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1918 · 2018

*forward together · saam vorentoe · masiye pbambili*

# **A PRISON-UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP: PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT BY REHUMANISING LEARNING**

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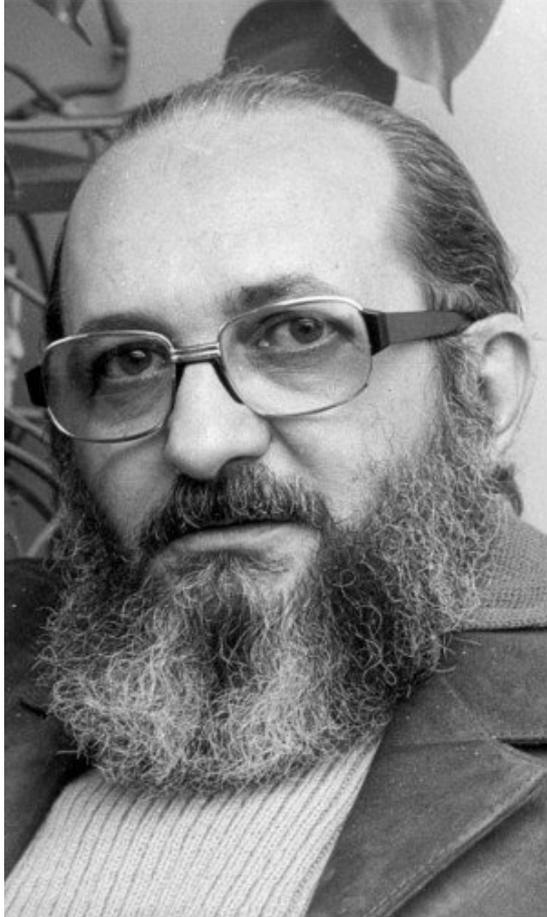
# INSPIRATION for ULC



**“EDUCATION  
IS THE MOST POWERFUL  
WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO  
CHANGE THE WORLD.”**

**NELSON  
MANDELA**

# INSPIRATION for ULC



*Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*

*- Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Foreword*

## COMPONENTS:

1. **educational partnership** between SU and DCS
  2. **social support** and **reintegration** for students post-incarceration
  3. **educating** and **sensitising** SU students (and wider community) about incarceration system – student-led
- NB for participant **empowerment** through **collaboration** and **interaction**: transformative power of **education as a tool for social justice**

- a **prison-university educational partnership** that provides higher education opportunities for SU students and UNISA students in Brandvlei Prison to study together under SU academics, and learn with and from each other through dialogue and the sharing of experience
- 2019: commencement of **interdisciplinary pilot module**
  - theme: “**Am I because we are? Exploring selves and communities**”
  - why interdisciplinary?

# EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT



(Collaborative poetry prompt after brainstorming session)

Today I learned **shared visions are powerful visions**

I discovered **we think alike**

I was surprised by **how common we think as academics**

I met **wonderful people!**

At the start **I was sceptical**

Right now **I convinced that sometimes people are not what they seem to be on the outside**

I'm thinking **together we will make it!!!**

I want to **engage more and share more ideas**

## OBJECTIVES:

- **rehumanising learning:** feeling connected to others, humanised rather than objectified, is conducive to empowerment, learning and holistic student development
- **transformative learning** takes place when students are exposed to new experiences and perspectives, such as interaction with diverse peers: students develop personal and social responsibility, helping integrate knowledge and skills with values, sense of self, identity and purpose (Quinlan, 2011, 2014)

# EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT



## OBJECTIVES:

- community engagement is aimed at narrowing the gap between SU and the communities it serves:
- is a form of **critical citizenship**, which is aimed at encouraging “critical reflection on the past and the imagining of a possible future shaped by social justice in preparation of living together in harmony in diverse societies. ... specifically aimed at transformation of thinking on a personal level towards a wider public good ... critical citizenship can serve to promote transformation, to imagine a possible future and to affect broad societal change.” (Bitzer and Constandius 2018)

## OBJECTIVES:

- potential to generate considerable – and original – **research output in the SOTL and criminal justice-related fields**, since this is the first SA prison-university collaborative learning partnership of this kind
- (also **collaborative international research** with partners from Cambridge University, UK; UC Berkeley, USA (Fulbright scholar); John Jay College of Criminal Justice, USA)

## OBJECTIVES:

- to aid students transitioning from prison to the **community** to continue their education, obtain employment, and lead stable, productive, fulfilling lives on the “outside”
- to challenge social disadvantage as a barrier to higher education learning by **offering re-entry facilitation and support** for incarcerated students to finish their studies / study further at SU post-release

# STUDENT-LED / CAMPUS EDUCATION COMPONENT



## OBJECTIVES:

- **breaking down the barriers** between universities and prisons
- **sensitising and educating** the community about the project, our incarceration system, the role communities need to play and the realities of this system.

# LOOKING FORWARD...



- must still finalise interdisciplinary SU academic participants and register pilot as SU short course
- “branding” – logo and slogan for website, social media, etc.
- logistics – coordination between DCS and SU, SU student recruitment, human resource constraints...
- obtain day-to-day **funding** for ULC going forward
- expanding project beyond pilot – other universities too!
- uncertainties and fears...
- **BUT... “It always seems impossible until it’s done”!**

12 (Mandela)