

South-South Symposium focussing on Rural Education

Initiated around mid-2015 by Dr Clive W. Kronenberg (Education Faculty, CPUT) the South-South Educational Scholarly Collaboration and Knowledge Interchange Initiative hosted its first Symposium in July 2016. Entitled *Novel Enquiries, Shaping Alliances & the Rural Factor*, and held on CPUT's Mowbray campus, the symposium saw the coming together of a wide range of educational research experts. Acting both as Chair and Assessor, was Prof. Meschach Ogunniy (UWC), holder of the 1995 UNESCO Chair for Science and Mathematics Education. Prof Ogunniy's wide experiences and successes in forging globally-significant cross-border scientific interactions naturally enthused his audience. Chairing Session II was educational stalwart, Prof. Johan Wasserman (University of Pretoria), whose expertise in the histories of African diaspora and the Republic of Argentina added stature to the objectives of the event. Offering a Specialist Contribution, was Dr. Diphane Hlalele (UFS), one of Africa's leading scholars in the field of rural education. The scholar principally advanced that, because rural ecologies are diverse, they therefore require an adaptable, wider approach in the creation of progressive learning methodologies.

Equally enthralling was the contribution from visiting scholar, Prof. Tania Morales de la Cruz, (University of Matanzas, Cuba), the key presenter at the Symposium. The scholar shed interesting light on her country's philosophies, policies, and strategies in terms of elevating the broader educational experience of Cuba's many outlying schooling communities. This presentation holds many lessons for South Africa, where rural education remains seriously neglected and thus grossly underdeveloped. Tania's expert views on multi-grade teaching, a much underdeveloped area of learning across the world today, appears in Dr Kronenberg's interview with her, published on *The Conversation* website.

Post-graduate Participation

Deeply encouraging were the contributions from our contemporary post-graduate fraternity. Zimbabwean national and Ph.D. candidate (CPUT) Nyarai Tunjera emphasised the importance of classroom technology, which she argued, enables rural communities to gain better apprenticeship of their real, outside worlds. Master's candidate (CPUT) Reuben H. Talliard dwelled on the important issue of second language education, a topic Ph.D. candidate Thelma Mort (CPUT) expanded on. Thelma drew attention to learners' personal experiences and emotional effects in such procedures, a relatively novel perspective that potentially could elicit much interest and/or input from our southern, Spanish-speaking neighbours.

M.Ed candidate (CPUT), Tarryn De Kock critically engaged the topic of education itself, arguing that rural learners' schooling and self-actualisation markedly differ from those of their urban peers. Argentinian historian and Ph.D. candidate Laura Efron (UCT) offered a historical review of the exchanges of educational practices in the South Atlantic over the course of the 20th century. The scholar underscored the enduring meaning of such developments in dealing with contemporary educational crises.

Further Contributions

The Symposium also saw the launch of this author's documentary film which features a number of "lessons", deemed fundamental to arguably any child's accomplishment at school, rural and

elsewhere. Keeping her sights firmly on the most vulnerable of our post-colonial (South-South) districts, post-matriculant Nomhle Kiti eloquently expounded on the work performed by The Children’s Resource Centre (Cape Town). The symposium’s most youthful participant also spoke of enriching collaborative practices that already exist for years between the CRC and Cuban schools.

Meeting Objectives

It is prudent to say that deep insights could be gained from S-S scholars operating in their respective fields. As Prof. Ogunniy expressed: *It was a pleasure to have interacted with such a very vibrant research group. . . .the research projects. . . are generally of a high quality.*

The symposium also presented various prospects for collaboration with much, critical thought afforded the experiences of rurally-based school children, prone as they are to neglect in South-South territories and elsewhere. In a sense, this initiative was a huge success, not because the global north but the global south sought to call the shots.

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© cwk 2016. A Selection of Symposium Participants and Attendees.



© cwk 2015. Cederberg Region: Site of Dr Kronenberg’s educational field research (2015).