

Faculty Activities, Visitors and Highlights: Second & Third Quarters 2020

Faculty of
Education



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Faculty Activities, Visitors and Highlights: First Quarter 2020

Education Department

In response to the isolation associated with working remotely during lockdown, a **Buddy System** was established to help ensure that all colleagues stay connected to each other and remain safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In July/August, the week-long **Research Design course** for MEd and PhD students **and the PhD week** were offered entirely online.

New appointments: **Dr Nhlanhla Mpofo** has been appointed to fill the vacant post of Associate Professor in English Language Teaching, **Dr Pam Vale** and soon-to-be **Dr Samukeliso Chikiwa** have been appointed as lecturers.

Dr Farhana Kajee was invited as Key Note Speaker by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) for their @Home Webinar on Tuesday 30 June 2020. Her presentation was entitled 'Leading learning during the COVID -19 pandemic: Legitimizing Knowledge & Knowers'.

Prof Di Wilmot has been invited to serve a second four-year term (2020-2024) as a member of the Steering Committee of the International Geography Union's Commission on Geographical Education (IGU-CGE).

Prof Callie Grant was invited by the University of KwaZulu-Natal to be a panellist for their webinar on the theme 'School leadership in times of crises: The COVID-19 pandemic' on 27 May 2020. Her presentation was entitled 'Absence and presence in educational leadership work during the COVID-19 pandemic: Challenges and future opportunities'. She was also invited by editors Professors Engeström, Nuttall and Hopwood to write an article for a special issue of the journal called *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, on the theme of 'Theorising and researching transformative agency through double stimulation'. The paper, entitled 'Double stimulation and transformative agency for leadership development of school learners in Southern Africa' was recently uploaded for on-line publication.

Ms Bev Moore received funding from the British Council to promote Inclusive Education and the *Teaching for All* (T4ALL) programme within our department. Rhodes University was one of ten universities to receive this funding.

In July **Emeritus Professor Hennie van der Mescht** started a Level 8, 30-credit **short course** entitled '*Becoming a lecturer in Teacher Education*' which 15 members of staff and postgraduate scholars are attending.

CHERTL Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning

Both the March and July **Doctoral Weeks** were held online as a result of the lockdown. The July Doc Week programme was also supplemented with synchronous academic writing sessions via the newly created AcWriMo.com website (a joint venture between CHERTL and CPGS) as well as various seminars and events.

A highlight of the Doc Week was a virtual book launch of the newly released Routledge book, ***Building knowledge in higher education: New directions in teaching and learning*** (ISBN 9780367463335), edited by **Professors Christine Winberg and Sioux McKenna and Dr Kirstin Wilmot**. The book is the second publication in the Legitimation Code Theory book series and included chapters from the following CHERTL staff members and associates: **Sioux McKenna, Kirstin Wilmot, Sherran Clarence, Lynn Quinn and Jo-Anne Vorster**. The book launch was attended by 125 people from approximately seven different countries. It included a guest presentation by Prof Steve Kirk (Durham University, UK) and Karl Maton (University of Sydney), as well as eight 'break out rooms' where authors interacted with participants about their chapter in more detail.

Dr Roxana Chiappa was invited to present a seminar via Zoom on the findings of her award-winning doctoral study to the Education Faculty on Thursday 30 July.

As a way to respond to the increasing degree of pressure triggered by the context of Covid-19, **Dr Roxana Chiappa** has developed a **space to cultivate and practice "mindfulness"** for postgraduate students interested in learning techniques for coping with stress and anxiety. By the end of July, 14 workshops have been conducted.

In May and June, **Dr Kirstin Wilmot** was invited by the CPGS to run two writing workshops for research students. Both workshops draw on her PhD research which analysed the knowledge practices of exemplary PhD dissertations. The first workshop, **Writing a literature review for your thesis**, unpacked the notion of establishing a research 'gap' and rationale for a study, and then showed the participants how to engage with literature in a critical manner in order to create a series of arguments. The second workshop, **Constructing findings in research writing: A focus on the Social Sciences and Humanities**, introduced students to a novel set of strategies to enable them to 'weave' between raw data, understandings of data, and to then start integrating existing knowledge in the field as well as incorporating theoretical concepts into their writing. The attendance at both workshops was high (180 scholars in first and about 100 scholars in the second) and feedback has been very positive.

Professors Jo-Anne Vorster and **Lynn Quinn** have both been invited to **join CHE Review Panels**. They attended a training session in July and have started working as part of their respective review teams. The review process will continue for the rest of the second semester.

As a team member of the **e/merge Africa network**, **Dr Nicola Pallit** has been involved in planning and facilitating webinars and other activities. Recordings of webinars offered by the e/merge Africa network can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOSslrb-EyqxMEJ-wMG49Fg/videos>

Dr Nicola Pallit was invited to be a **panellist for two Africa-wide webinars**. One was about remote teaching and learning facilitated by the Ghana Technology University College (GTUC) and the second was entitled 'African Universities Online: Challenges and Opportunities' facilitated by the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University. Details about GTUC webinar: <https://site.gtuc.edu.gh/2020/04/13/top-story/virtual-remote-teaching-and-learning-webinar.aspx>

Dr Roxana Chiappa is the co-organizer of the series "[Committing ourselves to Social Justice: Doctoral Education for Complex times](#)". This series, organised by the Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education at the University of Washington - Seattle, and sponsored by the Center for the Studies in Higher Education of UC Berkeley, invites academics from different countries and disciplinary fields to discuss the meaning of social justice in doctoral education. The latest webinar of the series - [Beyond Theory. Practicing social justice in the design and implementation of doctoral programs in education](#) - took place on July 28th 2020. **Professors Sioux McKenna** (Rhodes University) as a speaker at the event.

