



NEWS

August 2012

Reaching the y-generation of today requires a shift in approach

Inspiring educators

The Faculty of Education hosted the **Inspiring Teachers and Student Teachers Conference** on Friday, 3 August 2012 at the South Campus Auditorium. The idea was born after Mr Vuyani Matsha and Dr André du Plessis attended a similar conference in Johannesburg. The response was great, with nearly fifty percent of the attendees coming from outside Port Elizabeth - East London, Grahamstown, Graaff Reinet and Cradock.

The conference was opened by Prof Denise Zinn, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, and followed by a variety of presentations. Vuyani Matsha showed how games can be used within the Mathematics classroom for teaching, learning and enjoyment. André du Plessis made a case for why social media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) should not be banned, but embraced for learning. The Apple iPad as an ICT tool for teaching and learning featured when Michelle Lissoos showed how schools are harnessing the possibilities that iPads offer; matching learning and the youths' digital lifestyle.

Gavin Keller, principal of the Sun Valley Group of Schools, showed how the y-generation learner thinks and how teachers could meet these learners' needs. The brain is fascinating; understanding how it works maximizes learning, and this means embracing ICT, creativity and music as part of our teaching.



Incy Wincy Spider... Gavin Keller had delegates out of their seats, miming the actions to this rhyme as part of his presentation



The new generation of SA teachers... from left, Bertram Kleinhans, Jonalin Maarman, Lazolo Mweli, Mbali Zasawe and Mbulelo Kama

The use of toys for the teaching of Science concepts featured with Dr Les Meiring showing how teachers could use inexpensive toys in a fun manner to elicit science learning. Mr Zaka, community leader, shared the importance of having goals and to be self-motivated to achieve success. The ancient Egyptians and their contributions to mathematics was eloquently presented by Prof Peter Loyson. He also showed how advanced African civilizations were mathematically.

The conference concluded with presentations by Mr Bruce Damons, principal of Alfonso Arries Primary School, Dr Al Witten of the Centre for the Community School (CCS), Mr Lazola Mweli (teacher at Alfonso Arries) and four NMMU students (Jonalin Maarman, Mbali Zasawe, Mbulelo Kama and Bertram Kleinhans) making a case for what is required for the new generation teacher in South Africa.

Feedback received from delegates suggests that this conference assisted not only in making teachers aware of the possibilities that ICTs offer, but that teaching and learning requires a shift in our traditional ways in order to reach the y-generation of today.

Top NMMU Honours awarded



Dr André du Plessis and Executive Dean, Prof Denise Zinn, is awarded **NMMU Emerging Engagement Award 2012**



NMMU Teacher of the Year 2012, Dr Logan Athiemoolam (left), is pictured with NMMU VC, Prof Derrick Swartz.

This month saw several members of our faculty recognised for the work they are doing.

Top NMMU honours in 2012 were awarded to **Dr Logan Athiemoolam** in the category of NMMU Teacher of the Year and to **Dr Andre du Plessis** in the category of NMMU Emerging Engagement Award Recipient.

Prof Naydene de Lange received the award of Faculty Researcher of the Year, for the second year running.

Dr Andre du Plessis for the Faculty Emerging Researcher of the Year (he has now won awards in all three categories – teaching, research and engagement).

Dr Logan Athiemoolam for Faculty Teacher of the Year.

Prof Denise Zinn remarked, “We are extremely proud of you, of the work you are doing in the arenas of inspirational and innovative Teaching and Learning, Research as well as Engagement with various communities. Congratulations to our stars! In your light, we see the light!”

Celebrating faculty achievements...

A celebratory function was held earlier this month to acknowledge the post-graduate achievements of this year’s M and D graduates and their supervisors, as well as the recipients of NMMU Merit Awards.

Pictured right are, from left, Dr Robert Gerber, Dr Johanna Geldenhuys, Dr Adele Botha, Dr Lizette Oosthuisen, Prof Alette Delport, Dr Priscilla Gitonga, Mr GJ Kandankay (B Ed Hons Merit Award), Prof Paul Webb, Ms L. de Wet (B Ed Foundation Phase Merit Award) and Prof Denise Zinn.



Lunch with the Dean!



