

**University of Missouri South African Education Program (UMSAEP)
Academic Exchange Programme Report**

Visit to the University of Missouri St Louis Campus (UMSL)

13 November to 15 December 2023

Project Title

**Turning the Tide: The Case for Learners' Literacy Development in the Foundation
and Intermediate Phases in South Africa's Public Schooling System**

Report Submitted by

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Our Past Collaborations

Dr Mussman and I met in November 2014 during my Fulbright Postdoctoral tenure at UMSL. I was researching enabling factors to assist our first-year (freshmen) undergraduate students at UWC. The objective was to increase students' retention and throughput rates. We are both linguists and, hence, speak the same language. She invited me to attend her English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes, formerly referred to as ESL, during the Spring Semester of 2015, which I did.

As I observed her classes and interactions with the students, I realised that the students at UWC will benefit from these lessons and Dr Mussman's expertise in phonetics, word stress, and teaching grammar and vocabulary in context. I suggested we develop a language support course for English second language (L2) students in the EMS faculty, which she would teach. She was keen to do so since it would also allow her to visit South Africa. She wrote a proposal in 2018 and applied for the UM/UWC Linkage Program to visit UWC in 2019 to teach the

language support course with me as her host. Her application was successful. She visited UWC for three weeks during the winter break in 2019. We offered the language support course as a block course over two weeks, from July 1 to July 11, 2019, to 14 students (22 students showed an interest in the course, but eight did not pitch – most probably because it was the university’s holiday period).

The students completed activities, two essays; and three oral presentations. Lessons included various reading skills, grammar, and word stress and accent for comprehensibility and voice projection. They received a certificate of attendance at the end of the course. The students indicated in the evaluation feedback that they had learnt a lot; the course increased their confidence to communicate in English and they appreciated the manner in which Dr Mussman taught the course. A joint publication in the form of a book chapter titled *Increasing Retention of Linguistically Disadvantaged College Students in South Africa* was published in November 2019 in an international book titled *Beyond Language Learning Instruction: Transformative Supports for Emergent Bilinguals and Educators*. We attempted to follow up with the students to ascertain how they were doing in 2021, but only three responded.

Current Project

The current project concerns learners’ literacy development in South Africa’s public schooling sector, focusing specifically on their reading comprehension. The intention was and is to collaborate with Dr Denise Mussman to solve the learners’ poor literacy levels.

The first aim of Dr McGhie’s visit to UMSL was to document Dr Mussman’s reading and writing strategies in her English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and communication classes, and those of the respective teachers at three schools. The second aim was to work collaboratively through Dr Mussman’s reading course syllabus, the syllabi of the three schools (one elementary, one middle and one high school) and the South African CAPS syllabus for literacy development in primary and high schools. Four objectives were proposed:

1. Identify similarities and differences between the reading and writing strategies implemented in the classes and the content of the syllabi to identify the gaps/challenging parts and to suggest ways to overcome/resolve them;
2. Develop two reading and writing guides for language teachers to use in public primary and high schools in South Africa;

3. Construct an implementation plan that will assist primary and high school teachers in implementing the reading and writing strategies and monitoring the learners' progress in literacy development;
4. Develop the reading and writing guides into a handbook as part of Dr McGhie and Dr Mussman's research output, and write two or more articles for publication in accredited academic journals.

Contextual Background

The right to a basic education is one of the fundamental human rights in the South African Constitution (South African Constitution, 1996, Section 29(1)(a)). Spaull (2019) explains that the right to a basic education presupposes a child's ability to read and write with understanding at a basic level in their home language by age ten. Unfortunately, research conducted on learners' literacy levels in South Africa shows that the majority of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language (Meiklejohn, Westaway, Westaway & Long, 2021; Mullis, Martin, Foy & Hooper, 2017; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). Moreover, South Africa was the lowest-performing country (mean score of 320) out of 50 countries in the 2016 PIRLS study, with 78% of Grade 4 learners who could not read for meaning (Mullis et al., 2017).

