



# Community-Based Educational Research



## **Focus**

Our research focuses not only on generating theoretical knowledge about the issue, but also on **bringing about change** on personal, institutional and community levels. As such, we can call it research as social change as the process has educational, political and emancipatory intent.

Community-based educational research is defined as a partnership of students and community members who collaboratively engage in research with the purpose of solving a pressing educational problem to generate knowledge, skills, and processes that will enhance sustainable learning and development. The focus of COMBER is thus equally on two aspects of the collaborative and participatory research: 1) Researching with participants how to deal with issues they identify as impacting negatively on their lives. Since the researchers in this entity work in fields of Learner Support and Educational Psychology, the knowledge generated is related to the development of people, systems, and organisations to provide sustainable psycho-social support to actualize individual, relational, and collective strengths to optimise learning and development and minimise barriers that impede it. 2) Researching the process of forming and sustaining collaborative partnerships for transformation in education. Transformation is understood in this context as a movement towards the collaborative development of contextually-relevant education curriculum, systems, and policies that are inclusive, just, and democratically created.

## **Aims and objectives**

The main aim of COMBER is to facilitate the **learning and development** of people engaged in various education contexts, from pre-school through to adult education. We conduct this research with members of the various communities to assist them to learn how to address in a sustainable way issues they identify as problematic. To support community-based research aimed at the development of methodologies, theory, and practice based on a holistic, systematic, and integrated approach to the promotion of well-being. The knowledge generated will contribute to social transformation applicable to a local as well as a global scale. Specific objectives to reach this aim are:

- To develop theory to enable an improved systematic and critical understanding of how multiple systems interact to impact on the learning and development of various forms of community.
- To generate knowledge to inform the development of pre- and in-service teacher education (pre, postgrad) programs to promote an integrated holistic and ecosystemic understanding of learning and development within the educational context.
- To develop process-oriented, community- and evidence-based strategies to enhance the learning and development of educational communities, particularly those recognised to be most vulnerable.
- To develop holistic integrated strategies to facilitate enabling and inclusive spaces across all levels of interrelatedness in new communities,
- To develop the expertise of academics involved in the program to enable them to develop international research collaborations in this field.
- To take the research to scale whereby communities adopt and adapt processes that are informed by the knowledge generated by this entity.

## Director

### Prof Lesley Wood



#### Academic Qualifications:

- BA (Strathclyde, UK)
- BASS (Cum Laude) (UNISA)
- MA (UPE)
- DEd (UPE)
- PGCE (Cum Laude) (NMU)
- DLitt (Moravian College, USA)
- Registered Social Worker

**Research Interests** - I am interested in researching aspects that impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of learners, teachers and other education stakeholders. I operate from a participatory transformative paradigm and partner with community stakeholders to help them to develop capacity to take action for sustainable change. My research has included projects with learners, teachers, school leadership, governmental officials, and the wider community. My specific expertise includes HIV/AIDS in education and related social justice issues, sexuality education, prevention of substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy, and action research for educational transformation. My methodologies are participatory with a specific focus on action research for social change and professional development. My students benefit from being part of projects funded by the NRF and various other external funders.

**National research Foundation (NRF) rating: Category C2**

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## Educational Psychology and Learner Support

### Prof Johnnie Hay



#### Academic Qualifications:

- BA
- BA Hons (Clinical Psychology)
- MA (Clinical Psychology)
- PGCE (Guidance and Counselling) (PU for CHE)
- PhD in Child Psychology (UFS)
- Educational and Clinical Psychologist

**Research Interests** - Education Support Services, Inclusive Education, student learning, Life Orientation, registered counsellor training, and emotional issues of learners.

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## Educational Psychology and Learner Support

**Prof Macalane Malindi**



### Academic Qualifications:

- BEd
- BA Hons (Psychology)
- MEd (Special needs & Support Services)
- MEd (Educational Psychology)
- PhD (Learner Support)

**Research Interests** - Youth resilience (street-involved children, orphans, and teen mothers)

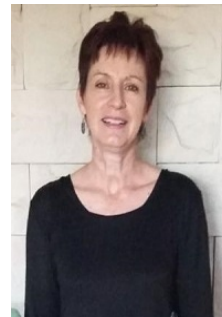
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## Educational Psychology

**Prof Mariette Koen**



### Academic Qualifications:

- Teaching Diploma: Remedial Teaching (cum laude)
- Teaching Diploma: Foundation Phase (cum laude)
- BA (Sesotho III and Psychology III) (cum laude)
- BA Hons (African Languages)
- BEd (Psychology of Education) (cum laude)
- MEd (Psychology of Education) (cum laude)
- PhD Educational Psychology
- HES 717 (Service learning) School of Higher Education
- MPhil in Higher Education (cum laude)

**Research Interests** - I am interested in researching aspects that influence the holistic well-being of the ECD learner. This includes factors that can impact on the social, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being of the young child. My research has included exploring teaching, learning and assessment issues in the higher education context in order to prepare pre-service teachers for the real life context. The aim is to capacitate pre-service teachers to form collaborative partnerships in the community to improve the holistic well-being of ECD learners.

