

## **Life on the fringes: The role of the Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment in empowering teachers**

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### **Introduction**

My previous pass rate was 7%. I cried for the best part of the first term ... [but] my 2009 History Grade 12 class blessed me with a 76% pass thanks to the NCS [National Curriculum Statement] course I did with Unisa in 2008!<sup>1</sup>

This sms message, received late on a Saturday night towards the end of December 2009, captures the desperation of a secondary school History teacher (and perhaps many others like her), turned into triumph. It was also this message that inspired the writing of this article.

The Department of History at the University of South Africa (Unisa) has been using distance learning techniques<sup>2</sup> in providing tertiary education to thousands of students for many decades. The majority of these students have been educators who teach History<sup>3</sup> – and since 2008, also Social Science, in Grades 8 and 9 – at secondary schools throughout South Africa. In addition to broadening their knowledge base through its degree courses, a non-formal Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment (later renamed Short Course in School History Enrichment) was launched in 1999. The reasons for this initiative were varied and are explored in some depth in this article, as are the different phases in the development of tutorial materials in response to changes to curriculum and education policy after 1994. Integrating the findings of a recent qualitative research project conducted in the History Department, the article uncovers some of the frustrations of secondary school History and Social Science teachers amid a fast-changing professional environment and their dire need

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1. Sms from N.S. Maxengana, late December 2009.
2. On the techniques, value and pitfalls of ODL in teacher training, see B. Robinson and C. Latchem (eds), *Teacher Education through Open and Distance Learning* (Routledge/Falmer, London and New York, 1993); H. Perraton (ed), *Distance Education for Teacher Training* (Routledge, New York, 1993). On information technology in teacher training, see C. Vrasidas and G.V. Glass (eds), *Online Professional Development for Teachers* (Information Age Publishing, Charlotte NC, 2004); D. Passey and B. Samways (eds), *Information Technology: Supporting Change through Teacher Education* (Chapman & Hall, London, 1997). On ODL teacher training in the African context, see H.H. Chikuya, "Teacher Education within the Context of Open and Distance Learning in Zimbabwe: A Case Study", PhD thesis, Unisa, June 2007; South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), *Teacher Education at a Distance in South Africa: Report for the National Audit, April-November 1995* (SAIDE, Braamfontein, n.d.); SAIDE, *Consolidated Report on SAIDE's Research into Educational Programmes and Opportunities in Rural Areas* (SAIDE, Braamfontein, n.d.).
3. In 2003 the author confirmed this in qualitative research on student perceptions of the semester system at Unisa. See Department of History (hereafter DH): Student Perceptions on Semesterisation.

for didactical and emotional support. On the other hand, it conveys the remarkable enthusiasm of many who, despite feeling marginalised, are committed to teaching the subject well, developing and inspiring their learners, and instilling a real love of History in the young people under their care. This positive attitude and the close interaction between candidates and tutors have in turn transcended the physical distance of an ODL environment and have inspired the course coordinator to sustain the course for more than a decade despite academic pressures, the scepticism of some colleagues and various structural constraints within the university.

### The rationale behind the course

The Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment was first conceptualised in 1998 by the former Chair of Department (COD), Albert Grundlingh,<sup>4</sup> who had to reinvigorate a rapidly declining department. Student numbers had begun falling dramatically after 1995 when the Unisa History Department reached a high point of 3,146 first-year enrolments. Student numbers subsequently went into a downward spiral ending at around 330 first-year students in 2005.<sup>5</sup> This decline at first level had a knock-on effect on second and third level courses, ultimately eroding postgraduate enrolment figures as well. The downward trend was not exceptional within the university given the general decline experienced by the Unisa Faculty of Arts (now the College of Human Sciences),<sup>6</sup> the pressure on academic history worldwide,<sup>7</sup> and the decrease in popularity of History at secondary and tertiary institutions across South Africa and neighbouring Lesotho,<sup>8</sup> Swaziland<sup>9</sup> and Botswana<sup>10</sup> during the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>11</sup>

An in-depth analysis of the reasons for this alarming development falls outside the scope of this article, but a few brief comments may be useful to contextualise the Unisa History Department's dilemma and new initiatives. Some of the factors raised by the Department to explain its situation and motivate its introduction of a non-

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4. Albert Grundlingh is currently the Chair of the History Department at Stellenbosch University.
  5. First-year enrolments dropped by 7.3% in 1996; 30.1% in 1997; 40.5 % in 1998 and 48.1% in 1999. From 2000 students enrolled for different semester modules at the same time making it difficult to calculate more accurately the total number of History I students. See DH: Student Statistics, 1990 to 2009.
  6. DH: Annual Report, 1998, p 3.
  7. T. Nuttall and J. Wright, "Probing the Predicaments of Academic History in Contemporary South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, 42, May 2000, pp 26–48; P. Eidelberg, "The Crisis of Academic History Revisited", *Kleio*, 33, 2001, pp 107–113.
  8. M. Ntabeni, "The Status of History Teaching, Learning and Examination Results in Lesotho, 2000–2004: Implications for Teacher Education", *Yesterday and Today*, Special Edition, 2006, p 100.
  9. E.Z. Mazibuko, "Developments in History Teaching at Secondary School Level in Swaziland: Lessons from Classroom Research", *Yesterday and Today*, 2, May 2008, p 138. Declining popularity of History in Swazi schools was confirmed by Ella Magongo (Principal, Sifundzani School, Mbabane, Swaziland) in e-mail correspondence with the author, 29 April 2010.
  10. J.R. Watson, "Human Relevance and Importance in the Classroom through Personal Stories", *Yesterday and Today*, 2, May 2008, p 73. Declining popularity of History at both secondary and tertiary level in Botswana was confirmed by Prof. Ackson Kanduzu of the University of Botswana in e-mail correspondence with the author, 30 April 2010.
  11. J. Verner, "Chairman's Report: SASHT Conference, 2005", *Yesterday and Today*, Special Edition, 2006, pp 5–6.

