



TICZA

TEACHER INTERNSHIP
COLLABORATION SOUTH AFRICA

Setting up for Success: Prototyping the ESTI Standardised Model in 2026/27

TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) Series CoP #18
Summary Report:
10 November 2025

The Teacher Internship Collaboration South Africa (TICZA) – Key Features

- TICZA is a collective impact collaboration project.
- It is a partnership initiative made up of government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions and private sector organisations.
- TICZA is governed by a representative Steering Committee.
- The aim of TICZA is to demonstrate the extent to, and conditions under which Extended Student Teacher Internships (ESTIs) can be an effective, efficient and widely used model for teacher work-integrated learning, embedded within teacher policy and practice as part of a broader goal of institutionalisation of the model.
- The TICZA Community of Practice (CoP) is a programme element intended to enhance sector-wide collaboration through which implementers share knowledge and practice, discuss key initial teacher education (ITE) issues and expand the evidence base on student-teacher internship models.

1. CoP 18 Overview

Key takeaways

- In the final community of practice (CoP) event, TICZA's achievements through the use of the Collective Impact approach over the past five years were summarised. These include development of the Standardised ESTI model incorporating Essential Wrap Around Support (EWAS) and the Common Competency Framework (CCF), the Cost Benefit Analysis, the TICZA Evaluation and the TICZA Meta Analysis (in process). These collaborative achievements contribute to the goal of institutionalising ESTIs.
- In 2026, the two-year prototyping process for proof of concept will begin. The nature of prototyping in a social innovation context and its application to TICZA was explored. The process involves empirical testing of the ESTI model in its use-context, with its stakeholders and end users, including test and control groups of Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) students. Four partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and NGOs are proposed, working in close collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) at national, provincial and district levels. The two research questions to be answered are:

- Does the Standardised ESTI Model identified through the TICZA process **produce teachers who are more competent** than teachers trained through other distance education programmes?
- Can the standardised ESTI model be delivered at a cost **affordable to government funding schemes** such as NSFAS, Funza Lushaka and the SETAs?
- Presenters from North West University (NWU) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ) outlined their institutions' work integrated learning (WIL) models to help participants consider how partnerships aligned to the Standardised ESTI Model might take shape.
- In closing, the prototyping proposal details and its planned implementation framework were shared, as well as possible timelines for requests for proposals and application processes for HEI/NGO partnership applications.

2. From Vision to Impact – Prototyping the Standardised ESTI Model [James Keevy and Tarryn de Kock, JET Education Services]

Update on TICZA

After five years of collaborative activities and targeted research, TICZA has reached agreement on a Standardised ESTI model, of which Essential Wrap Around Support (EWAS) is a core component. The next step is to consider how the model could be institutionalised and made affordable to the government fiscus.

James reminded participants of the features, highlights and stages of the TICZA journey so far, including:

- Application of Collective Impact approaches: common agenda, shared measurement systems (not fully achieved), mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone support;
- The location of ESTIs in the professional educator life cycle and their close relationship to the WIL component of the B. Ed degree;
- The stakeholder map, which illustrates roles and inter-relationships in the teacher education ecosystem;
- The continually refreshed TICZA Theory of Change;
- The critical research topics completed or underway: EWAS, Cost Benefit Analysis, the CCF, the TICZA Evaluation and the TICZA Meta Analysis.

