TEACHING & LEARNING
BEST PRACTICE CONFERENCE

REDEFINING TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT:
DRIVING STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Emerald Hotel Vanderbijlpark, 26 - 27 May 2026

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Day 1: 26 May 2026

09:30-09:50 Prof Re-an Müller & Ms Nicolene van Rooyen
"Show, Don't Tell":
ELEVATE (Enhancing Learning and Engagement with Virtual Authentic Training Experiences)
ELEVATE is an immersive learning initiative that uses Virtual Reality combined with 360° video to enhance safety management training through realistic, scenario-based experiences. This presentation shares lessons learned from production, showcases Phase 1, and highlights student feedback on student perceptions and engagement.

10:35-10:55 Prof Alwiena Blignaut
"Show, Don't Tell":
Level up learning: Game-based teaching
Game-based teaching allows students from different backgrounds to engage on a common ""playing field"". It empowers students to take an active role in their educational experience, enhancing teamwork, collaboration and active participation. The aim of this presentation is to introduce game-based teaching as an effective and innovative strategy for enhancing student participation and engagement.
By presenting a ""Show, Don't Tell"" demonstration, the following objectives would be addressed:
• Engaging the audience in a learning game;
• Introducing game-based teaching by example; and
• Show-casing some advantages of game-based teaching.

10:55-11:05 Dr Janien Linde
Lightning Talk:
Found Poetry as Creative Learning Opportunity: An Experiment in Multimodal Teaching
In this Lightning Talk I would like to share how my first-year students created found poetry from the prescribed volume of poetry for their Afrikaans and Dutch Literature module. I participated in TEA 2025 and would like to share what I did, what worked and what I learned in the process.

11:30-11:50 Dr Chilombo Banda

Presentation:

Press Play Using Game Shows to Transform Mass Communication Pedagogy

First-year students at North-West University (NWU) often face challenges when transitioning into higher education, such as limited classroom participation, passive learning habits, and difficulty engaging with abstract communication theories. In the context of Mass Communication and Media Studies, these challenges are further intensified by the need to relate theoretical frameworks to rapidly changing media environments. This paper introduces a classroom-based pedagogical intervention that modifies a Family Feud-style game as a gamified learning strategy to boost student engagement and participation among NWU first-year students. Based on principles of active, collaborative, and retrieval practice, the approach motivates students to recall, discuss, and apply key concepts such as media functions, audience reception, and communication models in an interactive, culturally relevant format. Drawing on its use in a first-year Mass Communication module at NWU, the paper highlights key best practices, including aligning game content with learning outcomes, fostering inclusive participation among diverse student cohorts, and incorporating structured debriefing to deepen conceptual understanding. The activity also functions as an informal assessment tool, enabling lecturers to identify knowledge gaps and adapt their teaching strategies in real time. The findings indicate that integrating familiar media formats into the classroom boosts student motivation, encourages peer learning, and enhances the connection between theory and practice. This paper adds to not only best practices in teaching and learning but also to the scholarship of teaching and learning at NWU by showing how low-cost, contextually appropriate gamification strategies can support students success and enrich learning.

11:50-12:10 Mr Aphiwe Ntloko

“Show, Don’t Tell”:

Empowering First-Year Social Work Students: Experiential Learning and Self-Awareness for Transformative Education

This presentation addresses the paradigm shift required in teaching first-year social work students in South Africa, emphasising the critical role of self-awareness in shaping worldviews and learning. Recognising that students’ realities are informed by their socialisation, the approach centres on uncovering personal values and societal influences that shape thinking and behaviour. Given the challenges first-year students face in reading comprehension and following instructions, this session advocates for experiential learning as a transformative pedagogical tool. By prioritising “learning by doing” and reflective practice, students engage actively, correcting mistakes through hands-on experience rather than passive reception. Acknowledging the wealth of knowledge students bring into the classroom, the presentation highlights the importance of student-informed teaching that values learner agency and participation. This interactive session exemplifies best practices in the scholarship of teaching and learning using live demonstrations to model effective engagement strategies. Through active participation, attendees will witness how creativity and innovation in teaching can foster deeper understanding, critical reflection, and student success. Aligned with the conference theme, “Redefining Teaching, Learning, and Assessment: Driving Student Success in the Digital Age,” this presentation offers practical insights into fostering inclusive, dynamic learning environments that empower social work students to thrive. It invites educators to rethink traditional methods and embrace

experiential, student-centred approaches that prepare learners for the complexities of social work practice in a rapidly evolving society.

