

NEWS



August 2013

Institutional Research Theme - Humanising Pedagogy

On the 22 August, Professor Denise Zinn, driver of the institutional research theme on Humanising Pedagogy, hosted a meeting aimed at exploring this concept as well as discussing possible research projects related to the theme. Professor Andre Keet (UFS) co-hosted the meeting and presented on a proposed research framework, as well as the set of propositions that drives the framework. Also touched upon were several possible research foci and outputs. Well attended by colleagues from across the institution, the engagement stimulated lively discussion and confirmed that humanising pedagogy is definitely an idea, a concept that is worth exploring, contesting, problematizing and investigating, especially of practical ways in which the concept can be taken up. It was envisaged at this meeting that a next step would be to hold a colloquium where presentations of proposed research and engagement may be presented.



National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)– the last cohort.



Centre Manager team

It was with a strong sense of nostalgia that we tackled the final Training of Tutor (TOT) sessions for the NPDE. On Saturday, 6 July, we hosted the Graaff-Reinet and Missionvale tutors in Port Elizabeth and, on the following Saturday, it was the turn of the tutors from Qumbu, Kokstad, Bizana and Lusikisiki to be orientated in Kokstad.

For the past 10 years, the NPDE has been central to the faculty's offering of teacher-upgrading programmes in deep-rural contexts and, once again, we assembled a strong team of Module Coordinators to conduct the training, including Dali, Chris (Dr), Mofu, Zanele (Ms), Tame-Gwaxule, Sindiswa (Ms), Villanueva, Mary-Grace (Dr), Foli, Randi (Ms), McKay, Emile (Mr), Mguca, Thuks (Ms) and Rudman, Neville (Mr)

In total, more than 70 tutors were involved in the training, and these tutors are now in a position to deliver our modules to the 700+ students in the programme.

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In the opening paragraph I referred to the fact that this was the final training session for the NPDE. The programme has been discontinued nationally and at the NMMU. This comes at a time when the NMMU Faculty of Education is beginning to withdraw from the distance education model, largely due to the current focus on curriculum renewal processes in the faculty.

NPDE GRADUATES

YEAR	FP	IP	SP
2003	182	106	118
2004	78	54	51
2005	121	85	103
2006	92	60	70
2007	128	65	73
2008	58	37	22
2009	264	55	111
2010	128	64	61
2011	11	2	1
2012	389	3	3
TOTALS	1451	531	613
			2595

So, apart from contributing significantly to the (qualified) teacher pool in a largely under-resourced region, what has been achieved by the offering of the NPDE in, mostly, the rural ex-Transkei? Over the years, many stories were shared with our tutors and centre managers. There are stories of the indignities experienced by many of these un- and under-qualified teachers in the schools where they teach. For example, professionally qualified teachers often do not allow their colleagues to forget their 'unqualified' status. I recall one student who declared proudly, "No longer will they refer to me as 'unqualified!'" as he held up his clenched fist, when he graduated.

I believe that the NPDE programme has contributed to teachers' personal and professional self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1994), self-efficacy can be defined as a person's belief about their ability to produce the levels of performance required to positively influence events that affect their lives. We are aware that teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy have a clear impact on their teaching practice and the manner in which they relate to the education process (Pajares, 1997). I believe that for the vast majority of those who completed the programme, this experience is true.

The following, which I came across during my Master's research into self-efficacy and the recognition of prior learning, probably best conveys what it is I am trying to say. This is specifically with regard to the RPL component of the NPDE. Of the 360 credits, 180 are completed through portfolio work where students reflect on their practice. As module coordinator for all the RPL modules, I can only hope that the RPL components in the NPDE achieved some measure of the following statement:

In every country, experience shows that some people find personally transforming the experience of trying to articulate for themselves what they have actually learned although they did not know they had learned it. Confidence can be boosted. Aspirations can expand. Motivation for learning is often strengthened. And as the sense of self is strengthened, so the world can become a better place. Often this is referred to as the empowerment of people. (Evans)

