

# EDU-brief

## VOLUME 7 ~ NO 1 ~ 2011

## UJICE ON THE SOWETO CAMPUS

In August 2010, the Centre for Education Practice Research, the research leg of the UJ Institute for Childhood Education (UJICE), moved from the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus to the Soweto Campus. On the western side of the Campus is the "Little Pink School", as it has become known colloquially – the Funda UJabule School, a training/research school which forms the core of UJICE.

The focus of research and development in childhood education is a groundbreaking recent innovation on the Soweto Campus. Education for children from the area, coupled with longitudinal research on their learning and development, brings education science to the classroom and vice versa. At the Funda UJabule School, children have the opportunity to learn in classrooms where their learning is studied systematically. This Gauteng Department of Education and UJ partnership school is now home to 169 children in Grade R and Grade 1. Their cognitive development, language development and also their growing understanding of mathematics and science concepts are studied over four years.

This research will also give a broad picture of where the children are in terms of their cognitive, social, emotional and physical development, as well as their health, upon school entry. There are already surprising results in terms of their use of language when they come to Grade R. The work is coordinated by Dr Helen Dunbar-Krige, Prof Elizabeth Henning and Prof Max Bergman, who is a visiting professor from the University of Basel. Prof Catherine Snow, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is also an advisor to researchers in literacy education.

### *Teacher Development and Teacher Education*

In addition to the school and the research in UJICE, a teacher-in-service development project is envisaged for the school's staff and other teachers in the area, as well as a community engagement project in which academic staff and students will run workshops for parents. The Institute sees this as a vital part of the development of healthy school communities and the advancement of young children.

The Faculty's 244 undergraduate students in the Foundation Phase BEd programme do much of their practical work at the Funda UJabule School and in its related activities. They walk from the lecture hall to the research and training school and are in constant contact with children and teachers. In collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and funded by the European Union (EU), the Institute and the Department of Childhood Education have also embarked on studies of foundation phase teacher education in a nationwide, inter-institutional programme that will be launched with UJ as the host in July 2011. This launch will be part of the first UJ Literacy Education Winter School, designed and developed in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



The Funda UJabule School on the Soweto campus

RETHINK EDUCATION.  
REINVENT YOURSELF.



## LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING ON THE SOWETO CAMPUS

In 2010 the UJ Faculty of Education (UJFE), in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), launched an innovative education leadership development initiative on the Soweto Campus. The President of Harvard University, Prof Drew Faust announced this UJ-Harvard partnership in November 2009 at the Soweto Campus of the University of Johannesburg. The first dimension of the initiative, the Principal Network, was also launched in November 2009. The Network draws on the HGSE experience in running a highly successful 'Principals Center' since 1987 for disadvantaged schools in the Boston area, grappling with similar educational challenges as their South African counterparts.

The UJFE-HGSE collaboration draws upon the distinctive qualities of the two institutional partners. Both institutions have solid track records in the field of educational leadership development and have credible long-term footprints in the communities in which they work. The two institutions also have strong relationships with educational authorities and both are passionately committed to improving the challenged South African schooling system through combining their strengths.

The initiative is supported with funding from the World Bank, First Rand Foundation, the Anglo American Chairman's Fund, Development Bank Southern Africa and JP Morgan – national and international sponsors.

Ms Rafia Qureshi expressed Corporate Philanthropy at J.P. Morgan's support as follows: "Having seen many education projects across the world, I truly believe the Education Leadership Initiative is a unique model of addressing a very complex issue and its uniqueness lies not only within its holistic approach but also within the very important sharing of knowledge between the two universities".

The ultimate goal of the partnership is to increase the capacity of South African school leaders to improve student achievement and opportunity – thus, the focus is on "leadership for learning". The UJFE-HGSE partnership aims to do this through raising professional standards for South African school principals, education officials, and other education stakeholders.

**The UJFE-HGSE collaboration, now linked to the Education Leadership Initiative, focuses on building school leadership capacity by:**

- Designing and implementing leadership development programmes and short courses for leaders at the school, district and provincial levels.
- Implementing a leadership for learning systemic intervention in the Johannesburg Central School District (mainly Soweto); including interventions focussing on instructional leadership; this intervention is viewed as a pilot to be replicated in other districts at a later stage.
- Using the Principal Network, which forms part of the ELI, to provide ongoing support and training for school leaders through online interaction and other professional development activities.
- Developing a research agenda in educational leadership. The research projects and teaching cases developed through the course of the collaboration will become part of a national repository of scholarship and practice-based resources on effective educational leadership, to be housed at the ELI. These materials will become assets for all educators in the country and beyond through a website sponsored by the Development Bank of Southern Africa.