12:10-12:30 Mr Koos De Villiers, Dr Anette Degenaar & Ms Thato Zethi

Presentation:

Bridging Theory and Practice: Enhancing Graduate Employability through Industry-Linked Social Media Projects

This presentation explores an innovative, multi-campus teaching approach implemented across the three North-West University (NWU) campuses to bridge the gap between theory, practice, and employability. Situated within the COMS214 module, the approach integrates authentic, industry-aligned learning through two complementary interventions. The first intervention focuses on a LinkedIn personal branding assignment in which students strategically develop their online professional identities. This process encourages reflection on skills, experiences, and career goals, positioning students as emerging communication practitioners in a competitive digital environment. The second intervention involves a collaborative, work-simulated learning project developed with the Faculty of Humanities (FHUM) liaison. Students engage with a real client brief to design social media content and a campaign aimed at engaging target audiences. This includes research, strategic planning, and presenting solutions through a client pitch utilising a social media strategy, brand manual and resource pack designed in collaboration with the NWU Centre for Teaching and Learning. Together, these interventions demonstrate how experiential, collaborative teaching practices can bridge the theory–practice divide while developing critical graduate attributes such as digital literacy, strategic thinking, and professional identity formation.

12:30-12:50 Prof Catrien Wentink

Presentation:

Using movement and culturally responsive teaching to satisfy the needs of Self-determination theory in my music theory classes.

In my music theory classes, I teach a culturally diverse group of students, making it an ongoing challenge to connect with everyone musically. To address this, I incorporated culturally responsive teaching strategies, including movement, in my classroom. Movement is deeply embedded in music-making within African cultures, making it a natural and engaging approach for students. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) suggests that fostering students' autonomy, competence, and sense of relatedness enhances their intrinsic motivation, which is crucial for positive academic outcomes (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009). Therefore, the aim of this single instrumental case study is to explore how the use of movement and culturally responsive teaching can satisfy the three needs of self-determination theory. This qualitative study employs a single instrumental case study approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018), focusing on my music theory module and its students (aged 18–25) over four years (2020–2023). Data collection methods include classroom observations, video recordings, student evaluations, and interviews. To analyse the data, I used Atlas.ti.24, applying Self-Determination Theory as a theoretical lens to code and interpret the data. Preliminary findings indicate that all three basic needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—were present in my music theory classes. The use of movement and culturally responsive teaching played a significant role in fostering these elements, ultimately enriching students' learning experiences.

12:50-13:00 Prof Anneke Moolman & Ms Estie Lubbe

Lightning Talk:

Guest Lectures in Assurance Education: Exploring PGDA Students' Learning Experiences and Perceptions

As part of the School of Accounting Sciences' community engagement, we invite carefully planned professional guest speakers (professionals) to provide students with insight into and exposure to practice. Specifically, this lightning talk would focus on guest lectures presented within our PGDA programme. Feedback will be requested from the students to determine students' experiences regarding the scheduled guest lectures. This would enable reflection on whether it plays a positive role in students' learning. By the time of the conference, we would have received feedback from the students, enabling us to share our experience.

13:00-13:10 Dr Werner Gresse

Lightning Talk:

Pedagogy of discomfort in the Labour Relations classroom: Teaching uncomfortable and controversial themes

Teaching is an inherently dynamic process that demands ongoing adaptability in response to continual societal shifts and technological advancements. However, caution is required in teaching as well, because students are regarded as vulnerable human participants in research; if this holds for research, it should likewise apply to teaching. In the peer observation session for my 2023 teaching award, the colleague who observed my class began her report by stating “For a very sensitive and controversial topic, Dr Gresse had a clear start, middle, and ending for his lesson”. This insight prompts significant teaching-related questions about how instructors can successfully deliver content that overlaps with strongly held social, political, legal, and moral convictions, especially in higher education environments that are becoming more diverse and more digitally interconnected. In labour relations, specific to my subjects, we frequently have to discuss sensitive and contentious issues, because the field is closely rooted in sociology and, in particular, to the broader socio-political context. Therefore, it is common for these lectures to have to themes related to race, gender, equality, politics, ideologies, religion etc. Based on previous experience, the simplest way to handle these topics is either to omit them and classify the material as self-study, or, where possible, to substitute them with examples and discussions that are less controversial in the South African context, while remaining relevant to the chapter’s scope. While these methods are useful, the reality is that students will encounter the same challenges once they enter employment, so we have a responsibility to prepare them for uncomfortable situations. Consequently, avoiding controversial topics is not necessarily the most effective strategy, particularly considering research on discomforting pedagogies, which indicates that thoughtfully supported challenges can foster new ways of thinking in students. In line with the theme of this conference, this presentation will consider how controversial topics may be taught in ways that advance student success through critical engagement, dialogic learning, and inclusive pedagogical practice. In contemporary classrooms, students bring with them diverse ideological, cultural, and personal worldviews, which may differ significantly not only from one another, but at times from those of the lecturer. These differences can create pedagogical tensions, but they also offer valuable opportunities for deeper learning, reflexivity, and the development of critical citizenship.