Class reps from each of the year groups in the B Ed undergraduate programme sat down to lunch with Executive Dean, Prof Denise Zinn, to share their experiences, ideas and impressions of the current under-graduate programmes. This is a first step towards tapping into the 'missing voice' of the students that will be used to inform the faculty curriculum renewal process. As the group is substantial – 28 student reps – there was lots to say! Some of the class reps are pictured above with Prof Denise Zinn (centre), Dr Deirdre Geduld (Foundation Phase Head of Programme, far left), Dr Tulsi Morar (Acting Director SITE, 3rd left) and Ms Heloise Sathorar (FET Head of Programme, 2nd right).

Student jet-setters get ready to take off!



The group of B Ed students who are participating in the **2012 International Exchange Programme** pictured whilst in Cape Town applying for their visas. *Back:* Elize Groenewald, Simcelile Bambelo and Candice Jewel. *Middle:* Nadine O'Neill (left) and Leslie Jacobs. *Front:* Mina Swart, Jade Hattingh and Nina Hanekom (George). They leave for their trips during September for 4 weeks.

Research Support Group (RSG)

The intent of the RSG is to create a network in which people share, assist and use others as sounding boards to start or develop their research. It is also a place where people share their work in ways that allow exploration of the process; the joys, tears, deliberations and the findings.

The engagement of the group over the last semester has been exhilarating and productive, and will continue this semester.

Please join as time permits:

Where: The Pink Fig (Circular Drive, Charlo)

Dates: 07 September, 21 September, 05 October, 16 October, 02 November, 16 November, 30 November

Time: 2:00 to 5:00pm

Donation of books between schools



No book thrown away... Text books, teacher resource books and learner exercise books were recently donated by VP Grey Primary School (Walmer) to Alfonso Arries Primary School (Booyesen Park). Opened in the beginning of the year, Alfonso Arries has been operating without textbooks; the teachers using what they are able to in order to facilitate learning. Assisted by faculty administrators and CCS, VP Grey drove out to Alfonso Arries with a full kombi and trailer to hand over the dozens of boxes of books and learning materials. Pictured above with excited learners and teachers are Alfonso Arries acting Principal, Mr Bruce Damons (2nd back left), and Mr Craig Geswint (2nd back right) of VP Grey.

Recycling and beautifying



Walking past the new section of building 11 you may have noticed the beginnings of a unique garden. Carol's window garden is made of plastic bottles and containers that she has planted with 'stukkies' out of her garden at home. Birds and inquisitive monkeys are regular visitors!

As Prof Zinn remarked, "This brings to mind Nancy Kline's chapter in 'Time to think' on 'Places that say back to you, "you matter"'. There are so many ways the administrators create such places in the Faculty, in different ways. Carol's garden is one such place."

A reminder...



ICEDU Colloquium: Showcasing intercultural education

On 07 August 2012 the Intercultural Education Unit (ICEDU) hosted a colloquium to showcase the work of colleagues in the Faculty of Education that resonates with intercultural education. The programme also included several presentations by members of other NMMU faculties and from other countries, ranging from Kenya and Sweden to the USA.

The Executive Dean of the Faculty, Prof Denise Zinn, welcomed all present to the event and Prof Nonnie Botha, head of the ICEDU, provided a brief background to the establishment and development of the Unit. The programme consisted of 10 presentations on a very wide range of topics, namely personal experiences as a visiting academic in a foreign country (Dr Agnes Kibui), the challenge of language issues in education (Dr Lyn Webb), teaching strategies in diverse university classrooms (Prof Bill Holderness and Dr Shirley Wagner-Welsh), inclusive education in the international arena (Dr Eileen Raymond), an Afrikaner student teacher's experiences in a farm school (Johan Pienaar), intercultural challenges in effective sexuality education training of Life Orientation teachers (Dr Christina Jordaan), the inter/trans-cultural encounter as 'radical unknowability' (Prof Dalene Swanson), participatory visual methodology to enhance PGCE students' understanding of multicultural education (Dr Logan Athiemoolam), multiculturalism in Europe (Prof Kerstin von Broemmsen), and closing the skills gap in an interdisciplinary and intercultural context in township high school students (Maria Marciales Arreaza, Michael Mitsumori, Christopher Galbick, Emily Dodge, Martha Welderufael, Lisa Dedmore and Rachel Ricioli). The presentations were very well received by the audience and lively debates ensued.

The presentations were interspersed with wonderfully appropriate performances, e.g., a role play performance by some of the Faculty's undergraduate students, which contrasted the past South African education classroom with the present situation.

