

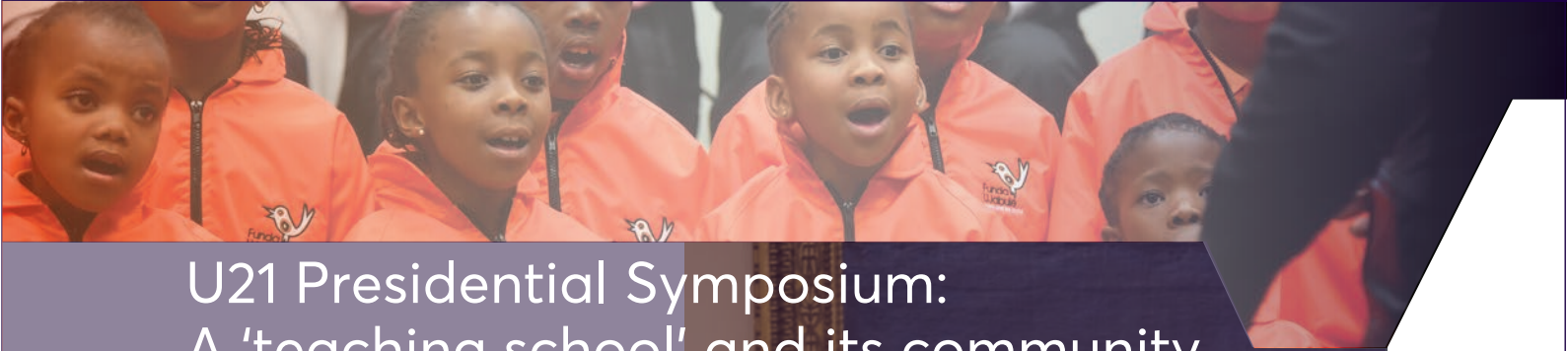
NEWSLETTER OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

# *EduBrief*



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

*Dynamic knowledge-making for 21st century education*



## U21 Presidential Symposium: A 'teaching school' and its community at the UJ Soweto Campus

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) belongs to a network of universities, Universitas 21 (U21) (<http://www.universitas21.com/> and <http://www.universitas21.com/member>). The 2017 Presidential Symposium of U21 took place at the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. The theme of the symposium was: "21st Century Global Anchor Institutions: universities, cities and the international talent economy". The case study of the Faculty of Education's work at its Soweto Campus was one of six case studies selected to be presented at the symposium.

The case, presented by Prof Sarah Gravett, describes a teacher education/development/research network in Soweto, South Africa, comprising the Faculty of Education at UJ, four public primary schools, community partners, with the university-affiliated 'teaching/research school', the Funda UJabule School, serving as anchor institution. The Funda UJabule School was established through an agreement between UJ and the Gauteng Department of Education. The objectives were: developing a learning site to enable practice-based and research-oriented primary school teacher education; enabling child development studies and research on the school curriculum; and serving as a development hub for schools in Soweto, while also educating Soweto children.

The civic-institutional network is motivated by UJ's drive to contribute to the South African school system's welfare by educating competent primary school teachers, conducting teacher professional development, collaborating with organisations that pursue similar goals and conducting research with local and international partners, such as the universities of Duisburg-Essen, Helsinki and Harvard.

Prof Gravett's presentation comprised a video (<https://youtu.be/gqizZn8NyMs>) coupled with reflective notes. She noted



*Prof Gravett addresses the audience*

that when she had asked colleagues and partners to give her words or phrases that encapsulate the essence of the network with the Funda UJabule School as anchor, images such as the following were used: giving and getting; balancing tensions between various components to benefit all; knowledge-making for the community; no silos; reciprocity in the development of usable knowledge.

Prof Gravett concluded that the notion of seamlessness, reciprocity and knowledge making were confirmed by a panel that reviewed the Faculty in 2016. The report states the following: "The Soweto experience suggests that it is possible to achieve a systemic integration of research, teacher education, school experiences and community engagement."



## The Finnish Minister of Education, Ms Sanni Grahn-Laasonen visits the Funda UJabule School on the Soweto Campus

Nadine Petersen: HOD Childhood Education, Faculty of Education, Soweto Campus

The Childhood Education flagship in the Faculty of Education was privileged to host the Finnish Minister of Education at a seminar on 31 May 2017. The minister was interested in gaining insight into the collaborative research between UJ's Childhood Education flagship and the University of Helsinki's Department of Teacher Education.

