

# News



## Message from the Dean

We all hoped that 2021 would be better than 2020, but we were still dealt a fair share of challenges, albeit different. I would like to thank you for all the work you did to make sure that Faculty work carried on in the midst of the pandemic. Your dedication and commitment does not go unnoticed. We are not sure how omicron is going to behave in 2022, but we hope that we have developed enough immunity as a country in order to withstand the 4th wave.

On 14 December, we celebrated the graduation of 1 M Ed and 3 PhD graduands. I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Prof Logan Athiemoolam, Prof Paul Webb, Prof Nokhanyo Mdzanga and Dr Christo Pienaar** for supervising their PhD students to completion. We are looking forward to celebrating the graduation of our undergraduate and Honours students in April next year! Your hard work in Learning, Teaching and Assessment has enabled us to see students pass and promoting to the next level of study. We have also seen colleagues working hard in publishing articles and book chapters. For that we say thank you and well done! Some colleagues still carried on with their community engagement activities staying true to Mandela Uni's commitment of being in service to society. We salute you for that.

The admission process and mark capturing also posed some challenges and the administrative staff worked around the clock to make sure that we do not fall behind with our submissions. Thank you for your hard work!

As we prepare for next year, I would like to inform you that **all modules must have a study letter** that clearly outlines the assessment plan. We have dealt with many cases last year and this year where students were not sure how their modules were going to be assessed. This does not take away the responsibility of the student to make sure that they attend class and submit all tasks by the due date. It is however easier to hold students accountable when they know from the beginning what they are expected to do. I have asked the HoDs to provide me with a list of modules that do not have a study letter by the end of February 2022. I know that not all modules lend themselves to this specific style of study letter, but you are expected to have something similar before the end of February 2022.

2021 has been taxing and has taken some of us emotionally away from our families even though we were physically at home. Please make sure that you are present and spend time with family and friends. Your mind and body need to relax. Please have fun and keep safe. Take time to rest, recharge and revitalise yourself so that you come back in full swing next year!

May you all enjoy a blessed and happy festive season.

Kind regards, Muki

*Dr Muki Moeng (D Ed); Executive Dean: Faculty of Education*

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# Literacy, Libraries and Living Well Project

*Dr Margie Childs, with  
Mr Thandile Lantu (alumni)*



Yesterday (07 December 2021) we had a Certificate Celebration in the library at Charles Duna Primary on my *Literacy, Libraries and Living Well Project*.

One of our IP Alumni, Thandile Lantu, has assisted me with the Project. Covid constraints became an opportunity for us.

Our literacy work with Wordless Picturebooks (WPB) took place in the homes of five IP learners. Their parents assisted them to create and write stories, prompted by the WPB that they explored together. At

the certificate celebration, these learners and their family members shared their experiences of the LLLW engagement. Afterwards the children and caregivers received a snack pack.

The responses of parents shook the common mantra of “uninvolved parents” that often surfaces in conversations and research topics.

The learners are moving to Grade 7 next year and each has identified two younger learners to continue with LLLW in 2022. Earlier this semester I delivered the WPB and writing materials for the new group.

However, during the celebrations yesterday, there seemed to be interest in the group of five to continue to work in the project next year. Thus, Thandile and I will meet in January before schools open to strategise on the approach we will take with both groups.

Thandile’s input has helped to take a community engagement project forward in important ways. In addition, insights that Thandile and I gain from the work are threaded into IP language and literacy modules.



# AFRIKAANS LITERATURE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

NELSON MANDELA  
UNIVERSITY



**Liminaliteit in Kamp Koershou: Deurgangsrites in Malan Steyn se *Bos* (2019)**

**Dewald Koen** Fakulteit Opvoedkunde

The Afrikaanse Letterkundevereniging (Afrikaans Literary Society) held its 19th bi-annual and first virtual conference from the 15th to the 17th of September and was hosted by Nelson Mandela University's School of Language, Media and Communication. Afrikaans literary scholars from eight South African universities as well as colleagues from Ghent University (Belgium) and Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland) and Radboud University (Netherlands) presented papers at this year's virtual conference.

The opening keynote address was presented by Professor Rita Felski from the University of Virginia entitled 'On resonance: *Stoner* by John Williams and *Theory* by Dionne Brand' in which she shed light on the 'campus novel'. Mr Dewald Koen from the Faculty of Education presented his paper entitled 'Liminaliteit in *Kamp Koershou: Deurgangsrites in Malan Steyn se Bos* (2019)'. His paper focused on the Afrikaans play, *Bos*, written by Stellenbosch playwright Malan Steyn in which a group of Grade 11 learners have to attend a survival camp named "Kamp Koershou" as part of a rite of passage. His close reading and discussion of the text (which is also one of the prescribed readings for PAFR200 students in the Senior Phase) is based on the French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's seminal text *The Rites of Passage* (1909) in which he identifies three categories of rites of passage. Mr Koen's paper focused on the liminal rites (rites of transition) as experienced by the characters in Malan Steyn's play and how these characters have to 'deal with transition' as well as focusing on themes such as violence, homophobia, sexism and trauma which many teenagers experience on a daily basis.