During the recent renovations of the Soweto Campus, UJ used two slogans to capture the vision for this campus: "leadership under construction" and "leaders revealed". The establishment of the ELI on the Soweto Campus serves as a testimony that the Faculty of Education, in collaboration with the HGSE, is living this vision.



## LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING ON THE SOWETO CAMPUS

### A visit to the US to celebrate the Leadership for Learning programme

The Leadership for Learning programme is a collaboration between the Faculty of Education at UJ and the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE). During April, Prof Sarah Gravett and Dr Lloyd Conley travelled to the US with the purpose of strengthening and celebrating the ties between the Faculty of Education, UJ and the HGSE. Prof Gravett also addressed a group of post-graduate students at HGSE on the partnership between UJ and HGSE.

One of the highlights at Harvard was a 'brown bag' lunch with the staff of HGSE. At the lunch Dr Deborah Jewel-Sherman, the HGSE leader of the programme, supported by Prof Gravett and Dr Conley, gave a talk explaining what the "leadership for learning" programme is about. This talk was followed by a lively and informative discussion. One attendee stated that *"the brown bag lunch was the best attended in my time at the HGSE"*.

Another purpose of the trip was to finalise plans to take a group of South African school principals and district officials to the HGSE in July 2011. 23 principals and district officials will be attending two institutes (programmes) at the HGSE. One group will attend the Harvard Institute for School Leadership: Leadership for Large-Scale Improvement and the second group will attend the National Institute for Urban School Leaders.

During the visit to the US Prof Gravett and Dr Conley also travelled to Washington, D.C. where they attended a formal dinner that was hosted by the Vice Chancellor (VC) of UJ, Prof Ihron Rensburg, and co-hosted by Ambassador Mr Ebrahim Rasool at the South African Embassy. Staff members from Howard University also attended the event as guests of the VC. The purpose of this dinner was to thank our partners in the programme – HGSE and the funders.

The VC, Prof Ihron Rensburg, delivered the keynote address, while the partners in the collaboration were represented by Prof Gravett and Mr Jack Jennings (HGSE). It was a very successful evening that everyone enjoyed greatly.



From Left to Right: Dr Jim Wyche (Provost, Howard University); Prof S. Gravett (Dean UJFE); Mr Jack Jennings (Dean of Administration HGSE); Prof I Rensburg (Vice Chancellor UJ), Dr Kofi Bota (Howard University); Dr. Deborah Jewel-Sherman (HGSE); Dr. L. Conley (UJFE); Dr J. Ellis (UJ)



## Educational psychology makes its mark on the Soweto campus

The Educational Psychology training programme – both at Honours and Masters level – was identified as one of the 'strong' programmes in the Faculty of Education. It was also described as an excellent programme in the recent audit by the Professional Board for Psychology. It is a unique, community-based, academic and professional education programme. In November 2010 the programme moved to the Soweto campus. Here it is in close proximity to schools and their communities where their professional services are sorely needed.

A hallmark of the Educational Psychology programme is its focus on community psychology, a field of the discipline with the specific brief of therapy and counselling at grassroots level. Psychological practice generally is moving away from the clinical individual practice to a broader view of consultation that involves more people, settings and communities. The training of educational psychologists and counsellors prepares them to work in this broader social base. The Educational Psychology programme does this through promoting an overall ethos of care. The programme's staff and students also do this by providing support to school communities. This includes the design, implementation and management of interventions in an ethical and culturally sensitive manner.

The focus of the programme was captured in the publication of a supplementary issue of the accredited journal *Education as Change* in December 2010. The move to the Soweto campus came at a good time. There is now a window of opportunity to live the vision of an engaged and caring set of programmes in the Faculty, close to the heartbeat of the city of Johannesburg in the area of Soweto.



## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION RESEARCH

A Special Interest Group (SIG) was founded recently in the Faculty of Education. The Childhood Education Research Group (CERG) will share ideas about learning and development of young children. They will also conduct seminars on the topic of teaching young children and the challenges of managing the foundation phase in under-performing South African schools. Their first objective is to work on articles for academic and other media publications. The members are all involved in research projects in the UJ Institute for Childhood Education and related work in the Centre for Education Practice Research. Four PhD students and five MEd students are also involved. The CERG is currently chaired by Prof Elbie Henning.