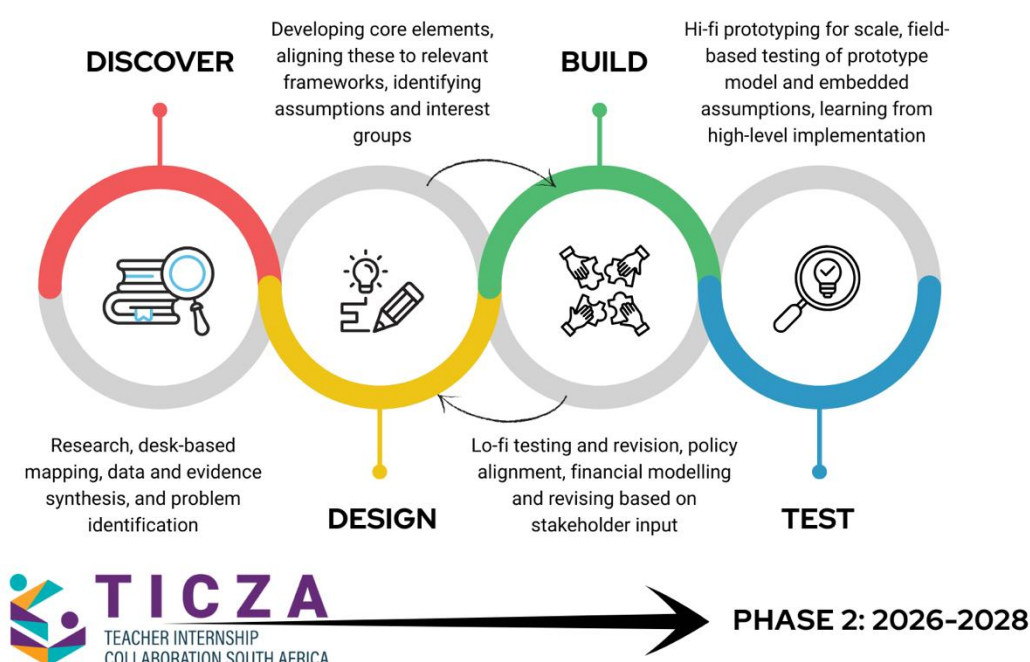
View the [presentation](#).

TICZA is now ready to test the ESTI model in context, and in this phase will be working closely with the DBE at national and district level and with HEIs in the public sector partnering with NGO Implementing Partners.

Prototyping for Proof of Concept

Tarryn de Kock described prototyping as a method of demonstrating design intent leading to a high-fidelity prototype model as close to its final form and cost as possible. This is empirically tested in its use-context, with its proposed end users and stakeholders.

Prototyping involves four core steps, which can be mapped against TICZA’s activities and progress over the past five years, as illustrated below.



In 2026, TICZA will embark on the **test phase** – ‘testing in the wild’ – checking against key indicators for effectiveness: **relevance** (is it addressing a real problem, and what are the conditions under which it can effect change?), **consistency** (what is a sustainable structure?) and **practicality** (are the financial and operational considerations feasible?). Tarryn discussed how the use of prototyping in the social sciences environment needs to accommodate human-centred design, checking the fit between all partners involved at different levels (from policy to implementation) as well as those affected by an intervention. Social innovation prototyping also takes into account the longer-term social implications of what is being tested.

The prototyping test will involve 50 distance education students studying through the Standardised ESTI model over two years, and 50 students in a control group studying through standard HEI offerings in three or four HEIs. Aims and boundaries for the prototype have been closely defined in order to control for variables and to work within the funding budget. Aspirational or anecdotal ESTI outcomes (e.g., quicker completion times or development of leadership qualities) cannot be tested for at this stage.

Eleven components of the Standardised ESTI Model will be tested:

1. **Essential Wraparound Support (EWAS):** at R30 000 per student teacher per year which includes the following:
 - **Supervision and mentoring:** of student teachers by project mentors on a 1:25 ratio for 21 days per year on-site for the mentor;
 - **Professional development:** of student teachers for 28 full days per year;
 - **Lesson observation assessment:** of student teachers x 7 per year.
2. **Competency assessment:** against common competencies as defined in the TICZA CCF.
3. **Qualification:** B. Ed degrees achieved.
4. **Cohort:** years 3-4.
5. **Institution:** public universities in South Africa.
6. **Mode:** distance education.
7. **Foundation Phase:** with preference for South African indigenous languages.
8. **Placement:** at quintile 1-3 public primary schools.

The process aims to answer **two key questions:**

1. Does the Standardised ESTI model identified through the TICZA process produce **teachers who are more competent** than teachers trained through other distance education programmes?
2. Can the standardised ESTI model be delivered at a cost **affordable to government funding schemes** such as NSFAS, Funza Lushaka and the SETAs?

