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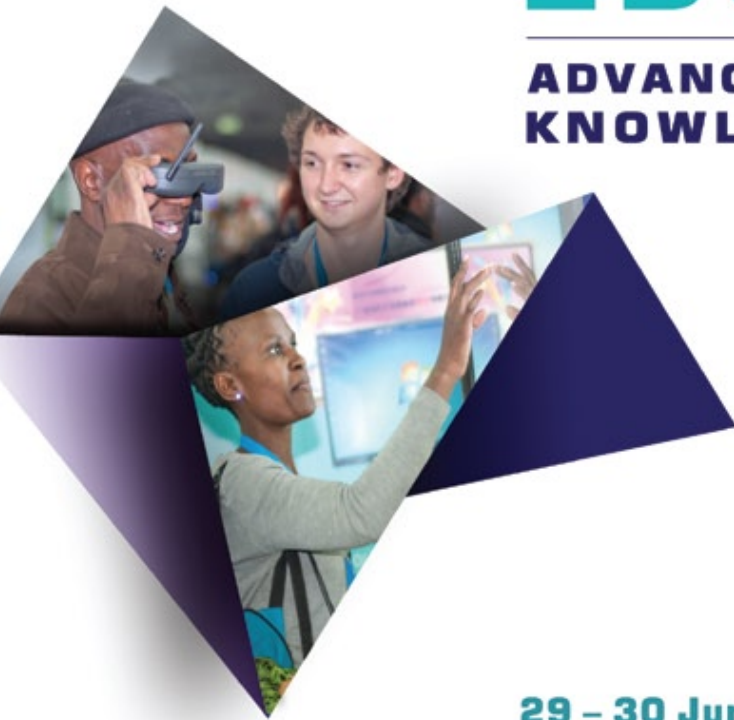
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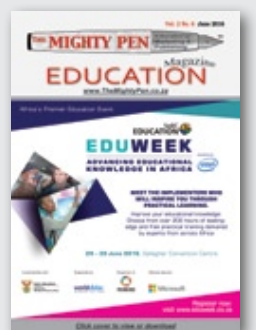
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Editor's column

The month of razzmatazz in education

Indeed, it is upon us. The mega-education event that thousands of principals, teachers, education companies and the public have been waiting for: EduWeek with SABC Education powered by Intel.

The Mighty Pen EDUCATION magazine is an exclusive digital education magazine media partner with the event, and our front cover says so. Although we are only two-years old as a magazine, I have worked with the Spintelligent team in my capacity as editor soon after the inception of the Education Week event 10 years ago.

And it's a great couple of days – EduWeek. In the past I have penned some cynical 'protest pieces' about commercialism and business frenzy, but the two-day event (*and it truly offers a diversity of platforms for direct relationships – it's an international indaba of workshops, conversations and demonstrations*) brings like-minded, education-focused people together.

But here's the catch;

The focus must be on talk, not trade. Or at least let's tone it down – less transaction and more relationship. After all, *business is about the people*.

We are all sitting around the same round table

So let's talk. Education is a political issue, undoubtedly, and it is also a *people's issue*. Every citizen of South Africa has a pledge in South African education, (*that's why it seems like everyone is an expert on education*), so it *is* a people's issue.

I still firmly believe it is *education* that is the uniting factor. Uniting us as a nation - politics and people. (*Dare I say it's even more powerful than our national anthem at a recent Springbok rugby game?*) It's an interesting question: should the education portfolio drive government direction?

If governments and ruling parties were actually education departments and quality control councils – would it be better?

Answer: It's all about the people. If education matters to every individual then an education-focused government would be driven by the pursuit of the core values of education. Those core values would abolish the many distracting divisions in our society such as racism and inequality. At the heart of the principles of education lies equal opportunity, the pursuit of learning and human collaboration.

And that is the true value of an event like EduWeek. People coming together, education-focused people with a desire to inform, impart and uplift. Sure, there's some trade and transaction but that should be a beneficial by-product of the relationships and partnerships that are formed.

Looking forward to seeing all of you there.

Yours in learning,

Editor

How safe is Wi-Fi in schools?

When it comes to school, many parents consider it a second home for their kids and when the learners go to their classroom, parents expect a safe environment. But some believe their schools are not doing everything they can to keep their kids safe and it could lead to serious health consequences. This is according to Laura Evans who wrote about *Wi-Fi exposure* in schools on Fox 5.

Today's technology is taking children on a virtual trip to the moon and a myriad of other places in the universe. One US school partnered with Google to offer the Expeditions Pioneer Program. Smartphones inside cardboard boxes are helping take the kids to the location virtually.

"The first I heard of Google Expeditions is when my 9-year-old came home and told me about the exciting field trip she took in the all-purpose room," said Laura Simon.

But she questioned the safety of the kids putting smartphones to their heads and next to their eyes.

"The kids were complaining of headaches, nausea and dizziness and they had eye strain, and there was a Google rep there that just said, 'Just take a few minutes. This is normal'," Simon said.

Simon is a member of a parent organisation called Safe Tech for Schools Maryland. The group is fighting for the safe use of technology in the classroom.

It's not just Google's Expeditions Pioneer Program that has them concerned. It is the whole technology program in many school systems.

Lisa Cline's 8-year-old son has his own school-issued Chromebook. "I'm concerned that he is getting exposed to radiation, even low levels, without my consent, but mostly without knowing what it's going to do to him long-term," she said.

Neither Cline nor the rest of the parent organisation is asking to get rid of the technology. They simply want it used safely. "They need to teach students how to use their devices safely and there should not be wireless in the schools," said Theodora Scarato of Safe Tech for Schools, Maryland, US.

Dr. Devra Davis is an expert on bioelectric magnetism and the founder of the Environmental Health Trust, a non-profit working to protect kindergarten and middle school children from health risks of cellphones and Wi-Fi systems. She has done more than 200 studies on the subject and said even relatively low exposure can interrupt normal brain or reproductive development in a child.

"We think that this is going to be related to leukaemia and possibly lymphoma later on as well," said Dr. Davis. "The question is do you want to experiment on your children?"

