

EDU•brief

VOLUME 7, NO 2, 2011

SOUTH AFRICA'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS LAUNCH FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT UJ

The state's national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education launched a Foundation Phase Teacher Education Programme at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) on Wednesday, 13 July 2011. The initiative is designed to strengthen Foundation Phase teacher education in South Africa's public universities. The project is funded by the EU to a total of R41m. The Department of Childhood Education on the university's Soweto campus participates in the programme. The UJ programme of research and pre-service teacher education development is led by Prof Elbie Henning of the Centre for Education practice Research at UJ.

The programme has two main objectives. Firstly, to increase the

number of graduates who specialise as Foundation Phase teachers, particularly teachers specialising in African languages; and secondly to increase the number of public universities that offer Foundation Phase initial teacher education programmes. The foregrounding of the role of foundation phase teaching as a profession is an important objective of the programme.

There is thus a focus on a recruitment campaign that will enhance the status and image of Foundation Phase teaching as a career, a bursary programme that will support 200 high achieving African language school leavers from rural areas in South Africa, and establishing a Childhood Education Research Association which will sustain and take forward the gains made in this

three year programme. Coupled with this is the support for the UJ-founded SA Journal of Childhood Education, which publishes research on learning and teaching of young children. This journal is situated in the CEPR at UJ and the first issue was handed to the Childhood Education community at the gala dinner by the editor.

"This programme is part of a broad and rich relationship that the European Union and South Africa have developed over the years. The level of support we are providing to this programme, reflects on the one hand our appreciation of the severity of the problem we are supporting the South African Government to address, and on the other hand, the confidence we have in its education policy and the concerted



to page 2

Mr Richard Young (European Union delegation); Prof Saartjie Gravett; Dr Dianne Parker; Dr Whitfield Green; Dr Berene Kramer (European Union delegation) Prof Elbie Henning; Mr Nils Jansons (European Union delegation)

RETHINK EDUCATION.
REINVENT YOURSELF.



from page 1

SOUTH AFRICA'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS LAUNCH FOUNDATION PHASE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT UJ

efforts it is making to improve the implementation of this policy," said Mr. Nils Jansons, Deputy Head of Delegation: European Union.

The initiative involves 20 South African universities. The first series of meetings and workshops were linked to the UJ Literacy Education Winter School. In 2012 the meetings will be linked to a Numeracy Education Winter School at Rhodes University.

According to Dr. Parker, Acting Deputy Director General: DHET, by 2014 all of the 20 universities will be teaching education programmes in the Foundation Phase. "We need to ensure that at the end of this programme we have trained knowledgeable educators in Foundation Phase and the Childhood Education programmes. This has to increase the quality of teaching methodologies in universities. The Department [DHET] fully supports the initiative," emphasised Dr. Parker. She added that the teachers that will come out of the programme have to be knowledgeable about Foundation Phase practice and should conduct research that will help improve the country's basic education.

UJ dignitaries that welcomed the initiative were, amongst others, Professor Sarah Gravett, Executive Dean: Faculty of Education, and Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Derek van der Merwe. The launch was held at the School of Tourism and Hospitality (STH) at UJ as part of the Literacy Education Winter School event.

EU PRESIDENT VISITS FUNDA UJABULE SCHOOL

The European Union President, President Barosso and an EU delegation visited the Funda UJabule School on the Soweto Campus of the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in September.

The school is a partnership between the Gauteng Department of Education and UJ. It is a public school, but also a research/teaching school, a first of its kind in South Africa.

As part of the UJ Institute for Childhood Education (UJICE) the Funda UJabule School serves not only children and families in Soweto, but also the scholarly community. Ground breaking research is conducted in a multifaceted panel inquiry over four years, in which the children's cognitive ability, their performance in mathematics, their linguistic competence in two languages (either isiZulu and English, or Sesotho and English), their literacy development

in two languages, as well as their learning of science are captured in standardised and custom-designed instruments.

The school also serves as teaching school for the Foundation Phase Education degree programme in the Faculty of Education. This pre-service foundation phase teacher education programme is researched by the Department of Childhood Education of the University, with Prof Elbie Henning as lead researcher, in a programme that is co-ordinated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), with European Union sponsorship. The EU/DHET also funds a project lead by the Dean of the Faculty of Education at UJ, Prof Saartjie Gravett, to research this type of school as a required component of teacher education in South Africa.



The photograph shows President Barosso and Commissioner Piebalg from the EU, Prof Anhina Parekh, Deputy Vice Chancellor UJ, Prof Saartjie Gravett (Dean of Education), Dr Diane Parker from the Department of Higher Education, UJ staff and students and some of the staff and children at Funda UJabule.

