



➤ Provincial Winner

## Excellence in Teaching Natural Sciences

**Name:** Mr Clemence Thomas  
**School:** Touwsrivier Primary School, Touwsrivier  
**District:** Cape Winelands Education District

**Mr Clemence Thomas is a Natural Sciences and Mathematics teacher at Touwsrivier Primary School for the past 11 years where he made an impact on both learners, teachers and the community he serves. At Touwsrivier Primary School he serves as a subject head and lead teacher for Natural Sciences and Technology.**

Mr Thomas strives to make the learners at his school independent problem-solvers that can do self-directed projects with the focus on Fourth Industrial Revolution skills including Coding and Robotics. His science classroom integrates what is taught in Mathematics and applies it to the practical application of the Natural Sciences topics. He believes that Science is a “do subject” and not a “talk subject” and that learners learn Science best when they are practically busy with the subject in the field. That is why most experiments happen outside the classroom and within the community.

In addition to teaching, he started Maths and Science clubs. The Maths and Science clubs participate in excursions that the learners plan and must do research on before they reach their

destination. Reflection is an important aspect to Mr Thomas as part of the feedback that learners need to give.

Real-world science and demonstrations form part of fieldwork the learners do. To support this further and making sure that the learners stay, Mr Thomas enter his learners as participants in the Astro Quiz, ESKOM Expo competitions and Natural Science Olympiads. Mr Thomas encourages the learners to display what they have learned and present it to other learners, parents and community members.

In the community Mr Thomas further empowers his learners to participate in nature conservation activities to clean the environment and create awareness of plastic pollution as well as alternative sources of energy.

He is also the chairperson of the Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging in the Touwsrivier area and has encouraged the learners to take pride in their community by cleaning and restoring heritage sites. Through this work he reaches out to non-governmental organisations to provide the learners with resources, clothes and food. This



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outreach continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Touwsrivier is a small town in the Western Cape where poverty and job security are two of the main social issues that challenge the community. Mr Thomas uses the school to build a community from primary to secondary level that encourages and mentor parents to support their children with their work at home.

He afforded community members the opportunity to visit countries such as

Germany, the United States of America and Israel. Through these activities and outreach programmes, Mr Thomas inspired a community member to become a science teacher who is now the principal of the secondary school in Touwsrivier.

Mr Thomas has a dream for Touwsrivier. His future plans for the town and the community are to build a science centre and developing Touwsrivier as the centre of excellence in Natural Sciences in South Africa.



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