On the 25th of September the Pan South African Language Board's national literary committee (Afrikaans) hosted a virtual conference in co-operation with the Western Cape Department of Basic Education which focused on the teaching of the various literary genres to Grade 11 Afrikaans First Additional Language learners. Mr Koen along with Dr Elbie Adendorff (Stellenbosch University) and Dr Mathilda Smit (University of the Free State) were invited to do a presentation which was attended by teachers from the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape as well as Gauteng, Free State and North West provinces. His presentation entitled "'I love it when you talk foreign": Lippelekklekker letterkunde in die Afrikaans EAT-klaskamer' ["I love it when you talk foreign": Finger licking good literature in the Afrikaans FAL classroom'] focused on the challenges teachers and learners have to face in the Afrikaans FAL classroom and how they could address these challenges by creating a stimulating classroom environment in which the teaching and learning of Afrikaans literature can be insightful and exciting for both the teacher and the learner. Based on the feedback received by the organisers, the PanSALB workshop was a resounding success and is likely to become an annual event to promote the creative teaching of literature in language classrooms all over South Africa.

*Mr Dewald Koen*



# Reading in the Intermediate Phase Classroom

Mr Dewald Koen (PILA300 lecturer) and  
Megan Coetzee (3rd Year IP student)

Megan Coetzee, a third year Intermediate Phase student, has been working part-time as an Intermediate Phase Afrikaans language teacher at a primary school located in a small Eastern Cape town. Being a passionate reader herself, Megan identified the need to promote a love for reading amongst her learners. She decided to take the initiative and created her very own classroom reading project with a creative twist in which she hopes to inculcate a love for reading amongst the learners in her classroom.

Megan got hold of a second hand lounge suite which she has brightened up for her classroom. The bookshelves will gradually be filled with books she will source from donors as well as family and friends. She designed a comfortable 'leeshoekie' (reading corner) where learners will be allowed to sit and read once they have completed a task during a lesson.

A learner will be required to read three books (in any language) after which the learner will be provided with an 'exit ticket' to paste into his or her reading booklet. Each 'exit ticket' contains interesting facts about a specific continent. This 'exit ticket' will then allow the learner to 'travel' to the next continent on the reading corner map. The idea behind this game is for each learner to obtain as many 'exit tickets' (hopefully all five) by the end of the year. Those learners who 'visited' all five continents by the end of the year, will receive a certificate and lucky packet.

Megan hopes to foster a life long love for reading in as many learners as is possible.



# Sondla Sonke initiatives



As part of the faculty's student support initiatives, the admin team of Gishma, Nozuko and Jackie continued to distribute food parcels over term 4. We are grateful for assistance from some of our colleagues and students. We are particularly grateful for the tireless support and assistance of senior IP student, Chuma Mdladlamba. Chuma is always willing to assist! He kept parcels in his res room so that needy students could collect a food parcel from him at any point in the week or weekend. It is indeed a lucky school who gets him as one of their teachers next year!

The team also responded to emergency calls by students during the extended power outage in Summerstrand during early November. We collated and handed out over 60 generous food parcels to desperate students. Their gratitude and expression of 'being seen and heard' has affirmed the need for such initiatives, but we cannot do this without continued support and assistance.

The 2022 AY support will begin early; we plan to respond whilst the students await the outcome of their funding applications. We have collected some funds to ensure a stock up in early January which will enable at risk students to be identified and offered support from the beginning of term 1. This will continue throughout the year as funds allow us to purchase stock.

Please support our Sodla Sonke initiative by bringing in non-perishable items, contributing funds or volunteering to be part of the team...

Financial support is easy! You can EFT into the university Standard Bank account:

When you deposit funds via EFT you must use ED19.4275 as reference so that Bank Recons will know where to allocate the funds. You may also add your name/surname, but the cost centre number must reflect first in the reference.



# BAYETHE MA-MOENG

by Nozuko Rhayi

'se ndazixaka kwamna ndizel'imincili  
Kudala ndisiva kuthethwa ngale mini  
Wamhle nzwakazi ndikubon'emini  
Oloo ncumo lwakho besakulibona nini?

MaMoeng iingqondo zethu zivulekile  
Nzwakaz'entle, phezulu kuthi ubekekile  
Ukuba yiDeani kuthi akuthi unguDinekile  
NamaZulu namhlanje sitsho futhi avumile.

Thetha ke maMoeng thina sakumamela  
Sibaz'iindlebe wena yitsho konke galela  
Mfund'omhle, eduze yiza nawe sondela  
Cima futhi konke nangamazwi 'zokuzikhelela.

Ngumnqweno wethu ukufunda ze sondele  
Sithululele thina kowolwazi wona umbele  
Ndiqongile ngathi kuwe uvimba ugwele  
MaMoeng kudulile kuthi uzelwe ngobubele.

Siyabulela kakhulu ngokusilondoloza  
Ukukhathala kwakho kuthi kuliyeza  
Neentsikelelo zophokoka njalo ziyeza  
Sive sonke singabafundi siyabhombholoza.

MaMoeng wena uyakuhlala usezintliziyweni zethu  
Mandehle, Enkosi.



