

### **To whom it may concern**

It is my privilege and pleasure to write about Dr Andre du Plessis, who I have known for several years, as a student and currently as a colleague. I have always been in awe of his energy and enthusiasm to learn, to teach, to research and to reach out to others through engagement projects, giving of himself unconditionally. I offer my comments by drawing on my experiences in the areas in which I have worked with Dr Du Plessis:

### **Leadership in the faculty**

I have noted his willingness to lead and to take up leadership positions where the need arises but also in areas in which he has strengths. He currently heads up the Postgraduate Certificate in Education, leading courageously in the challenging re-curriculation process. I have been in meetings where he had to give feedback on the re-curriculation process and have seen him able to take and defend a position in a kind and generous way.

My working with him closely over the past four years has been as co-editor of the newly established Educational Research for Social Change: An online journal. We are three co-editors and he has shown his co-leadership by fully engaging with the establishment of the journal and the online work as webmaster. He has also taken the lead as editor of a special issue focusing on his field of expertise, i.e. Information Communication Technology. This also points to his research informing his teaching.

### **Innovation**

In my engagement with Dr Du Plessis I have noted his keenness to innovate his teaching. The field of ICT lends itself to innovation, but it takes a dedicated and committed person to apply innovation to the work. He for example has developed small podcasts to enable his students to learn to use some software independently of him. His excitement when his students succeed and can demonstrate their success is contagious. He has invited me to his class to see his students' innovative work.

### **Subject expertise**

A good teacher is a researcher and a researcher uses his research to inform his teaching. This reciprocity epitomizes Dr Du Plessis's academic career. As ICT expert Dr Du Plessis has demonstrated his expertise through the research for his doctorate in the field of ICT. He has also published several articles related to ICT in teaching - both from his own work and also with the students he has supervised - and has also presented several conference papers, both nationally and internationally. A highlight and a demonstration of the acknowledgment of his expertise is his being invited to do keynote presentations at international conferences. Clearly, his esteem as teacher-researcher academic is rapidly developing.

**Staff relationships**

I can honestly say that Dr Du Plessis takes the issue of establishing sound relationships seriously as I have noted how he engages with colleagues in a positive way. He acknowledges their strengths and contributions to the programme he leads, while also being able to accept criticism. He adds cheer to a gathering.

**Student relationships**

Here too, I draw only on what I know for myself. My office is just opposite the computer laboratory he uses for his teaching and I can therefore hear his engagement with the students. He engages with the students in a respectful way, challenging them to think about what they do. It seems like joyful classes! The students acknowledge his expertise and the amount of work he puts in. I overheard a student say that he, Dr Du Plessis, is far too busy and should take a break! In spite of being busy he still makes time to stop and enquire about students' and colleagues' well-being.

I can truthfully say that what I have offered here as comments are only a little glimpse into the teacher goodness of Dr Du Plessis. In my mind Dr Du Plessis is an extra-ordinary committed and distinguished teacher.



Prof N de Lange  
HIV & AIDS Education Research Chair  
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University  
Faculty of Education  
11-OG-002  
South Campus  
University Way  
Port Elizabeth

Tel: 27-41-5044519  
Fax:27-41-5044519