

Inaugural lecture: Prof Emmanuel Mgqwashu

On 10 March 2023, Professor Emmanuel Mgqwashu delivered his inaugural lecture, titled *A timely question: How can we not talk about becoming a professor in the context of decolonising higher education?*, on the Potchefstroom Campus.

Prof Willie van Vollenhoven delivered a short introduction. Prof Lloyd Conley, executive dean, gave the welcoming address and had the honour of officially draping Prof Mgqwashu in his academic regalia. Prof Lesley le Grange was the respondent to this lecture.

Professor Robert Balfour, deputy vice-chancellor for Teaching and Learning, presented Prof Mgqwashu with his certificate and offered a word of congratulations.

The rest of the night was celebrated with Prof Mgqwashu's family, friends and colleagues.

To watch Prof Mgqwashu's lecture on YouTube, please click on the link: <https://youtu.be/3JtkS2a3-fA>.



English for Education Camps

The English for Education subject group held two camps for students from all three campuses at the Achterbergh Camp and Conference Centre, situated just outside Krugersdorp, on 17 to 19 and 24 to 26 March. The aims of the camps are to address academic content and to foster relationships among staff and students. The focus was on poetry, and specifically on poetry from the Romantic era.

Sessions included interactive presentations by lecturers on the start of poetry and its development until and including the Romantic period, and modelling the teaching or sharing of poetry. Relationship building was also included, as were students visually presenting messages from poems through a focus on figures of speech, and students performing poems. The latter was definitely a highlight, with students showcasing their innovation and creativity.

Students had free time in between sessions and used it to explore the scenic beauty of the terrain and to get to know students and staff from campuses other than their own. Staff from all the campuses had time to share best practices and to discuss issues of common interest in a more informal setting. Students provided reflective feedback on the camps afterwards and their response was overwhelmingly positive, expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to learn more in an academic sense, but also to develop their affective skills.



Gauteng Coding and Robotics Competition

Lecturers from the subject group Computer Science Education, who are also part of the Research Unit for Self-Directed Learning, were invited to judge the Gauteng Coding and Robotics Competition.

On 4 March Prof Marietjie Havenga and Dr Sukie van Zyl judged a Gauteng cluster competition and on 11 March Ms Fotiene Avrakotos-King judged the Gauteng final of the competition. The competition is an initiative of the British Council to promote programming and computational thinking. Learners from Grade 8 and Grade 9 could participate. The national winners will compete in the UK in the international leg of the competition. Learners had to identify real-world problems and program solutions using micro-bit devices (pocket-sized computers). Approximately 20 teams with 80 learners participated in each leg of the competition. Examples of projects were the following:

- A hat that monitors body temperature
- A fish tank that releases food at a set time, closes the lid and prevents animals from catching the fish by sounding an alarm
- An irrigation system that measures soil moisture
- Solar panels that rotate to capture the best quality UV light



In the pictures, Dr Sukie van Zyl and Prof Marietjie Havenga (Potchefstroom Campus) can be seen with the team from Waterkloof High School, and Ms Fotiene Avrakotos-King (Vanderbijlpark Campus) is with Mr Mohamed Ally, the Gauteng provincial coordinator for Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology.



The Gauteng winner: Intelligent fish tank, by learners from Hugenote High School

Extraordinary professor visits South Africa: Professor Charlie Webber

Our extraordinary professor from Canada, Charlie Webber, visited our entity from 4 to 19 March 2023. Having him here is always wonderful, as he shares knowledge on educational leadership from his international experience with us. It helps us all to reflect on our own situation and to improve our practice at university and school level as well as our research. Prof Webber not only visited the Potchefstroom Campus, but he also went to the Vanderbijlpark and Mahikeng Campus. He spent a day at each campus having individual discussions with the Edu-Lead members.



Prof Webber spent most of his time at the Potchefstroom Campus, where he also had discussions with the entity members on the campus. He attended the 2023 Educational Management, Leadership and Governance Seminar hosted by Edu-Lead, where he was a speaker. His presentations were about leadership paradigms, unionisation, teacher leadership and educational administration and leadership. Everyone who attended the seminar was pleased with the presentation from Prof Webber and really gained knowledge from the presentations.

