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ISEA

Institute for
the Study of
the Englishes
of Africa

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2024**





ISEA

Institute for the Study of the Englishes of Africa

Annual Report 2024

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Donors

Financial support from the following sources is acknowledged with gratitude:
African Humanities Programme for the *New Coin* Poetry Prize.

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Conspectus

The Institute for the Study of Englishes of Africa (ISEA) has been a driving force in advancing language education, literacy development, and scholarly research. This report highlights the achievements and contributions of the ISEA for the year 2024, reflecting its alignment with Rhodes University's **Institutional Development Plan (IDP) 2023–2028**. The initiatives and outcomes reported here are guided by several key IDP goals and objectives aimed at fostering excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.

Goal 1: Ensure Quality Scholarly Teaching and Learning

The ISEA's efforts contribute significantly to enhancing scholarly teaching and learning through:

- The **BEd (ELT) programme** equips educators with advanced skills and fosters professional growth in teaching English in diverse contexts.
- The successful graduation of five **MEd candidates**, enhancing their expertise and the academic standing of English educators.
- The development of **African Language Teaching Resources**, promoting multilingual scholarship and expanding the role of African languages in education.

Objective Alignment:

- **1.3:** Develop an enabling multilingual environment in which African Languages can thrive.
- **1.6:** Recognize and reward innovation and excellence in teaching and community engagement.

Goal 3: Create an Engaging and Transformative Student Experience

The ISEA supports transformative educational experiences for student teachers by:

- Ensuring the success of **BEd recruitment and contact sessions**, providing structured and impactful learning experiences.
- Offering **logistical support** for rural students, ensuring equitable access and fostering a supportive learning environment.

Objective Alignment:

- **3.5:** Ensure an inclusive institutional environment that embraces human rights, celebrates diversity, and respects all identities.

Goal 4: Strengthen Rhodes University's Standing as a Research-Intensive University

The ISEA contributes to research excellence and creative outputs through:

- Publications such as *English in Africa* and *New Coin Poetry*, which underline the Institute's commitment to impactful scholarship and the promotion of literary studies.

- Research initiatives, including the **COVID-19 literacy impact study**, which address relevant educational challenges and enhance the ISEA's research profile.

Objective Alignment:

- **4.1:** Support the culture of research excellence across the University.
- **4.9:** Increase interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research opportunities.

Goal 6: Attract, Develop, and Retain Quality Staff

The ISEA's activities enhance professional growth and institutional capacity by:

- Recognizing **staff achievements**, such as Dr Mawela's international presentations, which elevate the Institute's academic profile.
- Recruiting skilled personnel, including a new Administration Assistant, strengthening operational efficiency.

Objective Alignment:

- **6.6:** Provide strategies for the professional development, promotion, succession, and retention of staff.

Goal 8: Position and Promote Rhodes University as an Institution for the Public Good

The ISEA continues to contribute to the public good through:

- Partnerships with organizations such as the **Sishen Iron Ore Company Development Trust (SIOC-CDT)**, ensuring sustained impact in underprivileged communities.

Objective Alignment:

- **8.1:** Implement purposeful and equitable partnerships with the local community, advancing educational and social well-being.

The report demonstrates how the ISEA's achievements and initiatives align with the IDP's strategic vision, reinforcing its commitment to academic excellence, diverse access, and meaningful community engagement.

Staff News



Prof Mbelani, Ms Ntsbakaza and Prof Rosenberg



Prof Mbelani, Ms Kelemi, Dr Leff & Mr Sibanda planted a tree in honour of Rhodes University retiring staff

Ms Unathi Ntshakaza was appointed as the Administrator in July 2024 and brought needed stability. Dr Carol Leff retired at the end of December 2024. Dr Leff attended online webinars to update her copy-editing and proofreading skills and wrote the gruelling Professional Editors' Guild (PEG) Accreditation exam in September (result pending).

In her capacity as President of the Africa English Language Teaching Association, Dr Rethabile Mawela was in Egypt and Brazil.

ISEA Publications

PERIODICALS

The Director, Carol Leff, Nomangesi Kelemi.

- English in Africa* 51.1 (May 2024). Eds Renée Schatteman and Meg Vandermerwe. pp. 139
- English in Africa* 51.2 (October 2024). Eds David Attwell, Tony Voss and Gail Fincham. pp. 112
- English in Africa* 51.3 (December 2024). Eds David Attwell and Gail Fincham. (forthcoming)
- New Coin* 59.2 (Dec 2023). Ed. Kyle Allan. pp. 107
- New Coin* 60.1 (June 2024). Ed. Kyle Allan. pp. 90
- New Coin* 60.2 (Dec 2024). Ed. Kyle Allan. pp. 81
- Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 36 (2023). Ed. Christopher Thurman. pp. 118.
- Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 37 (2024). Ed. Christopher Thurman. pp. 83.

