



PSP NEWS 2nd TERM 2008

Western Cape Primary Science Programme; Edith Stephens Wetland Park, Lansdowne Road, Philippi 7785
P.O. Box 24158, Lansdowne 7779 ☎ 021 691 9039 Fax : 021 691 6350 e-mail: info@psp.org.za www.psp.org.za

Hullo, dear Colleagues

The 2nd term of 2008 is here! We hope that teachers have enjoyed the long break and are ready for a productive term with their learners.

We at the PSP have prepared a really exciting programme of excellent courses for this term - according to the teachers' recommendations from last year's Annual Mass Planning Forum and teacher interaction. We hope you enjoy the sessions.

*Please remember to **BOOK** your place in advance for the courses - this is essential! Use the booking form in the programme and fax it to the PSP, please!*

The PSP is there to support and assist you, wherever we can! May all your activities be successful this term!

Mascha, Gcobisa, Nthabi, Ntsiki, Nadiema, Sandra in the Boland, Rose, Viv, Vava and Zorina

THIS ISSUE

- *PSP facilitators explore facilities for science excursions*
- *PSP Cluster Project and classroom support*
- *The Water Hyacinth invasion. The story continues...*
- *Zenex / Spark Project - writing dialogues*
- *All the latest resource materials*



Donald Campbell, Chairperson of the PSP receives flowers as a token of appreciation for his efforts in assisting the PSP with its fundraising. Lynne Matthews (Trustee) looks on approvingly.

PSP FACILITATORS EXPLORE THE MANY FACILITIES FOR SCIENCE EXCURSIONS

The PSP facilitators, Nontsikelelo Mahote, Nadiema Gamielien, Sandra Rossouw and Zorina Dharsey, investigated places of interest around the Peninsula and environs that can be visited by teachers and their learners. Teachers often ask for recommendations of appropriate facilities for excursions and enrichment for their learners. They gathered information about all these facilities, the costs involved, as well as the educational value of such an outing. They visited the following places:

- Koeberg Nuclear Power Station
Visitors' Centre Tel: 021 550 4667
- The West Coast Fossil Park
Bookings Tel: 022 766 1606
- Palmiet Hydro-Power Station
Visitors' Centre Tel: 021 859 2690
- Edulis Library, Belville
Tel: 021 957 9618
- The iThemba Labs
Guided tours Tel: 021 843 1000/ 1021/ 1012
- SA Astronomical Observatory (SAAO)
Contact Sivuyile Manxoyi: Tel: 021 4470025

To find out more, contact the PSP facilitators at the PSP: Tel 021 691 9039.



PSP facilitators at the Palmiet Hydro-electric power station being introduced to the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve.

CLUSTER PROJECT EMPHASIS MOVES TO CLASSROOM SUPPORT

This year the focus in the Cluster meetings and workshops is to strengthen teachers' content knowledge, streamline the learning programmes, work schedules and improve the lesson plans for more effective and practical implementation in the classroom.

The PSP facilitators have therefore visited many teachers to offer support and assistance in their classes. This will become the main emphasis during this year.

Some facilitators will also work with teachers on developing a self-reflective tool to encourage improvement and learning in classroom practice.

Challenges

However, teachers are often faced with challenges such as:

Large class sizes

It's not uncommon to find between 50 - 60+ learners crammed into a classroom. Although the PSP facilitators are assisting many teachers who are trying courageously to make the best of really difficult circumstances, such large class numbers make successful practical teaching and learning almost impossible. This seems to be an intractable problem with no apparent solution in sight.

Teachers changing between learning areas

The PSP facilitators find many 'new' teachers, joining the project, who have just started teaching science this year. These teachers have a huge backlog, as they have not had the benefit of the PSP introductory courses on planning and intensive support from last year. They are effectively a new group of science teachers in the 2nd year of this project.

This also applies to a number of retired teachers, who have just entered the system to fill the places of those who have left for various reasons. Many of these teachers have had no official OBE training...