In 2011, the World Health Organisation classified radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, including Wi-Fi and cell phone signals, as possibly carcinogenic to

humans. Some scientists said radiofrequency waves don't cause cancer. But more and more experts in the field are coming forward expressing concern.

The American Academy of Paediatrics along with the Government Accountability Office are urging schools to adopt up-to-date radiation standards. The current standards are 20 years old and don't account for a child's use.

More than a dozen scientists and paediatric neurology experts from Harvard have written letters to the California Brain Tumor Association, joining the parent organisation in urging the school system switch to wired technology.

"To hear people – oncologists and epidemiologists – saying I don't know about this stuff, that's good enough for me," said Cline. "I don't want my child to be the guinea pig in that experiment."

According to studies the US has among the most conservative standards in the world regarding Wi-Fi usage in public areas and schools. Russia, Italy, France, Switzerland, China and Belgium are among more than 20 countries that have enacted policies to reduce Wi-Fi exposure in schools.

It is interesting to note that in South African schools the use of Wi-Fi is on the increase and public-private partnerships are ensuring that wireless connectivity becomes available to the nation. At this stage business sentiment will simply not allow for such precautionary hype. ▲

Do we read long feature articles on mobile platforms?

A report by Pew Research Centre in the US finds long-form content holds mobile reader attention twice as long as short content. This is according to a post by Ellen Harvey on *Publishing Executive*.

So what is long-form content? It might seem obvious, but there are many different definitions of what long-form content truly is. Some people consider articles longer than 700 words to be long-form, whereas others think that articles have to be in excess of 1 800 words to be considered long-form. Generally speaking, let's assume that long-form content refers to articles of around 1 200 words or longer, about two magazine pages.

Earlier this year the Pew Research Centre published an eye-opening study that explored how mobile readers engage with long- and short-form content. The results surprised many in the industry. Pew reports that out of the 30 news sites it tracked over the course of September 2015, long-form content earned twice as much engagement from mobile readers as short-form content. Long-form content – defined as articles exceeding 1 000 words – averaged 123 seconds per interaction compared to the 57 seconds spent on average with short-form content. Pew also reported that there didn't seem to be a limit to how much mobile users were willing to read as average time spent gradually increased as word length increased. That challenges an assumption that many in the media industry hold – that the mobile platform is used for brief interactions with content.

The study dissected web analytics data to learn what time of day mobile users engage most with long-form content, whether long-form content is read more during the week versus weekend, what platforms refer the most readers to long-form content, and more. Following are six points publishers and readers should note:

1. Although short-form articles are more numerous on mobile platforms, long-form articles earn just as many visits. Pew reports that on average a long-form article earns 1 530 interactions from mobile users compared to 1 576 interactions with short-form content, despite long-form content



accounting for only 24% of the total article sample size. "This does not necessarily mean audiences are asking for more long-form content as there is a strong likelihood that most users are not aware of story length when they click a link," reports Pew. "Still, long-form articles do, whether through shares, bookmarks, or other means, find their way to as many initial visitors as short-form."

2. Readers spend more time with long-form content on the weekends, particularly in the morning. On weekend mornings long-form content attracts 137 seconds of engaged time on average, compared to 123 seconds of engaged time during weekday mornings.
3. Social referrals drive the most mobile traffic (40% of total traffic) to long-form content, but internal referrals drive the most reader engagement. Mobile readers who click an internal link (a link within the same website) to a long-form piece on average spend 148 seconds on the article. Direct referrals drive the second longest engagements with long-form content at 132 engaged seconds. Social platforms drive the shortest average engagement at 111 seconds. Short-form content

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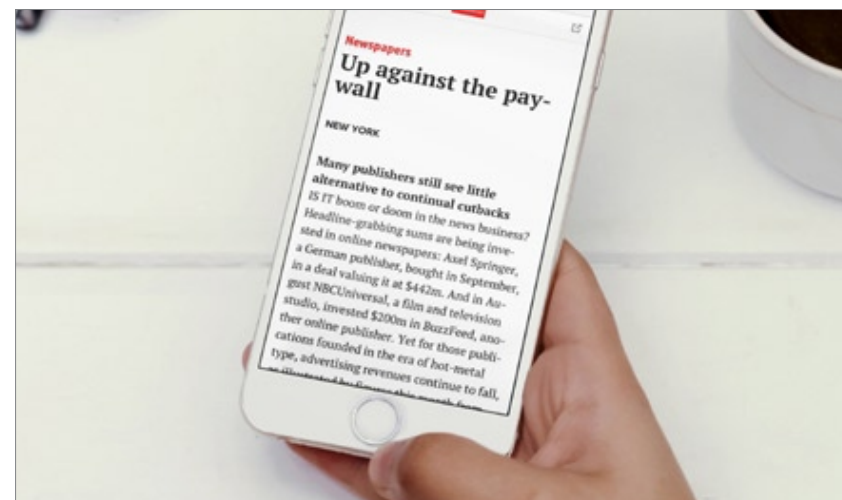
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follows a similar pattern, though direct referrals spend slightly more time with content at 62 seconds than internal referrals at 59 seconds. Like long-form, social refers the least engaged group of readers to short-form content, averaging 52 seconds of engaged time.

4. Facebook drives the most readers to long-form content, but Twitter drives the most engaged readers. “For longer content, users that arrive from Facebook spend an average of 107 seconds, compared with 133 seconds when they come from Twitter, a 24% difference. In shorter content, the same pattern emerges,” reports Pew.
5. The majority of interactions with content on mobile occur within the first two days of publication. 90% of all interactions with short-form content on mobile occurred by the fourth day after publication. For long-form content, 90% of all interactions occurred by the fifth day after publication. Pew notes that exceptionally long pieces of content that exceed 5 000 words tended to have a longer lifespan and longer periods of engagement even several days after publication. “For these news stories, average engaged time increases from 199 seconds the day of publication to 373 seconds 8 days later, an increase of 87%.” Pew theorises that readers who visit an article much later after publication may be more interested in the article’s topic, thus spending more time with that piece.
6. Few mobile visitors read other articles on the same site. According to Pew, “an overwhelming majority of both long-form readers (72%) and short-form readers (79%) view just one article on a given site over the course of a month on their cellphone.” Only 28% of long-form readers view multiple articles on a site after reading the long-form piece. Only 21% of short-form readers go on to read multiple articles on the same site.