The challenge of learners' inability to read with understanding is further exacerbated by the learners' socio-economic circumstances, including their home and community environments, challenges within the public schooling system such as overcrowded classrooms, a lack of qualified teachers, learners and teachers' absenteeism, and (at least) three of the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) regulations (Department of Basic Education, 2013; Meiklejohn et al., 2021; Songxaba, Coetzer & Molepo, 2017; Spaull & Jansen, 2019). COVID-19 and the prolonged national lockdown further exacerbated the challenge in quintile 1-3 schools because these are township schools where most of the learners' parents did not have internet and laptops at home to continue with the school syllabus.

Problem Statement

Dr McGhie teaches Academic Literacy (ALC) to all first-year Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences students at UWC. She has done intensive research on first-year students' learning challenges in her quest to find solutions that could overcome or prevent the challenges. A consistent challenge is first-year students' inability to understand instructions and questions and to read comprehensively.

In addition, as part of Dr McGhie's community engagement and empowerment commitment, she has worked with a youth development organisation in Bonteheuwel (one of the Coloured townships on the Cape Flats) for the past three years. The organisation works with the three high schools in Bonteheuwel and offers workshops on Saturdays and extra support classes for Grade 12 learners after school. The focus was on Arcadia High School in 2023.

On Monday afternoons, Dr McGhie taught the learners reading and writing skills to prepare for their final examinations in October and November 2023. In an initial meeting with the teachers at the beginning of the third quarter in July 2023 at the school, the teachers explained that the group of 67 Grade 12 learners (45 English home language and 22 L2 learners) could not read with understanding and tasked Dr McGhie to "try her best to teach them reading and writing skills". I argued that teaching Grade 12 learners how to read with understanding is too late. This should happen in the learner's foundational years, which are Grades 1 - 3, and build upon throughout the developmental stages of the public schooling system by qualified and competent teachers if South Africa is to achieve the educational objectives in the National Development Plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 4, which speaks to the provision of quality education.

Accordingly, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016), Spaul and Jansen (2019) and Venter (2020) (amongst others) advocate that the comprehension levels of learners will not change if current and future teachers are not becoming knowledgeable about reading, literacy, and writing, and about how to teach reading effectively. Based on the above contextual background and problem statement, I proposed that there was an urgent need to equip primary and high school language teachers with strategies and skills to teach reading and writing effectively and, in so doing, develop the learners' reading skills so that they will read with understanding and be better prepared for post-school studies.

Process Followed

Dr Mussman was proactive in making the arrangements for my visit. She contacted Dr Rebecca Rogers, Professor of Literacy Studies in the College of Education at UMSL. Dr Rogers is part of a team that started a community literacy clinic. In addition, Dr Mussman contacted some of her colleagues who were language teachers and reading specialists at different schools in St Louis and surrounding counties.

Thus, when I arrived at UMSL on November 13, 2023, I had an itinerary that included visits to a two-year community college and two elementary schools in St. Louis and meetings with

individual language teachers and reading specialists. I was also scheduled to present a lecture on education and literacy in South Africa's public schooling sector on Wednesday, November 29, 2024. The lecture was well-attended by faculty and students and well received.

Meeting with individual teachers and reading specialists resulted in a snowball effect as we were directed to other schools and teachers, which we followed up on as I also wanted to visit a middle school and a high school. We attempted to schedule the visits in the mornings so that Dr Mussman could be back for her classes at noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. I used the Metro train to meet Dr Mussman at Richmond Heights Station in the mornings to meet her halfway and an Uber to get to the school in O'Fallon for the full-day class observations.

In addition to the school visits and meetings with language teachers, I attended Dr Mussman's classes, observed what and how she taught and participated in the class activities and discussions. The classes ended on Wednesday, 6 December. I also assisted her with assessing the final presentations of international graduate teaching assistants on Monday, 11 December 2024.

Table 1 below lists the dates and names of the two-year college and the schools. Table 2 presents the dates and meetings with individual language teachers, reading specialists, and others.