Understandably, the million-dollar question one asks is, "But are the NPDE students better teachers for having been on the programme?" I do not have any quantitative data to verify or discount my claim, but I do believe that some gains have been made. Over the three years, the students were exposed to a number of theoretical understandings and pedagogical practices. For example, the teachers were engaged in literacy and numeracy modules, modules which focused on effective teaching and learning strategies, assessment approaches and professionalism in education; a 12-credit HIV and AIDS module was offered. Add to this the number of learning area studies (LAS) modules, (Life Skills, Technology, Natural Science, Mathematics, etc.) with the clear link to the CAPS documents. With the guidance of qualified module coordinators and experienced tutors in the field, surely, some benefit must have accrued.

On another level, it should be noted that many NPDE students went on to complete a variety of ACE, B.Ed and Honours programmes at NMMU and other institutes of higher education. Considering that the 'Matric' certificate and 5 years' service was a prerequisite to entry, I believe this to be a rich haul, initiated by the NPDE.

For me, one of the important spin-offs of the NMMU's work in this rural context is the development of the core tutors. In each of our centres, there have been a dedicated group of individuals who develop their skills to deliver programmes (lecturing) to adults. The development of adult educators has been a deliberate focus from our side. The majority of our tutors are teachers in basic education and, in light of this; we had to ensure that the tutors had a clear understanding that there was a significant difference between teaching children from Monday to Friday, to teaching adults on Saturday. Perhaps the emphasis on these differences and pedagogical approaches to support adult learning will prepare the tutors to lecture in other ABET programmes across a wide spectrum of topics. During the last year or two, we have also developed our tutors' understanding of the faculty's work towards a humanizing pedagogy. We taught our tutors to role model these understandings. The explicit attention to some of these issues, I believe, contributed positively to the experiences of the students in our programme.

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At King Shaka International Airport in Durban, coming home – the MC team: Job done!

Expanding our student support has been another personal highlight for me – this is an aspect that will be the focus of research and I anticipate some interesting results in this regard. I believe that the NMMU needs to develop student support significantly if we are to re-enter the distance education arena at any point in the future.

Finally, I believe it is important to remember some of the folk who contributed to the early development of the NPDE and those who took it further over the years. I am really loath to mention names, but I believe that Viv England, Brian Walter and Prof. Paul Webb deserve mention for their efforts in getting the programme off the ground and developing the relationships and structures for the programme to succeed. Other key players worthy of mention include, our Centre Managers and their assistants who have been the face of the NMMU's NPDE for so long; the NPDE administrators in Port Elizabeth who dealt with all the challenges that rural students may present with all the 'broken telephones'; the folk at NMMU Examinations, Human Resources and Admissions; and especially all the many tutors, module coordinators and moderators, both internal and external, for their academic input over the years ... thank you, all!

Super Ed- Beyond the Call of Duty

08th August 2013: In celebration of Women's Day, which was on the 9th August, Super Ed prepared small gift packs for the ladies on campus. To acknowledge and appreciate all the hard work they do around campus, we had well dressed gentlemen handing out the packs all over the campus, regardless of the rain and cold, we managed to surprise and bring out smiles (see attached pictures).

In an attempt to go beyond the call of duty once again, Super Ed will be represented by 8(5 committee members) candidates in the Mr. and Miss NMMU event which will be taking place on the 14th of September. A week before the auditions Super Ed went on encouraging its members to take part and have fun. We believe that a vibrant campus can only come out of participation and involvement in all the University's social events.

Having heard that there are only five Indian students on campus. We've decided to represent the Indian culture on Cultural Day (31 August 2013). We have managed to get 8 Indian outfits and some recipes for the dish. We are required to deliver an item thus we are practicing an Indian dance.

Currently there are 3 committee members taking part in the upcoming SC and House committee elections. These members are going on elections with a broad mind of change and innovation. Having been on Super Ed and taking part in almost all the events on campus, they have equipped themselves with leadership skills and a clear understanding of what the students need by attending Policy summits and parliament meetings.