13:10-13:20 Mr Charl Gertse

Lightning Talk:

From Item Analysis to Peer Learning: Innovating Assessment for Student Success

This presentation introduces an innovative assessment feedback strategy that turns item analysis into a collaborative learning tool. The method finds problem questions where misconceptions are prevalent and highlights areas of strong comprehension by analysing student performance on individual test questions. A structured peer feedback loop that encourages inquiry, discussion, and deeper understanding is created by connecting students who exhibit mastery with peers who had difficulty. This approach, which is based on the ideas of social the constructivism and item analysis, transforms assessment from a static performance metric into a dynamic learning opportunity. In addition to increasing student engagement, the approach fosters graduate qualities like teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving, connecting classroom instruction with the abilities needed in the workplace.

13:20-13:40 Prof Yvonne-Marié Brand

Lightning Talk:

Fostering graduate attributes through community-embedded brass pedagogy

This presentation shares a best-practice example of redesigning a fourth-year brass pedagogy module to foster graduate attributes and innovation in teaching and learning through community-embedded, practice-based approaches. While the module outcomes remained unchanged, the lecturer worked in close collaboration with the student to reshape the learning experience toward authentic, real-world engagement. The redesigned module included lesson planning for a beginner learner, a school-based recruitment demonstration, applied teaching and remediation, and a community brass workshop where the student designed, marketed, and presented a teaching intervention. Entrepreneurial elements and accessible digital tools—such as video submissions and mobile-based communication platforms—were integrated to extend learning beyond the classroom. This approach supported the development of agency, communication, problem-solving, and professional identity. The presentation offers a practical model for integrating student partnership, community engagement, and authentic assessment to foster graduate attributes in higher education.

14:25-14:45 Ms Musa Masiza, Prof Vicki Koen & Dr Tamlynn Jefferis

Presentation:

Mindjoy AI Tutor: Advancing Guidance in Proposal and Report Writing for Psychology Honours Students

The PSYH 674 (Research report: Theory and practice) psychology honours module offered at the North-West University (NWU) requires that students submit both a proposal and a report in a single academic year. Considering the time constraints and practical limitations in this regard, the module team explored the potential value of AI-powered learning platforms in the past few years to support students in the writing of their proposals and reports. Since AI technologies are increasingly being implemented across the world to enhance learning and contribute to innovative research and interventions in psychology, this seemed like the logical next step in the module to ensure best practice. The past two years has also seen a drastic increase in unethical AI use by students for their proposal and report assessments, further stressing the need to provide them with an ethical AI platform for this module

instead of not allowing AI use at all. With financial support from the NWU, Mindjoy licences were secured for the psychology honours students of 2026. Mindjoy, an AI-powered learning platform, is designed to assist educators in developing engaging and interactive learning experiences for students. With the assistance of the Mindjoy team, a tutor for guidance throughout the proposal and report writing process was created for the module. The presentation will introduce the tutor with practical examples and provide a reflection of the module team's experiences and observations pertaining to the use of the tutor.

14:45-15:05 Dr Estie Gresse

Presentation:

Blending AI with Case Law Summaries in Problem-Based Family Law Learning: Pedagogical Approach to Student Success

First year family law students often struggle significantly with the volume of case law prescribed for the module. Moreover, they struggle to interpret and condense this information, a crucial skill not only for their academic studies but also for their future work as legal professionals. Students are also expected to gain an understanding of how family law operates in real-world contexts, both through the interpretation of case law and through its practical application. Amid a fast-changing digital world, students can quickly become overwhelmed. They are expected to responsibly and ethically use a variety of digital tools, including AI and other relevant online resources, while also being required to master the theoretical underpinnings of the module. In the context of redefining teaching and learning to drive student success in a digital age, this paper reflects on an innovative approach to first-year family law legal education that integrates problem-based learning with the intentional use of artificial intelligence. Drawing on classroom practice, the paper explores how tools such as ChatGPT can be used to support students in engaging with complex legal material, particularly in the summarisation of case law, while still preserving the pedagogical value of traditional, unaided case analysis. This paper contends that deliberately combining AI with problem-based learning can improve student engagement and comprehension, while still preserving space for independent cognitive growth through conventional case summarisation. By requiring students to engage with both AI-assisted and self-directed tasks, a balanced approach is fostered that promotes critical thinking, reflection, and academic integrity. In addition, embedding practical legal drafting within problem-based scenarios contributes to the development of key graduate attributes. These include analytical reasoning, practical legal skills, ethical awareness, and professional readiness. Ultimately, this paper adds to the conversation on innovation in teaching and learning by demonstrating how the considered use of AI, together with experiential and practice-focused approaches, can foster the holistic development of first-year law students as they prepare to meet the demands of the legal profession.

15:05-15:25 Ms Eunice Pretorius & Ms Fotiene Avrakotos-King

"Show, Don't Tell":

Using Coding & Robotics to Promote Learning Engagement Across Modules

This presentation shares a practical model for integrating Coding & Robotics into Natural Science and Technology (NS&T) modules in an initial teacher education programme. Using the BBC micro:bit as a cross-curricular tool, student teachers engage with science concepts — such as the reflection of light and the properties of sound — through authentic coding and making activities. We demonstrate how Project-Based Learning (PBL) assessments, including

Scratch animation tasks and micro:bit prototype challenges, can develop both subject content knowledge and 21st-century digital competencies simultaneously. This integration models the very pedagogy student teachers are expected to enact in their future classrooms.