Table 1: School Visits

Day and date of visit	Name of school	Activities
Monday, Nov 20, 2023	Jefferson College	I observed a developmental reading class and met with the teacher, Ms. Lisa Ebert, afterwards.
Tuesday, Nov 21, 2023	Dr Henry Given Jr Elementary School	Observed the reading support classes and met with the reading specialist Ms. Michele Ferber.
Monday, Nov 27, 2023	Woerner Elementary School	Observed and interacted with teacher candidates in a Grade 2 class. Attended their de-briefing session after the class
Tuesday, Dec 5, 2023	Fort Zumwalt North Middle School (O'Fallon)	Met with the principal, Dr Damon Burkhart Observed two Grade 8 language classes Met with the language teacher and reading specialist afterwards
Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023	Fort Zumwalt West High School (O'Fallon District)	Met with the principal, Dr Edward Dreyer, to discuss and arrange specific class observations
Tuesday, 12 Dec 2023	Fort Zumwalt West High School (O'Fallon District)	Full-day observations of five classes (English 1 (RTI), Math 9, English 1 (Resource), AP Lang and Communication, English 1)

Table 2: Individual Meetings

Day and date	Met with	Affiliation
Monday, Nov 27, 2023	Dr Rogers, Rebecca (in person)	Professor of Literacy Studies, College of Education, UMSL
Monday, Dec 4, 2023	Ms Haley Bordelon (via Zoom)	Grades 1 -3 teacher at Beaunderwood Elementary School in Colorado (which is a farming community)
Tuesday, Dec 5, 2023	Ms Stephanie Koscieski (in person)	Senior Director of Clinical Experience and School Partnerships, College of Education, UMSL
Thursday, Dec 7, 2023	Dr Katya Sussman-Dawson (in person)	Assistant Professor of School Psychology, UMSL (she works with schools and local school districts)
Wednesday, Dec 13, 2023	Ms Nanette Saumier-Trax Ms Michelle Kasubke (via Zoom)	NMS Reading Specialist NMS English Language Teacher and English Dept Chairperson, Fort Zumwalt North Middle School
Thursday, Dec 14, 2023	Dr Matthew Taylor (in person)	Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, College of Arts & Sciences Interim Chair, Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychological Sciences, UMSL

Insights gained from Dr Mussman's classes

Dr Mussman taught three classes – an EAP reading and writing class, an EAP academic listening and language skills class, and a class preparing international graduate teaching assistants to teach undergraduate courses. The groups varied between eight and thirteen students, which is ideal for language learning classes. Also, it is not only freshmen and undergraduate students who register for her courses; international postgraduate students are requested by their supervisors/instructors to register for her communication class to develop their academic and interpersonal communication skills in English.

She focused on prefixes, stems and suffixes, word stress, vocabulary in context, pronunciation, small group discussions, and presentations. She also assigned the students tasks each week and scheduled individual presentations.

There are at least eight advantages of a small class which are:

1. A small class is easy to manage;
2. The instructor gets to know the students' names, their circumstances/ backgrounds and their personalities/strengths;
3. She identifies know who the strong students are, and the weaker ones;
4. She can identify students who have a challenge or difficulty in grasping the content or a specific aspect quickly/early on;
5. She can assist such a student(s) individually and provide extra opportunities to redo a task and master the skills taught;
6. She knows when a student is absent and can follow up with them or check in to ascertain the challenge;
7. Students develop confidence in speaking in whole class discussions; and
8. Students must focus. Those not participating or cheating can be corrected.

Most importantly, Dr Mussman is a native speaker of English and a linguist. She can correct and assist the students with their pronunciation of difficult or unknown words and has them practise word stress and rhythm.

Insights gained from school visits and discussions with teachers

Jefferson College was first on the list of school visits. It is a two-year college that caters for a diverse range of students. We visited a freshmen composition class where the instructor focused on academic essay writing. There were 16 students in the class. What she has done corresponds to what we do in the EMS faculty at UWC in our Academic Literacy for Commerce (ALC 131 and 132) courses.

The instructor Ms. Lisa Ebert is the college's reading specialist and was appointed to evaluate the students' reading levels in comparison to the content of the textbooks the instructors were using in their courses. All the departments in the college were asked to evaluate their textbooks and the student's reading levels. The findings showed that the content of the

textbooks was up to four grades higher than the student's reading comprehension levels. Based on this finding, the instructors became aware of the importance of having a campus reading program, adjusted the content and focused more on developing the students' reading comprehension levels.

