Dr Satsope Maoto: new Director for the School of Education

New School of Education Director develops instructional support for students

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Dr Satsope Maoto, the newly appointed Director for the School of Education, is curiously optimistic about the new learner support system strategy which the School is about to implement. She says the strategy will make her School both competitive and well-coordinated. Maoto was promoted from her previous position of Acting Director.

She says the School is planning to design learning activities that will provide instructional support for students. “Good teaching takes care of scaffolding. The metaphor of scaffolding refers to the amount of overt instructional structure and support provided in a course: the smaller or weaker the students’ foundation in a subject, the stronger and larger the scaffolding that is required (Bruner and Angelo, 1993). Underpinning this notion is the gradual withdrawal of scaffolding as students develop and become more independent learners”.

Maoto, who hails from Ga-Nchabeleng in the Limpopo Province, boasts several education qualifications and tremendous experience in teaching and learning. She obtained a teaching qualification at Dr CN Phatudi College in 1982. Subsequent to her first qualification, she moved to the Eastern Cape to advance her knowledge where she obtained Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Fort Hare in 1986. A year
later, she enrolled with the University of the North (now University of Limpopo) for a Bachelor of Education (BEd - Honours) graduated in 1989 and three years later enrolled for BA Honours in Psychology degree. She obtained Master in Education degree (Mathematics Education) from Leeds University in England (Britain) in 1996.

Maoto started with her teaching roles as a teacher at Baaphadima High School in 1983, Morokalebole High School in 1987, lecturer at Sekhukhune College of Education from 1987-1996. She joined MASTEC College from 1997-2000 as a lecturer and later promoted to a position of Primary PRESET/INSET Coordinator. Having learned the pros and cons of the education discipline, she took a new challenge as a lecturer in April 2000 at the University of Limpopo. She was promoted to senior lecturer in the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in 2004. She was appointed Acting Director in School of Education in June 2011 until 1 July 2015 where she was promoted as Director. In addition to the different educational forums she participates in, she is one of the Directors of Ukuqonda Institute, a mathematics and science non-profit organisation that ensures quality education in schools and at university level.

When everyone thought she was settled, she decided to add more feathers in her cap when she received DEd Mathematics Education from the Curtin University in Western Australia.

Maoto sees management and leadership as something that comes with responsibilities and good demeanor. To her, staff empowerment is imperative for any school to run efficiently. “We need to ensure that staff members are empowered in order to be productive, they need to be motivated and mentored to ensure that the school runs optimally. An exemplary Director is one who leads with the head, heart and hands as Ngambi (2011) puts it”.

Although she says the standard of education in South Africa has upgraded and continues to improve, she sees a gap in policy development and implementation. “Our system is improving although it’s not yet on the same par as those in matured democracies.”
“I must be resourceful and skillful in mapping different scenarios. This compels me to be capable of intelligent assessment on cultural, gender, spiritual differences and sensitivities,” she states, adding that she is going to connect with her staff members’ feelings in order to get things done as a united front. Leadership, as she highlighted, “is not about sitting in the office dreaming up strategies but about touching the institution through personal presence and relationships; it is about connectivity.”

Maoto has supervised research projects of 25 Honours students; 7 Master’s students (two still to graduate); 3 Doctoral students and externally assessed 5 Master’s dissertations and 4 Doctoral thesis of various universities (Rhodes; WITS; TUT and UNISA). She also peer reviewed SAPSE accredited journal articles such as Canadian Journal for Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education; South African Journal of Higher Education; Pythagoras; Journal of Educational Studies. She published 6 journal articles (2 of which still in press) and 6 chapters in School Mathematics (New Modern Graded Mathematics FET series (Grade 10-12)). She presented conference papers both nationally and internationally (e.g. Australia; Zimbabwe; Mozambique).