Our mobile companion

According to an article on *The Atlantic* by Megan Garber, people who read a 3 000-word article on tablets spent an average of more than six minutes with the story, those doing so on phones spent more than 12 minutes – a small eternity in Internet time.

Those stats are, if not counterintuitive, then counter-conventional: The working assumption, among media executives and most of the public who cares about

such things, has long been that phones are best suited for quick-hit stories and tweets rather than immersive, long-form reads. And while content producers have attempted to take advantage of the “lean-back” capabilities of the tablet, phone use has generally been seen as flitting and fleeting – the stuff of grocery store lines and taxi rides. The average mobile reader tends to skim through headlines and ‘snackable’ content as opposed to diving into long-form articles.

Things are shifting, though, and not just when it comes to text articles. A global survey of 50 000 people found 65% of mobile video viewers saying they preferred watching full movies and TV episodes to briefer stuff (music videos, movie clips) on their phones. In another survey, 8 in 10 people said they would watch TV shows on their phones, were the shows available. And even more (88%) said they would watch full-length movies.

So what’s the appeal? Part of it is the constant companionship phones provide. You’re in bed, and your laptop is in the other room, or your iPad, and the phone is right there. Part of it, too, is the way phones in particular are structured: That single, tab-less screen – the screen that scrolls with the flick of a finger – fits the way we most like to read.

Magazine-style feature writing and articles are still as popular as ever, particularly when people are happy to lean back, curl up, and read a long story from the comfort of their phones. ▲



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Teaching in the 21st Century Classroom

By Belinda Germeshuizen – Head of International, Digital and Trade: Macmillan Education

Lately the phrase “21st century skills” has been keenly associated with teaching and education. Many a consultant or mentor will advocate the need to teach 21st Century Skills to our learners. In principle it makes sense that new skills have to be taught as the world changes but of course a key question remains regarding practice and pedagogy: “How does one teach 21st Century Skills in class?”

The first matter is to define 21st Century Skills within an educational context. Professor of Education, Richard Allington, and others, have made the concept comprehensive by stating that 21st Century Skills are core competencies such as collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving that children need to thrive in today’s world (<http://www.edweek.org/tsb/articles/2010/10/12/01panel.h04.html>).

While people might think that most of these skills are “common sense” and acquired, one needs to realise that today’s world demands higher level application of these skills. The reason for this is simply that the world has changed dramatically in the past 15 to 20 years and this “new world” brings with it complicated challenges that we need to equip new generations for.

For example, information has become so fluid and so readily available that learners do not know how to approach data or texts in a logical and critical way. Children no longer consider the validity of information. They don’t know how to research further on a topic if there is no data link to take them further. Children don’t know how to access historic information which is not accessibly available through the internet. All these issues are a problem because children are currently learning to follow/copy knowledge instead of essentially creating or expanding on it. The generation before them are utilising the power of the internet to spew a lot of information into the world which is easier to rehash than to actually explore and learn from. Children need to be taught to be discerning of information and be critical of its value for their purposes and interests.

Similarly, in today’s connected world, children have to deal with the fact that everyone and anyone are accessible at any time. Twitter makes you feel



connected to every celebrity 24/7. Facebook allows you to follow your friends and “stalk” your crush, while Whatsapp allows families to stay in touch. But what happens when two celebrities go through a bitter spat and children are subjected to the nastiness? Or when you also “stalk” your ex because you just can’t let go? And then there are families who share exclusively on Whatsapp and forget that people used to “update” each other in person over Sunday lunch. Surely that’s not good? Once again, children need to be taught boundaries. They need to be critical of who they follow and what they’re willing to share in an ungovernable world. They need to learn to have an actual conversation instead of communicating via emoticons.

Now, a teacher may ask what this has to do with them. History teachers teach capital cities – done. Go to the science



teacher when you want to know what the air is made of – done. But that is where the tricky part comes in. Children don’t necessarily need that information from their teachers any longer. That information is available on their phone at any given time. Gone are the days of asking a human to assist you in gaining knowledge on something you want to know. Googling has filled that gap. There is information everywhere but are the youth acquiring appropriate and useful knowledge?

Therein lays the real issue: How do teachers help address what the curriculum says they must but also assist learners in accessing age appropriate and relevant information in such a way that they actually learn something? It is identifying the value of the knowledge that has to become the teacher’s role. Teachers need to help children remain curious about the world around them and learn things without the urge to divert to someone else’s quick (possibly wrong) answer. It’s about teaching children how to communicate in order to be heard and in order to protect themselves from misinformation. These are the challenges of the 21st century classroom and this is what teachers have to deal with because ultimately, that has always been the role of the teacher. ▲



Online learning is good business

There’s never been a better time to launch an online learning business, says Thought Industries CEO Barry Kelly. Today the global online learning market exceeds \$91 billion, and the barriers to entry have lessened considerably. As little as five years ago significant capital and time were required to build an online learning platform and hire the talent needed to maintain it. Now, thanks to cloud computing software, working with an online learning provider is much more affordable and streamlined. That’s allowing more publishers to tap into online learning revenue.

“You can build a very lucrative, high-margin business,” explained Kelly during a webinar titled *Seizing the Online Learning Revenue Opportunity*. “You can create one course that you can keep selling over and over again.”

But before publishers dive in, they need to assess their market to identify if there is an opportunity to provide online learning and what form their courses might take. Barry explains that publishers can analyse their existing audience to determine if online learning is sustainable, and then lay the foundations for a successful online learning programme.

“Ultimately, online learning comes down to high-quality content,” said Barry. “In order to get consumers to commit to an hour-long course, they need to know that what they are receiving is worthwhile. Online learning is not an impulse purchase. It’s something someone wants to experience. People are buying experiences and outcomes.”

According to an article on *eLearning Industry*, although online education has its limitations, there are several advantages of online learning that explain why eLearning may be the greatest revolution in today’s education.

It’s no wonder why millions of students from all around the world opt for online degree programmes or take at least one college course through an online platform. Nevertheless, online education is still related to stereotypes. People often think that online students are not smart enough for a traditional college or

university, they are lazy, and they don’t get “real” degrees. These claims discourage many people from taking online courses, so they get stuck in the traditional educational system that consumes a huge deal of money, nerves, and years of their lives.