Dr Henry Given Jr Elementary School was the first school we visited. The school caters for a diverse learner body. We observed Ms. Michele Ferber, the reading specialist, interact with learners who struggled with reading. The class teachers identify learners who struggle with reading and send them to the reading specialist for a reading session each day. Thus, learners from different grades are sent to the reading specialist class during the school day, but the groups are small – eight to ten learners at a time. The reading specialist has an assistant helping her to work with the learners. They use visual materials and fun games to develop the learners' reading abilities and work with a series of books titled *Levelled Literacy Books* by Fountas and Pinnell, which gradually become more challenging, thereby developing the learners' reading levels, abilities and skills to the required grade level.

Woerner Elementary School was next on the list. It is one of UMSL's College of Education partner schools where their teacher training candidates do their in-service teacher training. It was an all-boys Grade 2 class that we observed with about eight learners. Each teacher candidate was assigned one learner to work with. The objective was to develop a visual board of the learners' learnings and what they focused on during the term. Set themes were given, but the learners decided on the content and the things gathered and displayed on the board.

Dr Rogers was also in attendance and explained the teacher candidates' selection process and the criteria of what they should focus on. Practising reading and developing the learners' interest in books and the library were the main focus points, as well as environmental awareness. She emailed information on the community literacy clinic and what they do to develop the communities' literacy levels.

The principal of **Fort Zumwalt North Middle School** was one of the first principals who responded to our request to visit more schools. We first met with him and explained the purpose of our visit. He explained that his school is part of the O'Fallon School District and that the schools in the district work in collaboration with each other. The school has a diverse learner body with children from different backgrounds in Grades 6, 7 and 8. He explained that all the learners are tested at the start of their Grade 6 year to ascertain if they are on par with the required reading level. The learners are placed in different classes based on their scores on the tests, and the learners who are reading below Grade 6 levels are grouped in one class and follow a specific schedule geared to support and develop their reading levels. The reading specialist works with the language teachers and co-teaches this class.

The principal took us to two Grade 8 language classes to observe, and we met with the language teacher and the reading specialist afterwards. They explained that they do

independent reading assignments and can intervene early because they get to know the learners quickly. The reading specialist also gives individual attention to learners struggling with reading within the classes and provides further support if necessary. They further explained that all the learners have library sessions and are encouraged to spend time reading in the library and taking books home to strengthen and develop their reading skills and love for reading.

We were impressed that the principal knew the names of all the learners we met along the way, and he conversed with the teachers. His passion for the learners, the teachers and the school was visible. In turn, everyone responded favourably to him.

Fort Zumwalt West High School was the last school we visited. We first had an initial meeting with the principal at the school. Similar to the principal of the middle school, he explained that the schools within the O'Fallon District work in collaboration/partnership with each other. The learners start with a specific elementary school and move/feed into a middle school and, lastly, into the high school. Every time learners move to the next school, their academic records and progress reports are made available to that school. Thus, when the learners arrive at the school, they are already streamed into a schedule and specific classes according to their academic records and progress reports.

Based on this, the school has different language and mathematics classes and codes for the different streams in each grade. We planned for me to return to the school the following week to observe selected classes that the principal identified, which I did. There were about 16 to 20 learners in the 'normal' classes, while the classes where the learners needed extra support were small – one had only five learners.

Insights gained from the individual meetings

Ms Michelle Kasubke, the English language teacher at Fort Zumwalt North Middle School, explained that she focuses on word sounds (introductory phonetics) and lets learners practise sounding the words so that they can hear the different sounds; then, she moves to systematic phonetics, where she focuses on vowels and how words work. She guides learners step by step and then moves to blends, diagrams, and vocabulary. Lastly, she focuses on syllabi, prefixes, stems, and suffixes. She continuously reinforced the skills and referred to studies done in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Ms Nanette Saumier-Trax, the reading specialist also at Fort Zumwalt North Middle School, explained that the learners are tested at a reading lab at the end of Grade 5, at the beginning of Grade 6, in the middle of Grade 7, and at the end of Grade 8. The learners' decoding skills, comprehension, and reading fluency are tested. Learners who fail the tests are then provided with extra support.

Teacher Haley Bordelon teaches Grades 1 to 3 at Beaunderwood Elementary School in a farming community (rural town) in Colorado. The community has three schools – one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The schools work together and provide information about the learners as they move from one school to the next.

