

CONNECTED EDUCATION
EVERY LEADER, EVERY
TEACHER, EVERY LEARNER

BRIDGE

LINKING INNOVATORS IN EDUCATION

SOUTH AFRICAN EXTRAORDINARY SCHOOLS COALITION (SAESC)



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Interconnected
and
Interdependent

15 NOVEMBER 2021



Welcome and Introductions

Hayley Jacobs as the facilitator for this South Africa Extraordinary Schools Coalition welcomed everyone and did a brief introduction of the house rules. A LEAP Learner cited a poem on Black privilege to welcome all members of the Coalition. Participants were then encouraged to check in and reflect using the Miro board.

Click [here](#) to listen to the poem

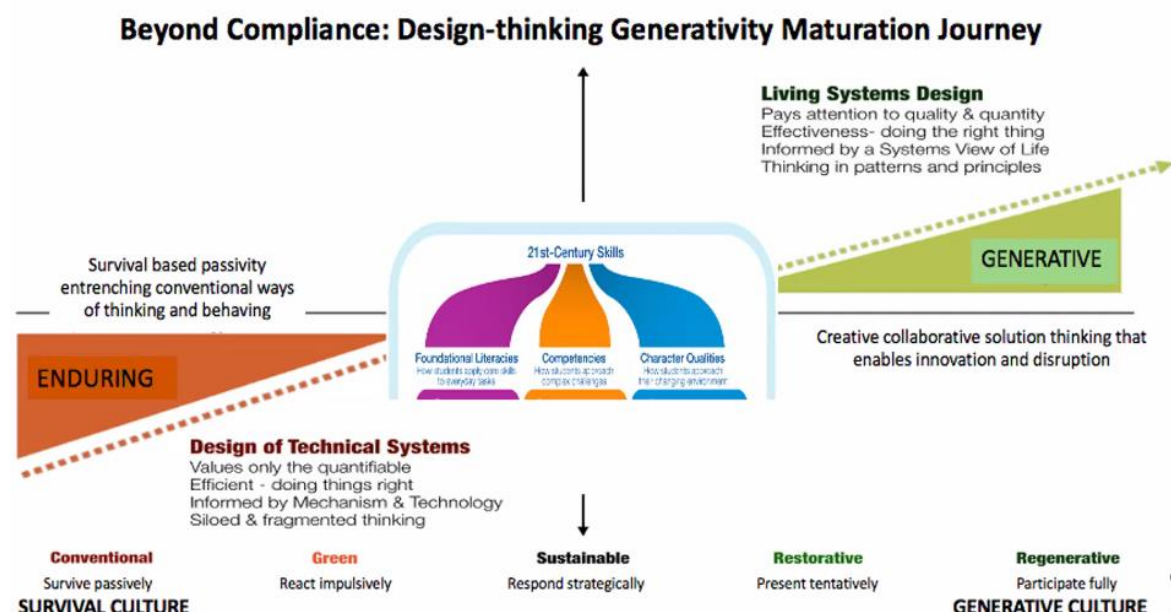
Mindfulness, Poetry, and Check-in

Participants were able to watch a video of David Attenborough presenting at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (also known as COP26) on the climate change challenges experienced by the world. The video explored people's experiences of how the issue of climate change affected individuals in different contexts. The Coalition participants were encouraged to listen attentively and to immerse themselves in the video.

It was noted from one of the discussions that:

As 21st Century people we need to make a mind-set shift and change how we think as we are failing to be environmentally responsible. It is important for people to know how to become a part of a regenerative movement in a global village by acquiring skills that are relevant in the 21st century.

In order to acquire 21st Century skills individuals need to understand what underpins these skills as well as the competencies and qualities required.



The 21st century skills are relevant in that they allow us to:

- Collaborate and do away with silos.
- Play a role in making the changes we want to see; this starts with a change in mindset.
- Have a global vision in a local mission.

