



# NEWS

November 2011

## Developing curricula for the New Teacher who *Dares to Teach* Curriculum Colloquium 2011

A faculty-wide *Curriculum Colloquium* was held on 27 October 2011. This event sought to bring all faculty members together to discuss four aspects of the on-going curriculum work being undertaken within the faculty's programmes.

Two of the aspects looked at were the external imperatives (e.g. HEQF and Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications or MRTEQ) and the internal imperatives (e.g. NMMU V2020 and the Faculty's new Vision and Mission) impacting curricula. The other two aspects presented opportunities to hear from two sets of 'missing voices' in the deliberations to date, i.e. students and principals.

A panel of students, representative of the different programmes across the Faculty, participated in the proceedings of the day as well as each presenting a brief overview of their experiences within the programme they are/were studying. The panel of principals, associated with the Centre for the Community School and Manyano Network, contributed in terms of experiences of teachers in the schools; how our graduates are equipped (or not) to teach in our schools; what they need a New Teacher to be and bring. Both groups of these 'missing voices' provided invaluable input and much food for thought.



Group discussion – B Ed FP student, Nokhanyo Jack, participates in a discussion with faculty staff. From left, Dr Al Witten, Nokhanyo, Prof Hugh Glover, Flip Potgieter, Dr Kathija Adam and Prof Denise Zinn

As Prof Denise Zinn remarked, "This Colloquium has marked a turning point for the Faculty in terms of developing curricula for the New Teacher who has to be able to confront the realities of 90% of our schools in the province and country, and, in Freirean terms, will 'dare to teach.'"

## On the Research Front...

**Top NMMU Researchers ...** Three of our academic colleagues appeared on the *2010 NMMU Researcher Per Unit Value List*, with Prof Paul Webb topping the list at number one!

Paul tops the list with 12.5 units, whilst colleagues, Prof Bill Holderness and Dr Christo Pienaar, appear at positions 14 (6 units) and 18 (5 units) respectively.

*Congratulations!* We are proud of you all.

The following impressive **research outputs** can be reported for the faculty to date (and there are more coming before the year ends):

- 13 book chapters (including co-editorship of one book)
- 19 published articles in accredited journals
- 11 articles currently *in press/accepted for publication* in accredited journals
- 2 additional co-authored articles submitted and awaiting feedback from reviewers
- 41 conference presentations (some co-presentations, or 'repeats')
- Post-doc student, Dr Mathabo Khau, has 3 articles in press, one accepted for 2012 publication, and 1 book chapter



Prof Paul Webb

EACH ONE



KNOW YOUR STATUS

REACH FIVE

*"Teaching is not just telling; it's modeling, demonstrating, empowering oneself and others with information. And that's why I tested."* Dr Noluthando Toni, Director: ITE School

Thank you to Dr Toni and the many faculty staff members who tested  
HIV is everyone's concern

Empowerment and leadership workshop for metro school leaders

## Thinking Environment in Schools

The Manyano Community Schooling Project participated in an empowerment and leadership workshop for School Management Teams within the project, in association with the faculty's Centre for the Community School (CCS).

Participants experienced the magnitude of applying the ten components of the *thinking environment* within different types of meetings in which they are involved. They are of the opinion that these components:

- Empowers one to deal with everyday job stresses
- Allows you to manage yourself and your relationships with others - "I do not need to solve everyone's problems and challenges but that every person is capable of doing so themselves"
- Advocate the use of positive emotions to energize and motivate staff, allowing them to claim ownership of decisions made and outcomes reached
- Acknowledges the impact of negative emotions on morale
- Understands how emotions link to performance and how the use of this information can result in improved performance
- Contribute to creating a climate that will retain high potential and performing individuals
- Enable greater creativity and innovation through listening to others
- Build high trust between educators, parents and learners through active listening and valuing each person

As one participant commented, "The thinking environment enables one to tap into the latent powers within each individual in the school. Within our schools we can live the lessons of kindness, refuse to feel good about the mistakes or suffering of anyone especially our children and be the change we want to see."

The participants are pictured alongside with facilitators, Candice and Trisha (centre) and Dr Al Witten, Director: CCS (back right)



### A final workshop ...



Dr Carol Rodgers, Fullbright Scholar in the faculty over the past year, held her last workshop with staff at the end of November.

She presented two presentations to members of staff on two of the focal areas of her work during 2011.

In the first presentation, Carol shared her emerging theory on the *Humanising Pedagogy*.

Her second presentation shared very important findings, as these relate to our recent graduates, with regard to M and D examiners' reports.

### Zuurberg Mt Village – Writers' Retreat

Prof Bill Holderness

During early November, a small group of Faculty staff, who will be presenting at the forthcoming HELTASA and SAHARA Conferences later in the month, participated in an intensive 2-day Writers' Retreat at the Zuurberg Mountain Village, 1 hour from P.E.

