

Contributors



Joyce West

Is an early childhood education scholar at the University of Pretoria, whose work sits at the intersection of language, literacy, teacher education, and educational technology. Her research focuses on how young children learn to read and write in multilingual contexts, with particular attention to African language literacy development, orthographic features, readability, and the implications of linguistic complexity for equitable early-grade instruction. She works across mixed-methods and design-oriented approaches to generate evidence that is both theoretically robust and usable for classroom practice, including tools and resources that support teacher decision-making and inclusive learning. A central thread in her scholarship is the question of how pedagogical innovation, especially technology-mediated learning, can expand access to high-quality early literacy experiences while remaining ethically grounded and context-responsive. This includes interests

in learning analytics, human-machine teaching, and the careful integration of generative AI into teacher education and curriculum design. Dr West collaborates with practitioners and partners to translate research into professional learning and classroom-ready materials, with a strong emphasis on multilingual pedagogy, translanguaging-informed practices, and equity-driven assessment.

As a co-editor of this volume, she is committed to exploring how AI-generated children's literature can serve as a catalyst for responsive citizenship and sustainability education—supporting children's ecological literacy, empathy, agency, and sense of shared responsibility in ways that align with the Sustainable Development Goals.



Kayla Willemse

Is a lecturer in the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Pretoria, with research interests that span educational technology, coding and robotics, and broader digital innovation. Her work sits at the intersection of early childhood development, human-centred design, and educational technology. A central thread in her scholarship is how emerging technologies can be used in ethical, playful, and context-sensitive ways to strengthen learning, creativity, and meaningful participation in everyday life. She also engages with digital design and examines how artificial intelligence can influence the quality, efficiency, and ethics of work across contexts.

Dr Willemse is a Fellow of the African Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AfriDSAI), is actively involved in diverse research projects, serves on editorial teams, and has contributed as a consultant to a range of interdisciplinary initiatives. As a co-editor of this volume, she is committed to exploring how AI-generated children's literature can serve as a catalyst for responsive citizenship and sustainability education, supporting children's ecological literacy, empathy, agency, and a sense of shared responsibility in ways that align with the Sustainable Development Goals. Guided by a commitment to exciting, innovative practice, she is passionate about creating meaningful experiences that connect people, technology, and real-world needs.



Darshana Morar-Leather

Darshana is a scientist and teacher based at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science, where she studies tiny creatures called ticks and their impact on animal health. Her work explores how ticks live, interact with animals, and spread pathogens that can make animals sick, helping people better protect livestock and wildlife. As part of a specialised research team, she investigates the smallest details using tools such as microscopes and shares the findings with other scientists and students. She teaches students training to become veterinary nurses and veterinarians, is passionate about teaching and discovery, and believes that even the smallest creatures play an important role in understanding and protecting the natural world.



Jean-Marie Koch

Is a dedicated and creative Afrikaans lecturer at SANTS Private Higher Education, a position she has held since 2022. She completed her BEd degree in Intermediate Phase Education at the University of Pretoria in 2017. She continued her studies at the University of Pretoria, completing both her BEd Honours degree in Quality Education (2019) and her MEd in Arts Education (2023). She is currently pursuing her PhD at the University of Pretoria and takes pride in her willingness to develop her skills daily.

As a strong organiser and natural leader, her skills are evident in the way she guides her community engagement committee. She advocates for collaborative work styles and continuous professional development. Her approach to the Afrikaans language is described as purposeful, empathetic, and dynamic. She is committed to her team and takes pride in the development of Afrikaans at SANTS. Through her work, she strives to view language not merely as an object of study, but as an instrument

of empowerment. In addition to her commitment to Afrikaans as language, she has committed her time to understanding creativity, especially in education. She is deeply focused on finding a deeper understanding of Creativity, especially in the midst of the flourishing Artificial Intelligence (AI) landscape. She hopes to find a way for human creativity to flourish while co-existing with AI, focusing on possibilities instead of perceived incapability.



