



# NEWS

June 2012

## Committed to Curriculum Renewal

Faculty staff, who teach on the ITE programmes, participated in a one day curriculum renewal workshop earlier this month. The purpose being to begin 'taking stock'; to discuss and assess the current situation within the B Ed and PGCE programmes. The work from this workshop was in preparation for a faculty-wide workshop to be held off campus.



Keep a look out for our *special edition* on the Curriculum Renewal Process to date!

### Commitment to consistent and exciting research recognised

The faculties' research award winners were recently announced. Winners will be hosted at an official NMMU ceremony in August, and each receives an amount in their research accounts. Executive Dean, Prof Denise Zinn, commented from her sabbatical in San Diego, "From afar, I want to congratulate you both. Your work, energy and commitment to doing consistent and exciting research is inspiring to us all. I am very proud of you both, well done!"



**Prof Naydene de Lange:**  
Education Faculty Researcher  
of the Year



**Dr Andre du Plessis:**  
Education Faculty Emerging  
Researcher of the Year

## Choir regional success!

A busy man... 4<sup>th</sup> year B Ed IP student, Lundi Nomlala, is undertaking his teaching practice at the Stephen Mzungula Primary School in New Brighton. In addition to the normal workload of a student teacher, Lundi involved himself in the school choir, and took them all the way to provincial competition level.

The choir competed in the Zone Level where they received three awards (Position 1 in HIV/AIDS & Folklore category, position 2 in the Western Piece and position 3 in IsiZulu song). These winnings took them to the Mega District Level and then to provincial level.

At the Provincial Competition (26 May 2012 at NMMU Indoor Sport Centre) they won the HIV/AIDS and Folklore category! "I feel happy that the children performed well and it was their first time to take part at the competition", remarked Lundi.



Lundi (front, left) pictured with the choir members after the provincial competition, where they won the HIV/AIDS & Folklore category.



**Second years IP student teachers in training...** Students undertaking their in-house teaching practice for IsiXhosa Language and Grammar with their lecturer, Dr Sindi Mbokodi.

## briefs

### Visit by world renowned scholar

Prof Carlos Alberto Torres, world renowned scholar on educational policy and reform, comparative education, political economy, social change and politics, was hosted by the faculty's Centre for the Community School (CCS) and CANRAD this month. He was joined by his wife, Prof Ana Elvira Raposo.

Prof Torres is also the founding director, with Paulo Freire, of the Paulo Freire Institute. The work of Paulo Freire, Prof Torres, and the Paulo Freire Institute is of great significance to many education scholars, educators, and education activists in South Africa. It is also very relevant to the conceptualization and work of CCS. The activities undertaken during their visit proved to be wonderful opportunities to engage with them on relevant topics, particularly in light of our current focus on curriculum renewal.

### Sylvan completes his 15<sup>th</sup> Comrades!

On Sunday 3 June the annual pilgrimage between Pietermaritzburg and Durban took place. Sylvan completed his race in 11r38m47s.

This year the race coincided with the 50th anniversary of Gelvandale High School where he matriculated. To honour this, Sylvan raised money for the school by being sponsored per 89km by colleagues and members of the public. As Sylvan commented, "Imagine being with me every step of the way when I go through Drummond or through a Valley of a Thousand Hills. Let us do great things together by advancing education!"

Well done Sylvan!

### Shervani selected to HER-SA

Congratulations to Dr Shervani Pillay, from the School for Education Research and Engagement, who has been selected to participate in the 10th HERS-SA Academy.

We are proud of you!



# New Teachers for New Times

by Rowayda Fortuin and Zethwee George (with Bernard Venter, Lundi Nomlala, Jaydee-Leigh van Onselen and Johan Pienaar)

Excitement and anticipation were some of the feelings we experienced when we entered the school gates of Colleen Glen Primary School, a farm school about 30 kilometers outside Port Elizabeth on the 8th of May 2012.