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## Life Orientation

**Prof Julialet Rens**



### **Academic Qualifications:**

- BA (PU for CHE)
- HED (PU for CHE)
- BEd (PU for CHE)
- MEd (PU for CHE)
- PhD (NWU)

**Research Interests** - Readiness of beginner teachers, Life Orientation and Life Skills as important school subjects and diversity and values.

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## Adult and Lifelong Learning

**Prof Akpovire Oduaran**



### **Academic Qualifications:**

- BEd Hons in History (University of Benin, Nigeria)
- MA in Adult Education Programme Development (Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria)
- PhD (University of Ibadan, Nigeria)

**Research Interests** - Adult and lifelong learning, continuing professional development, literacy, open and distance learning, intergenerational relationships.

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## Educational Psychology and Learner Support

Dr Doret Kirsten



### Academic Qualifications:

- BA (PU for CHE)
- NHOD (Cum Laude) (RAU)
- BEd Educational Psychology (Cum Laude) (RAU)
- MEd Educational Psychology (Cum Laude) (UJ)
- MA (Cum Laude) (NWU)
- PhD in Psychology (NWU)

**Research Interests** - Psychological well-being (measurement and promotion in various application fields). Mindfulness (measurement and promotion). Neuropsychology (executive functions).

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## Learner Support

Dr Marinda Neethling



### Academic Qualifications:

- PhD in Learner Support (NWU)

**Research Interests** - My research and teaching-learning philosophy focuses on community engagement through a participatory way to enhance practical and contextualized teaching and learning. The aim is to encourage sustainable educational transformation. My vision and mission are to develop self-efficacy for students to become life-long, critical and innovative thinkers when implementing inclusive education in their classrooms.

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## Continuing Education

Dr Moshweu Mampe



### Academic Qualifications:

- PhD (NWU)

**Research Interests** - Inclusive Education.

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## Learner Support

Dr ElMari Fouché



### Academic Qualifications:

- BA (NWU)
- BA (Hons) (NWU)
- MA (NWU)
- PhD in Industrial Psychology (NWU)
- ADT (Advanced Diploma in Teaching)

**Research Interests** - The well-being of the educator in SA and psychological health within educational settings.

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## Educational Psychology

Dr Jeanne Meiring



### Academic Qualifications:

- PGCE (cum laude) (UNISA)
- BSocSci (UP)
- BSocSci Hons (UP)
- BEd Hons (Cum Laude) (UP)
- MEd (Cum Laude) (UP)
- PhD (UP)
- Registered Educational Psychologist

**Research Interests** - Self-determination theory, identity, self-regulation and resilience.

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## Life Orientation

Dr Carolina Botha



### Academic Qualifications:

- BSc (UFS)
- BSc Hons (UFS)
- HED (UFS)
- MTh (UNISA)
- PhD (UFS)

**Research Interests** - Beginner teachers, pre-service teacher education, reality shock, theory-practice divide, Work Integrated Learning, Teaching and Learning.

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## Learner Support

Dr Thabo Makhalemele



### Academic Qualifications:

- BEd
- BEd Hons (Guidance & Counselling)
- MEd (Special Needs & Support Services)
- PhD (Learner Support)

**Research Interests** - Learner Support and Inclusive Education.

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## Life Orientation

Dr Carmen Joubert



### Academic Qualifications:

- BPsych (NWU)
- MA (NWU)
- PGCE (NWU)
- PhD in Education Psychology (NWU)

**Research Interests** - Resilience of teachers using interventions to enable them.

### Contact Information:

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**Learner Support**  
**Dr Elsabé Wessels**



**Academic Qualifications:**

- Higher diploma in Education (NWU)
- BEd Hons (NWU)
- MEd (NWU)
- PhD (NWU)
- MAPP (NWU)

**Research Interests** - Firstly, I do community-based research with teachers who work in under-resourced contexts because they face many challenges within the workplace that negatively affect their experiences of wellbeing. Reason being that research indicates that if teacher wellbeing improves the teachers create a more enabling climate for teaching and learning. I work collaboratively with teachers to help them find ways to improve their experiences of wellbeing following a participatory action learning and action research design (PALAR).