English in Africa

The special issue on Bessie Head (*EiA* 50.3, Dec 2023) arrived in hard copy in April 2024 and has been distributed. The first issue of 2024, a special issue on Sindiwe Magona (*EiA* 51.1, May 2024) is also available in print and online. *EiA* 51.2, Oct 2024 (an open issue) is at the printers, and *EiA* 51.3, Dec 2024 is currently in review.

English in Africa 51.1 was a special issue edited by Renée Schatteman and Meg Vandermerwe on the work of writer Sindiwe Magona. It carried articles by Namrata Dey Roy on ‘Creating Multilingual Spaces: Sindiwe Magona’s Autobiographical Works’, Swati Baruah on “‘Where is my own father?’ – Studying the Missing Father and the Abusive Paternal Government in *Mother to Mother*’, Jessica D. Lyons on ‘Realities of Apartheid and Idyllic Futures: Afropessimism and Afro-Optimism in Magona’s *Mother to Mother*’, Marcia Blumberg on ‘Performing Sindiwe Magona’s *Mother to Mother*. The Transformative Power of Theatre Adaptation’, Cathryne Cherop and Thulani Mkhize on ‘The Quest for Living: Resilience and Coping Mechanisms in Sindiwe Magona’s *Beantu’s Gift*’, Ewald Mengel on ‘Between Nostalgia and Trauma: Love, Loyalty, and Betrayal in Sindiwe Magona’s *Chasing the Tails of My Father’s Cattle*’, and Antjie Krog on ‘Some Influences from isiXhosa Literary Texts on Sindiwe Magona’s *When the Village Sleeps*’.

English in Africa 51.2 is a colourful issue for which Zakes Mda approved the use of one of his paintings for the cover which complements the lead article by Lauren Isaacs and Hermann Wittenberg titled 'Making Black Creativity Visible: Reading the Intermediality of Zakes Mda's Fictions'. This is followed by Marek Pawlicki's article 'There Might Be No Bottom To It': Unplumbed Depths and Uncanny Emotions in Damon Galgut's *The Quarry*. Kim Daniells writes on 'A sense of longing she had nowhere to put': Heterotopic Suburbia in Yewande Omotoso's *The Woman Next Door*. R.J. Lim's article on 'The Paradox of Silence and 'Dark Swoops': Unmooring Women's Language in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*' is followed by Cristovão Nwachukwu's essay 'A Call to Return: Rerouting Healing Pathways in Akwaeke Emezi's *Freshwater*'.

English in Africa 51.3 (in process)

New Coin Poetry journal

New Coin 59.2 ran poems by 21 poets and carried three book reviews. The Judge's Report for the New Coin Poetry Prize 2022 was by Dimakatso Sedite.

New Coin 60.1 ran poems by 20 poets and carried two book reviews.

New Coin 60.2 ran poems by 21 poets. The Judge's Report for the New Coin Poetry Prize 2023 was by Marike Beyers.

Shakespeare in Southern Africa

Shakespeare in Southern Africa 36 (2023) and 37 (2024) were special issues carrying papers from the Shakespeare Towards an End conference held at Spier from 24–27 May 2023. Volume 36 carried an Editorial by Chris Thurman and Marguerite de Waal followed by research articles by Peter Holland, Frances Ringwood, Naomi Nkealah and John Simango, Marta Fossati, Catherine Addison, Linda Ritchie, Peter Merrington, Marc Maufort and Zwelakhe J. Mtsaka. There was also poetry by Geoffrey Haresnape and a book review by Tony Voss. Volume 37, again with an editorial by Chris Thurman and Marguerite de Waal featured articles and essays by Lydia Valentine, Stephen Collins and Nii Kwartelai Quartey, Giuliana Iannaccaro, Henry Bell and David Schalkwyk. The issue closes with 'Roundtable: *Othello* in Cape Town, 2024' facilitated by Chris Thurman with contributors Lara Foot, Gerhard Marx, Mike van Graan, Shose Kessi and Sanele kaNtshingana.

The *Shakespeare in Southern Africa (SiSA)* Editorial Board engaged in a series of discussions on the transformation of the journal. Prof Chris Thurman, President and Editor of the *Shakespeare in Southern Africa Journal*, visited Prof Mbelani at Rhodes University on 13th of June 2024 to discuss possibilities surrounding the future of the journal including a name change, a vision, and a new editor.



Professors Chris Thurman and Deyi Mbelani at St Peter's Building, Rhodes University

As a result, Volume 37 of *SiSA* is the journal's last issue. The Shakespeare Society's journal will be re-launched as *Bakwethu: A Journal of Shakespeare Studies* in 2025. The historical allusion is to “Zihlobo, Bakwethu, MaRomani...” from K.E Masinga's translation-adaptation of *Julius Caesar* into an isiZulu radio drama that was hugely popular in the 1950s. The idea is to take advantage of the twin uses of Bakwethu as meaning “compatriots” but also, more casually, “companions”, *my peeps*. So, the new title is intended to disrupt the category of the nation or the national, which has always been a limitation of the journal under its current title. The term also implies a calling together of fellow Shakespeareans within digital earshot to listen up and join in the conversations.