The day's programme commenced with a personal tour of the Funda UJabule Primary School for Her Excellency, Ms Grahn-Laasonen, and her delegation led by the Vice Chancellor, Prof I Rensburg, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof S Gravett, and members of the Department of Childhood Education. The Funda UJabule Primary School, which was established in 2010 in partnership with the Gauteng Department of Education, serves not only as a public school, but also as a site for initial teacher education for the primary school (also known as a teaching school). In its operations as a teaching school, the academic staff and researchers in the childhood education flagship have learned much from the Finnish teacher training schools, specifically the Viikki School affiliated to the University of Helsinki. During the tour, the minister had an opportunity to interact with children in the school and spent considerable time on carpet activities with the Grade R classes and inspecting the books of the Grade 5 learners.

The minister and her delegation were also introduced to the teacher education programmes for the primary school and the teacher development work on the Soweto Campus (<https://youtu.be/gqizZn8NyMs>). The childhood teacher education programmes on the Soweto Campus are underpinned by a strong emphasis on child development studies, with accompanying student observations of young children at FUJS over four years. Teacher educators in the primary school programmes argue that this emphasis and the sustained involvement in the teaching school enables student teachers to learn how children develop over time, how they interact with the school curriculum and generally observe school life in action, all of which contributes to preparing them for the demands of the teaching profession. Dr Whitty Green, Chief Director for Teaching and Learning Development in the DHET, in his opening comments, made mention of the leading role being played by UJ's childhood teacher education team in promoting excellent primary school teacher education in South Africa.

Her Excellency, Ms Sanni Grahn-Laasonen then delivered the keynote address of the seminar entitled: **Competent teachers as keys to our success in education**, to an audience of approximately 300, including teachers from the Faculty's partner schools and graduate students from UJ. The minister highlighted the importance of having highly educated (all Finnish teachers have a Master's degree) and competent teachers for a successful education system.

The audience also had an opportunity to listen to three panel presentations: one on the Finnish education system, a second on STEAM education and a third, in which the National Research Funded collaborative research between the childhood education flagship and the University of Helsinki was presented. The two senior researchers in the project, Prof J Lavonen, Head of Teacher Education at the University of Helsinki and a distinguished visiting professor in the Faculty of Education, and Prof E Henning, SARChI chair: Integrated studies of learning language, mathematics and science for the primary school, presented reports. Prof Lavonen in his capacity as principle investigator for the Finnish team, also commented that although the South African model was relatively new, the results of the research held important lessons for the improvement of the Finnish teacher education model.

A short question and answer session enabled participants to ask questions of the panel presenters and learn more about the success of the Finnish education system.



Vice Chancellor, Prof I Rensburg, Her Excellency Ms Grahn-Laasonen, and the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof S Gravett.



## Professor Kenneth Ngcoza visits the University of Johannesburg

Mr Aviwe Sondlo

The Science Unit within the Science and Technology Department of Education had the privilege of hosting Professor Kenneth Mlungisi Ngcoza from Rhodes University for a three day visit. Professor Ngcoza is a science education lecturer at Rhodes University, and occupies a seat on the Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology (SAARMSTE) executive committee. Prof Ken Ngcoza was one of the six people nominated for the Grahamstown 2010 citizen of the year.

The Science Unit had a three-day engagement with Professor Ngcoza. Among the issues discussed were the following: possible ways of reviving the University of Johannesburg community engagement portfolio, the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge System in the natural and life science curriculum and possible future joint research between the two universities. The outcomes of the discussions include future collaborative research that might be conducted around the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, i.e. Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

## Transforming Post-School Education and Training: Towards an Alternative Vision.

The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) together with its partners in the Education Policy Consortium (EPC)<sup>1</sup> held a significant conference at the Kopanong Hotel and Conference Centre in Benoni on 18th to 19th May. The conference, attended by 300 participants, showcased research conducted by the EPC over the last four years relating to transforming the post-school education and training system. The conference was opened by Dr Hersheela Narsee, DHET's Director of Research Co-ordination, Monitoring and Evaluation and closed by Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, DHET's Deputy Director-General of Planning, Policy and Strategy.

