

## FROM THE FRONT OFFICE...

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## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Jasper Hamer** who has made it into the SA Development Team for debating, which is one of the national debating teams.



## SOUTH AFRICAN MATHEMATICS OLYMPIAD (SAMO)

MRS ROOS

Westerford did exceptionally well at the South African Mathematics Olympiad (SAMO) prize-giving at Emperor's Palace, Johannesburg, placing as the top Quintile 5 school in the country. Westerford was also the second runner up as the top performing school overall.

In the Junior division (grades 8 & 9) Ben Maree came first, Eli Williams 3rd and Jan Karstens 10th. In the Senior division (grades 10-12) William Alexander came 10th.



From left to right: Eli Williams, Jan Karstens, William Alexander and Ben Maree

The Western Province first teams, both junior and senior, also won a separate national team competition - the South African Mathematics Team Competition (SAMTC). Ben and Eli were on the winning junior team.

Others who were selected to participate in the third and final round were Johan le Roux (Gr8), Yannan Ke (Gr9), Caroline Cress (Gr12). Ellen Grant-Smith (Gr10) and Noah Adams (Gr12). Ellen and Noah both achieved an "Honourable Mention" in the Senior division.



Long March to Freedom is a monumental procession of 100 life-size bronze statues of iconic individuals and the largest exhibition of its kind in the world. The detailed sculptures of South African (and some international) personalities, some famous and others unknown, tell the story of South Africa's 350-year struggle for freedom and democracy through the lives of those depicted.

The Grade 9s were recently privileged to visit this extraordinary exhibit through an initiative by the National Heritage Project Non-Profit Company and sponsored by the First Rand Foundation. It was an immersive and moving experience to connect with people so vividly created in bronze: from the Khoenkhoen leaders of the 1600s, to proud Xhosa and Zulu kings, to the men and women who led the Struggle through the dark Apartheid years.

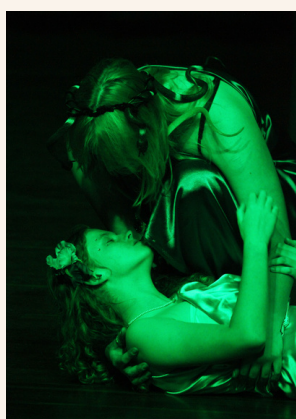
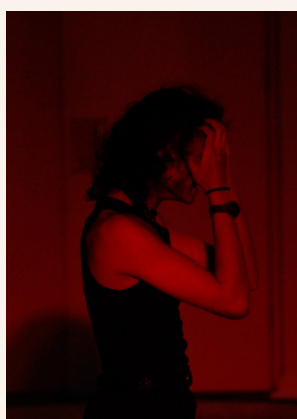
The facilitated visit had the Grade 9s do a thorough investigation of South African resistance history, with a particular focus on the resistance to Apartheid, 1948 - 1994. They completed an information-search activity, did research on a number of individuals and informed each other on what they had found and learnt. It was a novel way to discover their past and, I'm sure the Grade 9s would agree, much more exciting than textbooks and chalk-and-talk in a classroom!





On Saturday the 28 October, Westerford's actors, directors, writers, tech teams and food stall owners came together to put on the 2023 One-Act Play Festival. This is a day where plays that have been written, directed, produced and acted by Westerford pupils are performed for the parents, pupils, friends and families of Westerford. Each play would have two showings, while snacks and musical performances were in the library quad. The monologue competition also took place in the Jubilee Hall. This year, six plays were accepted to the festival. The productions were: *Unsighted serpents*, *He's a nice man* (these two were performed in the NT hall), *Pine(ing)*, *Dear Diary* (performed in the Drama Lab), *When the stars look back at you*, and *The Mollycoddle Manor* (performed in the Music Auditorium) and it is safe to say that each play absolutely excelled! The variety of content, themes and settings of the plays this year contrasted particularly well. Audiences could experience the despair of heartbreak, the drama of Greek gods and the comedy of the kitchen, making for an amazing programme. The performances started at 12:00 and ran until 16:15! There was a brief intermission before the evening was finally topped off with a prize giving that ran until 17:15.

