



PSP NEWS

THE WESTERN CAPE PRIMARY SCIENCE PROGRAMME



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Dear Colleagues and friends in education

The new CAPS curriculum is about to be introduced in SA. And schools and teachers are experiencing intense pressure to improve their learner results. From our interaction with teachers we see this ushering in a phase in which teachers shift their focus from their learners' needs towards desperately following the new prescriptions.

While we understand and support the drive towards making schools and teachers more accountable for their learner results, we hope this will not result in even less time/emphasis on other critical subjects in the curriculum. We are also concerned that innovative and creative methodologies may suffer in this shift of emphasis.

The PSP's role will be to support teachers to manage the change efficiently and to achieve the required results, but also to continue to promote creative methodologies for good teaching and learning in the classroom.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We hope to launch our new-look website in the next few weeks. Watch this space. You can also follow us

on:



<http://twitter.com/#!/WCPSP>



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Western-Cape-Primary-Science-Programme-PSP/129195860492136>

and read about the first-time teachers' experiences on the online blog from August!



<http://joint-mentorship-project.blogspot.com/>

With good wishes from us all at the PSP:

Mascha, Zorina, Rose, Gcobisa, Nadiema, Viv, Nocawe, Sandra, Nandi and Isabel.

THIS ISSUE

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- *USA interns develop PSP Case Studies*
- *PSP at AMESA National Conference*
- *Zenex Lead Teacher Training Weekend*

EXCITING NEW PROJECT IS LAUNCHED & GETS UNDERWAY

After six months of careful planning and preparation, the Joint Mentorship Project (JMP) was launched on Monday 20 June. It has already started its work with the first successful mentees' workshop held on the last Saturday of the school holidays.

The Joint Mentorship Project is an exciting collaborative initiative between the PSP, the Mathematics Education Primary Programme (MEPP), the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). The intention of the project is to mentor a maximum of 22 first-time primary school teachers, who were trained at the University of the Western Cape. This will be a pilot project, run over two years and will be researched by academics attached to the Faculty of Education of UWC.



Representatives of all stakeholders and participants of the JMP gathered at the launch of the project. They were the first-time teachers, the four organisations (WCED, UWC, PSP & MEPP) and the main funder, Anglo American Chairman's Fund.

The main speakers at the launch were:



Dawn Burke from The Hague Primary School (Delft). She spoke on behalf of the First-time teachers.



Prof Zubeida Desai – Head of the Faculty of Education at UWC.



Glen van Harte – Chief Curriculum Adviser; South District. He spoke on behalf of the Districts involved.



Agatha Lebethe from MEPP and Zorina Dharsey from the PSP also addressed the gathering.

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The Joint Mentorship Project (JMP) introductory workshop took place in the holidays at the PSP.

In this first workshop the mentees got to know the project's mentors and the parameters of the work ahead. The main focus of the workshop was 'setting the tone of your classroom' (mutual respect and understanding, co-operative engagement etc) and 'your role as the teacher' (what is expected as a role model).

The mentees reflected on the values conveyed through the inspiration of Madiba: *to forgive & live without bitterness, to be real, to persevere, to speak out, to be humble, treat your opponents fairly, to lead, spread the love, feel the fear & do it anyway, dance when you get the chance.*

At the end of the workshop, the new PSP social media initiatives were introduced and the mentees were invited to share their experiences through the JMP online blog. You can follow their stories from August <http://joint-mentorship-project.blogspot.com/>

The first-time teachers were also equipped with their files and journals to start their journey as reflective practitioners.



Zorina with Jerica Klaasen from Rainbow Primary & Samantha van Rhyn from Belhar Primary.



Themba and Prof Clarence Williams join the group.

INTRODUCING TWO NEW PSP TRUSTEES

We have great pleasure in welcoming two new Trustees to the PSP Board: Mthunzi Nxawe, Academic Publisher: Juta & Co. and Greshna Le Hane, Financial Performance Reporting Analyst: BP Southern Africa.

Mthunzi Nxawe has been a publisher for school and university textbooks for the past eight years. His interest is in curriculum and professional development of educators. He has taught both primary and secondary teachers at UCT, CPUT, and Rhodes University (RUMEP).



