

NEWS



July 2014



Molweni Bafundi

Narrating Student teacher experiences in township schools

At the sound of the early morning alarm is the start of a day that will challenge our boundaries as student teachers. As we journey to Stephen Mazungula and B.J. Mnyanda Primary Schools in New Brighton to teach English to a group of isiXhosa children, we are filled with excitement and trepidation. But, the comfort of the unusually warm winter's morning gears us for a spirit of adventure.

The welcome we receive is warm and incomparable. Slowly, our nerves subside as we exchange greetings with school teachers in isiXhosa. Soon we realize that we are not just student teachers but members of the school community. We are moved by the children's beautiful singing and rhythmic movements at the assembly. Suddenly, a new sense of the true meaning of the profession we have chosen is discovered. We step into our respective classrooms with such joy, peace and laughter.

Inside the classrooms we are equally humbled by the responsibility of being teachers to such beautiful children. Their eyes glimmer and their faces ooze hope and natural curiosity! We are not mother-tongue speakers of isiXhosa but completing the isiXhosa for beginners' module (PLCX 101) comes to our aid. "Molweni bafundi" are the words we use to greet our learners and to calm our own nerves. Their beautiful smiles and glorious laughter indicate the children's unconditional acceptance and innate instinct to include us regardless of our differences. From then on, we are faced with the challenge of being totally immersed in the rich and diverse nature of this community. Such immersion makes us realize that we are not gaining anything by focusing on our language barriers. Instead, facing the challenges and working together towards a solution is what makes us worthy of being prospective teachers.

The panic and frustration of losing your learners during the lesson is paralyzing. When wrinkles start to form on the children's faces we were sure that we are losing them. However, implementing the multilingual strategies of teaching helped us to keep the learners engaged. Calling up interpreters from among the learners to assist, using miming, dramatic faces, animated voices, allowing learners to move around and role play certain actions has helped us to keep our learners interested. The joy was elevated when we attempted to read the isiXhosa version of the story – the learners giggled and corrected us. We also sang an isiXhosa song before teaching the learners the lyrics of the same song in English. Other strategies we used include pointing at objects in the class; showing various word and picture flashcards; speaking slowly and clearly and doing team teaching.

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This experience made us aware of our teaching strategies and the way we approach a lesson. It also brought to our attention the need to become more fluent in isiXhosa as there were many questions asked that we could not answer. As much as learning the language this year has helped us, learning it in our fourth year has not been enough for it to be used in the classroom to the learners' advantage.

We feel extremely privileged to have had this opportunity and many of us commented that this experience has changed the way that we view education, learners and our role as future teachers. We recommend this experience to all education students. Let's make a difference and "DARE TO TEACH" outside our comfort zone.

Students who contributed to the project are Jolandi Van der Spuy, Jani van Wyk, Elizabeth Coney, Amy Ashton –Scott, Adrienne Joseph, Liske Theron, Sarah Staffen, Angela Martin and Nicole van Heerden





Dr Kathija Adam (in red) with Petedro Maqanda [NMMU Ss] Aphalele Makanda [Learner from Khwezi Lomso] Lungilwe Fanti [Learner from Khwezi Lomso] Nasreen Adam [NMMU Ss] Yolande Meleni [Learner from Khwezi Lomso] and Nickolas du Plooy [NDP Productions]

IN THE CLASSROOM IS THE HEART OF OUR FUTURE

Launch of PGCE Film "Heart of the WHO"

The "Heart of the WHO" a documentary film collated from eight short films produced by the 2013 cohort of PGCE students saw a highly successful launch at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown this July. Using video as a lens, PGCE students in collaboration with Khwezi Lomso High School in Missionvale explored the concept and theory of curriculum against social inequalities that challenge learners and their communities. This allowed them to develop a deeper, more critical understandings of what it means to be a teacher in South Africa today. The film focuses on the lives and living of learners within contextual realities true for a vast majority of learners in South Africa. It explores how schools can be a resource to such communities and that a caring teacher whose work extends beyond just the content and curriculum is the most valuable asset within such communities.

The film's premier screening on Friday 4 July 2014, recorded 105 people from 12 different countries attending. Subsequent screenings also recorded a good turnout of people with many who attended being involved in the education sector.