15:25-15:35 Dr Nombuso Zondo

Lightning Talk:

From Formula to Meaning: Using Data to Develop Statistical Thinking

A common challenge in undergraduate Statistics teaching is that students often focus on procedures and formulas without engaging with the interpretation of results in context. This presentation explores how digital data sources, AI tools, and statistical software can be used to generate and analyse data for teaching, learning and assessment. The approach helps students move beyond formula-driven learning towards interpreting data and developing statistical thinking in context. It also supports academics in creating tailored datasets for teaching and assessment more efficiently. The presentation briefly reflects on what was implemented, what worked well, and what was learned with the use of digital and AI tools in generating data to improve conceptual understanding in Statistics.

16:20-16:30 Mrs Mittah Malebo Magodielo, Mr Rodney Nel & Dr Oliver Gore

Digital Poster:

Peer mentors' experiences of supporting first-year students in a South African University

First-year students in South African higher education experience numerous challenges especially adapting to the university environment. Failure to develop effective study skills, managing time, and integration into the university environment contribute to them not progressing into the successive years of their studies. One of the interventions meant to address these challenges is the peer mentoring programme, which is designed to equip first-year students with knowledge, attitudes and social skills to help them integrate into the university environment through building a sense of belonging. While first-year students are primary beneficiaries as mentees, the programme is implemented by peer mentors who can also benefit through their engagement with the mentees. Despite the programme's widely recognized effectiveness in improving the first-year students' personal, social and academic skills, there is limited research into the mentors' experiences. This study aims to investigate the peer mentors' experiences of implementing a structured peer mentoring programme that targeted undergraduate students. A qualitative study was conducted at the North-West University using three focus group discussions and 52 open-ended questionnaires to gather data from peer mentors. An all-inclusive sampling strategy was used through inviting all the peer mentors to participate in the study. Informed by the Self-Determination Theory and Experiential Learning Theory the study argues that the programme offers the students the opportunity to develop agency, and personal and interpersonal skills through self-reflection and experiential learning. Findings indicate that despite the challenge of meeting mentees' expectation of receiving academic support, peer mentors benefited through self-reflection and interpersonal skills such as communication, leadership, and relating with others. The study recommends clear communication of the program focus which is social support, and the need to refer the first-year students to appropriate academic support programmes.

16:30-16:40 Dr Manuela Fernandes-Martins & Dr Musara Lubombo

Lightning Talk:

Reimagining SoTL in Contexts: Insights from a South African Multi-Institutional Benchmarking Study

Higher education institutions in South Africa face increasing pressure to develop sustainable and context-responsive approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), particularly within resource-constrained environments. This presentation shares insights emerging from a multi-institutional benchmarking initiative led by a Centre for Teaching and Learning at a South African university. The study drew on a desktop review of institutional SoTL initiatives, followed by a collaborative engagement with SoTL coordinators from five universities. Through a structured gallery walk and facilitated reflective discussions, participants shared institutional practices, support mechanisms, and challenges related to embedding SoTL within their contexts. Findings highlight three key best practices for strengthening SoTL. First, sustainable SoTL initiatives require integration into institutional strategy and funding frameworks rather than reliance on short-term project-based support. Second, adopting a "Slow SoTL" approach—foregrounding reflection, care, and relational academic practice—supports meaningful and contextually relevant teaching and learning innovation. Third, cross-institutional collaboration creates valuable opportunities for shared learning, enabling academics to exchange practices and co-construct knowledge about teaching and learning. The presentation offers practical recommendations for institutional leaders, academics, and educational developers seeking to embed and sustain SoTL within their institutions. These include aligning SoTL with strategic priorities, recognising diverse scholarly outputs, and fostering collaborative communities of practice. This presentation speaks directly to institutional leadership, strategy, and programme design. It highlights the role of SoTL coordinators and academic development structures and it provides guidance for leading and sustaining SoTL initiatives. By translating benchmarking insights into actionable strategies, this study contributes to strengthening teaching and learning practices through advancing SoTL as a legitimate and impactful form of scholarship in higher education.

DAY 2: 27 May 2026

08:45-09:15 Prof Chantel Muller

Invited Talk:

Realities Worth Teaching In: A Cross-Faculty Exploration of Meta Quest 3 as an Immersive Teaching Tool