The elementary school has small size classes. Her approach to teaching reading is to make learning fun for the learners. She first lets learners listen while she reads a story. Then, the learners read the story together as a group and, thereafter, individually. Once that is done, they must answer comprehension questions about the story. She also encourages the learners to look in the mirror as they sound the words to see how their mouths form the sounds, and she frequently takes them out into the environment. They also test the learners – when they start in Grade 1, in Grade 2, and at the end of Grade 3. She also meets with each learner’s parents at home to get to know them and their circumstances. Doing so allowed the parents to meet their children’s teacher, which helped in building a trusting relationship and a willingness to be involved in their children’s education and the school.

Teacher Bordelon uses effective methods of teaching that help children who have experienced trauma. She may spend a whole week on one letter of the alphabet until learners are comfortable and able to progress their levels of literacy. She explained that going too fast can make such children not learn anything at all.

She further explained that because it is a farming community where the parents work full days, and poverty is high, the parents pay a small amount for learners to stay after school and receive assistance with their homework. Schools only meet four days a week, which is now common in rural areas in the US. Also, the community has a family resource centre that assists and supports families and schools. The elementary school also makes use of high school learners who work as tutors and assist the learners with their homework after school. What stood out was that the entire community was involved and invested in the education of their children, which is typically the case in rural and small towns. Lastly, she explained that she is actually involved in the community, visible to them on weekends.

Dr Katya Sussman-Dawson is a school psychologist and an Assistant Professor in the Department of School Psychology in UMSL’s College of Education. She attended my lecture presentation on November 29, 2023, and spoke to me afterwards. She works with schools and the local school districts in St Louis and was interested in my research. We met in person on Thursday, December 7, 2024.

She explained that she follows a holistic approach that starts in early childhood (thus, before elementary schooling) to assist learners, parents, teachers and the districts with advice that is based on research. She also stressed that parental involvement is crucial and that parents should be supported and encouraged to become involved in their children’s schooling and work alongside the teachers and the schools. She directed me to free online software and

tests that we can use in South Africa and to the Florida Centre for Reading Research resources that are also freely available.

I have learned so much from the classroom observations and discussions with the people I met. I observed the teachers' engagement with the learners in the classes and their commitment to developing the learners' knowledge, skills and competencies. Small class sizes make it possible for the teachers to know their students and to give extra attention to the ones who need it. Moreover, having adequate and functional infrastructure and resources (both human resources, equipment, internet connectivity, laptops for every single learner with the required learning material, food and transportation) and the support of the principal and school districts enable the teachers to focus on learning and teaching. Qualified and competent teachers, reading specialists, and engaged and committed principals ensure that the learners receive a quality education. A safe school environment free of criminal activities such as gangsterism, drug and alcohol abuse, theft and violence, ensures that everyone who is part of the school can focus on what should be done in a peaceful, conducive and empowering context where respect and human dignity are valued.

Finally, as I visited the schools and interacted with the staff and learners, I realised that if our quintile 1 -3 schools had only 50% of the resources these schools had and the conditions described above, our learners would receive a quality education and their literacy levels would have been more developed and on par with learners from other countries.

Next Steps

Our meeting and discussions with Dr Sussman-Dawson about following a holistic approach to learners' literacy development **changed the way forward**. Developing a guide and strategies to effectively teach reading in the foundation phase in primary schools, which should be built upon in the following years, would only address one part of the problem. The challenges in South Africa's public schooling sector are complex and multi-faceted, which requires a holistic approach and cooperation from all the role players.

The new objectives are:

1. Work with primary schools and possibly early childhood to improve educational outcomes;
2. Provide early literacy intervention to learners: Pre-primary (3 - 5-year olds) and foundation phase (Grades R to 3);

3. Identify two pre-primary facilities, two primary and two high schools to use as research sites and participants where interventions will take place, and have one pre-primary, one primary and one high school as control groups;
4. Use data to work with policymakers to make more considerable nationwide changes based on the research conducted and learners' results and
5. Write joint research reports, teachers' guides, journal articles and a handbook for literacy development in public schools in South Africa.