Edubrief@UJ is the biannual newsletter of the Faculty of Education, UJ. If you would like to make any comments, please contact us via e-mail: journal-ed@uj.ac.za and visit our website for more news and information: www.uj.ac.za/education



Nick Welch

Language at work at Funda UJabule school

Nick Welch, a linguist from Wits, is assisting the UJ Institute for Childhood Education with standardised test translations. The Grade 1 learners of the Funda UJabule school on the Soweto campus are being tested in numeracy, language, literacy and cognitive ability. He assisted with the translations of the tests from English to isiZulu and Sesotho.

Nick also assists with professional development of the teachers at this UJ-GDE partner school, where he recently regaled the teachers with lessons in linguistics, explaining that different fields. Teachers enjoyed the discussion of African languages and their histories.

The teachers realised that this knowledge helps them to think about how they should use language in the classroom - that they should show children how parts of words change meaning, and so on. The teachers were especially gratified that knowledge of linguistics will assist them in teaching literacy. Nick continues to run these workshops.



AN ALUMNUS TO BE PROUD OF – Dr Judy Seligman launches a book on academic literacy for education students

Judy Seligman's experience of studying and working at 3 different South African universities gave her the necessary incubation for the ambitious project she recently completed. It allowed her to specialize in three different areas, namely drama, applied linguistics and educational linguistics. This, together with her extensive secondary teaching experience at Promat College in Cullen, also allowed her to gain a thorough understanding of what students from diverse backgrounds go through in their quest for achievement.

Judy graduated with a PhD in 2009 with the thesis title "Integrating language and subject content – a pedagogy for course design". She looked at the role of language in cognitive development, based on a Vygotskian perspective of the parallel development between cognition and language mastery. Her work was supervised by Prof Elizabeth Henning and co-supervised by Prof Saartjie Gravett. Her motivation to pursue this advanced degree could be traced to her deep concern, gained over the many years of academic support, with the level of language competence among undergraduate students. Her study wanted to find a way to design an appropriate textbook for such students.

Arising from this study, she found that at most institutions students are provided with a generic approach to the teaching of language skills, which seldom transfers to students' ability to take such generic skills and apply them to discipline-specific subjects. Current research emphasizes the need to synthesise rather than compartmentalize academic knowledge and consequently situates the learning of languages in

authentic educational contexts. The textbook she will launch targets undergraduate students and is written for education students. Thus, while students are learning the concepts and terminology of their discipline, such as summative assessment for example, they are simultaneously developing their language and study skills. The idea is that if we can improve the communicative competence of future teachers, they will be empowered to model and teach the language more effectively in their own classes.

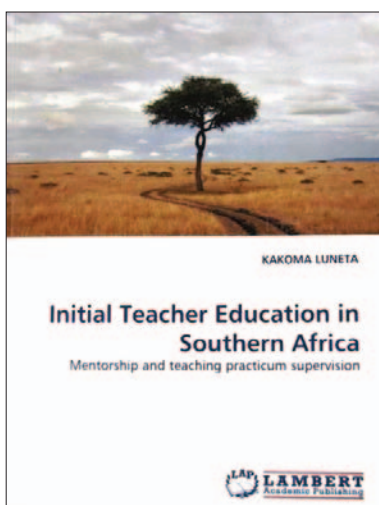
Judy completed the first draft of her textbook in a record time of just two months; an unprecedented feat for a single-authored book. The book will be published in December and a pre-launch will be held at UJ in November. The book entitled *Academic literacy for Education students* by Dr Judy Seligman (ISBN 9780199045396) will be available from academic bookstores and from the publisher, Oxford University Press Southern Africa from December 2011. For more information go to www.oxford.co.za. She hopes that this textbook will address a real need for language development at undergraduate level.



Dr Judy Seligman



Dr Luneta



Cover of the book

Dr Kakoma Luneta publishes a book on Initial Teacher Education in Southern Africa

This book is a culmination of research articles and other endeavours with which Dr Luneta has engaged over the past years. It recounts his work as a mathematics teacher educator, academic and researcher and explores his working experience in seven African countries, Europe and the USA. It also uses some of the findings and literature from his doctoral study. The book provides an in-depth analysis and insight on how mentoring teachers in Southern Africa can change the practical experience that student teachers face through the various stages of learning. The challenge has consistently been how best to train teachers who will possess cutting-edge content knowledge and be able to pedagogise that knowledge in order to inspire deep and meaningful learning. The book hinges on how the cooperating/mentor teachers, who essentially are school teachers in charge of supporting and inducting student teachers/mentees during the teaching practicum, can be trained in order to efficiently support and guide the students in their quest to becoming effective teachers. The book is published by LAP Lambert Academic Publishing (March 2011) and is available from Amazon and Kalahari. The faculty is very proud of Dr Luneta's achievement.

