



NEWS

January 2011

2011 ... a year of wellness

“It starts with us”

The Dean, Prof Denise Zinn, recently hosted a staff Welcome Tea at Madibaz Fine Dining to acknowledge the beginning of the 2011 academic year; welcoming staff members back after relaxing and rejuvenating December holidays and setting the tone for the coming year.

“It all starts with us” was the theme emphasised by Prof Zinn in her welcome address to staff. Wellness – mental, physical and spiritual, as well as social wellness – was highlighted as important especially if we are to accomplish all we are committed to doing. In light of the on-going re-visioning process the faculty is undertaking, Prof Zinn recapped, “Last year our re-visioning journey helped us collectively develop the following elements of our vision, mission, and pedagogy:

- Passionate and engaged teachers and education leaders
- Critical minds and consciousness
- Bringing hope and being forward-looking
- Being change agents, making a difference
- Building partnerships with students, schools, communities, alumni and government
- Using technology in education
- Creating enabling, conducive spaces in which to work
- Using and building a humanising pedagogy”

She encouraged each staff member to embrace all of these elements in their own work as ‘it all starts with us’. The following extract from Jon Kabat-Zinn’s “Wherever you go, there you are” provided inspiration:

There can be no resolution leading to growth until the present situation has been faced completely This is the part of working where you find yourself, with what is found here and now. This, then, really is it ... this place, this relationship, this dilemma, this job. The challenge of mindfulness is to work with the very circumstances that you find yourself in ... it is right here that the real work needs to happen. (p. 198)

Welcome

We welcome **Dr Carol Rodgers** who will be part of the faculty for the 2011 academic year as Fullbright Scholar. Carol hails from University at Albany (State University of New York) where she is Associate Professor (Education).

During her stay, Carol will be focusing her time on assisting in the development of a *humanizing pedagogy* through coursework, research, and professional development, all of which would be threaded with *descriptive inquiry* approach. She will be involved in programmes and activities in all three schools.

Carol can be found in office 06 0G 13, extension 4086

We also welcome **Dr Mathabo Khau** who is taking up post doc in our faculty. She will be working in the field of HIV and AIDS with Naydene.



Her research looks at the intersections of gender, sexuality, culture, religion and HIV in education. Her PhD used participatory visual methodologies to explore women science teachers' experiences of teaching sexuality education in rural schools in the age of HIV and AIDS. It focused on the gender dynamics characteristic of rural villages and how they play out in women teachers' identity formation, and how all these factors translate to effective teaching about sexuality, HIV and AIDS in Lesotho schools.

Mathabo can be found in office 06 01 30, extension 4033

We're connected ... and connecting ... With 500 million Facebook users, today's generation thrives on being socially connected. Become part of the NMMU's social network community... Join the official NMMU Facebook fan page at <http://www.facebook.com/NMMU4U> and/or follow NMMU4U on Twitter.

NEWS

“You showed us a new way to see things in our surroundings!”

Using photovoice

by Lina Beeskow, visiting Masters student, University of Oldenburg

As a student from University of Oldenburg (Germany) I came to South Africa to do research and to collect data for my master thesis which has the topic of *“How teachers see the discipline in their school”*. I also wanted to experience the diversity of cultures and the school system and did a two month internship at Sancto Primary School in Bethelsdorp. I was hosted by Deirdre Geduld and warmly welcomed by all the staff members, who allowed me a closer look at what it means to be a teacher in South Africa.

I was introduced to Prof Naydene de Lange and PhotoVoice at a workshop for Drama in Education in October 2010. I decided to use visual methodologies to explore with teachers how they viewed discipline in their school, and thought that using photographs and talking about them would help overcome the language barrier.

With the help of Prof Naydene de Lange and, together with Cordelia Mazomba, I contacted teachers at two primary schools in Motherwell. I worked with 6 educators from each school on two successive days. None of the participants had ever heard of or used photographs as a methodology to explore and express their views before. They were all very excited and curious and, after I explained to them what I wanted them to do, they went out armed with a digital camera to take 15 pictures of how they understand discipline in school.

During and after the process educators came to me with shining eyes to talk to me. Their comments give a good idea of how they experienced the PhotoVoice work: “You showed us a new way to see things in our surroundings! I have been teaching at this school for over 30 years and today I saw some places from a different angle or even for the first time.” “Normally if I have taken pictures I didn't think about the meaning or the interpretation. It's been the first time in my life that I thought about the process of taking pictures and analyzing it.” “I was astounded of the work my colleges did and the way they were presenting their thoughts and opinions about how they see discipline in school.” “We forgot about the time, it was fun going around, arranging and taking pictures.” “It was an eye-opener for me. With your help I have seen places in my own school to which I have never been before and I was shocked and recognized that there is still a lot of work to do and that we have to take care of our self, the learners and the environment.”

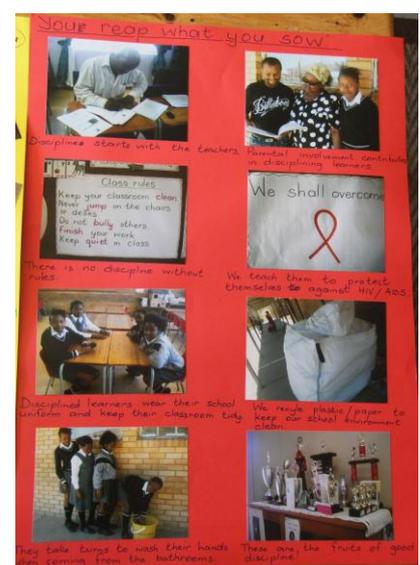
I found that through the methodology of using photographs everyone was able to express his/her own view of certain topics, using visual material they themselves made, to support their opinion. I recognized that with the help of images talking was much easier. It became more natural to talk and I had the feeling that the participants were more enthusiastic and motivated. They were as proud of the results, which were immediately available to them, and I was.



