



**iThemba
LABS**
Laboratory for Accelerator
Based Sciences

Science Engagement News March and April 2021

Supporting young people through motivational storytelling

Oprah Winfrey said “You can’t give it to others if you don’t have it yourself!”

The 2021 academic year is off and learners, students and educators need to come to grips with the “new normal”. Not only are they expected to show up, but they are expected to be motivated, focused, inspired and emotionally tough. They need to understand their own emotions and have the skills to manage the triggers; especially when it has the possibility of derailing them! So what can WE as the older generation do? Well, we can invest in conversations; specifically the art of telling stories that are authentic, insightful and reflective. Stories have the ability to connect human beings, to make us feel and to move us to action. The Science Engagement TEAM has been privileged to receive invitations to schools, TVET-colleges and universities to share their stories. The month of March created opportunities at **Emil Weder High** in Genadendal, **Shiloh Centre of Learning** in Bellville, and a virtual interaction at the **College of Cape Town**.

Possible sessions are being planned for April at **Knysna High**, **Beaufort West Senior Secondary** and **Hermanus Varsity**.

Bridging the GAP through technology

The primary school science programme, called “Siyophumelela” (Nguni word meaning we will succeed), is a programme that exposes grade-7 learners to the wonder of science through a range of hands-on and minds-on activities. The planned activities include amongst other unplugged coding workshops, an introduction to the scientific method through experiments and the expansion of the scientific vocabulary through a literacy challenge.

The Science Engagement team used the 1st term to visit the 15 participating schools where they treated the learners to an interactive science show. The learners will be competing in a science quiz during the 2nd term to identify at least 15 science ambassadors per school. These science ambassadors will then represent the schools in various other activities like the National Science Olympiad and possible participation in the EXCOM Expo for Young Scientists.

One of the challenges has always been the introduction of iThemba LABS into the school space; specifically, Primary Schools. We are looking for innovative ways of using technology and specifically coding and robotics to bridge the proverbial gap. Are you perhaps involved in a project that could provide a context within which we can explore some of these ideas? Are there opportunities linked to design and 3D printing that we could explore? We would love to hear from you.

Please contact Hilton Tobias (htobias@tlabs.ac.za) to set up a meeting

Enhancing the teaching and learning of Physical Science

The Science Engagement Team, in partnership with the staff and learners of Tuscany Glen High School, are hoping to give science teaching a face-lift. The TEAM will be using the school break to improve the appearance of the physical science classroom at the school. It is hoped that a fresh coat of paint, a few posters and the provision of teaching and learning aids will enhance the offering of the science department.

We have realized that you cannot disconnect the learning endeavor from the context within which it happens. iThemba LABS has always prided itself in its ability to facilitate access to state-of-art equipment and infrastructure as we advance knowledge and transform lives. It is hoped that these small acts will assist in positioning iThemba LABS as a partner in training and development. We do not just want to assist in beautifying spaces, but also to contribute to the discourse on the impact of science in society. We hope that many of you will avail yourselves to interact with learners and members of local communities through storytelling in the near future.

Contact Hilton Tobias (htobias@tlabs.ac.za) to start the conversation