The New Coin Poetry Prizes

The 2022 Prizes, awarded for the best poems in *New Coin* of that year, were judged by Dimakatso Sedite, whose report appears in the December 2023 issue of *New Coin* and is reproduced below. The 2023 Prizewinning poets appear in the December 2024 issue.

Judge's Report by Dimakatso Sedite

In the two 2022 *New Coin* issues, there seems to be an attempt to make sense of the world and spaces within it. The three winning poems are transcendental yet subtle, as they depict what the world is, when we allow transient moments to not slip away.

New Coin 2022 Prize Winners:

- **‘Details’ by Donald Parenzee**
- **‘Bitter’ by Zeenit Jacobs**
- **‘Desert Spirit’ by Warren Jeremy Rourke**

Donald Parenzee (1948–2022), was a poet with an acute sense of his surroundings. ‘Details’ captures magic on a cusp of flight, at its most impossible moment, just before it falls back into obscurity. He captures how living spaces are occupied by sounds, people, and things, with such precision, it stirs the spirit. Never missing a moment, slowing time in its haste, Parenzee drifts across spaces, looking for ways to curve the sharp edges of life, to relieve those crammed in the crumbles of life, not wanting anything to suffer. The poem has a meditative tempo and rhythm that portray an observant speaker in pensive mode. Unsettled, the speaker has a turn of thought, expressed through a variation of lines, to emphasise tension, a spasm of thought, or a rush of it, as he listens to what thrives in its forgotten space. He draws attention to the tension between humans and all else: animals, nature, industrial objects. We hence inhabit the soul of these objects, the inanimate, which themselves are not passive actors in this world that man has made his own: a musical chord is pulled from an industrial metal that grinds, showing the agency imbued in what humans have utterly disregarded. ‘Details’ reads like an orchestral stroke, a thrum on a wave: tasteful and timeless.

Zeenit Jacobs’s words are economical yet robust, sparse yet stark. In her elliptical poem ‘Bitter’, the speaker appears to be in conversation with herself, hesitant and disruptive, swallowing a gasp as the grotesque unfold. The speaker dissociates from the trauma, fragments it into shards, as if its totality is too much to bear. The trauma remains fractured, nonsensical, for that way it cannot hurt. Mundane objects morph into phantoms haunting themselves, absorbing the ire entrapping them. The result is an apocalypse of such horrific proportions that even in death, bodies cannot escape themselves, as they become the embodiment of a monster in whose hands they met their demise. Jacobs’s imagistic eye has a precision of someone looking for needles, when everyone else is on the hunt for boulders. ‘Bitter’ exemplifies what Haso Sismo calls ‘the art of the fallen limb, in which startling insights emerge and are subsequently concealed’. Devoid of gender pronouns, ‘Bitter’ hides the gender identity of the victim, careful not to misgender them/zem/xem. This lack of knowing who the victim lived as, before they/ze/xe died, heightens the poem’s mystery. The poet trusts South Africa’s wider social context to situate the poem, and complete the blanks. The stark imagery and implicit social context help ground the poem, and save it from being elusive. In another context, at another time, ‘Bitter’ may take on a different nuance, forever re-inventing itself:

Warren Jeremy Rourke’s ‘Desert Spirit’ is delightfully contemporary in expression, an

embodiment of Rita Dove's poetry as 'language at its most distilled and most powerful'. There is ennui, a listless annoyance, which at first seems trivial, before it catapults into an act so momentous, it becomes galactic. There is a feeling of alienation that is almost allegorical, with the beach being the space where the social contestation is happening. The poem's non-specificity gives it that other-worldly, cosmic feel. The speaker, a physical matter, becomes 'a desert spirit', to escape 'a man' 'with a shrivelled cock', creating a situational irony that makes the poem memorable. The speaker makes archetypal leaps from the known to the unknown, from the real to the magical, taking us with him to nowhere, from which we are reluctant to return. He ends with a trite mind twist: 'No impression', shattering the glass cylinder he'd so fantastically weaved us into:

In addition to the three prize winners, these contenders are worth mentioning:

'A Turbulence of a Spinning Tsunami' by **Kalahari Marrakesh** is a playful poem filled with the thrill of the moment and the innocence of youth. Centred on a township youth subculture of car-spinning, the speaker expresses the tension of repulsion and exhilaration he feels towards this popular township pastime: 'Doughnut girl engulfed in flames,/from Soweto to Mannenburg/gravel road to gravel road – ' [...] 'Stacey-lee May/a dynamite in a benky./Dushy ghel/High as fly'. Spontaneous in spirit, mimetic at times, Marrakesh's voice has an aura that is light and enduring.

