

Department of Psychology

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Electronic newsletter of the Department of Psychology

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Note from the Chair...



One of features of our department is that many of our undergraduate students choose psychology because they wish to become clinical or counselling psychologists. For this reason, they have their hearts set on gaining entry into our masters programme in clinical psychology and community counselling. While providing psychological services in the form of psychotherapy is highly commendable, it is not be the be-all and end-all of what psychology as a discipline and profession is about. In fact, there are many more ways in which psychology graduates may make a meaningful contribution to our society. Our masters degree in psychology by thesis is a way to develop skills in psychological theory, conceptualisation of research problems, research methods, and qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and scientific writing. Such intellectual and analytical skills are much-needed to help solve the complex array of problems in our increasingly complex society.

I am proud to say that our department plays a leading role in various initiatives in our country and on our continent. Several of our staff members are among the most productive researchers in South Africa, with publications in highly-regarded and prestigious international journals. We have numerous collaborative research projects with colleagues from institutions in various countries in the world. The Alan Flisher Center for Public Mental Health continues to develop research initiatives in various

African countries as well as build research capacity in the form of the MPhil programme in Public Mental Health. A very important journal, the African Journal of Disability is presently housed in our department, under the editorship of Professor Leslie Swartz. In general, the department is continually sought after as a research partner by scholars from all over the world.

We also take very seriously our responsibility to teach, mentor, and train new generations of students. With its large undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the department takes pride in its highly-trained graduates who go on to work and study in various parts of the country and the world. Insofar as community interaction is concerned, numerous projects are located in the department, run by staff and students. Our prestigious masters programme in Clinical Psychology and Community Counselling continues to provide much needed psychological services to the surrounding Stellenbosch community. The Departmental Colloquium is a thriving intellectual space and we have been pleased to welcome speakers from various parts of the world as well as from the local academic community. We encourage everyone to attend every Tuesday at lunchtime so that the department can continue its tradition of fostering stimulating debate and vibrant discussion.

By all accounts, psychology as a discipline and a profession is thriving under the custodianship of our department. We strive to create an enriched environment for both staff and students to thrive and to feel free to explore new ideas. On a personal note, it is with great pride and humility that I take up the role of chairperson of the department for the next three years. It is an absolute privilege for me to serve in this position and to work with a wonderful group of colleagues.

30th International Congress of Psychology

Cape Town, 2012



Stellenbosch University students from the Psychology, Educational psychology and Industrial Psychology Departments



Above: The Stellenbosch University stall manned by student volunteers

Below: Dr Helene Loxton, Mrs Lisa Visagie, Dr Marianna Le Roux, Miss Kathe Burkhardt



International Congress of Psychology (ICP) Conference 2012 and the role of Stellenbosch University

More than 5000 national and international delegates gathered from 22-27 July at the CTICC in Cape Town for the **International Congress of Psychology (ICP) Conference**. The International Congress of Psychology, held every four years under the auspices of the International Union of Psychological Science, is the flagship event in international psychology.

For the first time in its 30-year history, the congress was held in Africa, with the theme Psychology Serving Humanity. Stellenbosch University was one of SA university co-sponsors of the congress (thanks to the rector's generous support) and had 52 student and 20 staff members presenting papers and posters at the conference. More than 30 Stellenbosch University students from the Psychology, Educational psychology and Industrial Psychology Departments were also involved as volunteer assistants at the conference. Several academic staff members were actively involved within the scientific committees for the 44 themes of the conference.

The conference was hailed as a resounding success with the contribution of Stellenbosch University's Psychology Department playing a significant role. A list of some of the presentations and posters at the ICP conference in 2012 follow:

- Albien, A., & Naidoo, A.V. *Using the My System of Careers Influences in a South African Township*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Ballim, A., & Lesch, E. *Low-income fathers' constructions of being a father to a daughter*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Bantjes, J. Kagee, S., & Pretorius, C. *Training clinical and counselling psychologists in South Africa: Controversies, caveats and cautions*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Bomester, O., & Lesch, E. *Exploring closeness in parent-adolescent relationships*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Braathen, S. & Swartz, L. *Access to mental health services for people with psychiatric disabilities living in a poor, rural community*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Breet E., Seedat, S., & Kagee, A. *Relationship between intimate partner violence, HIV-related stigma and mental health among people living with HIV*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Capri, C., Johnson, M., Kruger, L., Tomlinson, M & Hakan, F. *Child sexual abuse workers' emotional experiences of working therapeutically in the Western Cape*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Coetzee, B., Kagee, A., & De Bruin, D. *The development of an inventory to assess structural barriers to adherence to antiretroviral therapy*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Conje, F., & Lesch, E. *The importance of studying father-adolescent daughter relationships in low-income communities: A literature review*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Dube, T. & Naidoo, A.V. *In the trenches: How prepared for community service do newly trained clinical psychologists feel?* 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Greeff, A. P. *A theoretical orientation for studies in family resilience*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, 22 – 27 July 2012, Cape Town.
- Greeff, A. P., Koegelenberg, G., Masters, R., & Deist, M. *Family resilience studies within the South African context (symposium)*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, 22 – 27 July 2012, Cape Town.
- Johnson, S. & Naidoo, A.V. *Impact of stress and burnout interventions for educators on high risk schools*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Kagee, A. (Convenor) *Research training in Africa: Successes and challenges*. Paper presented at the 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Kleintjes, S., Swartz, L. & Lund, C. *Participation of South Africans with lived experience of mental illness in public mental health policy-making*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.