The PGCE students were highly enthused by the opportunity to engage with the general public about their experiences and how this has shaped their thoughts about curriculum, teaching and learning in their own classrooms. For the learners who were a part of the film, attending the festival was an amazing experience which they enjoyed tremendously. The message of the film was very well received with high commendation of the exposition of the resilience and agency of learners, the positive impact a school can make to a community and to the lives of learners, the inevitable truth that education is a key driver for the elimination of poverty and other social ills in our society and that good teachers are an invaluable resource. The film also received many accolades in the comments section of the guestbook and in the discussion forum for this work. A student of education from the UK wrote:

"Impressive, incredible! I'm really taken by the creative and innovative ways in which teaching and learning happens in this country. I didn't expect it. The message of your film is clear in that a school can make a difference to learners lives and that teachers who care make the all the difference in the world. Your film sends a universal message that we can all act on. Well Done NMMU!!"

We could not on the outset have imagined that this experience would have such far reaching consequences and that this effort would make this kind of difference to others. We would like to that the Faculty of Education and NMMU for the continued support for teaching and learning innovations that can make a difference.



[left to right] Aphalele Makanda
Yolande Meleni Kathija Adam
Lungilwe Fanti
[Learners from Khwezi Lomso]

VISIT TO GOTHENBURG

GLOBAL UNIVERSITY PROJECT



As part of the Global University cooperation Laetitia Greyling, Elsa Lombard, and Cheryl Rensburg, Laetitia's PhD student, were invited to visit Gothenburg University. The visit included a variety of academic activities, most, but not all, focussing on Action Research and related aspects.

Some of the highlights of the visit included practical sessions on the use of Video Interaction Guidance and video analysis, a lecture on action research and a visit to an international school to experience inclusive education. This gave us a glimpse of how an inclusive system can work.

Meetings were scheduled with Prof Karin Rönnerman (Head of the Action Research Masters programme in the Nordic region) and Prof Anette Ohlin (member of the Nordic Action Research Network). Valuable information on how to formalise the development of research competence and capacity around action research at a Masters (and by implication also at an honours) level, was gathered. In the Nordic Action Research Network sharing days are arranged that deliberately mix practicing teachers, teacher educators, and researchers in order to gain the most from each group's experiences and practices.

This initiative has huge potential in the context of establishing professional learning communities at the NMMU; bridging the move from undergraduate to postgraduate studies. We were also invited to the final presentations of a group of postgraduate educators in the town of Angelholm. The in-service course focuses on the use of action research and Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) to reflect on an aspect of their classroom teaching.



Cheryl presented her experiences of using and adapted form of VIG in her Masters studies. We were also invited to do a presentation at the weekly research seminar, attended by Gothenburg university colleagues and some post graduate students. Our presentation focussed on different aspects of AR as well as different approaches to AR as practiced at NMMU, illustrating each approach with examples from our own or our students' studies.



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Laetitia and Cheryl met Bren Peters (a visiting scholar from the UK) who uses Lego in a class of Autistic children to enhance the students' communication and social skills), Inger Nilsson (a colleague at GU) and Shruti Johansson (a PhD student) who all shared their insights and research findings on work with children diagnosed with Autism in Hong Kong, Sweden and India. Elsa met with Frank Bach to discuss some aspects of science education and the use of representations by physics lecturers during their teaching. This was followed up with a meeting with Prof John Airey, a colleague from Uppsala University with whom the same was discussed. In Stockholm we did what tourists do best and had our time neatly wrapped up by Berit Lundgrin spending the Sunday with us.

However, we did not attend to academic matters only... On the weekends we climbed the Pulpit rock in Norway (whow!!), visited a city market near Varberg Fortress and attended a wonderful show by The Real Group (thanks Lars!)

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Prof Lars Gunnasson for the invitation that made this study visit possible while Ann-Charlotte Lundgrin was a most generous hostess who arranged the program and attending to so many small things. Not only did we gain valuable academic insights, we also brought back memories of positive relationships and experiences, as well as a number of e-mail addresses to follow up on and strengthen the collaboration between the Faculties of Education at NMMU and Sweden.

We are looking forward to a visit from our colleagues and friends during October this year.



Laetitia, Elsa and Cheryl





Celebrating the legacy of the late Nelson Mandela

Why spend 67 minutes when you can dedicate more? This question was posed by the staff of the Education Faculty as they met in July to discuss how they could affect change on Nelson Mandela Day. The administration staff created a plan to contribute to 2 non-profit organizations in various ways. After weeks of planning, the day finally came and the events hosted were most successful.



Some of the children of Sinethemba Children's Home getting creative with the face paint, making sure everyone has a colourful face.

