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Hullo again, dear Colleagues!

We hope you are keeping strong and are prepared for a productive new term. The PSP again offers a variety of support to teachers - from building our knowledge of science with a slide show about the Solar System and the Universe to interactive workshops dealing with topics such as Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase Language, Social Sciences and the Mathematics that was requested last year. See the programme of courses for Term Two. The PSP staff have been involved at the Cape Teaching Institute (CTI) in the delivery of the Natural Sciences course (three weeks long). We all found it an enriching experience to work with a wide variety of teachers from different educational settings and bringing a range of experiences from across the province. Two more courses will be offered this year.

The PSP is there for the benefit of teachers - please call and we will try to assist where we can!

Best wishes from Mascha and the PSP team: Gcobisa, Viv, Vagriuah, Rose, Ntsiki, Nthabi, Nadiema and Sandra in the Boland.

HIV/AIDS

Our thoughts go out to our colleagues in education, their communities and families who are either living with or have died from AIDS-related diseases



FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS INVESTIGATE THE PHASES OF THE MOON

During the first term, the Foundation Phase teachers involved in the 'H-Project' of the EMDC South investigated the Phases of the Moon with their learners.

At our first workshop this year, Dr Thebe Medupe of the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) came to speak to us and to answer our questions about the Moon. It was fascinating to hear what he had to say and we all found his talk very informative.

At the school-based follow-up sessions we were impressed to see many learners had become engaged in various forms of observing the phases of the moon. One teacher had engaged her new grade 1s in careful observation and drawing (recording) of the moon over 30 days. These young learners also identified what they had observed the night before on an African Moon Calendar. Some teachers got their learners to act out the movement of the moon around the Earth and the movement of the earth around the sun.

This was an exciting opportunity for us to see that young children can behave like scientists when we give them the chance to do so.



A grade 1 child recording her observation of the moon



A grade 1 child matching a crescent shape of the moon with the appropriate phase



A grade 3 child selecting the shape that matched his observation of the current phase of the moon.

THE PSP EXPLORES FOSSILS

The story of fossils - especially of the amazing SA fossil record - has been included into the Revised Natural Sciences curriculum. This is a new topic for most teachers and the PSP has been exploring ways to help build knowledge about this and at the same time develop interesting and practical ways to teach this topic. Prof Juri van den Heever of Stellenbosch University has presented two seminars to teachers at the PSP. He left a wonderful example of an AMMONITE fossil with the PSP for a while. It probably lived around 200 million years ago!

The PSP has also started developing learning experiences on fossils in courses with teachers. We are very excited about this new work in progress.



Ammonite fossil about 200 million years old - at the PSP office for a while. Come and see it!



Representation of a fossil imprint in clay made by teachers at the CTI course on Natural Sciences

HOEP WORKSHOPS THIS TERM

HOEP

Hands-on-Environment Project for teachers of Natural Sciences, Geography & other Learning Areas Grades 4 - 7

The two workshops deal with:

1. Networking in Nature

Animals and plants at Edith Stephens Wetland Park: Thurs 5 May: 2:30-4:30

2. Focus on birds: Tues 17 May :2:30 - 4:30

Remember this project invites you to bring your learners to the park for free! Just call PSP: 021 691 9039

This project is sponsored by the National Lottery Board

THE PSP TEAM WELCOMES NADIEMA



Nadiema trained at Hewat College. She taught Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Imperial Primary School, Mitchells Plain for 10 years. After that she was seconded to the GETINSET Project and then joined SAILI, where she worked for 5 years. While we regret the closure of the SAILI primary programme, we welcome Nadiema with open arms!

NEW FOUNDATION PHASE LANGUAGE MATERIALS

This new booklet on WRITING has been developed from the language courses and interaction with Foundation Phase teachers during 2004. It is available with all the other PSP materials.



PSP CLUSTER PROJECT 2005

This year 19 schools from the EMDCs East, Central and South Metropoles committed themselves to participating in the PSP Cluster Project. (This excludes the 9 Boland schools). The PSP facilitated a process of strengthening the curriculum plans that were developed by schools after the official July 2004 RNCS training. The work sessions on planning and assessing the NS curriculum happened over 4 consecutive days of 2 hrs at the beginning of the 1st term. These were followed on by 4 two-hour sessions on how to enable, manage and sustain the planning and assessment process back at the schools.

Teachers left with part of a Learning Programme / Phase Plan, their grade Work Schedules for that part of the Learning Programme and some Lesson Plans with tasks for assessment. The teachers are expected to complete these plans through the learnings from the course at their schools.

Schools in the EMDC East have decided to embark on a common narrative for each grade and to develop common tasks for assessment of the LOs, with a common assessment tool in order to maintain similar standards in these schools.

Teachers from Parkfields Primary School brought samples of the learners' work with some assessment tools they had developed. We discussed and compared the assessment in order to reach consensus on a standard for that particular grade.

Cluster Sharing Session

This term a similar cluster sharing session is planned with all the schools to share the successes and challenges. Teachers are expected to bring samples of learners' work with assessment and their own educator's portfolios.

School visits

Also this term, school visits are planned for each school to look at the progress of the plans as well as the challenges. Further information: Call Nontsikelelo at the PSP: 021 691 9039

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POWERLINES AND WATERBIRDS AT EDITH STEPHENS WETLAND PARK

Doug Harebottle, ADU, UCT reports

Every evening just before it gets dark, many, many birds such as Cattle Egrets (Ilanda), Sacred Ibis, Reed Cormorants (Ugwidi), White-breasted Cormorants (Ugwidi) and African Darters (lvuzi) fly in to the islands on the retention dam at Edith Stephens Wetland Park (ESWP). They settle on the Port Jackson trees to roost or sleep for the night, because the islands provide a safe and secure place to rest for the night.

Up to 2500 birds can spend the night at ESWP, particularly during autumn and winter.

However, they are confronted by one obstacle - a large powerline that spans over the dam close to the islands. Many birds fly in from the north and need to find a way over the powerlines without colliding with them. In the last six months, two African Sacred Ibis, three Red-knobbed Coots, a moorhen and Cape Shoveller have been found dead under the lines.

The Avian Demography unit at UCT approached the City Council with a plan and as a result 'bird-flappers' have been fitted to the powerlines. This makes them more visible to the birds.

In February over 100 flappers were fitted to the main electric cables over the dam and already one can see a positive effect on the roosting birds and other birds flying in and out of the wetlands at ESWP.



Powerlines over the retention dam at Edith Stephens Wetland Park (ESWP) cause the death of birds that collide with them.



'Bird flappers' have been attached to the cables to make them more visible to the birds.