## Peacebuilding in higher education

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) work in peace building, resilience and the prevention of violent extremism through education in Africa. UNESCO and IICBA embarked on the training of university lecturers and student teachers to be master trainers for peacebuilding and prevention of violence in Africa. This training is guided by Agenda 2063, CESA 2016 to 2025 as well as the Education 2030 Agenda and Framework for Action notably Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 on Education). The project is anchored in the recognition of the role of teachers in providing quality education and aims to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

South Africa was one of the countries that was invited to part of the training through the Deans forum which is led by Dr Muki Moeng (Chairperson of the National Education Deans Forum). UNESCO funded the project and Nelson Mandela University was appointed as the fund-holder with Mr Reinhold Gallant (Faculty of Education) serving as the coordinator.

In this regard, the Nelson Mandela University (NMU), Sol Plaatje University (SPU), and Durban University of Technology (DUT) held their strategic planning for Peacebuilding in places of higher education where students and academics worked tirelessly to ensure focused objectives with a clear action plan going into 2022.

Our very own Mr Nkqubela Chithelo (SRC Representative – Faculty of Education) presented on Transformative Pedagogy for Peacebuilding in South Africa.

Soon we will be launching peace structures at our institutions.



## HOPE

by Alizwa Vena

I might not be perfect,  
but as long as you are with me every step of way.  
I'm way better than being perfect.

You led me to better days.  
You lightened my way.  
You cleansed and cured my soul.  
Far better you healed my wounds.

I never thought I'd be happy  
Nor have faith again  
But You! My father made me see hope and have faith.  
You made me believe again.



# Faculty Alumni Community of Practice



The Dean recently launched the faculty's alumni community of practice (CoP) with the intention of sharing experiences and reflecting on practices in the classroom and in school with the view of improving teaching as well as to influence the reviewing of teacher education curricular.

As teacher educators, we are aware of the different contexts in which our graduates are employed and also understand that we cannot prepare them fully for what they will be confronted with once they qualify. This CoP aims to serve as a platform that will give you the opportunity to identify aspects that you found as shortcomings in your teacher education preparation programme, as well as aspects that you believe should be augmented and improved.

As part of the marketing drive, we handed out t-shirts to final year students who will soon join the teaching ranks of our alumni. We wish you all the best with your future endeavours and invite you to remain part of the faculty as members of our Alumni CoP.

Send an email to [Jackie.smith@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Jackie.smith@mandela.ac.za) to be included on the mailing list and to join in on CoP Alumni webinars, workshops, conferences, etc...



# Student assistant extraordinaire!

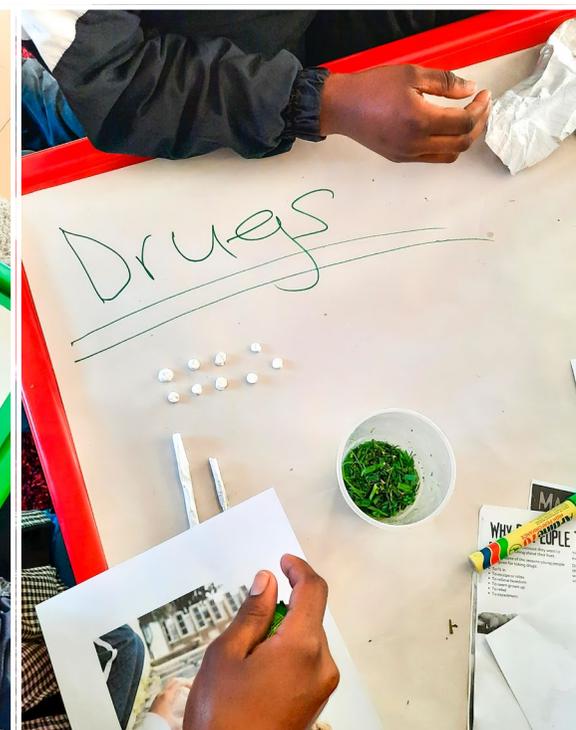


Chuma Mdladlamba is a final year B Ed IP student who has been a student assistant in the faculty and student housing department. He is passionate about ensuring students feel supported in a way that they do not get to experience what he did in his first year. He has been a tireless source of guidance in the first year experience programme, as well as a tutor on the PCTL100 module. Chuma is always willing to do assist – he kept food parcels in his res room so that students could be helped at any time of the week/weekend. He is always just a whatsapp away. Our thanks to him for being so fabulous and reliable; it will indeed be a lucky school who snaps him up!



# 3rd Year FP Jarvis Gqamlana Experience

JENNA THOMAS



My experience at Jarvis Gqamlana Public Primary School in Gqeberha was definitely one to remember. I visited the school on 21 September 2021 & attended one of the lessons with Dr Geduld. This specific lesson elaborated on the dangers of substance misuse and abuse to a Grade 7 class. This was new to me as I am an aspiring Foundation Phase teacher. The experience was refreshing though, because I was exposed to a different phase and stream in comparison to the one I've been made used to for the past 3 years of studying. This classroom experience really just showed me that kids are kids. I always had this misconception of younger children (Foundation Phase learners) being more behaved and respectful than older learners. But on this day I was proven wrong. We (as visitors to the school) were

warmly welcomed with a cup of tea and some chocolate cake. The learners did an ice breaker through a game of musical chairs. Thereafter, the learners were split up into different groups. There were visuals placed on a mat in the middle of the classroom, and these visuals were categorized, used and pasted on each group poster according to the different substances. The visuals were made up of empty substance packaging, as well as cut outs of pictures of some substances. The learners were asked questions about the following substances - drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and prescription drugs. Each group was given a different substance to create a poster on. The learners were asked questions about the substances so that they can write their answered information on their posters. I was surprised at how much they knew

about substances. It scared me and worried me, but at the same time it put my mind at ease to see how much they knew about the negative effects that substances have on one's body & health. They all learnt from each other and were able to share personal experiences. What stood out for me the most was how all of them don't see a life of productivity if substance abuse is part of their lives. They were very adamant and determined to break cycles of poverty caused by addiction. I enjoyed my visit to Jarvis Gqamlana Public Primary School and felt encouraged & hopeful after the lesson that I was fortunate enough to be part of.