### The Soweto Panel Research Programme (SPRP) underway

The Soweto Panel Research Programme (SPRP) began in 2009 and is coordinated by Prof. Dr. M.M. Bergman. The panel study aims at investigating the development of children living in Soweto from preschool (grade R, age 5 and 6) to grade 3. The Funda UJabule School was founded for the purposes of scientifically studying issues relating to the improvement of teaching and learning in disadvantaged schools in South Africa. Within this school, projects include the assessment of: cognitive abilities, mathematics/numeracy, language/linguistics, health status and household information. Each of these areas has various projects supported by a team of local and international experts. The SPRP aims at providing a better understanding of the teaching and learning context of children in disadvantaged areas in South Africa, especially in relation to factors that support children, teachers and communities in the beginning of their educational path in the South African context.

For more details on the projects, please visit [www.uj.ac.za/sowetopanel](http://www.uj.ac.za/sowetopanel).



Prof Max Bergman

### PROF BERGMAN SPEAKS ABOUT THE 'PROBLEM OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS'

Prof Max Bergman, visiting professor at the University of Johannesburg, presented a public lecture on the topic "Developing competence in context: The 'problem' of teaching and learning in schools". He justified the frameworks and recommendations that he presented by referring to his frustrations about research in education in this country. Everyone, it seems to Prof Bergman, from journalists, to education professors to book club members, has a "mono explanation" of what is wrong with education – whether language, curriculum revisions or class size. He further expressed his dismay at, among other things, the thousands of small scale research projects, which are flawed in design and method, institutional competition, the apparent lack of memorability of research findings.

Presenting a conceptual framework that recognizes the interplay of learners, teachers, care providers, the learning context, the community and the policy milieu, Prof Bergman pointed out that the more "studyable" something is (by focusing on one or two of the components), the less "real" it is. But, the more the complexities of teaching and learning are acknowledged, the less empirically accessible a study becomes. His solution, then, is to model competence in context. As an example, he described the panel research programme of the Soweto campus school which has the potential to generate a large data set from multiple research projects. He outlined three possible families of theories; institutional, relational and embodied, that could be used as a theoretical framework for this research, and, after considering their potential problems, explained in some detail a theory of reciprocal reflexivity which brings together agents, structures, action and meaning.

Prof Bergman's recommendations include the development of research methods and skills, with a particular emphasis on mixed methods design; increased collaboration within institutes and departments, and across faculties and universities; the fostering of "multi-inter-trans-cross disciplinary" theorization and empirical research and the need to replicate important research findings in different contexts.





Book display at the "Teachers Upfront" event at Wits University

## TEACHERS UPFRONT

In the wake of last year teachers' strikes there has been much public debate and outcry about the rights and wrongs of teachers. Everyone seems to have an opinion, teachers, learners, parents, union members, members of another public sector or just ordinary alarmed citizens. Yet, one of the main stakeholders, that is, universities who train teachers for the profession, have not played a prominent enough role in the matter. It is time for them to take the lead and to enable various parties to come together and to voice their views in a safe and enabling environment where, after the steam has been blown off, some real solutions can be found. This is the aim and vision of "Teachers Upfront", a partnership between Bridge, Wits School of Education, Mail and Guardian, and the UJ Faculty of Education.

At the first conversation in March the positive contributions of teachers were profiled. Guest panel speakers Dr Mamphela Ramphele, Prof Yael Shalem from Wits School of Education and Ms Phumi Mthiyane, a teacher at Realogile Secondary School in Alexandra, inspired the audience with words of wisdom, knowledge and experience. Dr Ramphele (explained) that there is a deep and suppressed woundedness in our society and the effects of this is manifested at the individual, community and civil society levels in the form of apathy, self-destructive behaviour, wasting and looting. She proposed healing circles in the home, at work and in classrooms to find ways of re-establishing our lost connections. Teachers need to be supported by these healing circles and should not be named, blamed and shamed anymore so that they can become professionals who are integrated economically, socially and politically.

Prof Shalem stressed that we cannot talk about teachers as a homogenous category, not just because of race and gender differences, but because of the vast socio-economic inequalities in society at large. For example the work for a teacher in a well-resourced school is incomparable to one

who works in an impoverished area, which by far characterises the majority of teachers. Prof Shalem differentiated between those children who have a second and third site of knowledge acquisition, such as access to books and internet at home and tutors outside the home, and the majority of children whose only site of acquisition is the school. This means that teachers of children from impoverished communities have to invest far more time and energy into their learners to get similar results to those teachers who work in more privileged schools. Prof Shalem concluded that shaming and blaming teachers must be stopped, that a recruitment campaign based on the slogan "teachers matter" be put out and that accountability is not a one size fits all concept. The different school contexts must be respected.