RUMEP Rhodes University Mathematics Education Project

The Terms of Reference for the **review of RUMEP** have been received and nominated reviewers have been appointed. Given the urgency, the Review Panel is hoping to complete its work and present a written report by 30 September.

The Collegial Clusters have been meeting their teachers virtually using Zoom and it is working well, after initial hiccups.

Following the successful piloting of one set of **assessments and lesson starters for one numeracy strategy across three provinces in 2019**, the DBE have requested, that we develop all sets of assessments and lesson starters for all six strategies for national roll-out in 2021. The RUMEP and WITS teams have worked hard to develop the other five sets of assessments and lesson starters and are currently finalising the documentation for handover to the department later this year. This is really exciting work (based on strong research and evidence of effectiveness) and we believe this could have a major impact on the national landscape.

We are in regular communication with our partner schools and teachers in our development programs. We have been distributing learning materials and will be distributing more during August for use in the home.

We are also in the process of converting our Teacher Professional Development sessions into a **blended online and contact format**. During the first 90 days of lockdown we did an extensive amount of resource development, designing and distributing via online platforms more than 50 brand new numeracy resources suitable for use at home.

We have also partnered with Grocott's to help fund two special editions, distributed in Makhanda and surrounds, in which we shared **numeracy activities for Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase learners**. These were shared in the Grocott's e-edition, as well as shared in 5000 print copies for the Intermediate Phase, and 9000 copies for Foundation Phase.

RUMEP has continued and extended our international collaborations on **using stories in mathematics education**.

Our work on the **Fraction as Measure storybook and instructional sequence**, with Dr Jana Visnovska (Australia) and Prof Jose Cortina (Mexico), has extended to new collaborations with academics in Spain and Italy. Spanish and Italian translations have been made for the storybook we developed and Spanish and Italian teachers and school children are now being introduced to the instructional sequence and the storybook.

CSD Centre for Social Development

Professor Lilli Pretorius has appointed as a **Visiting Professor** and **Margaret Irvine** a **Professional Associate** at the CSD.

The Level 6 **Advanced Certificate in Foundation Phase Literacy Teaching** has been registered on SAQA and students are in the process of being registered.

Significant donations (1000 'six-bricks' Duplo packs, 500 food parcels from HCI, and generous donations in response to a Mandela Day appeal) have been received and distributed.

The lockdown has facilitated CSD staff members' upskilling of digital technologies.

SARChI Chair and the ELRC Environmental Learning & Resource Centre

A highlight in the past couple of months has been our participation in the **UNESCO/Joint Education Services online #OpenUpYourThinking Research Challenge** involving approximately 100 young researchers in 11 SADC countries. **Distinguished Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka** was invited to lead Theme 1 of this programme, focussing on the intersection of water, food, livelihoods and education.

The Chair hosted the remainder of the GCRF Transforming Education for Sustainable Futures Programme consultations, which were done online. Additionally we contributed to two international webinars on the programme

Distinguished Professor Heila Lotz-Sisitka has given **3 keynote** and **plenary addresses** during this time online to the international research community. The Chair has also been working on putting the UNESCO Sustainability Starts with Teachers course online, for a regional offering of this programme in September. **Dr Zintle Songqwaru** hosted an excellent national consultation for this programme with Dr Chikunda from UNESCO in July, leading to consolidation of a partnership with the DHET on this programme.

The SARChI Chair and ELRC scholars have also been actively involved in setting up a learning network for COVID-19 related concerns in the rural Eastern Cape named the **Eastern Cape Together Iquonga Lothungelwano** which is working on socio-cultural approaches to COVID-10 communications and learning, involving 200 Champions in the rural Eastern Cape who share information, as well as action resources. We have been working closely with the RUCE and the RU Science Communications team on this initiative, as well as Makhana Circle of Unity. A special issue of Grocott's was supported by the Chair on 31 July 2020 which has been shared widely in Makhanda to all community organisations, schools as well as online.

The **One Ocean Hub research team**, under the leadership of **Dr Dylan McGarry** have also been active in the last quarter and despite the COVID-19 lockdown have hosted a number of high profile international seminars with the United Nations Environment Programme online. The OOH has launched a new website for Empatheatre practice, and has produced an animation which was also presented to the UNEP and other international stakeholders.

Professor Eureka Rosenberg led a response to the Natrass [et.al](#) article in the South African Journal of Science which produced much controversy around its racist assumptions. Her critique of the paper has been published in a volume of the SAJS responding to the weaknesses of the methodology and orientations of the research. Prof Rosenberg also launched a new edition of the Southern African Journal of Environmental Education in this period, and is currently editing a special issue on Environmental Education in times of risk (such as COVID-19). She has also been leading the 10 year review of the national Biodiversity Human Capital Development Strategy/.

Associate Professor Ingrid Schudel has done innovative e-learning pedagogical work.

NRF Mathematics Education Chair

The SANC team have published several peer reviewed journal articles this year and have several more submitted or soon to be submitted. Our team have submitted multiple conference papers for the SAARMSTE conference in January 2021.