Extended Reality (XR) technologies are no longer the preserve of gaming studios and tech companies — they are quietly entering lecture halls, simulation labs, and clinical training facilities worldwide. Yet in many South African universities, the Meta Quest 3/3S headset and its growing ecosystem of educational applications remain largely unexplored as formal teaching and learning tools. This presentation argues that the time to explore and prioritise XR-mediated immersive teaching is now. Drawing on a cross-faculty mapping exercise conducted across seven NWU undergraduate programmes spanning Engineering, Health Sciences, Law, Humanities, Education, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, and Economic and Management Sciences, this presentation demonstrates that freely available or low-cost applications on the Meta Horizon Store can meaningfully support module-specific outcomes in disciplines as varied as anatomy, constitutional law, oral advocacy, chemical engineering, ecology, and tourism management. Each example is paired with a concrete teaching and

learning application, illustrating not only what is pedagogically possible, but what is practically achievable without significant institutional investment. The central contention is straightforward: immersive, embodied learning experiences have a demonstrable capacity to enhance knowledge retention and build the kind of applied, contextual understanding that accelerates graduate work readiness. When a nursing student can embody a patient's experience, when a law student can practise oral argument before a virtual bench, or when a chemistry student can manipulate molecular bonds in three dimensional space, the distance between knowing and doing begins to close. This presentation invites participants to consider not just whether XR belongs in the university, but which of their own modules might be the next reality worth teaching in.

10:20-10:40 Ms Phakamile Mazibuko

"Show, Don't Tell":

From Text to Audio-Visual Learning: Using NotebookLM Podcast and Video to Enhance Student Engagement in Higher Education

I will be sharing and demonstrating my experience of using NotebookLM in my lectures to promote student engagement. I will also share students' feedback, reflecting on their experience with the tool and how it enhances their overall learning experience. This session adopts a "show, don't tell" approach by immersing participants in a simulated student learning experience using NotebookLM. The demonstration will include:

- Transforming academic texts into AI-generated podcast-style audio summaries.
- Generating video-based representations of academic content to support visual learning.
- Demonstrating how students can use these formats for revision, comprehension, and feedback.

Participants will experience how learning can shift from traditional text-based content to audio-visual engagement, promoting greater flexibility and deeper engagement. The session will conclude with a brief discussion on ethical considerations for integrating NotebookLM into teaching and learning.

10:40-11:00 Prof Mignon van Vreden & Prof Carolina Botha

Presentation:

Playing with Purpose: Embodied Reflection for Teacher Identity Development in Higher Education

Teacher identity development is a critical yet often under-theorised dimension of learning in higher education. This presentation explores how "playing with purpose" through embodied reflective practices can support pre-service teachers in developing a nuanced sense of professional identity. This presentation is a collaborative journey of two teacher educators learning together by reflecting on reflection activities with a small group of music education students and considering their relevance to large groups of education students. Drawing on our teaching practice, we showcase a series of structured, low-threshold activities—including web yarn (relational identity construction), Play-Doh modelling (embodied meaning-making), gingerbread identity mapping (layered self-representation), and M&M's reflection (guided narrative prompts)—that invite students to actively engage in processes of reflection that are cognitive, affective, and social. These activities reposition reflection as an embodied and shared practice rather than a purely written, individual task. In doing so, they create spaces where students can explore, negotiate, and articulate their emerging identities as teachers. Situated within the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, this presentation demonstrates

how playful, yet purposeful pedagogical design can enhance student engagement and contribute to identity development in higher education contexts. Participants will leave with practical, adaptable strategies for integrating embodied reflection into their own teaching, with a view to fostering meaningful learning and professional becoming.
The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate how playful, embodied reflective activities can be intentionally designed to support teacher identity development in higher education. Drawing on classroom-based practice, the presentation shows how structured approaches to “playing with purpose”—through activities such as web yarn, Play-Doh modelling, gingerbread identity mapping, and M&M’s reflection—enable pre-service teachers to engage in meaningful, relational, and reflective processes of professional becoming."

11:00-11:20 Mr Winsent Saunders

Presentation:

Putting tax knowledge into action: Student perceptions of a tax simulation project to develop Professional Values, Attitudes and Acumens

This study investigates accounting students’ perceptions of a newly developed tax simulation project as a vehicle to develop Professional Values, Attitudes and Acumens (PVAAs). It explores whether the project’s authentic, practice-oriented design effectively bridges the gap between technical knowledge and professional competence. Results indicate that the tax simulation project moderately, but positively, supported PVAA development. The project most strongly promotes decision-making acumen, relational acumen, ethics, and lifelong learning. Students highlighted its practical, real-life-like characteristics as particularly valuable for applying technical tax knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Technology-enabled features also enhanced digital acumen through data analytics and computational tasks. A correlation analysis confirms significant positive associations between PVAA-related competencies and students’ academic performance in the project’s assignments. This study contributes insights into simulation-based pedagogy that could be applied in Accounting Education to adequately prepare future professional accountants. It demonstrates how carefully designed, practice-oriented interventions can meaningfully develop multiple PVAAs and offers a replicable model for accounting educators globally.

