



MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Postgraduate Education Research Conference Highlights

**TRANSFORMING EDUCATION BEYOND BORDERS:
POSTGRADUATE STUDENT VOICES**



JOINTLY ORGANISED BY THE HIGHER
STUDIES CELL AND THE RESEARCH UNIT,
MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION





STUDENT
RESEARCH
CONFERENCE



ACADEMIC
PRESENTATION



KNOWLEDGE
SHARING

EDITOR - **Mangala Jawaheer**

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Karnesh Ramful

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Foreword by the Organising Chair

The MIE's Postgraduate Education Research Conference 2026, themed *Transforming Education Beyond Borders: Postgraduate Student Voices*, brought together postgraduate students and emergent scholars from Mauritius and beyond, in a rich space of dialogue, reflection and scholarly exchange. Across three days of presentations and discussions, participants engaged with diverse presentations exploring methodological innovation, educational transformation, policy, inclusion, decoloniality and student voice. These reflected the richness and important contribution of postgraduate research to educational thought and practice. The presence and engagement of experienced scholars further enriched the conference, fostering meaningful interactions and affirming the value of "conferring" as part of postgraduate learning and scholarly development.

This newsletter captures key moments from the conference through reflections, reviews and selected highlights, as a celebration of this intellectually rich event. I extend my sincere appreciation to all contributors, participants and the organising team, whose commitment made this edition such a rewarding experience, and I look forward to future conversations.

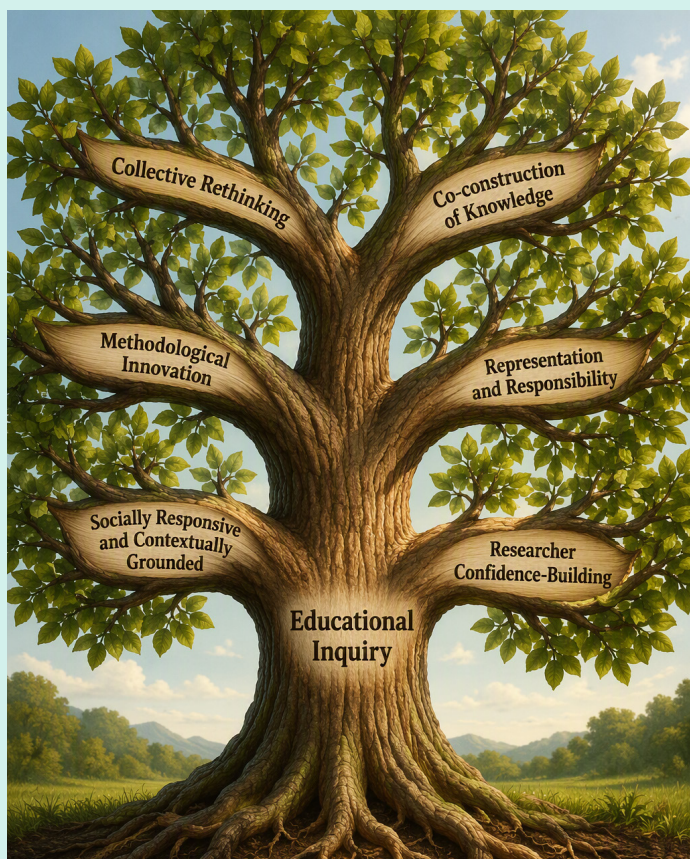
Dr Shalini Ramasawmy
Conference Convenor





Professor Hyleen Mariaye
UNESCO Chair in Higher Education
Mauritius Institute of Education

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Nurturing the Next Generation of Researchers

I extend my congratulations to Dr Shalini Ramasawmy, Conference Convenor, and the dynamic team of staff from the Higher Studies Cell and across MIE for organising the 2026 Postgraduate Education Research Conference, Transforming Education Beyond Borders: Postgraduate Student Voices. This conference once again demonstrated the vibrancy and depth of postgraduate scholarship at the Mauritius Institute of Education, bringing together emerging and experienced researchers from Mauritius and abroad in three days of rich intellectual exchange.

What stood out most was the sense of genuine scholarly community that emerged across sessions – students finding their voice, colleagues offering generous critique, and ideas travelling freely across disciplines and borders. The active participation of colleagues from South Africa and beyond reflects the kind of cross-border academic partnership that the UNESCO Chair seeks to nurture, in line with its Terms of Reference. The conference further embodies the Chair's commitment to building the capacity of academic staff and postgraduate researchers, and to increasing research output and publication in higher education so as to strengthen the standing of Mauritian universities on the international stage.