Discussion points

- TICZA takes a long-term view and sees the integration of ESTIs into ITE as a minimum 10-year process, with implications relating to teacher education policies and the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM).
- There was some discussion on the complexities of medium of instruction in multilingual schools, as well as how placement of students whose second and third language choices in their study programme will fit in with that of the schools. TICZA will need to work with the DBE and local circuits regarding selection of students as well as school placements in 3rd and 4th year to address these complexities. It is also

noted that the prototyping process is geographically constrained as a wider geographic spread increases costs.

3. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in ITE: current practices

Presenters from North West University and the University of Johannesburg shared the main features of their institutions' WIL models, with the intention of assisting participants to consider the nature of partnership applications in relation to prototyping the EWAS model for ESTIs. Presentations provided high-level overviews of areas such as the following:

- **Coordination and logistical** processes, including student recruitment, school placements, time frames, finance, monitoring and evaluation and relationship management;
- **Support processes**, including orientation at all levels, the role of mentors, the role of academic assessors, academic and other support systems and assessment;
- **Alignment** of WIL to the HEI academic programme and adjustments to the system that may be required for distance education students;
- **Ongoing WIL challenges** and areas of concern that need to be addressed.

School-based student teacher programme in the Department of Childhood Education (DCE) @ UJ [Dr Dean van der Merwe, University of Johannesburg]

Dr Dean van der Merwe outlined the online offering of UJ's Foundation Phase programme, currently in its fifth year of implementation. Intakes are small, averaging 20-25 students per year in the B. Ed programme, mostly based in Gauteng. This limitation is to help ensure that distance education students receive the same quality of provision as contact students, and to take UJ staff capacity into account.

Students have access to all UJ's support services, as well as orientation, module-specific tutoring and quarterly meetings where class reps can raise concerns. Students are placed in their internship schools for the full academic year, adhering to the schools' calendars. During their placements, the students must keep up with UJ coursework. Coursework and assessments are aligned with the campus-based programme, and in the 4th year, a DCE lecturer visits each school twice (once at the beginning and once near the end of the year) to observe and evaluate student teachers' teaching practice. From 2nd to 4th year, the students spend an additional week in other schools to meet the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) requirements. UJ works with the schools mainly through managing partners and has little influence over mentor selection.

See the [presentation](#) for details on all these elements.

Dean made the following observations on UJ's learnings so far:

- The quality of the mentoring received from mentor teachers/supervisors is not consistent. These differences can be noticeable, and UJ may intervene in some cases.
- UJ would like to get more detailed feedback from students on their school experiences through structured debriefings.
- School-based students gain more practical classroom experience than contact students, and it is not always possible to replicate campus-based assessment. These factors have implications for assessment design and equivalence.
- Longitudinal research on the experiences of school-based students and comparisons with contact students is underway.

WIL @ North West University (NWU) Faculty of Education (FEDU): Overview of WIL model and processes [Dr E Küng and Mr E Kok, NWU]

Dr Elize Kung is the Deputy for Strategic Relations under which WIL falls, while Eddie Kok is the Teaching Practice Academic Coordinator, the link between the academic and operational sides of FEDU.

The university's institutional WIL dual placement system is used (student self-placement, or through contracts between FEDU and schools), involving approximately 13 000 education students in 6 700 schools across the country per year overall: current figures for Foundation Phase distance education students are 574 in Year 3 and 532 in Year 4. The Teaching Practice office coordinates placement and logistics, while the Teaching Practice Academic Coordinator deals with academic matters. There are two teaching blocks per year, each consisting of four weeks. Teaching practice is paid for by students, although there are options in terms of stipends.

Schools select mentors and NWU does not have control over this. Mentors assess the students every semester, following guidelines in the NWU academic workbook, progressively increasing assessment in the later years of study. NWU's own academic assessors (about 220 lecturers) go out to schools in Years 3 and 4, visiting a different range of schools, to observe and assess senior students. There are orientation and ongoing professional development processes for lecturers involved in WIL.