The fact is online courses and degree programmes are more convenient and cheaper than their counterparts in traditional education. Those are the two main advantages of online learning that lead many students to opt for online platforms when they want to earn a degree or certificate.

The best thing about online learning is that you can learn in a relaxed manner even if you don’t want to get certified. You only need passion for learning and a quick online search that will take you to the right course. From that point on, you will be the master of your own education. ▲

Pearson partnership to benefit schools

Pearson South Africa and Sphere Holdings “Sphere” have announced a landmark empowerment partnership deal in which Sphere will acquire a 22.5% stake in Pearson South Africa Proprietary Limited, “Pearson South Africa”. Together with the Pearson Marang Education Trust’s 2.5% holding, the Sphere transaction raises Pearson South Africa’s black ownership level to 25%.

Pearson South Africa is a subsidiary of Pearson plc, the world’s largest education company. Sphere is an established black owned and managed investment holding company with a highly successful track record as an active long term investor in local and multinational companies providing critical infrastructure, and social and industrial goods and services to South and southern Africa.

Commenting on the transaction, Michael Ogden, Interim Managing Director of Pearson South Africa, said: “As a leading educational publisher and educational services provider, we are delighted to have agreed to this partnership, which will greatly enhance our reach and impact in the education sector. Sphere’s strong track record as professional investors, and proven capacity to work with multinational boards and management to deepen local client relationships and deliver winning South African strategies made them ideal investors and empowerment partners. Sphere has a clear commitment to South Africa that is closely aligned with our own values. Sphere also has the vision, credentials and technical skills necessary to advance our broad-based black economic empowerment goals and to help us take advantage of new opportunities.”

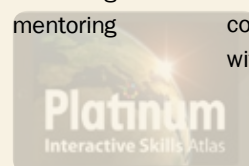
Sphere director and new Pearson SA board member Marang Denalane, said: “While South Africa is making massive investments in education as a national priority, we are not seeing the quality outcomes we should expect. This can and must change fast. Already, the so called 4th industrial revolution – the digitised economy – is becoming a reality for our workforce. So it’s vital that we mobilise the best education content and teaching practices to equip millions of South African learners with the education they need to get jobs, compete globally and reindustrialise our economy. This starts with traditional textbooks, teaching and systems, and will evolve into increasingly digitally enabled learning environments – as we develop the classrooms of the future. We look forward to working with Pearson to adapt their unparalleled global education expertise, content and services to meet the needs of South African learners, teachers, education departments and schools.”

Denalane added that Sphere would work with Pearson SA’s board and management to develop and deliver a sustainable growth strategy, to build deeper relationships with key clients and education stakeholders, and to bring new leadership talent into the business while supporting their mentoring initiatives.

Commenting further on the partnership, Michael Ogden said: “Although publishing forms a core part of our business, we are looking to expand and enhance our managed services and digital offering – particularly in the public education sector. This partnership with Sphere, as a ‘home-grown’ investment company, will enable us to continue to grow our business in this sector and to positively impact many thousands of learners across the country.”

Sphere Holdings was founded in 2003 and has a transformative business model that creates wealth that uplifts by putting real money back into the community with a focus on education. Since inception, about 14% of Sphere has been owned by four community charities with a focus on education, the Student Sponsorship Programme which sponsors children to attend top schools; the Disability Empowerment Concerns Trust, which supports NGO’s working with the disabled; the Ditikeni Investment Company an investment holding company financing 21 NGOs; and Mindset which equips disadvantaged schools and clinics with technology.

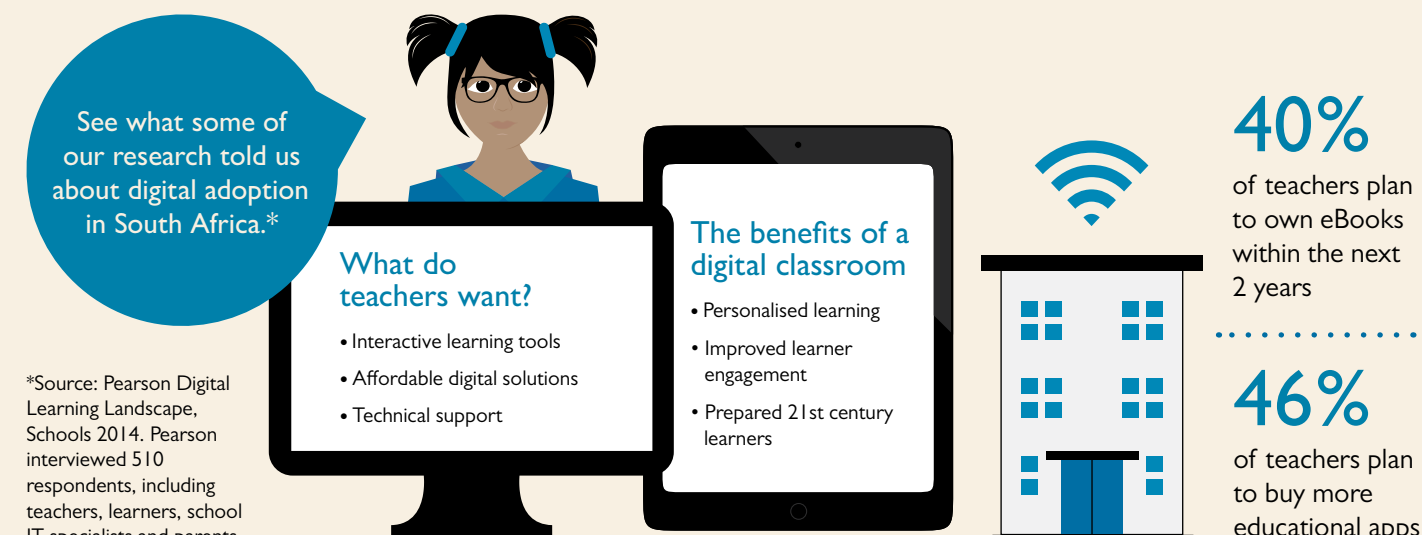
“When Sphere was formed, one of the key strategic pillars was supporting education, empowerment and development in South Africa and we are confident that we will bring the same commitment and drive to our partnership with Pearson,” concluded Denalane. ▲



Moving towards a digital classroom

Technology is changing the way you teach and the way your learners learn – engaging them, challenging them and preparing them to be successful in the 21st century.

