

CONFERENCE 2009
MOVIE MAKES MAGIC!
CONFERENCE REPORT
THE 2009 SASHT CONFERENCE
AT CRAWFORD COLLEGE, SANDTON

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During the weeks preceding the conference there were times when I wondered if it would happen at all. There seemed to be a never ending series of glitches and problems which are perhaps the inevitable view of those on the organising committee of any major event. As it happened it was a lively, busy and successful conference which will probably be remembered by those who attended for many years to come.

Crawford College extended a very welcoming hand to us all and provided more than adequate facilities for the speakers and a technical crew of learners who cheerfully saw to all the electronic needs of the conference. Arend Carl began with a partial retrospective view but reminded us that the increase in technology both in the classroom and outside it, has not replaced the need for critical thinking and analysis. As the main thrust of the conference was around the role of technology in teaching, this was a pertinent reminder.

Mary Reynolds of St Stithians Boys' College then took us through the way boys at her school were taught to be technologically literate rather than simply knowing how to use technology. It was also a lesson in how to train learners to avoid the "cut and paste" mentality that leads to so much plagiarism. We were then taken through the Maropeng experience with its interactive technology used to bring history alive.

A break for tea with excellent eats, was followed by a look at three very different commemorations of our past: the Voortrekker Monument, the SA Museum of Military History, and Mapungubwe. The presentations each took a very different approach to how we commemorate our past but all reminding us of the need to help learners to discover and appreciate their heritage.

We were then led through some experiences of history starting with a light-hearted look at aspects of the American Civil War and other more recent history on a visit to the U.S.A. in August; the harrowing problems of teaching mixed classes of South African learners the issues faced by the TRC and what

we, as educators, lived through; then a look at the Holocaust and its horrors through the roles of perpetrator, bystander, upstander and victim.

Lunch was a necessary break before departing for a full afternoon of excursions. First to Constitution Hill where we enjoyed a guided tour under the enthusiastic and knowledgeable Pius; then on to Liliesleaf Farm and the very hi-tech portrayal of the horrors of apartheid and the Rivonia Trial which many of us felt was geared more to entertain than to teach. From Liliesleaf we returned to Crawford before departing to the Rivonia Sports Club for an excellent Conference Dinner.

Saturday morning saw the only parallel sessions of the conference when we went back to looking at basics such as source analysis in one session and the impact of different teaching methods in the other. These were followed by the AGM at which the constitution of the society was accepted and a new committee elected. Tea was a welcome break after that before the final session which looked at the variety of source material available and especially the role of the internet, educational DVDs and is an inter-active whiteboard necessary for the modern history teacher?

Hectic, exhausting, stimulating - the conference was all of this and the entire conference was then given to all the delegates on a flash drive to relive and rethink it at their leisure. Thank you to all concerned.