formal short course for teachers, were the impression that had been created by Curriculum 2005 that History was being marginalised as a teaching subject at secondary schools,<sup>12</sup> with a corresponding negative impact on university enrolments; the turmoil in education at the time and the low pass rates in History in the senior grades (which other researchers ascribe mainly to a lack of essay-writing skills<sup>13</sup>); the changed salary structure for teachers which no longer rewarded the acquisition of a degree; the opening up of a wider variety of more lucrative job opportunities for black students after 1994 which made teaching less attractive as a career; and the perception that History had lost its usefulness as a tool to promote the “struggle” or, alternatively, support the status quo.<sup>14</sup> Other factors that have been raised, include the emergence of a new set of developmental priorities for South Africa after 1994; the role of school management committees which reinforce (if not create) negative perceptions about History as a subject suitable for the less intelligent learner, with adverse effects on the self-esteem of both History teachers and their learners; the influence of parents who steer their children away from History towards financially more viable and secure career options, such as the legal and medical professions; growing materialism among the South African youth; and stronger government focus on the advancement of the natural sciences and technology-related disciplines.<sup>15</sup> There is no better proof of lack of government support for the discipline than the recent cancellation of the requested Unisa workshop for History teachers from Gauteng West on the grounds that “after the budget for 2010/2011 in the FET [Further Education and Training] phase in our District [had been received], it was concluded that there are no funds for subjects like History ... funds will only cater for subjects that are regarded as gateway subjects”.<sup>16</sup>

In view of the Unisa History Department’s particular client base, Unisa historians could no longer avoid addressing the specific needs of History teachers. Its COD in 1998 – who formed part of a progressive minority in the Department in terms of historical thinking<sup>17</sup> and was associated with University of the Witwatersrand

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12. See also S. Seetal, “Reconceptualising History Teachers’ Identities within the Context of Changing Curriculum”, *Yesterday and Today*, Special Edition, 2006, p 149; E.-L. Mackie, “Histories that Creep in Sideways: A Study of Learners’ Attitudes to History and their Senses of the Past”, *Yesterday and Today*, 1, May 2007, p 82.
  13. Ntabeni, “The Status of History Teaching”, pp 100, 117; M. Ntabeni, “History Teaching, Learning and Junior Certificate (JC) Examination Results in Lesotho, 2000–2006: Implications for Teacher Education”, *Yesterday and Today*, 1, 2007, pp 218–19.
  14. DH: Annual Report, 1998, p 3; see also Mackie, “Histories that Creep in Sideways”, p 90.
  15. D.A. Black, “Changing Perceptions of History Education in Black Secondary Schools, with Special Reference to Mpumalanga, 1948–2008.” MA dissertation, Unisa, 2009, pp 147–149, 167–178, 187–196. For another empirical study of the reasons for the declining numbers of learners taking History, see L.J. Meyer, D. Bignaut, D. Braz and B. Bunt, “Where have all the Learners Gone? A Small Scale Study to Determine Reasons for the Decline in Numbers of Learners Taking History in the FET Phase”, *Yesterday and Today*, 2, May 2008, pp 15–29.
  16. DH: Short Course File 4: S.S. Mmotlana – H. Lubbe, 1 April 2010.
  17. A. Grundlingh, “History on the Hill: Aspects of Scholarship and Scholarly Life at the Unisa History Department”, *Kleio*, 38, 2, 2006, p 133; A Grundlingh, “Sosiale Geskiedenis en die Dilemma van Afrikanergeskiedskrywing”, *South African Historical Journal*, 19, 1987, pp 31–49; A.M. Grundlingh, “Transcending Transitions? The Social History Tradition of Historical Writing in South Africa in the 1990’s”, Inaugural lecture, Unisa, Pretoria, 1997, pp 1–21; A. Grundlingh, “Some Trends in South African Academic History: Changing Contexts and Challenges”, in S. Jeppie (ed), *Toward New Histories for South Africa: On the Place of the Past in our Present* (Cape Town, Juta Gariep, 2004).

History Workshop academics<sup>18</sup> involved in training workshops for secondary school History teachers<sup>19</sup> – had shown a theoretical interest in teacher training as part of political transformation since the mid-1990s,<sup>20</sup> and was aware of the involvement of Vista University’s Distance Education Campus (Vudec) in teacher training, especially in the poorer rural areas of the country.<sup>21</sup> As an increasing number of schools were beginning to phase out History at the senior levels, the Unisa History Department mailed flyers to all secondary schools in South Africa in 1998, emphasising the value of History and informing teachers of its degree courses and new Short Course for teachers.<sup>22</sup> This initiative, which drew some 150 enquiries,<sup>23</sup> revealed keen interest in the course and confirmed impressions, based on informal conversations with students, that teachers needed both moral support and resource materials in view of the lack of appropriate History school text books.<sup>24</sup> The following year, 115 Grade 11 and 12 History teachers across the country registered for the Short Course,<sup>25</sup> which initially had been developed with financial sponsorship from Coca-Cola Africa.<sup>26</sup>

The Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment was seen by academics in the History Department as an “outreach program ... making a meaningful and practical contribution to alleviate at least some of the distress in an area where we have the ability and capacity to do so”<sup>27</sup> by “empowering disadvantaged secondary school history teachers with skills to teach the subject, while at the same time providing them with resource material which is currently not available in textbooks”<sup>28</sup>. In addition to emphasising the educational value of such a venture, the project was justified by referring to its potential contribution to heritage and nation building in post-apartheid South Africa.<sup>29</sup> In turn, it was envisaged that History teachers would keep academics informed on matters relating to History teaching at secondary school level, thereby creating two-way communication between academic historians and History teachers.<sup>30</sup> There were also strategic considerations. It was argued that the course was “an extension and implementation of the core business function of the university as a distance teaching institution ... [which] fits in well with

