

NEWS



Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University

for tomorrow

Port Elizabeth & George

March 2014



Representative Council of Learners leadership workshop

The Representative Councils of Learners from four high schools met at Missionvale campus for an insightful training workshop.

The training workshop was offered by the Centre for the Community School as a pilot project in response to a needs assessment session that took place in July 2013. During this session, principals of the Manyano Network of Schools pointed out the inefficiency of the Representative Councils of Learners in their schools. The principals recognized that learners lacked adequate knowledge to perform their duties within the councils, and that the learners lacked confidence in their leadership roles- they are easily manipulated and intimidated by the adult (teachers and parents) leadership constituencies- "minor views are not considered as they are dominated by the adult constituents".

The workshop emphasized the importance of interpersonal skills required by efficient leaders, the need for guidance, as well as the need for organizational knowledge and skills. By fulfilling these needs, learners could be more prepared to fulfill their roles as leaders in their schools.

Six members of the Limekhaya High School alumni group assisted with the facilitation of the sessions as 160 learners (class reps...as well as their Executive Committee) were divided into smaller and manageable groups. When learners what they are taking back to their schools from the training, one learner mentioned "the need for a sense of responsibility and full commitment of all the constituents involved in his school". He believes this will assist in terms of making his school a better place to learn for him and his fellow school mates.

All learners indicated a strong need and appreciation for this intervention. Learners indicated that the training workshop should be an on-going activity throughout the year.

Leadership, however, is not only about embracing change. To be effective, leaders also need to lead change.

Anathi Jindela



Student Resources

Debunking Sexual Myths, Through Research and Education

The Resource Centre launched the “Education for Educators” series on the 25th and 26th March 2014. The workshop aimed to create a safe forum for students to discuss difficult and taboo issues, facilitated by leaders in the relevant subjects. The session concentrated on the topic of sexual health awareness and aims to “Debunk Sexual Myths, Through Research and Education”.

The first research workshop on “Social life and Sexual Risk” was hosted by Dr Rosemary Kalenga, the Senior Researcher on HIV & AIDS at NMMU. The session created an opportunity for dialogue between the facilitator and the 14 education students from different phases, regarding their understanding and misconceptions of sexual risks. The research conveyed interesting statistics on the sexual behaviours of NMMU students, stating that in the sample of 500 NMMU students, 87% of students have more than one sexual partner in a period of time, 74% of students have been treated for an STD or STI and only 50% of students used a condom during their last sexual encounter. These statistics also demonstrate that university relationships are valorized as a means of belonging, whilst only 2% of these university couples will remain in the long term relationship. The students used this chance to raise many pertinent realities concerning the sexual activity of school going learners and minors, including the growing number of learners who are sexually active, but unprepared to deal with the consequences thereof. Overall the session proved valuable to the third years who attended.



The second workshop took a more practical approach to sexual myths. Hosted by Sister Benjamin and Sister Mapinda of the Campus Health Clinic, this session focused on the reproductive system and how it is affected by pregnancy and contraception. The discussion also included the issue of STI's/STD's, the effect the nervous system and how these illnesses could be prevented. The sisters further discussed the spread of HIV/AIDS and the National Policy on treatment of learners with such infections. The workshop concluded with information on the various services provided by the clinic, such as primary health care, occupational health care, HIV/AIDS testing and management, and how these services could be made accessible to those in need.

The students in attendance asked many brave and difficult questions, and used these sessions to engage in open and honest dialogue regarding the difficult realities phasing young people in South Africa today. Many students requested follow-up talks on the issue – and expressed a sense of empowerment at being able to talk about these taboo issues.

Ms Taryn Isaacs

For Students: To share your thoughts and data on sexual behavior, fill in the student sexual health survey at <http://campussex.co.za/survey/>



