



SAALED NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026 - ISSUE 07

INSIDE, WE ALSO TALK ABOUT:

Letter from
Chairperson

Webinars

2026-2027
Board Members

2027 Fee
Structure

Thank you

WELCOME

As we move into the final stretch of the year, September brings with it a sense of renewed energy, reflection and opportunity. In this edition of the SAALED Newsletter, we continue to celebrate the work being done to support learners with educational differences and the educators, families and professionals who walk alongside them.

This month, we share opportunities for learning and professional development, highlight important conversations within our community and look ahead to initiatives that strengthen our collective understanding and support of inclusive education.

Thank you to our members, presenters, schools and wider SAALED community for continuing to engage, share expertise and contribute to meaningful conversations. It is through this collaboration that we continue to learn from one another and, ultimately, make a difference in the lives of the children and young people we serve.

We hope you enjoy this edition and find something that informs, inspires or supports you in your work.

‘Becoming is better than being.
The fixed mindset is about being:
The growth mindset is about becoming.
It’s about believing that you can develop your abilities through dedication, effort and learning.’

-Carol S. Dweck



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NPO 013-241

Letter from the Chairperson

Shirley Gray

Returning as Chairperson of SAALED, I am honoured to continue a journey that is very close to my heart, working together to strengthen the important work that we, at SAALED, do.

I am especially delighted to welcome all Board Members, including the newly elected Board Members and Deputy Chairperson, Melinda van Zyl. Each brings their own experience, passion and unique perspective, and I look forward to working together as we continue to grow SAALED.

At the heart of our work is inclusive education, recognizing that every learner has their own strengths, needs and learning journey.

SAALED plays a significant role in supporting educators and other professionals by providing practical strategies, professional development and opportunities to learn from one another and from experts in the field.

As we look towards 2027, there is so much to look forward to: new ideas, inspiring webinars, opportunities to connect and learn, and, most importantly, a shared commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of learners.

I hope you enjoy getting to know our Board Members through a variety of interactions. We are a passionate group, and I am confident that together we can make this another exciting and impactful time for SAALED.



"At the heart of our work is inclusive education, recognizing that every learner has their own strengths, needs and learning journey."



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Upcoming Webinar - 15 October 2026

Structured Literacy in the Foundation Phase Classroom

The Science of Reading has become a central topic in literacy education, but what does it actually mean for classroom practice?

Join Gillian and Ruan as they unpack the connection between the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy, exploring key evidence-based principles and what these look like in the everyday Foundation Phase classroom.

Drawing on practical examples and classroom-ready strategies, this webinar will demonstrate how Structured Literacy approaches can be integrated meaningfully into teaching and learning.

Participants will gain insights into supporting reading development through explicit, systematic, and engaging instructional practices.

Whether you are new to Structured Literacy or looking to refine and strengthen your current approach, this webinar offers valuable guidance on translating research into effective classroom practice, making the journey both manageable and meaningful.

Who should attend?

Foundation Phase teachers, learning support educators, school leaders, and anyone passionate about developing strong literacy foundations for young learners.

The poster is for a webinar titled "STRUCTURED LITERACY IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOM". It features the SAALED logo at the top, which includes the tagline "ALL ABOUT LEARNING DIFFERENTLY". Below the logo, the text "SAALED WEBINAR" is displayed. The main title "STRUCTURED LITERACY" is in large, bold, blue and yellow letters. Underneath, it says "IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOM" and "APPLYING THE SCIENCE OF READING: SOME PRACTICAL TIPS". Two speakers are featured: Gillian Forbes, a woman with short blonde hair and glasses, and Ruan Fourie, a man with short brown hair and a beard. Below their names, it says "Foundation Phase Teacher Learning Support" for Gillian and "Foundation Phase Teacher" for Ruan. The poster includes a paragraph about the Science of Reading and its application in the classroom, followed by a quote: "From research to practice". At the bottom, it provides the date "Thursday 15 October 2026" and time "18h00". It also lists the cost: "MEMBERS: R 230.00" and "NON MEMBERS: R 320.00". A button says "BOOK ON THE SAALED WEBSITE". The bottom of the poster features the SACE logo and social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

ALL ABOUT LEARNING DIFFERENTLY
SAALED
Southern African Association for Learning Differently
SAALED WEBINAR

STRUCTURED LITERACY
IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE CLASSROOM
APPLYING THE SCIENCE OF READING:
SOME PRACTICAL TIPS

Gillian Forbes
Foundation Phase Teacher
Learning Support

Ruan Fourie
Foundation Phase
Teacher

The concept of the Science of Reading is increasingly prominent in literacy circles, but what does it actually mean, and how can we apply its principles in the Foundation Phase classroom?

Join Gillian and Ruan as they explore how the Science of Reading informs Structured Literacy, briefly unpacking some of the key principles before focusing on what these can look like in everyday classroom practice. Through practical examples and strategies, they will explore some ways to incorporate Structured Literacy into the Foundation Phase classroom.