Modus Operandi

1. Prepare a research proposal and register a longitudinal research project at UWC to obtain ethical clearance to conduct research in schools on the Cape Flats;
2. Liaise with youth development organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs) already working in schools and communities on the Cape Flats to co-opt them as partners of the project;
3. Identify the eight schools and obtain permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to conduct the research at the schools;
4. Assess the schools' needs and find/secure funding to upgrade the infrastructure, create libraries, and computer rooms, and, if possible, appoint more teachers;
5. Conduct a survey (mini-census) in the identified communities to identify the needs of the communities: (i) how many parents are employed, unemployed and dependent on social grants; (ii) how many pre-primary children are in a pre-primary facility and how many are not; (iii) how many school going children are not in school, and what the reasons are; and (iv) how many parents and grandparents are illiterate and would want to become literate.
6. Seek and secure funding by liaising with the WCED, the private sector, farmers, religious organisations and civil society organisations, and also look for grants and other financial offerings/scholarships to assist the identified schools;
7. Start with the interventions and use the available free resources. Do a pre-test and follow the example of the schools visited by regularly administering tests to evaluate the learners' literacy development;
8. Create programs through the schools that encourage and assist parents with helping children read and do their homework assignments, thereby improving engagement in the children's learning and the parents' literacy levels. We will also offer free adult learning programs to upskill parents;
9. Create partnerships with schools in the different districts so that collaboration and a support network can be created, and feeder schools can be formed;

10. Use the model of the community literacy clinic and set up similar clinics within the communities where the participating schools are situated. These clinics will offer free literacy development classes to adults in the evenings and on Saturdays;
11. Recruit retired teachers and academics to assist with the interventions and recruit high school learners and university students to help learners with homework;
12. Appoint a research assistant to document and track the data and analyse the data as the project unfolds;
13. Prepare teacher and parent guides for distribution to schools and communities;
14. Write research reports and presentations to present to the WCED and other stakeholders to extend the project to other schools and other provinces in South Africa and
15. Write the articles and the handbook on literacy development in South Africa.

Proposed timeline

Dates	Activity	Responsible person(s)
Feb – April 2024	Write the research proposal and submit it to the Research and Ethics Committees at UWC	Dr McGhie, with assistance from Drs Mussman and Sussman-Dawson
Feb – June 2024	Identify and liaise with youth development organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs) Identify pre-primary and schools to use as research sites.	Dr McGhie Dr Mussman Dr Sussman-Dawson Dr McGhie
July- Oct 2024	Survey the communities where the schools are situated.	Dr McGhie, with assistance from youth development organisations and CSOs
Ongoing	Seeking partnerships and funding opportunities	Dr McGhie Dr Mussman Dr Sussman-Dawson
Sept- Oct 2024 and Ongoing in 2025	Providing training to schools (principals, teachers and support staff) Establish community literacy clinics within the communities.	Dr Sussman-Dawson (online) Dr Mussman (online) Dr McGhie Dr McGhie CSOs

	Establish/find a pre-primary facility in the community where parents do not have to pay monthly fees for their children.	Dr McGhie CSOs Funders
February 2025 – Nov 2026 Ongoing	Begin with the research in the schools and document and gather the data Write research reports, teachers' guides, presentations, articles, and the handbook at the end of the research Apply for an academic exchange grant to visit South Africa	Principals, teachers, community members Dr McGhie will provide oversight and liaise with Drs Mussman and Sussman-Dawson (online) Dr Sussman-Dawson Dr Mussman
2027 onwards	Present findings to the WCED and other role players to roll to other schools and other provinces	Dr McGhie Dr Sussman-Dawson Dr Mussman CSOs

Appreciation

I am immensely grateful to have received a UMSAEP award to travel to and stay at the University of Missouri-St. Louis in St. Louis, USA, during November and December 2023 to research learners' literacy development in schools.

I am equally grateful to Dr Denise Mussman for graciously acting as my host and transporting me where I needed to be. Thank you, Denise, for your friendship and collegiality and for caring enough to help me make a difference in the lives of our South African youth. I was and still am overwhelmed by the teachers, principals, reading specialists, and administrative staff who assisted with the arrangements for the visits, warm welcome, and willingness to accommodate, meet and share their best practices with us. I am appreciative of the two principals, Drs Damon Burkhart and Edward Dreyer, who acted as our guides at the schools, and Dr Dreyer, who personally brought me back to UMSL after the full-day class observations.

The result of my visit to UMSL is the beginning of a new chapter and research niche in my life – one that I will continue full-time once I (God willingly) retire from UWC in 2026.

I Thank You.

Venicia McGhie
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13 February 2024

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