The organisers: Mr Kingon Daniels and Mr Jordi had very kindly arranged for two external judges, Joshua Wyngaard and Matthew Kingwill (both of whom are involved in South African theatre) to attend the festival and award various prizes to the different plays. It was an extremely difficult job and, it is safe to say, no one envied the difficult decisions they had to make. Once the prizes had been awarded, hands had been shaken, photos taken and the expensive milkshakes drunk, attendants and performers alike packed up and left to treat themselves to a performance of a completely different kind from the Springboks. Although not quite as enthralling as the One-Act Plays, the bokke came close, rounding off an amazing Saturday of incredible performances!



## THE CONCERTO FESTIVAL

THATO GILLESPIE-NAIDOO AND DELILAH STOLOFF

Westerford's much anticipated annual concerto festival took place last week. In the spirit of the concerto, the performance of a soloist accompanied by an orchestra, some of Westerford's best and brightest soloists featured in this highlight of the musical calendar.

Many of the pieces played are large scale musical works, not for the faint of heart, and the pupils who excel musically are selected to perform in this event. 10 soloists who performed, they were Olivia Williams, Caroline Cress, Jamie Rutgers, Luke Pooler, Ella Adamson, Emma Henshall, Victor van Aswegen, Jian Goliath, Thomas Edwards and Alex McIvor.

As expected, the evening was an immense success, and each soloist performed admirably. Many thanks to the Music Department for organising such a beautiful display of Westerford's musicality, and congratulations to the musicians for their incredible performances.

## QUARTERLY CONCERT

KAI MANIE

On Thursday, 2 November, the Music Department hosted the final 2023 Quarterly Concert. After a long year of hard work, the evening was the perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy well-performed music.

Much to the joy of all performers, there was an excellent turnout of family members, Westerfordians and staff. The love and support from the audience were greatly appreciated by all performers, accompanists and music teachers, who were eager to share the year's progress and the results thereof.

A special thank you to the members of the Music Department for always encouraging and uplifting their pupils. Westerford would not be the same without their hard work and dedication

## WORLD CULTURES

NIYAZ CASSIEM

Accents form part of cultural social identity and they are significant in embracing your heritage. On Tuesday 17 October, World Cultures hosted an accent challenge in which pupils could compete for an amazing prize. The event encouraged the celebration of accents rather than the demeaning of them. This event was a fun competition while also being extremely enriching. The winner, Franco Casutt, is a foreign exchange student from Switzerland and he had to fight hard to overcome the rest. The World Cultures accent challenge was a great start to the 2023/2024 cultural year.





The incredibly talented Matric Art class of 2023 created a beautiful exhibition of their artistic progression during their time at Westerford. For those of you who were unable to attend in between Celebration, Valedictory and the general chaos that the fourth term brings, I have attached a few photos from the exhibition.

Prompts included Identity/Gender, Body Mind Soul, Seasons, Fragility, Irma Stern and, my favourite, Light. Congratulations to the Matrics for their incredible and thought-provoking work, and good luck to them for finals.



On Tuesday, 24 October, Westerford hosted a total of six speakers during the week's Multi-period. Following a similar procedure to Story Day in March this year, pupils were able to sign up for the talk they wanted to attend during the last 45 minutes of the day.

The speakers and the subject matter of their talks varied significantly and included Jeremy Veary on the Numbers Gangs and organised crime in South Africa, Philip van Niekerk on a newly-opened school in Tanzania sponsored by China, our own Mr Brookbanks on espionage, Amrita Pande on women's safety in South Africa, Graham from Metro Organics Farm on the effect of conventional farming on the environment, and Dr Anastacia Tomson on transgender life in South Africa and her experiences.