Robert Henney's 'Driving Away' is lyrical and a delight to listen to. Its old style has a timelessness that makes it relatable to today's reader. There is a pleasing, leitmotif-like melody that lends a certain mood and period to the poem: 'It is sixty six years now, sixty two if you/Prefer to be precise – the sun /Singeing skins of singular sickly hue/'. Loss wears armour of anger that does not perch on a page, but lilts with rhymes of old. 'Driving Away' offers a dash of nostalgia with contemporary finesse.

Zayah Wrights' 'For Kay' anchors you in the first ten stanzas: 'White *doeks*/Tight on their heads./Pictures of limbs/Nailed to weeping walls' [...] 'How can you cook/A stew for 5 years/And not realise the stove is not on?'. In the latter part of the poem, there is an abrupt transition into what feels like a different poem, with a dead metaphor or two, losing the energy that hooked us in the beginning. Like Marrakesh, Wrights is a new voice: fresh and exciting.

Juxtaposed against **Richard Fox's** 'nastepny przystanek' is Oksana Rozumna's 'My Country' (translated from the Ukrainian by Hanna Yanovska and Robert Berold). There is an incidental intertextual dialogue between the two poems, both embedded in the Global South countries of Poland and Ukraine, respectively. Two poems, two speaker identities, as disparate as they are similar, brought together by the commonality of their socio-historical experience. **Richard Fox's** 'nastepny przystanek' (which means 'next stop or

next destination' in Polish), is memorialised and transient, with a third-generation speaker's soul limping, meandering the streets of Poland with a century old scar. A portrayal so vivid, it stings the skin. Repressed memory becomes an open wound of a country once bereft by (Nazi) war, a memory triggered by neighbouring Russia-Ukraine war: 'The Russians make themselves at home. The way the Germans did,/the way all men do in the palaces of war'. The poem is a throbbing thought that bashes our foreheads into the wall with the unexpected: 'the liberation of the public space/given over to vandals and art'. In classic Richard Fox style, 'nastepny przystanek' is

In contrast, **Oksana Rozumna's** 'My Country' has emotional proximity and domestic rootedness. The speaker laments: 'somewhere there is my country where/after the spring of 2022/we no longer fear to get old'. Rozumna gives us a modern liturgical twist to the biblical Armageddon, 'where all the street photographs look like X-rays/things that are breathing somewhere – that in these photos/look like skeletons embracing'. She then prophecies the future: 'somewhere my home is reflected/in the clean blades of knives/in the freshly washed glasses'. In the end, it seems, the speaker's hope overcomes the fallacious determinism of the devastation of war.

In Fox's 'nastepny przystanek' and Rozumna's 'My Country', war gets re-imagined, for as Walt Whitman has written: 'The real war will never get in the books'.

Kelwyn Sole's anaphoric poem 'How to begin measuring the world' is fast-paced, with end-stopped lines that lament the world going by, unnoticed. The explanatory title relies on the imagery to take the poem forward. A refrain opens most lines, giving the poem a staccato effect that ferments in cacophonous sharpness, desperate to awaken the world whose ears remain deafened: 'And the song of an owl brooding on a roof/And the wriggled songs of babies limb-dancing their new bodies' [...] 'And the songs of dampened thighs locked in infatuation/And the songs of beauty briefly skittering across a mirror'.

In 'I want to be a factory supervisor', **Ayanda Billie** takes us back to the South African Black Mamba Rising worker poets of the 1980s, with a deceptively simple, but cleverly satirical portraiture of how black people's worth still lies in the dirt of their hands in this post-Temba Qabula era. In typical Billie diction of spontaneous speech, he parodies the futility of power wielded by those who hold jobs for the poor: 'I want to be a factory supervisor /A union member/Be friends with a shop steward/Buy him bunny chow and Coke'. Towards the end, Billie shifts from colloquial register to artful expression: 'Like an insect trapped in a spider web', taking a jab at the latter. 'I want to be a factory supervisor' has a natural feel to it, with no ambition for intellectual decorum. Its Black Aesthetic lends an ironic casualness to the poem's profoundness.

Other Publications

Contributions to Books

Effiong, O., Engelbrecht, S., & **Mawela, R. (2024)**. Cultivating Positive Attitudes and Reading Comprehension with Grade 8 Learners. K-12 Volume.

Mawela, R. (2024). Addressing the Displacement of African Indigenous Languages. In *Embedding Multilingualism in the Curriculum: Using Language as a Resource for Teaching and Learning*. (Eds.) Adams, A., Booie, M., Mawonga, S., Nkomo, D., Nosilela, B., & Vorster, J. Rhodes University.