Whether you are new to Structured Literacy or looking for ways to strengthen your current practice, this webinar aims to make the journey from research to classroom practice manageable and meaningful.

From research to practice

Date
Thursday
15 October 2026

Time
18h00

MEMBERS: R 230.00
NON MEMBERS: R 320.00

More Information
saaled.org.za

BOOK ON THE SAALED WEBSITE

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Reflection on past Webinar

Early Years. Ready to Learn: Play, Purpose, and Progress

Thursday evening's SAALED webinar was such an inspiring and thought-provoking session. I really enjoyed hearing Michelle Hackmann reflect on the powerful role that play has in children's learning and development.

A strong theme that emerged from the feedback was the importance of stepping back, observing more and allowing children to lead their own play. The ideas of 'wonder and wait,' protecting uninterrupted play and asking thoughtful questions rather than directing the play really resonated with participants. This is particularly important in the early years, as play provides children with opportunities to develop language, problem-solving, creativity, social skills, independence and emotional regulation. When children have the freedom to explore, make choices, take risks and work through challenges, they are building the foundations for lifelong learning.

For me, one of the most meaningful messages was that we don't always need to step in. Sometimes, the greatest learning happens when we pause, observe, trust and give children the freedom to explore and discover for themselves.

A beautiful reminder that play is learning—and by giving children the time, space and freedom to play, we are supporting far more than just play; we are nurturing the skills they need to think, communicate, connect, problem-solve and thrive.

Attendees Feedback:

"I loved having a refresher about the idea of learning through play!"

Attendees Feedback:

"A reminder of how important play is in young lives."

Missed the Webinar?

Here is some good news for SAALED members and education leaders: if you missed any of our 2026 webinars, recordings are available for purchase at the same price as the live webinar.

- ✓ Available on demand
- ✓ Member pricing

Reach out to events@saaled.org.za if you wish to purchase a recording.



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Getting to know the Board.

Chairperson



Shirley Gray
“Working together
to strengthen,
support and grow
SAALED.”

Deputy Chairperson



Melinda van Zyl
“A well-educated
mind will always
have more questions
than answers.”

Webinar Sub - Committee



Sam Kaufman
“Promoting learning,
wellbeing and
mental health
through support
& collaboration.”



Lauren Nel
“Building safe,
nurturing spaces
where every
child can
flourish.”



Leona Krishna
“Creating meaningful
learning pathways
that empower
learners with
diverse needs.”

Marketing Sub - Committee



Shannon Jacobs
“Helping create
a more inclusive
future for
every learner.”



**Jothindran
Pillay**
“Every
child
matters.”



Jennifer Cosslett
“The art of
teaching is the
art of assisting
discovery.”



Lucinda Pinto
“Every South
African child
deserves equal
access to quality
education.”



**Michelle
Hackmann**
“Every child
deserves to feel a
sense of belonging,
be valued and
be heard.”



Ruan Fourie
“Passionate about
literacy acquisition
and supporting staff
through continuous
professional
development.”





2027 Fee Structure

Please take note of important information.

With your continued support, SAALED can expand its resources, advocacy initiatives, and professional development programmes that empower educators, parents, and specialists to make meaningful contributions to learner success.

SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP

- R2 600 per school p.a
- ✓ Up to six teachers
 - ✓ Member rates
 - ✓ Networking
 - ✓ Resource access
 - ✓ Professional development

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

- R360 per person p.a
- ✓ Discounted webinars
 - ✓ Networking
 - ✓ Resource access
 - ✓ Professional development

RENEW TODAY

Secure your 2027 membership and stay connected to South Africa's community of inclusive-education specialists.

Contact SAALED to renew: memberships@saaled.org.za

WEBINAR FEES

Member Rate
R250.00 per webinar

Non-Member Rate
R350.00 per webinar

Contact SAALED to book your webinar attendance: events@saaled.org.za



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NPO 013-241

Thank you to Joe Pillay

A heartfelt thank you to outgoing Chairperson, Jothindran Pillay.

Joe, as you step down as Chairperson of SAALED, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for everything that you have contributed to our Association, and are delighted that you will be remaining on the Board.

Your creativity and IT expertise have been particular strengths, and we are especially thankful for the many innovative ideas you brought to our webinars and Annual Seminars. Your contribution has helped us to continually explore new and exciting ways of engaging with our members.

Joe, we truly appreciate the time and energy that you have given to SAALED. Your contribution has made a difference and we are very grateful to have had the benefit of your leadership and expertise. We trust that we can call on you whenever needed.

We wish you continued fulfilment in your role as Deputy Principal at Crawford International Sandton.

*With sincere appreciation,
Members of the SAALED Board*

Until next time, keep inspiring, keep learning and keep making a difference!

Onwards and Upwards!

*Shirley Gray
Chairperson*



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