

2015 1st Quarter Highlights

HOW DOES BRIDGE

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SA?



WE LINK

people in education through reflective learning forums and an online network



WE SHARE

knowledge products such as tools, resources and learning briefs



WE SUPPORT

Communities of Practice that meet and share knowledge, resources and working practice



WE FOCUS ON

- ▶ School leadership
- ▶ Teacher Development
- ▶ Learner Support
- ▶ Early Childhood Development
- ▶ Information Communication Technology (ICTs)

Welcome to the highlights of our 1st Quarter, 2015! BRIDGE is a non-profit organisation that drives collaboration and cooperation among educational stakeholders, sharing knowledge and resources within the education community in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the country.

Visit our new website!

The beginning of 2015 saw the launch of the new BRIDGE [website](#) and [Knowledge Hub](#). Our website describes the BRIDGE focus areas, activities and partners, and the nature and goals of each of our Communities of Practice. The Knowledge Hub is the repository which captures and makes available the knowledge and resources which flow from and between our members and our Communities of Practice.

You will find videos and presentations for all the CoP meetings noted in this newsletter on the BRIDGE website.



School Leadership

South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition

The [South African Extraordinary Schools Coalition](#) (SAESC) held its first National Meeting in 2015 at the Oprah Leadership Academy for Girls (OWLAG) on 17 March. Over 90 SAESC teachers, leaders and partners met to collaborate, share best instructional and leadership practice and observe the host school in action.



SAESC Members on walkabout at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy



School Peer Review Team and LEAP 5 School Leaders

The Fifteenth School Peer Review was successfully conducted on LEAP 5 Science and Maths School in Jane Furse, Limpopo in March 2015. The Peer Review process enables Coalition school leaders and their staff to observe each other's schools to provide feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement of the school under review in a non-judgemental and collaborative way. To access the SPR tools, visit the Coalition's [Knowledge Hub](#).

Local Principals' Communities of Practice



BRIDGE supports two principals' CoPs in the East of Gauteng.

The new school year started off with a bang, with our principals focused on finalizing learner numbers, managing post provisions and supporting each other on leading the curriculum management for the year.

Principals in action

The SGB (School Governing Body) elections have also been a major focus of discussion and activity. Principals have been busy checking on compliance, arranging voting days and ensuring that elections are both free and fair. Through sharing ideas, giving each other advice and drawing from the experience in the forum, principals have been able to create and share best working practice together.

[Click here](#) to see some tips on SGB elections from one of our CoP principals.

Launch of new Principals' Communities of Practice

BRIDGE and its partners celebrated on the 23rd of March 2015 as three new Principals' Communities of Practice were launched in the Ekudibeng Region.

Partnering with the Office of the Chief Director Ekudibeng, BRIDGE will support principals in the Ekurhuleni South, Sedibeng West and Sedibeng East districts. District officials, principals and Chief Director Alison Bengtson joined BRIDGE and long-standing BRIDGE principals as we reflected on the value of being a CoP member, with new principals sharing their concerns and hopes about their involvement. The Department reiterated its commitment to empowering principals through their participation in the BRIDGE model. The opportunity for busy principals to reflect and share honestly and openly with peers while learning from each other created excitement amongst all, as evidenced by the large turnout.



Chief Director Alison Bengtson and school principals at the launch.



Western Cape School Leadership Community of Practice

The Western Cape School Leadership community of practice met on the 26th of February at the host school LEAP Pinelands. Members of the Cop heard from students of UCT's Organisational Psychology department, who discussed their research into the field of leadership development and how practitioners could better measure their work to help them grow. Data-driven management is a focus for school leaders and often the inability to quantify their impact is a challenge for organisations involved in this kind of work.

Partnering with Cliff Central: The Leadership Platform Show



In studio

BRIDGE has partnered with Cliff Central and the **Leadership Platform Show**. The show includes a 30 minute slot in which the focus is on School Leadership. This year BRIDGE has taken part in eight shows on a variety of topics with a number of guests from various Communities of Practice. The show is streamed live every Monday at 11:00 on <http://cliffcentral.com/>.

The topics discussed on the Leadership Platform this year include:

- Challenges in leading the staff and student body of a public inclusive school.
- Partnership building and community engagement in an urban context.
- Leading a school in a rural context and connecting community, social endeavour and schooling.
- Methods to improve instruction through teacher collaboration.
- SGB elections and democratic participation in education.
- Managing and handling diversity in schools including language, gender, sexual orientation, disability and ability.
- Principals and governing bodies: how both are imperative for the success of schools.
- Leadership and education challenges faced by principals and education leaders.