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*Source: Pearson Digital Learning Landscape, Schools 2014. Pearson interviewed 510 respondents, including teachers, learners, school IT specialists and parents.

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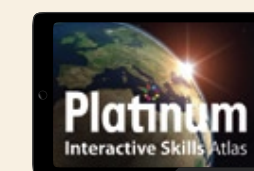
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Digital resources to support learning



The Platinum Interactive Skills Atlas provides Grade 8 – 12 learners with a personalised, interactive learning experience to understand and practise Map, Atlas and GIS skills. Learn more at www.platinumskillsatlas.pearson.co.za



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Advancing Educational Knowledge in Africa

Celebrating 10 Years of advancing educational knowledge in Africa, EduWeek with SABC Education powered by Intel promises to once again deliver the most comprehensive education event on the continent. Taking place from 29 to 30 June at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand, Johannesburg, EduWeek is all about responding directly to the needs and expectations of the industry.



EduWeek brings together educational professionals across Educational Technology (E-Tech), Vocational & Higher Education, Basic Education, Inclusive Education and NEW for 2016 Early Childhood Development and offers the perfect platform in which to evaluate, see and buy new solutions for all education institution's needs whilst attending free training sessions dedicated to each delegates specific needs.

Entrance to the event is completely free and sees over 4 000 educational professionals attend the two-day indaba. With over 40 countries represented in terms of attendees and exhibitors, EduWeek is a truly international event, with international standing.

EduWeek Exhibition

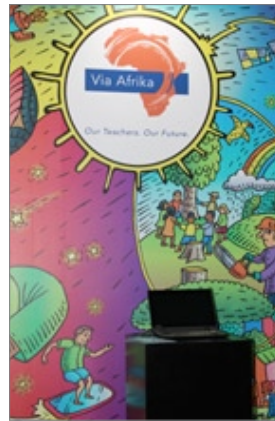
Eduweek is proud to deliver Africa's widest choice of quality end to end solutions in its education exhibition. The EduWeek exhibition floor has been clearly divided into eight product areas helping visitors to navigate their way directly to their preferred sector of interest, ensuring they are able to spend their time more effectively meeting the relevant suppliers who can best service their needs. These product zones enable delegates to easily compare products and solutions helping them make an informed purchase which is in line with their strategy.

Exclusive to EduWeek

No other education event this year will offer visitors the opportunity to meet top innovators such as Intel, Microsoft, Dell, Lenovo, HP, Smartlabs, Cambridge International Examinations, A+Students, ITEC, Vastratech, Positivo, Mustek and many more. Hands-on product demonstrations, live practical workshops, one-on-one tutorials and interactive features await to inspire and enthuse.

Technology at EduWeek

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Anyone with a vested interest in this fast-moving sector should attend EduWeek to stay up to date with the latest trends and innovations.

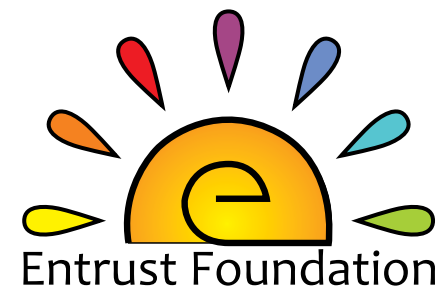
Engage with like-minded experts who are tackling Africa's most pertinent challenges in the EduTheatres

Learn about the latest developments, case studies and trends by renowned industry leaders as well as local education professionals. EduWeek offers four brand new EduTheatre's, each of which will host two full days of quality free practical and interactive sessions dedicated to Early Childhood Development, Vocational and Higher Education, Inclusive Education and Basic Education. Each EduTheatre sessions has been intricately designed to not only inspire and enthuse a passion for education, but also to provide attendees with practical take homes that they can apply in their own teaching environment.

EduWeek Awards

Another highlight of the EduWeek calendar is the EduWeek Awards which take place on the evening of 29 June. The EduWeek Awards recognise excellence across the African education ecosystem. The awards showcase the most innovative and life-changing projects, organisations, companies, teachers and education professionals who have been responsible for pioneering new frontiers, pushing boundaries, for inspiring others and for achieving growth in education in Africa.

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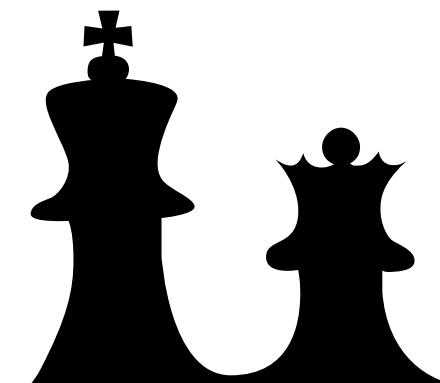
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The shortlist of finalists for the EduWeek awards

Basic Education

- Colourtech Holdings
- Green Beings
- One on One Community Based Programmes
- Sherpa Kids South Africa
- VastraTech

Higher Education

- Colourtech Holdings
- Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association
- Higher Education Transformation Network
- Pert Industrials
- Respublica
- The Council on Higher Education

Early Childhood Development

- Brain Booster
- Educanda
- Gymathstics
- Mysmartkid
- Rustics Jungle Gyms

Special Needs

- Academics By Curiosity
- The Chaeli Campaign
- Edit Microsystems

ICT

- Colourtech Holdings – Credobooks
- Edit Microsystems
- Snapplify
- The Reach Trust
- VastraTech

Innovation Product Award

- Brain Booster
- Eduworks
- Get Smarter

- School Advisor
- The Reach Trust
- VastraTech

Community Award

- Academics By Curiosity
- Edit Microsystems
- Ligbron Academy E-learning Project
- McWilliams & Co Educational Services
- Siyafunda Community Technology Centre

NGO

- Brain Booster
- Educhange and Research Foundation
- ORT South Africa
- Partners for Possibility
- The Reach Trust
- The Tomorrow Trust