11:20-11:30 Dr Luce Pretorius

Digital Poster:

Expectation vs reality: rethinking how we prepare students for practice-based learning

Students often enter practicum and work-integrated learning environments with expectations shaped by structured classroom teaching, clear processes, and a focus on helping outcomes. In contrast, practice settings frequently involve ambiguity, competing demands, emotional strain, and the need to navigate risk and uncertainty. This digital poster explores the gap between student expectations and the realities of practice-based learning, drawing on teaching experience across undergraduate and postgraduate social work education. Using a visually structured comparison, the poster highlights common mismatches between what students anticipate and what practice requires—particularly in relation to decision-making, emotional regulation, and navigating complex systems. The poster introduces the concept of the “hidden curriculum” in practice learning, emphasising how students often learn to manage uncertainty, boundaries, and professional responsibility through exposure rather than explicit teaching.

Practical implications are provided for educators across disciplines, including strategies to better prepare students through curriculum design, assessment approaches, and structured reflection. The aim is to support more realistic preparation for practice, enhance student confidence, and contribute to safer, more sustainable professional development.

11:55-12:15 Dr Rochelle Marais-Botha, Prof Carisma Nel & Prof Elma Marais

"Show, Don't Tell":

Enhancing Teacher Preparation through Mixed Reality Simulation: A Team Teaching Approach

This demonstration explores how Mixed Reality Simulation (MRS) is utilised to create an immersive learning environment within a collaborative team teaching approach in pre-service teacher education. Through MRS, a simulated classroom is established in which pre-service teachers engage with learner avatars, providing opportunities to practise and refine pedagogical strategies in a controlled, risk-free setting without impacting real learners. A distinctive feature of this approach is the integration of an adult avatar that functions as a facilitator and, in essence, as an additional team member within the teaching process. The adult avatar provides immediate, targeted feedback during teaching interactions, enabling pre-service teachers to reflect and adapt their instructional practices in real time. This form of feedback reduces anxiety often associated with lecturer-led critique, fostering a psychologically safe space where students are more open to experimentation and professional growth. While the simulation environment enables active participation and experiential learning, lecturers maintain overall control of the session. They guide the instructional process, monitor interactions, and shape the feedback provided to ensure alignment with professional teaching standards and learning outcomes. This demonstration highlights how MRS can be effectively leveraged to support collaborative team teaching, enhance student confidence, and strengthen reflective practice. By combining simulation technology with structured pedagogical support, this approach contributes to the development of competent, confident pre-service teachers who are better prepared for real classroom contexts.

12:15-12:25 Mr Gerhard Rodgers, Dr Shanae Theunissen, Dr Luce Pretorius & Dr Christiaan Bekker

Lightning Talk:

Beyond content: scaffolding professional identity in Psychology

Each year, our Honours Psychology students arrive academically strong and deeply motivated. Yet within weeks, familiar patterns emerged: overwhelm, conflict in group work, uncertainty about professional boundaries, and self-doubt about belonging at the postgraduate level. We initially interpreted these struggles as individual adjustment difficulties – the expected pressures of advanced study. The turning point came when we began to view these challenges through the lens of professional identity formation and the hidden curriculum. We realised we were expecting students to enact postgraduate autonomy, ethical responsibility, and professional conduct without ever making those expectations explicit. In Psychology, where reflexivity, boundaries, and scope of practice are foundational, this silence was significant. Instead of asking why students were not coping, we asked what developmental scaffolding was missing. We redesigned our Orientation week as intentional identity work. Team building became structured belonging. Discussions of dress code and communication became explorations of professional presence. Time management was

framed as self-regulation. We shifted from assuming competence to teaching transition. When professional identity expectations remain implicit, capable students may interpret normal transition anxiety as personal inadequacy. This has emotional and ethical implications within health professions education. Making the hidden curriculum visible is not remedial; it is socially accountable educational design. Postgraduate transition in Psychology is not only academic progression but an identity transformation. Reimagining orientation as a space for explicit professional formation may offer a practical strategy for cultivating future-ready graduates while reducing unnecessary student distress.

12:25-12:35 Ms Phathiswa Moyo

Lightning Talk:

Using Tools to present work readiness and accounting

Work readiness is a community engagement programme initially started in the Vaal Triangle Campus (VTC) under the leadership of Mrs B Van Die Niet, which has been scaled across campus to enable maximum students' participation. We invite industry experts to upskill our cohorts with work readiness skills. Now this project runs on a zero, budget meaning the guest speakers are providing their services pro bono. Guess what? The experts never have to leave the comfort of their home irrespective of their provinces, nor spend on petrol as the webinar is online. We started with 120+/- students in 2023 and even then our industry expert was based at Port Elizabeth. Already with the space constraints NWU has, where are we going to find venues during the day for such? Students voted that we hold the trainings between 17h00 – 18h00 online. The chatbox also facilitates the Q & A sessions nicely as the MCs allocate each question to the most appropriate expert. 2025, we had 1 500 students join the online webinar across campus and it was a success with students receiving certificates to attach to their cv's.