At sunrise and sunset, walks were taken in the surrounding hills and valleys. These inspired a song to be written and sung in appreciation of the beautiful inn and its surrounds. One walk took us past Woodfield Kranz. It was here, in 1855, that engineer Woodfield departed this life with his horse as they galloped late one night at neck-breaking speed down the sharply-winding mountain pass he had been drinking, now bears his name.

As a result of the time together, eight conference talks and articles must be produced. If not, the 'baboon' that suddenly emerged from the bushes at the bottom of the mountain pass, may suddenly jump across the paths of the non-productive writers!



From back: Lyn, Alette, Naydene and Paul  
Middle from left: Christina, Mathabo and Logan.  
With Bill in front.

# Embracing reflective practice

## ACE-LLT students in Qumbu and Bizana present action research projects in language teaching

As part of the ongoing initiative to ensure that students from off-campus sites are provided with quality training in conducting action research projects in their classes, the Qumbu and Bizana ACE-LLT students presented their research projects as part of the module that focuses on the reflection of language in learning and teaching.

The presentations were evaluated by Head of Programme, Dr Logan Athiemoolam, and part-time Lecturer, Joe Slingers, and were of a high standard demonstrating that with proper guidance, students in these off-campus sites have the potential to implement strategies to bring about meaningful change in their classes in rural areas. Furthermore their exposure to research enables them to think critically and analytically.

Many of the students (*pictured below with Logan*) indicated that action research has made a constructive contribution to their teaching as they have embraced reflective practice which has led to an improvement in teaching and learning in their classes.



## ACE-SL Students present Action Research Projects

ACE-SL (School Leadership) students presented papers at a mini-conference held at the Missionvale Campus as part of their language module on issues affecting their schools.



The ACE SL presenters are pictured with their certificates, along with lecturers Mr Vuks Tshazibana (back, second right) and Dr Sindi Mbokodi (back, far right). Dr Logan Athiemoolam and Professor Wolfgang Nitsch are in the front row centre and far right respectively.

The conference, an integral part of the ACE-SL programme, has been held for the past four years and provides a space for students to share best practice experiences in their schools with their colleagues and interested members of staff.

The conference was also attended by Professor Wolfgang Nitsch from the University of Oldenburg who posed insightful questions to the participants thereby enabling them to reflect more clearly on the issues and intervention strategies highlighted.

## briefs

### Final 2011 research seminar



Elsa Lombard presented at the final session of the faculty 2011 research seminar series.

Her topic: "The implementation of grounded theory

methodology in the development of a substantive theory of Academic Staff Professional Development (ASPD) practice" explored the potential of grounded theory methodology in educational research and how she used it to develop a substantive theory of ASPD practice.

The process of the methodology and its potential pitfalls formed the focus of the presentation – and which made it of general interest particularly to supervisors and promoters.

### Sundays Valley River Schools

A strat planning session for the Sundays Valley River Schools was held recently over four weekends. A total of 289 teachers from 22 schools attended the workshops. The aim of the workshops was to assist the schools in developing an action plan for their school development.

Some comments from the participating teachers included, "The workshops were well planned/organised"; "I learnt a lot about myself, my school... and how to improve ourselves and our school"; "this was an eye opener!"; "Keep up the good work, guys you are building a nation"; "I liked that every session had strands of motivation and something new to ponder over"



Participants in action during the workshops

# VEOP kicks off at last!

Neville Rudman

A process that started in February this year finally came to fruition when classes commenced at the end of October for the Vocational Educator Orientation Programme (VEOP), a 30-credit SLP for un- and under-qualified educators at FET Colleges at our Missionvale Campus. We have 44 students registered, 28 from Port Elizabeth College and 16 from Eastcape Midlands College.

This initiative fits in well with Higher Education South Africa (HESA) who, as part of a Strategic Framework for 2010-2020, committed itself to developing a “shared conceptual view on the character, form and content” of a re-conceptualized post-school education system and the position and distinct role of universities in such a system. The FET sector is currently in a state of crisis. Nationally, only 45% of full-time lecturing lecturers in the FET sector have a recognized teacher qualification.

In response to this situation the NMMU’s Office for Strategic Planning and Information Analysis has launched a research project engaged in access, admission, articulation and continuous professional development with regard to the FET/HEI interface in the Eastern Cape Province. A key goal of this project is to develop an institutional wide, coherent strategy for NMMU to better maximize our collective efforts to collaborate and partner with FET Colleges in the region.