Institution Leader of The Year

- Sehoole Moses Sello, Principal, Mankuroane Technical and Commercial Secondary, South Africa
- Gwynne Philander, Principal, Ned Doman High School, South Africa
- Panyaza Lesufi, MEC, Gauteng Education, South Africa
- Thoko Msane, Principal, Ottawa Primary School, South Africa

Teacher of Tomorrow

- Anthony Peters, Parklands College, South Africa
- Fred Bohasu, Founder & Director, Bunang Baswa, South Africa
- Lindsay Wesner, ICT integrator and Subject Head of Life Orientation,

- Parklands College, South Africa
- Thabiso Moruledi, Executive Media Partner, Academics By Curiosity, South Africa
- Thamsanqa Tyatya, Managing Director, Academics by Curiosity, South Africa

Educator Who Cares

- Katlego Thwane, Educator, Johannesburg girl's prep school, South Africa
- Mokhodu Machaba, Teacher, Ngwanamago primary school, South Africa
- Nicky du Plessis, Owner Techno-Kidz Computer Trainer at School Teaches Grades 4 to 7 and Coach for Robotics, Techno-Kidz, South Africa
- Sehoole Moses Sello, Principal, Mankuroane Technical and Commercial Secondary, South Africa
- Sharon Rowe, Principal, Footprints Special Needs School, South Africa

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Georina Westraadt, Senior lecturer Art Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa
- Gizelle McIntyre, Institute of People Development, South Africa
- Lorraine Roth, Director, Parklands College, South Africa
- Phuti Ragophala, Principal, Pula Madibogo Primary School, South Africa

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Education divide between racial groups is narrowing slowly

Study Time trend projections show that it could take almost 16 years to close the education gap between black and coloured South Africans, 23 years to close the black-white gap and 26 years to close the black-Indian gap.

This is according to Prof Acheampong Yaw Amoateng, research professor of Sociology and Family Studies at the Mafikeng Campus' School of Research and Postgraduate Studies. In a study published in the *South African Review of Sociology*, he and two collaborators from Brigham Young University in the USA investigated racial differences in educational outcomes in South Africa. Educational outcomes refer to the average number of years of schooling completed by a child between 2002 and 2009. "Races in the society had unequal access to education in the past so we wanted to see whether the trend has been arrested in the post-apartheid era," Prof Amoateng says.

Focusing on recent changes

"The countrywide study focused on boys and girls aged 7 to 18 years in the four major race groups, namely Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites," he says. "Our interest was in assessing recent changes, using Statistics South Africa's General Household Survey data for 2002 and 2009." In terms of average years of school completed, Africans have nearly one year's less schooling than the average of 11 years of schooling. Coloureds are more than a third of a year above Africans, while whites are nearly a year above Africans and Indians are 1.2 years above Africans.

"Indians have an advantage over other race groups by age seven and maintain that advantage as they age," says Prof Amoateng. "Other race groups too have similar educational attainment by age seven but the gap increases as they age. For example, by age 18, Africans and Coloureds have substantial disadvantage in attainment."

The researchers believe that these differences may be linked to racial differences in family and household characteristics. "While not disregarding infrastructure, income and service disparities, some of the educational disadvantage of African and Coloured children may be due to an unequally distributed disadvantage in family backgrounds and school conditions." For example, about half of African children live in female-headed households, while 12% live with only fathers. African and Coloured children also live in households with more siblings, fewer economic resources and less educated parents.

Disparities linger but are declining

"Our findings imply that despite the democratic government's efforts to address the educational inequalities and inequities of the past, discrepancies still exist, especially as far as the African majority are concerned," he says.



"However, we also observed that even though the magnitude is small, there is a decline in inequality between Africans on the one hand, and whites and Indians on the other. This shift suggests that the household circumstances of Africans are changing for the better, since without this they would be doing a lot worse than they are doing now."

The improvements give credence to government's claim that it has a good story to tell in terms of improving the circumstances of the poor and previously disadvantaged. "However, to ensure that the narrowing of the educational gap between Africans and other race groups is sustained and deepened, there is a need for more effective education policy that addresses both issues of racial inequality and disadvantaged family background."

Prof Amoateng says the study has raised further questions for investigation. "We would like to look at this issue from the point of view of social class and see if there are variations or differences in educational outcomes within the black group. In other words, how is the so-called black middle class doing compared to other classes of blacks? "Better still, does the black middle class compare favourably with the white and other middle classes in educational attainment? These would be interesting questions to examine in future." ▲

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Men in the Making – inspiring teenagers

While it has its own active corporate social investment programmes, short term insurance innovator MiWay is firmly behind the *Men in the Making Day* initiative. That's because the company believes in the concept of inspiring teenagers to become positive agents for change in their broader circles of influence and to help more youngsters grow into responsible, caring adults.



That's according to MiWay Head of Marketing and Brand, Nthabiseng Moloi, who notes the company launched its MiHeart Project in 2014 to improve computer literacy and ICT facilities in schools. "Through this initiative, we have formed close and special relationships with the schools where we are involved. Infusing Men in the Making Day into our project adds a direct and personal impact on the lives of the boys, their families and the communities we operate in," she explains.

The *Men in the Making Day* (MIM) programme is an initiative by vehicle monitoring company Tracker. MIM identifies disadvantaged boys and provides mentorship and skills training to better equip them to become providers and contributors to society, on the one hand, while establishing solid foundations for personal successes on the other.

Decision makers from SA's top brands pledged their commitment to MIM and invited grade 10 to 12 boy learners into their workplace for motivational talks, career guidance, team building and job shadowing, in a drive to provide much-needed mentorship and inspiration. Over 1 000 students nationwide were inspired by the day.

MiWay selected eight boys from Moletsane High School in Soweto, at which its MiHeart Project has already transformed the Computer Centre, to participate in its contribution to MIM.

However, the company is taking its contribution to MIM further, pairing the boys with four of its senior managers who will provide ongoing mentorship and support as the youngsters work their way through Grade 12. While cognisance is taken of the demands of study, sport and general life on the time of each individual, the mentors will spend time with learners to provide insights into career fields and options, while imparting various 'soft skills'.

