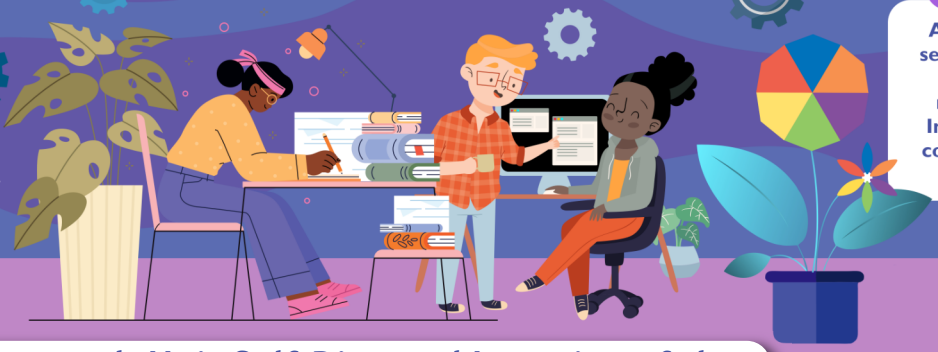
NWU® | SDL Research Unit Self-Directed Learning

9th International Self-Directed Learning Conference

Date:
4 – 6 November 2026

Venue:
Pecan Manor Boutique Conference & Function Venue, Hartbeespoort, South Africa



Theme
Advancing self-directed learning research: Innovation, context and praxis

The Research Unit Self-Directed Learning of the North-West University, South Africa, is pleased to announce the *9th International Self-Directed Learning Conference.*

Theme: Advancing self-directed learning research: Innovation, context and praxis

In its broadest meaning self-directed learning describes a process by which individuals take the initiative, with or without the assistance of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (Knowles, 1975).

Against the backdrop of this definition of self-directed learning (SDL), we invite educators, researchers, and practitioners to contribute to its continued advancement. We invite you to share innovative ideas and experiences across diverse contexts, and the praxis of SDL, which involves critical thinking, analysis, reflecting on actions and beliefs, and using this reflection to inform future action.

The 9th International Self-Directed Learning Conference offers a dynamic platform to showcase emerging research on SDL, explore new trends, and generate ideas for future inquiry. The conference also provides a platform for collaboration among international and local attendees committed to promoting SDL and ensuring that learning remains relevant in a rapidly changing world. Join us for an inspiring gathering of SDL enthusiasts dedicated to innovatively advancing SDL research in all contexts and praxis.

Keynote speakers: Prof Bret Staudt Willet (USA), Prof Yrjö Engeström (Finland); Prof Bernadette Geduld (RSA)

Conference subthemes:

- Scholarship and praxis for SDL
- Multimodal learning and open educational resources to enhance SDL
- Indigenous knowledge and contextualised learning to enhance SDL
- Play-based self-directed learning
- Assessment to support SDL
- Blended learning to support SDL
- Cognition and metacognition to enhance SDL
- Cooperative and problem-based learning to enhance SDL

Why submit a paper and register for the conference?

- Showcase your expertise and contribute to the scholarly advancement of SDL.
- Gain valuable feedback and insights to enhance your research.
- Join global educators and researchers advancing SDL in a beautiful South African setting.

Submission guidelines:

- All research should have ethics approval from the relevant institution.
- Download the submission template.
- Abstracts should be between 500 and 800 words (excluding references).
- Include citations and a reference list.
- Clearly outline the purpose, methodology and results (if available yet) and implications of the research.
- Submissions from diverse educational contexts are welcomed.

Submission deadline:
30 May 2026
Notification of acceptance:
15 June 2026
Registration:
From 15 June until 30 September 2026

Conference enquiries: Eunice Pretorius (LOC chair), Eunice.Pretorius@nwu.ac.za

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Technical enquiries: Francois Papers, Francois.Papers@nwu.ac.za

All conference details: Home | Research Unit Self-Directed Learning | Education

See link for more information: **https://education.nwu.ac.za/research-unit-self-directed-learning/conference-2026**