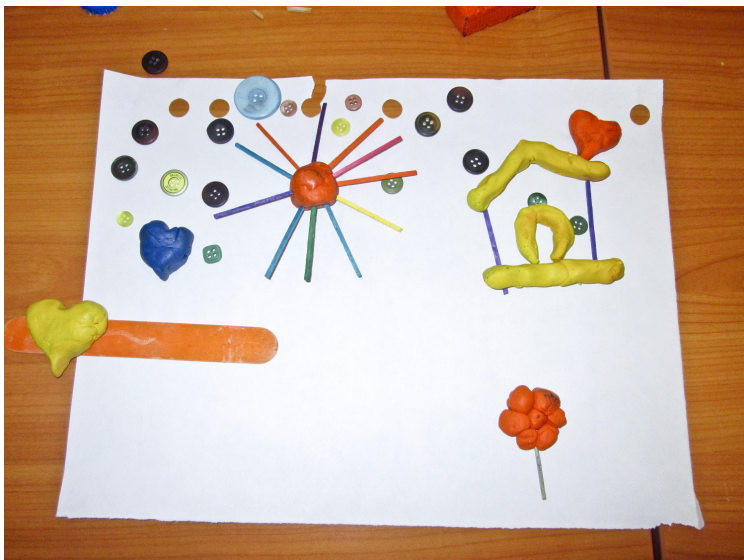


PRESENTING RESEARCH THROUGH ART

In March 2014 graduate student Avivit Cherrington, from the Faculty of Education, had the wonderful opportunity to present part of her research work at the 6th Global Conference of Hope: Probing the Boundaries held in Prague, Czech Republic. Her study exploring hope from the perspective of children attending a rural after-care centre in the Free State makes use of visual participatory methodology, and garnered a lot of interest at the conference. Handing out play-doh, colourful buttons and sticks to members of the audience, Avivit broke away from the traditionally verbal proceedings by presenting her paper in a visual and creative manner. "Working from a visual participatory framework is not just about generating visual data, but also about finding creative alternatives for disseminating one's work. What better way to explain to people how the children and I explored hope than by getting them to actually create something themselves and experience it?" The aim of the talk was to present the Mmogo-Method™ - a South African developed art-based projective data generation tool using clay and other items. The audience were asked to use the materials to create something that shows their experience of hope, and while they were busy with the activity Avivit explained some aspects of her work with the children, the benefits of working visually with various population groups and her personal observations of some of the preliminary themes that have emerged.

Even with only ten minutes available, participants had created colourful representations of their hope that carried very personal and detailed stories and experiences. “I was really surprised at how willing and eager people were to show off their artwork and share their reflections. Everyone commended me for presenting in such a different way and breaking the mould.” To add to the visual nature of her work she exhibited photographs of the Mmogo clay work that the children had made, along the walls of the room. Conference members were informed that the child participants were aware that Avivit would be presenting their work at the conference and were excited at the idea that people around the world would be sharing in their artwork and stories. “Displaying the children’s work in the room seemed to create an invisible connection between the conference participants and the children. I was really delighted that at the end of my session several people asked me to take a photo of what they had created and in turn share it with the children in South Africa – like an intimate exchange of hope stories.”

Prof Naydene De Lange



FACULTY OF EDUCATION AT GOLDEN GATE: EASA CONFERENCE



The Faculty of Education was well-represented at the annual conference of the Education Association of South Africa that took place in the picturesque Golden Gate Highlands National Park in the Eastern Free State in mid-January. Our Faculty members who carried the flag were Ms Mandie Kok (MEd student), Dr Nokhanyo Mayaba, Dr Christina Jordaan, Dr Geoffrey van der Voort (Ph D alumnus), Dr Al Witten, Dr Laetitia Greyling (Research Associate), Prof Lesley Wood (Research Associate), Prof Naydene de Lange, Prof Nonnie Botha and Prof Denise Zinn. Each one of them was involved in a conference presentation as individuals, or in teams. Their presentations covered a wide range of topics, namely education for democracy (Zinn, Witten & Zinn), participatory action research and community engagement (Wood, Greyling, Kok, et al.), school leadership (Wood & Damons), school improvement plans (Van der Voort & Wood), cultural stories (Mayaba & Wood), sexuality education (Jordaan), gender violence (De Lange & Mitchell), community school (Damons & Witten) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Botha).

The beautiful surroundings inspired much academic debate and engendered new ideas and networks that will hopefully feed into new research projects and publications in the future. The keynote speakers were enthusiastically supported and their messages resonated with areas of interest of our Faculty delegates: Prof Sari Lindblom-Ylänne from the University of Helsinki in Finland heads their Centre for Research and Development in Higher Education; Prof Mbulungeni Madiba (Centre for Higher Education Transformation at UCT) and Mandela Fellow at Harvard University, Dr Nick Taylor heads the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU), while Prof André Keet is the Director of the International Institute for the Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State.

Nokhanyo noted that language issues in schools and in higher education are given more attention than ever. She believes that one of the key note speakers, Prof Mbulungeni Madiba, added to the significance of language use in higher education as he highlighted in his presentation how students use different languages in order to access content and why translanguaging should be recognised as a communicative tool in a multilingual context.

Laetitia and Mandie were part of a round table discussion as members of a learning set in an NRF funded project with the research focus on Community Engagement. Lesley is the project leader and in their presentation the group shared some of the personal experiences in their journey using participatory action research. Mandie also indicated that she was very impressed by how well the conference was planned and that she found it to be a pleasure to learn from others in such a beautiful environment.

A highlight of the conference was when Nokhanyo was awarded the postgraduate medal of honour by EASA, a new medal category that will be awarded annually. Nokhanyo said: "It was an honour for me to be awarded the EASA post graduate medal of honour as a way of encouraging research amongst the EASA members and their Masters and PHD students. When the call was announced last year, my PhD promoter, Prof Les Wood, nominated me and I had to apply and indicate why I think I qualified for this nomination. I guess, I was able to convince the panel, hence the award." Congratulations Nokhanyo, we are proud of you!!

EASA elected a new chairperson for 2014, Prof Ronel Ferreira, and it was decided that the next conference will be hosted by the University of Pretoria – we are waiting with bated breath to hear where it will take place as it will have to be fantastic to beat Golden Gate!