# ENGAGE series



## ENGAGE #4

Queries: [helm@helm.ac.za](mailto:helm@helm.ac.za)

REGISTER NOW

### WHAT IT MEANS FOR DEANS

HELM, in conjunction with the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education Studies at the University of Johannesburg hosts the fourth in the ENGAGE series. Oliver Seale's in-depth study into the nature of deanship entitled *Deanship in the Global South: Bridging Troubled Waters* is about the deans' lived reality. It also follows deans as they try to navigate this important position and balance the ambiguous demands of both the academe and the executive. Their inadequate preparation and lack of support for deanship points to the need for a more strategic, integrated approach to leadership development and career management in this critical bridging role between the academe and administration.

ENGAGE #4 unpacks the nexus between academic leadership and executive management for deans in the university with particular attention on the following:

- How is deanship conceptualised, understood and lived in the 21st century university?
- Why do deans matter in universities and what matters for deans nowadays?
- How are we currently addressing the leadership and management development needs of deans during and after their tenure?

HELM ENGAGE #4 takes place on **Tuesday, 26 October 2021 (13:00-15:00)** where we will host another dynamic debate. Our speakers include Professor Jonathan Jansen, University of Stellenbosch, Dr Muki Moeng, Executive Dean, Education Faculty, NMU, Professor Denise Zinn, Programme Leader WIL and Dr Oliver Seale, HELM Director. They will unpack the complex global and local leadership environment of universities and its implication for deans; the changing nature of deanship; how deans traverse the delicate balance between the academe and administration; and advancing transformation and gender equity for access and success in this role.

Please feel free to pass this invitation on to others who may be interested.

ENGAGE #5 will focus on the emergent digital university, its conceptual underpinning, state of readiness in the South African higher education sector and advancing a more systemic holistic approach to digital transformation and technology mediated learning and teaching. Taking place on **Thursday, 25 November 2021 (14:00-16:00)**. The event will locate digital access and teaching and learning in the present and future of our higher education system.

Please [join HELM](#) to keep up to date on these and other upcoming 'thought breaks'.



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**NELSON MANDELA**  
UNIVERSITY



**Deanship:**

*A Lived Experience*  
**Muki Moeng**

# 2021 Year End Function



# 2021 Year End Function



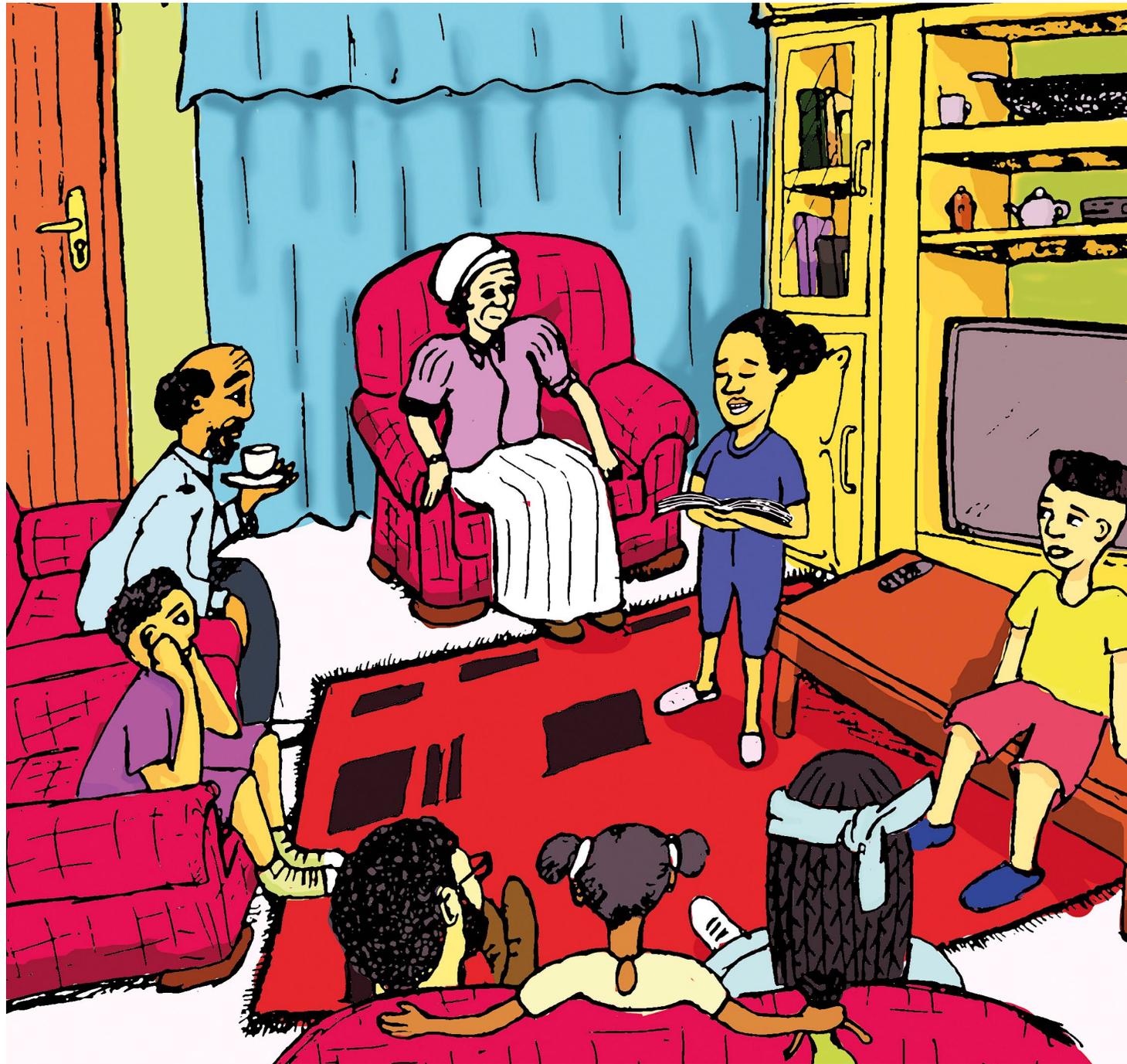
The Dean and faculty management decided that a M2M gathering to herald the end of the 2021 academic year was in order. This would be the first time since March/April 2020 and the start of the covid pandemic in RSA that the faculty would gather in one space. A large converted barn venue was chosen for its space, ventilation and covid protocols, with both permanent and non-permanent personnel being invited, along with their families

