Action Research is an effective means of engaging with empirical projects and offering researchers a reflexive tool while giving subjects the practical benefits of the investigation.

ACTION RESEARCH IS a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people (Reason & Bradbury 2001).

How do we know that action research can work? !Xaus Lodge (www.xauslodge.co.za) is an indigenously-owned development venture situated in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP). The lodge was constructed as a poverty alleviation venture in a remote part of the desert. In 2006 The Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) was invited by lodge operator, Transfrontier Parks Destinations (TFPD) to study lodge operations within a development communication framework. The research examined lodge marketing, strategic positioning and lodge-community partnerships in relation to issues of identity, representation and viability. Action research was applied to shape business decisions to rescue a project that was subject to every costly development mistake in the book. Despite this !Xaus, led by TFPD with research provided by...
CCMS (Continued) is a story of development success.

!Xaus Lodge won the 2010 Imvelo Awards in the Best Practice: Economic Impact category, having generated more than R5.1 million in income in Gordonia – the extended district in which the Park is located. The short term economic benefit is that Mier and Khomani individuals comprise at least 85% of the Lodge employees. The long-term benefit is that the Khomani and Mier are the owners of an asset now worth R11 million. Just four years ago, in 2006, the facility was wasting away on a sand dune.

CCMS researchers have published and presented papers at local (SACOMM) and international media and communications conferences (IAMCR) on the !Xaus Lodge experience and how action research was operationalised, and contributed to the financial success of the venture.

Further Information at:
The landscape seemed to vibrate in the intense heat. For the most part, it stretched out across the horizon, its vastness emphasised by wispy grass and darting shrubs. Well-defined koppies punctuated views, with names like “Reneserkop” and our own “Sphinx” bearing testimony to the bleakness of the landscape allowing one’s imagination to soar. The sense of generations of raptors nesting at the site, the remaining members of original Beukes family all plan to be buried in the family cemetery on the farm. However, it was at this location where I made my most important discovery.

Standing on one of the protruding flat rocks, my being took in the beautiful landscape stretching out around me. Kilometers of irregularly undulating veld, placid from this vantage point. The topography seemed shunted around Biesje Poort, with the dark worm-like rock outcroppings juxtaposed against the jagged, jarred heaps of colossal, flat rock pallets. In some cases, these massive slivers were all arranged to point in a specific direction. Oeliset related how these would serve as waypoints to earlier travelers, leading them northwards. The white pinnacle behind me also emphasised this direction, but the surrounding rocks connected me to all the directions of the wild.

As I jumped from one rock to the next, the solid object under my feet produced a hollow sound. I tapped around its surface and the moment I reached the point where the rock almost touched the white pinnacle’s base, the sound reverberated, clearly ringing out over the landscape surrounding me. I experienced the intense rush of discovering something very profound. I continued testing the remainder of the rocks strewn along the base of the pinnacle – they all reverberated, albeit at different frequencies. Needless to say, this only served to further fuel my active imaginations of the place and possible human interactions with it.

At this elevated location I realised that I experienced an exceptionally strong connection to the landscape. After only four days, I was acutely aware of my place within the environment and became conscious of a bigger reality other than just the now and here. I started to discover snippets of its history and the team uncovered various layers from different eras. A personal compilation of the history of the farm and its inhabitants by one of the daughters of the original farm-owners proved very insightful. I read about aspects such as the farm’s school and its sole teacher, Mr van der Westhuizen; the children’s monthly excursions to document the rock engravings and search for artifacts for the school museum and the revolutionary farm policy to install jackal fencing along its entire perimeter to nullify all future hunting of the animal. Most poignant was the family’s deeply ingrained love for the landscape that etched itself on the lives of over four generations of individuals. Even though the farm was sold twice over the past few years, the remaining members of original Beukes family all plan to be buried in the family cemetery on the farm.

All of the above bears witness to the powerful relationship between this landscape and its human inhabitants, passers-by or perhaps even researchers...

I look forward to documenting this relationship through further research.
THE ROLL OUT PLAN of our Biesje Poort rock art recording field trip was well worked out. But, as Prof Tomaselli often points out, reality in the field is messy. It is a far cry from the proofread, error-free text. The experience is always so much more.

By Mary Elizabeth Lange

Human, technological and natural elements all tested our resilience and ability to view research as a work in progress on this field trip. The human elements are best ignored but suffice to say encompassed relatively few power struggles considering I’m known by my family as a ‘fire cracker’ and that a group of talented leaders were thrown together in one mishmash of varying cultures, geographic origins, genders, languages, economies, disciplines and interests.

Technology testing came with a flat tyre on a gravel road in between nowhere and nowhere when it was already pitch dark and no spares (it was in for repairs at a garage in Kakamas). A ‘bonding experience’ I suggested but fortunately David and Koot didn’t hear what I’m sure they would have considered a pithy comment whilst their knees were crunched into the gravel and their heads were under the precariously balanced car. It would be the first of a number of times on this academic research trip that unscientific prayer appeared the only option to an unforeseen complication.

It was nature, the environment, the weather that really was even more ‘extreme’ than anticipated. Planning on paper assumed we would all sleep at night. The reality was that some of the research team did sleep better than others but all were rudely awoken on at least two nights. Roger and Liana were two of the research team participants who awoke with their tents flooded. Roger improvised by lifting the floor mat and placing it on top of him but he still woke up so sodden that his shirt could be wrung out.

Koot and others stood upright holding up the sides and top of their tents the next night as a freak whirlwind thunder and lightning storm battered not only tents but spirits too. Lauren called out loud to a higher power, Miliswa and Shanade crept deeper under their bedding, and once more I resolved to the unscientific as I muttered it my head: Please let it pass quickly! Please let it pass quickly...

I usually sing the strengths of the experiential aspect of research. I was however less appreciative when my supposedly hard wearing walking shoes’ soles lifted on the first day and I resorted to sneakers on the second. ‘They’ say that an experience that includes pain is far more memorable than one that does not so the pain searing through my lily white soles as we trundled up and down uneven stone and rock littered valleys will surely imprint the rock art recording experience in my mind for eternity. What I will especially remember is how those who are the keepers of the indigenous knowledge of the area such as Oelisit, Izak and David knew instinctively not only what routes to take that were kinder on the feet but Lydia quietly spared me even greater agony by telling me to walk where she walked, step by step. Fortunately Lauren had an extra pair of North Star takkies that she kindly offered me and my attire gained a ‘cool’ look far below my years. New shoes, however much they protect your soles, do bring with them blisters on heels and sides of toes ensuring that I would never forget all the days we spent out in the veld of ‘Biesje Poort nor those associated with it.