Various papers focussed on conceptualisations, methodologies and approaches that contribute to debates towards transforming post-school education and training in ways that could best serve society. Research highlighted alternatives through the exploration of lived experiences in education, work and society. CERT participants included Dr Mondli Hlatshwayo who presented a paper on the challenges and prospects of precarious labour, CERT research associate Enver Motala who explored alternative approaches to education, labour markets and socially useful work and a commentary and reflection at a plenary towards the end of this

<sup>1</sup> The Education Policy Consortium is a research partnership comprised of the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development (NMI) at the University of Fort Hare, the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) at the University of the Witwatersrand, CERT at UJ, the Centre for Integrated Post School Education and Training (CIPSET) at the Nelson Mandela University and the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD).

important conference by visiting professor Carol Anne Spreen and CERT director Salim Vally. Parallel sessions included discussions on service learning, children oriented community literacy, community education, socially engaged research and its scholarly purposes and 'critical pedagogy for critical times'.

Many of the EPC projects are critical of the dominance of linear approaches to the relationship between education and work – driven largely by the idea that the problem was essentially about the inadequate supply of skills, (referring to its quality and quantity, poor institutional responsiveness, lack of targets relative to 'scarce skills', poor content and pedagogical knowledge, forms of certification and accreditation and their weaknesses) essential to a thriving economy, higher levels of productivity and international competitiveness. The EPC approach was rather to examine more fundamentally the relationship in question by examining not only the *supply and demand issues* regarding skills, but a whole range of related issues about the relationship between education, work and democratic society, which included questions not only about work but also about the qualitative attributes and kinds of knowledge (and its validation) necessary for our society. This perspective is critical of the limited enquiry into the supply (and demand) of skill for the formal labour market and sought more broadly to examine the relationship between education and work by reference to the demands of a socially just and democratic society and the social relations under which knowledge is produced.

The conference raised questions about how such a relationship might be reconceptualised, the meaning and nature of work, the inherent constraints of the labour market, the quality and attributes of knowledge beyond its economic interpretation, and the role of socially useful and co-constructed knowledge outside formal labour markets. Very

importantly this approach was concerned about the structural barriers that characterised the existing framework of social relations which acted as a constraint on the role of education in society (whatever the possibilities of its supply and demand), reinforced by the limits of an economic approach to research.

Conference participants deliberated about how communities (outside the ambit of formal institutions) were to be engaged in the co-construction of knowledge, about the methods that were appropriate, the relationship between researcher and 'community', and the question of 'voice' and its representation. The importance of rigour in conducting such research and the pitfalls of such research because it was often more complex, time consuming and less predictable than conventional approaches to the development of knowledge were also discussed. For those EPC researchers involved in such research development based on the concept of mutual benefit, this approach was unavoidable for a proper understanding of both the problematic and its possible solutions. Especially important was the experience of communities through their self-initiated locally based livelihood and income generating activities which had social and economic value. These could not be properly engaged with if the communities in question were simply 'objectified' through research. Their direct collaboration through respectful and mutually beneficial forms of rigorous research was required if meaningful explanations and creative strategies were to be achieved. The agency for change often lay in the support that might be available for the autonomous development for forms of useful work in such communities.

CERT staff are in the process of collaborating on a book, which the Human Sciences Research Council has agreed to publish on the work of the EPC with communities and agencies over the past four years.



*'Participants at the conference on transforming post-school education, Benoni, 18-19th May, 2017.*



## Research and Policy: Researching History Teacher Education and the Potential Policy Change to Make History Compulsory in Schools

Linda Chisholm

Structural constraints as well as inadequate textbooks for teacher education hold back the preparation of history teachers for South African schools. This is one of the key findings of research conducted by a collaboration between UJ's CERT and Wits' Faculty of Education – and was at the centre of a vivid debate at a Roundtable hosted on 18 August on the nature, status and quality of history education in Schools of Education.

The main findings of the research presented by Linda Chisholm (UJ) Michelle Friedman (Wits) and Queenta Anyele Sindoh (UJ PhD student) were that Schools of Education were not in a position to produce adequate numbers of good history teachers to meet the need if history was made compulsory in Grades 10-12. The study also revealed that although lecturers reluctantly use textbooks, and supplement them with their own materials, new textbooks produced by Juta, Oxford University Press and Van Schaik since 2010 reproduce traditional colonial orthodoxies in their representations of the educational past. This was evidence of the isolation of those educationists writing such textbooks from mainstream history.