The Education Faculty sponsored a fun day at the African Sky Touch Farm, where the children of Sinethemba Children's Home were treated to tractor rides, pony rides and party packs filled with juices and delicious party snacks. The children were fed braai meals sponsored by local business Hands on Projects and were treated to cupcakes sponsored by Taste Bud Cupcakes. Each child was presented with gift packs consisting of a new pair of school shoes, individual blanket and an age appropriate toy. In addition the staff held a clothing collection and donated clothing and groceries to the Missionvale Care Centre.

Congratulations to the Admin forum on a wonderful Mandela Day Initiative – which the Sinethemba Children enjoyed and appreciated. The day was successful and would not have been possible without such a great team. Thank you to all the individuals who contributed to the realization of this day. Thanks for the sponsorship of braai packs, cupcakes, blankets and toys (from Mary-anne Laughs, Pam Roach and contributors). Thanks for the many donations of second hand clothing sponsored by Tulsi Morar, Ridaa Salie, Delene Botha, Jackie Hay, Carol Poisat, Sylvan Blignaut & Taryn Isaacs. And thanks to all who contributed R2890 towards school shoes– contributors include Nadine De Lange, Christo Pienaar, Marilyn Gibbs, Prakash Singh, Raj Kurup, Pam Austin, Taryn Isaacs, Sherwin King, Jackie Smith, Sindi Mbokodi, Mathabo Khau, Joy Turyagyenda, Logan Athiemoolam, Les Meiring, Basheera Brooks, Lonnie King, Carol Poisat, Ridaa Sallie, Delene Botha, Al Witten, Tash Dolley, Vuks Tshazibana.



UPPING GRADES WITH WINTER SCHOOL

Amina Peterson
Student FOE

One can never be fully at ease or at peace until one has given selflessly something they could never get back – Time! I was approached by a senior member of the URC (Uniting Reformed Church) – Bloemendal to avail my teaching skills at a winter school the church had organised for the community of Chatty in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. The winter school ran from Monday 30th June 2014 – Friday 4th July 2014 at Bethvale Primary school for Grade 10s and 11s. All learners in the community were welcome. The programme was aimed at doing remedial work of the June examinations, whilst writing and having fun.



Being the first week of the holiday we started with 30 learners and by the end of the week it exponentially grew to 83 learners. The growth was attributed to our spectacular media coverage and social media posts. The learners were provided with a breakfast snack before devotion and class, followed by a meal for lunch and then were sent home. At the end of the week we rewarded all learners who committed themselves to the winter school with an excursion to Bayworld, a tour of NMMU and lunch on the beach. All this was provided at no cost to the learners. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every sponsor who made this initiative possible.

Sunday the 6th July 2014 we had a mini graduation ceremony to thank every learner for attending and also as a form of motivation to get them to attend the Spring school in the vacation after successfully completing Term 3. I thoroughly enjoyed my week doing what I love most, teaching. The learners were totally strange to me as they all attend different schools and only a handful were from the school I teach at. One thing is for sure in community work lies peace, contentment and everlasting reward. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.





USING NOVEL APPROACHES AND OPEN SPACES TO ENHANCE CREATIVITY

Dr Brian Walter who teaches a creative writing course in the Faculty of Arts decided to expose his creative writing class, all of whom were International Students from the College of St Benedict/ St John's University (Minnesota, USA), to novel experiences outside the confines of his lecture venue.

Throughout the course the students were required to write their pieces of poetry based on their experiences in Port Elizabeth in various contexts and settings. Since all the students were exposed to two worlds; the world of beaches of Summerstrand and the sprawling township life on the outskirts of the city they had a more balanced perspective of their experiences in Port Elizabeth unlike most tourists who are only exposed to the opulence and luxury of Summerstrand.

In order to create a context for the students to acquire a better understanding of cultural experiences from various South African perspectives Dr Walter provided them with a context based on one of Athol Fugard's plays entitled 'My Life'. In the latter play Fugard selected five young women from various Performing Arts Schools and institutions with a brief that each member of the group tell a story based on their social and personal profile that would be stimulating and challenging in a group context. In an attempt to reflect the racial composition of society his group was representative of the demographics of the country. The participants kept diaries in which they recorded anything that interested them or happened to them in their daily lives and they shared these pieces of writing with the rest of the group. Fugard facilitated the creation and scripting of the play based on these young women's experiences just prior to the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. The play was taken to the Grahamstown festival where they gave a few sold out performances.

