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Mission

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COMBER



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY[®]
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

Learner Support -

Prof Lesley Wood



Academic Qualifications: BA, Strathclyde, UK; BASS (Cum laude), UNISA; MA, UPE; D.Ed, UPE; PGCHE (Cum laude), NMMU; Honorary Doctorate, Moravian College, Pennsylvania, USA.

Research interests: I am interested in researching aspects that impact on the psycho-social wellbeing of learners, teachers and other education stakeholders. I operate from a participatory transformative paradigm and my students partner in research with various stakeholders within education 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. I lead the niche area Community-based Educational Research (COMBER)). Specific expertise includes: HIV and AIDS in education, and related social justice issues; sexuality education; prevention of substance abuse and teenage pregnancy; action research for educational transformation. My methodologies are participatory, with a specific focus on action research for social change and for 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**

I have led or co-led 13 research projects; published over 70 articles/chapters; edited/co-authored 4 books; presented over 70 conference papers; and delivered 11 Masters and 5 PhDs since 2008.

I am a journal editor; national and international reviewer and examiner; and hold honorary research positions at NMU and Griffith University, Australia. I have been Chair of EASA and Vice President of SAERA, and represented EASA at the World Educational Research Association Council (2013-15).

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Learner Support -

Dr Elsabe Wessels



Research interests: I do community based research with teachers, specifically those who work in under-resourced contexts, because they face many challenges within their workplace that negatively affect their experiences of well-being. Reason being that research indicates that if teacher well-being 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 well-being, following a participatory action learning and action research (PALAR) design. Findings from my most recent study indicated that frequent, informal social contact with colleagues, coupled with explicit action to focus on positive emotions, improved teachers' experiences of well-being.

Students that would like to participate will have the opportunity to meet and work with teachers in the Mafikeng district.

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Educational Psychology -

Prof Ansie Kitching



**PhD Psychology; MEd (Psych) ,
Registered Educational Psychologist**

My research is conducted within COMBER with a focus on Enabling School Communities. The overarching aim of my research is to ensure that the promotion of health and well-being becomes part of the core business of schooling in South Africa. Although currently addressed in policy, efforts to promote mental health and well-being do not sufficiently include all stakeholders involved in schools contexts. The current efforts mainly focus on serious problems of risks and are often fragmented in nature. I therefore identified a need for an alternative approach that is holistic in nature and aimed at the integration of the current efforts into an integrated multi-level, multi-systemic process as proposed in research across the globe. My ongoing research focus on the development and implementation of an integrated, multi-level process to facilitate the promotion of holistic (whole-school) well-being. The focus of subprojects in which students will be involved include:

- The application of the process in various contexts;
- the development of strategies to facilitate social-emotional well-being of children and youth;
- the development of strategies to enhance relational well-being amongst all role-players;
- the integration of support for learners with special needs into a holistic well-being approach;
- the role of support services in the promotion of holistic well-being.

Besides the expected guidance and supervision that you should expect as a Hons, Masters and PhD student, this project will offer you an opportunity to become a social change agents, as it will develop your skills and competencies to facilitate the promotion of mental health and well-being in various contexts. You will also become part of a network of people across the globe who believe that well-being should be the core business of schooling and work diligently to ensure that it is achieved.

I am based at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies, an office of the North-West University in Wellington, Western Cape. I will be available on Potchefstroom Campus on appointment.

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Educational Psychology & Learner Support -

Prof Johnnie Hay



Projects initiated by Johnnie Hay

1. Overarching Subject Group Educational Psychology and Learner Support project

This project has been approved in 2015 and runs till 2019. It aims to serve as umbrella project for the Subject Group under which numerous researchers in the subject group can find a research home.

The title of the project has been formulated as follows:

Initiating and supporting psychosocial and educational wellness in diverse community contexts: innovation, development and intervention from an educational psychological and learner support perspective

The following sub-projects have been identified in the form of objectives under the umbrella title:

The research objectives envisaged currently for this project are to determine how:

- 1) Health promotion and health education can be initiated and promoted within all school and other community contexts;
- 2) BEd Honours Educational Psychology and Learner Support students facilitate psychosocial and educational wellness whilst being student counsellors or learner support educators in training;
- 3) *The BEd Honours Educational Psychology programme with its included practicum component equips students to meet diverse community, student, academic as well as professional requirements (of the HPCSA) during training and after graduation;*

- 4) *Trauma intervention by counsellors-in-training and registered counsellors can be delivered in order to comprehensively support individuals, specific groups and communities within the unique South African context - by employing psycho-educational practices;*
- 5) *Education support services of the various provincial departments of education can be supported in terms of efficient psychosocial and educational service rendering;*
- 6) *Legal and ethical aspects of psychosocial and educational intervention are contended with in the diverse individual, group and community settings; and*
- 7) *Educational psychology practices are implemented and utilised in communities with the aim of collaboratively working with the community stakeholders towards sustainable pathways to address contextual challenges.*

2. Sub-project 5: Supporting education support services (ESS) of the various provincial education departments

This project has started with survey research of education support service rendering (specifically district-based support teams) in the North-West and Free State provinces during the latter half of 2015 – and it is envisaged that it will be extended to other provinces in the near future.