Rubbing shoulders with distinct scholars at the ISCAR Conference Rome 2011 – by Josef de Beer

Alan Amory, Geoff Lautenbach and I attended the ISCAR (International Society for Cultural and Activity Research) Conference in Rome. There we met with great scholars like, Nikolai Veresov, Yrjo Engeström and Anna Stetsenko.

In my view, Veresov is one of the scholars with the most insight into Vygotsky's work, since he, as a person of Russian origin, understands the context of the era in which Vygotsky lived and worked. I had the privilege to have dinner with Veresov and 10 Russian students. Nikolai gave me electronic copies of some of his work, amongst others, a book that he edited, "Undiscovered Vygotsky" which is available to UJ students seeing that the author holds copyright. In Veresov's view, Vygotsky was often badly translated into English and this book should clear up some of the misconceptions stemming from that.

Yrjo Engeström's concern during the conference was that activity theory is often used as a "cookie cutter" when it comes to empirical analysis. He emphasized that we need "intermediate theoretical concepts" that connect general theory (CHAT) to particular data. An intermediate concept, in his view, must meet the demands and affordances of the particular kind of data; intermediate concepts are data-driven. Examples he gave are disturbance, voice, critical conflict, script, etc., or, of course, Veresov's concept of "dramatical collisions".

Anna Stetsenko, from the City University of New York, is also a fine Vygotskian scholar, and her work centers around transformative activist stance (TAS) in education. Her work is based on the premise that agency and activism are natural conditions for human beings, and on how teachers should be agents of change. Regarding research she said that "the difficulty is NOT in developing new ideas... but in escaping old ones."



Josef de Beer with Nikolai Veresov



Geoff Lautenbach, Anna Stetsenko and Alan Amory

First year students in a Visual Arts Workshop *by Rina Burger*



First year students taking part in a visual arts workshop

Arts and Culture is an exciting and rewarding subject which covers many aspects such as dance, drama, music and art. This subject explores a myriad of possibilities for both the educator and the learner.

In preparation of their future as educators first year students were given the opportunity to attend an insightful and rewarding workshop at La Femme Artiste Studio in Randburg. For three hours we explored the birth of the creative process, especially as experienced by learners

of school-going age. We further explored the acquisition and application of skills such as stretching paper, preparing a basic colours palette and brush techniques – These all culminated in ... voila ... a work of art!

Soft music, refreshments and the smell of fresh paint all contributed to the ambiance of a creative studio where students were allowed to explore the innermost parts of their creative spirits - a process which indeed warmed the cockles of my heart.

For some students this was a first encounter with the dynamics of an art studio and the creative process. It was exciting to hear that they all benefited immensely from our workshops and that they were looking forward to passing these new skills to other budding artists.

I can only dream of a time when we could have these workshops on a regular basis so that we may realise our full potential through creative exploration.

The joys of the Sabbatical leave

– by Gert van der Westhuizen

The privilege of sabbatical leave allows one to get away from all the teaching and committee work, and to focus on research. I used the time to travel, write and extend my professional network.

My travel to Netherlands and Spain enabled me to meet with prominent researchers working on professional learning, conversation analysis, and discourse studies. People I met include Harm Tillema, Anne Bannink, Tom Koole, Jet van Dam, Teun van Dijk, Daniel Cassany, among others.

Writing time allowed me to finalise articles with students and colleagues on topics such as learning equity, transformative research practice, activity theory and programme evaluation and learning conversations. I also made excellent progress with a textbook on "How Talk Moves – Conversation Analyses of Learning and Psychological Support Interactions" – a research text based on the case studies of our Masters students.

The UJ Google Group Conversation Analysis in Educational and Psychological Support Settings is also up and running. It is open to UJ staff and students. If you are interested, email a request to subscribe to Gert [gertvdw@uj.ac.za].



Prof Gert van der Westhuizen with Dr Harm Tillema of the University of Leiden, Netherlands



Professor Raj Meistry

STAFF PROFILE OF THE YEAR; PROFESSOR RAJ MEISTRY

Prof Meistry reached the pinnacle of his career in 2010 when he was promoted to Professor, and then appointed as Head of Department (Educational Leadership and Management) in the Faculty of Education. He has also been rated as an established researcher by the NRF. It is his firm belief that in order to improve the socio-economic conditions for all South Africans, the education system needs to be improved dramatically. He hopes that through his research and personal commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning in schools he will make a significant contribution to the general progress and enhancement of education in South Africa. His research agenda includes issues surrounding learner discipline, school funding and continuing professional development of teachers and school managers.