My sincere thanks to the organising team for making this conference a success, and my congratulations to every presenter who took the courageous step of sharing their work. Platforms such as this are vital in nurturing the next generation of researchers and deepening international collaboration. The Chair looks forward to support any such initiative and activities in the future.

Capturing the Main Threads of the Conference - A Synthesis of the Rapporteurs' Report

Across the conference, a sustained effort emerged to challenge conventional assumptions about postgraduate education, research practice, and the broader purposes of educational inquiry. This was most clearly articulated in the keynote, which problematised the growing instrumentalisation of postgraduate studies as primarily oriented towards individual advancement and credential accumulation. Instead, participants were invited to reimagine postgraduate education as a public good, one that carries ethical and societal responsibilities beyond the self. This provocation set the tone for the conference, prompting a collective rethinking of what it means to produce research that is not only rigorous, but also socially responsive and contextually grounded.

A prominent thread running across sessions was the turn towards methodological innovation, particularly through creative, participatory, and arts-based approaches. Researchers increasingly

sought to move beyond extractive modes of inquiry by foregrounding voice, agency, and co-construction of knowledge. Methods such as narrative collage, visual mapping, embodied practices, and reflective exhibitions enabled access to tacit and lived dimensions of experience, while repositioning participants as active contributors to the research process.

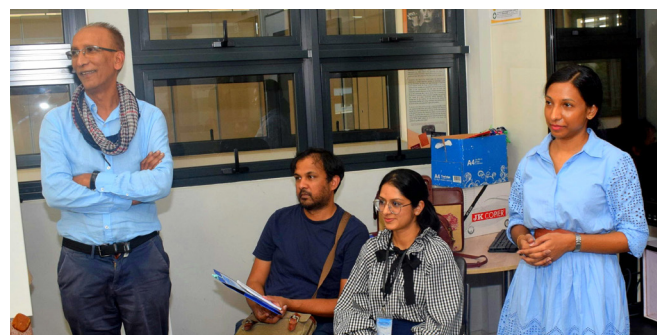
At the same time, these methodological expansions raised important ethical and epistemological questions. The emotional depth elicited through such approaches foregrounded the need for ongoing participant support and reflexive researcher engagement. Issues of positionality, particularly in insider research, further highlighted the complexities of navigating proximity, representation, and responsibility. Rather than being resolved, these tensions underscored the need for greater reflexivity and methodological rigour in qualitative inquiry.

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A second major pattern concerned the persistent gap between policy aspirations and educational practice. Across diverse contexts, presentations consistently revealed how reform agendas—whether related to assessment, innovation, sustainability, or skills development—are often constrained by systemic realities such as curriculum rigidity, resource limitations, and entrenched institutional cultures. Teachers, in particular, were positioned at the intersection of competing demands, expected to enact learner-centred approaches while remaining accountable to examination-driven systems. This disjuncture was framed not simply as a failure of implementation, but as a structural and relational issue. Agency emerged as contextually mediated, shaped by broader sociomaterial conditions rather than individual choice alone. Similarly, community-based and context-sensitive interventions highlighted the complexity of balancing local agency with systemic responsibility, raising questions about where accountability ultimately lies.



Closely linked to this was a strong emphasis on voice, identity, and lived experience. Presentations foregrounded teachers, student-teachers, and learners as active meaning-makers, while also interrogating the conditions under which their voices are represented. This reflexivity extended to questions of impact and readership, with presenters encouraged to move beyond descriptive accounts towards articulating the broader significance and transferability of their work.



Issues of equity and inclusion also featured prominently, with research addressing digital access, non-formal education, language barriers, and marginalised learning contexts. While innovative practices demonstrated the potential for more inclusive and responsive education, they also exposed the limitations of localised solutions in the absence of sustained structural support.

Across the conference, there was a clear movement towards understanding research as a form of action and advocacy. Participants emphasised the need to translate knowledge into context-sensitive interventions, while also maintaining critical and theoretical depth. This highlights an ongoing tension between producing actionable outcomes and preserving the complexity that meaningful research requires.