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18. His work has been acknowledged by History Workshop scholars such as Cynthia Kros. See C. Kros, “Considering the Legacy of Radical/Social History in South Africa”, *African Historical Review*, 39, 1, July 2007, pp 41–58; C. Kros, “Public History/Heritage: Translation, Transgression or More of the Same?”, *African Studies*, 69, 1, April 2010, pp 63–77.
  19. S.P. Lekgoathi, “The History Workshop, Teacher Development and Outcomes-Based Education over the Past Seven Years”, *African Studies*, 69, 1, April 2010, pp 103–123.
  20. See G. Cuthbertson and A. Grundlingh, “Distortions of Discourse: Some Problematic Issues in the Restructuring of History Education in South African Schools”, in A. Dickinson, P. Gordon, P. Lee and J. Slater (eds), *International Yearbook of History Education* (The Woburn Press, London, 1995), pp 11–29.
  21. *Mail & Guardian*, 13–19 March 1998, p 37.
  22. DH: Annual Report, 1998, p 3.
  23. DH: Minutes of Didactic and Design Committee Meeting, 14 August 1998.
  24. DH: Short Course File 1: Minutes, Didactic and Design Committee Meeting, 14 August 1998.
  25. DH: Annual Report, 1999, p 3.
  26. DH: Short Course File 1: A. Grundlingh – C. Ware, chairman of Coca-Cola, Africa, 12 May 1998; A. Grundlingh – E. Sibiyana and C. Fortuin, Coca-Cola, South Africa, 12 May 1998.
  27. DH: Proposal for introduction of Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment, p 1.
  28. DH: Short Course File 1: A. Grundlingh – C. Ware, Coca-Cola, Africa, 12 May 1998.
  29. DH: Short Course File 1: A. Grundlingh – C. Ware, Coca-Cola, Africa, 12 May 1998.
  30. These ideas were reflected in Short Course marketing brochures and on the departmental website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=157>

the general thrust and nature of the overall certificate program”;<sup>31</sup> that it would “add another practical dimension” to the History Department which could raise its profile and “double up as ‘market research’ in a sector where we have ‘known clients’”;<sup>32</sup> that it could serve as a trial run for modular courses and draw Short Course candidates into the Department’s formal offerings, thereby earning government subsidy;<sup>33</sup> and that it had the potential to generate money which could be used to fund other departmental initiatives, although the course was intended as a community engagement project and not a money-making exercise.<sup>34</sup>

### Educational change and the development of tutorial materials

The Short Course in School History Enrichment was presented via ODL techniques which, in its first phase, relied exclusively on print-based study material, written assignments and communication via telephone and/or correspondence. The study package<sup>35</sup> included a Resource Book written by academics in the Unisa History Department; stationery; and a tutorial letter (*Tutorial Letter 101*), which provided general administrative information and set out the assignments<sup>36</sup> that would assess whether candidates were able to teach the main themes of the school History syllabus effectively. The tutorial letter was also used to establish personal contact with students, narrow the distance between them and the lecturers by being warm and personal in tone, and to break the isolation which puts ODL students at a distinct disadvantage.<sup>37</sup> The letter oriented students by commenting on the value and challenges of outcomes-based education (OBE),<sup>38</sup> and reflecting on the position of History within Curriculum 2005. The Resource Book, on the other hand, provided candidates with up-to-date resource material for use in the classroom as well as “enrichment” materials aimed at deepening their understanding of historical debates on selected themes from the Grade 12 History syllabus. Although not well versed in the new OBE methodology on learning outcomes (LOs) and assessment standards (ASs), the authors made an attempt to enhance learning and ensure a reader-friendly text by integrating practical activities and visual material into the chapters. Concerned

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31. DH: Proposal for introduction of Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment, p 1. Non-formal certificate programmes became increasingly important within the university from the mid-1990s. See DH: Short Course File 1: Circular from W.F. Meyer (dean of the Faculty of Arts), 2 July 1996.
  32. DH: Proposal for introduction of Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment, p 1.
  33. DH: Proposal for Introduction of Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment, p 1.
  34. DH: Annual Report, 1999, p 3.
  35. An attempt was made to include a textbook sponsored by an external donor but this did not materialise. See DH: Short Course File 1: A. Grundlingh – K. Kalyan (general manager of Shell South Africa), 12 May 1998.
  36. Course candidates have found these assignments challenging yet exciting and very relevant to the curriculum. See DH: Short Course File 3: M.T. Phalane, comments on questionnaire at the back of *Tutorial Letter 101* (Option A); M. Badat, Middelburg, Mpumalanga, in a personal note (undated) in an assignment; Short Course File 2: Q30 – Z.B. Poswa, Vanderbijlpark.
  37. For interesting arguments on the needs of more interpersonally oriented learners with an African cultural background, see M. Qakisa-Makoe, “Reaching Out: Supporting Black Learners in Distance Education”, *Progressio*, 27, 1/2, 2005, pp 44–61.
  38. For case-study research on the perceptions of secondary school History teachers of OBE, see P. Warnich, “Secondary School Teachers Assessing Outcomes-Based Education (OBE): A Case Study”, *Yesterday and Today*, 3, October 2008, pp 59–72.

about the low Grade 12 pass rate in History at the time, the authors also decided to include guidelines for the Grade 12 final examination and examples of past Grade 12 History examination papers.<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately this first “resource package” had to be compiled in great haste to meet university deadlines.<sup>40</sup> Colleagues who were initially involved in the new initiative withdrew for a variety of reasons that were never openly debated. Factors that probably played a role were the pressure of other teaching commitments at undergraduate and postgraduate level;<sup>41</sup> the university’s strong emphasis on academic research and publications which compelled academics to rethink their priorities;<sup>42</sup> the subsidy system according to which the History Department does not receive government subsidy for its informal offerings; and simply not identifying with all the informal “criteria for selection”: interest in school History, competence in didactic techniques and course design, promotional skills, and, above all, “sensitivity to and empathy with the challenges facing History teachers (often in outlying areas) with little resource material and teaching skills”.<sup>43</sup> What probably made participation in the project even less attractive was the fact that the work involved in the Short Course was allocated over and above the “normal” workload of the lecturer(s); that this work was not taken into account for possible promotion, and that, unlike elsewhere in the university, lecturers involved in the Short Course would receive no additional remuneration.<sup>44</sup>

Assignments that were submitted by the first candidates who enrolled for the course in 1999, revealed an inability to digest and apply the course material to their teaching. By then it had also become apparent that we needed to involve teachers with a sound knowledge of OBE requirements and practical experience of teaching History in the modern South African classroom to help with the development of tutorial material and assessment techniques. This gave rise to the appointment of hand-picked school teachers as tutors on a contractual basis and the emergence of a very fruitful partnership between academic historians and school educators. With didactical input from these tutors, a learner-centred *Practical Guide for History Educators*<sup>45</sup> was compiled in 2000, updated in 2005,<sup>46</sup> and completely revised in 2007<sup>47</sup> in order to