Click [here](#) to see
David
Attenborough's
video

Interconnected & interdependent instructional practice

RAPHAEL MUKACHI

The Ubuntu Maths Institute (UMI) aims to shift mind-sets, to ensure that teachers believe and support children in their ability to learn mathematics. The UMI was established with a need to shift the practices applied in teaching and learning mathematics, informed by Ubuntu principles. In doing this, the UMI needs to ensure that learners are offered great learning experience while they are encouraged to explore and self-discover. The UMI intends to address the question raised by Prof John Volmink which seeks to ask, "What kind of people do we want to see coming out of our schooling system?". In response to Prof Volmink's question the UMI believes that people coming from the education system should be active citizens who are critical in their thinking and are literate, numerate, and multi-skilled, independent, and compassionate, and environmentally respectful.

The UMI vision is underpinned by the following five principles:

1. **Self-Knowledge** - I am because we are.
2. **Self-confidence** - I know my values and self-concept.
3. **Resilience** - working through the challenges and dealing with them.
4. **Empathy** - be able to walk in another person's shoes and consider the feelings of others.
5. **Service** - before we lead others, we should serve them.

Reflecting on teaching practices enables teachers to grow and develop. This is accompanied by thinking about thinking, which entails teachers analysing and understanding their teaching practices. This in turn informs how best they can teach in classrooms.

The various ways of learning and multiple intelligences that exist in schools make up an important part of metacognition. However, teachers should engage students using resources and materials that are naturally designed and offer satisfaction and understanding of why they need to learn the subjects they do in school.

Learners struggle with absorbing the content taught in class. In order to support them in their learning processes teachers need to emphasise "the power of not yet", and positively

iterate it to learners that “you don’t know it yet”. This serves as a reminder that learners have an opportunity to learn things which they do not know yet; they can still do better, and they can know and learn what they don’t know “yet”.

Fixed and Growth mindset at UMI:

At UMI, the emphasis is on shifting from a fixed to a growth mindset, and it is believed that every learner has the potential to do mathematics- there are no special attributes required from a learner.

Leave a common legacy that will leave our learners doing maths and teachers understanding and making learning fun and exciting for learners.

The UMI continues to host hybrid workshop in the various provinces: one workshop will be held in Limpopo at the end of this year (2021) and two will follow in Johannesburg and Durban in 2022.

Click [here](#) to see UMI’s short video and Growth and Fixed mindset

Interconnected and interdependent as citizen scientists

HERMAN MEYER

LEAP Five schools have strived for interconnected and interdependent citizen scientist through the *Living Lab Series* which allows learners to be innovative and the *Living Lab Spekboom Edition* which entails education for sustainability, and the *Leap Five Spekboom Hedge*.

The Living Lab Series

The Living Lab Series is a CAPs aligned resource for teachers and learners, which allows for teachers to use different and new ways of teaching which in turn allows for project based, problem based, and regenerative learning opportunities. The living labs are remarkable in that they do not conform to the traditional teaching methods. They render opportunities for learners to try things that are deemed impossible to do in classrooms.

Learners are encouraged to push their limits and boundaries in terms of what they are expected to learn. Although the curriculum guides the learning that takes place in schools, we should be encouraged to introduce new ways of learning and teaching. These spaces are innovative in that the different components of the curriculum can be experienced, assimilated, and integrated by learners and teachers. It has not only enabled integration of learning but has led to connectivity and tackling one of the issues faced by education which are the siloes faced in subject instruction in schools.

The Living Lab Spekboom Edition

The Living Lab Spekboom Edition challenges the status quo in that it forms a space where teachers and learners work together through co-creating and co-designing. It is a space that creates an ecosystem which displays the possibilities of teaching maths, life sciences and natural sciences differently.

The Spekboom hedge

What is 'the hedge'?