Overall, the conference functioned as a space of productive disruption, encouraging a shift away from performative and technicist approaches towards more relational, ethical, and contextually responsive forms of scholarship. It foregrounded the importance of asking not only what research reveals, but what it does, for whom, and under what conditions it contributes to more just and meaningful educational futures. Importantly, as a postgraduate conference, it also highlighted the developmental nature of scholarly work, reminding emerging researchers of the need to move beyond descriptive and context-bound accounts towards deeper theoretical engagement, analytical rigour, and a clear articulation of contribution. In this sense, the



conference did not simply showcase research in progress, but actively cultivated a scholarly community committed to critical inquiry, reflexivity, and the responsible production of knowledge.

Synthesized by Dr Wedsha Appadoo-Ramsamy



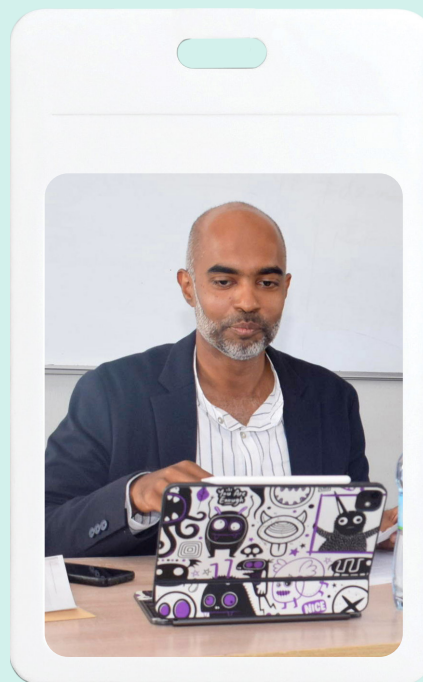
Team of Rapporteurs

- Dr Wedsha Appadoo-Ramsamy
- Suryakanti Anu Fulena
- Mangala Jawaheer
- Joann Permall
- Bhima Ramkissoon
- Divyashali Sowdagur

Insights from a Session Chair

Research is among what constitutes the very essence of the academic, woven into her fibre and identity. The Postgraduate Conference was a much-needed space for this aspect to flourish, in dialogue and constructive tensions between researchers with various degrees of experience. Chairing one of the plenary MPhil sessions was an immense honour, privilege and pleasure, an opportunity for which I am deeply grateful. Sharing the table with colleagues who have come this far in their respective research journeys, while firmly positioning themselves in regard to what lies ahead, was a beautiful experience in itself. In a context where the nature of knowledge is being questioned, it remains essential to return to the roots of what the human mind may create and put into dialogue, especially where the researcher infuses herself into the process and makes it her own. And this is what I take from the session: *l'appropriation de la recherche comme energiea, un processus en train de se faire. Mo remerisie tou dimounn ki finn kontribie dan kalite sa sesion-la.*

Dr Shameem Oozeerally



Dr Shameem Oozeerally
Mauritius Institute of Education





Dr Rajendra Korlapu-Bungaree
Mauritius Institute of Education

Chairing Across Borders: Reflections from the Postgraduate Research Conference

I had the privilege of chairing an afternoon session at this year's Postgraduate Research Conference, held under the theme *Research Insights beyond Borders*. Three of the four scheduled presenters delivered their papers. I always like preparing for the sessions I chair, so, for all of the speakers, I went through the bios provided, did a quick online search for their academic profile, and went through their abstracts to identify potential questions. I personally believe it is the least one could do as a Chair assigned to a session. One of the challenging moments as Chair of a hybrid session is when you expect your online presenter to be present but then the person does not turn up. There is always that moment of uncertainty which you then have to quickly resolve to allow the session to proceed. I am grateful that the logistics and communications for this event enabled me to proceed with my task with equanimity.

Nomonde Cele, from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, offered a compelling argument that Black African women's literary writing is not simply culture but is theory. Rajeshwaree Chengelvoyen brought the discussion closer to home, sharing findings from her PGDip research on language barriers faced by international nursing students on clinical placement in Mauritius. Her practical interventions, namely a translation manual and a peer buddy system, became the point of

numerous questions and interventions from the audience during the session.

Another highlight was Abdulai Akuamah's ecolinguistic reading of Akan proverbs from Ghana. A group of our B.Ed students attended and were visibly animated, asking sharp, curious questions about frameworks used and literature consulted. Many of us were struck about the way the oral culture was deeply entrenched in contemporary ways of thinking and being in Ghana. That cross-cultural curiosity, sparked by a paper on Ghanaian proverbs, felt like exactly what a research conference should do, and also showed the way that research could effectively bridge gaps across different contexts.