Mthunzi Nxawe - PSP Trustee

Greshna Le Hane is a qualified Chartered Accountant and is currently the Fraud and Misconduct Analyst, at BP S Africa. Previously she was part of the Strategy, Planning and



Greshna le Hane – PSP Trustee

Performance team for the Southern African Fuels Value Chain at BP South Africa.

Amongst other interests, Greshna serves on the committee for

African Women's Chartered Accountants (AWCA) in the Western Cape.

We would like to thank them for their voluntary time and commitment to the PSP. We hope their association with the PSP proves stimulating and beneficial, as the PSP hopes to benefit from their Trusteeship.

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INTERNS FROM THE USA DEVELOP PSP TEACHER CASE STUDIES

Two students from the University of Kentucky in the USA joined the PSP for a productive and fun internship from May to July 2011. This was their first time in South Africa as well as their first experience working with an NGO.

In their eight week internship, Zach and Krista worked on teacher case studies through conducting interviews with several primary school teachers who had participated in PSP programmes. They developed fascinating pictures which tell teachers' personal stories and highlight their hard work and dedication. We look forward to publishing those stories in a PSP case studies booklet in due course.

"Working in Cape Town and with the PSP has been an eye-opening experience," says Zach. "Since this trip, I have been reflecting on my own education and I have realized that the opportunities I have had were taken for granted... I have enjoyed working with the PSP because I know their cause is just and important for the posterity of Cape Town".



Krista and Zach from the University of Kentucky – interns with the PSP for eight weeks

Krista says, "My time in Cape Town and with the PSP has been amazing. The PSP allowed us to bear witness to many of the difficulties facing the education system in the areas around Cape Town. We saw the great work of the PSP and similar NGOs and the vital role they play in these communities."

Our thanks go to Krista and Zach for their commitment and hard work as well as their warm and open attitude during their internship with the PSP.

PSP AT AMESA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Association for Mathematics Education
of South Africa

During the last week of the winter holidays two PSP Facilitators, Nocawe Malatse and Nadiema Gamielien, together with one of the PSP Advisory Committee teachers, Thando Mgudlwa of Impendulo Primary in Khayelitsha, attended the Annual AMESA Conference held at Witwatersrand University. The theme of this congress was *Mathematics in a Globalised World*. The response from teachers across the country was overwhelming, with more than 900 teachers and other interested educationists attending the 5-day Congress. Everybody shared the same aim: **to improve the teaching and learning of Mathematics in order to increase the percentage of learners passing Mathematics at a higher level.**

The Congress also focused on curriculum change and its impact on classroom practice, especially with the country poised to implement the new CAPS.



Pictured here are: Aarnout Brombacher, Nadiema Gamielien, Hamsa Venkatakrishnan, Nocawe Malatse and Thando Mgudlwa (PSP Advisory Committee).

The academic programme, co-ordinated by Hamsa Venkatakrishnan and her team was inspiring and empowering as we all strive towards higher standards of professionalism in the exercise of our profession. Minister Naledi Pandor, (Dept of Science and Technology) presented the opening address.

Despite the cold weather, we all learnt so much!
Nadiema Gamielien.

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LEAD TEACHER TRAINING WEEKEND ZENEX SPARK PROJECT

The Houw Hoek Inn was the perfect venue for the special Lead Teacher Training weekend, held with the sixteen Lead Teachers from the Zenex Spark Project on the first weekend in the school holidays.

During the course of the weekend the teachers experienced a variety of team-building and leadership activities. A highlight of the weekend was an exhilarating drumming activity on Friday evening that unified the group and got them working in harmony together.

The success of the activities and games depended on working in teams and supporting one another.

On the Saturday Mitchell Messina led a brilliant workshop on personal development, which had been designed specifically for the Zenex English and Literacy Lead Teachers. They were all delighted that Glen van Harte was able to join part of this session. And, as at conferences, it was important that teachers also had opportunities to chat informally.

Teachers discussed how they could start to form a strong group. Marlene shared her idea of producing a collection of children's writing as a reader. This collection would include Grade 1 to Grade 6 writing from all the schools. The Lead Teachers would collect the writing throughout the third term, and then Marlene would guide the process of turning this into a publication.

There is also a move to start a group on a social networking site, so that these Lead Teachers can keep in touch and support each other.