The ambition to make history compulsory in the FET phase and therefore to produce new history teachers will be hamstrung by the low status of history and teacher education in general in universities as well as by ongoing budget cuts. Whether it is made compulsory or not, the research findings made it clear that the preparation of history teachers as well as the teaching of history of education is in serious need of greater attention.

The question of the status and nature of history education in Schools of Education arose in the context firstly of the appointment of a Ministerial Committee in 2015 by the Department of Basic Education to investigate and make recommendations on whether history should be made compulsory in schools or not. This raised the question of whether universities were preparing enough quality history teachers and whether they are in a position to do so for the future or not. This study also came into being in the context of the RhodesMustFall# and FeesMustFall# campaigns which highlighted the colonial character of the university curriculum and need for its decolonisation, as well as the funding crisis afflicting universities. To investigate it, the team conducted interviews in 20 out of the 25 Universities and Universities of Technology that offer history as part of their educational offerings. In addition, course outlines, assessments and textbooks in use were analysed. A distinction was made between the historical knowledge taught in the preparation of history teachers and approaches taken in the teaching of history of education.

The keynote address, chaired by Professor Natasha Erlank from UJ's History Department, was by

Prof Sekibakiba Lekgoathi from Wits, who is also on the Ministerial Committee appointed to make recommendations on whether history should be made compulsory in the FET or not. The Committee will report on its conclusions in December 2017. He elaborated on their extensive comparative research – which shows that the question is not unique to South Africa but that a diversity of models exist globally. He suggested that the history curriculum needs to be further decolonised and reviewed. He emphasised the importance of archaeology and pre-colonial history and the need to bring this into greater prominence in the curriculum. He reiterated the importance of multiperspectivalism in history education and warned against the kind of 'patriotic history' that is current in Zimbabwe. He also referred to the need for teacher capacitation should it be made compulsory.

Should the Department of Basic Education wish to do so, structural constraints which are mainly financial, that currently hinder Faculties' capacity to produce adequate numbers of history teachers of good quality would need to be addressed. Our evidence shows that inadequate resources result in too few staff members having to teach enormous classes. This affects the curriculum that is taught, the amount of time that can be spent on supervising teaching practice and the quality of assessment of students.

At many universities, practice teaching is supervised by classroom-based teachers who push teachers back into old methods of teaching that do not promote learning. In order to assess large student numbers, unqualified auxiliaries are often appointed. This compromises the quality of students going out to teach history, an issue widely acknowledged by respondents. Although numbers of history students are increasing, history students are excluded from Funza Lushaka bursaries.

On the whole, the vast majority of teachers are taught history method with reference to the CAPS curriculum instead of to more complex questions relating to historical thinking and how this can be taught. As one of the foundational disciplines of education, history of education is accorded very limited time.

For this reason, the Roundtable also facilitated a dialogue between history educators in Schools of Education and History Departments about the relationship between them. Johan Wasserman from the University of Pretoria, formerly at UKZN, and Prof Bernard Mbenga from North-West (Mafikeng Campus) provided fascinating insight into the different historical and contemporary practices and relationships between the two.

The Roundtable brought together policy-makers, practitioners and researchers – the resulting discussion was rich and thought-provoking, hopefully also giving the Ministerial Committee pause for further reflection.



**Viren Ramdhany**, a new colleague in the Department of Science and Technology Education (SciTechEd), holds a PhD in Mathematics Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). He joined the Mathematics Education Unit in June 2017 after completing a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of the Witwatersrand. He presented research papers at various conferences, such as SAARMSTE 2013-2015 and ICME 2016. Some of these papers were also published in conference proceedings. His research interests focus on the training and professional development of pre-service mathematics teachers. He believes teacher education and development is a process of continuous evolution and must be perceived from many different perspectives, ranging from psychological to sociological.

## Department of Science and Technology Education hosts 2nd award ceremony honouring its top achievers

On the evening of 15 March 2017, the Department of Science and Technology Education (SciTechEd) staged its 2nd annual award ceremony, during which top student achievers from 2016 (at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) were honoured. The ceremony took place in the Council Chambers of the University, and 21 awards were made to exceptional students in the domains of Learning Technologies in Education, Mathematics Education, Science Education and Technology in Education. All awardees were accompanied by two or three guests – mostly family members, friends or colleagues – who treasured the opportunity to share in the accomplishments of their loved ones.