Research conferences can sometimes seem like monologues, and to be fair, I almost felt this would be the case as well, but as we engaged with the speakers, I noted a shift in the mood, especially as the audience became more interested in the persons presenting and their message. I also noted how the level of interaction peaked when the speaker was actually in the room with them rather than presenting online, suggesting that there is great potential in academic discourse in face to face contexts. I am glad to note epistemic borders shifting during this session.

Dr Rajendra Korlapu-Bungaree



Dr Clive Jimmy William Brown
CPUT, Faculty of Education,
Western Cape, South Africa

Opening Doors for International Collaborative Research

My prior visit in July 2024, when I presented "Post-PhD: What Next?", laid a strong foundation for ongoing scholarly exchange. Once again, the organising team is to be commended for curating a conference of remarkable intellectual depth, achieved through a collaborative institutional effort that foregrounds postgraduate voices within an intimate yet globally resonant academic space.

My engagement with MIE has consistently been developmental across professional, academic, and personal domains. The conference provided a stimulating platform for critical dialogue, enabling participants to interrogate emerging questions in postgraduate education and to foster meaningful collegial connections across contexts. Notably, the experience challenges common misconceptions about academic travel to Mauritius; rather than being leisure-focused, the conference is characterised by rigorous intellectual engagement and sustained scholarly reflection.

This time, I presented on Transforming teacher education beyond borders: Student-teachers' voices in a philosophical pedagogy of disruption. This most recent participation has further strengthened my commitment to collaborative research and dialogue with colleagues at MIE. I look forward to deepening these engagements through future scholarly initiatives that advance postgraduate education beyond borders.

Dr Clive Jimmy William Brown





Mr Gulshan Sooklall
MPhil Ed graduate
Mauritius Institute of Education

My journey from MPhil Graduation to Research Presentation

The MIE Postgraduate Conference took place just a day after our MPhil graduation. While the graduation ceremony carried all the expected grandeur, presenting in the first plenary session of the conference the following morning felt even more significant. It marked a different kind of graduation: a transition from being a student demonstrating learning outcomes to becoming a practitioner-researcher publicly articulating and defending a scholarly perspective.

I am grateful to the organising team for providing such a valuable platform. The quality of presentations and discussions offered a meaningful glimpse into the scholarly journey ahead, reminding me that research is shaped not only by the ideas we present but also by how we question, challenge and respond to one another.

What I valued most from this event was the opportunity to engage with the breadth of education studies. I was struck by the diversity of topics, methodologies and research contexts represented on one platform. Listening to and interacting with such a diverse group of early career researchers highlighted the extent to which education studies brings different forms of knowledge into conversation. For me, this multidisciplinary was the most enriching aspect of the conference experience.

Mr Gulshan Sooklall





Mrs Malini Callimootoo Jeewon
EdD student, St Mary's University

Choosing Reflective Exhibition as Interactive Presentation

Presenting my research through a reflective exhibition was a valuable and enriching experience. Unlike a traditional presentation, the exhibition allowed visitors to engage directly with the research process through conceptual maps, teaching artefacts, I-poem excerpts, and opportunities for reflection. This interactive format helped make my research more accessible and encouraged meaningful conversations about visual arts integration in Special Educational Needs (SEN) classrooms.

The experience also enabled me to communicate my methodological choices in a creative and engaging way. By presenting participant-generated artefacts and poetic representations of teacher voices, I was able to demonstrate how arts-based approaches can contribute to understanding teaching practices. The exhibition encouraged visitors to reflect on how knowledge is constructed and interpreted within research.

As my study is still in progress, the exhibition has been particularly helpful in supporting my ongoing reflexivity as a researcher. Discussions with visitors provided different perspectives on my methodological approach and highlighted aspects of the research that may require further consideration. The experience strengthened my confidence in using arts-based methods and reinforced the value of presenting research in ways that are participatory, reflective, and accessible to a wider audience.

Mrs Malini Callimootoo Jeewon

Reflections by Postgraduate Diploma in Education Students

As two students on the PGDip Ed programme attending the postgraduate conference on 17 April 2026, we found the experience enriching and motivating. We were particularly impressed by the quality of the presentations and how research is a process that invites scholarly interest and opportunities for further learning. We appreciated the presentation on teacher identity which delved on power dynamics accentuating the dichotomous nature of teacher voice as agentic and potentially contestatory.

