools were mandated to adopt a code of conduct to establish discipline,

because discipline is essential for effective teaching and learning. However, teachers encounter challenges when implementing learner discipline policy in South African schools. The paper is underpinned by sense-making theory to understand the teachers' challenges in implementing discipline policy. Using the qualitative research approach, the study employed semi-structured interviews and documents analysis to generate data from two schools. Purposive sampling strategy was used to

select ten participants. They involved a principal, two safety committee teachers, and two school-based support team teachers from each school. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the DBE develop a standardized learner discipline policy, allowing the learners' code of conduct to serve as a context-specific framework that outlines values and behaviours drawn from a standardized learner discipline policy.



Author (s): Prof Phumlani Erasmus Myende

Title: [District Officials' Understanding and Enactment of Accountability for Learners' Academic Performance in Primary Schools.](#)

Keywords: [Academic performance, Accountability, District Officials, Primary schools, Systems approach.](#)

Given the enormous financial investment that the South African government is committing to education, the expectation is that such an investment should yield positive returns to the state and the nation at large. Strengthening accountability from those entrusted with such responsibility is one of the strategies to employ in order to attain the state's money's worth. The questions answered in this paper are: how do district officials promote accountability for learners' academic performance in

primary schools, and what are the challenges they encounter in the process of promoting accountability? An interpretive qualitative approach was adopted to conduct the study using a case study methodology. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from 6 district officials and document analysis was used to generate data. Data was analysed thematically. The findings suggest that, while the phenomenon of accountability is well-understood by district officials through certain

accountability measures that are instituted, there are challenges that are encountered in the process of promoting accountability for learners' academic performance in primary schools. This paper thus argues that accountability is a reciprocal process between schools and the district office and strengthening it at both levels is key to the overall improvement of learners' academic performance in primary schools.



Author (s): Mr Mpangane & Dr Awodiji

Title: *An analysis of departmental heads' experiences in the use of distributed leadership to improve learners' performance in the field of geography.*

Keywords: Collaboration, Departmental heads, Distributed leadership, Geography, learners' performance.

In South Africa, schools are judged by results, yet learners' performance depends on classroom practice shaped by teacher support and monitoring. Departmental heads, though often undervalued, play a vital role. Distributed leadership, fostering shared responsibility, is increasingly seen as key to enhancing teaching and learning. However, limited research has explored how DHs apply DL to enhance Geography performance in South African schools. Based on Spillane's distributed leadership theory, this study

investigated how DHs employ DL to improve learners' performance in Geography. The research examined DHs' understanding of DL, its distinction from other leadership models, their daily leadership practices, and the challenges they face in applying DL. A generic qualitative design within a constructivist paradigm was employed. Using purposive sampling, six Geography DHs from secondary schools in Mpumalanga's Gert Sibande District were selected. Semi-structured online interviews were conducted,

transcribed, coded, and analysed thematically using Atlas. Findings indicate that DHs employ DL to support teachers, foster collaboration, and enhance learners' achievement. The study contributes to the understanding of middle leadership in South African schools and recommends that DHs strengthen DL through continuous development, mentoring, collaborative fieldwork, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Author (s): Ms Nontobeko Mabaso & Dr Sekitla Makhasane

Title: *Teachers' Understanding of the Law and Learners Discipline in Addressing Learner Discipline in South African Secondary Schools.*

Keywords: Learner discipline, teachers, law.

This study explored teachers' understanding of the law and learner discipline in South African secondary schools. The South African Schools Act (1996) and the Basic Education Laws Amendment Act (2024)

provide the legal framework for learner discipline. However, studies indicate that teachers struggle to interpret and apply these laws. This qualitative study explores how 10 teachers from two secondary



schools in the Free State province perceive and apply relevant legislation, including the South African Schools Act. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups reveal variations in teachers'

understanding of the law and learner discipline, influencing their discipline strategies. Findings highlighted that teachers understand the laws governing learner discipline

however there is still a need for enhanced teacher training, policy clarity, and collaborative approaches to address learner discipline. Recommendations emphasized

the importance of legal literacy, whole-school approaches, and community engagement in fostering positive learning environments.



