



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

30 November 2018

Newly qualified teachers get support from UCT

In 2014 about 14 000 South African teachers left the profession. With the attrition rate so severe, the country is forecast to have only 7% more teachers in 2025 than it had in 2013.

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) School of Education's Newly Qualified Teachers Project supports first-year teachers to enrich their job experience, but also to help address attrition in the profession. The programme is available to all recently qualified teachers across the range, from Grade one to matric.

Associate Professor Cathy Kell, director of the School of Education, commented: "As a result of the extensive professional and personal pressures placed on teachers, and the alarming attrition rate nationwide, the School of Education started the project in 2016 in response to requests from our graduates who often struggled and gave up."

Far from being a half-day job as is often the perception, teachers today bear a huge responsibility for good results and upholding the standards of education.

The project aims to step into the gap which sees South Africa unable to offer any standardised induction or mentorship programmes to first-year teachers. While some schools try to provide in-house support, Kell said, these teachers were mostly left to fend for themselves in extremely demanding jobs at schools that were often also resource-constrained. It provides critical support to Postgraduate Certificate (PGCE) students entering the classroom full-time.

One participant in the 2018 cohort, who successfully completed the support course, said the session offered "a safe space to share our thoughts and feelings about teaching". She added that they also learnt a lot about teaching, especially classroom management, which she found extremely beneficial.

The graduates were supported by project manager Judy Sacks, School of Education staff, and an advisory committee that includes Kell, a teacher, the Western Cape Department of Education and UCT's Schools Development Unit.

Kell stressed that being a new teacher thrust into a new classroom can be a very stressful and lonely experience.

"The knowledge that our staff have of the situation in Western Cape schools, and the unique characteristics of each school, is invaluable in developing these desperately needed support networks," she said.

Among the support the new teachers enjoy are interactive seminars which offer ongoing professional development throughout the year, school visits and classroom observation, as well one-on-one mentoring.

The programme also acts as a resource base to strengthen teaching capacity and provides a digital platform for new teachers to access resources.

Sacks said they were committed to keeping talented and passionate teachers motivated, supported and in the profession.

"A greater objective is to create school climates that are supportive and caring, so that newly qualified teachers are appropriately mentored to meet the challenge of teaching in diverse classrooms.

"We also want to ensure they have the academic and social skills to provide meaningful access for all learners," she said.

The project's growing reputation has already seen many of the current cohort of PGCE students register to be part of the initiative next year.

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Angelique Botha

Media Liaison and Monitoring Assistant
Communication and Marketing Department
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch
Tel: +27 (21) 650 2583
Cell: +27 (64) 276 6234
Email: angelique.botha@uct.ac.za
Website: www.uct.ac.za