The anonymous evaluation of the colloquium by the participants was overwhelmingly positive. The suggestions for improvement echoed each other in that all of them wanted more: more involvement by students; more presentations from other countries; more about how we work in our South African classrooms now; more time for presentations, discussions and questions; more time for networking – more, MORE, **MORE!**

Prof Nonnie Botha reported that the intention is to consider making this an annual event, probably over more than one day to accommodate the call for 'more'. Through this the ICEDU aims to prepare students for life in our increasingly complex world and to help students to look beyond themselves, and that colloquiums such as this one provides opportunities for participants to discover differences and to subsequently rise above such differences.



A cocktail and networking opportunity closed the proceedings of the day, with a performance being provided by the Umngqungqo waKwantu group



Back row: Dr T. Morar, Ms L. Dedmore, Mr M. Misumori, Ms R. Ricioli, Prof H. Glover (Project Leader), Dr R. Webster (Deputy Dean, DUC), Mr C. Galbick, Prof P. Webb. Front row: Ms M. Arreaza, Dr J. Gosh (Deputy Dean, Business, DUC), Ms E. Dodge, Dr J. Davis (Occupational Therapy, DUC), and Ms M. Welderfael

During a four week period over July and August the Faculty hosted a team of seven students and various faculty from the Dominican University of California, San Francisco, USA.

The team are part of the evolving multi-disciplinary project between DUC and NMMU – a project which aims to provide students with an international multi-cultural experience whilst serving in poor, disadvantaged communities.

Prof Hugh Glover, project co-ordinator, reports that the team served in two partnering schools, Masipahtisane and Newell High school, and made a positive impact during their stay and learned much from their township immersion. The team was made up of two occupational therapists, two maths/science teachers, an MBA student and two B.Sc students who are tutors at DUC.

African Education Week

Empowerment for all through quality Education

The African Education Week 2012 was held at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg from the 2nd to the 4th of July 2012. The conference provided a forum for education representatives from across the continent from government to private companies, schools, FET colleges, universities, publishers, e-learning organisations, safety and security, financial institutions and other suppliers, to come together to find solutions to the issues facing the education sector.

The aim of this event was to provide delegates with a fresh perspective on the challenges facing education in Africa today, as well as skills and strategies necessary to address the challenges they encounter on a daily basis. Delegates also had the opportunity to share their own stories, and learn from and be motivated by the success stories of their peers.

The multi-track event incorporated Basic Education, Early Childhood Development, Inclusive Education, Maths and Science Literacy, Teacher Training, Further and Higher Education, Corporate Social Investment and ICT in education.

Delegates were also able to attend pre-conference master classes, as well as an exhibition showcasing educational materials, products and services.

Dr Logan Athiemoolam presented a paper entitled *“Implementing a Continuing Professional Development Programme in Rural Towns to empower teachers to reflect on language related issues”*.

The paper, which focused on a review of the revised ACE-LLT course of study that was presented as a pilot programme to teachers in Qumbu and Bizana, examined all aspects of programme delivery including the design of study material, training of tutors, site visits for quality assurance and rural outreach projects linked to the programme, amongst others.

Delegates, especially those representing the government, unions and service providers were particularly impressed by the model of delivery and the creative manner in which the programme was presented in these far flung rural areas without compromising on quality and standards.

They expressed interest in the modules which they felt were particularly relevant

and practical for all teachers and suggested that these modules be presented over a wider area across South Africa. Currently plans are underway to develop the modules into short learning programmes.

The many stimulating papers presented and the interesting book displays and exhibitions accounted for the positive mood that characterised the conference.

The thought provoking papers by many practising principals and teachers in the field ensured that delegates were not only provided with food for thought to ponder over the pressing issues affecting South African education at large, but also encouraged to reflect on the creative solutions proposed by a number of speakers aimed at addressing some of these challenges.



Dr Logan Athiemoolam (second left) is photographed with several other delegates at the African Education Week conference

Conference News

International Congress on Mathematical Education (ICME-12), Seoul, Korea

Lyn Webb

The 12th International Congress on Mathematical Education (ICME-12) took place in Seoul from July 8th to 15th. This is the Olympics of Math Education conferences as it is held every four years and attracts between 3 500 and 4 000 participants. In 2010 I was privileged to be invited by the Chairman of the International Commission on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI) to present what they term a regular lecture at ICME-12. In effect one has an hour to present on a topic of one's choice. Two South Africans, Prof Michael de Villiers of UKZN and I, were invited.