Anne MacKenzie: a special visitor to the Faculty

Anne MacKenzie has been a visiting professor from the USA for a few years now. She is the editor of ISI accredited journal *The Biology Teacher* where some staff members have published articles in the past. She has run various workshops on how to publish in academic journals, giving prospective authors, be they students or staff members, an opportunity to gain some tips from an insider's perspective. Regarding the most dreaded fate that all authors face, she reminds new authors that "rejections happen. Try not to dwell on them. Submit the manuscript to the next journal immediately after reformatting and consider reviewers' comments. One publisher said: *The Diary of Anne Frank* was scarcely worth reading. He said: The girl doesn't, it seems to me, have a special perception or feeling which would lift that book above the 'curiosity' level". The diary became a widely published book on the subject of the Holocaust and continues to be used in teaching the subject to this day, the message being that just because some editors may reject you, it's no reason to give up or to lose confidence.

Ann is currently an associate professor in the department of teacher education at Miami University and former Ohio Teacher of the Year. This year, she is the recipient of the Richard T. Delp Outstanding Faculty Award from Miami's School of Education, Health and Society (EHS). This award is presented annually to an outstanding EHS faculty member who has significantly influenced the lives of students. The UJ Faculty of Education is grateful for Ann's involvement here in South Africa.



Anne MacKenzie

Recognition of exceptional achievement

In October the Faculty of Education held their annual top achiever awards function at the Council Chambers. Both students and staff members received certificates for excellent achievement. Students were awarded with prizes such as "best student in the Bed Honours Degree", "best student in the Advanced Certificate in Education", "best student in the Postgraduate Certificate of Education" and the handing of the "Vice-Chancellor medallion 2010", which went to Catherine Johnston.



From left to right: Prof S Gravett, Ms Mabalane (first time published journal article 2010); Dr de Beer (best staff member Indaba presentation 2010); Dr Ramnarain (first time published journal article 2010 and most units published in 2010); Dr Morgan (best postgraduate Indaba presentation 2010 and most units published postgraduate student 2010); Prof Amory and Ms Ramdhani (First time published journal article 2010).



Students in the Faculty of Education who received awards and prizes, together with the Dean of the Faculty, Prof Gravett, Vice Dean Prof Looke and the marketing co-ordinator, Mrs van Rooyen.

Prof Alan Amory wins prize for best paper presented at an international conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications



Geoff and Alan with Jan and Tony Herrington



Lisbon, Portugal

Alan Amory and Geoff Lautenbach braved the heat of Portugal in June this year to attend ED-MEDIA to present papers to the large international audience at the University of Lisbon (Celebrating its centenary this year). Duan Van der Westhuizen and Glenda Barlow-Jones made use of the opportunity to present a virtual paper titled "the role of digital literacy in the academic performance of first year students in an information technology course" from the comfort of their offices, a recent ED-MEDIA initiative. Geoff Lautenbach presented a paper based on research done on the reconceptualization of a third year undergraduate module titled "Student-

generated design principles for transforming an educational technology module." Alan Amory presented a paper titled "Play games to learn: pre-service teacher development" arguing that games should mediate knowledge construction rather than be the focus of the learning activity. This paper was recognized as one of the best papers of the conference and Alan was presented with the ED-MEDIA award certificate for his efforts.

An interesting theme that caught our attention at the conference was the notion of "open courses." Such courses are made available for review and participation by anyone. In fact, you may complete the course without registering,

but to gain recognition participants have to register formally. This is an extension of the open source, open content, open access philosophy that make educational resources available to a much wider community. Easy access to Internet resources drives this philosophy. Another development by the Open University was the use of social media. For example, a social networking website on classification and taxonomy for the general public is linked to an open course at the university. This is a unique linkage between a social network site and a university course which closes the divide between amateur biologists and scientific knowledge.

"BOKKIE DAY" BOOSTS NATIONAL PRIDE IN FOUNDATION PHASE STUDENT TEACHERS



Foundation phase teachers host "Bokkie Day" as part of their service learning with Funda UJabule school children

As part of their teacher education programme, first year B Ed Foundation phase students are introduced to the pedagogy of service learning. The aim is to train them to provide services that meet the needs of a community.