Jarred West

Is a partner that specialises in anti-counterfeiting and intellectual property law. He has expertise in dealing with enforcement against counterfeit goods with a specific focus on marketplace enforcement, raid procedures, customs actions, DTI, and SAPS actions.

He has also presented numerous seminars on the topic of anti-counterfeiting and brand protection to officials of the Department of Customs and Excise and members of the South African Police Service.



Elsamarie Kersop

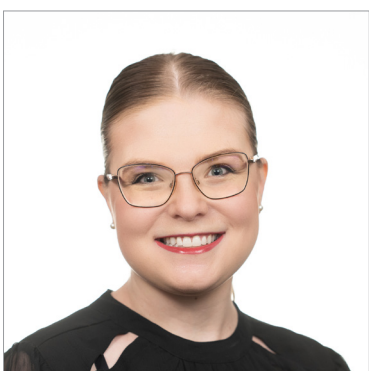
Is an experienced Foundation Phase educator, academic lecturer, and researcher with a strong focus on literacy, learner support, and teacher development. She is currently appointed at Emeris as well as other tertiary institutions, where she is responsible for lecturing, curriculum development, moderation, supervision of postgraduate students, and work-integrated learning assessment. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Linguistics and holds a Master of Education in Learner Support, and has published peer-reviewed research on teachers' perceptions of EGRA implementation. Elsamarie is actively involved in research, community outreach, and academic leadership, and is committed to advancing inclusive, evidence-based practices in early literacy and teacher education.



Shine Aung

My name is Shine Aung, I have a PhD in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development, from the University of Pretoria. For the past 7 years, I have worked with children, specifically those within township contexts. Here I assist learners who struggle with reading, in English as a second additional language, through the promotion of innovative pedagogical practices. My master and PhD studies focused on the area of language and literacy in Education.

I also work for the University of Pretoria, where I lecture modules based on classroom literacies, the methodology of English, assessment and curriculum design in Education, along with postgraduate research supervision. I have written teacher training guides and presented teacher workshops in areas such as translanguaging and multilingual pedagogies.



M Ellis

Is a PhD candidate in Educational Psychology and a lecturer in psychology and literacy practices. Her research interests focus on teacher efficacy and data-driven decision-making in reading assessments to better inform instruction and early intervention. Mariska is passionate about teacher education and wants to equip future teachers with the knowledge and skills to use evidence-based tools in the classroom to support young learners' literacy development and fostering a love for reading.



Nadia Swanepoel

Is a lecturer in the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on foundation phase mathematics, with particular emphasis on making mathematics in early childhood education accessible, meaningful, and engaging for both in-service and pre-service teachers. She is an active researcher and supervises postgraduate students across diverse areas of foundation phase mathematics education. As a recipient of two Teaching and Learning Awards, Dr. Swanepoel is deeply committed to integrating community engagement with teaching and learning, and she takes pride in supporting pre-service teachers as agents of change for sustainable and transformative education.



Ruan Christiaan Willemse

Is a Senior Financial Planner and Investment Specialist, and an equity shareholder, with over a decade of experience in financial planning, wealth management, and investment strategy. He is known for an approach grounded in ethics, strategic insight, and unwavering client focus, with a strong commitment to transparency, reliability, and long-term relationship building. His aim is to design sustainable financial strategies tailored to each client's unique goals and circumstances, ensuring advice is objective, clear, and consistently aligned with clients' best interests.

His expertise includes risk planning, retirement planning, investment portfolio management, business insurance, medical and gap cover, and fiduciary services. Staying current with an evolving financial landscape and regulatory change, he provides forward-thinking guidance to both individuals and businesses, and is valued for his ability to simplify complex financial concepts and bring clarity to important decisions. His professional

excellence has been recognised through three International Quality Awards presented by LIMRA, as well as Sanlam Eagle Status as an Iron Eagle, reflecting consistent performance, ethical practice, and client satisfaction. He is also a proud member of the Concept Lynnwood 100's club.

