



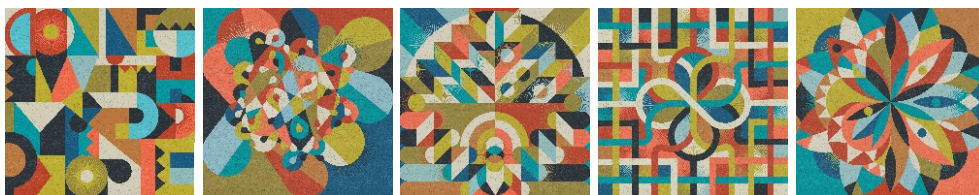
Producing Reflective Scholars Who Lead Where they Are

As important as producing new knowledge, is producing scholars who go on to lead change in educational systems and practice, because they have, by undertaking research that is highly relevant to them, deepened their skills and insights and clarified what transformational leadership means for them personally. Our undergraduate students undertake micro-studies in the classroom while on Teaching Practice; our Honours students study school-based leadership in the contexts where they teach. Our graduates serve in senior positions in ministries of education and lead continental social movements. Our green skills researchers are informing the Presidency; and both students and staff have offered their research in numerous social contexts, from local court rooms, to the highest levels of the United Nations

Our vision is to be foremost in the generation and advancement of locally responsive and globally engaged knowledge that seeks to create a just and sustainable society

(Rhodes University Institutional Development Plan *Umkhombandlela* 2023 – 2028)

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Faculty of Education



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Engaged Leaders Transforming Education



The Distinctive Scholarship of the Faculty of Education at Rhodes University

Department of Primary & Early Childhood Education	Department of Secondary and Post-School Education	Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning
South African Numeracy Chair	Chair in Global Change and Social Learning	Chair in Environment and Sustainability Education
Centre for Social Development	Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project	Institute for the Study of the Englishes of Africa

Our Faculty is diverse. In its three departments and three associated entities, the academic staff speak Xhosa, Zulu, English, Afrikaans, Tswana, Shona, Kiswahili and Chichewa among others. Our 1000+ students speak an even greater range of languages, from Southern Africa and beyond. The Faculty produces researchers, teachers, lecturers, early childhood educators, community facilitators, and more. After all, education does not start and end with schooling; its foundations are laid before a child attends the first day of formal school, and learning should continue post-school, both formally (e.g. workplace-based education) and informally (community and public education). The Faculty's scholarship spans this spectrum.

We strive to be caring, creative and reflective scholars, united in the quest to co-create and share knowledge with the power to lead transformation towards quality education and sustainable futures for all: *The Africa We Want*.

Our 50 permanent staff teach and research in a variety of programmes: from early childhood education and the various phases of schooling to higher education, work-based learning and public education. Each year some 300 post-graduate students join us in researching in various specialisms including language education; literacy and numeracy; curriculum; decoloniality; leadership; environment and sustainability education; information and computer technology; and science education.



What holds this together?

At the heart of this diversity, our scholarship coheres around practical-intellectual and ethical questions about learning, teaching and transformation. Learning is so vital, for so many social outcomes, that we dedicate an entire faculty and academic field to it, with the variety of contexts in which learning is to be understood and mediated, shaping the variety of areas of research, teaching and learning.

In the Education Faculty at Rhodes University, the academic project is distinctively shaped by our time and place; Africa at the start of the 21st century. From Makhanda in the Eastern Cape to Namibia and beyond, our research is deeply etched with the need to transform educational systems that still do not serve the majority of Africans well; this includes decolonising methodologies and curricula, seeking ways to expand access to worthwhile existing knowledge, while also engaging in co-learning what is not yet known: how humanity can live together in equitable, socially just and environmentally sustainable ways. This engaged, transformational project drives and coheres our scholarship.



Our mathematics education and numeracy research programmes collaborate nationally and internationally to study the cognitive dimensions of mathematical reasoning and processes, from the development of number sense in the early years, to visualization in learning Algebra or Trigonometry. A new focus on computational thinking will benefit from this established work. The need to understand mathematics learning and teaching in its socio-cultural context is also evident, e.g. in studies on the role of clubs in shaping mathematical identities, and ethno-mathematics.

The interplay between disciplinary concepts and operations, and cultural and indigenous knowledge, is also a focus in our science education research. Place-based learning in relation to local developmental challenges, features strongly in our environment and sustainability education (ESE) research. Here researchers from around Africa study ways in which to enable not only learning about, but developing regenerative solutions for local and global sustainability challenges, from food security to climate crises. Cutting edge research into policy, scholar activism, and transformative environmental learning feature in this programme, along with a focus on activating ESE in curricula and skills development systems across SADC.



Another core research area in the Faculty is higher education studies (HES), and here too we interrogate educational systems, curricula and pedagogy, the nature of worthwhile knowledge, how to both improve access to powerful knowledge and decolonize curricula, thus strengthening the foundations of social justice and equality. This resonates with research exploring the links between home and school knowledge in early childhood and primary education. The digital divide appears starkly in many of our studies and the better use of technology in and for education is the focus of emerging programmes on ICTs in Education, and artificial intelligence.

Our research engages locally, in the Eastern Cape, in Namibia, where we offer research training, and elsewhere in Africa. In Makhanda, we undertake research with schools, CBOs, NGOs and ECD centres, to study how education and learning can be strengthened, so as to enhance better quality educational outcomes for children, youth and communities. At the same time, our environmental curriculum and teacher education research has an impact across SADC and beyond. Materials informed by our Math and Foundation Phase research is used nationally, and our ESE and HES research inform policy. These impacts are not possible without partnerships and we work with many other higher education institutions and education sector partners.

In education, inter- and transdisciplinary studies thrive and we contribute both epistemologically and methodologically to other disciplines and fields. Our research and evaluation courses and schools expose scholars to a variety of methods, with a strong emphasis on creative ways to generate qualitative data, and on the philosophical underpinnings that make the (co)construction of new knowledge using a variety of sources ontologically, epistemologically and axiologically defensible. As a result of pushing at these boundaries in our quest for transformation, we have an international presence in transdisciplinary and engaged scholarship.