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Produced by students and staff of Culture, Communication & Media Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

text



The annual Kalahari field trip is an exciting research adventure that gives CCMS students the opportunity to put their academic training into real world practice



Photo: Brigitte Logie

# Kalahari capers

TEN OF THE most valiant students from CCMS opted for an experience of a lifetime when joining Prof. Tomaselli on his 10th annual trip to the enthralling Kalahari to visit the #Khomani in the Northern Cape of South Africa and !Xoo in southern Botswana.

Many had expectations and questions; will we meet people like the characters in *God's Must be Crazy*, what is the correct name to use - San or Bushman? These expectations were soon proven to be rather romanticized and questions of naming were quickly resolved when the communities themselves, told us they are identified with "Bushman" as a form of resistance against external naming.

Although our hosts were welcoming and entertaining, they are also devastatingly poor. Our trip took us from 'Die Prof's' (as Prof. Tomaselli is known in the Kalahari) house in Westville, to Kimberley where we spent three nights. From there we travelled to Andriesvale and Witraai - home to the #Khomani

We camped at Molopo Lodge and discovered the meaning of frostbite, and after a thrilling night of game viewing in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, we arrived at Ngwatle - home to the !Xoo. Throughout this journey we discussed, and sometimes argued, over what it means to be 'a Bushman' and delved into other discussions with our hosts, interactive knowledge was exchanged during this journey.

The !Xoo also joined in on some of these

*By Brigitte Logie*

ponderings and delighted in getting the chance to ask *us* questions and learn more about 'the other' (the intriguing 'Westerners'). On one such occasion three !Xoo girls sang traditional songs around our bonfire, and we returned the favour by attempting to sing some of our most memorable songs. This proved to be most challenging and often ended in peals of laughter by both parties. This is participatory research inaugurated.

The time away from the cocoon of urban civilization resulted in most of us learning more about ourselves - when we had originally thought we were there to learn about our hosts.

Surprisingly, when the 17 nights came to an abrupt end we were all sad about the prospect of returning home. Friends had been made and our minds had been enriched. The Kalahari trip truly was an experience that we will never forget.



Photo: Laurence ...

CCMS students on the 2009 Kalahari trip

# From The Big Hole to Big Opportunities

**T**HE BIG QUESTION on most students' minds is what to do once they have completed their undergraduate degrees.

Often their main concern is whether their university education has adequately prepared them for the working world. Udesha Moodley, who completed her BSocSci Honours degree last year, dismisses this because she firmly believes her postgraduate studies in the CCMS department at Howard College, UKZN, have equipped her to confidently enter the 'real' world.

Udesha recently paid a visit to her old campus to talk to a group of students who will be embarking on a trip to the Kalahari in June as part of the CCMS Honours course *Visual Anthropology: Re-thinking Indigeneity*. Having participated in the trip herself when she was a student, Udesha was invited to share her experiences with the new students. During her visit she emphasised the correlation between her CCMS Honours courses and the real world, saying that "In a CCMS Honours degree the emphasis is on important things like inter-cultural communication. And you know, most jobs, most companies and a lot of life in general has to do with communicating with diverse others and breaking down cultural barriers".

It was during her trip to the Kalahari that Udesha really began to appreciate the value of her CCMS studies. En route to the Kalahari, she and the other students spent some time

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by **Sertanya Reddy**

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conducting research in Kimberley. It was here that Udesha developed her Honours project dealing with Kimberley's Big Hole as a form of cultural heritage. Her project stirred up a lot of interest in Kimberley's tourism industry and she will soon be invited back to speak to Kimberley's business chamber and tourism groups. According to Udesha, "My project started off like a little seed and then it branched off into so many different areas". What had the most profound impact on Udesha was that her academic CCMS project actually had relevance in the real world and was being appreciated as such.

In addition to the real-world relevance of her project, Udesha also emphasised the invaluable knowledge and skills she has acquired from completing a CCMS Honours degree. When applying for graduate programmes at major companies, the research and presentation skills she developed during her Honours year allowed her to stand out as a potential employee. Even more importantly, she believes that her CCMS studies have encouraged the growth of her confidence, saying that "I feel like I'm a changed person after Honours. I've learnt that anything depends on how you view it and CCMS changes how you see the world. I've learnt that nothing is not doable – you just need the confidence to go for it."