12:35-12:45 Mr Othusitse Maunatlala and Mr Ofentse Ngake

Lightning Talk:

Rethinking Assessment in Collaborative Learning Environments: Ensuring Fairness, Accountability, and Student Success in the Digital Age

Group work is a widely used teaching strategy in higher education, yet assessing it fairly remains a persistent challenge. Often, students who contribute minimally benefit from the efforts of more active peers, raising concerns about equity and the validity of assessment outcomes. Assessment practices within group work contexts often fail to accurately reflect individual student contributions, resulting in inequitable grading and passive participation. This lightning talk shares a practical approach to redesigning assessment in collaborative learning environments to ensure individual accountability. Drawing on reflective teaching practice, the presentation highlights how integrating peer assessment, structured reflection, and Learning Management System (LMS) tools can make student contributions more visible. The session offers a simple but effective framework that lecturers can apply to promote fairness, enhance engagement, and support student success in digitally mediated learning environments.

14:30-14:50 Prof Martin Chanza

Presentation:

Exploring the Relationships Between Student Perceptions, Engagement, and Learning Outcomes in Time Series Forecasting Using Animations: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

Animations are increasingly used in teaching complex quantitative concepts, such as time series analysis and forecasting, due to their potential to enhance understanding and engagement. While previous studies have focused on descriptive or experimental outcomes, the relational dynamics between students' perceptions, engagement, cognitive load, and learning outcomes remain underexplored. This study employs a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine these relationships among 41 undergraduate students enrolled in a forecasting methods course. Data were collected via validated questionnaires measuring students' perceptions of animations, engagement, perceived cognitive load, and learning outcomes. SEM results indicate that positive perceptions of animations significantly predict higher engagement, which in turn enhances learning outcomes. Cognitive load was found to moderate the relationship between perceptions and engagement. The findings highlight the pivotal role of student perceptions in multimedia-enhanced learning and provide evidence-based guidance for designing effective instructional animations in quantitative education.

14:50-15:10 Ms Selaelo Nonky Ramohoeba

"Show, Don't Tell":

Scaling Engagement in Large Physics Labs: A Blended Learning Approach

Large-enrolment modules present a significant challenge in maintaining student engagement, ensuring academic integrity, and delivering meaningful learning experiences. This presentation shares a best-practice approach implemented in first-year physics practicals at North-West University, where approximately 1 200 students are accommodated across sessions of nearly 300 students each. The approach adopts a structured blended learning model using the institutional learning management system (eFundi), while still retaining traditional paper-based practical work. It combines pre-laboratory preparation, guided in-lab activities, and post-laboratory online assessments. Paper-based worksheets are used to support hands-on engagement and conceptual understanding during the practical, while online assessments are used to reinforce learning, improve feedback turnaround, and strengthen accountability. Key strategies include the coordinated use of demonstrators as facilitators of group-based learning, structured session management for large cohorts, and the integration of LMS tools to support assessment and tracking. This balanced approach ensures that the benefits of tactile, experimental learning are preserved while leveraging digital systems to enhance efficiency and oversight. The practice has resulted in improved student participation, reduced misuse of memoranda, enhanced consistency in assessment, and better monitoring of student progress. It demonstrates how combining traditional and digital methods can transform large classes into structured, engaging, and scalable learning environments. The session will provide practical, transferable strategies for managing large classes, integrating LMS platforms effectively, and maintaining academic integrity while preserving the value of hands-on learning.

15:10-15:30 Ms Lulama Mabala, Dr Yolanda Stevens & Dr Cornelia Schreck

Presentation:

From Silos to Synergy: Integrating Modules and LMS Design to Cultivate Graduate Attributes

Higher education programmes are often structured in ways that fragment learning, with modules experienced as isolated units. This limits students' ability to transfer knowledge and skills across contexts, reducing engagement and preparedness for professional practice. This presentation showcases an integrated team-teaching approach within an Honours programme in Recreation Science, where three modules were combined into an eight-month Leadership Development Project. Students worked with real clients, fostering authentic, experiential learning aligned with professional environments. To reduce fragmentation and confusion, a dedicated Learning Management System (LMS) site was developed to centralise project activities, resources, and assessments. This digital integration enhanced alignment across modules, reduced duplication, and increased transparency in the learning process. Grounded in experiential and situated learning principles, the project supported students in actively constructing knowledge through meaningful, context-rich tasks. Evidence from student feedback and outcomes demonstrates how intentional curriculum integration, supported by team-teaching and LMS design, enhanced engagement, deepened learning, and promoted graduate attributes such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and professional responsibility. For the teaching team, this approach strengthened collaboration, improved alignment across modules, and enhanced efficiency in curriculum delivery. This model contributes to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning by offering a practical, transferable framework for interdisciplinary collaboration and digitally supported curriculum design across disciplines.

