

PrimTEd

Newsletter 4

June 2018

Into Phase Three

The PrimTEd project is now well into its Phase Three, the third financial year of its operation since initiation in the second half of 2016. The good

news is that outputs are starting to emerge and we report on some of these in this newsletter. Further good news is that most of the South

African universities involved in initial teacher education are involved with one or more of the seven working groups of the project.

The National Advisory Committee

In February this year it was reported to the NWC that the National Advisory Committee has been established with representatives from the following organisations:

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)	Dr Whitfield Green, Dr Michelle Mathey
Department of Basic Education (DBE)	Mr Gerrit Coetzee
Education Deans Forum (EDF)	Dr Muki Moeng
National Teachers' Union (NATU)	Professor S.N. Imenda
National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA)	Mrs Gaylin Bowles
Professional Educators Union (PEU)	Mr J. Motona
South African Council for Educators (SACE)	Mr Theo Toolo
South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)	Mrs Veronica Hofmeester
South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF)	Professor Hamsa Venkatakrisnan
Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (SAOU)	Adele Jacob

The Committee will meet once a year. It will advise on the implementation of the projects, review proposals and progress reports and where necessary address implementation blockages.

National Working Committee

The NWC has met four times in the Phase Two of the project, twice in 2017 and already twice in 2018. At the first February 2018 meeting the Workgroup Coordinators were introduced to the evaluator of the whole project, Prof. Johann Louw of the University of Cape Town, who outlined the evaluation process to the committee and will produce an interim report by June 2019.

Also under discussion were the various forces pushing for a core curriculum for the ITE of literacy and mathematics teachers as well as the various initiatives working on standards to improve the professional standing of teachers.

The second meeting in April 2018 looked in some detail at this issue of professional standards for teachers and particularly the knowledge and practice standards that would apply to literacy and mathematics teachers. The Committee members' minds were concentrated by Robert Prince of UCT's presentation on the latest

National Benchmark Test (NBT) results. These tests at the twelve participating universities assess the entry-level academic and quantitative literacy and mathematics proficiency of students (and thus helps universities improve their selection processes, academic support and curriculum development work.

The data suggests that relatively few first year students are ready for university level study and that in 2018 the Education student intake was the weakest of all the Faculties, with less than 16% of the them found to be proficient in academic literacy.

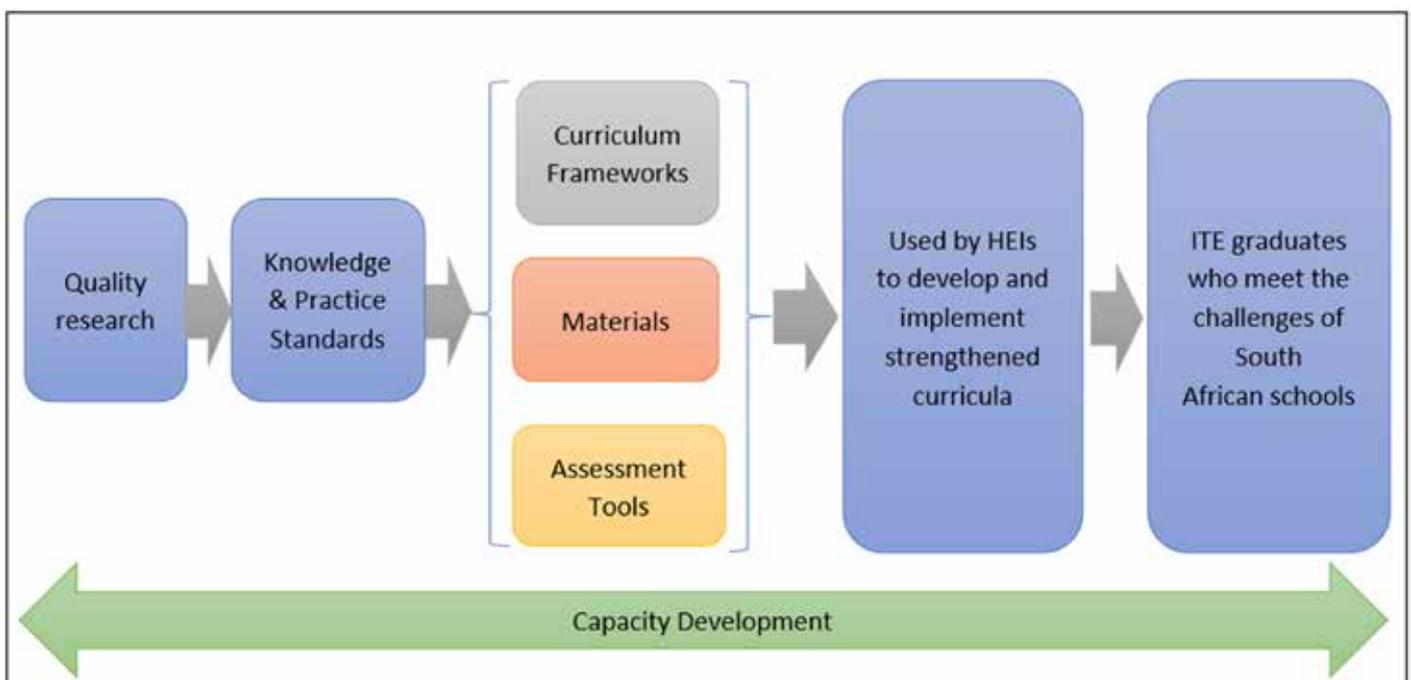
According to these Education student scores, only about 30% of them are suitable candidates for degree level study, while a further 40% would require an extended programme if they are to meet the qualification requirements.

