



NEWS

September 2011

Recognition and pride ... vibrant teaching and research developments in faculty

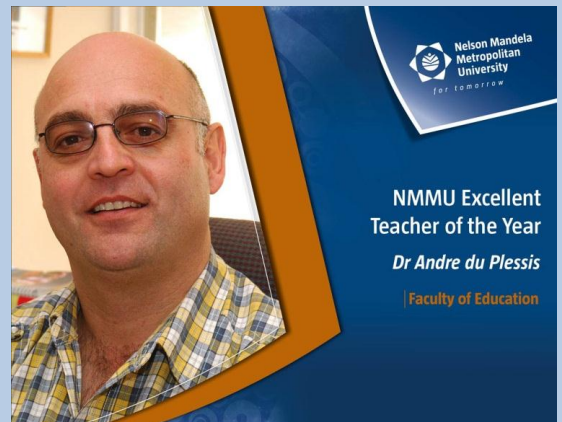
2011 Teaching and Research Awards

Colleague and SITE lecturer, **Dr Andre du Plessis**, was honoured at the recent Teaching and Research Awards evening as the **2011 NMMU Excellent Teacher of the Year**.

Dr du Plessis' efforts as a lecturer in teaching both primary and high school mathematics in the Bachelor of Education degree programme, along with his commitment to using Wiki's as a tool for teachers to share ideas and online resources, won him this prestigious title.

As further recognition for his drive and commitment, Andre also received the award as **Faculty Teacher of the Year**.

Well done Andre, we are very proud of you!



Also honoured at the gala event as **Faculty Researcher of the Year** was **Prof Naydene de Lange** (pictured right), whose research for social change using visual and alternative methodologies continues to impact.

Receiving the award for **Faculty Emerging Researcher of the Year** was **Dr Christo Pienaar** (pictured right). His increasing number of journal articles and the successful graduation of M and D students earned him this honour.

Naydene and Christo, we are proud you!



Top Faculty research achievements

Congratulations also go to our top faculty researchers on their achievements this year, and over the past few years too:

- **Prof Paul Webb** who has made it to **position 12** in the Top 20 List of Researchers over the past 5 years (2006-2010) for outputs generated by research articles and graduated M and D students. *Well done Paul, you have done us very proud!*
- **Prof Tilla Olivier** who has made it to **position 17** of the Top 20 List of Researchers over the past 5 years (2006-2010), also based on research articles and graduated M and D students over the past 5 years. *Our congratulations to Tilla too!*

WORKING TOGETHER

*We shape our self
To fit this world
And by the world
Are shaped again.
The visible
And the invisible
Working together
In common cause,
To produce
the miraculous
I am thinking of the way
the intangible air
passed at speed
round a shaped wing
easily
holds our weight.
So may we, in this life
Trust
To those elements
We have yet to see
Or imagine
And look for the true
Shape of our own self
By forming it well
To the great
Intangibles about us*

David Whyte

Student Voice

Dear Prof Zinn,

We at the George campus would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the experience of attending both the opening of the community school centre as well as the seminar the following day.

We feel that the experience was something that would stay with us, especially seeing all the people involved and their positive and passionate attitude towards teaching and making a difference in other people's lives. It was a huge pity that not more of the George students could attend, as we believe that it could have made a difference in their lives too. It would be brilliant if there could be more events like these for students to attend as this would help them become better teachers. As one of the students who attended has mentioned, his way of thinking on what he wants to achieve as well as his approach to teaching has changed for the better. Another thing that stood out was meeting some of the principals and parents and hearing how they all deal with problems by trying to involve the community and make them take responsibility for the schools in their area.

We, as students also felt appreciated because our inputs were valued and we felt this is the way forward, that we can all sit around a table and discuss how to overcome the current and future difficulties in our schools and communities. Some of us were in model C schools and did not know that there are so many struggling schools. We appreciate the fact that the principals and parents were open enough to tell us what is happening in their schools. This opened our eyes to future difficulties and challenges that we might have to face. We hope that the university can further empower us, as future teachers, to take on these challenges and find solutions to them.

We are looking forward to your visit to our campus.

Kind regards,

George Campus (Education Faculty)

This email was so significant and moving

This is the student voice that I think is currently either missing or not present enough in our work, debates and plans in the Faculty.

... Reading this gives me hope for the future and for achieving our Vision and Mission.

Denise Zinn, Executive Dean

briefs

INWENT success

Cordelia Mazomba successfully completed the INWENT blended learning course, *Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic: A capacity building course for Teacher Educators in Africa*.

The course is jointly organised by GIZ and the University of the Western Cape and ran from August 2010 to May 2011.

Well done Cordelia!

Who says 'Toys are for grandchildren only?'

Dr Les Meiring presented at the September research seminar series.

His fascinating presentation explored the use of many different toys to either explain the complexities of the very abstract concept of energy to grandchildren, or to use as educative curriculum material to develop both the content and pedagogical content knowledge of IP students preparing to become 'expert' teachers of the energy concept.