The main takeaway from the conference was the closing remarks of Professor Michael Samuel who emphasised the importance of engaging with research authentically for the better good as well as for personal satisfaction and how it is important to engage and network in conferences. The speakers' passion for research was palpable and inspired us to consider joining the MA in leadership and potentially contribute to educational research.

Beyond its academic richness, the conference was particularly inspiring for the spirit of collegiality and mutual respect that characterised the interactions among participants. It demonstrated

how scholarly engagement can transcend social and cultural boundaries, fostering a genuine sense of community united by a shared commitment to education and research.

Looking ahead, we believe that providing more opportunities for students like ourselves and emerging researchers to participate in question-and-answer sessions would strengthen the inclusive spirit of the conference. This will empower the next generation of scholars to embrace the opportunity to engage with experienced academics.

Students from the Postgraduate Diploma in Education- Leadership and Management

Shakeel Hussein RAJABALEE

Urvasee Devi SURNAM



Inspiring Messages from PGDip Ed and MA Ed Alumni: Take up the Challenge!

Melanie Felicite Gopaul and Faraknaaz Essmallgee, both alumni of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education and MA in Education programmes, were invited to submit abstracts for the conference in recognition of the quality and potential of their research. Following a rigorous blind peer-review process, they were selected, alongside other researchers, to present their work.

Melanie's presentation, entitled *Exploring School Leadership Behaviours that Contribute to Enhancing Teacher Job Satisfaction: A Case Study of a Rodriguan Secondary School*, examined the relationship between school leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction. Faraknaaz presented her study, *Investigating Tutor-Student Relationships in Online Teacher Education: Methodological Insights from a Small-Scale Qualitative Study*, which explored methodological considerations in researching tutor-student interactions within an online teacher education context.

As first-time conference presenters, they serve as an inspiration to prospective students and have an encouraging message for those considering embarking on an MA in Education at the MIE.

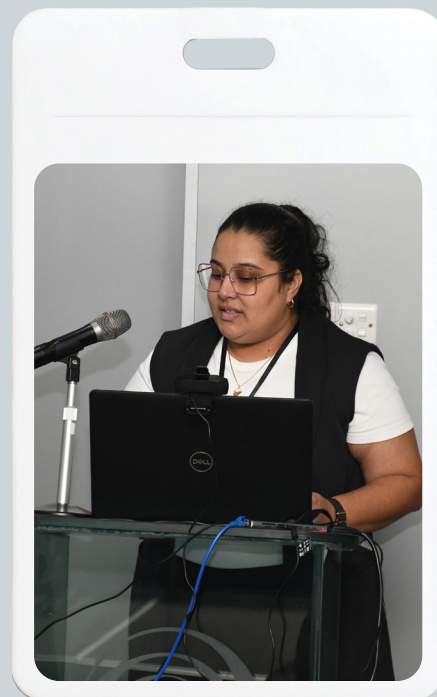
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As a former PGDip and MA Education Leadership and Management student and a presenter at the postgraduate conference, my postgraduate journey has been one of growth, reflection and transformation. I embarked on this path not only to deepen my academic knowledge but also to challenge myself personally and professionally, particularly in relation to critical thinking, reflection and leadership.

Balancing studies with work, family and social commitments was often overwhelming and at times research and academic writing felt daunting. However, the postgraduate experience proved to be deeply transformative. It encouraged me to continuously reflect on my leadership approach, my relationships with colleagues and the ways in which I support learners within my department.

A key milestone in this journey was presenting my research at the postgraduate conference. Sharing my work in a formal academic setting pushed me beyond my comfort zone and significantly strengthened my confidence and communication skills. Overall, this experience enhanced my professional practice, resilience, critical thinking and reflective capacity, while also fostering a sense of belonging within a professional learning community.

My message to PGDip and MA students is to embrace every challenge. Postgraduate study requires hard work, sacrifice and persistence but it offers rich opportunities for growth, confidence, resilience and meaningful personal and professional development.