The Faculty of Education is committed to contributing to this effort by offering the VEOP to un- and under-qualified FET College lecturers serving at FET colleges in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan area. At the Port Elizabeth College 76 of the 200 lecturers are not qualified (Source: Brian McKenzie, Registrar) and at East Cape Midlands has a total of 104 of which 58 are not qualified. (Source: Ms Nonkonzo Chagi, Vice-Principal, Academic)

Although we were not the first to pilot this SLP, we are certainly the first to incorporate our learnings of a *humanizing pedagogy*, as well as a strong emphasis on the technological preparedness of our student-lecturers. And we are certainly the first, I believe, who were blessed with having a Fullbright Scholar of note (!) in attendance to guide the learning. Thank you so much, Carol, for making the time to be there! Carol’s voice will continue to be heard in the programme as she has been registered on the module LEARN site as a lecturer, so she can ‘keep an eye on us’ from afar!



Students at their first contact session

So far the students have displayed a high level of acceptance of and involvement in these two ‘add-ins’ and have made it clear that they want to develop in this direction. The stories they told of humanizing, dehumanizing and healing moments in their lives will for a long time stay with me, and the work they are doing on LEARN will continue form a central dimension of this programme.

## Pedagogical Week, Oldenburg, Germany

The Pedagogical Week is an annual event held at Oldenburg University to showcase teaching and learning ideas. Activities include presentations and workshops on topical issues in Education, and participants range from school teachers, policy makers in education, university lecturers, and other stakeholders in education.

**Heloise Sathorar**, Head of Programme B Ed FET, attended this year’s event. The main objective of her participation being to explore how this Pedagogical Week is planned and put together so that the NMMU and faculty could explore the possibilities of holding a similar event. We look forward to hearing more!

## Congrats Nonnie!

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# Drama in Education

## Trainers from Oldenburg provide drama-in-education training for faculty staff and metropole teachers

A group of experienced drama-in-education trainers from the University of Oldenburg, accompanied by Professor Wolfgang Nitsch, provided two interesting workshops for both staff and teachers.

The trainers (Frank Fuhman, Jorg Kowollik, Karen Fuhman and Gabi Morgan) expressed excitement about the possibilities of promoting drama-in-education among members of staff and teachers from both primary and secondary schools in the metropole and surrounds.

Attendee's at the staff workshop thoroughly enjoyed the experience and immersed themselves in the range of activities presented by the trainers. The general reaction was positive, "it is an exciting way to learn and teach, and the possibilities for implementing the techniques in a classroom setting are endless".

Eighteen teachers attended a second workshop session at Missionvale Campus and were visibly thrilled by the experience, and exposure to a novel approach to teaching and learning: "this could be applied across the curriculum in unique and exciting ways!"



*Having fun... Participating in the activities were staff members Naydene, Didi, Logan and Mathabo*

## PGCE students experiment with *Drama in Education*

Under the guidance of Logan Athiemoolam, PGCE students showcased their multicultural education theatre-in-education productions to peers and visitors. Their presentations examined themes such as racial discrimination, religious intolerance, racial profiling and the tapestry of cultural practices synonymous with the diverse groups in South Africa.

The impressive presentations led to in-depth discussion, analysis and interrogation of key issues, themes and perspectives as students tried to come to terms with the myriad of issues they will have to contend with in multicultural learning environs.

Two visiting academics, Ms Sheila Graham from Jamaica and Professor Anne Hickling-Hudson from Queensland University of Technology, were impressed with the presentations and the level of engagement of students.



*Logan (far right) pictured with one of the PGCE groups post performance*

According to many students the presentations enabled them to acquire a better understanding of crucial issues affecting multicultural schools and made them aware of the kinds of strategies that could be implemented to address such issues.

The PGCE English Methodology students also produced theatre-in-education pieces of an exceptionally high standard. Highlighted during these presentations were excellent acting abilities and good use of voice, gestures and expression which will hold them in good stead in their future vocation as teachers. Some of the themes highlighted included forced removals, the influence of social networking on our lives and warped perceptions of reality as demonstrated by skewed interpretations of our observations.

In their positive feedback, they expressed the hope that training sessions would continue in the future so that they could eventually create a forum where personal experiences related to implementing drama-in-education in their classes could be shared.

One of the teachers from the group will be visiting University of Oldenburg next year to acquire extensive training in the field of drama-in-education and will then provide workshops for teachers upon returning.

The trainers also visited one of Logan's classes to examine how he is implementing drama-in-education in his classes.

They were impressed with the students' role play presentations and the manner in which they interrogated crucial issues relating to religious intolerance and discrimination in the context of teaching and learning and posed a number of insightful questions to the students based on their presentations.

The team was very impressed with the enthusiasm of the participants at both workshops and optimistic about the prospects for the promotion of drama-in-education amongst teachers in the Nelson Mandela Metropole.