Academic support includes an orientation session that aims to disrupt students' assumptions and expectations regarding replicating 'traditional' teaching. This is followed by other phased orientation programmes and elective short courses (e.g., 'alternative discipline' or Foundation Phase board writing skills), which, while not credit-bearing, are helpful in bringing theory and practice together. NWU takes an integrated approach to teaching and learning in that didactics is integrated into the academic programme. There are reporting channels for psycho-social support. Distance education students have access to all support services offered to contact students.

See the [presentation](#) for details on all these elements.

The presenters noted that lack of control over selection and training of school-based mentors is an issue; there is a lack of capacity to closely monitor and evaluate mentor quality overall, with reliance on visits by academic assessors and feedback from school principals. The Teaching Practice Support Services offers a platform for both assessors and students to reporting issues.

Discussion points in response to both presentations

- Dr Setshedi from the Department of Higher Education & Training (DHET) noted that there are concerns regarding partnerships set up directly with schools, as the department supports MOUs at district level for interventions relating to teacher education. From a TICZA perspective, the need to work closely with districts was stressed.
- The criteria for use of the term ‘functional schools’ need to be addressed in the MRTEQ revision.
- At NWU, student enrolment in terms of language of instruction or language modules in their degree reflects students’ home and additional language matric choices. NWU offers English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, Setswana and Sesotho, and, for distance students only, isiXhosa and Sepedi.
- A potential problem is a concentration of student-teachers from different HEIs in the same school. This is more likely to happen in Gauteng than in any other province, and needs to be managed through communication with schools. However, it is also the case that many schools are reluctant to take in student teachers, seeing them as a strain on capacity.
- In education, and especially in relation to WIL, stakeholder relationship management is key. Both HEIs locate this critical strategic function in their Faculties of Education.
- NWU offers a B. Ed in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), but this is still only in the second year of implementation with a small cohort of funded students. WIL takes place in ECD centres, and NWU is currently working with practitioners to develop the system.

4. Next Steps

The focus is on working with three universities who have been part of the TICZA process: NWU, UJ and the University of South Africa (UNISA). While there is a core group of NGOs who have been committed to TICZA throughout the process, any NGOs who wish to apply to join the programme may do so.

Alignment with the DBE has been confirmed, and TICZA will work with the department at national, provincial and district levels in setting up and throughout the prototyping process.

HEIs and NGOs need to apply in partnership, opting in to the ESTI Standardised Model. The criteria for application are clearly set out in the Terms of Reference shortly to be released.

Securing funding is in process, and the aim is to get the Request for Proposals out and the application process started before year-end. The selection committee will be convened through the TICZA Steer Com, and the hope is to set up four HEI/ NGO partnerships for the prototyping process in 2026.

Acknowledgement

James Keevy thanked all those who have walked this journey with TICZA so far, while looking forward to the next stage. Patience Voller closed by noting that CoP 18 marks the end of the TICZA Community of Practice series, which began with TICZA CoP 1 in August 2021.

Participant List

Facilitator: Patience Voller, National Association of Social Change Entities in Education (NASCEE)

	Name	Organisation
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2	Justinus Setshedi	Department of Higher Education and Training
3	Zaahedah Vally	JET Education Services
4	Tshegofatso Mashaphu	JET Education Services
5	Tarryn de Kock	JET Education Services
6	James Keevy	JET Education Services
7	Judy Tate	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
8	Robyn McQueen	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
9	Flick Holmes	Khanyisa Inanda Seminary Community Projects
10	Patience Voller	NASCEE
11	Melissa King	NASCEE
12	Carisma Nel	North West University
13	JE Kok	North West University
14	Dr E Küng	North West University
15	Zorina Dharsey	Primary Science Programme
16	David Watson	Thandulwazi Academy
17	Nkosiphile Bhebhe	St John's College
18	Rene Levinge-Lang	St Peter's Foundation
19	Dean van der Merwe	University of Johannesburg
20	Kathleen Fonseca	University of Johannesburg
21	Emisang Machedi	Zenex Foundation