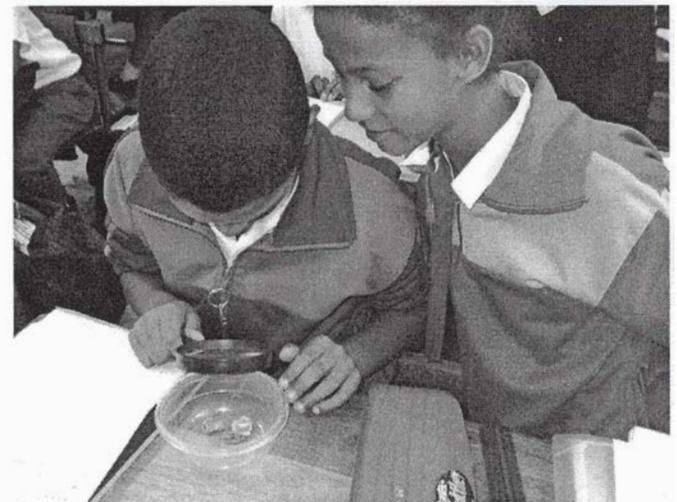
Some wonderful work is happening in classrooms

However, we are all encouraged by the great work that is happening in many classes, despite the difficult conditions.

The facilitators saw various hands-on practical lessons, where teachers used equipment from the Old Mutual's *Out of the Box* resource very successfully.



Grade 6 learners at Enkululekweni Primary with their teacher, Primrose Jongile. They are testing various Foods for the presence of starch.



Grade 5 learners from J.S Klopper Primary in Elsiesriver looking at the development of their bean seeds.



Grade 4 learners at Andile Primary in New Crossroads with their teacher, Miss Thandi Mxosana investigating living things in a soil habitat.



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Using the school gardens for curriculum purposes



The flourishing school garden at Kukhanyile Primary in Khayelitsha.

It is encouraging to see that, with PSP Cluster facilitation, teachers are starting to use their school gardens for curriculum purposes. (Many schools established these gardens with the help of other organizations, like Kirstenbosch, SEED or Amy Biehl Foundation etc.) At one school in Khayelitsha, for example, the learners were able to use spinach leaves from their garden to add to their foods to test for starch as part of their lessons on photosynthesis.

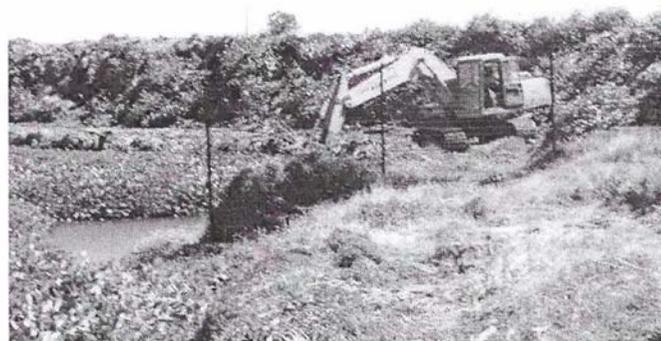
The PSP salutes these many remarkable teachers!

WATER HYACINTH INVASION THE STORY CONTINUES...

Water Hyacinth is a seriously invasive alien plant that covers the surface of water in dams and ponds. It has got out of hand here at the park, as in many other water bodies in Southern Africa. It grows very fast to cover every centimetre of water surface! As it does that, it prevents any light from getting through into the water. This results in the death of most water life, including insect larvae and fish.

This hyacinth plant also takes away valuable open water space, which provides refuge for many birds, particularly the swimming birds such as coots, ducks and cormorants.

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The management of the park contracted earth-moving equipment (excavators and trucks) to remove these plants from the water.

We were thrilled to see the progress, with whole sections of open water appearing again as these machines scooped out the hyacinth.



Mountains of hyacinth taken out of the pond.