Dr Walter used the play 'My Life' as a starting point to enhance his international students' understanding of the various cultures in South Africa since the play showcased the experiences of young women from various cultural and religious backgrounds. The class was particularly interested in enhancing their understanding of the Indian woman's experiences as depicted in the play and Hinduism in particular as this was not a religion that the group was familiar with.

In the meantime Logan Athiemoolam had already presented a lecture to the same group of international students on the 'South African Education system' in which the forced removals from South End were touched on. Dr Walter then contacted Logan and asked him if he could organize an excursion for the group to the Hindu Temple in Upper Valley Road, South End where he grew up as a child. The temple which was consecrated in the 1890s and overlooks the Baaken's River and Settlers Park, is today a national monument.

The students were taken on an excursion to the temple where they were provided with a brief background to Hinduism and thereafter sat leisurely in the temple grounds engaging in their pieces of creative writing based on the play 'My Life' and the temple experiences.

Brian published the group's collection of poetry in an anthology which includes all their pieces of writing since they arrived in Port Elizabeth. Three of the poems from the collection written by students in the temple's grounds are highlighted below.

Logan Athiemoolam

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Torn

This serene valley
– pinned between mountains,
a river flows through
to the sea –
nourished the Indian people;
place of comfort,
place of God.
Until they were torn away,
relocated into an unknown,
left with
history, memories,
still picture home,
the valley.

Cassandra Yurick

India: in Port Elizabeth

A city,
so diverse
a concrete jungle
full of life,
and roots beneath the earth
tell stories of the past:
to this day
a temple remains
hidden away
in Africa.

Jared Kurzt

Valley Road Temple

Incense burns:
in golden reflections
deities encompass the temple,
our spirits ever present
amongst the foliage,
our lives transient .
We embark ever forward
life shifts
our destiny before us,
simply it will be shown,
felt, radiated
eternal, ever radiating
unconditional love.

Kayla Karst





SAARMSTE EASTERN CAPE CHAPTER WRITING CLINIC AND COLLOQUIUM AT NMMU

It was a milestone event for NMMU Faculty of Education to host the SAARMSTE Eastern Cape Chapter writing clinic and postgraduate colloquium. For the first time in the Chapters history representatives from all Eastern Cape HEIs [Rhodes University, Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu University and NMMU] Science and Maths faculty and their postgraduate students participated in a three day event (19-21 June 2014) in preparation for the SAARMSTE conference in Mozambique in January 2015.

The writing clinic was facilitated by Prof. Fred Lubben the Editor of AJARMSTE where Maths and Science faculty and their postgraduate students were provided with a workshop on writing for publication.

The first day of the workshop provided an introduction to writing in journals and some general guidelines while most of the second day was devoted to participants working actively under the guidance of Prof. Lubben on articles or proposals they were working on for the conference. Participants were highly enthused by the facilitation.

The colloquium was held at the Missionvale campus with an opening address by Prof Ntshongwana. The keynote speaker was NMMU FRF Mathematics Chair Prof. Werner Olivier who spoke about the value of digital spaces in the teaching and learning of science education. In addition there were 5 faculty and student presentations of their research and one round table. It was an important event which developed a community of sharing.

A faculty member from Rhodes University Dr. Ken Ncgoza commented: "We can finally say the Eastern Cape Chapter is on fire. I am absolutely amazed that every single participant has walked away with a paper in progress for submission to AJARMSTE and possible presentation at the SAARMSTE conference in Maputo 2014." Another faculty member from Walter Sisulu University, Dr. Alex Jogy commented:

"For the all of us this was indeed a wonderful learning and nurturing event. We look forward to more Chapter activities in the future." A postgraduate participant from NMMU Mr. Africa remarked: "I really felt that this was a safe space in which I could share my work. It was good to hear and learn from the views and experiences of other lecturers and students from other universities in the Eastern Cape."

Dr. Kathija Adam and Dr. Tulsi Morar

CONGRATULATIONS! RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS



2014 Faculty Researcher of the Year:
Prof Prakash Singh



2014 Faculty Emerging Research of the year:
Dr Chris Dali

Girls Leading Change make their voices heard at the Human Sciences Research Council in Durban



The “Girls Leading Change” were at it again! On the 24th of June, 7 of the 15 girls made our way to Durban with Prof Naydene de Lange - to share our activist research of addressing sexual violence. We were invited to Agenda’s Feminist Dialogue to join the discussions around “Transforming violent culture and building platforms for young women”.