Lyn at ICME-12 with a traditional fan she painted

On the day before the Congress started I represented South Africa at the International Commission on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI) General Assembly. It was heady stuff to be responsible for South Africa's vote concerning committees that will shape Math projects and initiatives worldwide for the next four years.

There is inevitably a frisson of anxiety when one ventures into a new country with different customs and a totally foreign written and spoken language. South Korea is no exception, but the subway has an English touch screen and, with a population of 10 million, there's always the probability that someone has a vestige of English competence wherever it is that one is lost...

The Congress was held in COEX, a convention centre about four times the size of the ICC in Cape Town. At breaks one was able to chat to those whose names one only sees on seminal journal articles – Alan Schoenfeld, Jo Boaler, Deborah Ball, Mogens Niss, Iddo Gall, Zalman Usiskin...

It was daunting to face a full hall with a dry throat, and questions from renowned researchers, but the invitation to submit to Australia's premier Math Education Research Journal for their Focus Issue ignited a warm glow deep inside. In all I presented our South African research four times during the week.

Korea is a divided country and we travelled to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) where barbed wire and overt military presence defines the border between two countries separated by propaganda and animosity. It was chilling to walk in silence through the dripping Third Tunnel that North Korea mined under South Korean land to launch an assault on Seoul – one of many tunnels, of which only four have been unmasked.

The networking and academic stimulation that a conference such as ICME provides cannot be measured. The old adage rings true: "One cannot travel well, and return home the same person..."

Learner Centred Approaches to Mathematics and Science, Maseru, Lesotho 23 – 25 July

Lyn Webb

What a privilege to be included as one of three overseas presenters at the Maseru Teachers' Workshop in July! I shared the honours with Prof Norma Boakes from Richard Stockton College, New Jersey, USA and Dr Tony Harries from Durham University in UK.

The commitment of the teachers and the quality of their presentations for the three days was astounding. A highlight was a visit to Dr Gerard Mathot's *Seliba ba Boithuto* Institute (*see photo below*) which encourages peer learning with the motto – give the responsibility for learning back to the learner. The institute, high on the hill overlooking Maseru, echoes Rob Helfenbein's 'places of opportunity'.



The National University of Lesotho, the Lesotho College of Education and the Ministry of Education and Training were well represented.

Congratulations to Ajay Narayanan and his team for a very special experience. We were made to feel as though our contributions were valued – and further invitations for the AfriCME conference in Maseru in July 2013 are tempting!



Lyn (2nd right) with the Maseru organisers and plenary speakers.

Thinking Dialogue - future of our off campus involvement

Prof Alette Delpont

At the end of June a daylong retreat was held, essentially for key stakeholders (including centre managers, students, tutors, module coordinators, HOPs, DOSs, faculty administrators, as well as representatives from NMMU top management) to *think* about the necessity and feasibility of the faculty's future off campus engagement.

The purpose of the workshop was formulated as follows: ***To understand the reality and complexity of off campus delivery – to choose our on-going involvement and to commit to a way forward that has the necessary resources to deliver excellence.***

The workshop was very successfully facilitated by Trisha Wood and Candice Smith with *Thinking Environment* methodology. The sessions were structured around carefully formulated questions, including:

1. *What aspect of your work connects you to this issue and what matters most to you about off campus delivery for teacher education?*
2. *What is the current situation regarding programmes, centres, students, subsidies, incl the new draft DHET policy on ODL?*
3. *Having heard the presentations, what have you learnt or re-learned about off campus delivery? What more do you think, or feel, or want to say?*
4. *What do we want and need you to know about what works well, and what our challenges are?*
5. *What information needs clarifying in order for you to be able to continue to think well about a way forward?*



The day concluded with a series of small table discussions (see photo alongside) responding to the following questions: *What is working well? What is not working well? What is missing? What might we be assuming that could stand in the way of making the necessary changes? If we can make the changes we want, how would we go about doing that? What additional relationships do we need to create and sustain? What additional resources do we need? What are the next steps following on from today? What are our freshest thoughts on what the university needs to focus on and address for the future of off campus delivery? What are we feeling inspired about?*

A conclusion reached, through general agreement, is that the need to continue is imperative especially given the faculty's mission to "take education to the people".

Successful off campus tutor training sessions

B Ed (Honours) at Missionvale and Durban

Dr Kathija Adam

The July lull provided the perfect opportunity for the B Ed (Honours) teams to touch bases before the start to the new semester (see team photo alongside).