‘Walk site, find unrecorded engravings and transfer skills on tracing engravings’ is so to the point and efficient on paper. The reality was a deceiving similarity of hillocks, 37 degrees sweltering heat and shimmering rocks that burnt the thighs, forearms and palms of hands that tried to rest on them. Detailed planning also did not take into account that just as we had not found the rock art site on which my MA dissertation was based on our prerecording site trip - so too it evaded us on the first three days of this field trip. On the fourth day I was determined to search for it and Roger agreed to join me as did Prof Tomaselli but he was waylaid by Belinda finding pottery.

I was convinced Roger was going to kill me. He climbed up and down almost as nimbly as did David. My heart was pounding out of my ears, my eyes burning from perspiration and sunscreen streaming down the rivulets that crease the outer corners of my eyes and my chest would not allow enough oxygen in. I didn’t plan to use an asthma pump but fortunately two puffs on it combined with a rested regulated heart beat and I was back traipsing after Roger who zigzagged with the natural wearing of the hillside. We found a number of rock art sites mostly that were marked by Fock & Fock’s signatory miniature cairn. Roger creatively called the one site that included engravings similar to those identified by David as of ‘20th century origin’: 20th Century Focks.

It was two and a half hours since we left the team and both our water bottles were empty. Once more I resorted to unscientific methods and pleaded: Please let us find the site. Perhaps I should include that the entire reason why I had submitted a proposal to record the rock art on the site was because of the particular site on which I based my MA dissertation. I had photographed them but had not even included a measure in the photograph. It just seemed too cruel, too away from the neat written proposal, to not even find that site.

In the valley below me, I recognised a plateau and once I reached it I gazed in joy at familiar images. My whoops of excitement were heard by no-one except Roger. Yet the site where we had left the others was ironically only one small valley away. In a ‘secretive’ setting, reminiscent of Oelisit’s description of a previous site as a ‘womb,’ we had to crawl under a tree between a
crevice to leave the plateau and join the rest of the research team. The next day nature once more had the last say as we strove to trace as many of the remaining engravings identified as possible. I planned to trace those on the secretive plateau. Light rain fell that made tracing with the permanent markers impossible until the soft rain passed.

Standing on the plateau with soaked cotton pants and blouse sticking to my limbs I could smell the sweet wet grass. First kneeling and then lying flat on the rock, as guided by David, I slurped up fresh rain water from a small hollow in the gneiss rock next to an impressive pecked engraving. Then the rain stopped and all helped to trace the remaining engravings whilst the air and the rocks were rain cooled. As the National Heritage Council funding staff watched us as part of their monitoring and evaluation of the project I knew we could not have planned it better on paper.
The experience: Layers of voices

This is an extract from an interview that took place on 2nd of April 2011 in the dining room of River City Inn after the team had enjoyed a large breakfast. Lankie, Izak and Lydia Lys Kruiper (all Nama-speaking Kalahari crafters and organic intellectuals) spoke Afrikaans and Shanade (an English speaking PhD student) interviewed them in Afrikaans but interpreted for Miliswa (a SiSwati speaker who was researching the project process for her MA) into English. There is the crashing of dishes handled in the background. Mary (English-speaking coordinator of the project) transcribed the taped the interview into English from the original Afrikaans and Shanade’s English interpretation.)

By Lankie Kruiper, Izak Kruiper, Lydia Lys Kruiper, Shanade Barnabas and Miliswa Magongo

Shanade (for Miliswa): How do you feel about the rock art [at Biesje Poort] and the project?

Lankie: It was for me a great privilege and I feel very inspired. It is my first time, I have only previously heard of rock art that was engraved. It is the first time that I have seen it. It was very nice to share with the students, the project participants. And the engravings themselves – there are some of our engravings that are similar but there are also others that differ. It was a good experience. Even the tracing: it was a great privilege to go everywhere there. Those people who engraved died many years ago.

Izak: And also the skills, the skills that we used were very interesting because we worked with pen and paper and also the GPS that Lankie used. So it was for me a very good experience with the archaeologists’ skills.
Shanade: And what did you think of the experience with the GPS?

Lankie: I have had a bit of GPS experience.

Shanade: Before this project?

Lankie: Yes.

Miliswa (in English): Please tell us about that?

Shanade: When was that?

Lankie: In 2009 on Kalahari Plant research.

Shanade: And tell me! Lankie yesterday you taught Roger how to use it!

Lankie and Izak (laughter): Yes, yes.

Shanade (laughing to Miliswa): Yesterday, Roger didn’t know how to use the GPS and “Lankie taught him how. Is that true?

Lankie: Yes.

Miliswa (to Shanade in English): Was this the same GPS that he used in 2009?

Shanade: Was it the same type of GPS or a different one?

Lankie: It was a bit different.

Shanade: So did you learn this one quickly?

Lankie: Yes, quickly.

Shanade: Yes it was just a day or two and then Liana was gone and then you were the one with the skills.

Izak: Yes with the skills and then he even taught Roger. I asked if I could have a look but then I saw he pushed here and there and I gave some of my attention to the GPS but then I realised it would take me some time to learn it. Just like with a cell phone it takes some time, about three months, to understand it because even my cell phone number I don’t know if off by heart... (laughs)... but with him it is very quick. He thinks quicker and his mind is still open. But mine is like...I’ll say a mouse nest...(laughs)...with all the thoughts so, oh well, I’ll maybe at a later stage see if I can’t also learn it. He must teach me so he is my teacher now for me to learn that skill now and understand it.

Shanade: And the whole project?

Lankie: It was an experience to be part of the project. I learnt a little and that which I learnt I appreciate.

Shanade: And Lydia what do you think about that rock art?

Lydia Lys: It’s a good thing. That which I personally hadn’t seen I saw now and I learnt a little from what I saw and so it is a privilege really, and David, what I saw with him. We actually learnt something from him and I am grateful for that, for him and for what we saw with him. As well as the students who shared with us it was a privilege and for us to share with them. Also Lankie with the GPS, it was a privilege that he took part and he can now train the other children and even me. I was very pleased that he accepted it so that he can also share orally with the others what he saw and what he did with David and the others. It is really for me a privilege. And I hope that some don’t swing away from the group as I am very happy with the group with whom I did this. And I hope that we try to take it forward on a path together.

Photo: Lauren Dyll-Myklebust

†Lankie is shown some of the intricacies of the GPS finder by Liana Müller a lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the University of Cape Town
My Personal experiences at the AIDS Foundation of South Africa’s Learning and Sharing Conference, 26 – 28 October 2010, Durban

By Precious Greehy

It has been two years since the AIDS Foundation of South Africa hosted the Learning and Sharing Conference. Ironically, the event packed with NGO delegates from all over South Africa seemed to have lasted for as long as the blinking of an eye! Perhaps this is due to the fact that it was the most engaging conference in which I’ve ever participated. As part of the organizing committee, I was busy running around like a headless chicken, too busy to notice the time slipping away. Whatever the case, this year’s conference certainly left me wishing for more.

The conference focused on the role of culture in shaping community and individual perceptions of health and illness. The key component of the conference was the sharing of knowledge and experiences by AFSA partners (including CCMS) while giving them an opportunity to hear presentations from experts from the fields of science, government, academia and NGOs.