Secondly, I engage in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) to do research on how I can improve my own teaching practices when teaching language to Foundation Phase student teachers. I focus on covering the theory-practice gap. The research designs involve Self-Study Teacher Research (SSTR) and PALAR.

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**Educational Psychology and Learner Support**

**Dr Illasha Kok**



**Academic Qualifications:**

- BSc (PU for CHE)
- HED (UNISA)
- BEd Hons (UNISA)
- MEd (PU for CHE)
- PhD (PU for CHE)
- BSc Hons (NWU)
- MSc (NWU)
- HPCSA Registered Psychologist

**Research Interests** - As Research psychologist my interest is focused on the improvement of psychological wellbeing of teachers in diverse school settings. One of the main aspects of health promoting schools is the wellbeing of teachers and I am especially interested in the advancement thereof in the South African school context. My research is motivated by the pragmatic paradigm and therefore I am compelled to mixing qualitative and quantitative models of research to provide me with the freedom to develop profound relationships with the participants to achieve the desired research results. I can support students in Learner Support to develop various research skills through conducting research independently and develop programs to assist teachers and enhance challenging areas in the fields of my expertise.

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## Life Orientation

### Dr Lettie Botha



#### Academic Qualifications:

- BEd (NWU)
- BEd Hons (NWU)
- MEd (NWU)
- PhD (NWU)

**Research Interests** - I focus on the impact of *paternal absence* on *child development*, as well as developing possible intervention strategies for

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## Creative Arts Education

### Dr Merna Meyer



#### Academic Qualifications:

- BEd (UP)
- BEd Hons (UP)
- MEd (NWU)
- Phd (NWU)

**Research Interests** - Professional development of art education and socially engaged art.

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## Life Orientation

### Dr Pieter Swarts



#### Academic Qualifications:

- HED (Hewat Teachers Training College)
- BA (Unisa)
- BEd Hons (Unv Stellenbosch)
- MA (NWU)
- MEd (Unv Stellenbosch)
- PHD (NWU)

**Research Interests** – Infusing critical environmental education with life skills education to facilitate the promotion of a holistic approach towards learner well-being / learning to be.

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## Early Childhood Education and Learner Support

### Ms Andri Schoonen



#### Academic Qualifications:

- BEd (NWU)
- BEd Hons (NWU)
- MEd (NWU)

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### Extraordinary Professor

**Prof Mary Brydon-Miller (University of Louisville, Kentucky)**



#### Academic Qualifications:

- MA (University of Massachusetts)
- BA (University of California)
- PhD in Environmental Psychology (University of Massachusetts)

**Research Interests** - Educational and Community-based Participatory Action Research, International Higher Education, Research Ethics, Environmental Education and Climate Change Advocacy.

### Honorary Research Fellow

**Prof Petra Engelbrecht**



#### Academic Qualifications:

- HED (UNISA)
- BEd (UP)
- MEd (Psych) (Cum Laude) (UP)
- PHD in Educational Psychology (UP)
- Doctor of Education (Honoris Causa): University of Eastern Finland, Finland, 2014

**Research Interests** – Inclusive education in diverse cultural-historical contexts.

**National Research Foundation (NRF) rating:**

**Category B3**

### Honorary Research Fellow

**Prof Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt**



#### Academic Qualifications:

- PhD in Literature (University of Queensland)
- PhD in Higher Education (Deakin University)
- DLitt in Management Education (International Management Centre, UK)
- Honorary Doctor of Professional Studies (Global University for Lifelong Learning, US)

**Research Interests** - Improving practice and advancing theory in higher education and communities through participatory methodologies of collaborative action learning, action research and action leadership, with an emphasis on social justice, sustainability, alternative globalisation, self-directed transformational learning, and knowledge creation as knowledge democracy.

### Research Fellow

**Prof Ansie Kitching**



#### Academic Qualifications:

- BA (UFS)
- HED (Cum Laude) (UFS)
- BEd Psych Hons (Cum Laude) (UP)
- MEd Psych (Cum Laude) (UP)
- PHD Psychology (NWU)
- Registered Educational Psychologist

**Research Interests** - Development and implementation of an integrated multi-level process to facilitate the promotion of holistic whole school well-being.

## **Research Fellow**

**Dr Mary McAteer**



### **Academic Qualifications:**

- BEd (Physical Sciences) *TASC, Leeds University*
- MSc Educational Management (with Distinction) *University of Ulster*
- DPhil, Contemporary Science Education: Historical and Philosophical Roots, *University of Ulster*
- PG Cert, Research Supervision, *Edge Hill University*

**Research Interests** – Action Research  
participatory research, knowledge  
generation/democratisation,  
Science/Mathematics Education



## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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