Articles and Reviews in Journals, Magazines and Online

Hendricks, M. and Xeketwana, S. 2024. Translanguaging for learning in selected English First Additional Language secondary school classrooms. *Reading & Writing* Vol 15, No 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v15i1.502>

Mahna, J.P., **Mawela, R.**, Gougou, M., Oyore, M. (2024). Investigating Internationalization of Higher Education in the Post-Epidemic Era. In *International Journal of Research Studies in Education*. ISSN: 2243-7703 Online ISSN: 2243-7711.

Poetry in Literary Journals – Print and Online

Leff, Carol. 'Red Earth.' *Stanzas* No 31 (Mar/Apr 2024): 15–16

- ----- 'Paralytic Grief.' *Stanzas* No 31 (Mar/Apr 2024): 16

----- 'Mourning Coffee.' *Stanzas* No 31 (Mar/Apr 2024): 17

----- 'Statue of Fernando Pessoa.' (photograph) *Stanzas* No 31 (Mar/Apr 2024): 52

- ----- 'Prohibited goods.' *A Flower for the Dashboard – Poems from Aerial 1998–2019*, edited by Shirley Marais. Aerial Publishing: 34

- ----- 'The mulberry tree.' *A Flower for the Dashboard – Poems from Aerial 1998–2019*, edited by Shirley Marais. Aerial Publishing: 96

- ----- 'Flashbacks.' *A Flower for the Dashboard – Poems from Aerial 1998–2019*, edited by Shirley Marais. Aerial Publishing: 139

- ----- 'The Big Sleep' Avbob Poetry Project.

www.avbobpoetry.co.za/Poem/View?PoemID=241410

- ----- 'Tree of Life' Avbob Poetry Project.

www.avbobpoetry.co.za/Poem/View?PoemID=241398

----- 'This table' www.avbobpoetry.co.za/Poem/View?PoemID=241709

- ----- 'Demosthenes' *Stanzas* No 31 (Dec 2024): forthcoming.

- ----- 'CyanoTides' *Art on the Verandah*, 21–23 Dec 2024, Bushman's River Mouth, Ndlambe.

----- Poetry reading. The Red Wheelbarrow (online). 29 August 2024.

Conferences, Colloquia and Public Lectures

In his capacity as the President of the National Association of English Teachers of South Africa (NAETSA), Mr. Sibanda collaborated with the British Council and the National Department of Basic Education in training 45 Master Trainers who in turn trained 120 teachers in the Northern Cape, Kuruman and Upington (May 2024), as a pilot project. Further trainings were carried out as follows:

1. Northern Cape, Kuruman, JTG District. LEAP multigrade training where 60 multigrade teachers were trained from 17–18 October 2024.
2. Limpopo, Mokopane District. LEAP training. 64 teachers were trained on 26–27 October 2024.
3. KZN, Richards Bay. English Connects training was held on 19 and 26 October and 9 November 2024, and 150 teachers were trained in total.

Mr Sibanda was in Cape Town from 4 to 5 July to write a paper with the British Council, which he presented at the LITASA Conference at the University of Cape Town from 13 to 15 September 2024. Prof Mbelani was invited on 26/07/2024 to present a short keynote at the RU IsiXhosa Spelling Bee Competition, where nine top Grade 11 students from various local schools competed. The event was attended by FP BEd 1st Year students, lecturers, parents, and NGOs.

Prof Mbelani presented a webinar at the University of Johannesburg on 10th October 2024 titled *“Breaking the vicious cycle of racial linguistic ideologies through a transformative multilingual agency.”*

Dr Mawela was a featured speaker during the Africa ELTA 8th International Conference in Cairo, Egypt (28th May to 3rd June). She was invited to be the keynote speaker during the Brazil TESOL 20th International Conference in Goiania, Brazil from the 17th to the 20th of July.

Dr Mawela participated in the writing of the University Multilingual project booklet. The booklet, entitled *“Embedding Multilingualism in the Curriculum: Using Language as a Resource for Teaching and Learning,”* was launched on July 24th.



Dr B. Nosilela, Prof B. Antia, Dr K. Mzilikazi, Ms Lalu Mokuku, & Dr R. Mawela at RU

Research

Dr Mawela continues her research project entitled “*Investigating the Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Literacy in Disadvantaged Communities and Emerging Strategies to Mitigate Against the Impact*”. This two-year research project began in 2023 and is expected to be completed at the end of 2024.

Mr Sibanda is writing up his PhD thesis entitled “*Contestations around the South African Language-in-Education Policy and Practice: A Case Study of Selected Northern Cape Schools*”. He has put in the intention to submit.