All talks were well-enjoyed and beneficial to the listeners, and we look forward to having more events like this one.

## **ALWAYS ANASTACIA**

**DELILAH STOLOFF**

Last Tuesday, Westerford had the honour of hosting Doctor Anastacia Tomson, a transgender GP based in Sea Point, to discuss her life and lived experiences as a transgender woman in South Africa.

Anastacia captured the attention of Seminar A with her riveting and heart-wrenching story about seeking healthcare as a transgender person, being outed in the workplace, working in the medical field as a proud transgender woman, and activism. She spoke in depth about autonomy and our individual human right to decide what we would like to do with our bodies and our lives. It was an inspiring and empowering experience to listen to her speak and share her perspective on activism within the sphere of human rights.

If you'd like to learn more about Anastacia, we encourage you to read her book, *Always Anastacia*, a powerful memoir and an important read for many of the Westerford community.

## **ESPIONAGE FROM A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE**

**AMEERA CARIEM AND LUJA MARX**

On 24 October, Mr Brookbanks gave a brief insight into the world of espionage for the Multi Multi Period. The session, which took place in the Noel Taylor Hall, was well-attended, and was already fully booked a day in advance.

Mr Brookbanks covered a variety of topics including the world and development of espionage, how it all started, and the role of spies and how it is done today.

He also explained the difference between statutory and non-statutory forces, and how espionage focus changed as a result of the world wars, as well as the extraordinary tale of Dieter Gerhardt, the South African spy who leaked classified information from the likes of NATO to Russia for over 20 years.

You can find out more about the topics discussed in the Multi session by reading some of the books by John le Carré, a novelist and former spy.



On 9 and 10 September 2023, a Department of Basic Education (DBE) Consultative Conference was held for all stakeholders in the education sector, including DBE officials, Teachers and Principals, Union officials and Pupils to focus on **Curriculum Strengthening** of the CAPS. Six schools from across South Africa (from Gauteng, the Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State and the Western Cape) were invited by *Save The Children*, an NPO striving for children's rights and welfare through focus on education. We (Inganathi and Lily) travelled to Johannesburg with Mr Brookbanks as the representatives of Westerford (the only high school from the Western Cape) to contribute to the conference by giving our collective vision for education in South Africa. This was argued as follows in briefing documents which were provided to participants:

*Given the centrality of curriculum and assessment policy to the education process, and their interconnectedness to the other levers, the sector has decided to foreground Curriculum Strengthening as an immediate area of focus.*