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39. DH: Proposal for introduction of Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment.
  40. DH: Short Course File 1: Minutes of Didactic and Design Committee Meeting, 15 June 1998.
  41. Some colleagues were explicit from the outset that they would only participate if the new course did not interfere with their other teaching tasks. See DH: Short Course File 1: responses to an invitation from the COD to volunteer their services.
  42. This issue features regularly in departmental meetings. See DH: Minutes of Departmental Meetings.
  43. DH: Short Course File 1: COD’s response to a questionnaire on non-formal tuition circulated by J.A. Döckel, vice-principal (Research and Planning) at Unisa, 13 March 2000.
  44. DH: Short Course File 1: COD’s response to a questionnaire on non-formal tuition circulated by J.A. Döckel, 13 March 2000.
  45. H. Terre Blanche, G. Joubert and H. Lubbe (compilers), *Practical Guide for History Educators* (Unisa, Pretoria, 2000).
  46. H. Terre Blanche, G. Joubert and H. Lubbe (compilers), updated by F. Rankin and J. Gerrard, *Practical Guide for History Educators* (Unisa, Pretoria, 2005).
  47. N. Pereira, R. Odendaal and H. Lubbe (compilers), *Practical Guide for History Teachers, Grades 11&12* (Unisa, Pretoria, 2007).

keep track of syllabus and education policy changes.<sup>48</sup> Students could now be offered more appropriate guidance; syllabus-related, OBE-directed assignments for practical application in the classroom; encouraging constructive feedback on work submitted; and permission to rework and resubmit assignments until they were successful. This gave candidates the opportunity to broaden their knowledge, improve their teaching skills, boost their confidence, enhance their creativity and build the academic capacity of their learners – all of this while working fulltime and studying part-time towards a professional qualification.<sup>49</sup>

The introduction of a new syllabus for History Grade 10 in 2008 led to the development of a second short course option (Option B)<sup>50</sup> structured along the same lines as the first option (Option A) except that it also included additional material in the form of a Resource Booklet.<sup>51</sup> Shortly afterwards, Option C (Social Science for Grades 8 and 9)<sup>52</sup> followed – a course aimed at assisting Grades 8 and 9 Social Science teachers in teaching both History and Geography more creatively and effectively according to *National Curriculum Statement* (NCS) requirements.<sup>53</sup>

The didactical guidance integrated in the *Practical Guide* for each of the course options proved very beneficial and the quality of assignments submitted for assessment improved dramatically. However, students clearly needed to see how practical activities, such as group work and heritage investigation, could be conducted in the classroom. In informal telephonic conversations many expressed frustration at a very heavy teaching workload. This paved the way for the development of two CDROMs (respectively entitled “First Aid for FET” and “Short Cuts to Teaching Social Science”) which provided ready-made lesson plans, work schedules, assessment rubrics and electronic mark sheets which calculate marks for continuous assessment (CASS) automatically, according to NCS specifications. A low-cost DVD was also developed for the FET Phase (Grades 10–12), entitled “Work Smarter not Harder”, complete with rubrics and worksheets that could be downloaded from an accompanying CD. This DVD illustrated how group work should be conducted in the classroom; how source-based extended writing could be taught; how a heritage investigation could be approached and how portfolios could be compiled. These digital products were subsequently made available for sale to History and Social Science teachers throughout South Africa, thereby spreading the influence of the Short Course to teachers who were not enrolled for it.<sup>54</sup>

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48. For an overview of educational changes in South Africa after 1994, see Black, “Changing Perceptions of History Education”, chapter 5.

49. The Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment is accredited by SAQA and is offered at NQF Level 5.

50. N. Pereira and H. Lubbe (compilers), *Practical Guide for History Teachers, Grade 10* (Unisa, Pretoria, 2008).

51. N. Pereira (compiler), *Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment Resource Booklet* (Unisa, Pretoria, 2008).

52. R. Odendaal, N. Pereira and H. Lubbe (compilers), *Practical Guide for Social Science Teachers, Grades 8 & 9* (Unisa, Pretoria, 2008).

53. See *National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10–12 (General)*, History (Dept of Education, Pretoria, 2003); *National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10-12: Subject Guidelines: History* (Dept of Education, Pretoria, 2008).

54. All of the above items are available from the Unisa History Department.

In view of the relatively small size of the course, the sparse distribution of students and the lack of human and financial resources, ODL techniques such as radio/television broadcasts, video-conferencing and Web 2 applications are not yet viable. Many students still do not have easy access to the internet and so online teaching would not be a wise route to take either. Furthermore, face-to-face contact in the form of teacher training workshops, although ideal, is impossible for the same reasons as those set out above. Such workshops are arranged only upon the request of the Education Department authorities, which rarely occurs,<sup>55</sup> and do not materialise mainly for financial reasons. This explains why the very successful History teachers' workshop that took place in Welkom at the beginning of February 2008 and reached many more History teachers than those registered for the Short Course, did not lead to follow-up workshops despite all the hard work of the organiser, Ms Cecilia Khoabane. This leaves the Short Course team with little option but to develop more CDs and/or DVDs in order to augment and improve the existing audiovisual products.

The Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment recently entered a new phase when it began attracting interest from institutions and organisations other than schools and individual teachers. The Ditsong National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg, for example, enrolled some of its staff members for the Short Course in 2009, the main objective being to enable the museum to market its resources more efficiently and improve service delivery to History teachers and learners visiting the museum.<sup>56</sup> In an attempt to assist these candidates who lacked a teaching background, course projects were adapted to accommodate a museum focus. In addition, a practical workshop was presented at the museum early in 2009, during which museum staff received training in OBE principles and the requirements of History teaching in the FET phase. The museum's Education Officer subsequently reported that the course proved very useful in introducing him to the contents of the new History syllabi and the relevant learning outcomes and assessment standards. It also familiarised him with conditions in the post-apartheid South African classroom, taught him how to design creative worksheets, and assisted him in compressing the museum's vast resources into manageable portions, in line with the guidelines for effective lesson planning.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, a staff member of Albany Museum who is responsible for "public outreach", enrolled for the Short Course in 2010. She sees the course as a way to acquire a better grounding in the new NCS History curriculum and to empower herself in assisting History teachers and learners from schools in the Grahamstown area with their heritage lessons and projects.<sup>58</sup>

In another exciting development, the Board of the Historical Association of South Africa offered to sponsor two History teachers to enrol for the course in 2010<sup>59</sup> in an attempt to strengthen History education at grassroots level. Two committed

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55. The author's own experience confirms that of a historian from North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, who laments the "lack of communication and cooperation in the broader history teaching profession". See K. du Pisani, "Learners, Teachers, Professors and Historical Consciousness", *Yesterday and Today*, 1, May 2007, pp 15–16.
  56. Telephone conversation with Prof. Deon Fourie, Board of Directors of the Military Museum, 15 September 2008; and personal consultation with Alan Sinclair, 17 February 2009.
  57. DH, Short Course File 2: Q3, K.J. Boale, SA National Museum of Military History.
  58. DH: Short Course File 4: N. Sibawu – H. Lubbe, 17 March 2010; 6 May 2010.
  59. DH: Short Course File 4: H. Lubbe – J.S. Bergh, president of Historical Association of South Africa, 27 October 2009.



candidates from previously disadvantaged schools in the Free State were subsequently identified<sup>60</sup> and are well on their way to completing the course. It is hoped that this “partnership” between the Unisa History Department and the Historical Association will be sustained in the years to come.

### Researching the value of the Short Course

Towards the end of 2009 a short questionnaire consisting of six open-ended questions was despatched to all Short Course candidates (n=90)<sup>61</sup> who had completed the course in the years 2006 to 2008. They were asked to comment on why they had enrolled for the course; how the course had helped them as History or Social Science teachers; how the course had helped their learners; what aspects of the course they found most useful; which aspects they would want changed or added when the study material was reviewed; and their views on the audiovisual resources that had been developed under the umbrella of the Short Course. Respondents were given the choice between returning their responses anonymously or providing their names, in which case their contribution would be acknowledged in publications flowing from the research. Most surprisingly, only one of the 37 responses returned<sup>62</sup> (response rate of 41.1%), was submitted without a name. Several respondents expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to air their views and contribute to academic research on educational issues which had a direct impact on their lives.<sup>63</sup> Because most of the respondents had willingly provided their contact details, personalised letters could be despatched in which they were thanked for their contribution and assured of the History Department’s appreciation of their good work in the classroom. In addition, sms technology was used to clarify certain statements raised in response to the questionnaire. This often produced fascinating additional information on teaching conditions in the poorer rural areas and the positive impact of the Short Course on pass rates<sup>64</sup> – an issue which is currently being explored further.

Students enrolling for the course are also offered the opportunity to comment on the tutorial material and practical projects by returning a comment sheet provided at the back of both *Tutorial Letter 101* and the *Practical Guide*. Few students seem to be making use of this option, but the comments and suggestions that have been received,<sup>65</sup> have also been integrated into this article.

### Research findings

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60. DH: Short Course File 4: C.K. Kgoabane (Free State Education Department) – H. Lubbe, 19 October 2009.
  61. This refers to the sample size of 90 participants.
  62. These responses are filed in File 2 of the Short Course archive and are numbered Q1 to Q37.
  63. DH: Short Course File 3: M. Badat – H. Lubbe, undated. Similar appreciation was expressed by several other students who telephoned the History Department.
  64. Sms from N.S. Maxengana, who completed the course in 2008.
  65. These comments are filed in File 3 of the Short Course archive and are unnumbered.

Although small in size, this investigation produced richly-textured material which provides a window into the minds and hearts of teachers who are fighting against great odds to keep the discipline of History alive in South African schools.

When asked why they had decided to enrol for the Short Course, a few individuals mentioned personal, academic, occupational and professional growth as a major consideration.<sup>66</sup> The majority of the respondents, however, were driven by much more specific needs such as assistance in understanding and implementing the requirements of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the new FET History syllabus. In this regard, more experienced teachers were simply looking for a “refresher course” which would build their confidence in teaching the new syllabus and to get a feel of what recently qualified educators were contributing as they emerged from university.<sup>67</sup> Others required assistance of a more fundamental nature. They needed to gain a better understanding of all the various syllabus changes and challenges; get a grip on new content; and acquire new ideas and teaching methods (skills) to teach the new FET syllabus effectively according to the OBE approach.<sup>68</sup> Some were even more specific, mentioning that they needed assistance in setting source-based questions and teaching extended writing; differentiating between the various kinds of rubrics; handling map work in Geography; and acquiring facilitation skills.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, only three respondents explicitly mentioned a need to improve the pass rate.<sup>70</sup>

Adequate guidance from the Government Department of Education (DoE) was apparently not forthcoming.<sup>71</sup> Workshops had either been too superficial, leaving teachers feeling insecure about coping with NCS requirements in terms of the new FET syllabus, despite attending many DoE workshops, or too few were arranged in some parts of the country. One respondent stated that she had received no support and guidance from the DoE, nor had she received any direction from her school, where she was the only History teacher.<sup>72</sup>

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66. DH: Short Course File 2: Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatiele; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q30 – Z.B. Poswa, Vanderbijlpark; Short Course File 4: N. Sibawu – H. Lubbe, 6 May 2010.
67. DH: Short Course File 2: Q9 – M. Lancaster, Grahamstown; Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix.
68. DH: Short Course File 2: Q1 – M. Badat, Middelburg, Mpumalanga; Q4 – I. Brand, Ladysmith; Q6 – D.C. Dube, Ekangala; Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatiele; Q15 – V.M. Maphiri, Hamakuya; Q16 – S.F. Matsoku, Dendron; Q19 – N.J. Moseithe, Taung; Q21 – F.S. Motsoeneng, Three Rivers; Q23 – T. Mtshali, Kwanganase; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge; Q26 – A. Nielsen, Edenvale; Q27 – M.Z. Nkosi, Nongoma; Q30 – Z.B. Poswa, Vanderbijlpark; Q32 – A.J.R. Truter, Lutzville; Q34 – T.R. Zindela, Dimbaza; Q36 – Anonymous.
69. DH: Short Course File 2: Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q14 – M. Miya, Bultfontein.
70. DH: Short Course File 2: Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q13 – S. Maluleke, Elliot.
71. Research conducted by SAIDE between 1999 and 2002 indicates that teachers experienced inadequate support; DoE workshops on OBE were slow to materialize; and the presenters were not well informed about Curriculum 2005 and OBE. See *Consolidated Report on SAIDE's Research into Educational Programmes and Opportunities in Rural Areas*, <http://www.saide.org.za/frontend/>, accessed 6 May 2010.
72. DH: Short Course File 2: Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix; Q20 – M.B. Motsinoni, Ga-Kgapane; Q5 – B. da Silva, Escombe.