Guy Butler Research Award

The current recipients are:

Recipient Name	Subject	Student Number	Amount Awarded	Degree
Mxuma, S	Journalism & Media Studies	20M2777	R 60 000	BAH
May, SL	Drama	21M0072	R 30 000	BAH
Mankai, SE	Drama	20M7778	R 30 000	BAH
Futshane, CK	Drama	19F3721	R 100 000	MA1
For 2025				
Futshane, CK	Drama	19F3721	R 100 000	MA2
Bronkhorst, C	English	25B5387	R 100 000	BAH
Phoswa, G	Linguistics	20P2973	R 120 000	MA1
Edley, CDM	English Literature	08E5273	R 130 000	PHD1

Language Teacher Professional Development Project

Under-graduate

Graduation of 23 BEd (ELT) 2021–2023 cohort of students in April 2024

26 students graduated on the 5th of April. Three of the 26 students from Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape were self-funded. 23 of the 26 were the 4th cohort of BEd students from the Northern Cape, sponsored by SIOC-CDT. Mr Malahlela graced the graduation ceremony on behalf of SIOC (see the legacy photo of the VC, Deputy VCs, Mr Malahlela, ISEA, RUMEP, and CSD Staff and students). Missing in the photo are the Dean of the Faculty of Education and the ISEA Director (both standing at the back). Amongst the graduates, we had one *cum laude* and four who received the Dean's Outstanding List Award.



2024 SIOC Funded Graduates

New BEd Cohort – 2024–2026

The early start of this cohort was delayed in the signing processes of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between SIOC-CDT and RU. In February, the ISEA embarked on a rigorous recruitment and selection process of 30 students, 25 from Kuruman in the Northern Cape and five from Thabazimbi in Limpopo. These students finalised their administrative and academic registration for the BEd (ELT) during the March contact session at RU.

Contact Sessions

There were three contact lecture sessions in 2024:

- Monday 25 to Wednesday 27 March (3 days) at Rhodes University
- Monday 17 to Tuesday 26 June (10 days) at Rhodes University
- Monday 23 to Friday 27 September (5 days) in Kuruman, Northern Cape.

Contact sessions took the form of three face-to-face block sessions, and weekly online evening sessions on Wednesday from 18:30 to 20:00. There was 100% attendance in all sessions except for two students on maternity leave during the winter session. The first year did not offer a reasonable time to address the individual needs of the diverse students in terms of being in an early or mid-year career, language teaching background, content knowledge, technological savviness, and the range of years of studying between the last qualification and the current first year. Lecturing team reflections indicated a need for more contact sessions and the encouragement of self-directed learning through platforms such as RUconnected. The last contact teaching session was from 23 to 27 September in Kuruman, Northern Cape.



September Contact Session

School support visits and afternoon workshops

There were two classroom support visits per student in Kuruman and Thabazimbi, the first from 15–19 April and the second from 21 July to 01 August. The school visits provided first-hand experience of the gap between the ideal and the reality of South African basic education. Although the purpose of school support visits was communicated during the first contact session, students continued to be nervous about being observed in their classroom practice. After each lesson, students engaged in post-lesson reflection

with an ISEA staff and the students. However, many students struggled to engage in post-lesson reflection because they seemed to foreground previous experience of teaching practice rather than seeing it as a developmental space.



Lesson Observations



Post-lesson Reflection

The roads between Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and Limpopo presented challenges such as an accident in the Isuzu that was caused by a warthog, and bad roads in isolated areas without connectivity. ISEA staff were appreciated for careful driving.



Thabazimbi Farm School



Workshop in Kuruman



Isuzu dent, EC



Road to Henningville, NC

End-of-the-year examinations

Meriting Lodge in Kuruman provided accommodation (except for those residing nearby) and an examination venue for all 30 students from 21–25 October. The first day allowed students to revise and regroup. During this day, Mr Malahlela visited the examination to encourage students. After the internal marking processes were completed, the ISEA maintained its tradition of getting the new external examiner, Dr Karen McCarthy from the University of Johannesburg to physically visit the ISEA at Rhodes University from 11–12 November. There were three sit-down examinations of three modules and three continuous assessment modules that were externally moderated. Dr McCarthy had the opportunity to meet the whole teaching team on Tuesday 12th to discuss the strengths and areas of improvement in the BEd (ELT) offering in the remaining second and third years.



BEd (ELT) Cohort with SIOC-CDT rep Mr M. Malahlela



BEd (ELT) Exams in progress, Kuruman in NC



Dr McCarthy in discussion with Ms Mamase

Post-graduate Studies

BEd Honours in Bilingual Education for Diversity and Access

A total of seven candidates were registered and the first lectures of foundational courses were done with the rest of the Faculty of Education honours registered in 2024 to 2025. Prof Mbelani and Dr Mawela are part of the Faculty lecturing team. Four students wrote the final examinations, two deregistered, and one changed to another stream within the Faculty. The ISEA will host the remaining four students in 2025 in the second year of specialisation.

The Faculty of Education plans to have a new intake of South African students in 2025. The ISEA welcomed the motion of two cohorts running in parallel.