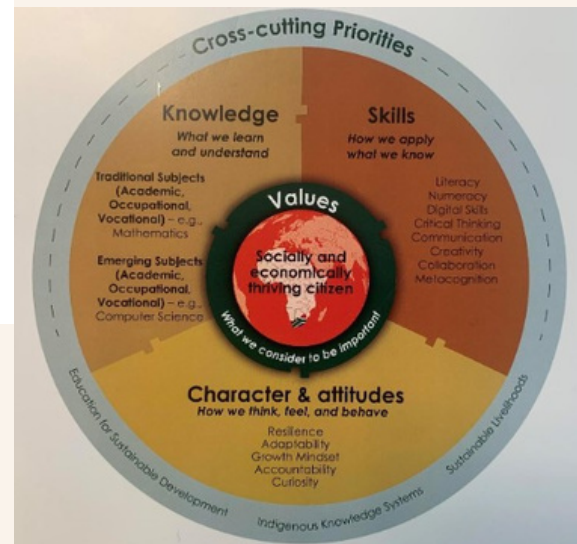
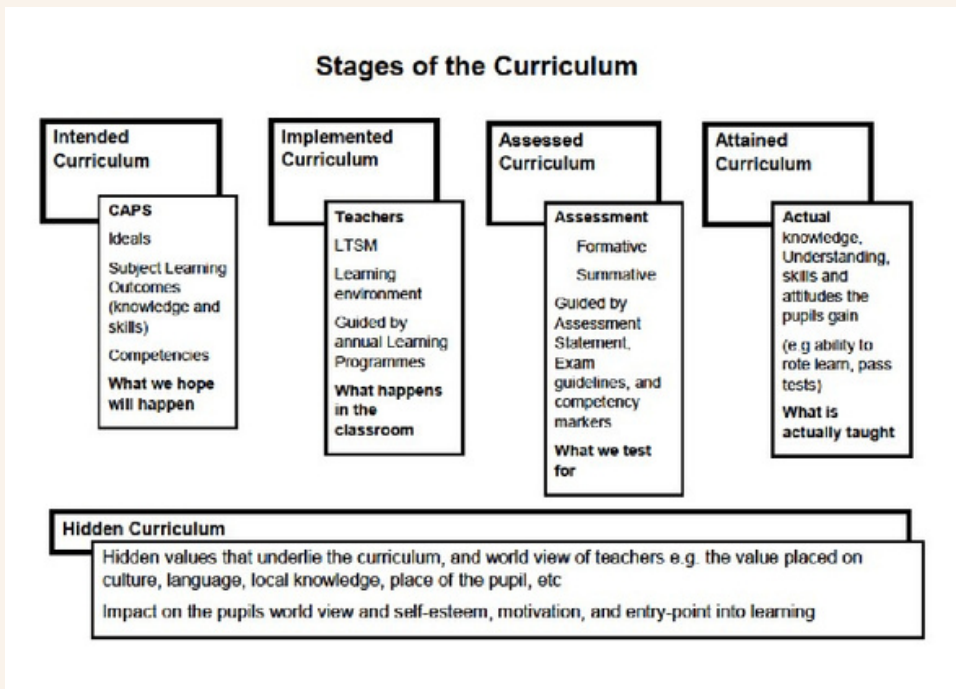
What made this consultative conference unique in the history of our democratic South Africa, is that it took place after a nation-wide consultation with a primary sector of the education sector – the pupils themselves. We, along with the rest of our group, were privileged to make a submission on behalf of the entire school-going constituency in South Africa. The organisers responded with a Letter of Appreciation acknowledging this significant pupil-input which can be found [here](#). Below is a snippet from the speech that we delivered during the conference:

"A goal without a plan is a dream. Education without adaptability is a dead-end. Let's make our dreams a reality. Let's strengthen our education system, together. [...] Our generation are the leaders of the future, tasked with driving the changes our world and country need to adapt to. What better way to start than through our education. Education needs to properly equip the youth to prepare us all to become global citizens. Education is a right, a right that we have the responsibility to broaden, enrich and renew in order to better develop stronger, more self-sufficient South Africans."

At the outset it must be emphasised, the CAPS Syllabus is not being rewritten and the implementation of CAPS will continue to be subject driven. The Curriculum Strengthening initiative being undertaken should not be understood as an attempt to move back towards a Competency-based curriculum (similar to our failed attempt to implement outcomes-based education). It is a deliberate and systematic infusion of competencies into the intended CAPS curriculum. In other words, as distinct from Competency-based, the curriculum strengthening advocates for **Competency-infused curricula** where content remains core, the competencies are developed through content and, in turn, the content is strengthened via competency infusion.

For those interested in more than our feedback in this article, the following briefing documents are provided on the DBE Website: 'Draft Discussion document, Curriculum Strengthening, Executive Summary' which was delivered by the DBE Director: Learning Recovery and Curriculum Strengthening (Ms C Weston), and 'Draft Discussion document, Competency Framework, Summary' which was spoken about by the DBE Technical Advisor: National Education Collaboration Trust.

The Stages of the Curriculum and the Competency Framework are pictured below. The Framework emphasises infusion of specific core values, knowledge, skills, character traits and attitudes, and cross-cutting priorities into the curriculum. There is a desperate need to consciously strengthen the intended curriculum of CAPS.