Feedback on the question of how the course had helped the participants as History and/or Social Science teachers was quite varied, but generally extremely positive. Not only had the course provided fresh knowledge, new ideas and additional resource material, but had also encouraged at least some teachers to do further reading.<sup>73</sup> With an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the practicality of the National Curriculum Statement and OBE in general, candidates had managed to move away from a purely content-driven teaching style towards an interactive, learner-centred approach, which fully involved learners in the process of historical discovery.<sup>74</sup> At the same time, the course had broadened teachers' understanding of History skills and study methods and had taught them how to conduct classroom activities, such as group work, oral history projects, heritage investigation and source-based and extended writing. In general, it had improved their ability to analyse and interpret historical sources, think more creatively and guide learners towards achieving the various learning outcomes.<sup>75</sup>

Planning and assessment within an NCS framework had apparently been two major challenges for History teachers. Again the Short Course seemed to have brought great relief as many respondents commented on how useful the course in general, and the *Practical Guide* in particular, had been in preparing subject frameworks, work schedules and “demystifying” lesson planning.<sup>76</sup> They had also acquired a better understanding of continuous assessment and a wider variety of assessment strategies. Unlike in the past, they were now able to set questions that met NCS requirements and were consciously grading questions from basic to advanced, in order to provide for both the weaker and more gifted learner respectively.<sup>77</sup>

Although respondents were not specifically asked about their pass rates,<sup>78</sup> some spontaneously shared impressive statistics. In the case of the teacher quoted at the beginning of this article, her Grade 12 pass rate improved by 69%.<sup>79</sup> For another it increased by between 60% and 70% in the year during which he completed the Short Course [2006] and then “rocketed to 100%”.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, a student from Polokwane

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73. DH: Short Course File 2: Q1 – M. Badat, Middelburg, Mpumalanga; Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q8 – T. Kruger, Johannesburg; Q35 – S.A. Zulu, Nongoma.
74. DH: Short Course File 2: Q1 – M. Badat, Middelburg; Q14 – M. Miya, Bultfontein; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge; Q27 – M.Z. Nkosi, Nongoma; Q9 – M. Lancaster, Grahamstown.
75. DH: Short Course File 2: Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q6 – D.C. Dube, Ekangala; Q21 – F.S. Motsoeneng, Three Rivers; Q32 – A.J.R. Truter, Lutzville; Q36 – Anonymous; Q13 – S. Maluleke, Elliot; Q9 – M. Lancaster, Grahamstown.
76. DH: Short Course File 2: Q16 – S.F. Matsoku, Dendron. See also Q2 – L. Barayi, Queenstown; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatielie; Q15 – V.M. Maphiri, Hamakuya; Q20 – M.B. Motsinoni, Ga-Kgapane; Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere.
77. DH: Short Course File 2: Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatielie; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q13 – S. Maluleke, Elliot; Q15 – V.M. Maphiri, Hamakuya; Q21 – F.S. Motsoeneng, Three Rivers; Q23 – T. Mtshali, Kwangwanase; Q19 – N.J. Mosetlhe, Taung; Q9 – M. Lancaster, Grahamstown.
78. This aspect is currently being explored further and will be commented on in more detail at the upcoming conference of the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) scheduled for 24–25 September 2010.
79. Sms from N.S. Maxengana, late December 2009.
80. DH: Short Course File 2: Q30 – Z.B. Poswa, Vanderbijlpark.

reported a much improved pass rate on the comment form at the back of *Tutorial Letter 101*.<sup>81</sup>

On a psychological level, the Short Course achieved more than it had aimed for. Respondents clearly felt more empowered, more motivated and enjoyed their teaching more. Several mentioned how their self-confidence had improved, how this had made them less reliant on a particular text book and more willing to experiment, and how it had prepared them for allowing their learners greater intellectual freedom in the classroom. Candidates had clearly acquired some facilitation skills and had become increasingly confident in managing classroom activities. Moreover, Short Course studies had a positive impact on cross-curricular teaching<sup>82</sup> and led at least one candidate to comment:

It [the Short Course in School History Enrichment] has enabled me to be a flying star in History, and the local schools time and again call on me to help them in History. It has helped me to improve my teaching skills in History. Now I am at ease in History; I am the “Master of history”, believe me.<sup>83</sup>

Ultimately, qualifying for this Unisa certificate instilled a sense of pride in students and, at least for one grateful candidate, it proved to be “life changing”.<sup>84</sup>

To what extent, one might ask, did enhanced knowledge and teaching capacity on the part of teachers filter through to their learners? This research project has confirmed the critically important link between inspirational, quality teaching and good learner performance.<sup>85</sup> According to the feedback that has been accumulated, learners clearly benefited hugely in terms of skills development. They became more research orientated than before and acquired a range of skills in terms of selection, critical thinking and analysis, interpretation, application, communication and study skills. In addition, they were better able to detect bias in historical sources and connect social concepts to the real world. Finally, teachers reported that they were better equipped to teach extended writing as a result of their Short Course studies and were therefore noticing significant improvement in their learners’ History essays in terms of focus and structure.<sup>86</sup>

But there were also broader positive influences of a more psychological nature that should be considered. Perceptions of History as a difficult and boring subject about dead people, had clearly changed as a result of a transformed teaching style.

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81. DH: Short Course File 3: M.M. Mailula, Polokwane.