30th International Congress of Psychology

Cape Town, 2012

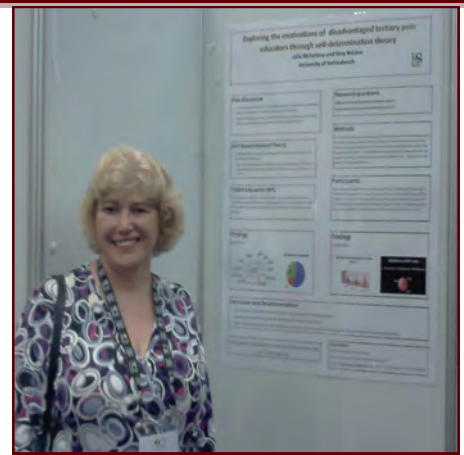
- Kleinhans, A., & Lesch E. *Constructions of intimacy in heterosexual, longterm relationships in a South African farmworker community*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Le Roux, M. C., Swartz, L., & Swart, E. *An animal-assisted reading programme. Results from a South African study*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Lesch, A., Roux, S., & Swartz L. *What role do communities play in scientific research? Exploring community perspectives on HIV/AIDS and trial participation at a HIV vaccine research centre in South Africa*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Lesch E. *Close relationships in one low income South African community: Introduction to symposium*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Loxton, H., Burkhardt, K & Ollendick, T. *Construction of the South African version of the Fear Survey Schedule for Children*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Loxton, H., & Visagie, L. *Assessing the fears of children with varying degrees of visual impairment*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- McFarlane, J., & Naidoo, A.V. *Exploring motivations of disadvantaged tertiary peer educators through self-determination theory*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- McVeigh, J., Van Rooy, G., Mannan, H., Swartz, L., El Tayeb, S., Munthali, A., Amin, M., MacLachlan, M. & El Khatim, A. *Equiframe: Analysis of equity for people with disabilities in 51 health policies from Sudan, Malawi, South Africa and Namibia*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Naidoo, A.V., Williams, L., Hagan, S., Conchar., L., McFarlane, J. *Crossing the (Kei) bridge: Reflections of Stellenbosch University students serving on the Phelophepha health train*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Naidoo, A.V., Williams, L., Lararus, S., et al. *Complexities and challenges of negotiating a CBPR partnership*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Odendaal, W. A., Lewin, S., Tomlinson, M., Hausler, H. & Mtshizana, Y. *The use of audio and visual diaries to explore the adherence behaviours of HIV and TB patients: a South African study*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Pretorius, C., & Brooddryk, M. *Misconceptions about traumatic brain injuries among University Students*, 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Swartz, L. *Training disabled people's organisation members in Southern Africa in basic research skills*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.
- Taliep, N., Lazarus, S., Bulbia, S., & Naidoo, A. *Using CBPR to mobilising spiritual capacities and religious assets to promote peace*. 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 July 2012.



Anouk Albien and Julie McFarlane



Lisa Visagie and Helene Loxton



Julie McFarlane and Tony Naidoo's poster

Stellenbosch lecturer presents keynote address in Diyarbakir, Turkey



Desmond Painter, a Senior Lecturer in our department, was invited to deliver a keynote address at the Third Critical Psychology Symposium in Diyarbakir, Turkey, in September 2012. The conference was organised by the Association of Psychologists for Social Solidarity (TODAP) and sponsored by the Municipality of Diyarbakir,

which is the capital city of the predominantly Kurdish region in south-eastern Turkey.

The theme of the conference was 'Social Trauma' and aimed (according to the call for papers) 'at bringing activists, students and scholars together to discuss critical psychology and its implications.' Painter presented a paper called *Beyond Subjects of Trauma: Rethinking Psychology in South Africa after Apartheid*. In this paper he critically reflected on the uses and abuses of the concept 'trauma' in critical psychology, especially in relation to how our understanding of political subjectivity and social change in situations of oppression and conflict.

According to Painter it was huge privilege to be invited as a speaker to this conference: 'Diyarbakir is one of the most fascinating, and in some ways most unlikely, conference destinations I have ever visited. The so-called 'Kurdish question' in Turkey is extremely complex, and critical psychologists there are struggling with similar issues as their South African counterparts regarding the role of psychology in a culturally diverse, politically oppressive, and economically unequal society. In fact, in both these countries, South Africa and Turkey, critical psychology is the name given to attempts to think psychology both *in relation to* and *beyond* histories of colonialism, inequality and oppression.'

The conference took place at a time of heightened political tensions, intensified by the war in neighbouring Syria. According to Painter, 'Because the conference was sponsored by the local municipality, which is currently governed by a Kurdish party, we had the opportunity to meet and discuss the political situation with a number of prominent Kurdish politicians. They were understandably fascinated by South African history – and also very knowledgeable. They have studied the liberation struggle and post-apartheid transformation in detail, and were all fascinated by our constitutional provisions for language rights.'