The LEAP Five school has initiated a Spekboom hedge on their campus as well as a hedge hub which supports other schools to propagate and grow Spekboom. Most communities have limited knowledge of the Spekboom, therefore LEAP five uses the Spekboom hedge as a teaching tool, and develops assessments around it, while also teaching the overall benefits of the plants.

Living labs don't only focus on life science or mathematics they involve other subjects and enable learners to reflect and get back into harmony with nature.

Each LEAP Five learner is encouraged to plant at least 5 plants and to take some of them home to continue propagating and also create an awareness. So far 5500 of the targeted 22 000 Spekboom plants have been planted by LEAP Five.



A Spekboom Hedge

Click [here](#) to see Herman's Presentation.

Interconnected and interdependent across generations & communities

LUNGISWA GWAAI

Lungiswa is a former LEAP learner, who in her personal growth is successfully utilising the lessons learned at her school and showing how LEAP is not only benefitting the local space but the global space as well. LEAP has taught Lungiswa that more than simply *embracing* opportunities, one can *create* opportunities for generations all over the country. She is making strides in the community and beyond. Below are some projects she is involved with that allow her to make an impact.

These include:

- **Langa ECD Project:** The objective of this project is to create high quality foundational learning for all young children in ECD centres in the Langa area. The project also aims to tackle issues of infrastructure and the registration of ECD centres. With the high prevalence of unqualified and underqualified practitioners in the area, the Langa ECD Project initiated training for principals and ECD practitioners. Some training is done through ELRU while several practitioners are placed in colleges to obtain their qualifications. This project which works with about 34 ECD centers, is made possible by the support of Rotary International.
- **LEAP Community Multipurpose Center:** This project supports various activities in the community, for example: food gardens, Christmas parties, Easter celebrations, a soup kitchen and senior citizen programmes.
- **The LEAP Interact Group:** This is a group of students who serve beyond the social development of the community by practicing good will within the community.
- **Lungiswa, Champion Teacher:** For the 'teen-preneur' programme which focuses on teaching kids about business and entrepreneurship at an early age.

Interconnected and Interdependent in the digital revolution

JEREMIAH MUBAIWA

The LEAP digital strategy was developed collaboratively with a digital partner and is informed by a relook at the existing strategy. The aim is to ensure that learners work with both digital and non-digital partners to become digital citizen, benefitting both learners and the community at large. One of the ways used to achieve this is by using digital tools to collaborate.

To initiate the strategy, certain requirements had to be met. These included, among others: the digital upskilling of teachers, having a stable Wi-Fi connection, and everyone having a working device. This does not only ensure that learners acquire 21st Century digital skills but also ensures that no learners are left behind. The community has been included as an integral part of the strategy, to ensure that it can have maximum impact. The strategy aims to benefit each stakeholder: the chart below provides an example of how the strategy will change the current state to an ideal state for teachers and learners as

stakeholders. It outlines the organisations strategy and shows how the strategy intends to take organisations from the current state to an ideal state.

How do we become more Connected and Responsive?

We will take our organisation from it's current state as displayed on the table, to the ideal state as shown. For example:

Current State	Ideal State
Instructional practices are teacher-centred	Learner centred - teaching
Focus on whole class learning	Individual learning pathways
Learners as consumers	Learners as active digital citizens
Teachers as transmitters of information	Teachers as facilitators
Fear of new technologies	Embrace new technologies
Limited equipment and software	Optimum, lean infrastructure
Silos in administration	Seamless integration

As an organisation that aims to be data driven, collected learner data will be used to inform decisions and improve academic performance. It can also be used to create narratives, monitor, and generate solutions to challenges faced by learners in the school.

Click [here](#) to see Jeremiah's presentation

The Child at the Centre

JAMES MALOPE

Interconnected and Interdependent explores the need for all stakeholders involved in schools to benefit and have an impact. Partnership is important, but pairing with the right partners, who have a vision which aligns with that of the school, is key. While it is crucial that all partners understand the importance and the need for each partnership, it is most critical to ensure that the child remains the centre of attention.

