

# NEWS

NOVEMBER EDITION

New thinking patterns develop around the concept of the community school

## MANYANO CONFERENCE

The **Manyano Conference** held at the North Campus on 5 and 6 November showed beyond any shadow of doubt that there is a wide ranging consensus and commitment towards both the improvement of both teaching and learning at schools, and the development of the communities around the schools. In order for this to happen, new thinking patterns were propagated centred around the concept of a community school.

The new thinking patterns explained and discussed had two foci: One being the role that the school should play in the community, the other the role the community should play in supporting schools and improving teaching and learning. On the one hand it was stressed that all teaching and learning (not only that of matriculants) should receive attention, and on the other that school improvement is a “collective responsibility”. The Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof Derrick Swartz, said that “We need to realise that one of the tragedies of our time is the abdication of social responsibility after 1994”.

Speakers stressed the importance of communities to take responsibility for schools. For this to happen, people need to talk together and be accountable. “We need to have high expectations for our children and for one another”, Marty Blank.

The highlight of the conference was the presentations by four schools (two from Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, and two from East London) that are examples of what could be achieved when the community and school come together for the betterment of both. One of the school leaders (Mr Johannes) put it like this: “As a school, we don’t go for excuses. We see what is wrong, and then we fix it. We believe the school should change the community. We look at the unemployment rate and the crime rate as measuring sticks to find out whether we have any impact on the community”. And then he said this, which for me seems to sum up the thrust of this conference: “Township kids are facing many challenges. Sometimes for us as teachers, it becomes too much.”



*Adding their perspective ... learners from East London at the conference*

The conference concluded with a general discussion where individuals pledged their support. Amongst others, the conference was encouraged when the editor of the Herald, Denise Robinson said “At the Herald, I am taking up the challenge to be part of the debate”, and the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the NMMU announced the **establishment of a Centre for Community Schools**, which will be dependent on the schools and the communities as “knowledge creators”, so that we together can “take care of the future of our children”. ~ Johan McFarlane



*From left: Dr Al Witten, Ms Heather Robertson, the new EP Herald Editor, and Mr Allan Zinn (CANRAD)*



*Prof Denise Zinn (third right) and Dr Noluthando Toni (third left) pictured with several of the learners and teachers who attended the Manyano conference*

# NEWS

## ABCD Course in Canada

On the 24 September 2010 I boarded a SAA plane to Canada. I was extremely excited. The 3 week course was intense and demanded of us to work together as a group. The **COADY International Institute** (St Francis Xavier University) attracts people from every corner of the world - I made some great contacts around the world, especially from India!



*Roleplay: I was giving an ABCD presentation to a Vietnamese donor*

The aim of the course was to demonstrate how and why development work should move from a NEEDS basis approach to an ASSETS basis approach.

This was illustrated by pointing out the different theories and then by utilising various instruments like the Leaky Bucket, Transect Walk, Mapping Associations, Identifying the Assets and Skills

within the community, Mapping the natural resources in the community, the Practice of Story Telling and GIS Community Mapping (using Google Earth).

We had the opportunity to see two different communities where the Assets Based Community Development approach was applied. We interacted with the community members and were able to ask questions and give comments. As we visited these communities, I noticed that they were so proud of what they have achieved and they were most willing to share their expertise with others.

It truly was an unforgettable experience and one that I will treasure for years to come. I am now an Alumnus of the St Francis University as I graduated with a certificate in "Mobilising Assets for Community Driven Development". ~ Vernon Naidoo



*I played soccer and scored 2 goals! This was a major achievement for me as I am the worst soccer player in my family!*



*Skype was a great form of communication. My wife, Leanne, used her data projector to project my image onto the wall while I was talking to them. My son, Jordan, could not contain himself and here he is giving me a hug via Skype!*



**News from the Resource Centre** NASOU kindly donated 6 boxes of text books (205 books in total!) recently. The donation includes Learner's Books as well as Teacher's Guides in a number of learning areas.