Besides the staff of the Department, the event was also attended by the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof Sarah Gravett (who formally reflected on the function at the end of the ceremony), the Head of Faculty Administration, Ms Gadija Petker and HODs from other departments in the Faculty. A unique feature of this event is the three minute presentations that are made by the master's and doctoral graduates, who introduce their studies to an appreciative audience.

Author, Benjamin Zander's definition of success aptly captures the reaction of the awardees: "It's not about wealth or fame or power. It's about how many shining eyes I have around me". And on the night of the event, there were plenty to be seen. The Executive Dean afterwards extended her sincere gratitude to the Department for this initiative, and especially for the elegant manner in which the event was hosted: "The award ceremony was a resounding success. It was very gratifying to see how much the students appreciated the event".



### **Undergraduate awardees:**

*Front (left to right): Mr Dumasani Socatsha (Best PGCE FET student in Mathematics Education); Ms Mary-Louise Nel (Best 4th year student in both Mathematics and Science Education), Ms Mamorena Khasu (Best FET 4th year student in both research projects in Civil Technology Education and in Engineering Graphics and Design Education); Ms Thato Phasha (who shared the Best FET 4th year student in the Civil Technology Education research project with Ms Khasu) and Mr Hein Benadie (Best FET PGCE student in Science Education (Life Sciences)).*

**Back** (left to right): Mr Johann van Aswegen (Best Senior and FET Phase PGCE student in Technology Education); Mr Kenneth Baloyi (Best ICT Support Role student over two years); Ms Genevieve Geddes (Best FET 4th year student in Science Education (Life Sciences)); Mr Ra'ees Khan (Best 4th year student in ICT Support Methodology) and Ms Unarine Mulaudzi (Best FET PGCE student in Science Education (Natural Sciences)).





**Honours awardees:** Ms Tasneem Sadat (Best Hons student in ICT Education); Ms Suzaan van Heerden (Best Hons student in Mathematics Education) and Ms Mafor Penn (Best Hons student in Science Education).



**Master's awardees:** Mr Jameson Goto (Best Master's coursework graduate in ICT in Education); Mr Shepherd Simango (Best full dissertation Master's graduate in ICT in Education) and Mr Manzini Hlatswayo (Best Master's coursework graduate in Science Education).



**Doctoral awardees:** Dr Glenda Barlow-Jones (PhD in ICT in Education); Dr Jacqui Chetty (PhD in ICT in Communication); Dr Lydia Mavuru (PhD in Science Education); Dr Anastasia Buma (PhD in Science Education) and Dr Erica Pretorius (PhD in Science Education)



The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof Saartjie Gravett is flanked by Ms Mamorena Khasu (undergraduate Technology Education awardee) on her left and Mr Jameson Goto (Master's awardee in ICT in Education) on her right.

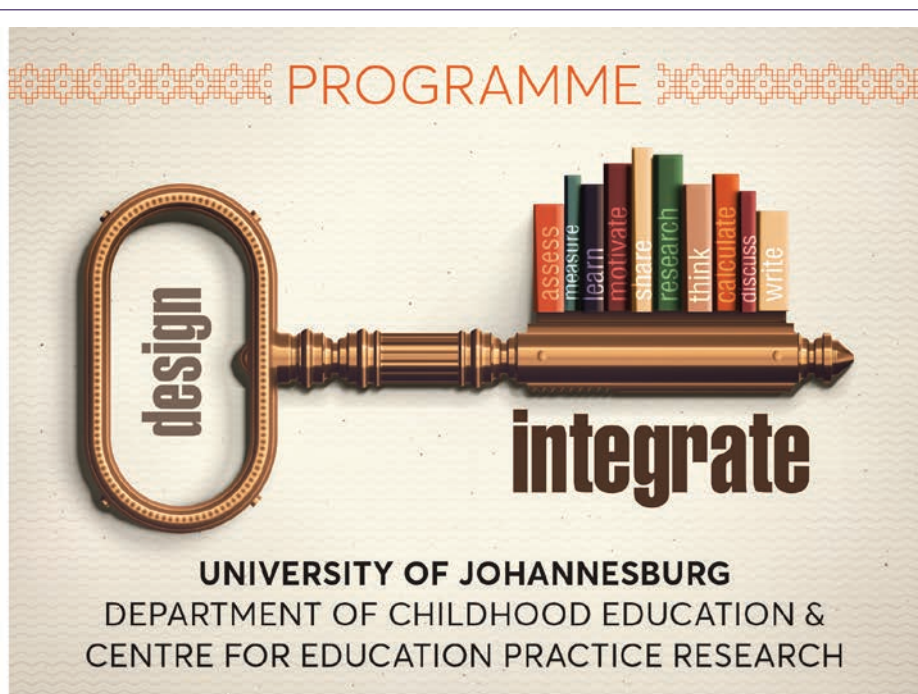


Dr Jacqui Chetty (senior lecturer in the Dept of Applied Information Systems at UJ) introduces her thesis in ICT in Education to the audience.



