



PSP NEWSLETTER

Keeping you up to date with PSP teacher development

2018 TERM 1

From the Director

Language and comprehension/decoding skills are essential for children's success in school and beyond. The development of language is strongly interdependent with, and supports brain and cognitive development. A large vocabulary increases a child's creativity and stimulates the imagination. Children with poor language skills therefore struggle throughout their time in school, and drop out when they can no longer cope!

PSP long ago realised the importance of language as the foundation for learning, and incorporated language practitioners such as Charlotte Du Toit in the 1980's, followed by Viv and Alan Kenyon in the 1990's – 2010. Our programme integrates activities to develop language and vocabulary in all our Maths and Science work with teachers, such as shared writing, shared reading, word walls, the use of writing frames, etc. Such language strategies help children grapple with and understand content and processes more clearly and help them confidently progress to the next level.

The 2016 PIRLS Report paints a dismal picture of primary school language ability in South Africa. However, as always, the PSP responds to the needs of both teachers and children and we are excited to have Marlene Rousseau and Vangiwe Makhubalo on board to pilot a unique language project with Foundation Phase teachers.

Wishing you all a splendid term!

Dr. Zorina Dharsey

Reading Crisis in SA



In December 2016, the results of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, PIRLS, were published. Fifty countries had participated; South Africa was one of 5 African countries. The study found that 8 out of 10 Grade 4 children (i.e. 78% of all Grade 4s in SA) cannot read for meaning.

These Grade 4s cannot:

- find and retrieve information that is clearly stated in texts,
- make straightforward inferences about events,
- offer reasons for characters' actions.

PSP response

The PSP is tackling this head on, with plans to assist teachers to let their learners perform better than the almost 13000 South African Grade 4s who participated in this reading test.

A new PSP pilot project with 8 schools will start soon, with Vava Makhubalo from the PSP and Marlene Rousseau supporting the Foundation Phase teachers for two years. The project is guided by CAPS and will focus on developing children's high order thinking. Children will learn from Grade 1 to write and read for meaning. They will also have lots of fun, listening to stories, singing songs and performing action rhymes.

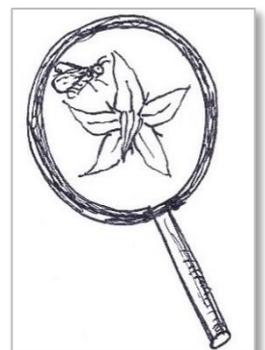
At the heart of this learning teachers, children and the PSP will work together and learn from each other.

2018 Kicks off with *Life & Living*



On the first Saturday of the 2018 school year, 57 Grade 4 to 7 teachers from 17 schools participated in the 6 hr course on the strand *Life & Living*. The course dealt with topics such as Living things, Ecosystems and Biodiversity. *Life & Living came to life!*

See how Grade 7 teachers examined the parts of the flower to understand how pollination works in the sexual reproduction of plants!



PSP COURSES: IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Book your place 2 days before every course.



Courses start at 14:30 (FP) and 15:00 (IP & SP).



Don't be late as there may not be space for you.



SACE points awarded for full attendance.

A Practical Approach to Assessment

The PSP was asked to run a course on Assessment in Atlantis, West Coast District in the last term of 2017. Teachers were divided into Grade groups and started with a practical activity and how they would assess it. Then teachers analysed an exam paper; looked at different types of questions; understood low, middle and high order questions and developed their own exam questions.

Teachers found it most rewarding and stimulating to discuss the exam questions with other teachers.



Grade 6 teachers constructing a Mars Rover. This provides the basis for all the elements of developing a comprehensive assessment task, and how to assess it.

Some teachers' comments:

".... I can't wait to implement the building of the rockets.....I learnt a lot. I benefitted the most from the practical experiments. The facts and how to do the questioning makes science easier to implement."

"The models and the approach was so helpful to understand the concepts. The practical side of the topic was good for us to understand and for teaching and assessing."



Grade 5 teachers comparing the water-holding capacity of soils – a good investigation providing excellent assessment opportunities.

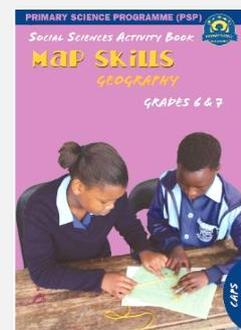
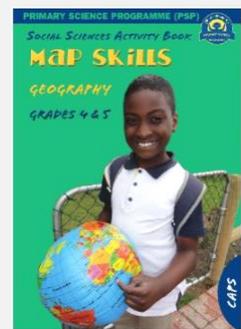
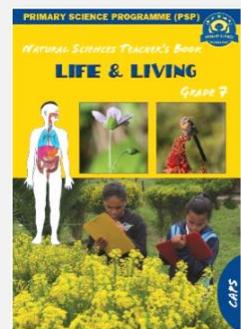
PSP BELIEVES...



Children need to be active to embed their learning

NEW PSP RESOURCES

Get your copy now!



PSP's new Training Room in Action

The new classroom space at the PSP is light, bright and spacious. It has been used from the first week of this term. Thirty-four teachers attended the Foundation Phase course on numbers, operations & relationships, with a special focus on place value.

Teachers shared common challenges, such as learners struggling with problem-solving story sums. One of the reasons is because story sums are most often not supported with pictures to provide context for understanding.

It is essential that children understand the story before they can relate it to an operation. Teachers looked at appropriate vocabulary for their particular children, to enable the message to get across.



PRIMARY SCIENCE PROGRAMME (PSP)

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