The conference was attended by over 265 delegates, some of which were AFSA’s supported community-based organizations from KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Northern Cape, Mpumalanga and Free State provinces. In the course of the three-day conference, close to 30 speakers presented and/or facilitated commissions based on four conference themes: i) Masculinity & Femininity, ii) Confronting sexual and gender identity, iii) Indigenous Knowledge systems & iv) Communication, advocacy and the media. On day one, the conference began with an address from Prof Nceba Gcaleeni from the UKZN School of Medicine, the Councilor’s representative, Cllr James Nxumalo, followed by Dr Tshabalala from the KZN Health Ministry. The first part of the session was concluded with a speech by the KZN Premier, Dr Zweli Mkize. The later addressed delegates on how poverty can be overcome, especially at poor household levels, through the ‘one garden, one home programme’ where families are encouraged to start their own food gardens for consumption and for income generation purposes.

He emphasised the importance of revisiting positive cultural principles and values in order to promote health and prevent postmodern social ills including gender-based disparities.

The most relevant and interesting discussions for me were on the role of media in communicating and advocating positive cultural practices in the promotion of health and the prevention of HIV and AIDS led by our colleagues from CCMS. As a prospective CCMS MA student this was a very interesting topic, since media has a social responsibility in shaping society’s opinions and ways of thinking. In certain instances, the media is responsible for negative portrayals of minorities, some of which perpetuate gender stereotypes. Sometimes, there exist ethical errors in terms of language used in reporting and inappropriate news headlines. As an example, most of the news we read about African traditions and practices including traditional healing, traditional male circumcision and virginity testing are usually dehumanized or portrayed negatively. The benefits of these practices are usually not very well researched, leading to misrepresentation of cultural practices.

Though it’s important for the media to expose and keep the public informed and aware of ill practices done in the name of culture, it is also imperative for the media to maintain a balance in their reporting and to abide by specific ethical values which guide the quality of their reporting. I believe the media can be an effective tool in promoting good cultural practices and show how these traditional principles and values contribute towards the general wellbeing of communities at large.

In general, journalists are seen by some as ‘evil’ people who are always on the lookout to report bad news or stories which will ‘sell’ more publications. However, it was later explained by Dr William Bird from African Media Monitoring that journalists work under tight deadlines, high pressure environments and these factors largely contribute to or results in media fatigue. We also discussed the fundamental elements of successful media campaigns which organizations can adopt to promote their work. These include engaging, debating & building relationships with the media, making plans and devoting resources, making one’s work relevant to the media (from worthy to newsworthy). There was also a large focus around drawing from global edutainment and programmes such as Soul City, Tshatsha and Beat It. These were discussed as good examples of well researched and effective programmes.

Overall, discussions from plenary sessions and commissions were wide-ranging and interesting. Everyone benefited from the wide range of experiences and challenges that were shared by NGOs, government departments, academics and scientists from all over the country.
By Eliza Govender and Lauren Dyll-Myklebust

The Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has over the years produced some of the key findings in HIV and AIDS communication under the public health communication research programme. The research programme is offered in partnership with Johns Hopkins Health and Education in South Africa (JHHESA) with funding from USAID/PEPFAR. The central objective of the programme is to specifically build the capacity of South Africans and Africans to research, design, implement, monitor and evaluate public health communication strategies. The module was originally developed in 2002 by key theorists and practitioners such as Prof Larry Kincaid (JHU), Dr Patrick Coleman (JHU), Prof Keyan Tomaselli (UKZN), Prof Lynn Dalrymple (UZ), Dr Warren Parker and Richard Delate, who drew on extensive field experience and research in public health promotion, using Entertainment Education (EE) as a communication strategy for social change. In 2008 the module was revised to incorporate a focus on social and behavioural communication, where communication not only focuses on promoting positive change but also reinforces behaviours amongst those that have adopted a certain behaviour and promotes change amongst those who have not made the change. USAID/PEPFAR has also contributed to numerous MA and PhD bursaries over the years, empowering novice researchers with skills and resources to conduct research on national HIV and AIDS prevention programmes and campaigns. Over the years, graduates of the programme have worked with organisations and programmes such as Soul City, loveLife, Takalani Sesame, Tsha Tsha, Intersexions, 4Play: Sex Tips for Girls and Brothers for Life among others.

The partner ship with JHHESA has created a direct link with global academics and practitioners capacitating young graduates with the research, skills and experience to address some of the national development and health issues. To date, CCMS has seen over 300 graduates advance through its post graduate programme, with more than 55% of students working within the development and public health field. CCMS is now internationally recognised as a premier graduate programme with a significant contribution to the field of public health communication in Africa. That gives us something to SHOUT OUT about.

Eliza Govender, CCMS Programme Manager, and Lauren Dyll-Myklebust, CCMS lecturer and module co-ordinator, attended the JHHESA Partner’s Meeting in January 2011 at the impressive O.R. Tambo Airport hotel where they received the Shout Out award on behalf of CCMS. The certificates were handed out at a glamorous award ceremony by Patrick Coleman, then JHHESA Chairman and Managing Director. Coleman was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement award in recognition of his pioneering work in entertainment education and for his over 25 years contribution to the public health communication field.

The annual meeting allowed JHHESA partners an opportunity to network and provide feedback on their project or organisation’s progress in terms of the ‘themes’ identified by JHHESA. These themes included Programming for Women and Girls on HIV prevention where 4 Play: Sex Tips for Girls - as seen on e.tv and recently nominated for seven SAFTA awards - was a hot topic. Other themes that spurred robust discussion included; HIV counselling and testing, documenting best practices, the link between HIV and TB, as well as medical male circumcision.
I REMEMBER ENTERING the womb of time, as I sat watching people trace rock art in the hot sun with delight. The atmosphere had an essence of children eating strawberries after being taught it is delicate to the taste buds.

By Belinda Kruiper

My mind soon wandered, and it became the past and the present. I was everywhere at once. I felt the cool lurking wind of the water snake. I once was told it is the snake that carries the crown and protects the sacred sites of those who lived before.

I started walking, saw Keyan ahead, also Mary and Roger. There was a point when I lost sight of them as I was busy following a pink grasshopper.

This creature soon had me completely absorbed in watching his doings, what flowers or plants were around, the type of sand etc. I stood still for a while when I felt the cool wind face me from the front. I remembered to listen and feel. I heard the gentle hissing sound and knew I was entering the snake’s domain.

I personally have no stories of the water snake, other than the fact a wisdom keeper of the bushmen told me I am the medicine of the serpent. The one who carries the crown. I thought about this in a moment and then knew I had to step back, leave the snake to be and allow the cool wind to guide me further. I stood for a few seconds, greeted the ancestors and walked back not once turning my back. By the time I turned, I was in the heat and realities of Biesje Poort and everyone working so hard: “what am I doing?” The next minute my friend the pink grasshopper was all around, flying to and from south to north. I watched, felt my feet itch, all senses alerted. This moment I knew I was on Sacred ground, as these are the feelings I normally feel when I discover Sacred sites. I saw the grasshopper drop on a red patch of ground at the entrance of some rocks.