Painter hopes to maintain and develop the connections he made in Turkey. 'Despite obvious cultural differences, our countries share a lot, and we can learn a lot from one another. I hope to invite a number of Turkish psychologists to a critical psychology conference in Stellenbosch in 2014.'



Research collaboration on childhood anxiety Maastricht-Stellenbosch 2002 - 2013

Dr Loxton visited Prof Peter Muris in April 2013 at Maastricht University, The Netherlands, with regard to joint ongoing research and the planning of new projects in the field of childhood anxiety.

Prof Muris is a full professor in Developmental Psychopathology at the Department of Clinical Psychological Science, Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, Maastricht University. Being widely acknowledged for his expertise in the field of childhood anxiety disorders and a prolific author, he is also associate editor of the *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, and the *Journal of Experimental Psychopathology*, and member of the editorial boards of several other journals. Prof Muris and Dr Loxton collaborated on a number of research projects since 2002, when she visited Maastricht University as an academic on the exchange programme whilst working on her doctoral study on the topic “*Expressed fears and coping mechanisms of a selected group of preschool children*”.

Since 2002, Dr Loxton co-supervised four master’s degree research exchange students from The Netherlands and coordinated research capacity building exchange of four Stellenbosch enrolled master’s degree research students to The Netherlands. As a result of this collaboration, joint publications appeared in three peer-reviewed academic journals.

Andrea Wege, a Stellenbosch enrolled master’s degree research student under Dr Loxton’s supervision, was accepted on the exchange programme at Maastricht for the period January - June 2013. Apart from doing additional structured Psychology courses in *Development and Learning and Memory*, Andrea finds the consultations with Prof Muris on her research topic “*The relation between anxiety symptoms and behavioural inhibition in young South African children*”, academically very enriching and inspirational.



In the photo from left to right are Prof Peter Muris from Maastricht University, Dr Helene Loxton and Ms Andrea Wege from Stellenbosch University.

Celebrating Valentines Day at Stellenzicht Secondary School



Rozanne Casper, Alberta van der Watt and Freda Cronje under the supervision of Dr. Elmien Lesch

On Valentine's Day (14 February 2013), postgraduate students from the Close Relationships Research and Community Interaction Project set up a cupcake decorating competition for the learners of Stellenzicht Secondary school in Jamestown. 700 cupcakes and various decorative materials were generously provided by sponsors Pioneer Foods for the event.



This event was organized with the aim of prompting learners to think about the importance of cultivating healthy relationships in their lives. The learners of the

school were asked to decorate a cupcake for a special person in their life (be it for a parent, sibling, friend, boyfriend or girlfriend). They were encouraged to give the cupcake to this special person after school in order to convey their love and affection for that person.



The other aim of the event was to explore the viability of launching a 'Relationship Chatting Space' in this school. We envision this space to allow learners to talk in smaller groups about the questions, problems and issues that they experience in their various close relationships. As we currently lack knowledge and understanding concerning South African adolescents' relationships with significant other people in their lives, it is hoped that these conversations will provide information about the relationship issues that need to be addressed and researched in this community.



The 13th European Congress of Psychology Stockholm, Sweden 9–12 July 2013

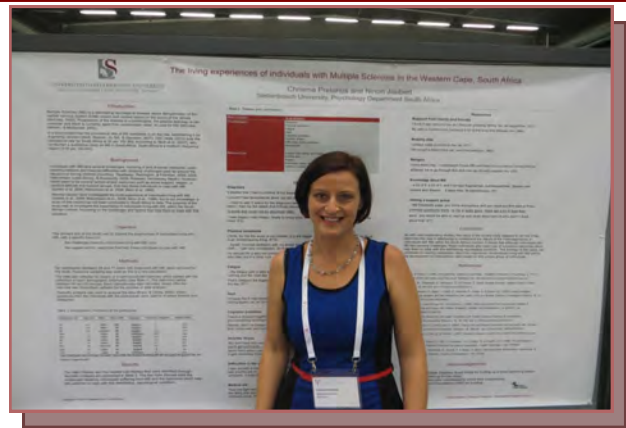
The 13th European Congress of Psychology (ECP 2013) was held in Stockholm from 9-12 July 2013, under the auspices of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) and organized by the Swedish Psychological Association. ECP 2013 brought together scientists and practitioners from Europe and the rest of the world to present and discuss new research, specifically involving the field of neuroscience.

Dr. Chrisma Pretorius has an interest in neuropsychology as well as health psychology.



She is especially interested in conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Huntington's disease, Traumatic Brain Injuries and the experiences of individuals living with these conditions, as well as, the experience of the caregivers caring for these individuals. She had the opportunity to present some of her current research, relating to MS, at the ECP. This included the experiences of individuals living with MS, as well as, the experiences of MS caregivers. Resulting from her presentation at the ECP, potential research collaborations with Austria are currently being explored.

Dr. Pretorius and her students are involved in a number of related qualitative research projects.



Dr Chrisma Pretorius

Ninon Joubert investigated the experiences of individuals living with MS in the Western Cape, as part of her Honours research project. She is currently conducting a study to investigate the experiences of individuals living with Huntington's disease, as part of her Master's studies in Psychology. Daniël du Plooy conducted a study to investigate the experiences of MS caregivers as part of his Honours research project. Mandi Broodryk is currently exploring the experiences of the caregivers of individuals who survived a traumatic brain injury. The aim of all these studies is to explore the experiences of these individuals within the South African context.