15:30-15:50 Ms Mianda Erasmus, Ms Tebogo Matlou, Mr Lawrence Mamabolo, Ms Beandra Viljoen & Ms Roané du Preez

Presentation:

Responding to the Challenges of the Digital Era: Blended and Technology-Enabled Practices in Large Class First-Year Psychology Teaching

In our aligned modules, we (team) teach Psychology to large classes of first-year students. We have between 2500 and 3000 students across the three campuses. Large first year classes present significant challenges for student engagement and academic success, which have been further strengthened by the rise of Artificial intelligence (AI) tools and post-COVID shifts in teaching and learning. Therefore, we had to adapt in many ways to curb the temptation of "short cuts" and encourage engagement and class attendance. In this presentation, we aim to share some of our practices. Based on Lebrun's pragmatic learning model, we structure our modules in such a way to assist students to master the content, to adapt to university by scaffolding the assessments and to incorporate constructive alignment throughout. We know that engagement with content is crucial for success, thus we make use of various practices to encourage engagement. Our flipped learning approach requires students to work through the content before attending class so that they can focus on application during class. They prepare by completing detailed eFundi lesson activities each week. We further encourage preparation and class attendance by utilising Dropbox activities during each in-person class. These application activities consist of questions on a case study based on the content of that week, which also prepares them for similar questions in the semester test and exam. Engagement is further encouraged in the weekly shared interactive online Teams session by using Mentimeter. Mentimeter helps to facilitate student

participation in activities, such as quizzes and open-ended questions, to test knowledge and increase engagement. As a module team, we monitor engagement and progression with eFundi in-lesson activities and online quizzes to detect at risk students early. In this way, we hope to give students a wakeup call and provide or refer them for academic support before it is too late. In 2025, PSYC 121 piloted MindJoy to enhance student success and engagement in the digital era. Mindjoy allowed students to have an online tutor to use any time and in the language of their choice. In addition, they received feedback on their group assignment in order to improve before submitting. The feedback we received was very positive.
We will be presenting as module teams with lecturers from two first year modules on all three campuses.

15:50-16:10 Ms Tarryn Williams, Mr Kobus Le Roux, Mr Gene Mathey, Prof Lida Holtzhausen, Dr Musara Lubombo & Ms Skyler Pedro

Panel Discussion:

Click, Build, Prepare: Lecturer Experiences from the NWU Learning Management System Pilot

The implementation of a new Learning Management System (LMS) is most impactful when informed by the lived experiences of lecturers. At North-West University (NWU), the institution is currently in the process of implementing a new LMS Brightspace, with an initial pilot phase that includes 14 modules and approximately 30 lecturers. These lecturers have received foundational training and are actively engaged in building their modules within Brightspace, positioning them to offer valuable, firsthand insights into the early stages of adoption. This session features a dynamic, on-stage panel of three lecturers from this pilot group, who will share their journeys of engaging with the new LMS while reflecting on their successes, challenges, and key lessons learned. The discussion will explore how lecturers are using new LMS features to enhance teaching and learning (T&L), improve student engagement, and rethink their pedagogical approaches. By foregrounding authentic voices, this session aims to bridge the gap between technology adoption and meaningful educational transformation.

16:10-16:20 Ms Nomthandazo Msimango, Mr Ace Tyu & Ms Tarryn Willaims

“Show, Don’t Tell”:

To Infinity and Beyond: Transforming Teaching & Learning with ACADEX

North-West University (NWU) is embarking on an exciting transition from eFundi to Brightspace, opening new possibilities for enhancing Teaching and Learning (T&L). This transition to a new Learning Management System (LMS) presents opportunities. This session plans introduces Brightspace as a dynamic LMS designed to enhance T&L practices. Through an engaging “show and tell” format, we will showcase key features and innovations that support active learning, inclusive design, and improved learner engagement. Attendees will experience practical demonstrations of tools that streamline course design, enhance feedback, and support data-informed teaching. Whether you are new to Brightspace or exploring its full potential, this session will take you on a journey beyond traditional LMS use, highlighting how innovation can elevate teaching and learning experiences. Join us as we go to infinity and beyond in reimagining digital learning.

16:20-16:40 Ms Zingisa Ngwane, Ms Letshego Harejane & Ms Orefile Malebo

“Show, Don’t Tell”:

Aligned for Impact: Applying Constructive Alignment in LMS Design to Enhance Learning in the Digital Age

This presentation showcases the intentional design and development of a module within a Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing, guided by the principles of constructive alignment and implemented on eFundi and how it has migrated to Brightspace Learning Management System (LMS). In response to the growing need for digitally enriched, student-centred learning environments, the module was carefully mapped to ensure alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment strategies. Adopting a “show, don’t tell” approach, the session will include a live demonstration of a 10–15 minute segment of the module as experienced by students. Participants will engage in an active learning activity embedded within the LMS, illustrating how digital tools can be used to promote interaction, critical thinking, and meaningful engagement. The demonstration will also highlight how module mapping informed the structured integration of content, activities, and assessments to support student success. In addition, a brief example of an assessment and feedback strategy will be presented to demonstrate how aligned assessment practices can enhance learning and provide timely feedback in an online environment. The session will conclude with a short discussion, inviting participants to reflect on how to use constructive alignment and LMS capabilities in their own contexts. This presentation contributes to the ongoing conversation on redefining teaching, learning, and assessment in higher education.