I moved in the direction, curious, and felt my feet itch more strongly as I got closer. The moment I looked down, the grasshopper flew north and there on the red sand, I saw the pottery pieces.

Thank you God I said, it is about senses and feelings and then we can see direction as the crow flies. The road to the north is within all of us, it is in the mountains, in the rocks, in the clouds, in the sunrays and the winds. It is and was and will be, a search for truth.

In moments, rock and man combined hearts. In time, hearts combined could bring about lasting peace
In peace we may begin to understand
Our time and place on God’s very holy land.
We can not own it
We can not know it
We can only thank our creator
And foremost bring honour to the oldest
Nimini or land or universe
The language differs.

Best wishes and thanks for a great experience.
Belinda Org (Kruiper before 1 April 2011)

Uncovering the history of an ancient people: Some shards of pottery tell a story

Reflections on Biesje Poort

Stone on stone

This discussion was prompted by a question: “How would the rock engraving artists have made the rock engravings?” It was recorded at the elephant rock engraving in the early afternoon heat on the 30th March 2011 at Biesje Poort, Site 12 or Elephant Hide site. Izak Kruiper spoke in Afrikaans and used gestures to illustrate his discussion. It was interpreted by Mary Lange, and this was digitally recorded and the recording used for this transcription is done so with Izak’s permission.

By Izak Kruiper

They would have used a stone [to make the engravings]. There are different types of stone: soft stones and hard stones, an iron stone. As we saw that small round stone had a hole in it and if I take a stone that is hard like an iron stone and I rub it [against another stone] then I can make that hole in it. I would use that hard stone to make these. It is just as you would walk and pick up a stick, or pick something up, then the feel of it - how heavy it is or how light it is - and if it has a bit of weight it has more power to be used to chip.

In those days you wouldn’t have had something to wear over your eyes to protect them if something was going to fly off. [You would work] close enough to see what you were doing but far away enough not to get hurt. You could have attached a stick to the stone. You could also have hit one stone with another stone.

That is the end of the conversation

Best wishes and thanks for a great experience.
Belinda Org (Kruiper before 1 April 2011)
Rock art recording? What’s it got to do with me?

When I was initially invited to be a part of the Biesje Poort team my mind quickly went into overdrive thinking about the reasons why I didn’t want to be a part of the team. I kept on thinking about rock art recording and its relevance to me - a young black woman. I wanted to do my research on a ‘contemporary’ topic in public health because rumour has it that is where the money is. I was not interested in being “ontologically changed” (Tomaselli et al 2008:355).

By Miliswa Magongo

Although my area of focus within the Biesje Poort project was going to be participatory development communication, for some weird reason I kept on obsessing about the rock art recording. To me rock art recording meant boring history that had nothing to do with me or where I was going in life. Please don’t blame me for my naivety. Blame it on the fact that I’m from the iPod generation. Coming from this generation, which is obsessed with small technological devices I missed the bigger picture of being a part of this project.

You see - being a part of the iPod generation means that my outlook on the world revolves around ‘me, myself and i’. The iPod among other technological devices I’m obsessed with encourage me to alienate myself from my immediate environment. I could be sitting in a train for three hours but I will only allow myself to be connected with Utopia rather than with the person next to me. Greeting and chatting to a stranger, which in South Africa is considered the embodiment of ubuntu, is now seen as an invasion of privacy. I therefore considered rock art to be irrelevant to me as it is spatially, geographically and periodically removed from me.

Looking back I’m glad I grabbed the opportunity to be a part of the Biesje Poort rock art recording project. Being a part of a multicultural and multidisciplinary team was an enlightening and humbling experience. The fact that the whole project was structured within a participatory approach meant that everyone’s voice mattered. From the Bushmen – who are generally portrayed by the media and tourism as ‘living in the past’ - to the professors. Everyone was considered to have wealth of knowledge worth sharing. This collaborative learning inspired a renewed interest in me to know more about other people and their way of life. I learnt to appreciate the fact that no matter who we are or where we come from we ultimately have similar values. Genuinely engaging with people from other cultures forces one to appreciate more than just the superficial differences between individuals but to learn to respect and tolerate other people’s way of life.

Apart from my developed intercultural awareness and communication skills gathering my data at the beginning of my research has provided me with a step ahead in my research. Gathering data first before laying down one’s theoretical framework may be viewed as peculiar by some. But researching and writing within cultural studies paradigm has given me flexibility to use my data to inform my theory and literature.

I have since discovered that, intercultural adjustment and adaptation are viewed increasingly as essential for people who want to work in the media and communications industry. David Morris (2011:13) also mentioned that “an intangible but crucial benefit of archaeology is the perspective it can provide, liberating us from the current terrible timescales and extreme shallowness or even absence of any sense of history or memory which effectively leaves many people today in some senses directionless - or even oblivious – as regards the future”.

Please remind me again: Who was worried that the Biesje Poort project is not relevant in the 21st century?

References
The Waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the deeps also were troubled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalms 77: 16-20

This was a portion of my morning’s scripture reading after a night of heavenly fury. After the ordeal I thought it fitting to read this passage aloud to my tent mates. Our first night of camping at Khamkirri was not to be forgotten. Thunder and lightning shook us in our beds, strong winds threatened to tear away the feeble canvas over our heads and the mighty rushing waters of the Orange River just beyond the banks on which we camped were vehement reminders of the frailty of life. The storm lasted for most of the night and so did our prayers.

The relative peace of the next night was broken at 1am by a whirlwind, a signature Northern Cape mini tornado. Again, we were reminded of our transience.

During the day the sun gave us no reprieve. We laboured over rocks and boulders, and a few of us once made the mistake of following the directions of a certain professor, risking life and limb trudging through knee-high grass, formidabley dubbed ‘snake country’. I remember the fear of taking one uncertain step after another and then the sense of handing myself over to this place.

This landscape, its harshness and majesty form part of the meaning of the thousand year old art for which we searched. Standing on the koppies you’re greeted by the clear blue sky rolling out uninhibited at all sides, the great big dome top of the world. The red earth below is speckled with quartz crystals and the prospect of hidden rock art all over this spectacular sweep of land.

You cannot remain removed from this landscape, it does not allow it. You cannot escape the heat, and when you find a shady
spot you are grateful for the tree that gives it to you. There is no road, or gentle gravel path, no boardwalk to direct your way. Instead you have to be aware of your surroundings as you search for a foothold. In this way you become part of the place, not owning and changing it but being connected to and changed within it as the place itself remains surreally constant and at the same time in flux.