With approximately 75 attendee's, we gathered with lots of gaiety and festivity. Our Executive Dean, Dr Muki Moeng, addressed the gathering and reflected on the past two academic years and the adjustments we have all embraced in teaching and learning and academic administration. She further discussed the faculty academic plans for the upcoming 2022 academic year, as had been strategized and ratified in departmental sessions. She also handed out faculty certificates of appreciation to several staff members in recognition of their 'going above and beyond'.

# USING STORYTELLING AS EDUCATIONAL RAPID RESPONSE TO COVID19

*Prof N.N. Mdzanga*

When a call on Rapid Response Research and Innovation measures against the COVID19 pandemic came out in April 2020, I thought it was an opportunity not to be missed. Universities had been requested to respond to this call in order to rapidly provide assistance to the public against the COVID 19 pandemic. As response to this call, a few colleagues and I thought about putting together a project to respond to the theme on 'public understanding and awareness'. After a few brainstorming sessions, we agreed on a project that will provide an educational response to COVID19-and what better way than writing stories that could inform families on COVID19. Through these stories we aim to educate and raise awareness about issues such as the importance of staying at home during lockdown, how mathematical patterns can be used to show how the CORONA virus can spread and so forth. We hope that these stories would inspire, motivate, entertain, educate and influence what families do during this time. We plan to disseminate the stories as follows: uploading stories online and link will be distributed to a network of educators and student teachers as a reading resource; donate stories to orphanages, reading clubs and schools; read stories in local radio stations, avail them as supplements in the local newspapers as well as converting them into braille and donate to families and schools for children who are blind. Contributors are: Prof's du Plessis, Khau, Mdzanga, Pillay; Drs Sathorar, Geduld, Childs, Moeng & community members: Ms Gedze, Mntwini & Chizu.



# Sibongile and Thando help mom and dad through a tough time

*Mathabo Khau*

*Illustrated by Makocheng Gloria*

Thando and Sibongile lived with their parents in a small house in a rural village. Thando and Sibongile shared a room, and mom and dad had their own room. They were very happy in their family because mom and dad made sure that the children had all their basic needs. Dad worked in mine in the city near the village. Mom was a teacher in the village primary school where Thando and Sibongile were learners. Thando was very protective of his little sister Sibongile and made sure that they walked together to and from school daily.

However, it happened one day that the country was shut down. Schools, shops and many places of work were closed, and people were told to stay at home where they could be safe from a dangerous virus.

"Why are you sad my dear sister?" asked Thando. "Don't you like my jokes anymore?"

"I am sad because I am missing my school friends. Why can't I visit them?" replied Sibongile.

"We have to respect the president my sister. Staying at home protects everybody so that we do not get sick" said Thando to Sibongile.

The children were playing with a puzzle in their room one day when they heard raised voices from their parents' room. They kept quiet and listened to dad and mom talking with loud voices.

"I am tired of sitting around and being useless in my own house. I feel like no one needs me in this house. It is always you and your children busy with books and I can't do anything but watch" said dad throwing a book at mom. The children heard a loud thud on the wall and ran to their parents' room.

Mom was kneeling in a corner where the book had fallen and was picking up the torn pages, with tears running down her cheeks. Mom had a bruise on her face where the book had hit her. Thando and Sibongile were very sad.