Prof Moletsane, who chaired the event, welcomed the audiences in Durban, Pretoria and Cape Town. The last two audiences were linked via video conference. Amongst those invited to present were women from Project Empower, APC-Cape Town and us! The South Africa-Canada partnership on addressing sexual violence against girls was also officially announced. A special issue of Agenda, “Sex, gender and childhood” was launched, and several authors who had written articles for the special issue spoke about their work. The purpose of this event was essentially to have a platform where women could speak openly about problems and challenges that face them on a day to day basis. The young women from Project Empower spoke about sexual violence and other forms of violence and factors contributing to this in informal settlements.



Back: Asisipho Mntonga, Sandisiwe Gaiza, Elethu Ntsethe, Zethu Jiyana, sitting, Prof Relebohile Moletsane, Bongiwe Maome, Wandiswa Momoza, Takatso Mohlomi and Prof Naydene de Lange



Takatso Mohlomi.

The authors of an article (related to such challenges faced by young women) spoke about how society is dealing with/should deal with these challenges. The “Girls leading change” spoke about the challenges and problems that we young women face with sexual violence and harassment at a tertiary institution. This was well received and sparked lively discussion! Several members of the audience voiced their interest and pride in the work that we are doing, and offered suggestions on how we could extend our project. The trip was without a doubt a huge learning curve for us, because we learned that we are not alone, people relate to the matters that we are trying to raise and above that people support our efforts. This will also inform our future discussions and keep the momentum going. The experience of mingling with and being heard by academics and other role players, was exciting! We are grateful for the opportunity and the financial support from the Faculty of Education!

Bongi Maome
Student FOE

ACE LLT STUDENTS PRESENT RESEARCH PAPERS AT CONFERENCE IN KOKSTAD

Logan Athiemoolam

The ACE-LLT Kokstad group presented papers on their action research projects at the annual conference held there. The 19 papers presented focused on some of the language challenges that these in-service teachers were confronted with in their classes in predominantly rural contexts. Most of the papers tended to highlight the challenges experienced by learners with regard to reading and writing and the intervention strategies that they implemented to address the identified challenges.

The lively presentations demonstrated the in-service teachers' ability to implement action research in their classroom settings and to report on the processes and findings on the basis of the action research cycle. In reflecting on their experiences the teachers indicated that their knowledge of action research had enabled them to be more proactive in their classes so that their classes could be centres of learning, growth and development. It was interesting to hear from the presenters that other staff members in their schools were eager to know about action research after observing the positive changes and developments in their classes. This led to the sharing of ideas and collaborative action to enhance teaching and learning.

The ACE-LLT team who visited the Kokstad centre and organised and co-ordinated the conference included Logan Athiemoolam, Nokhanyo Mayaba, Joe Slingers and Cosi Rasana. Nokhanyo and Joe, who served as the adjudicators for the day, provided excellent feedback to the students and were impressed by the standard of presentations.

In reflecting on the ACE-LLT programme after the conference the teachers indicated that the programme had been beneficial to their overall development as teachers and had stimulated them to experiment with novel approaches to teaching and learning in their classes. They felt that they had grown immensely over the past few years having commenced their studies with the NPDE and then progressing to the ACE-LLT. They were saddened as they would not be able to pursue further studies at the Kokstad Centre since all off-campus education programmes will be discontinued by the end of the year.

RESOURCE CENTRE NEWS

To meet the needs of the digital age, the FOE Resource Centre is also available online through the Moodle site. The site brings online materials such as the latest CAPS documents, teacher's guides and printable resources to the student body.

Visit the **NMMU Education Resource Centre** today!

<http://learn.nmmu.ac.za/course/view.php?id=1711>



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Maggie Hugo (right), a BEd: FET student who received first prize in the Accounting 2 General Stream at the recent Accounting degree prize giving ceremony. In the picture, Maggie is with Prof Derek Forsyth who is Head of Division, Corporate Reporting in the Department of Accounting Sciences. The Faculty is very proud of this excellent endeavour.



International Exchange

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that the following students will be representing NMMU and our faculty at St Cloud university (USA), as well as University of Gothenburg (Sweden), during the period 1 Sept – 1 Oct 2014 – a wonderful opportunity to enrich and broaden their understandings of education and schooling. They will soon liaise with their respective 2nd semester lecturers in this regard.

We wish them a safe trip and lots of fun and learning!

67 MINUTES

Nelson Mandela Day 2014