There are a number of parallel standards development processes under way at the moment: the South

African Council for Educators (SACE) *Professional Teaching Standards*, the Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care and Education's *Knowledge and practice standards for emerging and initial teacher preparation for early childhood care and education*, the Digital Learning Competencies Working Group's *Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning*, and the PrimTEd literacy and mathematics working groups' standards development.

These standards will in due course inform Initial Teacher Education programme content, processes and materials at the curriculum level.

If well designed, collaboratively developed, collectively owned, and taken up into teacher education programmes, knowledge and practice standards can provide the basis for greater convergence between teacher education programmes intended to develop teachers of specific subjects, without requiring that programmes follow exactly the same curricula.



Literacy Work Groups – the Consolidated Literacy Work Group (WG1)

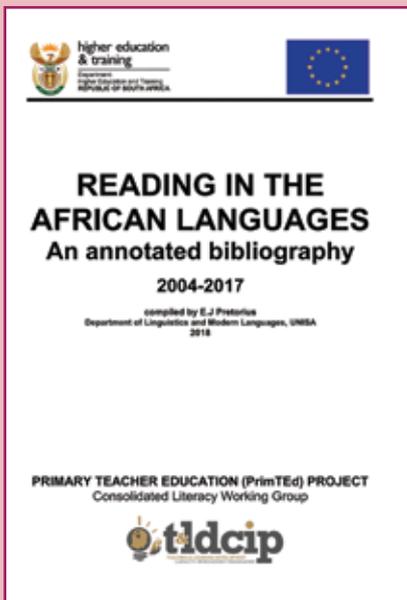


The language and literacy workers have been extremely busy over the last few months, visiting various universities as part of their audit of literacy related courses and modules and running two consultative workshops at which two of their outputs were showcased – a bibliography on research on early reading in African languages and draft knowledge and practice standards for graduate literacy teachers.

The Early Reading in African Languages Workshop

Held on 9 April and attended by 35 participants from fifteen universities the workshop launched the annotated bibliography compiled by Professor Lilli Pretorius of UNISA. It provides a summary account of research that has been done on reading in African languages from 2004 to 2017, more specifically on languages belonging mainly to the family of Southern African Bantu languages. Comprising over 40 annotated entries, mainly

research articles from accredited journals, chapters from books and postgraduate dissertations, it also lists several other sources closely related to reading in the African languages. It is available on the PrimTEd website and will be regularly updated. The workshop also looked at the development of consonant and vowel charts and the knowledge and resources needed by teachers to teach decoding.