"Mom, are you hurt? Dad, did you hurt mom?" the children said in a chorus.

Dad just walked out of the house and sat on a chair outside. Mom told the children that she was fine, but her favourite book was torn to pieces. Sibongile started crying and saying it is all her fault that her dad is angry. Thando and mom tried very hard to convince Sibongile that it was not her fault.

Finally, Thando asked Sibongile to go with him to their room to look at something interesting. When they got their room, Thando took out one of mom's magazines and they both lay on the bed and looked at the pictures. There were recipes and pictures of delicious food.

There were also pictures of people doing different jobs. Sibongile was eventually happy looking at the magazine with her brother and they competed on who chose the most delicious foods. Thando said to his sister "I have an idea to help mom and dad. Are you in?" "Yes, of course" said Sibongile happily.

"Okay. Here is the plan; we can cook supper for mom and dad to show them that we love and need them even if they are not going to work. Do you remember their favourite dish?"

"Yes. It is bean stew cooked with bones. We have beans in the cupboard and mom bought bones at the butchery last week" said Sibongile to her brother. "Who will chop the wood for the stove? We are not strong enough."

"You can talk to dad to help us with chopping the wood. You know you are very clever when it comes to talking to him. He always listens to you. I will talk to mom and ask her how she cooks bean stew" said Thando.

Sibongile and Thando were very happy with their plan. They each went to talk to their parents to ask for help. Mom was happy to tell Thando how she prepares her bean stew. She even helped him write down all the steps to follow. Sibongile took the axe from the woodshed and placed some wood on the chopping stone.

Dad watched as Sibongile struggled with the axe. He came to her and asked, "What are you doing baby?"

Sibongile looked at dad with sad eyes and said "I am not as strong as you dad. I want to chop some wood for the stove so that Thando and I can cook for you and mom."

Dad smiled at Sibongile and said, "I'll help you my princess."

Dad took the axe from Sibongile and started chopping the wood and helped with bringing some coal into the kitchen.

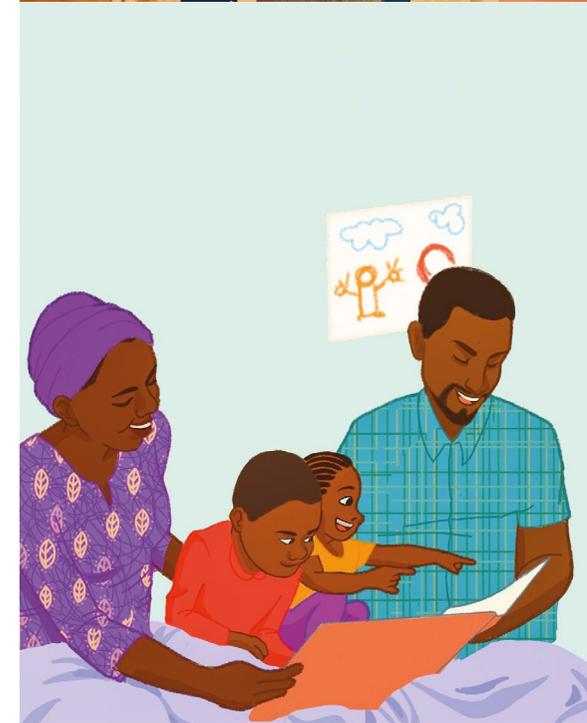
"Mom, you can go and rest. We will do the cooking today" said the children. Finally, the stew was cooked, and the kitchen was smelling good. Dad came into the house and asked the children what was cooking. They told him that it is a surprise.

"Dad, can you help us lay the table please?" Sibongile pleaded with her dad. Dad was very hungry and hurried to set the table. Thando called mom to the kitchen. When all were seated at the table, Thando and Sibongile said grace and opened the pot.

"Wow! It really smells great" said mom and dad at the same time. They all looked at each other and laughed. Mom dished for everyone and the family had a lovely meal.

When they finished eating dad asked mom to help him wash the dishes. As they were washing the dishes, dad apologised to mom for what he did. "I had no right to take out my frustrations on you my love. Can you forgive me please?" Dad said to mom. Mom told dad that she had forgiven him a long time ago. Mom and dad were happy and finished washing the dishes while they were both singing their favourite hymn.

That night Thando and Sibongile asked mom and dad to read them their favourite story of a prince and a princess who overcome many challenges, got married and lived happily ever after. As the children became sleepy, they both said, "We wish mom and dad can also live happily ever after!"



# Touching and hugging spread coronavirus fast

André du Plessis  
Illustrated by Bulelani Boo



The bell for break rang, “Clingeling, clingeling, clingeling.” The learners took out their lunchboxes. Some had a second lunchbox that they brought to school to share with those in need. Every week, one learner who could bring an extra lunchbox for a specific learner in need and for the next week was allocated. In this middle-class community school sharing and caring for one another is important without labelling those in need as poor or lazy.

v o i c e

As the learners rushed out onto the grass patches surrounded by dry soil patches on the playground, Peter’s silenced all those around him when he exclaimed “Have you heard, have you heard!! We cannot go to school anymore!!”

“That sounds great to me” John commented in a happy voice and many other learners nodded with a smile on their faces.