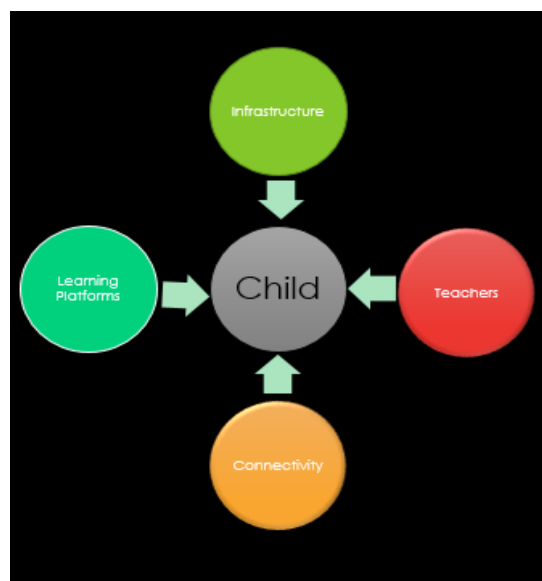
The process entails 4 components:

- Infrastructure (cellphones, laptops)
- Prepping teachers
- Connectivity (continuously supporting learners at home)
- Learning platforms

LEAP schools belong to the community, and partners need to be aware of this important fact.

Since learners are at the centre of the project, it is essential that we understand what the impact and outcomes are on the learner. Learners need to learn critical skills of the future and to prepare for future jobs. There should be a reciprocal relationship where all stakeholders play an equal role.

Click [here](#) to see James' Presentation



Interconnected & interdependent in families and community

“It takes a village to raise a child”

ASANDA SIGIGABA

Asanda Sigigaba is a leader of a LEAP school in Alexander. She works with the Alexander community, and she believes in and tries to live the saying that “it takes a village to raise a child”.

Although schools play a vital role in the lives of children, it is through partnerships that various stakeholders are allowed to get involved. One of the steps taken in addressing the challenges faced by children is to explore the prevailing issues and the various stakeholders that can assist in addressing the associated challenges. So far, the stakeholders involved with the school are parents, the Alexander SAPS, clinics, and schools in the community.

Other Partnerships include:

- *The Rays of hope* – an NPO based in Alexander and other areas, which impacts on children’s lives by helping them deal with the different challenges they face.
- *Ignition* – A financial programme aimed at assisting learners financially when they access university. With the high prevalence of GBV, the programme has identified the need to refer and offer counselling services and support to GBV victims in schools. Partnerships do not only allow for tackling of issues effectively but they ensure that these issues are tackled in a holistic manner.

Patricia works within the social development space; this involves working with young people in social development programmes. Involving young people benefits the programme because they are aware of the challenges faced by the community. This helps to identify solutions to the challenges. The programme ensures that young people understand the importance of small “gives” as they contribute to the whole, it makes a difference in the lives of those affected.

The programmes work with different structures of the community, such as: ECD centres, old age homes, and disability homes. “If you give me a fish, I will eat tomorrow but if you teach me how to fish, I will never be hungry”. This quote emphasise that young people should be taught skills that enable them to provide for themselves. This is done through training programmes which involve making waffles and samosas, needle work and knitting.

One of the most beneficial, is the sewing course which leads to certification after three months, where after students can start their own businesses in their communities. Individuals have already started reaping the benefits of their involvement in this project as they have been able to supply uniforms to ECD centres, the Department of Social Development, and the LEAP schools.

This programme has empowered women by reminding them that they are capable of making their own living. Some have even initiated tuckshops in schools to sell Christmas packets.

The sustainability of the project is significant because it enables individuals to continue benefitting and making their own living.





A snapshot of Project activities.

Closing

To close the CoP, Hayley, thanked all presenters and participants for the stimulating engagement.

The previous SAESC knowledge products can be accessed on the BRIDGE website using the link below.

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

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