Regardless of all the things that are being done in the society, the values of the university guide our decision making processes, especially in the cases where we have to go out to the community schools. Though we accept offers to work or assist other schools, we chose to put more focus at just one school, to avoid clashes with our studies. Like our Facebook page for updates on Super Ed. https://www.facebook.com/?ref=tn_tnmn#!/SuperEdSaasveld



DETA EDUCATION



By: Logan Athiemoolam

CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI

Professor Denise Zinn and Dr Logan Athiemoolam attended the 5th DETA (Distance Education and Teacher Education in Africa) conference at the Kenya Science Campus College of Education and External Studies at the University of Nairobi from the 29th of July to the 1st of August 2013. The conference which was jointly organized by the University of Pretoria, the South African Institute of Distance Education and the University of Nairobi, featured the pre-conference Open Education Resources (OER) Workshop and the African Deans of Education Forum (ADEF) on the 29th of July and plenary and parallel sessions from the 30th of July to the 1st of August. The theme of the conference was *"Teacher education and development in Africa: The need for access, equity, sustainability, quality and relevance within the context of globalization"*.

The Pre-conference OER Workshop which was presented by Tony Mays, a Senior Programme Specialist with the Institute for Distance Education, provided participants with an opportunity to share their experiences of using/ researching OER and mobile technology in education and teacher development. The purpose of the African Deans of Education Forum (ADEF) was to facilitate dialogue on critical issues in teacher education among the leadership of African faculties of education.

The keynote speakers included amongst others Professor Bob Moon Emeritus Professor of the Open University of the United Kingdom, Professor Asha Singh Kanwar from the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Professor Florida Karani from the University of Nairobi and Professor Supo Jegede from the University of Lagos.

The parallel session streams focused on the following themes:

- The role of collaboration and partnerships in teacher education and development in Africa
- Equipping African teachers to develop their learners as critical citizens in a digital world (ICTs in teacher education)
- Standards and quality assurance in teacher education and development in Africa
- Models, practices or experiences in the use of distance education for teacher education and development in Africa
- Leadership and management development for African schooling in the 21st century
- The role of collaboration and partnerships in teacher education and development in Africa



Second from the left, Dr Logamurthie Athiemoolam and (second from the right) Prof Denise Zinn with colleagues at the conference.

Professor Zinn chaired a keynote panel focusing on models, practices/experiences in the use of distance education for teacher education and development in Africa. Logan Athiemoolam presented a paper entitled *'Drama-in-education across borders: the NMMU/Oldenburger (Germany) partnership for teacher development'*. The paper focused on the collaborative partnership between the two institutions over a period of 9 years in the field of drama-in-education which involved the participation of drama instructors from Germany, lecturing staff and both pre- and in-service teachers from both institutions.

During their visit to Nairobi Professor Zinn and Dr Athiemoolam were invited by Dr Agnes Kibui, one of Dr Athiemoolam's 2007 doctoral graduates from the NMMU's Faculty of Education to the Kikuyu campus of the Nairobi University where she lectures. They had a short meeting, with the Dean of the Faculty of Education, HOD and other members of staff to discuss potential links between the two faculties of education. The meeting was initiated by Dr Kibui who, as a proud alumnus of the NMMU, would like to expand links between her institution and her alma mater.

This was the 5th DETA conference of its kind; previous DETA conferences were held at the University of Pretoria (2005), Makerere University in Uganda (2007), University of Cape Coast in Ghana (2009) and the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique (2011). The next DETA conference will be held at the University of Lagos in Nigeria in 2015.

The Community Scholars Writing Circle (CSC)



The Community Scholars Writing Circle (CSC) was established by the Centre for the Community School as a means of implementing the Centre's research agenda. Through documentation, the circle works to build scholarship and voice around school and community improvement and development as it relates to the community school. Research work and community scholarship that emerges from the circle will be published across a range of formats including refereed journals, books, and national and local newspapers.

The CSC meets on a regular basis for writing workshops and presentations of relevant work.

IRT Humanising Pedagogy

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Gallery