“Come on, what is so wonderful about missing school? I love learning and being with my teachers and the learners” Nomsa commented with a look of disbelief on her face.

Nomsa could see from the corner of her eye how some of her other classmates were in disbelief and did she perhaps also notice a few teary eyes? More learners were drawn to the circle.

“What did you say Peter? We could not hear what you were shouting” Themba asked.

“There is a thing. A thing in the air or I don’t know where else, but it is in other places too ... This thing makes you very sick” Peter tried to explain, “But I am not sure what it is. I heard the principal speaking to our teacher in the passage about it. They used a difficult word “con ...” something. The principal said that everyone can spread it.”

“It is contagious, Peter, that is the word that you were looking for” said Nomsa with a clever look on her face. She was one of the top English learners and she came from the township adjacent to the suburb in which the school resided.

“This sounds very serious” Vuyani added.

“It is serious, because if it is contagious, it means people can get infected easily” added Sandra.

“Oh, my goodness, that is why they don’t want us to come to school” said Nomsa in a crying voice.



The learners continued talking, some kicking soccer balls, some playing touching, other marbles. The bell rang to indicate that break was over, and the learners lined up on the sandy soil and scattered grass patches. "Please lead off in an orderly manner to your classrooms and be quiet" ordered Ms Marais.

Mr Grootboom entered the multigrade class, a class in which there are more than one grade, with a worried, yet calm face. "Grade 4 and Grade 5, I have something very important to share with you. Sorry ... eh ... it is not just very important eh hm ... it is of the utmost importance. That means eh that it is something that we must be eh very serious about." Gavin was putting up his hand and flicking his fingers click-click "Sir, sir, sir... I know ..." he exclaimed. "Thank you, Gavin, but please give me a moment now."

"I want you all to take out your pencils and erasers, please" Mr Grootboom instructed. "I am also giving each group an A4 page for each group member" he added.

"Dolphins, Cats, Eagles, Cheetahs and Kudus, do you all have one extra page now." The learners nodded.

"Often children ask why they have to do Maths. Today I will show you how important Maths are in our daily lives to make calculations and predictions. What is a prediction? Discuss this in your groups, you have 60 seconds".

The groups buzzed and after 60 seconds Mr Grootboom asked each group to respond. Mr Grootboom was proud with the manner his groups replied.

"Children, there is something very dangerous in our country." Hands went up, but Mr Grootboom ignored them and continued "This dangerous thing is a virus that not only can make one very ill, but it can let one die." The class was silent, full of shock. "This is called COVID-19 or the CORONA virus and is very contagious which means we as people spread it by touching and sneezing when we are infected with the virus" the teacher continued. "I want you to work out the following for me in and I hope you will now see why Maths is so important.

Let us assume that I, Mr Grootboom, is infected with the virus. I come into the class, scratch my eye and congratulate Veli with a handshake on his great soccer goal that he scored yesterday. How many people could now be infected?" The hands were immediately up "Two sir" the learners echoed.

"You are correct. Now let us assume that the two of us, Veli and Mr Grootboom, who are now infected each spread the virus to one new person who is not yet infected with the virus, how many persons could be infected with the virus now?" This time it took slightly longer to respond, but the hands went up and the learners exclaimed "Four people sir." Mr Grootboom smiled, "And how many people could become infected if each of the four infected persons spread the virus to one new non- infected person each?" This time it was lightning quick "Eight, eight."

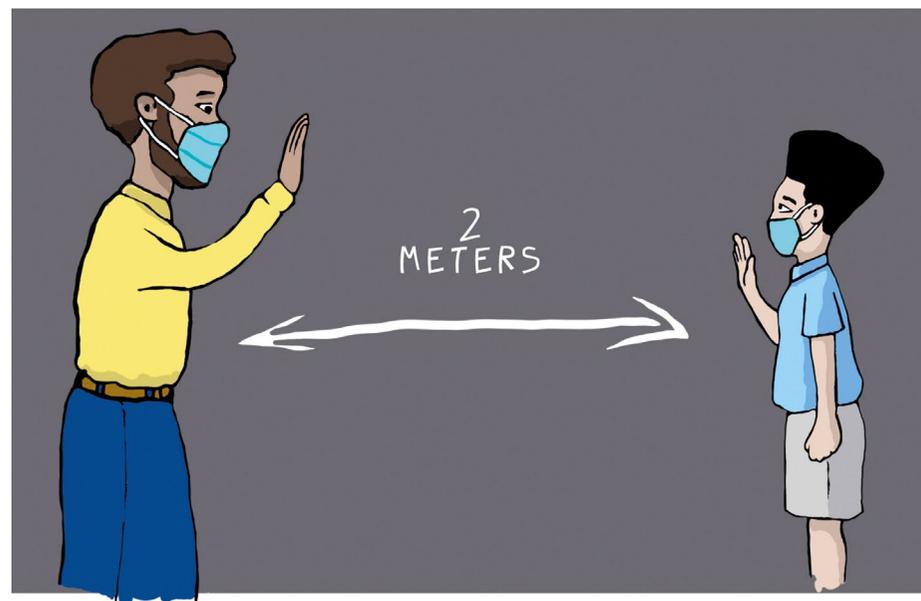
"And how many people could become infected if each of the eight infected persons spread the virus to one new non-infected person each?" They responded, "Sixteen sir!"