Our team’s discussions of the cultural landscape became real in the act of walking through this space. Even the act of helping each other traverse the precarious rock added another layer of meaning to the site. I would periodically think of the people who walked here thousands of years ago and how they must have helped each other in the same way.

This research trip was filled with nuanced experiences. We were at once scientific and spiritual, camping in ‘luxury’ and at the mercy of the landscape, afraid and exhilarated, together and alone. All in all, the different perspectives, cultures and areas of interest of the research team provided a fertile setting for exploration. Lording above this was the natural environment, this place so severe and so enthralling.
THE DOWNPOURS AND wind trammeled us by night, and the sun toasted us by day. Roads were washed away. Huge pools verged on our campsite and separated us from the site ablutions. At night we desperately clung onto our tents on the edge of the rapidly rising Orange River, getting washed out in the process.

By Keyan G Tomaselli

During the day we worked with members of the ‡Khomani who shared with us their interpretations of the engravings while ‡Lankie entered the GPS coordinates. Few think that the descendants of the First People have opinions on such early art. Our paradigm differs. Paradigms are fought out between scholars but this interpretive dominance needs to be fractured. The Gods, the ancestors, the spirits were speaking to us, insisted the ‡Khomani, via the engravings, thunder, lightening and the storms.

Our ‡Khomani colleagues, with whom we have been working for over 12 years, despaired at the professional researchers slaving away under the relentless sun. Surely it was better to sit under a shady tree or rock at mid-day? We explained that research auditors require evidence of output; they were coming from Pretoria on our last day to check that the site existed, and to ensure that we were actually working at it.

We explained that our budget and academic leave requirements would not stretch to extra days on site while we waited for the sun to cool, for the water snake to talk to us, or for the time for working to feel ‘right’. Here was very sensible indigenous practice at work.

What we were doing is post-modern media archaeology. This archaeology started with Mary, Charlize and Belinda’s work at Ngwatle, Botswana, and published in *Writing in the San/d* (2007), developed in other publications since. Here, they mapped our camp site and analysed its geography in relation to our host community and its historical traces. The idea was to understand our relationship with our hosts and their relationship with us. The text (camp site, archaeological traces, engravings, rock art) is not therefore at Biesje Poort studied by us for its own sake, but additionally from the interpretations stemming from readings by our ‡Khomani interlocutors and wider team as a whole.

What I have learned from our studies of indigeneity is that nothing is normative, nothing can be taken for granted, and that science is always up for grabs. Now, that’s indigenous knowledge at work.
**Biesje Poort: A place of birth**

**By Oeliset Jan Org**

As we walk in here and out there we come upon a place that is like a mother’s womb, a place of birth, a receptacle, a place of nurturing and a place to which to come home. It is also the place where the snake would come to rest and then leave again. If you look down you will see the river, the snake. 

If we look at it with feeling and in thought we can see the veins, the arteries entering the womb. This is a very soft place. It is the earth’s womb. If we look at the way it lays then we realise something. If you look at the rocks and the koppies then you will see where they fled to. The way that the koppies are lying is the direction to which they fled or travelled. The way the people moved in the direction of the lie of the land. It is the pathway or route to the north - to the Park. 

An ordinary hunter, such as myself, if I get up in the morning and I walk from here and I go around the right side of these rocks then it takes me a little longer to find what I seek. But if I go around that way and I come up in the East then I’m in the light as otherwise you are walking in the shadows. And so with this type of work it is better to first walk back so that you can come facing the light. Because you may get to a place where the shadows are long and then it is not as clear as if you enter in the light. As soon as you are in the light then you see more things but if you turn your back to the light then you won’t be able to see things so clearly. 

The rock doesn’t show just north or not. You need to look carefully how the earth is lying. It shows you north, south, east and west. There is a rock that points directly to the north and there is a rock that points directly to the east. It is like a bush doctor who works with bones and throws them. In the same way as he reads the bones so we read the rocks and the landscape.

We can’t do anything without God. Discussions, thoughts or whatever: they are just God’s. God gave us everything on this earth.

**Grinding stones and tsamma melons**

**By Lydia Lys Kruiper**

The skin of the tsamma melon can be used to wash oneself using them with the husks of the pips as a scrubber. The kernels of the pips are ground into a meal and used for porridge by mixing in the juice of the tsamma melon. The upper grind stone that was found at the other site and the lower grind stone here in the rocks can be used to grind tsamma melon kernels. They take the tsamma pips and if they have not dried naturally then they make a fire in the sand and put the pips packed into the hot sand to toast them. The toasted pips are beaten with a stick in the hand to shell them. The kernels are then ground to make a paste. It is a lot of work. We still make tsamma pap but now we add mielie meal to it.
Engaging the traces:
Archaeological meanings and ambiguities in the artefacts in and around Biesje Poort Site 10

On our recent visit to Biesje Poort, university and museum researchers and Khomani craft-workers sought to record some of the numerous rock engraving sites through a sharing of skills and insights. The rock art is enfolded in a landscape replete with other traces of a long and dynamic intertwining of cultural and natural histories. One site, logged as BP10, is a palimpsest with artefacts providing much food for discussion about the meanings and ambiguities of the variety of material culture remains that may occur in any given locale. What were the implications of these at this particular spot?

By David Morris, McGregor Museum

BP10 is a flat sandy area abutting the Biesje Poort hills. The artefacts strewn across its surface are a disassembly of at least two or more histories, a succession of erasures, of over-printing: on the face of it, chaotic. A few flaked stone tools; several brass cartridge cases (darkly patinated); an upper grindstone; a single postage-stamp-sized clay potsherd; a glass marble (of the type from a circa 100-year-old mineral water bottle); and a variety of metal items, brown with age, including short bits of wire, steel loops (resembling either part of a broken padlock or cut chain links), nails (both flat and round – any wooden objects they once fastened long since having disintegrated), and a belt buckle with snake-motif clasp. Nearby (at what we logged as BP12 – but who can say precisely where each site starts and ends?) are rock engravings of elephant, giraffe, antelope and strangely contorted, other-worldly hand-like designs. BP11, in an intermediate space, has precolonial artefacts including stone flakes and a lower grindstone. It too is a palimpsest: alongside Later Stone Age traces, perhaps 500 years old, Lankie Kruiper found a classic Middle Stone Age triangular stone point, possibly 125 000 years old. In warmer, wetter conditions at that time, during the generally cold Pleistocene, there was a marked increase in the abundance of Middle Stone Age sites.

People, all the time, make connections and distinctions to invest the world with order and meaning, drawing what lines of classification seem most appropriate, constructing what narratives or rationalisations seem to make best sense. So it was with our group who, right away and following their particular take on the items we were finding (informed by different kinds of past experience or knowledge), began developing their various story lines – our combined and divergent ideas quickly evolving in the course of the encounter. The resultant ‘world versions’ (citing Nelson Goodman on such constructs) may differ and yet be equally viable – until matters of consistency, coherence, and best fit with evidence lead to a narrowing, by elimination, to one or another (or a smaller range) of various possible scenarios. Fresh clues and ideas keep the interpretive enterprise alive. Our engagement with BP10, and with all the other sites, traces and phenomena we encountered that week, exemplified this kind of quest, to make sense of things.

