COMBER Project received the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Community Engagement

Ethics number / Etieknommer: NWU-00641-18-S2

Dr Marinda Neethling is the project leader who was addressed by lecturers of the Cedar College of Education in the Umzinyathi District, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), to participate in a community-engagement project in which teachers in the district can receive in-service training and can learn how to effectively teach and support learners with diverse educational needs in their inclusive classrooms. Dr Elsabe Wessels from the Mahikeng Campus came on board, along with Prof Lesley Wood, research director of COMBER and an expert on community engagement and PALAR, and Prof Petra Engelbrecht, as a skilled researcher on inclusive education.

The need for professional development in inclusive education was highlighted in our institution when BEd students in the Umzinyathi District in rural KZN had to complete practical assignments with the help of teachers. They found that the teachers lacked basic knowledge of supporting learners with diverse educational needs. The community-engagement project provides educators with in-service training to effectively teach and support learners with diverse educational needs.

This research project is based on constructivist and critical theories because experiences and ideas change, knowledge is created, and questions are asked, explored and reflected on. The theories are positioned in a PALAR paradigm to improve the scholarship of teaching and learning. The project thus embraces and integrates the core function of higher education, namely teaching, research and community engagement through transformational and sustainable development.

COMBER-projek ontvang die Visekanselierstoekenning vir Uitnemendheid in Gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid

Dr Marinda Neethling is die projekleier wat deur dosente van die Cedar College of Education in die Umzinyathi-distrik in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) gevra is om deel te neem aan 'n gemeenskapsbetrokkenheidsprojek waarin onderwysers in die distrik indiensopleiding kan ontvang en kan leer hoe om leerders met diverse opvoedkundige behoeftes in hulle inklusiewe klaskamers doeltreffend te onderrig en te ondersteun. Dr Elsabe Wessels van die Mahikengkampus, saam met prof Lesley Wood, die navorsingsdirekteur van COMBER en 'n kundige op die gebied van gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid en PALAR, en prof Petra Engelbrecht, as 'n vaardige navorser oor inklusiewe onderwys, het ook hand bygesit.

Die behoefte aan professionele ontwikkeling in inklusiewe onderwys het by ons instelling onder ons aandag gekom toe BEd-studente in die Umzinyathi-distrik in die landelike KZN praktiese opdragte met behulp van onderwysers moes voltooi. Hulle het gevind dat die onderwysers se basiese kennis oor die ondersteuning aan leerders met diverse opvoedkundige behoeftes ontbreek het.
Die gemeenskapsbetrokkenheidsprojek verskaf aan onderwysers indiensopleiding om leerders met diverse opvoedkundige behoeftes te onderrig en te ondersteun.

Hierdie navorsingsprojek is op konstruktivistiese en kritiese teorieë gegrond, aangesien ervarings en idees verander, kennis geskep word, en vrae gevra en ondersoek word en daaroor nagedink word. Die teorieë is in 'n PALAR-paradigma geposisioneer om die vakkundigheid van onderrig en leer te verbeter. Die projek omarm en integreer dus die kernfunksie van hoër onderwys, naamlik onderrig, navorsing en gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid deur transformasionele en volhoubare ontwikkeling.