Centre for Higher Education Development

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
CENTRE FOR INFORMATION LITERACY
CENTRE FOR OPEN LEARNING
HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION
AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES UNIT

DEAN'S OFFICE

"An overview of CHED's research output points to a body of scholarship which is responsive to pressing national and institutional needs in higher education."





Dean's Report

The vision of the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) is to be a cross-faculty unit that contributes to continual improvement in the quality of higher education through widening access, promoting excellence through equity, developing the curriculum in partnership with faculties, and enhancing the competence of graduates by ensuring the provision of key skills.

CHED's research mission is to ensure that its educational development work is based on rigorous and ethical research that will serve the objectives of providing equitable access to higher education, enabling social redress through higher education, and generally strengthening the quality of teaching and learning in higher education at UCT, in South Africa, and in countries with similar needs. CHED's research arises from both institutional need and individual interest, comprising all areas connected to teaching and learning, including the basic disciplines in which some of us are based.

A further objective is to enable systemic improvement through the research-led development of policy options at national and institutional level. For this reason, a considerable proportion of the research efforts of CHED staff goes into institutional research (for example, into the impact of the introduction of anonymous marking on student performance, or the reasons why some students in good academic standing drop out of the system), and national research (for example, in response to requests from such agencies as the Department of Higher Education and Training or the Higher Education Quality Committee).

An overview of CHED's research output points to a body of scholarship which is responsive to pressing national and institutional needs in higher education. Examples include research into the interface between schooling and higher education and issues of access, selection and placement;

improving the quality of teaching and learning in disciplinespecific contexts such as Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics and Information Systems; the role of tertiary educators in a changing higher education landscape; and the challenges and possibilities of Information and Communication Technology for teaching and learning. CHED contributes to national debate on these issues, among many, through a strong presence in South African journals (e.g. South African Journal of Higher Education, Southern Africa Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, South African Computer Journal, South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science). CHED's contribution extends internationally as CHED staff are now consistently publishing in the leading journals in higher education (e.g. Teaching in Higher Education, Higher Education, British Education Research Journal) as well as leading journals in specialist areas (e.g. Journal of Applied Linguistics, American Journal of Physics, British Journal of Educational Technology). This illustrative sample of journals in which CHED staff publish also points to the multidisciplinary nature of CHED's collective research output.

With respect to the achievements of 2009, consistent with UCT's overall pattern, CHED's level of research output has continued to increase. Highlights for the year include the publication of two special editions in leading international journals which were co-edited by CHED staff and include several papers by UCT authors. In addition to its existing five NRF-rated researchers, 2009 saw the addition of three new NRF-rated researchers. As CHED's level of research activity and output continues to increase, we are confident that our contributions to 'research-led' teaching and learning processes at the University will grow apace, as well as our contributions to the growing international field of higher education studies in its broadest sense.

Associate Professor Nan Yeld

Dean of Higher Education Development

NATIONAL BENCHMARK TESTS CAUSE A STIR

From the moment the results from the pilot National Benchmark Tests (NBT) were announced, they caused a few flutters among universities. After all, the test, conducted with just over 11 500 first-time-entering students at seven South African universities in February 2009, showed that about half would need some sort of academic support if they were to complete their studies. This came as no surprise, however, since several studies have shown that only about half the students entering higher education leave with a qualification. As 2009's first-year university students are the first graduates from South African schools' new outcomesbased education (OBE) curriculum, the dots from the NBT results were quickly connected to the OBE's National Senior Certificate qualification. Perhaps too quickly, suggested Prof Nan Yeld, dean of the Centre for Higher Education and head of the NBT study, who noted that the school system as a whole is still in poor repair. "The NBT, actually, was not meant to say much about what's happening at schools," said Yeld. "What it is trying to do is create a uniform set of instruments so that higher education institutions will know more about what they need to do."



ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

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DAVIDOWITZ, B. AND CHITTLEBOROUGH, G. 2009. Linking the macroscopic and sub-microscopic levels: diagrams. In J.K. Gilbert and D. Treagust (Eds.), Multiple Representations in Chemical Education, pp. 169-191. Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media B.V. ISBN 9781402088711.07021 5583 7.

SCOTT, I.R. 2009. Academic development in South African higher education. In E. Bitzer (Ed.), Higher Education in South Africa: A Scholarly Look Behind the Scene, pp. 21-49. South Africa: SUN MeDIA Stellenbosch. ISBN 9781920338145.