If you are interested in what was shared during these shows, listen to the podcasts [here](#).



Learner Support

Maths and Science Learner Support Main Community



Dr Muavia Gallie in the Main Community meeting

The **Main Community** heard from Dr Muavia Gallie on his current work in the NECT school turnaround project in Limpopo province. Representatives from various organisations engaged with his turnaround strategy, a school improvement plan making use of change agents supporting school principals, district officials and SMTs. The strategy supports schools around 5 key domains: teaching and learning, leadership, personnel and professional learning, school and community as well as data and information management. This strategy is currently being used in 119 schools in Limpopo.

Monitoring and Evaluation Action Group

In the **Monitoring and Evaluation action group**, members were presented with the recently released Epoch and Optima public schools Mathematics Challenge Programme evaluation. Eric Schollar took the CoP through the intensive evaluation done on the 64 high-performing schools in this project. A key finding from this evaluation was the alarming decline in mathematics pass rates country wide in not just lower performing schools, but also high-performing schools. The Maths Challenge Schools were able to curb this decline, and in some instances arrest it altogether.



Eric Schollar presenting on the Epoch & Optima Trust maths interventions

Post School Access Action Group



At the recently re-named **Post School Access action group**, members met to discuss key action points for the year of 2015. This CoP has been involved in Messaging and Mapping activities, and subcommittees reflected back to the larger group on their intended tasks. A messaging concept note was shared with the group, who also engaged with the prototype map of the Post School Access chain.

The Post School Access action group committees

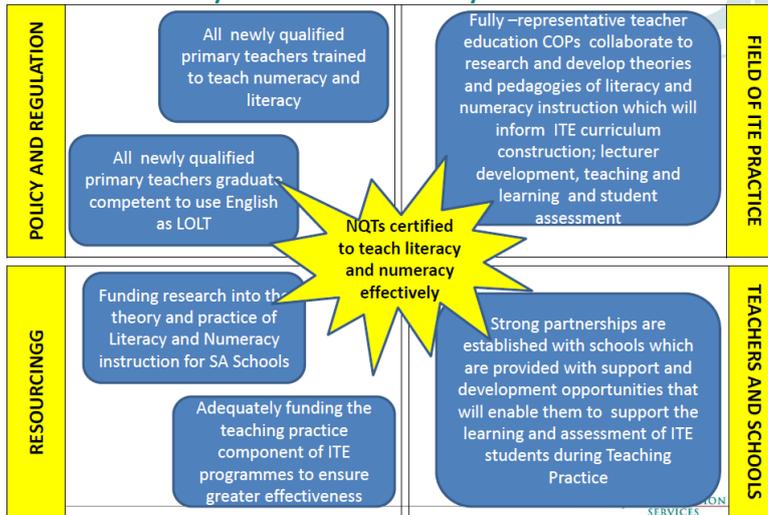


Teacher Development

Teacher Development Action Group

The Teacher Development Action Group is a group which emerged from the Maths and Science Learner Support Main community. This group has grown in numbers and falls into the BRIDGE's Teacher Development Focus Area.

Suggestions for a 5 year programme to strengthen ITE Literacy and Numeracy Education for Primary School Teachers



Slide from ITERP presentation

The **Teacher Development action group** took a close look at Initial Teacher Education (ITE) through the ITE Research Project shared by Dr Nick Taylor. Dr Taylor discussed the relationship between pre-service teacher education and some of the frequently identified issues in the quality of teaching in SA. The findings of the ITERP highlight noticeable differences in the structures and approaches of five HEIs in their course requirements for Bachelor of Education degrees. This research poses pertinent questions relating to standardisation of pre-service teacher education in South Africa.

Teachers Upfront Seminars: Managing Diverse Classrooms and Dealing with Bullying

Teachers Upfront seminars are a platform designed to support, develop and acknowledge the contribution made by teachers. A wide spectrum of role players in education participate in the seminars and have, collaboratively, built up a large knowledge repository on issues affecting teachers and teaching.



The panel at Sci Bono Discovery Centre, presenting on *Managing Diverse Classrooms*.

An exciting development is the live airing of the seminars on DSTV channel 319 and on the BRIDGE website. Two broadcasts have already happened: *Managing Diverse Classrooms* on the 18th of February and *Dealing with Bullying* on the 18th of March.