<https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/primted/resources/language-and-literacy-resources-repository/reading-in-african-languages-an-annotated-bibliography-pretorius-2018.pdf/download>



Annotated list of readings on literacy teacher competencies and standards

The readings have been categorised under the following headings and sub-headings:

[Part 1: General teacher competencies](#)

[Part 2: Literacy teacher competencies](#)

[General literacy teacher competencies](#)

[English teacher competencies](#)

[Part 3: Literacy teacher competencies as assessors of literacy learning](#)

Part 1: General teacher competencies

British Columbia Ministry of Education. 2013. *Standards for the education, competence and professional conduct of educators in British Columbia*. Fourth Edition. Vancouver, British Columbia: Ministry of Education, Teacher Regulation Branch

A set of eight short and very general standards.

General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland. 2011. *Teaching: The Reflective Profession, Incorporating the Northern Ireland Teacher Competencies*. Belfast: General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

Provides a general discussion on these general competencies, the aspects of which are then given in some detail, with exemplars appropriate to the educator's experience and length of service.

Jobs for the Future and the Council of Chief State School Officers. 2015. *Educator competencies for personalized, learner-centered teaching*. Boston, Massachusetts: Jobs for the Future

Describes a general set of teacher competencies that would support a more personalized, learner-centred approach to school and college education. It assumes curricular freedom and educational systems that are already making innovative learner-centred reforms. Includes cross-references to the *InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards*.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. 2010 [2016]. *What teachers should know and be able to do*. Arlington, Virginia: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Provides five general standards described as "core propositions" with a discussion of each including a set of sub-propositions.

The Standards for Literacy Teachers Workshop

This was a consultative workshop that examined the draft knowledge and practice standards for language and literacy graduate teachers produced by the group. It was attended by 36 participants on 4 May who through a highly interactive process critiqued the drafts and make suggestions for the refinement of what were general seen as highly useful documents.

Another annotated bibliography was compiled as part of the standards development project and lists examples of literacy teacher competencies and standards relating to language and literacy teaching.

After some revision in the light of the consultation recommendations, these standards will be placed on the PrimTEd website. <https://www.jet.org.za/clearing-house/printed/standards/literacy-teacher-standards>





“ Each tool-kit will include a text on the ‘big idea’ being dealt with, activities for the lecture room and the classroom.”

Working Group 3 (WG3): Shape, Space and Measurement

The geometry working group is energetically involved in the development of a set of “tool-kits” on key components of geometry. This work was preceded by the design of a materials development checklist and a template for the geometry tool-kits. There is to be general introduction to the tool-kits (with material on the theoretical perspective informing their design), and each tool-kit will include a text on the “big idea” being dealt with, activities for the lecture room and activities for the classroom, and references and hyperlinks. There will also be a set of lesson outlines for the classroom.

Two writing workshops have been held, the most recent on 8 to 10 March in Durbanville near Cape Town. Workgroup participants from nine universities refined the work they had been doing to develop teacher guides and toolkits for the Intermediate Phase grades 4 to 6 on some key Shape and Space themes: Properties, 2D shapes, Transformation and Tessellation, Measurement, Time, Temperature, Capacity and Volume.

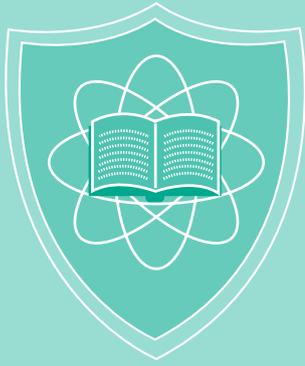
Also in attendance were John Aitchison from CCWG1 (Knowledge management) to discuss the typesetting and packaging of these outputs and Nicky Roberts of CCWG2 (Assessment) to look at how the knowledge and skills developed via these guides and toolkits could be assessed.