## Our General Feedback

Overall, this unique experience was humbling, motivational and very interesting. Stepping outside of the bubble that is Cape Town, it was humbling to realise the immense privilege Westerford has in terms of space, resources, staff, school culture, and the education itself (working together with the other pupils, we learned that one of the school's yearly fees was R400). When speaking to the two pupils from the Ekurhuleni School for the Deaf, we were educated about how the prejudice many communities have against non-hearing people affects their education, and the complex nature of general education that is taught in sign language (we also learnt a few phrases in SASL). The presentations given during the conference on IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems) and ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) were not only exciting as potentially forming part of the prospective competency-infused curricula, but also for ideas here at Westerford, like placing more emphasis on using the current three main languages in Cape Town: Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English, as well as planting seeds for ideas of events and projects focused on sustainability. We are grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of this hugely beneficial process and thank all parties involved: Mr Brookbanks, Save The Children, the DBE, and others, including those Westerfordians who helped us by giving their input at a Save The Children workshop we hosted in early Term 3 (brownies were rewarded!).



Beware the Jabberwock, the stuff of nightmares, Lewis Carroll's most feared creation... except, of course, the Jabberwock is the looming threat of exam season, and we Westerfordians are all trembling in terror before it. In preparation for the final battle, Peer Helpers and AID (Accessibility Inclusive Diversity) hosted a much-needed study skills event, and have compiled a cheat sheet of sorts for all the procrastinators out there.

## 1. Setting the scene

Where you choose to study matters. There actually is a scientific reason why you shouldn't be studying in your bed - who would have thought? Besides being terrible for your musculoskeletal and digestive systems, your brain associates your bed with - you guessed it - rest and sleep. When you study in bed, you don't study as effectively, you don't retain information as well, and you're more likely to take a nap on your notes. Studying at a table or a desk is better for your physical health, and will help you achieve your goal of becoming an academic weapon.

## 2. Drawing up a timetable

Structure is very important during a time of exam-induced turmoil. Creating a timetable adds structure to your studying stress, helps you feel more prepared and contained, and guides you on your journey to packing a year's worth of information into your exhausted brain. Whether creating a blank timetable to fill in as you go, or planning out each day's swotting like a drill sergeant, a timetable leads you down the road to success.

## 3. A procrastinator's priorities

When conquering the sheer amount of incomplete tasks becomes comparable to the struggles of Sisyphus, it can help to list every single one of them (I know, I know - don't panic just yet) and sort them by priority. Do the most urgent tasks first, and then you can tackle that forgotten essay due in two weeks and clean your bedroom.

## 4. Note taking matters

What more can I say? Note taking is actually beneficial to your studying success. It keeps your concentration focused on your teacher, helps you actually absorb information, helps you organise your work, and allows you to create a condensed set of notes to learn from. On top of that, some of what you've written down will be stored in that brain of yours, and you will find memorising your work much easier.

## 5. Memorising multitudes

Onto memorisation. Everyone has different methods of storing all that information. I like to write down everything that I can remember and fill in the gaps afterwards. Some people find it beneficial to pace while they recite their notes, others love flashcards. Whichever method works best for you doesn't affect the following, a truth that will shake you to your very core: you cannot memorise a year's worth of work the night before an exam.

Peer Helpers and AID would like to thank everyone who attended our event, and encourage our fellow pupils to utilise some of the tips listed above. Who knows? They may surprise you. Good luck everyone, and "may the odds be ever in your favour".



This was going to be an article about movies to look forward to that would be coming out in cinemas after exams. Unfortunately, due to the writers' strike and ongoing actors' strike in America, most big movie releases (such as that of *Dune Part Two*) have been set back by months. Thanks Disney... Instead, this is going to be an article on some films and series you may have missed that will be able to keep you entertained come the holiday.