MEd and PhD Studies

Graduation of Five MEds



Ms Ntikinca, Mr Mbebe & Ms Ndlovu

Five MEd scholars graduated this year. Mr Sydney Gazide, supervised by Dr Mawela, graduated in the April Graduation. Four MEd scholars graduated in October: Mr Xolela Mbebe, Ms Sharon Moyo (graduated in absentia because she is in the US), Ms Sheillah Ndhlovu (Distinction) (Dr Mawela), and Ms Xolela Ntikinca (Distinction) (Prof Mbelani).

2024 Registrations

There are seven students registered, three PhDs and four MEds.

Prof Mbelani

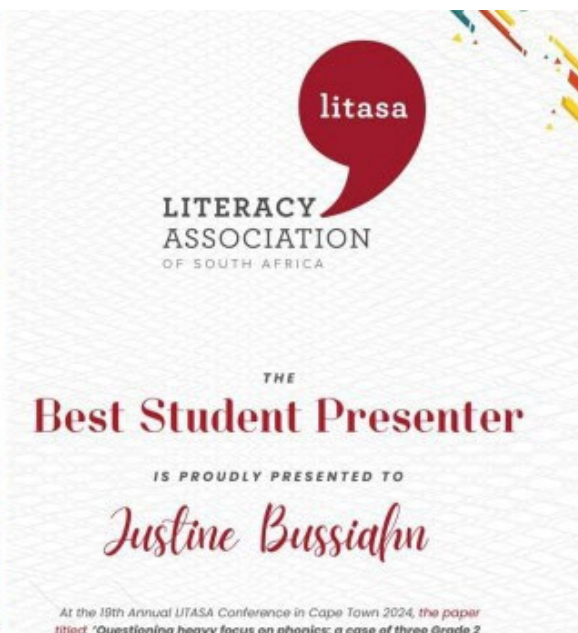
1. Ms Rozanne Meyer (supervised by Prof Mbelani) formally presented her PhD proposal to the Education Higher Degrees Committee and was advised to resubmit.

2. Mr Lutho Mnyanda and Ms Sibongile Dlamini are writing up their thesis drafts and plan to submit their PhD theses for examination in April 2025.
3. Ms Justine Bussiahn and Ms Milisa Mamase are writing up their MEd theses and plan to submit them by February 2025.

Dr Mawela

1. Ms Keutlwile Matlhare is writing her MEd proposal.
2. Mr Michael Lila (co-supervised with Prof Mbelani) is writing up his MEd thesis and plans to submit it in February 2025.

Two contact sessions at Rhodes University were organized, five days in March and 10 days in June-July. As milestones along the way, students present early work-in-progress from proposal to thesis submission via two contact sessions (five days in March and 10 days in June-July) Tuesday Seminars (see photos below). Moreover, students present their grappling with data interpretation at conferences in exchange for feedback. One highlight of such presentations was at LITASA 2024 by Justine (see below). The main challenges relate to publications during the MEd and PhD on the one hand and to meeting the growing demand for registration at the ISEA in 2025 on the other hand.



Campus Creative Writing Programme: 2024

Last implemented in 2022, the short course in creative writing was started in full swing in 2024 from March to August. There were four teachers (Ms Marike Beyers, Ms Crystal Warren, Ms Jeannie McKeown, and Mr Sithembele Xhegwana) who met with 29 students at St Peter's Building Room 36 every Tuesday evening. 15 participants produced writing pieces for the publication, which was launched on the 10th of December. The facilitators are experienced literary writers based at Amazwi. The dedication of the facilitators, most of whom do this work voluntarily, is highly appreciated. Two volumes (poetry and prose) of the best of *Aerial* (comprising work written in the short course over the last 21 years) were launched in April at the Bathurst Book Fair and Amazwi SA Museum of Literature.



Book Launch at AMAZWI (10th December 2024)

Graduate Supervision and Examining

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

Dr Mawela was an External Examiner for three MEd candidates from the National University of Lesotho.

She is also the external examiner for the “Second and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning (PHLC402)” module at Nelson Mandela University.

Prof Mbelani was the External Examiner for two MEd candidates from the University of Namibia and the University of Johannesburg.

He is also the external examiner for BEd Honours at the University of Johannesburg.

Degrees in Progress

Mr Sibanda is writing up his PhD thesis entitled “*Contestations around the South African Language-in-Education Policy and Practice: A Case Study of Selected Northern Cape Schools*”. He has put in the intention to submit.

External Responsibilities

Dr Mawela is the deputy chairperson of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees Committee. She is the President of the Africa English Language Teachers Association (ELTA). She is also a member of Helderberg College of Higher Education Council. She serves as the chairperson of the Grahamstown Primary School Board. In addition, she serves on the ISER board.