Tessellate: to fit together in a pattern with no spaces. The word is derived from a Latin one for the small blocks of stone, tile, glass, or other material used in the construction of a mosaic.



Cross-cutting Work Groups

Cross-Cutting Working Group 1 (CCWG1): Knowledge Management



PrimTEd website

After some development delays the website went live in November 2017. It is hosted on the JET Education Services website) at <https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/printed>

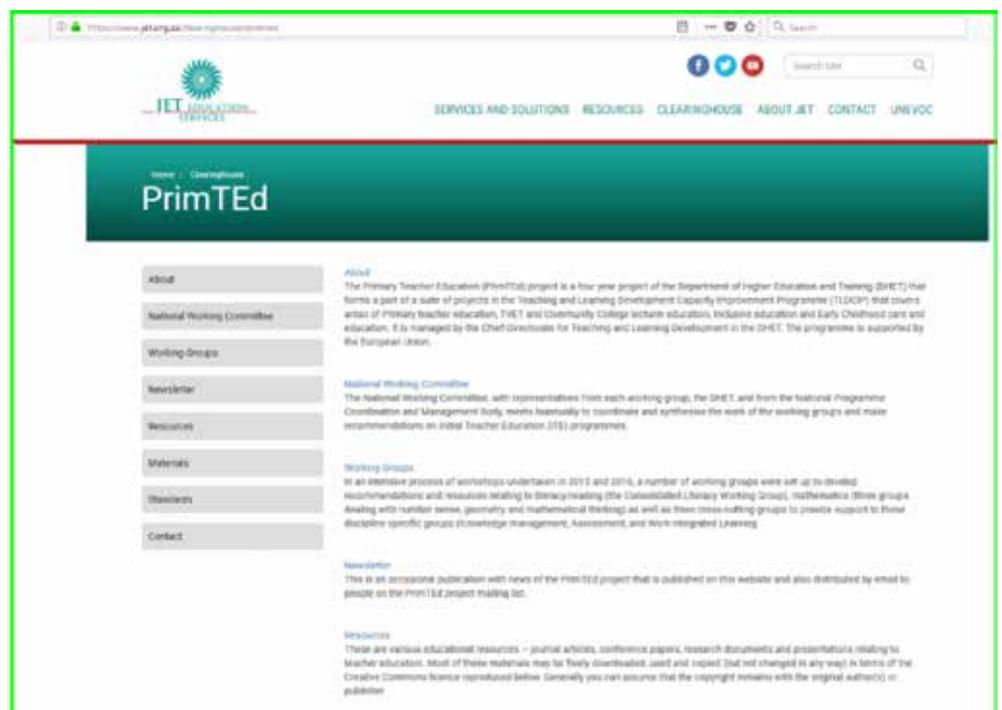
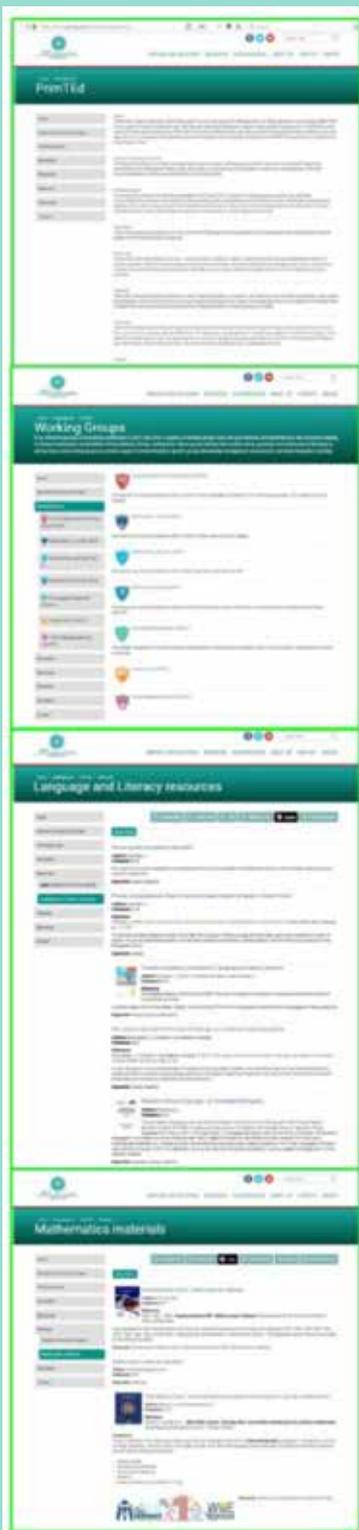
The JET website already hosts a UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre which acts as a clearinghouse for resources for TVET: research, case studies, databases, publications, etc.).