Given the focus on the Rugby World Cup and the drive to promote national pride in the South African Rugby Team, the principal at the Funda UJabule School wanted the children to engage in rugby, learn to value this sport and provide support to the national team. In response to this, the idea was sparked for students to host an event that would enable the children to achieve this. The event, called "Bokkie Day", was a success and students indicated that they learnt valuable lessons about the teaching profession. There were a total of 160 1st year students who engaged in 'Bokkie Day' activities that ranged from plays, educational games, dance, painting and other games related to the sport of rugby. Students also provided food, trophies, certificates, medals, t-shirts, name tags, cakes, juice and party packs to the learners at the school. To end the fun-filled educational day learners were treated to playtime on jumping castles sponsored by a group of 1st year students.

Teachers Upfront: Educational conversations

Teachers Upfront is a four-way partnership between Wits, the University of Johannesburg's Education Faculty, the Bridge network and the Mail & Guardian. Two events took place since the one reported on in the last edition of EduBrief. The first was about school communities. The emphasis was on the need for communities to support the schools that serve them if solutions to South Africa's education crisis are to emerge. Guest speakers included Misheck Ndebele, education lecturer at Wits; Theresa Moila, senior manager for education at the Transnet Foundation; and Lamile Faltein, principal of Limekhaya High School in Uitenhage's Kwa-Langa township in the Eastern Cape. This latter speaker, Mr Faltein, made a special impression on the audience as he demonstrated what the role of a school principal is in ensuring that teachers are accountable and up-skilled in the face of the poor matriculation rate statistics the country knows only too well. He involved the surrounding community in establishing a vision for the school and in ensuring that it is fulfilled. The community-crafted vision for his school is to "strive to provide a quality education service to produce balanced learners who will play

a leading role in advancing the respect of human rights and the economic development of the country". Each of these contains a subset of principles and each in turn is translated into practice through specific processes and structures. Mr Faltein is an example of how to overcome victim-thinking in rural schools and his presentation was well-received at this event.

The second event in September focused on teachers' rights and responsibilities. Muavia Gallie of the Education Management Association of South Africa began the discussion by suggesting that, for the teaching profession to be viewed in a positive light within the larger society, the responsibility teachers owe to both their learners and the profession itself must be evident. Renny Somnath of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union said that while the social pathologies inherent in the previous system have been changed and we are on the right path with access to education having improved, the lack of quality education means the curtailing of learners' rights. But rights have also helped create a climate of fear in schools, said Sol Mashiloane, chairperson of the

Alexandra Education Council. University of Johannesburg senior researcher Salim Vally argued that the discourse on rights should be understood to describe not only the right to education but also what kind of education and to what end. Education is about skills, knowledge and values and context determines quality. Salim Vally said that we need to work collectively to ensure that teaching is seen as a profession with status and we must neither forsake our public education system nor allow education to be commodified.



Lamile Faltein, principal of Limekhaya High School in Uitenhage's

NEWS OF JOURNALS IN THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION PRACTICE RESEARCH (CEPR)



New associate editors Ms Senoelo Nkhase, Dr Yashica Prithiviraj and Dr Dinah Magano

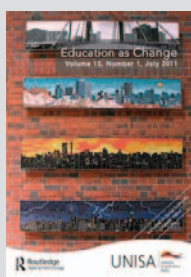
Three new associate editors have been welcomed to the editorial staff of the two journals of the CEPR at UJ.

Dr Dinah Magano is joining the team of *Education as Change*, our SCCI (ISI) listed journal on curriculum research. Dinah's field of expertise is Psychology of Education. She has already published in *Teaching in Higher Education (ISI)*, *Journal of Social Sciences (IBSS)*, *EASA Conference proceeding* and co-authored a book called *Learning Conversation*. Her experience as an author will contribute greatly to the work of the team.

Dr Yashica Prithiviraj, a community psychologist in Education, will help with the many submissions on the topic for the Centre's new Journal, the *SA Journal of Childhood Education (SAJCE)*. She has also published in *Inkanyiso*, *Journal of Human and Social Science*.

Ms Senoelo Nkhase, a mathematics and science education practitioner, is welcoming the challenge to review science and mathematics manuscripts and to take care of the many articles on these topics that are submitted to this journal.

The first issue of SAJCE was handed to the representative of the minister of Higher Education at a dinner at UJ in July. The second issue of 2011 is in production. It will be accompanied by *Khululeka*, an ECD supplement to this issue, edited by Sonja van der Vyver, who was assisted by Sarah Letlape and Plantinah Makate.



Covers for the two CEPR journals: *Education as Change* and *South African Journal of Childhood Education*