Outside of work, he is passionate about travel and prioritises exploring new destinations, cultures, cuisines, and landscapes, which continually refreshes his perspective. He also enjoys technology and computers, gardening, reading widely across topics that challenge conventional thinking, and music, which helps him maintain a balanced and creative mindset.



Tanner Mark Fox

A Senior Financial Advisor and Investment Generalist, I specialise in serving qualified professionals. With more than a decade of experience in the financial sector, I am adept at delivering comprehensive wealth and financial solutions tailored to my clients' unique needs.

My expertise spans customer service, insurance, sales, and strategic investment planning.

I offer a full suite of services, including billing, auditing and tax support, short-term insurance (both personal and commercial), risk cover assessments and proposals, local and offshore investment options, and thorough estate planning.

My goal is to provide holistic, reliable guidance to help clients achieve financial security and success.



Okuhle Natasha Sekujika

Okuhle Natasha Sekujika is a young lady who started her learning journey just like you. She went to school every day, loved asking questions, and wanted to learn more. Her favorite subjects were Biology (the study of living things) and Math. When she was 21, she continued her journey and graduated with degrees in Biological Sciences and in Genetics and Developmental Biology from the University of the Witwatersrand. She then completed a two-year internship at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science, in the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, where she expanded her knowledge and got to see and work with all kinds of interesting animals. She built great relationships with her coworkers and the role she took reinforced the importance of working with a team in her research environment. Currently, she is a full-time second-year MSc student doing research in Veterinary Science.



Andeliza Frederik

Dr Andeliza Frederik is a scientist who loves learning about insects and arachnids that live in nature. She studies ticks and their pathogens. Even though ticks are tiny, they can spread pathogens to animals and sometimes people which can make them very sick, so her work is very important. She works at the University of Pretoria in the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, where she teaches students and helps them become scientists too. Andeliza also spends time outdoors collecting ticks from animals and the environment. She uses special tools and experiments in the lab to understand how pathogens spread and how to stop them.



Luis Neves

Meet Professor Luis Neves, a real-life science explorer!

Born in the sunny country of Mozambique, Prof Luis has spent nearly 30 years working as a veterinarian, which is a special doctor who takes care of all kinds of animals. He is a Professor of Veterinary Parasitology at the University of Pretoria, where he teaches students all about parasites — the tiny, uninvited guests like ticks that sometimes hitch a ride on animals.

Prof Luis is a world-class expert on ticks and the teeny-tiny germs they carry. He has traveled to many places, including the University of Liverpool in England, to study how these little bugs work and how to keep our animal friends healthy and happy. He has even written over 80 scientific

stories (called publications) about his discoveries! When he isn't busy teaching or studying ticks, he helps lead big science projects to solve mysteries about animal health.



Ludovica Ingleto

Ludovica Ingleto is an Italian PhD student who studies tiny organisms called ticks and the pathogens they can transmit. She has always been curious about the world and loves traveling and discovering new places. When she was 17, Ludovica won a scholarship that allowed her to spend part of her high school in Brazil. It was there, for the first time, that she learned that some germs, which cause diseases, can be transmitted from small organisms such as insects and ticks to humans. This discovery fascinated her and raised many questions: how do these diseases spread? Can we prevent them? From that moment, she understood that to truly protect people, it is important to take care of the environment and the animals around us. With these ideas, Ludovica studied Evolutionary Biology and is now a PhD student in infectious diseases of animals at the University of Bologna, Italy, where she studies pathogens (tiny organisms that can cause diseases) and how they move between animals, the environment, and humans, adopting a One Health approach, which means recognising that the health of humans, animals, and the environment is closely interconnected. Currently, Ludovica is a visiting PhD student at the Tick Research Group, Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, University of Pretoria, South Africa, where she studies ticks and the pathogens they can transmit, learning from local researchers and exploring different parts of the world. She is particularly interested in how climate change is allowing tropical tick species to spread in Europe.