

Bringing stories to life as Early Childhood student teachers inspire learners during Readathon Excursion

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Third-year students from the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) at the University of Namibia's Khomasdal Campus embarked on a delightful excursion to Olof Palme Primary School in Katutura. This activity was part of the department's "Easy Read-Aloud Community Engagement Project," designed to bring the joy of reading to young learners.



The students were accompanied by ECEC staff members, including Dr. Jessica Jansen, Ms. Helga Kaurora, Mr. Andre Kandundu, Ms. Eveline Ndatilifa, Ms. Renate Shikwaya, and Ms. Hedwig Mutau. The primary objective of the trip was for the students to read

aloud from their “Big Books” to junior primary learners. Each student took turns reading their stories to small groups, while some encouraged the children to chorus-read alongside them.

“The excitement in the learners’ eyes as they engaged with the stories was truly heartwarming,” said Dr. Taimi Ndapandula Nghikembua, Head of the ECEC Department. “This type of experience goes beyond the classroom – it fosters a love for reading and encourages language development, which are crucial in early childhood education.”



The excursion was part of the celebrations for National Readathon Week, an annual event organised by the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture to promote reading and literacy among Namibian learners. The project also allowed UNAM students to implement what they’ve learned in their coursework by applying it in a practical, real-world setting.

Invaluable experience both for students and learners

Reflecting on the experience, Dr. Jessica Jansen, Lecturer in Lower Primary Education, emphasised the importance of hands-on learning: “By reading aloud to the learners, our students not only practice their teaching skills but also contribute to the literacy

development of the community. It's an invaluable experience for both the students and the learners."



The Olof Palme learners were eager to hear the stories, following along attentively as the students read in Afrikaans, Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero, Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, and English. Ms. Adams, one of the teachers at the school, praised the students' efforts: "The books are amazing! The students really went the extra mile with these beautiful creations."

One of the students, Elré van Wyk, shared her excitement: "Every time I turned a page, the learners would say, 'WOW,' and that was such an amazing feeling. Seeing their engagement was priceless."



Children acquire language primarily through listening, and reading aloud is a powerful tool for connecting spoken and written words. Dr. Nghikembua noted, “When children hear words read aloud, it builds their vocabulary and comprehension, helping them make sense of how printed words relate to spoken language.”

The Head of Department for Junior Primary at Olof Palme Primary School, Ms. Lea Iiyambo, expressed her gratitude: “Our learners have enjoyed this so much, thank you. We look forward to collaborating in other areas as well.”

This storybook excursion not only reinforced the importance of literacy but also provided a platform for UNAM students to give back to the community, fostering a deeper connection between theory and practice in their educational journey.