Prof Umesh Ramnarain present a certificate to Mr Manzini Hlatswayo as the best Master's coursework graduate in Science Education.





**Winter School for teachers and researchers**  
**11 July – 14 July 2017**  
**Funda UJabule School – Soweto Campus of UJ**

**Theme: Classroom practice and research  
in the primary school**



**A HUB OF TEACHER  
LEARNING AT THE CENTRE  
FOR EDUCATION PRACTICE  
RESEARCH WINTER SCHOOL**

The Centre for Education Practice Research Winter School is an established feature on the calendar of the Childhood Education Flagship on the Soweto campus. This year, the workshops and courses were presented at the Funda UJabule School.

The programme included workshops for practising teachers and researchers. In the last sessions on Thursday and Friday it was evident that primary school learning is being foregrounded, also by the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Two colleagues from the DBE presented sessions. It was evident that teachers do not have enough insight into the work of the DBE's research and development. One thing that became clear during the sessions is that the DBE website is underutilised. For example, the EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) tool is available in all local languages and can be used with ease by teachers.

Prof Elizabeth Henning summarised the activities of four days in a question-and-answer session on the last day. Amid much humour and demonstrations of how to ignite interest and keep motivated learners on track, the week of learning and camaraderie was closed with the challenge: How to face the challenge of being an autonomous teachers while facing 'the spectre of curriculum coverage'.

The winter school will continue on the events calendar of the CEPR and is now linked with the PD (professional development) work of the Department of Childhood Education with the partner schools in Soweto.

The plenary workshops by Dr Anni Loukomies and Dr Reeta Niema, from the Viikki school in Helsinki, motivated the participants to do action research in class and to unpack what motivation means for teachers. These two presenters invited the teachers to correspond with them. An exchange of teachers between the Viikki school in Helsinki and the Funda UJabule School in Soweto is on the charts.

The CEPR winter school is managed by Delia Arends, the CEPR project-coordinator.

## Editorial:

In this issue of EduBrief there is significant foregrounding of the international participation in which the faculty is engaged. Prof Sarah Gravett, the Faculty's Executive dean, represented the Faculty at the Universitas 21 event in Nottingham, UK, and made a significant impression with her report on the work done in the teaching school in Soweto.

The visit of the Finnish Minister of Education Her Excellency Ms Grahn-Laasonen to this same establishment – the teaching school – provided further evidence of the significance of this international partnership. It is generally accepted that the level of education in Finland is of a very high standard, and the partnerships and association between UJ and this country, with its strong focus on education, bode well for the future. It is anticipated that further significant research will derive from these engagements.

The work of CERT is also foregrounded in this issue of EduBrief. The researchers involved in this unit are strongly located within the local community and are committed to making a significant contribution to education through this engagement. The two-day event which is reported on in some detail is one example of how the CERT group is engaged in research in, and providing reports on, much-needed change in the preparation of teachers in South Africa.

History is a subject which is often regarded as less significant, because it does not provide skills that are immediately applicable to the marketplace. However, history is a subject rooted in the humanities, and as such is strongly located within the debates regarding individual and social selves, and the values we hold. History therefore has a position of significance because this subject provides insights into opinions, biases, values, the nature of argument, and critical thinking. Professor Linda Chisholm considers its value in the South African curriculum.

The SciTechEd Department hosted a visiting Professor from Rhodes University, Professor Kenneth Mlungisi Ngcoza, and several partnerships have been proposed. The potential for research is significant.

Celebrating achievements is a significant issue, and the SciTechEd Department held its 2nd Annual Awards Ceremony. Students from both undergraduate and postgraduate groups were honoured for their achievements.

It is evident from the various reports and articles in this issue of EduBrief that the Faculty of Education is engaged in important and exciting ventures.

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