As Edu-Lead, we thank Prof Webber for visiting us and for sharing so much knowledge with our colleagues. We hope he will visit us again soon.

Africa collaboration on early childhood education

Drs Marinda Neethling and Susan Greyling of COMBER visited Namibia and Zimbabwe in November and December 2022 to collaborate and foster friendships in the field of early childhood development.

Dr Neethling's research focuses on the holistic training of caregivers at early childhood development centres in Africa, where these caregivers are often grandmothers and/or mothers without formal qualifications. Dr Greyling's research focuses on the management of the centres, which is regarded as a scarce skill.

Together they are developing training material for caregivers and are focusing on practical lessons and activities to stimulate the holistic development of the young child. After visiting some centres, the researchers agreed on the importance of contextual knowledge and understanding and agreed on adjustments to the materials.

While in Zimbabwe, the two NWU researchers also paid a courtesy visit to Dr Fae Chung, former Zimbabwean Minister of Education and founder member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).



Dr Susan Greyling (NWU), Dr Prosper Lunga, a Zimbabwean postdoc student in COMBER research entity of NWU, Dr Marinda Neethling (NWU), Dr Fay Chung (Former Minister of Education, Zimbabwe, and Founder member of FAWE)

Dr Chung shared her views on the importance of early childhood education on the African continent and commended the NWU for the work it does in this regard.

Plans for 2023 include further collaboration between the co-researchers from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia and further collaboration in other African countries.



Dr Attwell Mamvuto (Deputy Dean: Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe), Dr Susan Greyling (NWU) Prof Oswell Hapanyengwi (Dean: Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe) Dr Marinda Neethling (NWU), prof Tsitsi Chataika (Research Director: Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe)

Block B: Launching of Research-in-Action Campaign

The Mahikeng Campus lecturers of Block B celebrated autumn in the corridor and launched a campaign they call Research-in-Action.

During a research conversation between Dr De Klerk, Dr Seherrie and Dr Wessels an invitation was forwarded to all colleagues of Block B to become part of a research group with the aim of engaging in article writing. Dr De Klerk mobilised the colleagues and facilitated a work session where research possibilities were discussed. The colleagues committed themselves to co-authoring at least five articles that would be submitted to journals after approval has been granted by the different scientific and ethics committees.



Dr De Klerk invited all colleagues to an autumn celebration event and officially opened the Research-in-Action Campaign on behalf of Block B on Thursday, 2 March 2023. Prof Mncube, Prof Netshitangani, Dr De Klerk, Dr Khumalo, Dr Mayombe and Dr Dhlamini will provide guidance to the colleagues in terms of research writing. At present, Block B has the following in its pocket in terms of research: (a) 11 submitted papers, (b) five accepted papers and (c) one published paper for the 2023 academic year. During the launching of Research-in-Action, Dr De Klerk motivated his colleagues to *“take every opportunity, learn from each other and put yourself out there to become the authority on your work”*.



2023 Education Management, Leadership and Governance Seminar



On 16 and 17 March 2023, Edu-Lead hosted a national seminar at the NWU Potchefstroom Campus. Guests and colleagues from other universities, our students, and officials from the Department of Education attended. The seminar took place during the visit of our extraordinary professor, Charlie Webber, who was our international guest and speaker at the event. Prof Conley welcomed the guests, while Prof Heystek, Prof Van der Vyver, Prof Smit, Dr De Klerk, Dr Shula and Dr Challens were among the NWU colleagues who made presentations at the seminar. Prof Mthiyane from UP and staff members from the Department of Education also made presentations.



The presenters and all those who were at the seminar shared their different views and ideas on management, leadership and governance in schools. This was the first seminar of its kind, and Edu-Lead is planning on making it an annual occasion and on making it grow. It was a fruitful event, and we are looking forward to having more of its kind.

Happy Birthday

to everyone celebrating their birthday this month

