

Herinneringe / Reminiscences

The Historical Association of South Africa's funding of two deserving History teachers to enrol for the *UNISA Short Course in School History Enrichment*

Since the inception of the National Curriculum Statement, because of the shifting paradigms in education, things seemed bleak and I even contemplated leaving my profession as an educator. I simply could not come to grips with Learning Outcomes, Assessment Standards and the historical content as I was expected to. Through some interventions and assistance from my learning facilitator, Cecilia Khoabane, I was introduced to the *UNISA Short Course in School History Enrichment*. That was when I started seeing things in a different light.

Through hard work and zeal I managed to acquit myself very well in my studies and I passed the course with distinction. The course was very interesting and I acquired a great wealth of knowledge and techniques which have made me far more at ease with providing the learners with tuition. I was introduced to a variety of approaches on how to deal with sources, extend writing skills, conduct group work, and undertake lesson planning. I am now also confident with the values and the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards expected for every lesson.

Comments from my tutors were very positive and encouraging and I am looking forward to working together with them in future. Since we are working as a team in our district I am able to share the knowledge acquired through my studies at UNISA with them for the betterment of results in our district. The methods and approaches acquired helped immensely to inculcate a passion for History among colleagues. I am also encouraging other colleagues to enrol for the short course in order to improve their teaching skills.

M.O.E. Lebona

In South Africa a paradigm shift on how we are thinking about education is occurring. But this shift is going to make no difference at all if it is not followed through into parallel shifts into our practices as day-to-day educators. Our competence is judged by our demonstrated abilities to involve learners in their learning; to enable them to think and solve problems; and to develop in our learners a deep understanding of the subject we teach. This is where the *UNISA Short Course in School History Enrichment* came in to provide the appropriate knowledge and methodology.

The Introduction of the new curriculum and Outcomes Based Education has proven to be a challenge among educators mainly due to the

fact that the training of educators is not thorough enough. Through experience in teaching one is continuously forced to ask this question: How do we want learners to know things and to demonstrate their competence? The outcomes, goals, aims and objectives become only statements of intent. They provide us with the bigger picture of what we hope our learners will achieve, but without details for the teacher on how to do this. Nor were we told how to develop lesson plans. The short course in History from UNISA helped me realise that by educating educators of what to do, they are able to show learners how to achieve, to develop competence as prescribed in the outcomes, and to demonstrate their competence.

Some of the components in this short course include planning. I am proud to announce that I am a good planner today. I am able to generate detailed descriptions of what the learners must be able to do by the end of the learning process. The content to be taught, method to be used and level of expectation from learners to demonstrate competence are some of the things planning has taught me. I now also know how this competence will be demonstrated by the learners. This also includes detailed descriptions of the kind of performance learners must produce in order to demonstrate that they have achieved the outcome.

My sincere gratitude goes to Ms Cecilia Khoabane, Lejweleputswa History learning facilitator for believing in me. She is and always will be an inspiration to many of us educators, because she continuously seeks to empower us and make us better people. It is through her that I came to know about this course in History and she encouraged me to continue with it.

It would be poignant if I did not remember the tutelage of Ms Lubbe, course coordinator, in her endeavour to make us better people. She courageously whittled and mentored us despite disappointments and the poor performances we displayed. Her work will go a long way in making future historians a force to be reckoned with.

*M.G. Nhlapo*¹

1. Both bursary holders, on completion of the *UNISA Short Course in School History Enrichment*, were appointed as sub-examiners for the Grade 12 History examination in the Free State.