Prof Nonnie Botha

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) visits Charles Duna Primary School in New Brighton

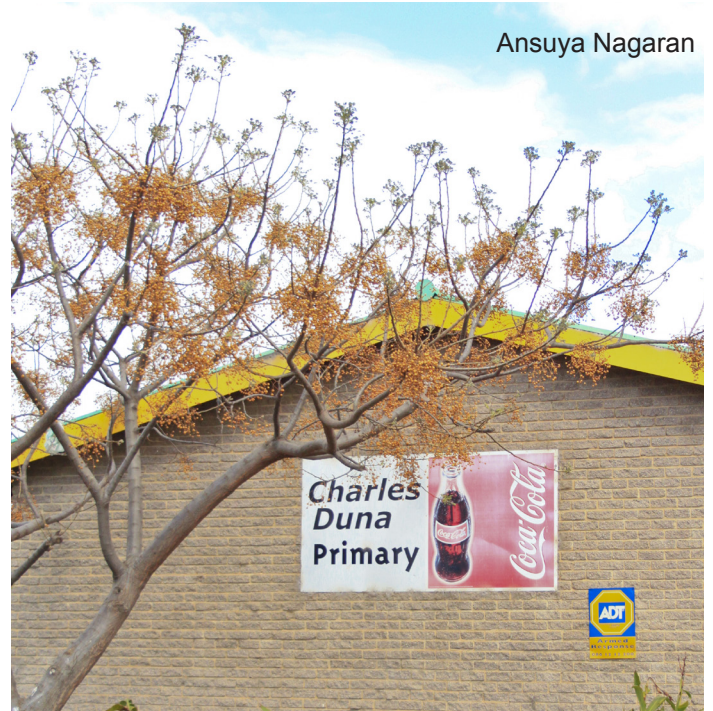
A group of approximately 80 students from the Terrascope Program at MIT embarked on a field trip to the Eastern Cape of South Africa hosted by the Earth Stewardship Research Institute of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). The purpose of the field trip was to expose the students from both MIT and NMMU to issues of water security in Africa (particularly in South Africa), and to provide an opportunity for students from very different cultural and educational background to network and explore common ground to establish a basis for responsible earth stewardship.

As part of the exposure to water security issues in South Africa, the students visited Charles Duna Primary School of the Manyano Network of Schools in the township of New Brighton. Although the school was established in 1962, the school did not have running water or storm water drainage until July 2013.

The principal of Charles Duna Primary, Ms Nombulelo Sume, hosted the students at the school and told them of her struggle for a functional water supply. She explained that as an interim measure, the water system at the school was reliant on parent volunteers who would use buckets to fill the cisterns and flush the toilets. Sume also explained that not having a functional water supply often meant that learners would need to be sent home early for hygienic reasons, and this compromised the quality of education they received.

Despite these challenges, the school remained the best performing school in the district. The students expressed their great admiration not only for Sume's determination in securing a functional water system for the school but also for ensuring quality education and extra-curricular programs at the school. They also commended her on the "vibrancy" and "beauty" of the school and marveled at how much the school is able to offer its learners despite the social, economic and infrastructural challenges with which the school is faced.

Ansuya Nagaran



BRIEFS



Welcome

Jabu Bam has been appointed the Project Administrator for the ABSA Bank Foundation Schools Entrepreneurship Project, the NEDBANK Eyethu Community Trust Professional Development Project and the NEDBANK Entrepreneurship Crafts and Arts Project



Faculty of Education Marketing



Marketing the Education Faculty to learners in Nelson Mandela Bay

This year marketing will concentrate on seven major events, running between March and May 2014. During the month of March, the marketing committee made-up of Tulsi Morar (chairperson), Kelley Felix, Gishma Daniels-Smith, Carol Poisat, Tobeka Mapasa, and Taryn Isaacs worked towards positioning the Faculty of Education as a forward thinking, technologically savvy, humanizing, educational institution.



The student society project in the Motherwell community

NMMU societies shared information about the various programmes available and how to enroll at NMMU. Spearheaded by second year intermediate phase student Bongani Meleni, the faculty was well represented to learners in the area. Bongani shared his experience of working at the exhibition "the warm welcoming we got from the Motherwell community is unbelievable, it made me want to give more to those who are in need of my expertise. What I also liked about the engagement was that we went to the people to give them knowledge and understanding, instead of letting them come to the campus. This is an experience I would like to have again."



The Working World Extravaganza

The Working World Extravaganza, took place between the 4th and 7th March 2014. The highlights of the exhibition included the eye catching stall, the assistance of NMMU senior students who took the opportunity to engage with learners, and the hardworking staff members who volunteered their time to engage with school-goers. The WWE project was a success, with many students expressing excitement over the "dare-to-teach" rulers they received.



The VC Outreach to Northern Area Schools

the VC-outreach at Saint Thomas High School, was hosted on the 27th March 2014. The evening created a space for the top students from the Northern Area School District, to meet and converse with Vice-chancellor Derrick Swartz. All the faculties were well represented, but the Education Faculty stall remained the most attractive and interactive stall of them all. The event aimed to reach possible undergraduate and postgraduate learners through incentives and promotional items. Once again, these efforts have been successful and reached many potential university scholars for 2015.



Mosaic of moments



Student Resources HIV Workshop



The Vice-Chancellor's St Thomas Outreach



Working World Extravaganza