PASSPORT to Health Appeal *Promoting Physical Activity and School Sport*

HMS and Education staff and students are involved in this project at several disadvantaged schools in PE and Aberdeen.

Through the use of simple painted court markings, a fitness circuit and provision of much needed sports equipment, this project is getting kids moving!

2011 schools are: Aberdeen, Charles Duna, Machiu and Sapphire Road Primary schools.

They are appealing for donations of any and all your unwanted sports equipment, e.g. soccer balls, rugby balls, netballs, volleyballs, tennis balls and rackets, cricket bats and balls, skipping ropes, hoola hoops... Spring clean your garage!

Also welcomed are books, puzzles and other educational games (including educational computer games), trees, paint, coloured paper off-cuts, shade-cloth, curtaining, etc...

Laetitia (laetitia.greyling@nmmu.ac.za) | Ronette (ronette.wood2@nmmu.ac.za) | Cheryl (cheryl.walter@nmmu.ac.za)

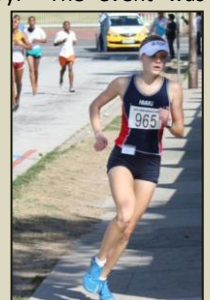


What a treat!

Faculty administrative staff were treated to a delightful luncheon on 7th September in acknowledgement of Secretaries Day, with each person leaving with a gift candle to serve as a reminder of the light they bring to, and share with, the greater team.

A winner in Human Race!

B Ed FET student, **Annica Coetzee**, won *The Human Race* in the Junior Female category. The event was organised by CANRAD, and 1,500 people took part in the race that was held at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium on 10 September.



Young scientists display talent

The **PE Regional Eskom Expo for Young Scientists 2011** was held on Thursday 11th August at the NMMU Indoor Sports Centre. Professor Andrew Leitch, Dean of Faculty of Science delivered the opening address.

A record number of entries were received; with over 280 learners from Grades 5-12 participating and 202 projects being assessed by 60 judges. Every project was evaluated twice and the learner(s) interviewed. Participation certificates were awarded to all entrants, with Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards being given to learners with projects that showed good scientific method, innovation and creativity.

Seventeen projects were selected to represent Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eskom National Expo in Boksburg (October). These finalists will join the regional finalists from Grahamstown and East London.

The judges (assessors) volunteered from all walks of life, including a number of lecturers from Faculty of Science and Engineering, and offered expertise from a range of specialist categories from Medical Science, Ecology, Environmental Science, Chemistry, Physics, Plant Sciences to Scientific Teaching Aids. Two training workshops were held for first time judges by Anthony Marks, thus ensuring a well-equipped judging team.

As Director of the regional organising committee, **Marilyn Gibbs**, commented, "All in all, it was an energetic and enthusiastic event; the Young Scientists certainly showed us what wonderful creative and innovative spirits we have in Nelson Mandela Bay... maybe a future Einstein!"



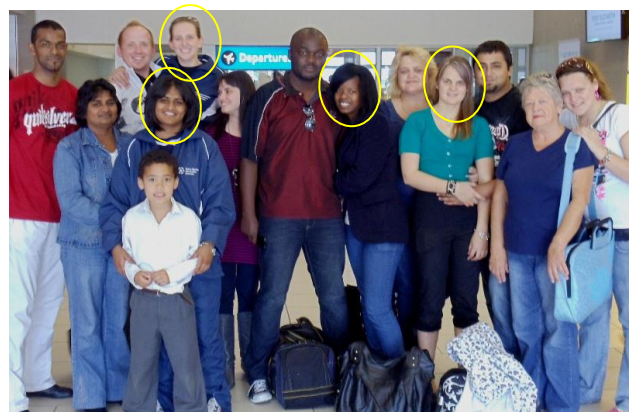
Creating a Thinking Environment

Faculty management staff attended a two day leadership development workshop this month based around the books by Nancy Kline, *Time to Think* and *More Time to Think*.

Facilitators, Trisha and Candice, introduced participants to the *Thinking Environment* and how to create such a thinking environment in our workplace through the application of simple yet transformative principles, which drive team effectiveness; result in higher quality relationships and intrinsically value the contribution and humanity of each person. Its power is even evident in shorter, smarter meetings!



Inspired! Back from left: Skhura, Neville, Lyn, Candice, Denise, Pat, Logan, Christo, Christina, Elsa, Heloise and Nonnie. Front from left: Carol, Trisha, Alette, Deirdre, Noluthando and Pam



Bon Voyage!

Four of the Education students selected for the 2011 faculty international exchange programme jettied off from PE Airport earlier this month. Two of the students, Natalie Wood and Shanice Masher, will be spending four weeks at Gothenburg, Sweden. Whilst Lerato and Sihanka will be enjoying American hospitality at Wilmington North Carolina.