Each dialogue is followed by an article on the content published by the [Mail & Guardian. Link](#) to News & Media on the BRIDGE website to access these articles

[Click here](#) to watch the *Managing Diverse Classrooms* seminar, [click here](#) to watch the *Dealing with Bullying* on the BRIDGE website.



Early Childhood Development (ECD)

National ECD Community of Practice

In order to foster critical debate about what 'quality' in ECD means and to support the improvement of quality across the sector, the ECD CoP is developing an ECD Quality Framework and Reflection Toolkit. The purpose of the toolkit is to encourage ECD stakeholders in all contexts to critically reflect on what quality means for them.

BRIDGE is in the process of mapping the quality of Resource and Training Organisations (RTOs) in the Eastern Cape. This exercise will mirror the dimensions of quality that the CoP has identified. The data gathered will be presented on an online interactive map which will be accessible to all ECD stakeholders, thereby ensuring improved collaboration and coordination in the sector.

BRIDGE was invited by the ECD Donor Forum to present on the key achievements of the ECD Community of Practice.

The ECD Community of Practice and the ECD Directorate of the Gauteng Department of Education, namely the ECD Institute, have formalised a partnership whereby it was agreed that there will a deliberate exchange of knowledge between the ECD CoP and the ECD Institute's Stakeholder Engagement Forum. Furthermore, BRIDGE will play a Knowledge Management role for the ECD Institute by ensuring the dissemination of knowledge through provincial and national networks.



ECD Stakeholders work in groups to provide input into the ECD Quality Framework and Tool



Western Cape ECD Community of Practice

The Western Cape ECD CoP is scheduled to meet at the end of March. The group will continue their reflections on the quality dimensions of ECD, and specifically contribute to the development of the ECD Quality Reflective Toolkit which the national ECD community is working on.



Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Western Cape ICTs in Education Community of Practice



The Western Cape ICTs CoP met early this year to refocus their efforts on growing relationships and sharing working practice with each other. Russel Pengelly of Computer 4 Kids showcased their award winning ICT integration curriculum for educator training and support programmes. Numeric's Kirsty Thompson spoke about the organisation's work with Mathematics online. Jo Besford presented on Green Shoots' holistic approach, which looks at Maths & Science, Curriculum & Pedagogy, Technological Innovation and Youth Development. Members remained committed to learning about each other and using reflective discussion to improve their organisations.

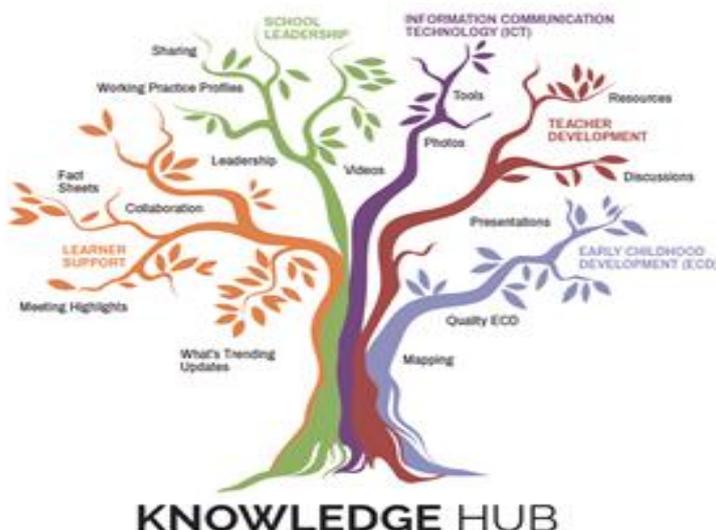
BRIDGE Participation



Deputy Minister Surty talking at the DBE Roundtable

The Department of Basic Education hosted a Roundtable discussion 'Strengthening Collaboration with Non-Governmental Organisations to Improve Learner Participation and Performance in Mathematics, Science and Technology' to feed into its MST strategy. BRIDGE presented in the context of the Research stream.

The First Rand Foundation and the Mail & Guardian convened a Critical Thinking Forum on 'What can be done to improve maths education in South Africa?' at which the FRF Maths Chairs presented their projects. BRIDGE presented on 'Lessons for improved systems performance'.



Read more on the BRIDGE knowledge hub:

<http://www.bridge.org.za/knowledge-hub/>

Join us on Social media:

Twitter: [BridgeProjectSA](#)

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LinkedIn: [BRIDGE Innovation in Learning Organisation](#)