There is specific focus on the challenges faced by these individuals, the support and/or resources that help these individuals to cope either living with the condition, or with the caregiving task. The research on the experiences of individuals living with MS, sparked an interest in the kind of support that these individuals receive from an online Facebook support group for MS sufferers. Two Honours students, Jacqui Steadman and Gerstin Roos are currently exploring the impact of an online Facebook support group for MS sufferers on non-active, as well as, active users.



Doctoral students present at University of Miami conference

Two PhD students Lorenza Williams (Psychology) and Bianca Joseph (Educational Psychology) recently attended the Biennial Conference of the Society for Community Research and Action (Division 27 of APA) at the University of Miami, Florida 27 – 29 June 2013. The theme of the conference was Communal Thriving: Pursuing meaning, justice and well-being. Lorenza and Bianca presented a symposium on different community interaction projects where Stellenbosch University worked with community partners in pursuit of communal thriving through research, volunteerism and public service.

These two students also visited various universities in Washington DC and New York.



Top right: Lorenza and Bianca at the Capitol building in Washington DC.

Bottom right: Lorenza and Bianca with Prof Rod Watts (The Graduate Centre of City University of New York), a former visiting professor to the Psychology Department of Stellenbosch University.

Bottom centre: Prof Isaac Prilleltensky (University of Miami), esteemed academic and practitioner of Community Psychology.

Bottom left: Lorenza and Bianca with Key note speaker Alison Austin and her husband.

Academic literacy skills intervention in Psychology 348

An academic literacy skills component has been developed as part of the Psychology 348 module in 2013. The aim is to improve the students' skills to think, read and write critically. The writing consultant in the department, Anneliese de Wet, is joined by five tutors and they work together with the almost 530 students to assist them in improving their skills in the lectures every Friday. An interactive, experiential approach has been adopted.

It has been a learning experience for the students as well as the tutors. One of the tutors noted "This is a wonderful collaborative initiative between the faculty, the department and the individuals involved. May it grow and develop in future". Another tutor said "Personally, I would have appreciated a course like this to prepare me for postgraduate level instead of struggling on my own to learn how to write well and how to search for literature efficiently". The experience of the tutors has been positive and by

comparing the level of literacy in the class at the start of the semester with the performance in the assignment, improvements in these skills will hopefully be noted.



The Academic Literacy Task Team: Wylene Saal, Simona Flavio, Anneliese de Wet, Kirsten Penderis and Cindy Lewis. Absent: Jeanette Steenkamp.

Three doctors and a professor



Drs Sanja Kilian, Cindy Wiggett-Barnard, and Marieanna le Roux, with their supervisor Prof Leslie Swartz, at graduation on 11 March 2013.

In their dissertations, Sanja Kilian explored language issues in mental health care, Cindy Wiggett-Barnard studied disability and employment issues, and Marieanna le Roux demonstrated the impact of a canine-assisted programme on children's reading skills.

Scepticism: a necessary approach to the world

Prof. Ashraf Kagee



The word scepticism comes from the Greek *skeptikos*, which means to consider or examine. Scepticism requires that claims to truth should be interrogated, consistency of logic should be tested, and evidence supporting a claim

must be carefully weighed. A sceptic is one who questions the validity of a claim by calling for evidence to prove or disprove it. In fact, society would get nowhere if its citizens uncritically accepted what they are told by authorities. In the absence of a sceptical approach to the world, commonly accepted dogmas, assumptions, and beliefs may remain unexamined even though these may have no evidentiary basis.

Rather than being nihilistic and negative, sceptical inquiry is a constructive and positive force in society. Sceptics owe a great deal to the philosopher David Hume who recognised the fallibility of our senses but sought to correct this fallibility through reason. The modern sceptical movement is rooted in the scientific method, which involves the systematic collection of data to test natural explanations of phenomena. However, science yields provisional rather than eternal truths and scientific findings are constantly being refined and even altered as new evidence emerges. To this extent, it is necessary to have the mental or cognitive flexibility to change one's mind in the face of new evidence.

The writer Michael Shermer encourages us to keep an open mind to new ideas, but not so open that one's brains fall out! In other words, a careful balance between scepticism and credulity is a necessary intellectual attribute. The philosopher Thomas Kuhn similarly noted that an essential tension exists between commitment to the status quo and the blind pursuit of new ideas. Sceptics thus need to remain open to new ideas and unexpected ways of thinking about the world but maintain a stance that demands evidence for these new ideas to be tenable.

A surprising proportion of our population believes in phenomena such as astrology, psychic abilities, communicating with deceased persons, miracle cures, extra-sensory perception, and creationism. So, how do we draw the line between what is believable and what is not? One way to go about making this kind of

decision is to decide if a claim can be tested or not. The philosopher of science Karl Popper wrote that to be scientifically tenable, predictions, claims and theories should be falsifiable, in other words, they should be stated in a way that they can be proved wrong. Those statements that are indeed proved incorrect by the evidence should then be discarded as having no validity. Statements that withstand attempts to falsify them, however, remain tenable as they are supported by the evidence. In the alternative health care arena, many practitioners make extraordinary claims about herbal cures, homeopathy, iridology, and other interventions mostly in the absence of proper evidence. In psychology as well, numerous theories and interventions that have no scientific basis abound. I believe it is necessary for psychologists to apply treatments that have been demonstrated by controlled studies to be effective in ameliorating psychological symptoms.