The process...



Building up an image



The result

NEWS

EASA Medal of Honour

Professor Tilla Olivier

A highlight of the recent EASA conference held at Sun City was the awarding of the EASA Medal of Honour to Prof Tilla Olivier for her exceptional contribution to education in South Africa.

Tilla was recognized not only for her extraordinary achievements within the field of education, *"Prof Olivier's endeavours over the past ten years alone demonstrate many extraordinary achievements..."*, but also for her commitment to research in education and the promotion of theory and practice of education. *"Through publishing and presenting papers at national and international conferences she has been able to share her research findings with a wide international audience..."*.

Tilla's reputation as a supervisor, mentor and guide, which led to 21 Masters and 10 doctoral students achieving success, was also highlighted. In particular, her ability to provide thorough feedback to the students and, in return, expecting them to honour their submission deadlines to her.

As an NRF-rated researcher, Tilla's engagement with various community research projects using visual methodology was lauded, *"Prof Olivier was able to contribute towards social change by working with the teachers who were largely from disadvantaged backgrounds..."*.

Tilla's passion and commitment to education, teaching and research is obvious and has been shared with many over the years. This medal, along with the many other accolades gathered during her career, acknowledges her many contributions to education.

Congratulations Tilla, we are proud of you!



Prof Tilla Olivier with her Medal of Honour award

Conference Briefs

BEAUTY OR BEAST: TURNING THE TIDE OF EDUCATION

This was the theme of the recent Educational Association of South Africa Conference (EASA) conference, held in Sun City from 10-13 January 2011.

Profs Lesley Wood, Tilla Olivier and Naydene de Lange, along with Drs Sindi Mbokodi and Christina Jordaan and Ms Tobeka Mapasa all presented papers at the conference.



From left, Tobeka, Naydene and Sindi

RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES 2011

The Faculty Research Seminar Series will continue in 2011. The year schedule is in the process of being finalized, but please diarise the first one for the year...

Date: 16 February 2011

Time: 12h00 – 13h30

Venue: Umvelani Room, South Campus

Presenter: Elsa Lombard

Coffee and tea will be provided

Looking forward to seeing you all there!

NEWS

Expanding horizons with North-South Cooperation

In December, **Neville** and two of our postgraduate students, **Phaello Malataliana** and **Ayanda Simayi**, spent a few weeks at the University of Oldenburg courtesy of the North-South cooperation partnership. Each pursued avenues of cooperation and collaboration unique to their research. Our German colleagues scheduled a rich variety of academic experiences from all spheres of education-related matters. During information sessions, valuable information was shared regarding the current state of the German education system, race issues, unemployment, language usage and qualitative action research. Ayanda and Phaello attended teacher-research sessions, where small groups of teachers are given opportunities to practice and experiment engaging in action research at a very early stage of their teaching careers. Several visits to local schools were undertaken which provided a window into the German education system. Whilst it was agreed that much had been achieved during this trip, the future of this focus area of the NMMU/Oldenburg cooperation is now dependent on funding. Furthermore, the focus area needs to produce something concrete. This may become a reality with the possible launch of a joint module writing process in South Africa in July 2011.

*"The purpose of my visit was to seek out best practice in terms of vocational (**berufsbildung**) training of FET lecturers, and to see how this may contribute to the South African context. ... [Thanks to all] who did so much to ensure my trip was full and enjoyable" **Neville***



Björn Mokwinski & I making some notes



'Jamming' with Tobias – a full social schedule was organised to balance out the work schedule!

*"A selection by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University as one of two postgraduate students going to Germany seemed like a remote dream to me. I could not comprehend how can a Xhosa girl, who grew up in the village of Peddie and teaching in one of the worst performing and disadvantaged schools in Port Elizabeth was now about to visit Europe. This occasion revitalized my belief that we are now living in a democratic South Africa, where academic excellence is acknowledged and individuals are treated fairly irrespective of race and social background. My gratitude is extended to NMMU, DAAD and the CSN team for making this visit possible" **Ayanda***



Ayanda & Wiebke in Bremen

Contribution to World AIDS Day 2010

Three generous colleagues knitted away their lunch hours to make a contribution to vulnerable children at a school in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

Naydene handed over the knitted jerseys to the principal, Mr Nkabine of Gobindlovu School, at a celebration of World AIDS Day where the *Every Voice Counts* project was also show cased.



From left, Muriel, Carol & Delene

Support this worthy cause

'Newborns Incubator Campaign'

Algoa FM and Pick and Pay have joined forces to save the lives of newborns in the Eastern Cape by purchasing six incubators for the Dora Nginza Neo Natal Unit.

How you can help...

All EC Pick n Pay store till-points will carry booklets of R10 Donation Vouchers. Customers can choose to have a voucher swiped through the till by their cashier, voluntarily adding R10 to their grocery bill. Participating customers are entered into a lucky-draw competition to win one of 12 x R2000 Pick n Pay Gift Cards.

Visit <http://www.newborns.org.za/> for more info.