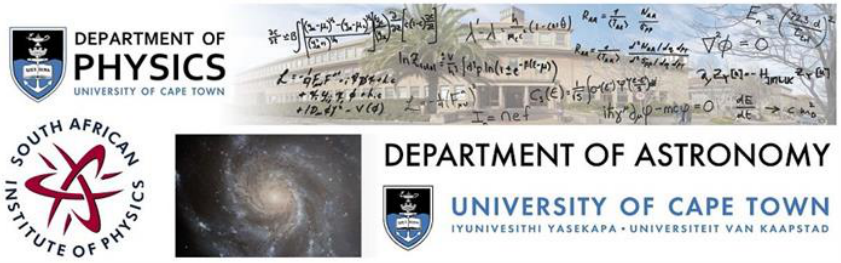

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A new approach to teaching graphs to first year science students

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Abstract content
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Despite being one of the most important concepts in the study of physics, graphs continue to be a problem area for most first year students. Most of them arrive at university without a strong background in understanding basic concepts like graphs. Graphs are a very important part in the study of physics at university. Interpretation of data is the cornerstone of science education. Graphs show rates at which things happen, relationship between variables and are a good tool for representing data visually to see relationships and trends. The Unizulu Science Centre developed a very simple method of teaching graphs to first year physics students through the use of multimedia technology. Because data can be abstract, using simple tools like user-friendly software programmes which are freely downloadable from the internet can make graphs very clear to the students. This paper seeks to showcase the use of these simple teaching tools in teaching abstract concepts in physics at university level. The presenter will demonstrate these concepts with the hope that others can learn and use them to improve physics teaching.

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