Scepticism is a necessary intellectual attitude, perhaps more so in a complex society such as ours characterised by consumerism, wide disparities in wealth, a history of AIDS denialism by government, climate change sceptics, the debates around the merits of genetically modified food, and to a large extent the credibility bestowed on a political elite that by all accounts seems more interested in its own material gains than genuine social upliftment. While some degree of trust in political leadership is necessary for a society to function, healthy scepticism is also required to question and challenge leaders when there is evidence of maladministration or corruption. Scepticism demands that there be no sacred cows and that everything should be up for challenge, even the most dearly held dogmas.

We fortunately have a critical print media in our country. But for democracy to thrive, all citizens should be imbued with a critical stance that demands the best available evidence from various agents of power that make claims to truth, such as government officials, pharmaceutical companies, the medical establishment, educational experts, psychologists, and indeed from ourselves as engaged citizens. I encourage the new generation of students to assertively interrogate claims they are presented with, including those from their lecturers!

The CASE of Community Engagement

Doctoral student, Lane Benjamin, is a clinical psychologist with a passion for community. Lane has been developing a holistic community project in Hanover Park called CASE- Community Action towards a safer Environment. Hanover Park is often in the news for its high gang and crime statistics. Started in 2001 with a group of 15 voluntary women who received training as counsellors, the project has grown to include a range of interventions at schools and community centres involving learners, youth, adult men and women and community leaders. The case model provides training and access to psychological and life skills using a reconceptualised understanding of trauma addressing the systemic causes of violence and community dysfunction. There is a heavy investment in training and developing people from the community to become active and skilled mentors who serve as role models in the various CASE programmes.



Lane Benjamin

Worcester Hope and Reconciliation Process

Jason Bantjes

In 1996 a group of right wing extremists were responsible for a bomb explosion at the Shoprite/ Narotam complex in Worcester. In an historic event on the 3rd September this year, 25 survivors of the bomb blast will meet with one of the men responsible for the violent attack. This dialogue between the survivors and the perpetrator is part of a "Hope and Reconciliation Process" that will be used to engage the Worcester Community in broader reconciliation and restitution initiatives. As part of this process staff and masters students from the Psychology Department will work with psychologists from Correctional Services to provide psychological support and clinical services to the survivors. These clinical psychological services will be offered by the Psychology Department's Community Psychology Clinic located at Welgevallen as part of our on-going commitment to provide accessible and socially relevant psychological services to the broader community.

Doctoral student's research attracts the attention of the Western Cape's Department of Education



After completing her masters research focusing on *Transpersonal practices as prevention intervention for burnout among HIV/AIDS coordinator teachers*, Sharon Johnson felt compelled to continue her research to explore ways to addressing the alarming levels of teacher stress and burnout she had encountered. In her doctoral research Sharon, with the

endorsement and keen interest of the WCED, has compared 3 ten session interventions based on cognitive (Transactional analysis), emotional (Transpersonal Psychology) and physically oriented (Trauma release exercises) interventions with a control group. Her study also explores qualitatively what the participants

found in the specific intervention to be of personal benefit for themselves and in terms of their class room competence. While her dissertation is yet to be examined, the feedback from the schools has been very positive with participating schools eager to continue with the interventions as part of staff development. Sharon has been invited to address WCED educational psychologists and support staff on her findings. She will also be presenting her findings at the annual conference of the Psychological Society of South Africa.

Sharon is also currently the chair of the Psychological Society of South Africa's Division for Psychometrists and Registered Counsellors for the past three years and received PsySSA's commendation for being the most improved structure of the society.

Mother-infant book sharing – a pilot study and a randomized controlled trial (RCT)

Professor Mark Tomlinson

Partners: Professor Peter Cooper and Professor Lynne Murray (University of Reading, UK and Stellenbosch University)



Research from economically developed countries suggests that book sharing between a carer and an infant may be especially effective as a means of promoting infant cognitive and language development. Training studies carried out in such countries, aimed at improving the quality of book sharing, have consistently shown that training is effective and, compared to other kinds of parent training, that book sharing programmes are associated with greater gains in infant language skills. To date the potential of this approach has barely been explored in low and middle income countries, and not at all in Africa. In societies where there is no or little culture of book sharing, the introduction of sensitive and facilitatory book sharing could have a profound effect on children's intellectual development and readiness for school. It is important that this possibility receives systematic

investigation.