"Through the contributions of our senior managers, we want this to be the best year of these boys' lives as they grow into young men. Our hope is

that in our own small way, MiWay can fire up a spark in each individual; to give a glimpse of the endless possibilities that are out there; and for some of us, who also grew up in the township, to remind them that they have the freedom to be the best they can be," Moloi adds.

Role models such as those introduced by the MIM programme can play a crucial part in helping youngsters who don't have a strong father figure in their lives to appreciate the value which flows from making the right choices.

"Our participating staff members are a mirror for these boys, showing them how much is possible through hard work and the right attitude."

Moloi says MiWay intends to award a bursary for further study to the best performer of its MIM participants.

"Ultimately, initiatives like this can and do make an impact on our country, one boy at a time. By adding MIM to the MiHeart project, we're able to focus not just on the school and the needs of the ICT department, but now also on the needs of some of the most at-risk learners," she concludes. ▲

Students with disabilities at tertiary institutions

According to the findings of the *Disability in Higher Education Project in South African Tertiary Institutions* by the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis, limited attention has been placed on addressing issues of access, retention, progression and participation of students with disabilities within the South African tertiary environment.

This is notwithstanding the fact that students with disabilities have been identified in various governmental policy documents as being historically disadvantaged and deserving of special attention. More and more tertiary institutions, however, are now seemingly focussing on the mainstreaming and inclusion of students with disabilities.

Some Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in South Africa have established so-called Disability Units (DU) to offer specialised services to their students with disabilities in order to facilitate access and integration of these students at their institutions.

The study confirmed that the factors that impact on disability inclusion go beyond things under the direct control of HEIs. The schooling system and its ability to produce learners with disabilities that can enter the tertiary sector, for example, need to be interrogated. Parenting and support systems available to students have an impact.

Over the past few years, the FNB Fund has focused its efforts on providing support to the education sector, from early childhood development to primary and tertiary education. Through the various programmes undertaken within these areas, it has focused on raising awareness of students with disabilities at tertiary institutions.

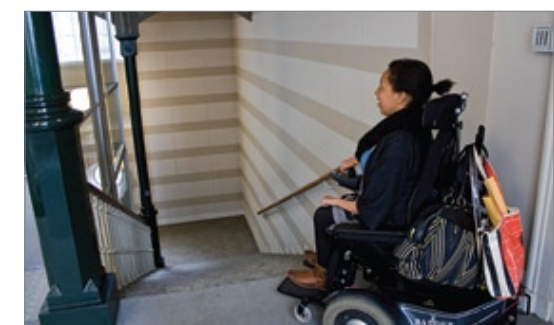
The FNB Fund currently funds students from two disability units – one at Stellenbosch University and the other at the University of the Free State. Pearl Mphuthi, FNB Fund Manager visited some of these disability units to learn about their successes and challenges.

"My visit to the universities was an eye-opening experience. It made me realise that even though students are faced with physical disabilities, there are social and psychological repercussions for them, their families and the communities they live in. The lessons learned concerned the complexities of the sector, the role of the disability units at the universities, the types of disabilities and their impact on the students' studies, and the variety of support required, including types of assistive devices and associated costs," said Mphuthi.

While the FNB Fund gives financial support, the funding goes toward a mixture of tuition, accommodation, transport and assistive devices.

Hetsie Veitch, Head of the Unit for Students with Disabilities at Free State University said that recipients of the fund allocation have been able to utilise the support toward their different individual needs. She added that three students used the funds to purchase specialised assistive devices that are not only beneficial for their studies but will also make their daily functioning in the workplace much easier.

Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Head of the Disability Unit at Stellenbosch University stated that the four students who were funded this year were enormously grateful and relieved to be awarded the bursary as it freed them up to focus on being academically successful, amidst their visual, physical and health impairments.



"It has become clear that students with disabilities require a holistic level of support – spanning psychological, technological and adaptations to the environment and academic sphere. It is also not enough to only speak to disabled students and their challenges but it is equally important to engage other university stakeholders, such as the heads of the disability units, as they are all part of the environment in which these students live and study," concludes Mphuthi. ▲

Early Childhood Development is enriched by human interaction – and technology

Harnessing interpersonal traits and the ability to develop relationships are at the very heart of early learning and development in children. As children grow and develop, they increasingly want to play; speak and take in what is happening around them, which ultimately influences their own behaviours and mannerisms. Through early interactions children learn to communicate and enjoy being in a social environment.

Education expert Gavin Keller says: “Children’s understanding of the world around them is often given a meaning by their exposure to immediate relationships, communication interactions, how they play and how their needs are met through contact with others. Many interactions are spontaneous whilst others come about through careful planning and direction from the parents or minders to ensure that the child is developing well in all areas. It is a well-known fact that children learn by being with others.”

During early development it is important that children are encouraged to learn through self-initiated and self-directed learning tools. At other times, the adult leads through planned and guided activities and increases or lessens the amount and type of support as children grow in confidence and competence.

Children learn more effectively by being involved in making choices and decisions, and by feeling in control. Through interactive games, learning can become part of every activity, which is enjoyable and rewarding for the child as they can challenge themselves to learn new skills or build on their existing skills. It is in this type of interactive environment that children also practice language and problem-solving skills. Keller adds, “When an adult is listening attentively to the child while displaying positive body language and uses words, phrases or gestures to let the child know they are listening, the child is encouraged to express himself in a creative manner by using their imagination.”

Technology can make a difference

“The biggest development of children comes from interaction; therefore it is imperative to make sure that we are using the right tools to assist in the development of children’s skills. Interactive tools such as STIMULEARN from Nestlé NIDO 3+, help children explore, discover, enquire, make decisions and take risks. Through this experience, children gather information which helps them build skills such as language, psychomotor, problem solving, attention, concentration and memory,” says Keller.

It can easily be said that children use playing as a vehicle to learn through exploration, imagination and investigation. Many education theorists support the



idea that playing is an essential part of children’s lives, it teaches them to learn, think and solve problems, imagine, create and communicate.

Understanding that children learn interdependently and interactively with parents or teachers, the App also creatively combines parental interaction with cognitive stimulation through the various games that make up the App. The App also has a special learning feature for mothers to help monitor their child’s development, equipped with tips and advice from experts.