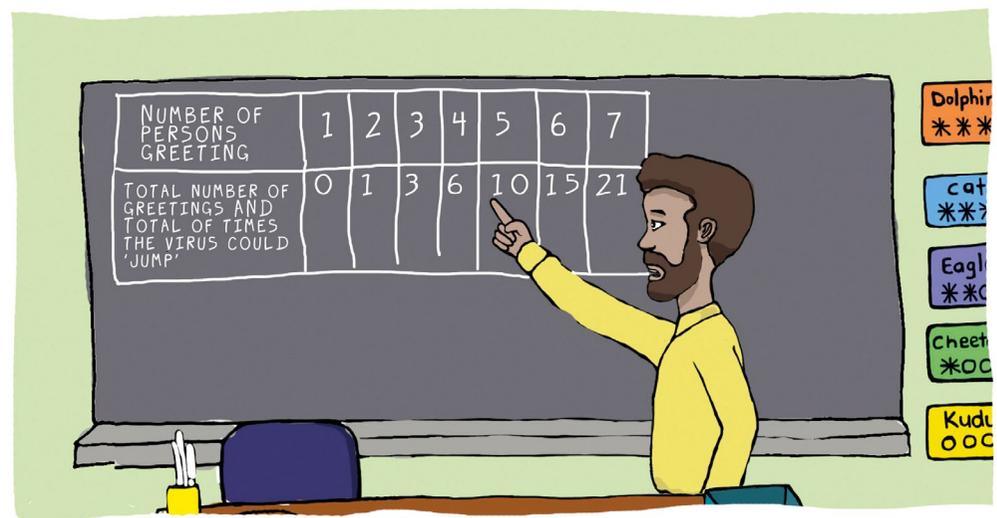
"Class, in your groups, I want you to use the A4 piece of paper that I have given you. Fold it in half. Please write in the one half a warning that you can take home to show if four infected persons come into contact with one non-infected person each and on the other half when eight infected persons come into contact with one non-infected person each." After they all wrote their warnings, Mr Grootboom said to the class: "This is a very simple manner to show the spreading of the Corona virus, but do not tell the full story. The spread of the virus can be much faster."

The class listened in silence, shocked.

Mr Grootboom continued: "I want to show you how many times the Corona virus can easily spread at a wedding, birthday or funeral if one hugs or shakes hands. Maybe I should say how many times the virus could 'jump' or 'move' between persons. Now, remember that each time a person hugs another person, the virus could spread."

"Let us assume that there are four people at a funeral and each person is allowed to hug each other only once to greet. The person who starts the hugging is infected with the virus and hugs each other person first. Then the





next person hugs the other persons which he or she did not hug yet, once. How many hugs will there be if four persons hug one another? This will also be the number of times the virus could 'jump' or 'move' between the persons who are hugging."

The groups started working, some acting it out, which could start the spread of the virus if anyone of them was infected.

"What is the answer class?" Mr Grootboom asked. "Six sir" the group replied.

"If the same process is followed, but there are five persons, one is infected and four are uninfected. The infected person starts to hug each other person and then the other persons start hugging one another. How many times could the virus 'jump' or 'move' between them?" The learners acted it out and replied softly "Ten sir".

"If the same process is followed, but there are six persons, one is infected and five are uninfected. The infected person starts to hug each other person and then the other persons start hugging one another. How many times could the virus 'jump' or 'move' between them?" The learners again acted it out and replied even more softly "Fifteen sir".

"If the same process is followed, but there are seven persons, one is infected and six are uninfected. The infected person starts to hug each other person and then the other persons start hugging one another. How many times could the virus 'jump' or 'move' between them?" The learners again acted it out and replied softly in a very worried voice "Twenty-one sir".

Mr Grootboom drew the table shown on the left

"Class, can you see now that if there are 7 people as in our hugging problem, there is a chance that the virus could 'jump' or 'move' 21 times between them."

Mr Grootboom asked: "What if there are 20 people that will going to hug, and the same process is followed?"

The bell would ring soon to indicate the end of the day.

Mr Grootboom continued "You have to pack up and leave within five minutes class, but before you pack up, there is a mathematical formula that you can use. See if you can use  $n*(n - 1) \div 2$  where n is the number of persons. You can do this at home with your family" Mr Grootboom said.

"The formula works sir" Zandile said. "I used it. I used BODMAS. If I put 6 in the place of n in  $n*(n - 1) \div 2$ , I do the brackets first, 6 subtract 1 is 5. Then the BODMAS rule, 6 I put in the place of the first n and 6 multiplied with 5 is 30. Then I divide 30 with 2 and I get 15."

Mr Grootboom felt good, "Wonderful Zandile."

Mr Grootboom explained to the class: "The solution to not get the virus is to stay away at least 2 meters from anyone, wear a an approved mask, wash the surfaces in your home with soap or sanitiser and most important of all and wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds or use the approved sanitiser."

"Schools will be closed from tomorrow until further notice from the government." The bell rang and the learners were dismissed. Mr Grootboom hoped that his dearly loved children will share the information with their parents and will return safely when the schools re-open, else ... the result might be ... He shivered.





Newsletter of the Faculty of Education

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