We recently completed a pilot study in Khayelitsha in order to establish feasibility and acceptability of the intervention. In the pilot study women in the group receiving the intervention attended an initial session outlining the benefits to infants of book sharing and describing the key features of sensitive book sharing. Each mother then received a 15 minute session from a trainer of individual support in book sharing with her own infant, using a picture book. At the end of the session there was a 20 minute group discussion focussed around a particular picture book, after which mothers and infants left, each with a copy of this book. Mothers were advised to practise book sharing with their child every day. There were six further training sessions held weekly. These sessions each began with a group meeting reviewing with the mothers their experiences with the book sharing, and recapitulating the critical features of sensitive book sharing. This was followed by individual training sessions. Each session ended with discussion of a new book which mothers and infants then took home with them. The mothers in the comparison group attended the research base for the same amount of time as the mothers who received the

training. The comparison group mothers received the same amount of instruction and individual support as the mothers who received the book sharing training, but the focus was on toy play. At each session a toy was introduced and there was discussion about how the child could be encouraged to explore the toy. Mothers were encouraged to support child play at home. In our pilot study, mothers receiving book sharing training engaged well with it, and they also benefited from it: thus, compared to the comparison group mothers, they became more sensitive, more facilitating, and more elaborative with their infants during book sharing; and they also became more sensitive to their infants during toy play. In addition, infants whose mothers received the book sharing training showed greater benefits than the comparison group infants in both their attention and language. It was clear that the training programme was well received by the community, and that the mothers engage actively in it. It was also clear that the children engaged well with the books and appeared to benefit from the structured involvement with their mothers. We are currently conducting a randomized controlled trial. Data collection will be completed at the end of May 2013.

Integrating Teaching, Research and Community Engagement in the Kayamandi Community Project

Professor Tony Naidoo



Since 2010 honours and masters students and staff from the Psychology Department have been working together with teachers, primary health staff and NGO staff to develop a



sustainable community engagement project in Kayamandi.



Using a community based participative process where community members are part of the planning and implementation of decisions and activities, the project seeks to address specific needs identified in the Kayamandi community.

The project is strategically linked to the honours Career Psychology module and the master's community practicum.



Initial activities have focused on developing career guidance and counselling activities for high school learners and mental health interventions at the schools, primary health clinic and community centres.

By linking a practicum experience to the module, the honour students have the valuable learning opportunity to apply and integrate



their theoretical knowledge and practical skills by designing and implementing group and one-on-one interventions for the learners at Kayamandi and Makapula high schools. This is done in consultation with the teachers to ensure the interventions are suitable for the school context. Their interventions have included workshops to assist with choosing their matric subjects, providing the matric learners with pertinent information for applying to colleges, universities, and learnerships and for bursary and loan applications, assisting with guided visits to the campus open day, and in helping with career exhibitions at the two high schools in the community. This is augmented with individual career counselling. The two masters students from the Clinical Psychology and Community Counselling