Author (s): Prof Blondel Nyamkure, Dr Nishana Beharie Parsad & Mr Anele Davids

Title: [An evaluation of educator reflections, in the Johannesburg Region, of factors that impact on their implementation of grade 3 home languages.](#)

Keywords: Evaluation, Curriculum Support, Impact.

Learning losses were incurred during the COVID 19 pandemic, warranting the need for the implementation of impactful curriculum support programmes and effective learning recovery strategies at all levels. In particular, understanding the challenges and support needs of educators was key. To strengthen support, an initiative was undertaken to gauge Grade 3 Home Language educator reflections of their implementation context in 2023. The Johannesburg region yielded 1306 educator responses. Adopting a social

constructivist research paradigm, theoretical constructs and frameworks that underscored the value of educator feedback included "Service Brands" De Chernatony and Segal-Horn 2003, "Critical Inquiry", "Reflexive Competence", Transactional versus Transformational Curriculum Support" and "Ubuntu". The use of online semi structured surveys yielded substantive data which was analysed using both Content and Thematic analyses methods. The findings highlight both contextual and implementation challenges as

well as curriculum support strengths. Recommendations for enhanced district and provincial curriculum support are provided. This initiative contributes to Growing Gauteng Together (GGT) 2030 action plans and body of knowledge by providing critical insights into what can constitute impactful curriculum support programme strategies, the role of management and leadership in evaluating impact and the value of educator feedback in strengthening curriculum support programmes at all levels.



Author (s): Prof Berington Zanoxolo Gobingca

Title: **Dynamics for accessibility of female academics to management and leadership positions in selected Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges in Eastern Cape Province.**

Keywords: Gender equity, management position, Stereotype, Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges.

The purpose of this research was to explore dynamics influencing the accessibility of female academics to management positions in selected technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges. The under-representativeness of females in leadership and management positions in TVET colleges is an issue and should be addressed with redress measures as a national mandate for equal opportunities. The feminism theoretical framework underpinned this research. An interpretivism research

paradigm, case study research design and qualitative approach were adopted. Observation and semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with eight lecturers purposefully selected to ensure that each site was represented by one lecturer. Managers were excluded from the assumption that they might be conflicted with the phenomenon being explored. A thematic approach was used to analyse the data. Female lecturers lack thereof confidence to be effective leaders in managing

educational resources. Socio-cultural and stereotype perspectives in societies that males are borne to be leaders still exist. Labour formations were found to contribute to non-implementation of gender equity. Leadership programs could strengthen female academics' skills and practices to management positions. Roadshows to address the stereotype should be conducted. Re-curriculation of programmes to incorporate learning content embracing and adopting gender equity in learning institutions is recommended.

Sibongile Winnie Baloyi and Vusi Joseph Maseko

Title: **Collaboration or Compliance? Educator Reflections on the Impact of SSIP in Underperforming Schools.**

Keywords: Teacher agency, SSIP, collaboration, professional development.

In a rapidly evolving educational landscape, teacher professional development remains central to systemic reform. South Africa's Secondary School Improvement Programme (SSIP) was introduced to support underperforming

schools, particularly at Grade 12 level. However, the programme's top-down implementation model raises critical questions about teacher voice, autonomy, and contextual fit. This paper explores whether educators perceive their participation as

genuine collaboration or passive compliance. The study sought to investigate how Grade 12 teachers in the Gauteng East District experience SSIP and whether collaborative cultures exist within its implementation. The core research question asked:

To what extent do teachers experience SSIP as a collaborative professional development process? Adopting an interpretivist paradigm and qualitative exploratory design, the study purposively selected ten Grade 12 educators. Data were collected through online

semi-structured interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Findings reveal that while SSIP improved subject content delivery, educators experienced limited school-based collaboration and often felt alienated from decision-making. The study

recommends repositioning SSIP to empower educators as co-creators of professional development. This research contributes to national conversations on strategic leadership, contextual relevance, and sustainable educational reform.