Module Coordinators and tutors from nine different off-campus centres met at Missionvale (7 July) or Durban (14 July) to engage in discussions related to modules offered to Honours students this semester. Discussions started with an orientation around the Faculty of Education *Vision and Mission* and the underpinning humanising pedagogy that is reflected in all that we do. During the orientation, the important role of tutors and their interaction with off campus students was explicitly highlighted as they are our partners at the various centres offering B Ed (Honours).



The comments from tutors about the orientation clarify the need to include off campus partners in curriculum renewal and for such interaction to occur on a regular basis.

Module coordinators then broke away for module sessions in which tutors were briefed on the requirements of each module and on the assessments and deadlines. This semester all tutors and module coordinators will engage in interactive engagement of classroom practices over email which should assist with improving the quality of delivery and assessment. In light of this, Missionvale lectures will always be a week ahead of the centres so that MC-Tutor discussions can take place before and after class sessions. These findings will not only assist with quality but provide some additional insights for the faculty curriculum renewal processes related to B Ed (Honours).

NPDE Tutor training in Kokstad

Neville Rudman

Managing the logistics of getting seventy Tutors and four Module Coordinators to converge on Kokstad from Port Elizabeth and the other centres in Lusikisiki, Bizana and Qumbu is no mean feat, but with the excellent teamwork between Sherwin King and the Centre Managers, I was delighted that we managed to get started more or less on time with all present.

We were warmly met by local Centre Manager, Ms Patricia Napier, and her team of helpers. Tea and coffee was served and we immediately got down to the business of training. During the first session, Dr Lonnie King trained his team in the delivery of PNFIS204 (Assessment 11) and Ms Sindiswa Somniso focussed on PNFIS 312 (HIV & Aids Education), while I sat down with the different Student Support staff to develop the curriculum we plan to cover this semester during our six one-hour sessions.

One of the goals we had set ourselves from the outset, was to begin making inroads in the rural context into the Faculty's focus on our Humanizing Pedagogy. So sessions were all started with a round ... bringing all the voices into the room, and the module coordinators selected some of the principles to role model and share during their presentations.



Bringing all voices into the room; Lonnie starts a 'round'

This was also one of the focus areas of the post-tea session, where I did a presentation which included some discussion of the unique challenges of teaching adults, a further focus on the humanizing principles, as well as the need for efficient and effective administration from all Tutors.

During the post-lunch session Ms Lungiswa Caga trained the PNFIS205 module (Professionalism in Education 11), while I trained PNRL202 (RPL Portfolio). The evaluations that were conducted at the end of each session indicate that our Tutors are generally well prepared for the task before them. Where areas of concern were identified by the evaluations, these will be addressed through teleconferences.

One of the highlights for me was when – during the student support session – Ms Yolisa Dudula suggested that SSP's should be pro-active in the initiation of support groups for various groups of students. Many of our students experience serious health challenges. According to Ms Dudula there is a big need to give students the opportunity to join, e.g., diabetic, blood pressure or HIV & Aids support groups, as required, where they can share their experiences, preferred diets and generally have the support of colleagues. Health professionals from local clinics can also be invited to address them. I refer to this as a highlight, because it adds a new dimension to the role of the SSP, and brings off-campus support a small step closer to the kind of support given to our on-campus students.



The morning after ... tired, but happy!

What is also gratifying is that the income raised by the caterers, will be donated to the *Yondlabantu Foundation*, who care for Orphans and Vulnerable communities. Well done, Patricia! Then, of course, the whole process was repeated the following weekend at Missionvale so that the Graaff-Reinet and local Tutors could be trained. Again, a successful event for which I am extremely grateful.

I asked each (MC) participant for a brief input on their experiences.

Sindi Somniso: "Thank you for helping us with the principles of a humanising pedagogy. It was a good help for me. It was a great pleasure to work with that group of tutors, we argued positively, they asked questions and came up with suggestions, which is important to me. I was working with a group of tutors who seemed to be serious about what they are doing. Thank you for the exposure, the experience and the opportunity you granted me to be the co-ordinator of this module."

Lungi Caga: "The visit to Kokstad presented an opportunity of getting to grips with the realities of being an out of campus student. I learnt that it is hard, as a result I empathise with them."

Lonnie King: "The cold of a Kokstad wintry morning (see pic) could not dispel the warm collegiality and eager participation of the group of 20 committed Assessment tutors present at the training session."



Sindi (foreground) in a discussion circle in her HIV & Aids class



The tutors enjoy a light moment together during a session