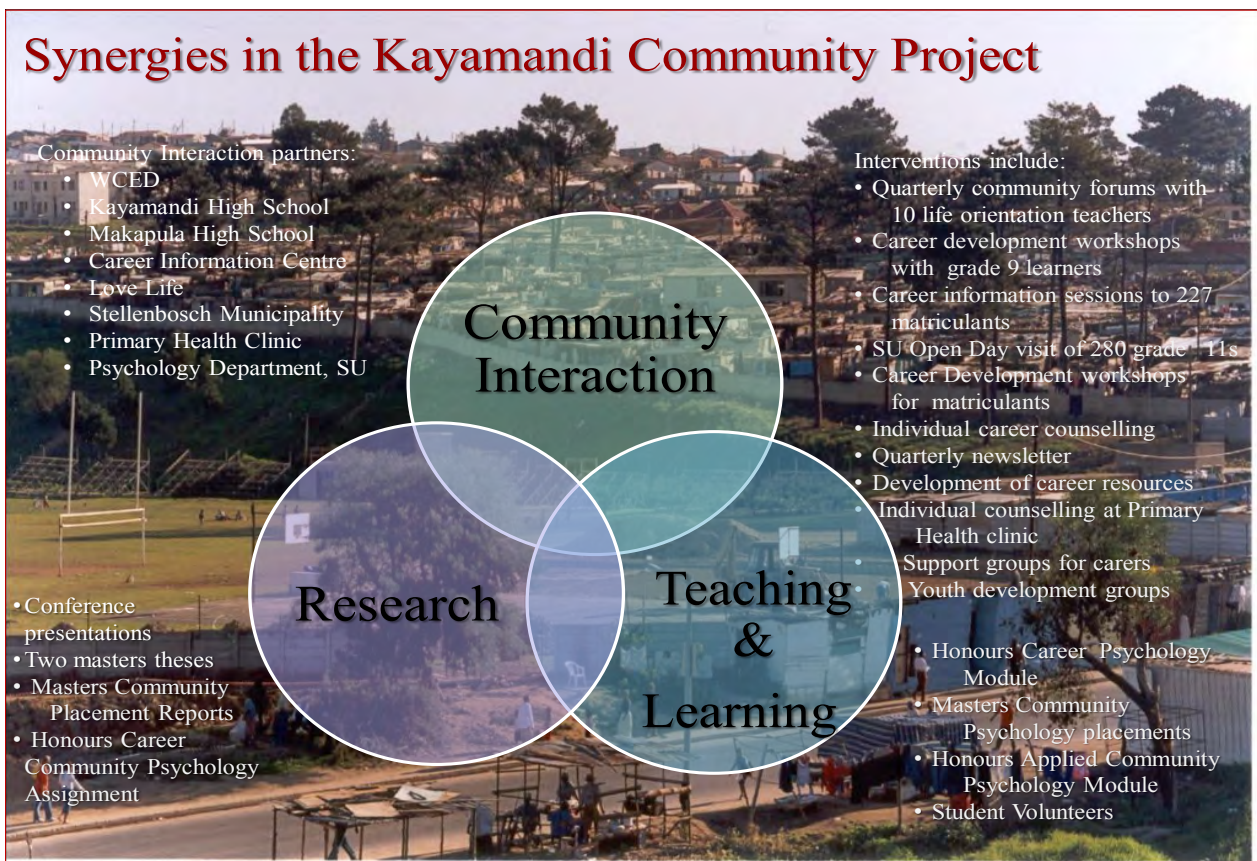


programme, who do a yearlong one day per week placement in the Kayamandi community, render individual and group counselling at the primary health clinic and run support groups for home-based carers at the Legacy Centre and also facilitate a weekly

youth development group. Anouk Albien whose masters research is linked to assessing appropriate career interventions in the Kayamandi community, has helped to coordinate the activities of the project.

See the diagram below for an overview of the

outcomes of the Kayamandi community project in terms of the teaching and learning, research and community interaction functions and how these functions have been integrated.



**Research
skills
workshops
facilitated by
international
visitors**



Dr Jason Bantjes

During the first six months of this year the Psychology Department hosted a number of international researchers, who visited the department to run workshops with students and staff.

Prof Maureen Weiss (School of Kinesiology, University of Minnesota) facilitated a workshop on “Research Methods in the Psychology of Sport and Exercise”. The workshop was attended by masters students who are conducting research in this area and

interested staff members.

Prof Birthe Loa Knizek (Faculty of Nursing, Sør-Trøndelag University College, Norway) facilitated a research skills workshop for honours and masters students who are currently investigating the knowledge, practices, attitudes and beliefs of health care workers towards suicide.

Prof Robert Schweitzer (School of Psychology and Counselling, Queensland University of Technology, Australia) facilitated a workshop on the evidence base for brief psycho-dynamic psychotherapy for the masters students in Clinical Psychology and Community Counseling.

All of these workshops provided students with the opportunity to engage with international specialists and to hone their research skills.

Unit for Psychology Flagship status

The **Unit for Psychology** (which is located at Welgevallen) was awarded **Community Interaction Flagship Status** for the work that it is doing in providing psychological services to the broader Stellenbosch Community. This award is a result of many years of work by many people in the Psychology Department. The funding received will enable the Department to consolidate and expand the range of psychological services offered and to plan and implement new community base psychological interventions.

Research visit by Prof Heidi Hjelmeland

Prof Heidi Hjelmeland (Professor of Health Science, Department of Social Work and Health Science, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway) spent a month visiting the Psychology Department. This visit was enabled by a grant received from Stellenbosch University’s Division of Research Development and from funding from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. During her time here, Prof Hjelmeland worked with a group of masters students to assist them with their research on suicide. Prof Hjelmeland’s visit also enabled us to plan a collaborative research project (with colleagues in Norway, Pakistan and Uganda) to investigate self-harm and attempted suicide. This research project will get underway later this year.

Honde, kinders en lees: Resultate van 'n Suid- Afrikaanse studie



Dr. Marieanna le Roux



Dr. Marieanna le Roux het tydens die Maart 2013 gradeplegtigheid haar PhD graad verwerf met die titel "Die effek van troeteldier-ondersteunde leesprogram op die leesvaardighede van graad 3-kindere in 'n Wes-Kaapse laerskool". Hierdie studie was die eerste van sy soort in Suid-Afrika.

Kinders sukkel wêreldwyd om te lees en in Suid-Afrika is dit ook 'n probleem. Die nasionale geletterdheidsyfers vir 2011 was 35% en die Wes-Kaap syfer was 43%. Die Wes-Kaapse Onderwysdepartement se eie onafhanklike ondersoek vir geletterdheid vir graad 3 was 30.4%. Troeteldier-ondersteunde leesprogramme is 'n relatiewe nuwe tipe leesprogram wat ondersteuning bied aan kinders wat sukkel om te lees. Die doel van die huidige studie was om die effek van 'n troeteldier-ondersteunde leesprogram op die leesvaardighede van graad 3-kindere te bepaal.

'n Klassieke eksperimentele ontwerp met ewekansige voortoets-natoets-kontrole groep ontwerp is gebruik. Al die kindere in graad 3 wat aan die kriteria voldoen het, is ewekansig in drie eksperimentele groepe en een kontrolegroep ingedeel. Die Leeshondgroep (n=27) het vir 'n leeshond en leesfasiliteerder gelees, die Leesfasiliteerdergroep (n=24) het vir 'n leesfasiliteerder alleen gelees terwyl die Teddiebeergroep (n=26) vir 'n teddiebeer en leesfasiliteerder gelees het. Die Kontrolegroep (n=25) het voortgegaan met hul normale



skoolaktiwiteite. Die data-insameling het plaasgevind voor die aanvang van die leesprogram (Tyd 1), direk ná voltooiing van die leesprogram (Tyd 2) en 'n opvolgmeting het ag weke later (Tyd 3) plaasgevind.