The third speaker, Ms Phumi Mthiyane inspired the audience with her optimism, energy, passion and personal narratives recounting her experiences as a teacher in a township school environment. She attributes much of her success to her mindset, asserting that at the centre is an open, humble mind, willing to accept and be receptive to change. As an example of practical solution strategies she mentioned how she brought her learners in contact with Alex FM, a community radio station that has given the school a weekly slot to discuss problems and issues and to find solutions to them. Suddenly learners were required to do research, to come up with facts and to take responsibility for their own issues. For her the role of teachers is to be an inspiration to learners and to each other. "In Alex", she said, "we have to learn to live with learners who are rejected by the more privileged schools; we cannot send them anywhere else". Ms Mthiyane keeps her own 'bank account' full by finding joy and contentment through her faith.

People wishing to be involved in these conversations can do so on the virtual platform: **[www.bridge.org.za](http://www.bridge.org.za)**.

# THE FACULTY PUTS ITS RESEARCH ON DISPLAY

To support the development of research capacity by staff and postgraduate students, staff members and postgraduate students were invited to attend as a delegate or as a presenter the "Research Indaba", organized by Prof Alan Amory and members of the Faculty Research Committee. Eight staff members and seven students presented their work which range from topics such as how to build a better bridge between theory and practice in teaching; inclusive education; diversity in school leadership; history textbooks analysis; mathematics teaching; student's expectations of school experience; educational technology; and the first year excursion to Achterbergh, to name a few. After the 20 minute presentation delegates had a chance to discuss and ask questions which facilitated rich interaction between staff and students. Dr Josef de Beer and Ms Kathy Morgan won the awards for best staff and student presentations respectively. The faculty hopes that this successful event marks the beginning of more such indabas so that staff and students could become more familiar with each others' work and have an opportunity to engage in discussion and debate.

## SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMMES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

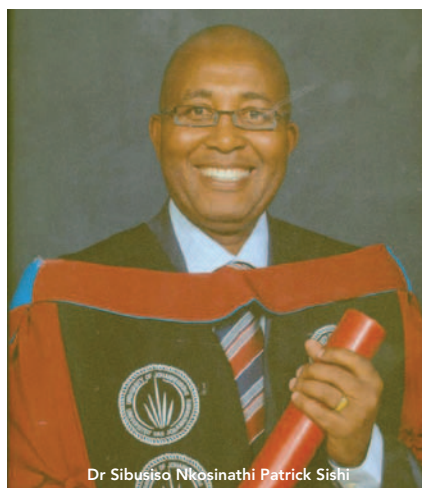
This year the Department of Educational Psychology is offering four Short Learning Programmes in Inclusive Education which are designed for educators to increase their theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the fields of inclusion and special needs education. The programmes focus on the identification, screening, assessment and support of learners who have special educational needs, or experience 'barriers to learning and development' within both mainstream, inclusive schools and the Special Educational Needs sectors. In mainstream classrooms, since the formalization of Inclusive Education with the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), there are many more learners with moderate support needs, such as learning problems and attention deficit disorder, and teachers require additional competence for teaching these children.



Participants in the Short Learning Programmes for inclusive education

## SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMMES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

For the Special Education sector these programmes address the highly specialized knowledge that is required in managing learners with high or intense support needs, such as sensory, neurological or cognitive impairments. Educators often need to design specific assessment opportunities, such as amanuensis, scribes and concessions; and develop individualized support programmes for these learners, such as an adapted curriculum and the use of technology assisted devices. Additionally, working within multi-disciplinary teams in the assessment and support of such learners requires specialized skills. These programmes also promote inclusive schools to act as centres of community engagement and support families who have children with special educational needs. High level of parental involvement in schools increases both the school's efficacy and learner performance. In the Special Education sector highly specialized knowledge is required of these teachers in building partnerships with families who have children with severe disabilities. These schools also act as resource centres supporting their community. The Department of Educational psychology is also pleased to welcome the Gauteng Department of Education who is sponsoring teachers from selected Full Service Schools and Special Needs Schools into these programmes.