Mr Sibanda serves as the President of the National Association of English Teachers' Association (NAETSA). He also serves on the National Strategic Materials Review Committee for DBE and BC teaching materials.

Prof Mbelani reviewed the National Research Foundation (NRF) rating application in October 2024.

Dr Leff is co-supervising with Prof Phil van Schalkwyk (Director of the Research Unit Languages and Literature in the SA Context at North-West University), a PhD candidate, Ms Farzanah Loonate. Leff is also a member of the Professional Editors' Guild (PEG), Academic and Non-Fiction Authors Assoc of SA (ANFASA), and the English Academy of Southern Africa (EASA).

ISEA 60th Anniversary Celebrations

The four-day celebration planned for July 2024 was cancelled due to many unforeseen challenges related to staff shortages at the ISEA. Rather, celebrations were continuous and foregrounded the ISEA's visibility in the branding of cars, banners, and clothing.



SIOC-cdt sponsored ISEA Ford Ranger



Branded ISEA Isuzu



A start was made in refreshing the ISEA website by Ms Mamase and RU Communications and Marketing.

Also, a memory booklet (scrapbook) in which former ISEA students reminisced about their days at Rhodes University and the ISEA in particular was compiled. This project is still in progress.

Conclusion

The year 2024 was exciting, challenging, and full of possibilities. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who contributed to the successful publication of ISEA periodicals. Special recognition goes to Professors David Attwell, Gail Fincham, Tony Vos, and Dr Eva Kowalska for their voluntary efforts in editing the 2024 volumes of *English in Africa*. We also acknowledge Mr Kyle Allan, whose tenure as editor of *New Coin* concluded this year. His dedication to curating diverse South African poetry has left a lasting impact. Additionally, Prof Chris Thurman is highly commendable in relaunching *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* to new heights. A special thank you to Dr Carol Leff, whose role as ISEA Publications Manager has been instrumental in supporting the success of all three journals.

The successful delivery of the BEd (ELT) course was another highlight of the year. The 2024 graduation ceremony at Rhodes University was particularly significant, as it formally acknowledged the invaluable support of SIOC-CDT in funding the RU BEd in-service programmes in the Northern Cape. This achievement was marked by a legacy photograph capturing key partners and contributors.

We express our sincere gratitude to SIOC-CDT for its continued generosity in funding the 5th cohort of teachers (2024–2026) in the Northern Cape and Limpopo. Although Limpopo was not initially included in the budget, ISEA remained committed to delivering high-quality teaching. We appreciate SIOC-CDT's openness, communication, and strong visibility, which continue to strengthen our partnership. Our thanks also extend to the JTG and Thabazimbi District Education Management Teams for their collaboration in ensuring the continued success of the programme.

The current cohort deserves recognition for its dedication, engagement, and eagerness to learn, evident in their participation in contact sessions (both online and in-person), school support visits, and afternoon workshops. However, delivering the BEd programme presents unique challenges, particularly due to the diverse backgrounds of students. A special acknowledgment goes to the lecturing team for their reflective, strategic, and intentional approach in responding to students' needs. However, opportunities remain to integrate research-led teacher education into the BEd (ELT) curriculum, and the team is currently conceptualizing ways to strengthen this approach in the second and third years.

A major achievement of 2024 was the successful launch of the BEd Honours in Diversity and Access, aligning with ISEA's vision of expanding postgraduate studies. The Language, Literature, and Literacy Community of Practice played a crucial role in the success of MEd and PhD studies. As a result, five MEd graduates completed their studies in 2024.

Additionally, research activities are gaining momentum, with students presenting at conferences, contributing to book chapters, and publishing journal articles. A significant highlight was Dr Mawela's inclusion in the 2024 Rhodes University Research Report as one of the top 30 researchers – a well-deserved recognition of her contributions.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to conceptualizing and planning the ISEA's 60th Anniversary celebrations. While the celebrations were not fully realized due to staff shortages, we acknowledge the dedication and effort of those involved.

The ISEA's main pillars of periodicals, BEd (ELT), postgraduate studies, research, and community engagement would not have thrived without the unwavering support of Ms Unathi Ntshakaza and Ms Nomangesi Kelemi. Their dedication to managing logistics has been integral to the programme's smooth operation and success. We sincerely appreciate their commitment and efficiency, which have greatly contributed to the flourishing of all programmes.

Lastly, we experienced a bittersweet moment as we bade farewell to Ms Khaya Fulani, who

made a profound impact on multiple BEd (ELT) cohorts funded by the Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education, the Zenex Foundation, and the SIOC-CDT. Her legacy, particularly her passionate teachings on “time-on-task” and “task-on-time”, will continue to inspire colleagues and students alike.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of 2024, we look forward to continued growth, innovation, and collaboration in the years to come. Thank you to everyone who played a part in making this year a success!

Director: Prof MaDey'Andile Mbelani



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