### Congratulations to our newly appointed Head of Programmes!

Logan Athiemoolam  
Pam Austin  
Pat Bean  
Laetitia Greyling  
Christina Jordaan  
Raj Kurup  
Elsa Lombard (Acting)

Sindi Mbokodi  
Les Meiring  
Christo Pienaar  
Shervani Pillay (Acting)  
Heloise Sathorar  
Lynn Webb



# NEWS

## Swedish-South Africa Links

The Swedish-South Africa Links group spent the week of 11-15 October in Gothenburg Sweden working with their Swedish counterparts. Apart from observing science lessons in a Swedish intermediate school, a highlight of the trip was a visit to Uppsala University where they met Professor Cedric Linder (who is linked to the University of the Western Cape) and members of his Physics Education team who have recently focused on scientific literacy.



*The team! (back) Raj Kurup, Paul Webb, Clas Olander and (front) Mary Grace Villanueva, Goran Lassbo and Nokhanyo Mayaba*

On his way to Sweden Paul spent a day at Canterbury Christ Church University in Canterbury, UK. Members of this institution have integrated parts of our scientific literacy strategy into their pre-service curriculum and are planning researching the topic as their students promote scientific literacy in schools during their practice teaching.

## Research Briefs

### ANOTHER RATED RESEARCHER

Congratulations to PROF PRAKASH SINGH on receiving his NRF C3 rating - well done Prakash, we are so proud of you!



### PROPOSAL DEFENCE EVENT

The proposal defence event held mid-November was very successful. Congratulations to Lesley (PC: Ph D), Shervani (PC: M Ed) and Carol (PA: Ph D and M Ed), as well as to all who were involved on the panels and to our students, who lived up to our expectations - changing from bundles of nerves to exhilarated researchers!

"One of the huge positives for the Faculty is that we made a very good impression on the rest of the University with the quality of our students, supervisors / promoters, the scholarly nature of the event and the meticulous arrangements. We can be truly proud", Nonnie Botha.

## Writing Retreat - November 2010



*Reaching new heights of academic success...*



*Back: Paul, Logan, Johan, Johanna, Tia, Christo, Raj  
Front: Andre, Glynis, Sindi & Noluthando with Mascot!*

Several Faculty supervisors and their newly graduated PhD students enjoyed a writing retreat in the tranquil surroundings of Addo earlier this month. This offered the teams an opportunity to co-author a paper/article based on the students PhD thesis. Superb accommodation and delectable food (and a few trampoline workouts!) balanced the hours of hard work and writing.

# NEWS

by Logan Athiemoolam

## Drama in Education

### ENGLISH METHODOLOGY STUDENTS STAGE HILARIOUS PLAY

The English methodology students staged a light hearted play in October entitled *'The Happy Days of Harrison Gumede: Coconut Syndrome'*. The comedy with more serious undertones focused on the dilemma confronted by the westernised African who relinquishes his African roots in the pursuit of a more European way of life.

The play which was produced under workshop conditions facilitated by Logan Athiemoolam aimed to empower students with skills on how to use an original script but to adapt the dialogue to suit their own needs without losing sight of the theme that the play aimed to examine. The play was well received by those in attendance and favourably reviewed by Dr Charles van Renen and Dr Christina Jordaan who served as adjudicators for the production.



### DRAMA-IN-EDUCATION WORKSHOPS PRESENTED BY TRAINERS FROM OLDENBURG

In October the Faculty of Education of the NMMU was fortunate to host experienced drama-in-education trainers from the University of Oldenburg who presented a very successful two day programme at the Summerstrand South Campus. The trainers, namely Gabi Morgen, Karen Furhman and Jorg Kowollik, shared their expertise in frozen image building with the participants comprising members of staff, students and teachers. The programme, which was jointly organised by the NMMU and the University of Oldenburg, was very well received by the participants.

The trainers left the NMMU inspired by the positive feedback from all involved and by the endless possibilities that such a programme could present for the continued joint drama-in-education ventures between the two institutions in the foreseeable future. The team of trainers will be returning to the NMMU in April to present follow up workshops to all interested members of staff, students and teachers.

### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS INSPIRE STUDENTS

The PGCE students registered for the PGED 302 module staged a range of interesting presentations on issues relating to multicultural education such as stereotyping, xenophobia and cultural diversity amongst others to make learning fun.

A number of the presentations incorporated drama-in-education principles and approaches, dance and music which contributed to the success of the presentations as a whole.