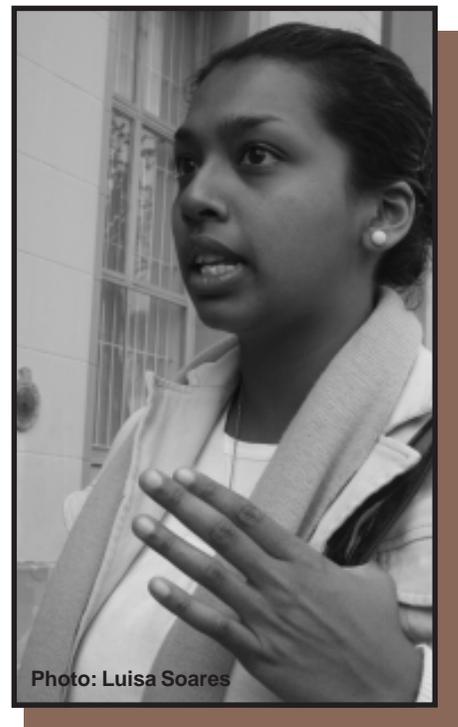


Photo: Luisa Soares

For Udesha, the most valuable aspect of her Honours degree was that "What I learnt at CCMS does apply to the working world. With a background in CCMS, there are so many different fields you can go into and a variety of companies you can work for. Students must realise that their lives won't always go according to plan but doing CCMS Honours has provided me with options and opportunities".

Udesha is currently working for an events management company and is considering working abroad for a while. Her confidence and passion to succeed has been fostered by her CCMS experience: "All the trips I went on for Honours, like to the Kalahari and to Jo'burg for the Bafundi film festival, have taught me that the only way you can go in life is forward and you can't let anything stop you."

## Resurrection: *SUBtext* Walks Again!

**F**OR MANY OF YOU, the mid-90s was a period of sports, games and primary school. But for others, this was a period of growth and acceptance, namely those who were in the then Centre for Cultural and Media Studies at the "University of Natal".

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By **Colin Murphy**

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For those in the dark, cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field which examines texts and sub-texts and their relationships to power relations within contexts. In the mid-90s the students and staff of the Centre for Cultural and Media Studies founded a quarterly newsletter they entitled *SUBtext*. The newsletter was aimed at informing people both locally and abroad of what was taking place within their chosen discipline. The quarterly publication examined different events in South Africa from a media and cultural studies paradigm, whilst simultaneously engaging with the student body, attempting to promote the field which has since been termed CCMS (Culture, Communication and Media Studies).

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The publication was successful, and was even approached for subscriptions by readers from different parts of the globe. The current students in the CCMS post-graduate programme have (with the much-appreciated help of the staff) resurrected *SUBtext*, and hope to revive the glory-days once achieved by this publication.

*SUBtext* will be produced entirely by post-graduate students of CCMS, with the aim of promoting and informing the student body of the different courses available in CCMS, and the activities they engage in.

*SUBtext* is not going to be another "academic pamphlet" filled with jargon trying to persuade you to consider furthering your studies in CCMS; it is written by the students, for the students. It will be engaging, riveting and stimulate the imagination of undergraduate students about CCMS activities. *SUBtext* will cover a range of areas under the umbrella term of CCMS, including interviews with the staff and students, information on different courses available, visitors to CCMS and projects currently being undertaken by Howard College CCMS students.

*SUBtext* will be available in both print and electronic form, and will be distributed among most of the humanities' students of Howard College.

Welcome to *SUBtext* ...

# Freire, Fun and Food Colouring

By Aaliyah Dangor



Photo: Eliza Govender

*The workshop kicked off with an ice-breaker that involved the class forming a human-knot*

IF MAKING HONOURS students attend Friday afternoon sessions wasn't bad enough, the media class was horrified to discover that we would be reporting on 24th April for a full-day Freirian workshop. A *what* workshop?

Apparently the students who could not manage the jump from undergraduate to postgraduate studies were sending out such vibes of distress that lecturers decided to organize a workshop based on Paulo Freire's participatory approach to learning. The aim was to encourage students to identify their honours-related problems and work together to using their own knowledge and experience to find workable solutions.