Author: Dr Thabile Morgan

Title: [Advancing the quality of education by incorporating 21 Century Skills: A study conducted at Johannesburg South District South Africa.](#)

Keywords: [Education technology, digital literacy, pedagogical strategies, quality education.](#)



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) underscores the significance of quality education for all, emphasizing the need for inclusive and equitable learning opportunities that provide lifelong learning and the acquisition of essential capabilities. In the continually evolving academic sphere, cultivating 21st century abilities have emerged as a pivotal element in ensuring the provision of incredible knowledge and experiences. This paper uses constructivism

to scrutinize pioneering pedagogical tactics designed to foster the improvement of 21st century abilities within the context of quality education. By using content analysis, it examines present instructional literature and meticulously evaluating practical coaching methodologies, this study endeavours to illuminate powerful teaching strategies that foster critical thinking, ingenuity, collaboration, and virtual literacy among students in schools. Moreover, this examination delves into the

position of teachers in fostering those abilities. It investigates the ability to demand situations and opportunities linked with implementing those processes in diverse school settings. By exploring the juxtaposition of pedagogy and 21st century skills, this conceptual study offers actionable insights for teachers, policymakers, and invested stakeholders eager to cultivate resilient and adaptable learning environments.



Author (s): Dr M. C. Letuma

Title: : **Barriers to Creating Safe Learning Environments: School Management Teams and Bullying in Secondary Schools, Free State.**
Keywords: **bullying, classroom management, learning environment, school management team.**

Bullying is a form of abuse that can be physical, verbal, psychological, or emotional, affecting education systems worldwide. This study explores the challenges School Management Teams (SMTs) face in addressing bullying within secondary schools. Grounded in Human Relations Theory, the study adopted an interpretive paradigm, qualitative approach, and multiple-case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select three participants from three secondary schools. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and

analysed thematically. Findings revealed that SMTs encounter both school-based and external barriers, including teacher absenteeism, repeated learner misconduct, lack of disclosure by victims, gangsterism, and limited parental involvement. Through the lens of Human Relations Theory, the study found that interpersonal dynamics, such as communication, trust, and group relations, may contribute to the persistence of bullying. The study underscores the importance of improving communication and trust between staff and

learners, which is essential for effective reporting and intervention. Confidential and safe reporting mechanisms are recommended to protect students. Further, SMTs need support through training in time management, responsibility, and classroom control to curb absenteeism and enhance learner supervision. Lastly, parental workshops and awareness campaigns may foster understanding of bullying's effects and encourage greater parental engagement.



Author: Mr Andile Qodashe

Title: [Reimagining Schools through the BELA Act: Transformative Leadership and Collaborative Governance](#)
Keywords: [Human Dignity, Equality, Freedom.](#)

This study explores the transformative potential of education in advancing human dignity, equality and freedom within South African schools. Grounded in a qualitative research paradigm, it engages with educational literature and policy discourse to examine how governance, leadership and learner experience can be reshaped towards inclusivity and empowerment. This study highlights ways in which schools can adapt cultures that honour learners' identities, encourage equitable participation and safeguard individual freedoms. This study

employs content analysis to review and critically examine educational literature and policies. The analysis will be used to build arguments in support of the BELA Act, highlighting its potential to facilitate values-driven leadership and participatory governance. In doing so, the study demonstrates how the Act can contribute to realizing the constitutional ideals of human dignity, equality, and freedom. The study demonstrates that when guided by integrity and vision, education can be reimaged as a space of empowerment

and social justice. Findings emphasize the importance of values-driven leadership and participatory governance in realizing the constitutional ideals of human dignity, equality and freedom. The work offers strategic insights for school governing bodies, learner representative councils, education practitioners and policy makers committed to building inclusive and transformative learning environments.



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