

# **TEACHER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

## **POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This is a brief report on the training that was recently undertaken under the aegis of the NATU Teacher Development Institute. In this interim report I focus on the Positive School Culture (PSC) Programme. This Programme was sponsored by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) which provided hard copies of study manuals and connectivity data to all participants. The participants were broken down into two groups of 150 members each. However, for Group 2, NATU's Central Executive Board paid for 20 more members in addition to the 150 sponsored by the NECT. The first group comprised NATU members from Ulundi and Abaqulusi regions, while the second group consisted of members from the Ilembe, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Estcourt regions. There was also one member from the North-West Region. Owing to the challenges of subject coverage, training could only take place on Saturdays. Thus, for Group 1, the training was conducted on 29 May and 5 June, while for Group 2, it took place on 12 and 19 June 2021. Altogether, a total of 320 members (150 for Group 1 and 170 Group 2) were invited to participate in the Programme and credited with data. The actual total number of participants who turned up for training will be given in the final report.

The training was conducted virtually on the Zoom platform, supported by hard copy study manuals. It took place over two half-day sessions per group, starting at 08h00 and ending at 13h00. Participants contributed towards their own professional development by availing their own devices.

### **2.0 PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION**

The importance of the culture of a school cannot be over-emphasised. School culture is the basis of all success and achievement at the school. It is the culture of the school that regulates the behaviour of the school community; it is the school's culture that builds commitment to purpose among all members and stakeholders of the school; and it is the school's culture that builds and sustains the pride that moulds the school community into a viable force. The culture of a school impacts learner attitudes and performance, teacher commitment and professionalism, and parental involvement and support. The culture of a school is the basis of a positive school image, and the reason for the resulting respect that comes from the community and community structures and institutions. All priorities and activities of a school must be embedded in a positive school culture in order to improve the chance of success.

Owing to the importance of culture to the success of a school, this module sought to provide participants with the understanding and skills to assess and reflect on the cultures of their respective schools, and the information and guidelines that are necessary to develop and implement an agenda for creating positive school cultures.

The main content items covered in the programme were as follows:

- a) Culture as the basis of the performance and success of a school.

- b) Culture as residing in the character and contributions of its people, rather than in the artefacts and physical attributes of the school.
- c) Since all schools have people who inhabit them, all schools will acquire a culture based on the nature and behaviour of people in the school community.
- d) Culture as a collective responsibility: all must practise and preserve the culture; all must add value in regulating and sustaining that culture.
- e) The importance of school, as a collective and with the power and dominance of its culture, to transform all the people who enter the school's space.
- f) A positive culture cannot be left to chance. A positive school culture must be crafted, facilitated and nurtured by school leadership with the support of members of the school community.

Despite being delivered virtually, the sessions had built-in activities which required the participants to actively engage with each other in both break-away and in plenary group sessions.

### 3.0 SUCCESSES

Two main indicators of success may be cited:

- a) The planning and execution of the training sessions by NECT officials went very well,
- b) The workshop evaluations (formal) and informal yielded very possible comments – please, refer to the reactions of participants presented below:

Some of the non-solicited reactions of the participants were:

**Group 1**  
 [04/19, 13:23] +27 82 841 3310: Good day Honourable Professor I wish to extend my sincere thanks to you and NATU at large for the certificates that I have attained, really. Information gained helps me a lot especially at workplace where the school is dominated by the majority of our sister union and demonstrating the lack of knowledge. Then I practise what I learned. Thank you so much  
 [04/19, 13:33] Simenda: Many thanks, we shall continue to look out for more opportunities. We're glad you found the training relevant and useful.

**Group 2**  
 [06/12, 12:42] +27 76 860 2912: Network has disconnected me, ❖❖❖❖  
 [06/12, 12:43] +27 65 804 2282: I am also disconnected.  
 [06/12, 12:46] +27 72 728 6375: I am a PL1 teacher, I don't think I will be able to share what I have learned here without some accreditation of some sort. Is it possible to get some certification?  
 [06/12, 13:21] +27 65 925 0607: Saze safunda weeee Thixo. This was informative and mind opening. We have a great deal of work to do provided we are work as a team with the Management. This was awesome. NATU u r the best. Aluta 🍌 Continua ❖❖  
 [06/12, 13:22] +27 66 204 0459: Network problem, please colleague's share the presentation as from group ranking discussion... Thanks  
 [06/12, 13:24] +27 72 774 2187: Viva NATU

[06/12, 13:28] +27 73 573 9102: We really learnt a lot although I personally had a network problem, but from what I managed to hear, I think NATU deserve a standing ovation for always keeping us informed. ❓❓❓❓❓  
[06/12, 13:29] +27 83 374 6185: Thank you so much for the informative workshop although I didn't write the pre-test because I was on the road listening through the headsets. I've learned a lot, and the network kept breaking up. Thank you so much.

The main comments related to (a) connectivity difficulties, (b) how informative and helpful the workshop was, and (c) a request for some form of accreditation for the training. The connectivity issues were above our control, particularly considering that there was Eskom load-shedding at the time of the training. Both the NECT and the NATU DTI are pleased that participation in the workshops empowered those who had attended. On the issue of certificates, unfortunately, this training was for CPTD points only. The Programme is SACE endorsed and the participants will be credited CPTD points (not sure how many points but will find out).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks and gratitude to both the NECT and NATU's CEB for their support for this Programme. There will be further training in the second Semester of this year. We appeal to members to take advantage of the training when it becomes available.

I wish to conclude by acknowledging the support of the NECT team for the many hours they put into the planning and implementation that made this training the success that it became. In particular, I wish to express my respect and thanks to the late Mr Japhta Mametja with whom we began to plan this training but, sadly, was taken away before the implementation stage. MHSRIP.

My other words of gratitude go to the rest of the NECT team: Dr Deva Govender, Ms Lebongang Maphela, Messrs G. Nhauro, L.L. (Bonny) Lecogo, Thalete Dlamini and our two Facilitators: Messrs George Taodzera and S. Khanye. Lastly, to my colleagues at NATU: Mr SV Malinga, the Acting President; Mrs BZ Mbatha, the Vice President: Professional Matters; and Ms. Sbongile Ndlovu, my Personal Assistant.

PROF. SN IMENDA

DIRECTOR, NATU DTI

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