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SMITH, L. 2009. An analysis of the impact of pedagogic interventions in first-year academic development and mainstream courses in microeconomics. South African Journal of Economics, 77(1): 162-178.

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THESEN, L.K. 2009. Researching 'ideological becoming' in lectures: challenges for knowing differently. Studies in Higher Education, 34(4): 391-402.

Research Output

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CRAIG, T.S. 2009. "It's not my job to teach them this stuff!" Development of school mathematics skills within the tertiary environment. In D. Wessels (Ed.), Proceedings of the Seventh Southern Right Delta Conference on the Teaching and Learning of Undergraduate Mathematics and Statistics, 30 November - 4 December 2009, Gordon's Bay, South Africa. ISBN 9780620459792.

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CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

CZERNIEWICZ, L. AND BROWN, C. 2009. A virtual wheel of fortune? Enablers and constraints. In S. Marshall, W. Kinuthia and W. Taylor (Eds.), Bridging the Knowledge Divide: Educational Technology for Development, pp. 57-76. Charlotte NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc. ISBN 9781607521099.

CZERNIEWICZ, L. AND BROWN, C. 2009. Intermediaries and infrastructure as agents: the mediation of e-learning policy and use by institutional culture. In T. Mayes, D. Morrison, H. Mellar, P. Bullen and M. Oliver (Eds.), Transforming Higher Education Through Technology-Enhanced Learning, pp. 107-121. Heslington, New York: The Higher Education Academy. ISBN 9781907207112.

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CENTRE FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

AUTHORED BOOKS

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DEAN, C. AND DE JAGER, K. 2009. Statistics for electronic resources. South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science, 75: 76-85.

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MASANGO, C.A. 2009. Understanding copyright in support of scholarship: some possible challenges to scholars and academic librarians in the digital environment? International Journal of Information Management, 29: 232-236.

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NASSIMBENI, M. 2009. Report of the "Train the Trainers in Information Literacy" Workshop Hosted by the Centre for Information Literacy, University of Cape Town, Republic of South Africa, 4-6 October 2008. International Library Review, 41: 262-267.

STUDENTS DIAL INTO EDUCATION NETWORK

The cellphone, it turns out not surprisingly, is the South African student's most prized electronic gizmo. This according to a sixyear-old study on the access to and use of ICTs for teaching and learning in higher education institutions, conducted by Assoc Prof Laura Czerniewicz, Cheryl Brown and a small team of assistants at UCT's Centre for Higher Education Development. The project kicked off with a baseline survey among staff and students in the Western Cape in 2004, which showed that the uptake of ICTs was poor. By a second-phase study in 2007, extended to six additional institutions around the country, the situation had improved markedly. Although, the research found, it's the omnipresent cellphone rather than the PC - that could be an economic issue that rules the technological roost. But mobile or Mac, most ICT use among students is of the no-frills kind, largely for surfing the Internet or writing essays, revealed a more intimate thirdphase survey, run in 2009. Only among small pockets of students is ICT used more innovatively. While the study made a point of not naming universities, it divided institutions into two groups. So while Corporate Structured Institutions implemented sufficient policy, they did not encourage innovation or variety of use. On the other hand, the more relaxed Structured Collegial Institutions do inspire innovation, but uptake and technical support are longterm challenges.



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UNDERWOOD, P.G. 2009. Supporting the information needs of entrepreneurs in South Africa. International Library Review, 58: 569-580.

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CENTRE FOR OPEN LEARNING

ARTICLES IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

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CREATIVE WRITING

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FISKE, I.J. (WRITING AS DE KOK) 2009. Pilgrimage. In Floor Houben (Ed.), Ze kwamen om een dichter te zien, pp. 478-480. Netherlands: Wagner en Van Santen en Stichting Poetry International.

FISKE, I.J. (WRITING AS DE KOK) 2009. Poem in Norwegian English Language Teaching Program. Cape Town: New Passport. [Online] http://www.kunnskap.no.

FISKE, I.J. (WRITING AS DE KOK) 2009. The Head of the Household, pp. 479. Netherlands: Wagner en Van Santen en Stichting Poetry International.

FISKE, I.J. (WRITING AS DE KOK) 2009. Time to go. In A-Z of African Writers, pp. 74-75. Pietermoritzburg: Shuter & Shooter (Pty) Ltd. ISBN 9781430600015.

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HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

EDITED BOOKS

COOPER, L.H. AND WALTERS, S. (EDS.) 2009. Learning/ Work: Turning Work and Lifelong Learning Inside Out. 378pp. Cape Town: HSRC Press. ISBN 9780796922830.

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