Melanie Felicite Gopaul
PGDip Ed and MA Ed (LM)
graduate

Melanie Felicite Gopaul

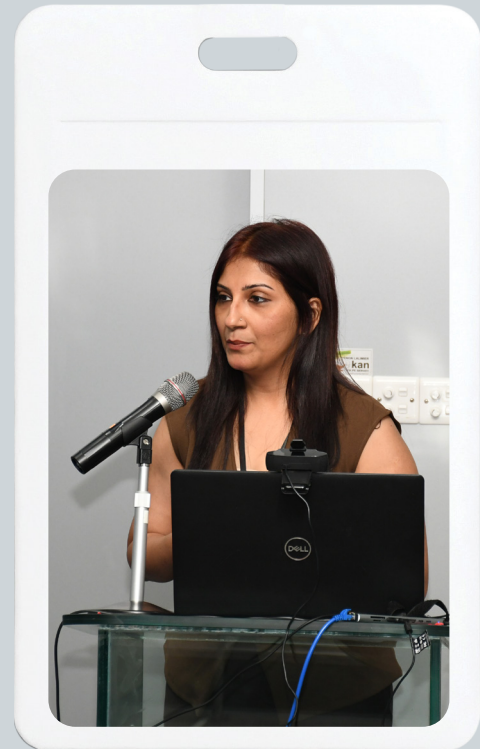
Beyond Qualifications: A Transformative Academic Journey

My journey through the PGDip and MA in Education (Learning & Teaching in Higher Education) programmes at the Mauritius Institute of Education has been both professionally transformative and personally enriching. I initially joined the programmes with the intention of strengthening my pedagogical knowledge. However, the experience went far beyond acquiring theoretical understanding. It challenged me to reflect critically on my own practice, rethink teaching and learning from multiple perspectives, and develop a stronger scholarly voice within higher education.

One of the most valuable aspects of the programmes was the supportive academic environment created by lecturers and peers. The discussions, collaborative learning experiences, and research opportunities encouraged my intellectual growth while also nurturing my confidence as a tutor and researcher. Presenting at the postgraduate conference was a particularly meaningful milestone as it allowed me to share my research journey and engage in scholarly dialogue with fellow academics and students.

My message to current and prospective PGDip and Master's students is to fully embrace the journey with openness and perseverance. The programmes require commitment and critical engagement, but they also provide invaluable opportunities for professional growth, self-discovery, and academic development. Beyond qualifications, they shape reflective practitioners who are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to education and society.

Faraknaaz Essmallgee



Faraknaaz Essmallgee
PGDip Ed and MA Ed (Learning
and teaching in HE) graduate

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Professor Michael Anthony Samuel - A Valued and Longstanding Member of the MIE Research Community

Professor Michael Anthony Samuel of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Education, a valued and longstanding member of the MIE research community, delivered the keynote address at the Postgraduate Conference, April 2026. Drawing on his extensive experience as a researcher and doctoral supervisor, he shared thought-provoking insights on scholarship, research practice, and the role of researchers in addressing contemporary educational challenges. Having attended the different presentations, he concluded the conference with a powerful and insightful message to emerging researchers, the details of which are presented below.

The Importance of Scholarly Conferencing for Novice Scholars

Presenting at a postgraduate conference is not a performance, it is an act of scholarly engagement. The audience is your collaborator, not your examiner, and your task is not merely to report what you studied, but to convince a specific audience of a new and insightful view.

First-time presenters often mistake thoroughness for depth. Covering everything is less important than foregrounding the insights your research generates. Resist the temptation to read from your slides or reproduce AI-drafted prose; instead, speak with an authentic voice, make eye contact, and invite critique. Present your raw data, the field voices that carry your argument, rather than jumping prematurely to interpretation.

Attend carefully to the architecture of your report: the levels of analysis move from description (what?) to evaluation (why?) to theory (so what?), and each level demands intellectual honesty. Acknowledge the limitations of your study; scholarly humility is a virtue, not a concession. Equally, resist the uncritical celebration of your theoretical framework, theory must transform how you see your phenomenon, not merely decorate your design choices.

Finally, remember: a conference is a living conversation. Connect your work to the broader themes and keynote arguments around you. You are not just presenting your study- you are entering a scholarly community.

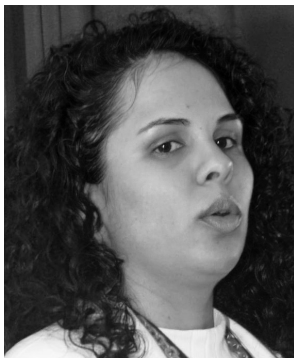
Prof Michael Anthony Samuel



Prof Michael Anthony Samuel
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Keynote Speaker

I acknowledge that AI assisted in synthesising the "Closing remarks" presentation I made into this discursive text. I have deliberately chosen to craft the text as a note to novice researchers.



OUR GROWING RESEARCH COMMUNITY