The PrimTEd pages are gradually being populated with material from the working groups and also in a section of the website devoted to the various teaching standards initiatives currently under way in South Africa (<https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/printed/standards>).

A start has also been made to have materials developed in the past by various DHET and DBE literacy and mathematics projects made available for downloading.

Further work will be done on copyright issues and on specifications for text and visual material that will be put on the website.

Working Groups have, however, been slow to send in material for the website.





**Developing
assessment
instruments to
assess developing
competence of
primary teacher
education students
and new primary
teacher graduates.**

Cross-Cutting Work Group 2 (CCWG2): Assessment

This group continues to be a very active in piloting its online mathematics and CAL academic language tests, both of which are designed to get a sense of where education students are and whether they have become more proficient in their own mathematical and CAL use by the end of their studies.

In 2017 the online maths test was administered to 317 1st year B.Ed. students at two universities and 264 4th year students at four institutions. The test is designed for the Foundation and Intermediate Phase levels.

One of the benefits of the online test is that it is marked automatically. A paper based version of the test will soon be trialed. The PrimTEd maths test consists of two kinds of items: subject content items of a type typically encountered in the primary school curriculum and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) items which attempt to probe knowledge of how to teach a topic.

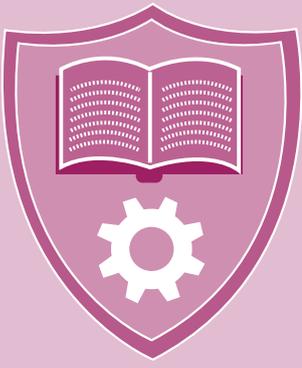
Encouragingly, 4th year students scored higher (mean 52%) than their 1st year counterparts (mean 40%), although questions have to be asked as to whether we should be satisfied with allowing a student who has scored less than 60% on this test into a maths classroom. Students found the PCK items more difficult than those based on straight maths content knowledge.

The University of the Witwatersrand is using the test to diagnose student problems, and those requiring help are directed to the Olico online materials (learn.olico.org), which provide development and practice work.

In 2018 the Assessment Working Group added an academic literacy test and expanded the number of participating universities to 12. The Group is developing a report format for participating universities, which compares the results from an institution, with students names, with those of other institutions, which are anonymised. Results are disaggregated by topic area, level of cognitive demand, PCK/content, etc. and provision made for development over time. Each participating institution also gets all the raw student score data in a spreadsheet, so they can diagnose and work with individuals requiring additional support, and can identify those students who could be used as tutors.

The Assessment Working Group will be presenting at the following conferences:

- AMESA conference: 25 - 29 June 2018. Venue: University of the Free State (Main Campus),
- SAERA conference: 22-24 October 2018 North West
- SAARMSTE conference 2019 January



Cross-Cutting Work Group 3 (CCWG3): Work Integrated Learning

This working group is dealing with the problem of most current Initial Teacher Education focusing on knowledge but not on practice (in spite of requirements that teaching practice forms a significant component of the qualification credits).



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Primary Teacher Education Project

The PrimTEd Project is a component of the Department of Higher Education and Training's Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme (TLDCIP), and as such is under the overall authority of the DHET's Director-General. The PrimTEd Project is managed by the Chief Directorate for Teaching and Learning Development, located in the University Education branch of the DHET.

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