82. DH: Short Course File 2: Q1 – M. Badat, Middelburg; Q5 – B. da Silva, Escombe; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatielle; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix; Q6 – D.C. Dube, Ekangala; Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge; Q34 – T.R. Zindela, Dimbaza; Short Course File 3: M. Badat, Middelburg, Mpumalanga, in a personal note (undated) included in an assignment.

83. DH: Short Course File 2: Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha.

84. DH: Short Course File 2: Q14 – M. Miya, Bultfontein.

85. See also R. King, “Be Passionate about History – Marketing History to Learners and Parents”, *Yesterday and Today*, Special Edition, 2006, pp 33–38.

86. DH: Short Course File 2: Q10 – P. Leboea, Matatielle; Q13 – S. Maluleke, Elliot; Q20 – M.B. Motsinoni, Ga-Kgapane; Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q16 – S.F. Matsoku, Dendron; Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix; Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q2 – L.N. Barayi, Queenstown; Q23 – T. Mtshali, Kwangwanase; Q35 – S.A. Zulu, Nongoma; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile.

History learners had gained confidence and consequently had become more willing to participate in classroom activities. In addition, they were more motivated and independent, taking responsibility for their own learning. Short Course candidates who had acquired more direction and better focus managed to give their learners a clearer idea of what was expected. This, in turn, encouraged learners to work harder towards known goals and ensured that they were better prepared for the final examination. A more learner-centred and interactive approach also made learners more comfortable in answering source-based questions and applying historical concepts. Moreover, it triggered debate in the classroom and shaped values and attitudes such as building empathy. Ultimately, learners grew to love History and became more appreciative of the value of History as an avenue towards developing creative thinking and understanding the present.<sup>87</sup>

When asked what aspects of the Short Course candidates found most useful, the *Practical Guide* in particular received a general “thumbs up”. It was described as “an excellent reference document”<sup>88</sup> which had been carefully thought through, created a solid foundation for the National Curriculum Statement and ventured where the Department of Education apparently feared to tread.<sup>89</sup> Specific aspects of the guide that had been particularly helpful in addressing problem areas included lesson planning; source-based and extended writing; guidelines for group work in the classroom; guidelines for cartoon analysis and map work in Social Science; clarification on learning outcomes and assessment standards; and use of templates, rubrics and matrixes for assessment.<sup>90</sup>

As regular revision of the tutorial material is an important feature of this short course, respondents were invited to make suggestions for improvement. Some asked for more source-based questions with memoranda and more learner activities, clearly not realising that the objective of the course was to help teachers to be creative and not to spoon feed them. Perhaps more important suggestions revealed a need for more assistance with oral history projects, heritage investigation and teaching extended writing to learners who do not have English as a mother tongue.<sup>91</sup> These aspects were

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87. DH: Short Course File 2: Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q16 – S.F. Matsoku, Dendron; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge; Q34 – T.R. Zindela, Dimbaza; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatielle; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q26 – A. Nielsen, Edenvale; Q30 – Z.B. Poswa, Vanderbijlpark; Q6 – D.C. Dube, Ekangala; Q19 – N.J. Moseithe, Taung Station.
88. DH: Short Course File 2: Q26 – A. Nielsen, Edenvale.
89. DH: Short Course File 2: Q9 – M. Lancaster, Grahamstown. In the same vein, see Q5 – B. da Silva, Escombe; Q36 – Anonymous; Q20 – M.B. Motsinoni, Ga-Kgapane; Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q16 – S.F. Matsoku, Dendron.
90. DH: Short Course File 2: Q4 – I. Brand, Ladysmith; Q6 – D.C. Dube, Ekangala; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatielle; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q13 – S. Maluleke, Elliot; Q15 – V.M. Maphiri, Hamakuya; Q19 – N.J. Moseithe, Taung Station; Q21 – F.S. Motsoeneng, Three Rivers; Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge; Q26 – A. Nielsen, Edenvale; Q27 – M.Z. Nkosi, Nongoma; Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix; Q30 – Z.B. Poswa, Vanderbijlpark; Q32 – A.J.R. Truter, Lutzville; Q34 – T.R. Zindela, Dimbaza; Q35 – S.A. Zulu, Nongoma; Q36 – Anonymous.
91. DH: Short Course File 2: Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge; Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix; Q5 – B. da Silva, Escombe; Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatielle; Q20 – M.B. Motsinoni, Ga-Kgapane.

indeed addressed in greater depth on the “First Aid for FET” DVD, but many respondents seemed not to have had access to these resources at the time of responding to the questionnaire. They had either completed the Short Course before the introduction of the two CDs and DVD and were therefore unable to comment on their usefulness,<sup>92</sup> or had been unable to order these items because their schools would not finance them.<sup>93</sup> A problem for some students was that their schools did not have the electronic equipment to access the CDs and DVD,<sup>94</sup> but the majority were simply unaware of these resources<sup>95</sup> despite the annual marketing of the course and its products to secondary schools across South Africa. Those who did comment found the guidelines for formal assessment and compiling learner and educator portfolios particularly useful; thought that the CDs and DVD helped to allay fears relating to the NCS approach; and appreciated the entertainment value which helped to fight boredom.<sup>96</sup>

## Conclusion

Although enrolments for History at South African institutions of higher learning are on the rise<sup>97</sup> and public history is vibrant,<sup>98</sup> History remains under severe pressure in secondary schools. Government has marginalised the subject, and so it has lost its primacy as a motor of nation building and cultural engineering despite this being strongly asserted in the school syllabus. Education faculties have also abandoned history education, while academic History departments have not embraced it, many opting for Heritage instead. Teaching History is clearly relegated in a way that public history is not. This has to do with new elites in textbook writing and an antipathy sometimes to embedded ideological intentions that are considered essential at school level in the interest of forging new social identities. Nevertheless, the History teacher remains very relevant in the twenty-first century.<sup>99</sup> But this currently marginalised teacher needs empowerment through continuous in-service training – training which is not only appropriate in terms of knowledge and skills development, but also offers the right kind of emotional support that can break down isolation, build self-esteem in

