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Greetings to you, dear colleagues and friends!

We have passed the halfway mark of 2006 – now its downhill till the end of the year! We hope that teachers have had a good break and have regained their energy and enthusiasm to sustain their excellence as teachers with their learners ... we applaud them!

Exciting courses have been planned again for term three. I would like to recommend the SLIDE SHOW THAT INTRODUCES THE COURSE ON EARTH AND BEYOND. (Monday 24 July at 2:30pm) This slide show is an introduction to astronomy and will be run by Dr Enrico Olivier from the SAAO. Enrico is a young astronomer who attended school at William Lloyd Primary in Paarl! He studied at UWC and then in Australia. He is a wonderful role model for our youth.

Good luck, for this term – may all our work in education prove enriching to all of us!
Regards from the PSP team:
Mascha, Gcobisa, Rose, Ntsiki, Nadiema, Viv, Vagriuah, Nthabi and Sandra in the Boland.

ANNUAL MASS PLANNING FORUM FOR 2007

The PSP will hold its

ANNUAL MASS PLANNING FORUM
on
THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2006 at 2pm.

Please book this day to come to the PSP to decide together with many other teachers what courses and further support the PSP should provide in 2007.

USING PICTURES TO DEVELOP WHOLE LANGUAGE

This year the PSP Language workshops are focusing on ways to use easily available, inexpensive resources to develop primary school learners' language. In the first term we focused on using newspapers. In the second term we focused on using pictures from newspapers, magazines and sets of A4 sized black and white pictures on various themes produced by ELRU. (These cost just R15 per set of ten pictures.)

Ruth Versfeld worked with us and brought her rich experience of working with pictures in classrooms. When the teachers reported on their experiences of carrying out a picture task with their learners, we were impressed. The children had talked and listened. They had drawn, written and read. And throughout the learning experience they had been thinking. They had had a rich and meaningful Whole Language experience.



FP teachers from JS Klopper & St John's show some Whole Language work their learners did using pictures



INVESTIGATING PUSHES & PULLS IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

During the second term of 2006, teachers and learners in H-Project schools of the EMDC SOUTH investigated Pushes and Pulls. At the workshop we explored pushes and pulls in our daily lives. We looked through newspapers and magazines for pictures and found that there was either a 'push' or a 'pull' in almost every picture. We explored moving things, as well as magnets. We were excited to discover that almost everything we do involves either a push or a pull!



Teachers investigating the effects of pushing at a workshop.



A grade R child at Intshinga Primary blowing (pushing) air into a balloon.



Investigating pushes and pulls in playground games at Linge Primary.



Cheryl Bock's grade 3s investigating pushes and pulls in a PE lesson at Alpine Primary.



THE PSP CLUSTER WORK A VERY SUCCESSFUL MODEL OF IN-SERVICE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

The PSP conceptualised the Cluster project with teachers as well as the EMDC's five years ago. The critical features of this model are:

- The EMDCs identify a short list of schools
- Schools commit for a full year's work
- The PSP offers intensive curriculum planning and assessment support
- Teams of teachers and the School Management Team participate
- The PSP provides teachers with the necessary resources
- School-based support is provided each term
- Classroom support is given on request.

This intensive support results in the whole school sharing similar planning and assessment processes. It also penetrates into the classrooms, where learning experiences become active and practical. Over the years, the PSP has worked with 140 cluster project schools. This is an exciting model of work in partnership with the WCED. The PSP hopes to extend it next year to incorporate Natural Sciences in the Foundation Phase.



BREEDING DISPLAYS OF THE WHITE-BREASTED CORMORANTS (Ugwi)

In a previous PSP Newsletter we mentioned that the White-breasted Cormorants (Ugwi) started building nests and breeding in winter 2005 for the first time at the retention dam at Edith Stephens Wetland Park.

This year, they returned towards the end of May again and were the first species to start building nests there. The fact that they have returned shows that the islands in the retention dam are a good breeding site. Here it is safe from predators. The rooikrans trees on the islands can support the large and bulky nests of these Ugwi.



White-breasted Cormorants (Ugwi)



Two nests with Ugwi in the rooikrans tree at ESWP.

These birds have some interesting courtship displays and if you watch carefully, you will see how the male and female birds interact. Before the birds start building the nest, the male lands at a nest site and waves his wings, opening and closing them. During this time he draws his head in, raises his tail and points his bill towards the sky. If a female lands next to him he starts gaping, (keeps his bill open) placing his head all the way back as he holds up his tail. The female responds by also gaping, but she only places her head halfway back to the tail which remains drooped downward. She gives a soft "hrrrr" call. Both birds then preen each other (comb each others' feathers). They entwine their necks, point their bills upwards and move their necks and heads from side to side.



Then they begin to build their nest. The male collects all the nest material, while the female actually builds the nest.

Most of the sky-pointing and wing waving behaviour is repeated when either the male or female returns to the nest site each time. Thanks to Doug Harebottle of the ADU at UCT.

AFRICAN SKIES ASTRONOMY CARDS GRADES 4-9 LAUNCHED!

The astronomy cards were launched at the SAASTE Conference in Durban in early July. (SAASTE: - South African Association of Science & Technology Educators).

The launch took the form of two participative workshop sessions, where delegates could engage with the astronomy cards, look carefully at the content, find information etc. The feedback and comments about the cards were very positive from educators and academics alike. The workshop sessions were run by Ish Qanya, who participated in the development of these materials.

It became clear again that educators are generally unfamiliar with content about astronomy. Some academics at the conference, such as Dr KK Naidoo and Prof N Govender from the University of KZN voiced their appreciation of these astronomy cards. "These materials show that progress is being made towards popularising astronomy for all grades."

The PSP will run a workshop on these astronomy cards and ideas on how they can be used productively in class at the start of the fourth term.

These Astronomy Cards were developed in partnership with the SAAO and funded by the Shuttleworth Foundation. They are available from

PSP: Tel: (021) 691 9039
EDUMEDIA: Tel: (021) 689 9536



20 YEARS OF IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING!!

We would like to extend our congratulations and thanks to Mascha who has been with the PSP for 20 years!! We celebrated her 20th anniversary at PSP during the school holidays, with the staff and some PSP friends. We are sure you would like to join us in thanking her for her superb leadership of the PSP over the past two decades.

Umz'ontsundu e Ntshona Koloni ubhe lide
"Huntshu!!!" Nangamso mfaz'obele lide,
ngelifa lemfundo oliph' umzi ontsundu.
Tshotsho ubekho gorhakazi ndini!!
Wafa, wavuka uPSP womcelela wanje, ngenxa yakho lo!! Masikuyeke!!