

UNAM Students Discover New Teaching Dynamics at N/a'an ku sê Primary School

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The Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) Department at the University of Namibia's Khomasdal Campus is dedicated to bridging theory and practice through hands-on classroom experiences. Recently, fourth-year ECEC students visited N/a'anku se Primary School, located about 54 km outside Windhoek, to observe the multi-grade teaching approach in action.



In preparation for the school visit, students engaged in theoretical sessions focused on the multi-grade teaching approach. They were tasked with completing an observation schedule, which would guide their learning during the visit. The N/a'an ku sê Primary School welcomed the group with a warm, musical reception, including a lively opening song and dance performance that set a positive tone for the day.

Ms Renate Shikwaya and Ms Jacolynn van Wyk, lecturers in the ECEC Department, have always emphasised the importance of connecting theory to practice.

Exploring the Power of Multi-Grade Classrooms

"The atmosphere was incredibly welcoming, and the enthusiasm of the learners was contagious," Mrs. van Wyk noted. The school operates three multi-grade classrooms, and students were divided into small groups to observe teaching practices in these unique

learning environments. Before the observations began, the principal, Mr. Lionel Samuels, provided insights into the school's operations and the activities of the N/a'an ku sê Foundation. He also shared his thoughts on the effectiveness of the multi-grade approach and highlighted international success stories, sparking curiosity among the students.



For many of the visiting students, the experience was eye-opening. “The students were surprised by the seamless integration of the multi-grade approach in the classrooms,” Mrs. Shikwaya explained. One student, Mariam, observed that learners were not separated by grades, and teachers noted that older students often acted as tutors for their younger peers. “The interaction between different grade levels was remarkable,” Mrs. van Wyk added, highlighting how the students enjoyed observing the lessons with Mr. Pedro Begitu and Ms. Lentroutie Cloete.

Though the primary focus was on multi-grade classes, the students also gained valuable insights from observing a grade 1 class led by Ms. Sherley Vries. “We were impressed by the learners’ abilities, especially during the English phonics and Mathematics lessons,” Mrs. Shikwaya remarked. One student, Hendrina, noted, “The learners are very smart,” while another, Soini, praised Ms. Sherley’s teaching skills, adding, “Ms. Sherley is a very good teacher.”

Reflecting on the visit, Mrs. van Wyk shared that the students’ perceptions of multi-grade teaching shifted significantly. “Initially, many students were hesitant about the idea of teaching in a multi-grade setting, but seeing the approach in action changed their minds,” she said. The lecturers and students expressed gratitude for the informative day, with hopes for continued engagement with N/a'an ku sê Primary School in the future.