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92. DH: Short Course File 2: Q10 – P.D. Leboea, Matatiele; Q25 – V.H. Ndlovu, Cato Ridge.
93. See, for example, DH: Short Course File 2: Q21 – F.S. Motsoeneng, Three Rivers. More students raised this point in telephone conversations with the author.
94. DH: Short Course File 2: Q26 – A. Nielsen, Edenvale; Q34 – T.R. Zindela, Dimbaza; Q35 – S.A. Zulu, Nongoma.
95. DH: Short Course File 2: Q2 – L.N. Barayi, Queenstown; Q4 – I. Brand, Ladysmith; Q5 – B. da Silva, Escombe; Q7 – Z.A. Gontsana, Mthatha; Q8 – T. Kruger, Welobie; Q11 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane; Q13 – S. Maluleke, Elliot; Q14 – M. Miya, Bultfontein; Q15 – V.M. Maphiri, Hamakuya; Q16 – S.F. Matsoku, Dendron; Q19 – N.J. Moseithe, Taung Station; Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q14 – M. Miya, Bultfontein; Q23 – T. Mtshali, Kwangwanase; Q24 – S.L. Mzila, Lady Frere; Q27 – M.Z. Nkosi, Nongoma; Q29 – J.A. Peters, Phoenix; Q32 – A.J.R. Truter, Lutzville.
96. DH: Short Course File 2: Q12 – L.K. Magagula, Sibuyile; Q6 – D.C. Dube, Ekangala; Q37 – M.M. Mailula, Polokwane.
97. DH: Student statistics, 1990 to 2009. This is confirmed in conversations with colleagues who are in contact with History departments at other South African universities.
98. See Kros, “Public History/Heritage”, pp 63–77; C. Rassool, “Power, Knowledge and the Politics of Public Pasts”, *African Studies*, 69, 1, April 2010, pp 79–101.
99. See P. McMahon, “How Relevant is the History Teacher in the 21st Century?”, *Yesterday and Today*, 1, May 2007, pp 255–259.

a non-paternalistic manner, strengthen motivation, and inculcate perseverance. The Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment, sometimes perceived as peripheral to the academic activities of Unisa and its History Department, has proved to be effective in meeting all the above criteria. Moreover, it has been a very enriching experience for the course coordinator who has been inspired by the sincere gratitude of the students;<sup>100</sup> the support of successive CODs; financial assistance from the Executive Dean of the College of Human Sciences; the tacit support of some colleagues; and the space that the course has provided to be creative. In addition, it has enabled her to create a presence for the Unisa History Department and help build the discipline at community level. Finally, it has provided an avenue to implement a philosophy of life geared towards adding value to the lives of people, thereby “breathing life” into those on the fringes.

### **Abstract**

#### **Life on the fringes: The role of the Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment in empowering teachers**

This article explores the role of the Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment in empowering secondary school teachers to teach History and Social Science more effectively and creatively. It outlines the rationale behind the introduction of the course in 1998/9 and the various phases in tutorial materials development in response to continuous curriculum and education policy changes. Based on personal reflection and the findings of qualitative research conducted during 2009, the article highlights the marginalisation of History teachers, learners who elect to take History and professional historians engaged in teacher development, against the backdrop of a discipline that finds itself under severe pressure. It argues that this Short Course not only plays a significant role in History skills development at secondary school level, but that it also inspires and enhances the self-confidence of teachers and learners, thereby “breathing life” into both its clients and its developer, simultaneously assisting in keeping the discipline alive at secondary school level. Moreover, the course has uncovered admirable enthusiasm for their profession and subject among a small yet dedicated body of History teachers which is currently radiating wider than the History classroom into the heritage sector and the community at large.

### **Opsomming**

#### **Lewe op die periferie: Die rol van die Unisa Kort Kursus in Skoolgeskiedenis-verryking in die bemagtiging van onderwysers**

Hierdie artikel ondersoek die rol van die Unisa Kort Kursus in Skoolgeskiedenis-verryking in die bemagtiging van onderwysers om Geskiedenis en Sosiale Wetenskap

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100. See, for example, DH: Short Course File 3: M.T. Phalane’s reply to the questionnaire at the back of *Tutorial Letter 101*. Short Course students also make use of 24-hour cell phone contact with the course coordinator to discuss problems and express appreciation.

doeltreffender en meer kreatief op sekondêre skoolvlak aan te bied. Dit gee 'n oorsig van die beweegredes vir die instelling van die kursus in 1998/9 en die onderskeie fases in die ontwikkeling van studiemateriaal in reaksie op voortdurende verandering in onderwysbeleid en skoolleerplanne. Gegronde op persoonlike refleksie en die bevindinge van kwalitatiewe navorsing wat in 2009 onderneem is, beklemtoon die artikel die marginalisasie van geskiedenisonderwysers, -leerders en professionele historici betrokke by onderwysontwikkeling teen die agtergrond van 'n dissipline wat onder groot druk verkeer. Dit betoog dat hierdie Kort Kursus nie net 'n belangrike rol speel in die ontwikkeling van geskiedenisvaardighede op sekondêre skoolvlak nie, maar dat dit ook onderwysers en leerders inspireer en selfvertroue bou waarlangs die kursus "lewe blaas" in sowel sy kliënte as die kursusontwikkelaar en tegelykertyd help om die historiese dissipline lewendig te hou op sekondêre skoolvlak. Meer nog – die kursus het 'n bewonderingswaardige entoesiasme vir hul werk en vak onder 'n klein maar toegewyde groep onderwysers aan die lig gebring wat tans besig is om wyer as die geskiedenisklaskamer na die erfenissektor en die breër samelewing uit te kring.

### **Keywords**

Department of History; Unisa; History; Social Sciences; South Africa; secondary schools; teachers; teacher training; open and distance learning; outcomes-based education (OBE); FET phase; Unisa Short Course in School History Enrichment; school history; heritage; museums; electronic resources; Historical Association of South Africa.

### **Sleutelwoorde**

Department Geskiedenis; Unisa; Geskiedenis; Sosiale Wetenskappe; Suid-Afrika; sekondêre skole; onderwysers; onderwysopleiding; afstandsonderrig; uitkomsgebaseerde onderrig (UGO0; VOO-fase; Unisa Kort Kursus in Skoolgeskiedenis-verryking; skoolgeskiedenis; erfenis; museums; elektroniese hulpbronne; Historiese Genootskap van Suid-Afrika.