Keller concludes “Movement activities are especially well-suited to helping children develop social skills.

The App serves as the ultimate visual learning tool specifically designed to meet the learning needs of children whilst understanding children need to be active with games such as:

- Pearl Beach – designed to aid or improves Psychomotor Skills.
- Island Market – designed to aid/improve Language, Memory and Attention.
- Story House – designed to aid/improve Language and Attention skills.
- Forgotten Castle – designed to aid/improve Memory.
- Mr Skylab – designed to aid/improve Problem Solving skills. ▲



Learners take a stand against smoking

To raise awareness around World No Tobacco Day on 31 May, learners at Riverside College on Burgundy Estate in Cape Town carried out a series of creative sensory-based experiments. In a special assembly, learners from grades five to 12 sat, eyes closed, listening to the rattling sound of someone with advanced emphysema breathing. They were then guided through exercises that allowed them to smell, see and feel the effect that smoking has on the body.

“Rather than just tell our learners that smoking is unhealthy, we wanted them to experience the negative side effects for themselves. It struck us that smelling stale tobacco, seeing the tar it deposits in the lungs and experiencing shortness of breath would be much more interactive and memorable than a lecture or assignment,” says High School Principal, Dave Swart.



Fabio Caldeira, Grade 12

Multi-sensory educative techniques have taken off in recent years, with a growing body of research showing that engaging more than one sense during learning improves information processing and retention. We are more likely to remember something if there are multiple sensory triggers associated with that event or lesson.

“Ninety percent of smokers begin before the age of 19, some even starting as young as 11. This is a health concern we really need to address in our schools,” says Swart. “With the bombardment of information presented to young people on a daily basis, finding innovative ways to drive health-related messages home is key.”

“If the message is still not getting through ask them what they would do with R60 000 – at an average cost of R35 per pack, a pack-a-day smoking habit adds up to that amount over five years – that’s enough to buy your first car.”

At the conclusion of the special assembly, learners voiced a pledge

- I have been made aware of the dangers of smoking.
- I know that it is an expensive and unhealthy habit.
- I know that smoking is not cool, it will not help me fit in.
- I will not put pressure on my peers to take up smoking.
- I will think before I smoke.

Want to try it out with your learners?

- **Hear:** Play a clip of somebody with advanced emphysema breathing.
- **Feel:** Everybody take a deep breath – then release some, but not all, of the air. Breathe in again. Release some. Breathe again.
- **See:** Create a mixture of ‘tar’ with molasses



Jordan Gradie, Grade 7



Alex Goodwin, Grade 8,
Tara Africa, Grade 10

and pour it in to a thin glass cylinder – a pack-a-day smoker ingests approximately one cup in a year.

- **Smell:** Pick up some stompies, let them sit in a jar with some water for a while then take a smell. ▲

Editor’s note

Smoking among teenagers is an issue that affects countries worldwide. While not every culture views youth smoking as an issue that needs to be addressed, the US has taken drastic measure in an attempt to reduce and eventually eliminate use of tobacco products among teens. 90% of smokers are estimated to have begun smoking before the age of 20; therefore it is necessary to reduce the number of youths who start smoking before this age in order to reduce the total number of smokers. When the tobacco industry first began to target this new youth demographic, they did so in an entirely non-discreet method (for example through the use of characters that mimic cartoons). Once they began to experience resistance from the public they took a more subdued approach by using anti-tobacco advertisements to actually raise awareness of tobacco products in youths and to increase their desire to smoke.

Get a career – get Bushwise

South Africa with its abundant and unsurpassed flora and fauna is driving the demand for local and international BSc. (Zoology) students wishing to complete their post-graduate studies in a real-world environment. Bushwise, South Africa's leading FGSA training services provider is leading the herd with their admission of a number of these students having continuously demonstrated for the past seven years that their training programmes provide a deep understanding of the forces that shape the highly structured ecosystems and behaviour of which Zoology, a core biological discipline underpinning current interest and research in conservation, requires.

The Field Guides Association of Southern Africa (FGASA) provides educational opportunities to promote the conservation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage of Southern Africa. To this end FGASA maintains and serves a professional association of highly-trained nature guides, tour operators and hospitality institutions who share the vision and are committed to the FGASA Code of Conduct and Responsible Tourism Guidelines.

"Through our various FGASA training programmes we provide learners the opportunity to study animals and their habitats which are not only diverse but continually evolve and are at the core to the future of conservation not just within Southern Africa but the world" explains Sophie Niemann, director of Bushwise. "These real-world experiences reflect the evolutionary relationships of the animals, identifying and understanding the requirements of the studies in anatomy, physiology, reproduction, behaviour, community ecology and molecular genetics and how they contribute to ensuring a high-standard of knowledge learners take with them in the future after graduating."

Not only a flash-point for post-graduate students who are wanting to further their field practical experience, Bushwise's Professional Field Guide Course offers in-depth theoretical and practical training over 23 weeks and a 50-week programme which includes an internship at various top safari lodges and conservation organisations within South Africa. This intensive course underpins the belief of why so many South African trained field guides are in such high demand, not just within Africa but abroad as well.

In addition to this Bushwise have recently launched the Introductory Field Guide and Wildlife career course, offering a 65 day theoretical course or an 83 day course, which includes an 18 day practical component. However, the industry is plagued by many service providers offering quick, superficial training that doesn't



equip students with the skills that they need to get a job, advance their career or, in some cases meet many of the key experiences required by post-graduate students.

Over the past six years an average of 94% of students have passed the FGASA examinations at first attempt with its most recent group of 29 graduates in 2015 achieving an average mark of 90.76% which is testament to Bushwise's focus on experiences of collaboration in a problem-based learning (PBL) environment. Lead by Ben Coley, Head Trainer and supported by a team of three trainers who work directly with learners to negotiate and construct new understandings of their environment and develop life-long learning skills grounded in genuine situations of practice in which a high degree of collaboration is essential for a successful outcome.

"The BSc. (Zoology) major requirements of integrating theory with real-world practical [both field and laboratory] studies are best explored at the Bushwise campus. This is purposefully designed to showcase interaction and exploration of animals and fragile ecosystems found within Southern Africa" concludes Niemann. ▲



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