Distressing developments

However, the budget for clearing the hyacinth has run out and the work had to stop. Only half the hyacinth has been removed. Now it is growing rapidly again!

This removal work needs to continue *urgently* until at least 95% of the hyacinth is out of the water. Then the park can continue the fight against this invasion with an internal maintenance programme.

We believe it would be a great pity if the City of Cape Town does not capitalise on funds already expended on the first part of this project.

Only when this is achieved and the weed is removed, will the retention dam once again be able to function as an open water body, and birds and insect life will start returning to the park.

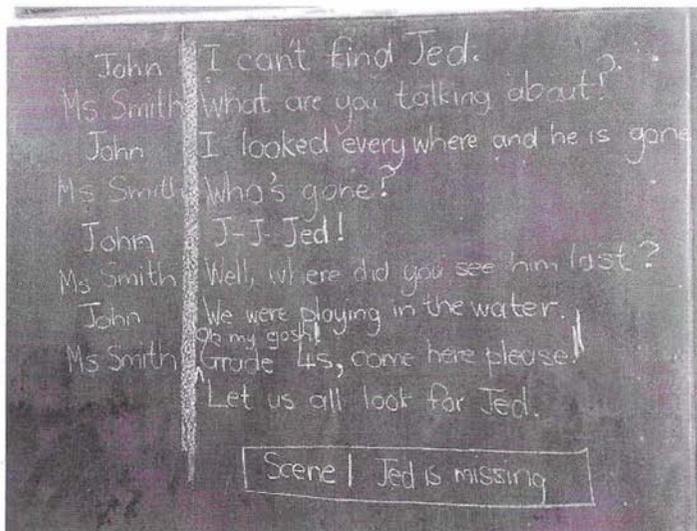


THE ZENEX / SPARK PROJECT GETS LEARNERS WRITING DIALOGUES

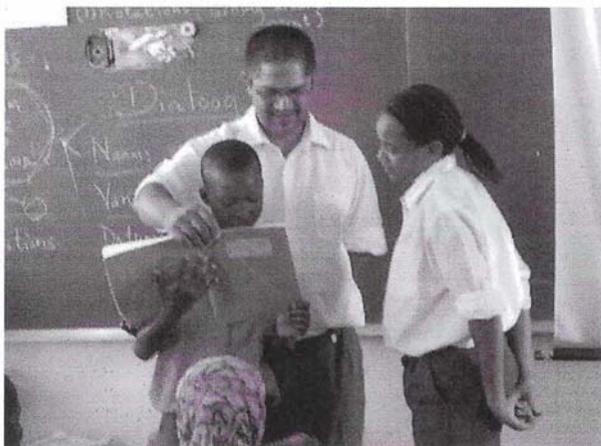


The Intermediate Phase learners of the Zenex/Spark schools in the Metropole South District had a good time last term when they took a few lessons to create and write dialogues in class. First, each pair of learners chose a photograph of a person, then they created a character and after this, the pair of learners wrote three dialogues between their character and his/her friend.

After all the writing was done, each pair of learners stood in front of the class and read their dialogues aloud. The dialogues grabbed our interest, and we were all impressed with the creativity of the children that came through in their writing.



Example of a dialogue written by grade 4 learners, using Shared Writing.



Mr Cassiem from Highlands Primary supports his learners as they read their dialogue aloud.

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THE CITY LAUNCHES PSP'S ENVIRONMENTAL HANDBOOK ON EE

The City of Cape Town launched the PSP's new environmental handbook for teachers: *Learning about Environment at the Edith Stephens Wetland Park* on the eve of World Wetlands Day on 1 February this year.



Enjoying the launch on 1 Feb this year were: Julia Wood; City of Cape Town, Mascha Ainslie; PSP, Wendy Hitchcock; Environmental Consultant to the PSP, Stacy-Anne Michaels; City of Cape Town and Rose Thomas; PSP.

LATEST MATERIALS FROM THE PSP