Dr Sishi graduated in 2010 with a D Phil, supervised by Prof Coert Looock and co-supervised by Prof Brigitte Smit and Dr Pierre Du Plessis. Given the inadequate knowledge and understanding in the macro-education environment about teacher subjectivities, Dr Sishi's PhD research sought to establish whether teachers understood the change processes at national, provincial and institutional level. The thesis used the theoretical lens of Michel Foucault looking at power, discourse, subjectivity in interpreting existing knowledge. His findings indicate that teachers were generally outwardly in support of education policy reforms, albeit on their own terms. Their perceptions of policy implementation were that it was complex and had inherent flaws regarding its assumptions about practice. In addition, most teachers were frustrated by the invisible role and inadequate leadership on the part of education management. Dr Sishi recommended that synergy be created between educational change, the capacity of employees to deal with change and the resources and support provided for policy implementation and effective change management.

Dr Sishi has recently been promoted to the position of Superintendent-General

## AN ALUMNUS TO BE PROUD OF – DR SIBUSISO NKOSINATHI PATRICK SISHI

of Education in KZN, indicating that his studies at UJ prepared him well for this position. Before that he was the Chief Director for Measurement, Assessment and Examinations at the Department of Basic Education where he was responsible for overseeing the integrity and credibility of these systems. His previous experience includes 24 years as a teacher, Head of Department, Deputy Principal and Principal. He envisages the contribution of his study as having improved the assessment systems he was responsible for, particularly in the areas of policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These improvements could well be the result of capacity and academic development in research, policy development, assessment, curriculum, and educational management expertise attained through the PhD study. However, the value of this PhD goes beyond relevance to a particular area of work to include a better appreciation of the diversity of cultures and personal histories of every human being. "When this happen it gives us hope that we are equipped to contribute to a better life and better world for all", Dr Sishi said.





Petro van Rooyen, Marketing Coordinator; Cecilia du Plessis; Dr Pierre du Plessis who represented the Faculty of Education

## CECILIA DU PLESSIS IS PROUD WINNER OF BURSARY

The Faculties of Education, Economic and Financial Sciences, Law and Management launched a bursary competition in 2010 for grade 11 learners who wish to study at UJ in these faculties. One winner per Faculty was awarded with a full bursary covering the tuition fees for the first year of study. Creativity, originality, research and writing skills were the decisive criteria. The Faculty of Education received seven entries from 25 schools.

This year's winner is Cecilia du Plessis from the Ho rskool Florida. She obtained 80% for her entry and wishes to become a teacher in the Further Education and Training, School Phase (Grades 10 – 12) with specialisation in Mathematics and Afrikaans. She is looking forward to experiencing student life in the Faculty of Education.



Prof Jace Pillay from the Department of Educational Psychology has written an article about the experiences of learners from child-headed households in a vulnerable school that makes a difference and he outlined the lessons for school psychologists. It is

part of a larger research project focusing on child-headed households and their psycho-educational context funded by SANPAD. The editor of the US-based journal to which this article was submitted, namely School Psychology International Journal, commented favourably on the article. He wrote that "this is an intriguing and captivating manuscript since it is groundbreaking. This work has the potential to become seminal in our field. I want your article to serve as a model for internationalizing the scope and context of SPIJ articles for aspiring contributors." This qualitative study included a sample of grade 5 to 7 learners in a vulnerable school. The findings provide a vivid description of their living conditions, changing roles, community fears and school experiences. Based on this article, Jace has also been invited to write another article for a special issue on the UN Declaration of Children's Rights. The faculty is proud of Jace's and his team's 'groundbreaking' work.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Edubrief@UJ is the biannual newsletter of the Faculty of Education, UJ. The editor wishes to thank the editorial committee and all the various contributors. The committee comprises Prof Sarah Gravett, Dr Dirk Postma, Dr Dinah Magano, Mrs Petro van Rooyen and Mr George Makubalo. The editor would also like to thank Dr Elizabeth Walton for her contribution to this edition. If you would like to make any comments, please contact us via e-mail: kmorgan@uj.ac.za and visit our website for more news and information: [www.uj.ac.za/education](http://www.uj.ac.za/education).

In this issue of Edubrief we foreground the Faculty's profile and work on the Soweto Campus. Two major programmes in the Faculty have moved to that campus, namely the Educational Psychology programme and the Education Leadership and Management, as well as the Office of the Dean, where they are establishing new teaching and learning communities. In this edition of the newsletter we highlight the exciting developments on this campus and focus on the research activities taking place there. The rest of the articles highlight other events that took place in the Faculty in the first semester.

For more news and events, please visit the news link on the Faculty's website: <http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/Faculties/educationandevents/Pages/home.aspx>