Broadly, it was possible to distinguish, at BP10, objects of colonial and precolonial contexts, not discounting some potential overlap. But just as it was impossible to be certain which of the
precolonial artefacts were contemporaneous on this flat erosion surface, and whether any could be linked with nearby engravings (a generalised claim to this effect has been repeated but remains untested), so it was hard to say whether or not all the more recent artefacts could be read in terms of a single set of circumstances. A hypothetical scenario referencing a nearby ‘Bushman grave’, the cartridge cases, the possibly military buckle clasp, the British army tunic button found upslope, the abandoned stone tools and grindstone, and the other items variously woven as components of a single dramatic episode at the edge of these hills, could make for a remarkably coherent – and poignant – story. But the real story/ies, undoubtedly, would be less spectacular and altogether more complex.

What if the button, or the buckle, once part of a military uniform, arrived on-site on the shoulders or around the waist of a farm-hand? Old bits of uniform or other clothing, beyond their prime, are known to be handed down to clothe the less privileged and may end their days (dropping into a future archaeological context) in quite unanticipated circumstances. Evidence for shooting may refer to such quotidian farm activities as predator control – or, as literature from Biesje Poort itself attests, keeping the dassie population down (these herbivores compete with sheep for pasturage). Bits of wire and some of the other items may point to BP10 having been a temporary work area for the erection of farm fencing. Micro-histories emerge from the interrogation of these and other objects on-site. Indirectly they point to macro processes and larger historical events, ultimately including those of conquest and the workings of sub-continental and world industrial and economic regimes (we spoke of manufacturing and commerce in relation to the two kinds of steel nails that were noticed, while the possibility that we had part of a broken padlock stimulated discussion on the history and local advent of concepts of private property relative to communal ownership). Contexts beyond the immediately local place were similarly noted with respect to the raw materials on which precolonial stone tools were made. Some we had seen were exotic to Biesje Poort, produced on stones procured along the banks of the Gariep, more than a day’s walk away (or traded in via intermediate groups).

The different possible readings arising from BP10 highlight the ambiguity that is often inherent in artefacts. The final circumstances under which an item ends up in a site may differ somewhat from its more usual connotations and the better interpretation may often be the less obvious one. While speculating, our debates made us aware of the multivocality of things and of places and the assumptions and preconceptions we bring to our acts of characterisation and narration.

An interesting find: a belt buckle with a snake motif clasp

On visiting Biesje Poort

by Koot Msawula, Casual Worker attached to the Archaeology Department, McGregor Museum (Dictated to and translated by David Morris)

WHEN WE FIRST went to Biesje Poort I had not known it would be such a beautiful place. I went with David Morris and we met with a group from the Khomani Bushmen community, also two professors [Keyan Tomaselli & Roger Fisher] and Mary [Lange] who took us completely to heart and took us to Biesje Poort, where we did the project. There were also several students and together we made a very good team. We learnt a lot from one another, especially from the Bushmen.

On the first day we walked around to see what we could see. After a while we found rock engravings as well as artefacts. The following day we found many more engravings, actually more than we have found at Wildebeest Kuil. The engravings are very clear to see. That is a place that’s very important. The Bushmen who were with us told us how the old people made the engravings on the rocks, that the position of the engravings and the angle of the sun would show us which way they were moving. I learnt a lot from Izak Kruiper who said he could see signs in the engravings that told him about the place. They would also predict the weather when they saw the clouds in the evening and said the water snake was coming. On the last day they spoke about it when we were making copies of the engravings and we soon had to seek shelter when the rain once again came down!

I’ll be very glad if they can make Biesje Poort into the kind of place that people can visit, like Wildebeest Kuil, especially for school children and other people to learn about the Bushmen who were there before. It’s a great history actually at Biesje Poort. The place must be kept safe and we must make sure that nothing is removed from there. This project should not stop here. We must go on with it because we must not forget our elders’ history which is important for our children.
A S WE SNAKED our way up the rocky terrain it dawned on me that the multidisciplinary and multicultural Biesje Poort KhoiSan Rock Art Recording project could be considered a new phase in the CCMS Rethinking Indigeneity project (that originated in collaboration with the University of Leeds, Centre for Postcolonial Studies)¹.

By Lauren Dyll-Myklebust

Although the phases are ongoing and intersecting, Biesje Poort could be mapped as phase six in the project’s trajectory. As far as the CCMS contingent of the team goes, we are still concerned with the same subject-matter: development communication, issues of representation and reception, identity politics, researcher-researched relations etc but the methodology of the project is somewhat different. The past five phases have engaged with our host/participant communities, such as the Khojani in the Northern Cape, with an objective to debunk the assumption that indigeneity necessarily entails marginalised communities reverting to a ‘traditional’ self-representation or lifestyles in ‘resistance’ to influences of the globalised world. Our research is therefore set within a participatory framework whereby our participant community members can discursively engage and negotiate the perceptions, expectations and at times, myths, that the media, researchers, lodge operators and tourists may impose. Their voices are integral to our research and they actively position themselves in a contemporary context. Often it us, the ‘researchers’, who are asked questions by our participants that make us think about our own lives, therefore blurring the researcher/researched dichotomy.

The Biesje Poort project goes one step further in that the researcher/researched division is almost non-existent. Yes, researchers were present with research questions in mind but it was the entire team, consisting of professors, students, archaeologists, fieldworkers, co-ordinators, landscape architects and Kalahari crafters and organic intellectuals, who were the informants or ‘study sample’. Cultural relativity and multivocality were the order of the day and the guiding framework is characterised by “multiple ways of seeing and making sense of the world”². This was operationalised in the variety of research and recording techniques including cultural mapping via GPS, tracing rock art and scientific methods of recording heritage sites, open-ended face-to-face interviews to record impressions and stories, demonstrations of found material culture and participant observation. Sharing knowledge is at the heart of any participatory process and this requires valuing all team members as equals. At Biesje Poort all team members were considered experts. Whereas some team members shared knowledge from tertiary education and professional sectors, others shared their indigenous knowledge of the rock art and material culture in fascinating stories. One could be cynical and claim that the crafters live a different life compared to their forefathers and so would question the source of indigenous knowledge, but we take our meaning of indigenous knowledge as local “knowledges produced in a specific social context and employed by laypeople in their everyday lives”³ as within the present but relating to the past whether through oral narratives or practices (cf. Morris, 2005)⁴. Lydia, showed us the ways in which she uses the lower grinding stone/surface in order to make tsamma porridge. Oeliset and Izak demonstrated and explained the use of a small round upper grinding stone to grind ochre. The project is holistic in its outlook where the presence of the rock art is a catalyst to many other forms of research and research questions. The team’s responses to the Biesje Poort site and engravings were recorded not solely in relation to gathering data around the rock art but also with the view to analyse how the relationship to rock art heritage/recording/preservation/representation replicates or differs from each other. This type of research places Biesje Poort not only with the markings of the past, but with relevance to the present: a living heritage.