## ***Andor***

*Star Wars* has been around for almost 50 years. It is one of the most iconic film franchises in the world and is considered to be one of the most culturally influential films of all time. Epic storylines and unselfconsciously cheesy wipe effects have become synonymous with the name. Although loved by millions, the franchise is often criticised for lacking any substance. However, at the end of 2022 a new series premiered on Disney Plus that challenged this stereotype: *Andor*. Mirroring the rise of the Empire in the *Star Wars* universe with authoritarian states in the world, the series follows its protagonist and title character, Cassian Andor as he grapples with the struggles of living in a galaxy run by an oppressive system. As well as being a gripping and brilliantly made series it also reflects on the struggles of resisting an oppressive government and the sacrifices made by those who choose to do so. The series sets itself apart from most other *Star Wars* productions and was nominated for 8 Emmys! If you're looking for a gripping watch that will provide you with a bit of food for thought as well as entertainment, then this is the series for you!

## ***Our flag means death***

Taika Waititi is most well known for his work on the Thor films as well as his unforgettable (although not necessarily family friendly) *Jojo Rabbit*. What seems to have missed most people's attention is his comedy series (co-produced with David Jenkins): *Our flag means death*. The comedy series follows the exploits of Stede Bonnet in his attempts to become a great pirate captain and his ensuing complex relationship with legendary swashbuckler Blackbeard (played by Taika Waititi). It is a wacky and hilarious series that fans of Waititi's work will relish. The second season has just been released on HBO Max and I highly recommend fans of *Flight of the Conchords*, *What We Do in the Shadows* and any of Waititi's other work, to give this a watch. It will not disappoint! It is available to watch on HBO Max.

## ***The Pigeon Tunnel***


While the name David Cornwell might not mean much to most people, the name John Le Carré probably will. Known as one of the most influential spy novelists of all time, the author received critical acclaim for his works. A few of his most famous novels include: *The Spy who came in from the cold*, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* and *The Constant Gardener*. The documentary (directed by Academy Award-winning Errol Morris) follows the life story of the acclaimed author in Morris's classic engrossing style. Most people (myself included) tend to shy away from documentaries due to their serious and non-fictional nature. Morris, however, makes the life story of this remarkable author feel like a tale of suspense and drama and weaves a simple conversation between himself and Le Carré into an incredible story with superb cinematography and brilliant editing. It is available to stream on Apple TV and will leave any movie buffs suitably enthralled.





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Please click on this link to make WHS your beneficiary <https://www.myschool.co.za/supporter/update/>  
Should you not yet have a card, the My School App can be downloaded from Apple and Google App Stores and a virtual card applied for.

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We encourage you to join the School Days programme, which runs in a similar way by shopping at Dischem and other stores. Click to join - <https://www.schooldays.co.za/home>



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Your child will learn how to snorkel confidently and safely, interact with amazing ocean animals, and learn all about ocean conservation.  
Age group: 9-16

9am to 1pm at Windmill Beach Marine Protected Area

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Book your child's spot by emailing [mahen@iamwateroceanimpact.com](mailto:mahen@iamwateroceanimpact.com)



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Arrival at Windmill beach and introductions from the team. Yoga inspired stretching followed by mindful breathing. Exciting ocean knowledge discussion.

Change into wetsuits and begin first round of stations.

Station 1: Guided snorkel experience. Station 2: Rocky shores exploration to learn more about the animals that live along our coastline. Station 3: Trash timeline activity to learn more about the impact plastic pollution has on the ocean.

Second round of stations begins with each group rotating to the next station.

Third and final round of stations begins with each group rotating to the next station.

Change out of wetsuits. Beach games to warm up after snorkelling. Sharing Shell Circle.

## Why I AM WATER?

Proceeds from this experience will afford a group of Grade 7 learners from low-income communities a chance to experience an Ocean Guardians Workshop.

By choosing to send your children on an I AM WATER Ocean Experience you are supporting another child, allowing them to experience ocean connection in the same way that your child will.

Our coaches have extensive water safety and child safeguarding training. We are the safest option.

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