Tydens die 10-weke-troeteldier-ondersteunde leesprogram (TOL) het die kindere in elk van die groepe vir ongeveer 20 min. gelees uit graad 1-, 2- en 3-vlak boekies wat hulle self gekies het. Die kindere is individueel uit die klas geneem na 'n ander lokaal in die skool waar hulle rustig vir óf die leeshond en 'n leesfasiliteerder, óf die leesfasiliteerder alleen óf 'n teddiebeer met 'n leesfasiliteerder gelees het, afhangende van die groep waarin hulle was.

Kindere in die Leeshondgroep het beduidend beter gevaar in die ESSi Leestoets tydens Tyd 2 en Tyd 3 as die kindere in die ander drie groepe. Die leesbegrip van die leeshondgroep, soos gemeet deur die Neale Individuele leestoets, het ook beduidend verbeter in vergelyking met dié van die ander drie groepe.

Hierdie resultate is ook tydens die 30th International Congress of Psychology in Kaapstad aangebied. Dr. Le Roux het haar studies onder leiding van proff. Leslie Swartz en Estelle Swart voltooi.

Twee vrywilligers met hul honde is steeds werksaam by die skool en bied ondersteuning aan nie-vaardige lesers.

Dr. Le Roux is tydens die 2013 Algemene Jaarvergadering van *Pets as Therapy* tot voorsitter verkies. Vir meer inligting oor *Pets as Therapy* kontak:

Pets as Therapy

www.pat.org.za

Voorsitter: Marieanna le Roux mclr@sun.ac.za

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Life Design and Career Counselling: Building Hope and Resilience 2013

The Life Designing and Career Counselling International Conference was held in Padua Italy from the 20-22 June 2013. Padua is situated in Northeast Italy, about 50 km inland from Venice. As a historic university town, the beautiful sights consisted of a collection of heritage churches and civic buildings. The Patron Saint of Padua is St Anthony, known as the Saint of lost things and renowned to restore lost people and property. Somehow it was only fitting that a conference based on promoting resiliency and hope was held in a town that honoured the restoration of what has been lost. I was successful in receiving a travel grant to go to this conference and present my Master's thesis findings, which sparked further discussions about psycho-social difficulties and subjective reframing of enablers and barriers. Prof Greeff and Prof Naidoo also attended and presented at this conference on behalf of Stellenbosch University.



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This conference was organised by the European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counselling (ESVDC) in conjunction with the University of Padua's Larios Research Laboratory as well as various other Italian and international psychological research associations. Presentations were held in both Italian and English by forerunners of the career field such as Prof Savickas, Prof Watson, Dr McMahon and Prof Soressi amongst

many others. Recent global events such as economic recessions and natural disasters called for a conference focus on life redesigning, instilling hope and resilience, both in personal and career dimensions. The integration of career psychology and therapeutic elements of counselling was highlighted as a necessity. Personal trauma was invariably linked to career trajectories and the meaning-making thereof. New techniques, research methods and findings that would align the career counselling field with a changed world-of-work and new technological platforms were shared. I am very grateful to have been part of these innovative dialogues. My next step is a Doctorate in the career counselling field to aid development of new career counselling approaches in the South African context.

Anouk Albien



Professor Awie Greeff, Miss Anouk Albien and Professor Tony Naidoo



Southern African Students Psychology Conference 2013

Mandi Broodryk, Rozanne Casper, Carmen Harrison, Simona Flavio, Nicole Schuitmaker, Jeanette Steenkamp, Nicola Thackwell, Alberte van der Watt



The Southern African Students Psychology Conference was hosted by the Departments of Psychology of UNISA and Wits from 24 to 28 June 2013. The conference was held in Johannesburg at the Wits East Campus. Eight Masters students from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University had the opportunity to attend and present their research at this conference.

The conference provided a platform for students to engage with peers about different topics, which relate to their research as well as their experience as postgraduate students. The pre-conference workshops were useful and relevant. These included a workshop on quantitative data analysis, an article writing workshop, career opportunities workshop, an introductory workshop to equine-assisted psychotherapy (EAP), an organizational development workshop as well as a workshop on Sandtray therapy. There were also interesting lunch time talks

regarding the funding process for postgraduate students as well as a session on job hunting for students with a background in psychology. The Masters students found these workshops and talks to be very informative.

One specific talk that stood out for most of the Masters students included a panel



discussion on the relevance of research in Psychology. Important issues were raised in this discussion. There seems to be fragmentation between the different registrations in psychology which is damaging for the profession. It was encouraging to see so many people rallying to support the vital role that research can play in the discipline, and advocating a more holistic profession that is inclusive of the roles that the various

specializations can play. It will be interesting to see how these issues will be received by the HPCSA and other governing bodies in further discussions.

Attending the conference and representing the University was a great opportunity to get to know other Masters students within the department. Due to the nature of the psychology Masters (by thesis)

programme, students generally work from home and do not really get the opportunity to connect with other students in the programme. This conference

was a wonderful opportunity for bonding and learning about other students' research within the department.

The Masters students would like to thank the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University for giving them the opportunity to attend this conference. It was a valuable learning experience and a fantastic practice run for future conference presentations at local and international level.



Jeanette Steenkamp



Mandi Broodryk



Nicole Schuitmaker



Carmen Harrison