Pragmatic skills transfer took the form of GPS training for cultural mapping. Lankie Kruiper, became proficient in the use of GPS recording following training.

Triangulation? Pondering the origins and significance of image, Lauren casts a long shadow over the depictions of animals

Photo: Lauren Dyll-Myklebust

Blurring the lines at the Biesje Poort Heritage Site: Mapping the Future of Rethinking Indigeneity Research
by Liana Müller. Through training by David Morris and Koot Msawula of the McGregor Museum on-site copies of individual engravings were eventually generated by all team members who broke away into smaller ‘work groups’ where in a very Freirean way the student/teacher division became blurred. ‘Students’ became the ‘teacher’ as we asked each other questions like: what do I do if there is this bit of broken rock? Do I use a different coloured pen now to mark a different shape? Is it okay if the two colours blur into each other? To teach is empowering.

Scholarly discourse around participatory development communication typically creates a dichotomy in its application between a participation-as-a-means and participation-as-an-ends approach. Another way in which the Biesje Poort project blurs divisions is that it combined both participation in its activities and the outcome of these processes resulted in a state of being empowered for all team members.

As you would have read in my team members’ evocative accounts the fieldtrip entailed moments of exploration, discovery and (fear!) in a number of ways - physically, academically and spiritually. I end with a quote that should form the framework for this new phase, as it valorises ‘wholeness’ rather than duality:

Using body, mind and spirit as a template in which to organize meaningful research asks us to extend beyond our objective/empirical knowing (body) into wider spaces of reflection offered through conscious subjectivity (mind) and, finally via recognition and engagement with deeper realities (spirit). We at first thought it was about opposites, about duality...and painting our theories of gender, science, and life under this light. Black and white comparisons kept us busy for hundreds of years...It has caused untold horror and helped create a rigid epistemology we now assume cannot evolve...We have options, however [to] step from entrenched patterns of thinking to include older ways and more experienced expressions of what intelligence really is and how it can be expressed...Research and life are more in line with three simple categories that have been lost in theory and rhetoric: body, mind and spirit. Thus begins the discussion of a triangulation of meaning.

References
I have enjoyed the short stories of Italo Calvino and often regretted that I can only read him in translation, although I believe the translated texts of his writing to be fair literary effort. ‘Invisible Cities’ appealed, possibly because I am an architect, and ‘Mr Palomar’, possibly because I have a scientific bent. Its structure is as clever as the magic square of numbers in Albrecht Durer’s ‘Melancholia’. I am recently reading Calvino’s ‘Six memos for the next millennium’, the record of his last lectures which were to be given in the United States. The little volume has lain on my shelves for the better part of nigh twelve years and it was written fifteen years prior to that so it too is part of history. We have five of these essays, ‘Lightness’, ‘Quickness’, ‘Exactitude’, ‘Visibility’ and ‘Multiplicity’. ‘Consistency’ was never written. These he believed were enduring values if literature was to continue to provide only that which it could give in the twenty-first century.

While the essays are sometimes abstruse and require a familiarity with classic texts of bygone eras if one is to access them intelligently, certain insights are direct and cause for reflection.

Accompanying the team to the rock-engravings of Biesjespoort has elicited many reflections - on aspects of our natural state, our place in nature, our common humanity, shared culture and unique expressions within it of groups and individual, both in the present and over time.

What intrigued me was when we were gathered at the first sighting of engravings, which we called Elephant Hide - because of the presence of an engraving depicting an elephant, the hide-like appearance of the exposed Gneiss surface and the way these engravings had eluded us for so long, as if in hiding – David Morris held a discussion on how even place-names may be deeply meaningful. He used by way of example ‘Renosterkop’ which in the late C18 had been transliterated from the local Namneiqua pastoralists for whom it was known as “Nawaptana” [Nawabdanas]. When David had to pronounce this he then asked the Nama speakers of the group if it was correct. This set off a discussion amongst the Nama-speakers, the lingua franca of the desiccated north-west southern Africa, because they had not encountered the creature so were trying through following etymologies to discover a meaning. This led me to thinking that perhaps the rock engravings are memory made visible – their purpose not to share exact meaning but to elicit recall and provoke discussion. They are mimetics put to mnemonic device.

When the following day we found a beautiful panel depicting three rhinoceroses I was with the Nama group. Izak Kruiper said, as if in a moment of revelation: “Ja, hulle het hierdie dier geken!” [Yes, they knew this creature].

I, with the poet Sidney Clouts in his poem ‘Table Mountain’, hold

I am not contemplative by nature but in nature…
by nature, among; in nature, one…
one by one. NO one in one…
forever, one, one-one

Photo: Roger Fisher
George Ritzer coined the term *McDonaldisation* in referring to the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurants are coming to dominate more and more sectors of society.

Globalization

This process extends its practices into businesses & lifestyles of all types, on a global scale...

I think I have a different definition for *McDonaldisation*.

Oh yeah?! Please do enlighten us.

A process my stomach desperately needs to undergo...

?! Sigh

ccms
Cultural Calamities - in the lives of Media Students

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ON THE 22 DECEMBER 2010, the National Bargaining Council for the South African clothing manufacturing industry took a decision that will have significant implications for the apparel sector – and by default, the fashion sector.

By Renato Palmi

The South African apparel and textile industry is the sixth largest manufacturing employer and the eleventh largest exporter of manufactured goods. An estimated 230 000 people are directly employed in the industry, with a further 200 000 employed in related industries[1].

At the KwaZulu-Natal Economic Recovery and Jobs Summit in 2009, SACTWU’s Deputy General Secretary, Andrew Kriel[2], pointed out that these industry sectors currently employed about 200 000 people, with KZN making up about 40% of this figure. He said the industry generated some R41-billion in annual sales and that women made up nearly 70% of the workforce. “There is no way that we can compete with a country like China, which subsidises its industry,” he said, adding that the unrelenting loss of jobs is extremely detrimental to South Africa’s social fabric, and that the industry’s demise cannot be contemplated.

The New Compliance Policy, which was endorsed by the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (SACTWU), the Apparel Manufacturers Association (AMSA) and the Coastal Clothing Manufacturers Association (CCMA), gives non-compliant clothing companies until 31 March 2011 to be 70% wage-compliant or face closure.

In the new Policy’s terms, “wage-compliant” means that for a qualified machinist in non-metro area is in the region of R444.00 a week. So, what impacts may this Policy have on the fashion sector? Cut-make-and-trim production costs may rise to offset the increase in wages. Some CMTs may be forced to close on their own accord or through legal action by the Bargaining Council. Many of these companies might opt for a deeper presence in the informal sector. SACTWU has stated that the number of non-compliant companies (with 385 currently listed on their database) is growing, and that all CMTs which fail to sign up to the New Compliance Policy may face closure.

