



17 August 2023

USAf's three groups congregate at Stellenbosch University this Thursday to explore multilingual mathematics education in higher education

About 70 delegates representing all public universities in South Africa are expected to descend on Stellenbosch University this Thursday, 17 August, 2023. These are members of three Universities South Africa's communities of practice, speakers and policymakers meeting at a joint colloquium to explore **Multilingualism in the teaching and learning of Mathematics in Higher Education**.

The participating groups are the Community of Practice (CoP) for the Teaching and Learning of African Languages (CoPAL), another CoP for the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics (CoP TLM) and the Education Deans' Forum (EDF). Multilingualism in teaching and learning refers to the use of multiple languages in the classroom as a means of instruction, communication, and interaction between teachers and students.

The objective of this one-day colloquium is to provide a platform to promote interdisciplinary conversations and exchange of ideas among educators, researchers, and policymakers to explore the intersection of multilingualism, language and mathematics education. Through this collaboration, the colloquium aims to identify and develop innovative teaching strategies that leverage the strengths of multilingualism and interdisciplinary learning to enhance the quality of mathematics education.

By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, the colloquium seeks to advance knowledge and understanding of how multilingualism can be effectively integrated into mathematics education, and teacher education, ultimately benefiting students and educators alike.

This is the first colloquium to assemble three communities of practice in pursuit of one common goal. The joint colloquium recognises the common threads among USAf groups; it highlights the interdisciplinary nature of learning and the fundamental role that Language can play in teaching and learning mathematics. The colloquium also acknowledges that students come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and that their languages are valuable resources for learning.

Ultimately, bringing all three groups under one roof demonstrates USAf's strategy to facilitate a cross-pollination of ideas to address a common and crucial theme of student success in mathematics education. It is hoped that this approach will extend the impact of the work of these CoPs. The Colloquium is also envisaged to yield new thoughts as the delegates identify best practices of teaching mathematics in multilingual contexts. It might ignite new research ideas in multilingual maths education or influence curriculum or policy development towards advancing multilingual mathematics education.

All Chairpersons of the three participating CoPs will set the stage for the day's deliberations. Professor Luneta Kakoma, a Professor of Mathematics Education from the University of Johannesburg, will deliver the keynote address. He has been appointed a Visiting Professor of Mathematics Education in the Faculty of Education of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, and was recently a Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge – Centre for Neuroscience Education. Professor Kakoma has published five books, over 100 book chapters and articles in accredited journals. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the newly launched *African Journal of Teacher Education and Development*.

Other speakers lined up to lead the Colloquium discussions are top mathematicians and language scholars selected from South Africa's university sector. The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) Chief Executive Officer, Mr Lance Schultz, will also participate, as will Dr Marcia Socikwa, Deputy Director-General overseeing University Education in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Dr Socikwa will present a perspective on the Department's Language Policy Framework for Higher Education.

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