We were six 4th year Education students who got the opportunity to do two weeks of our teaching practice as part of the research project "New Teachers for New Times". Together with the teachers of Colleen Glen Primary School we attended a two day workshop led by Prof. Naydene de Lange, Dr. Athimoolam, Dr. Khau and Mrs. Mazomba on how to use 'new' visual methodologies in the classroom. At the workshop these methodologies looked achievable and we were ready and keen on the 8th of May to implement these methodologies (which included image theatre, drawings, collage and photovoice) in the classroom.

We were overwhelmed by the warm welcoming ceremony on our first day by the staff and learners. It is something all of us will never forget. The moment we walked into our classes, reality struck: we can plan the best lessons, but we cannot walk into a class not taking into consideration who the learners are and what their strengths and challenges are. We were challenged to get a sense of who the learners are and how to help them bring out the best in themselves.

This project made us, as teachers-in-training, look differently at schooling and teaching. We were challenged with issues in and outside our classrooms that we have never experienced before, but we also learnt how to address them with what we had learnt in the Education Faculty. With grateful hearts, we can say that this experience made a difference to us and that we contributed in making a difference to so many young learners' lives.



## For your Diary - Upcoming Events

### **The Soupçon Series – A Taste of Research and Collegiality**

A series of short, voluntary, collegial and accessible workshops on a variety of topics designed to support supervisors and their students meet the challenges of the research enterprise.

The approach will be to:

- Present half-hour workshops consisting of a 10 minute presentation and 20 minutes for questions and discussion
- 'User-friendly' sessions which promote collegial discussion and direct application where possible
- Offer a series of sessions which might be practical, methodological or philosophical
- Host the sessions at lunch time in a comfortable venue with some light sustenance

All academics will be invited to put forward presentation possibilities which will be presented on the *smorgasbord*.

A *Gourmet Entrée* series may be held during an agreed week in the school holidays for students at their supervisors' request. Some of the *Soupçon Series* sessions could be expanded as longer presentations and workshops, during which students can attend sessions, enjoy a collegial atmosphere, share experiences and work directly with their respective supervisors and promoters.

Enquiries: Paul Webb, Elsa Lombard

### **Intercultural Education Unit (ICEDU) Colloquium**

ICEDU will be hosting a colloquium in August and the purpose of this colloquium will be to showcase the work of colleagues in the Faculty of Education that resonates with intercultural education.

Date: 07 August 2012

For further information: Nonnie Botha, Lyn Webb, Logan Athimoolam or Ndileka Jacobs

A wealth of contributions, conversations and friendships

## Reflections on Research Support Group semester activities...

Dr Kathija Adam

In reflecting through RSG in terms of its purpose and possible outcomes of our getting together, the following has been observed:

1. I think RSG has served the purpose of bringing together and engaging faculty who choose to be a part of it on the aspect of research;
2. It has allowed information sharing amongst members and created a network amongst faculty towards engaging in research talk that is conducive to support and provision of sound board to colleagues;
3. It has created a safe space for ideas, fears, uncertainties related to research to be addressed;
4. The inclusion of both novice and experienced researchers has allowed for us a faculty to draw on each others expertise;
5. The creative aspects of our meeting has been positive in stimulating fresh thoughts on research processes and it is a central part of our engagement (like the one highlighted below);
6. Thoughts about groups of faculty working together on research have commenced and some funding opportunities are being identified; and
7. Individual goals have progressed but it is still early for any deliverables.
8. Three people will be applying for Thuthuka funding – Vuyani, Deon and myself.

A recent highlight in the group was catching up with our novice researchers and their work. Alette had attended a workshop with one of her students and brought to the group some of the interesting ideas which could be useful for both novice researchers and any supervisor. Annaline volunteered to go through a *Socrates Questioning Task* through which she got to think about her research and receive some ideas from those who were there. One of the requirements was that we not interfere with Annaline's thinking processes while the questions were being asked. We learnt much more about Annaline's intended research through this mechanism, so if any of you are thinking of starting a research project, then this is definitely for you.