The various non-compliant employer representative bodies, including the Newcastle Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the KZN CMT Forum, and the Free State Clothing Association, represent 256 companies and some 27 500 employees. A representative of the KZN CMT Forum has said that more clothing companies are joining their group, reinforcing these ranks as a collective a powerful lobby that cannot be ignored by SACTWU.

Many are asking why the Union is pursuing a policy that is unsustainable and could lead to the “demise of an industry sector” which it opposed so strongly at the 2009 Summit. There is no clear answer. SACTWU rejected a wage proposal initially put forward by the Newcastle coalition that linked wages to productivity, saying that no such alternative would be acceptable: a company is either compliant or non-compliant. Furthermore, SACTWU and AMSA maintain that the non-compliant companies continue to create an unfair trading environment, and it is not right for those companies that are compliant to suffer because they are abiding by the rules.

One might also ask whether all clothing operations were becoming compliant within two months would have a positive effect on the industry. Considering that manufacturers would still have to compete with both cheap and illegal imports, and manage a labour force that cannot offer the same productivity levels seen in Asia, the chances of this are slim.

By extension, would a fully compliant industry induce retailers to support more local suppliers and, in turn, the local fashion sector? The non-compliant companies have vowed to reject the New Compliance Policy in principle, and have declared on record that most of their members cannot...
afford to pay the Metro-area wage rate of R740 per week. Another argument against the new policy posed to SACTWU is a simple economic fact: wages cannot be negotiated or even restructured in isolation, as both local and global economic realities within an industry sector would have to be considered. The impasse between the clothing sector stakeholders escalated to a new level when ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe said that the “ruling party’s focus would now be on creating as many jobs as possible, rather than insisting only on ‘decent work’”.[3] There are murmurs in the corridors around forum engagements between manufacturers, the Bargaining Council and SACTWU that nothing would happen to those companies that are not 70% compliant come the end of March, as the political fall-out of massive job losses in this vital industry sector would result in a political nightmare for both government and labour. The fashion sector, which relies on and is a crucial element in the apparel value chain, has been far too quiet in regard to policy development within this arena, given the potentially adverse impacts of the new Policy on their businesses and on the sector as a whole. The fashion sector should take these developments seriously; and, through Fashion Councils or as individuals, publicly voice either support for the Union’s actions or concerns about wage increases and job losses. Every fashion designer and fashion house should give thought to the effects on their business viability if CMTs either become compliant and are forced to charge more, or if CMTs are closed because they cannot meet the requirements of the New Compliance Policy. 1 http://www.infomat.com. 2008 Research Report 2 Kriel is now General Secretary of SACTWU 3 “Torn over ending unemployment,” Sunday Times, 23 January 2011

Gendered Identities
A PUNCH LINE from Trevor Noah’s stand-up comedy show, Day Walker states: “Gender what? It’s obvious, he’s a woman”, .

By Simphiwe Ngwane

2009 and 2010 brought with them many illuminations and new discourse to the South African populace with regards to gender and sexuality. Who could forget the whole Casta Simenya Saga, with the whole gender/sexuality verification test and of course my personal favourite the Senzo and Jason fiasco on Generations. Issues of gender and sexuality which are normally taboo and controversial are slowly being injected into the media milieu and people are all up in arms. Days later a counter group was created stating that others will NOT stop watching if Jason and Senzo continue kissing. Mfundi Vundla had succeeded in creating discourse around the matter of sexuality and people now started to discuss, vocalise their thoughts be it good or bad. Whilst watching Generations one evening some students at residence pondered on who was the “girl” or the “boy” between Jason and Senzo.

Most people tend to superimpose the dynamics of heterosexual relationships onto homosexual relationships. People unconsciously recognise only one supreme hegemonic masculinity and forget that being a biological male does not confer masculinity, but masculinity just like gender is socio-historically and culturally created. Most Cultural theorists acknowledge that there numerous ‘forms’ of masculinities, varying in hierarchy thus there is such a thing as homosexual masculinity and within it hierarchies exist. Thus just like Frieza evolved to different stages he was still biologically male, therefore Jason and Senzo exhibit different ‘forms’ of homosexual masculinity thus there’s no “chick” or “dude” just two blokes with varying homosexual masculinities. Gone are the days when homosexuality was defined as a feminine soul trapped in a male body.
Tinkering with technology -the pleasures of the iPad

During my free time in between lectures, I find myself retreating behind my iPad to read the New York Times and checking e-mails at the library, tapping away at the touch screen furiously, I’m long gone from this reality and sucked into my iPad’s virtual world, reading the New York Times as if I were in America.

By Puleng Moloi

Needless to say the iPad is the greatest gadget I’ve come across thus far. It’s practically a digital diary, with my timetable, notes, a USB, word processor and more which I may need on the go.

I must stress the iPad doesn’t replace your laptop or phone, but bridges the gap between the two. The start up of the iPad is less than 30 seconds and it’s unbelievably light weight! For a student like me it’s convenient to have one. Looking up information on the internet is seamless, and the battery life is impeccable. I don’t need to charge it for 2 to 3 days a week, and when I do it takes less than 3 hours to fully charge.

It’s a sleek device to use for work and entertainment. I have ditched picking out library books, and gone for e-books on the net and podcasts offered on iTunes.

The iPad has a great user interface that allows you to read books and pdfs - which most of the time are lecture slides and notes lecturers have put on learning@ukzn, e-mail and other online resources. The iPad is so easy to use, it doesn’t even come with a user manual in the box! Due to the first generation iPad being such a success story, the iPad 2 is finally out in America. It was released on the 11th March 2011, and Apple sold over 1 million in 2 days. Apple customers are loyal customers.

The specifications of the iPad 2 are immaculate, it weighs 601 g with a height of 241.2 mm and width of 185.7 mm. The standard features like Wi-Fi and Bluetooth are available. The iPad 2 has a HD back and VGA front camera. Photo and video geotagging over Wi-Fi, with up to 10 hours of surfing the web on Wi-Fi, watching videos, or listening to music. And here is the exciting part...it’s now cellular (this means you can make phone and video calls on it). The iPad has taken the portable computing experience to another level. Students no longer need to carry bulky laptop bags and chargers.

South African authorized Apple resellers only have the first iPad generation in stores, which was officially released this year in February, with prices varying from R4800 to R9000. Pricing depends on the type of iPad you are looking , 16GB or 32GB, WiFi only or WiFi and 3G. The WiFi and 3G is less restricting because it enables you to connect to the internet using a sim card over a 3G network, which is great for people who aren’t always in WiFi hotspot zones.

More and more students are recognising the benefits of investing in this light-weight, user-friendly learning device.

From a student’s perspective I recommend you do, it will probably change your learning experience forever.