We look forward to hearing about their experiences!

Musings on recent NPDE visit to Lusikisiki and Mbizana

People make a difference, or not

Neville Rudman

On Thursday, 8 September, I undertook a trip with Drs Carol Rodgers and Christina Jordaan to the NPDE off-campus centres in Lusikisiki and Mbizana. Christina joined to attend (as Module Coordinator) the PNFP307 Life Skills classes in these centres, to meet with the students and tutors and to get an impression on how things are progressing at the mid-way stage in the semester. Carol made use of the opportunity to continue the work she started with regard to further development of our humanizing pedagogy with the two groups of tutors.

On the Friday we had the opportunity to visit some schools and an FET College in the Mbizana region. The schools we visited were Mzamba Comprehensive High School, where our Mbizana Centre Manager, Yolisa Magidela, is Principal, Didi Senior Primary and Luna Junior Secondary, where Yolisa's husband, Joseph Magidela, is the Principal. The FET College we visited was the Ingwe FET College on the outskirts of Mbizana.



Neville and Yolisa (back) with learners at Mzamba Comprehensive High School

The visits to these institutions highlighted for us the many challenges encountered by the folk who live in rural areas ... and how some of them have successfully overcome these challenges, through their sheer determination to create a better world for those around them. *We became acutely aware that people can make a difference, or not.* One could see evidence of the powerful impact of strong (humanizing) leadership on the faces of young (even FP) children, and (sadly) one could see the impact of non-involved, self-righteous, (outdated?) approaches on the faces of others. It was interesting to note that where things went well, the school communities were involved. A possible expansion area into these rural areas for the Community Schools Centre?

On Saturday, Carol demonstrated again her value to the faculty when she interacted with the tutors around the concept of a *humanizing pedagogy*. First listening to (and recording) some stories and then teaching them to count in Wolof, an indigenous Senegalese language, created a wonderful platform to initiate the discussion on what a humanizing pedagogy is and what it does. I am so grateful for the work she did, as I believe that *our tutors have really been sensitized* to the strong need for a humanizing approach, especially considering the context within which they work. Thank you, Carol!

"I was really ignited by the great work that the tutors are doing. The improvement in the managing and running of the centres was also really positive to see ... A highlight for me was being part of Carol's workshop with the tutors - how she managed to really appreciate them and their abilities"
Christina Jordaan

Christina met with the Life Skills tutors and students. I attended some of her sessions and it was so good to see how both students and tutors valued not only her inputs, but the *fact that she was there!* Thank you, Christina!

We spent many hours on the road, travelling about 500km over the four days. This time, however, for me, the kilometers flew past, as the conversations we had and the stories we told were so interesting and stimulating. Thank you, ladies! (*you helped take my mind off the fact that I was missing the opening ceremony and at least the first 8 games of RWC 2011...*)

Carol Rodgers

My first professional trip to the rural areas was exhilarating. As someone who spends most of her time in the environment of the University, it was important to get out into the schools to see what is actually happening. While I did not get to observe classes, I did get to meet many students; the highlight of my time. We saw four schools: two exceptional ones, and two that lacked the spirit and care of the others. Leadership rather than resources made the difference. What we saw in the strong schools were two powerful examples of **"humanising" leadership**.

On Saturday I was lucky enough to run two workshops for teacher trainers in both Lusikisiki and Mbizana. The students shared their recollections of humanising, dehumanising, and healing learning experiences. In many cases the humanising experience involved teachers who "saw" the learner and his or her capacity to succeed, and communicated to the learner their belief that s/he "could." The dehumanising stories, sadly, often happened in the context of school, where children were beaten, humiliated, and publicly shamed. The healing stories were often stories of resilience: learners who had suffered enormously but had garnered the strength to succeed, often with the support of teachers and parents, in spite of such defeats. Interestingly, even though the assignment asked participants to recall a *learning* experience, few of the recollections were of learning particular *subject matter* in school. Rather, they were memories of kindnesses, patience, generosity, and teachers who were present to the students' learning. They were stories of *relationship*. This is vital, but it also leaves a large hole in the picture of learning: the acquisition and generation of knowledge, understanding, and connection to the world. Clearly, additional work with a humanising pedagogy needs to take gap this into account.

The second half of each workshop gave the participants the experience of learning something new – how to count to 100 in Wolof, an indigenous language of Senegal. Using Cuisinaire rods, the students, with very little actual input from me, drew upon their knowledge of sound, number, and language structure to figure out how to count in a language they did not know. I let them know when their work was correct or not, and I gave them the *tools* to complete specific tasks but they generated the knowledge, including generating the problems that they wanted to solve. It was, as it always is, a thrill to watch learners use their intelligence.



A young learner from Mzamba Comprehensive

I am grateful to Neville and to SCPD for giving me the opportunity to meet and work with these schools and teachers. I shall not soon forget the warmth, energy and gratitude they conveyed.