

3 to 5 MAY



**Rhodes University**  
Community  
Engaged  
Learning  
Symposium



**RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
*Where leaders learn*





## Message from the Organisers

Dear Delegate,

The call for transformation in higher education has never been more pressing, nor more broadly debated by academics and students within the sector. Within this broader transformation project, the call for universities to become more socially responsive institutions working towards the public good, is a goal which can be seen to be served through community engaged learning activities in all of their guises – from volunteerism, to service-learning and through engaged research projects. We are delighted to welcome you to the second annual Community Engaged Learning Symposium to share your research, narratives, theoretical frameworks, and lessons and insights from your practical experiences. It is our hope that through engaging in debate and critical dialogue over the course of the symposium with fellow community engaged learning practitioners from diverse disciplines, universities and community partner organisations, that we will be able to contribute to the project of building new knowledge in the scholarship of engagement which will help us to jointly solve the real and pressing issues of social justice and inequality facing our society today.

We extend our sincere thanks to those delegates who have travelled great distances to join us, and we wish all of the delegates from visiting universities a stimulating and enjoyable stay in Grahamstown and at Rhodes University. We are greatly indebted to the Rhodes University Research Office for their support in organizing and securing funds necessary to run the symposium. This year we have also partnered with the Journal for New Generation Sciences, and we would like to extend a word of thanks for the encouragement and support from the JNGS team, in particular the editor Prof. Laetus Lategan. We would also like to thank our symposium assistants and student volunteers for all of their tireless efforts to make the conference run smoothly. Most importantly, we would like to thank our team from the Community Engagement Division who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in all things!

With best wishes

**Sharli Anne Paphits** (s.paphitis@ru.ac.za) and **Diana Hornby** (d.hornby@ru.ac.za)

### **The RUCE TEAM:**

Benita Bobo (b.bobo@ru.ac.za); Nosipho Nkwinti (n.nkwinti@ru.ac.za);  
Philisa Tawule (p.tawule@ru.ac.za); Thobani Mesani (t.mesani@ru.ac.za);  
Busi Tshabalala (busitshabalala@gmail.com)



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### **Debbie Stott (Rhodes University, South African Numeracy Chair Project) Anneliese Maritz, Sarah Williams (Lebone Centre): Family Maths Events in Grahamstown After-School Programmes: A Community Approach**

As early as 1974 Bronfenbrenner, wrote about the importance of family involvement in child development, particularly with regard to the success of intervention programmes. Since 2013, the South African Numeracy (SANC) project at Rhodes University has supported a number of schools in setting up and running Family Maths Events which form part of the 'community buzz' encourage by the project. These events aim to get families talking and enjoying maths together as well as encouraging a 'maths is fun' ethos.



Following positive experiences, in 2015 as part of a larger 3-year partnership project with 5 local after-care centres, this work was extended to the after-care centres by coaching and supporting maths club facilitators to run such events at their centres, as a supplementary aspect to the maths club programme.

The evidence indicates that the family is the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child. The evidence indicates further that the involvement of the child's family as an active participant is critical to the success of any intervention program. The Harvard Family Research Project (2007) points out that family involvement can be strengthened with positive results for children and their school success. Epstein's (2001) book indicates that 'well-designed program and practices of school, family, and community partnerships benefit students, families and schools' (p.18). This is supported by projects done in other countries such as Australia and South Africa where they work specifically with mathematics.

In 2015, the 5 local after-care centres each ran a Family Maths event and will continue to do so in 2016 and beyond. Following the success of the maths events, the aftercare centres have also duplicated this model in developing family literacy events. In this narrative we share best practice of these community engaged learning events from the after-care centres perspective: 1) The model used for planning, organising and running the events (Graven & Stott, 2015) and 2) some feedback on the value of running such events for the centre, the children and their families.

By sharing our ideas, we hope to encourage others to set up similar events in their own community. Parents have commented that they felt they had a second chance at learning maths and that they had desperately wanted to help their children with their learning but weren't sure how to go about this. Our highly positive experiences of the family maths and literacy events lead us to suggest that other communities could begin to run such events at their schools or in their community centres and to perhaps extend them to other subject areas.