The session kicked off with an ice-breaker that involved the class forming a human-knot. The idea was to test our communication skills, which were surprisingly poor for a communications class, but the exercise did reveal some extraordinary gymnastic talents from our classmates. However, the atmosphere quickly sobered when a fellow student was heavily criticised for her project proposal. We eventually discovered that attacking her was part of a planned invisible theatre designed to provoke emotion from the class, which it certainly did...and our enraged hissing also elicited much laughter from the sneaky lecturers.

Problem solving was then initiated through participatory games such as driving an imaginary car around the room...which taught us that many of our peers must have bought their licences considering the bad braking skills they were displaying. "Speed-dating" with a difference was used to generate discussion about our concerns, and image theatre was an activity that involved us creating frozen representations of our problems.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the afternoon of body-mapping. Armed with food colouring, kokis and pastels, we set about the task of tracing life-size outlines of our bodies which we then filled with the power of the heart, mind and hands and feet.

Any notions of us being a mature group of young adults with an undergraduate degree to our name were quickly dispelled as everyone released their inner child in between fits of giggling, some rather lopsided drawings and splashes of food-colouring-paint.

The aim was to find links between our passion and our work, and to turn problems into constructive factors.

The outcome? A much calmer honours class...until the night before our research projects are due of course!

*The real highlight of the day was without any doubt the session in the afternoon of body-mapping. The images were filled with the power of the heart, mind and hands and feet*



Photo: Eliza Govender

*Armed with food colouring, kokis and pastels, we set about the task of tracing life-size outlines of our bodies*



Photo: Eliza Govender

# Oh, the drama...

By Luisa Soares

**I**F YOU AMBLE FAR enough into the shrubbery surrounding our drama department on campus, there's a chance that you might just stumble across Hut 7. Stop there, that's DramAidE.

DramAidE (Drama AIDS Education) is a CCMS affiliated, independent, donor-funded organisation that exists on the campuses of 23 different Higher Education Institutions around South Africa. The organisation was established by Professor Lynn Dalrymple and post-graduate students from the department of drama at the University of Zululand in 1992.

So why are campus geographics important? Simple. In 2005 a study in South Africa showed that the prevalence rate of young adults aged between 15-24 living with HIV (yes, that includes us, a nice university going age) was 10.3%. For this reason, DramAidE since its inception has been striving to increase HIV/Aids awareness through the medium of drama, particularly on campuses, and to encourage support and minimise stigma for those who are HIV-positive. A key goal is to empower young people to make decisions about their sexual behaviour that are informed and safe.

A major current project of DramAidE is the Health Promoters' Project. Health Promoters are young people who are living openly with HIV on their campuses. They are recruited, trained and assisted to conduct interactive workshops and campaigns on HIV prevention, risk of transmission, testing and delaying one's sexual debut.

Also you may have seen the Scrutinise campaign, which DramAidE is currently involved with, along with other partners. The campaign, using a series of animated TV adverts around the themes of HIV/Aids, will culminate on five campuses, in arts festivals and a large-scale concert event. These projects and many others receive major funding from the United States Agency for International Development through JHHESA (Johns Hopkins Health and Education South Africa).

For more, follow the link to DramAidE on our website at <http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za>

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## Step into my Office

by Bhavya Jeena

**C**CULTURE, Communication & Media Studies students finally have their own office space at the bottom of MTB stairs. This is a space where students and lecturers can co-exist without standing on each other's toes.

Gone are those days in Undergrad where I would stand sheepishly in the Media corridor, unsure whether I was allowed to be there or not. I began the year with the same apprehensive feeling about the postgrad office. But, I soon changed my attitude.

The CCMS office is a laid-back, helpful place where students are welcome to use the facilities. Freedom comes with responsibility and a few honours students also double up as research assistants to Professor Keyan Tomaselli.

This makes visiting the office all the more fun. I've begun to think of it as a casual, friendly environment where everybody knows your name. Open the door and you will see a room with chairs, magazines, a large circular coffee table and students making use of the free wi-fi service. Most postgrad lecturers are students themselves, 20-somethings and plugging away at their PhDs. 'This is *your* place,' said one of my lecturers, 'Use it.'

No worries, I plan to do just that.

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