In the new semester the group will once again open the invitation to all faculty, reminding them of the opportunity to join.

## ZUURBERG Writing Retreat 13-15 June 2012

Four academics attended this writing retreat (Pam, Christina, Nokhanyo and Eileen) and all were keen to get their research down on paper. This opportunity was made possible with ERTIC funding and the beautiful Zuurberg Inn was the venue of choice. Each participant committed to write up the following articles for publication:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Dr Pam Austin:        | <i>Can trust relationships be promoted in a classroom situation by adopting five universal core values?</i>                 |
| Dr Christina Jordaan: | <i>A case for formal visual literacy teaching in higher education</i>   |
| Nokhanyo Mayaba:      | <i>Rediscovering the power of stories: using traditional folktales to boost resilience and literacy of at-risk children</i> |
| Eileen Scheckle:      | <i>Literature review chapter</i>  |

The days were spent writing with research talk around meal times. Every meal time was used for discussing a particular question raised by Naydene (facilitator/mentor). Before leaving, each writer had an appointed critical reader who will read the article or chapter once a complete draft is ready.

"The work accomplished, the collegiality, the investment in research, and the time spent together over meals discussing 'the question ...' made for a gratifying few days." Naydene.



"Jy moet die swaar kry met lekker kry klaar kry!" Langenhoven

## NPDE examination monitoring – A tale of three centres ...

Neville Rudman

I was very privileged to attend the pre-examination preparations at Qumbu Centre on Friday, 8 June. Approximately 260 students were cramped – shoulder to shoulder – into a venue where the Student Support Person, Mr Qcobile Lingani (who is also a lay preacher) provided spiritual sustenance with a powerfully delivered message from the Bible. I did not understand much as the delivery was in isiXhosa, but from the animated reactions of the students it was clear to me that this was a very welcome start to the examinations. This was followed by an address from Ms Yolisa Dudula, Centre Manager, who called on them to be calm and to do their best. I was given the opportunity to address them and wishing them well on behalf of the faculty, I told them that they owe it to the children they teach to be the best they can be.



*Getting down to the serious business of tackling the first exam*

The welcoming warmth (this time in an extremely cold Qumbu) always blows me away – on this occasion I again marvelled at the gooseflesh singing and 'lewensvreugde' of these folk. Their life is not an easy one, teaching mostly in hugely under-resourced schools with overcrowded classrooms, minimal opportunities for pedagogical growth and a department of education that turned their backs on them by withdrawing funding mid-way through their studies; yet they carry on regardless ... with an amazing depth of spirituality that clearly sustains them.

The students were seated thirty minutes before the commencement of the exams, the papers were handed out fifteen minutes later and the exams started on time. Ten venues, twenty five per class. As a faculty we are extremely fortunate to have a Centre Manager of the calibre of Yolisa Dudula to manage the centre.

Travelling home, I was embarrassed that I had felt so sorry for myself travelling the seven hours by road (PE to EL, EL to Qumbu) to get to the centre. In retrospect, it was a small price to pay for the richness I discovered there.

The following week I was in Kokstad (13 June) and Bizana (15 June). The NPDE in Kokstad is offered at Kokstad Primary School, a well-resourced school, and again the examinations started on time, with good examination practices apparent.

We service about 500 students in this centre, and managing these logistics is not for the faint-hearted. Ms Patricia Napier and her assistant Ms Asanda Mcasa are doing sterling work in this regard. I again made use of the opportunity to pop into each venue and wish the students well for the examination.

The Bizana examination processes were equally well managed in terms of punctuality & classroom management.

Our programme is offered at Bizana Senior Secondary School (Gr 10 – 12). Interesting about this school is that they have 10 Matric classes of approx. 30 learners each, with more than 1000 learners in total. Ms Yolisa Magidela (Mayoli) and Ms Vuyokazi Ntshakaza do sterling work in our Bizana Centre.



*Patricia and Asanda, responsible for the logistics of our biggest centre*



*Mayoli and Vuyo in front of the school*