The ultimate goal is to develop mechanisms on how to support ESS optimally in provinces in order to ensure optimal service rendering. A number of M and D students have already been involved in strengthening this sub-project.

3. Sub-project 3: The perceived contribution of the BEd Hons Educational Psychology alumni of 2002-2018 to psychosocial and educational wellness of diverse communities – and their experiences of the training they received at the NWU as Registered Counsellors

This sub-project (of the umbrella Subject Group project) will be running from 2016 to 2018, and involve interested RSPR students (and their supervisors from the Subject Group) who would like to do their research projects on the experiences and perceived contribution of NWU alumni Registered

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Education Psychology & Learner Support -

Dr Lynn Preston



Dr Lynn Preston
MEd Guidance and Counselling (Educational Psychology)
PhD Educational psychology specialising in Trauma Interventions
Registered Educational Psychologist

My research is conducted within COMBER with a focus on Community support in a Medical Environment by providing psycho-social education to the community. The main aim of the research is to encourage and promote health, especially mental health in a primary care setting and ensure that it is acknowledged, implemented and reaches everyone, right down to grass roots level.

Even though mental health is widely publicised and many policies are in place it still sadly takes a back seat in South Africa. Due to this a more combined effort in the public primary care sector is needed, to provide a holistic approach to mental health. This I feel can be achieved by combining the educational aspects of health promotion and well-being with the medical needs of the individual. Furthermore, my research is transdisciplinary in nature which promotes co-operation and teamwork across all disciplines, with all role players.

The sub areas of my research are:

- Self-care of hypertensive patients regarding their motivation, management and monitoring of lifestyles.
- Developing strategies to promote primary mental health care to all community members.
- Mental health promotion in schools
- Self-care of mental health patients in schools and communities

The BEd honours programme, of which I am one of the team members, will offer you an additional professional qualification, namely Registered Counsellor with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. Regarding Masters and PhD qualifications, successful completion of these will enable you to develop skills and competencies in communities that will widen your scope in promoting health and educating people.

I am based in the Faculty of Education, Educational psychology subject group at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University



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Educational Psychology & Learner Support -

Dr Charles Viljoen



Dr. Charles T. Viljoen is a senior lecturer in Educational Psychology and Learner Support in the School for Education at the North-West University Potchefstroom Campus South Africa. In 1994 he received his PhD from the same university. His area of specialization is on the promotion of health, well-being and wellness in educational settings.

In 1994, Dr. Viljoen was elected to represent an African delegation as part of the Young African Leaders Project to the United States. In 1998/99, a William Fulbright Grant for senior academic research was awarded to him. This award took him to various universities in the US where he did research and lectured courses in multicultural and diversity education. In 2002 a second William Fulbright Scholarship was awarded to him. As part of the New Century Scholars Program dr. Viljoen was one of 30 leading international scholars and professionals representing a variety of disciplines. The research focus of this group is "*Challenges of Health in a Borderless World*".

Dr. Viljoen is a member of the Education Association of South Africa; The International Network for Philosophers of Education and the Psychological Association of South Africa.

He has extensive teaching and research experience in countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the USA, South Korea and South Africa.

He received international recognition for the distinguished work done as a member of the New Century Scholars Programme "*Health in a Borderless World*" when his name and scientific specialisation were taken up in the 22nd Edition (2004) of Who's Who in the World as well as in the International Biographical Centre (IBC) in Cambridge for Outstanding Academics of the 21st Century Awards 2004.

Various masters and PhD students were supervised and mentored under his guidance.

His current research work includes:

- health literacy in educational settings,
- the promotion of health, well-being and wellness through schools, and
- health promotion and the community.

The main focus of the current research project is to understand the nature and scope of health literacies demonstrated by key role players in their endeavours to promote health in schools.

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Educational Psychology & Learner Support-

Dr Wanda van der Merwe



Project under Dr Lynn Preston: Promoting bio- psychosocial educational support in a community context: B Ed Honours Counselling students

Ms van der Merwe is an Educational Psychologist who specializes in the expressive therapies, with as special focus on the utilization of Photo Therapy in psychological well-being especially in community context. She highlighting the importance of psycho- educational therapy, within a trans-disciplinary approach for mental health support within communities.

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Education Psychology & Learner Support -

Dr Illasha Kok



Academic Qualifications:

BSc (PU for CHE); HED (UNISA); BEd Hons (UNISA);
MEd Teaching and Learning (PU for CHE);
PhD Teaching and Learning (PU for CHE).
BSc Hons Psychology (NWU Potchefstroom); MSc
Research Psychology (NWU Potchefstroom); 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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Educational Psychology & Learner Support-

Dr Doret Kirsten



Projects:

1. Promoting bio-psycho social educational support in a community context (PRIME):
 - a. Evaluation of the psychological well-being and supervision needs of registered counsellors in training
2. Wellness promotion in the community / HIV/AIDS clinic:
 - a. HIV/Aids & Stigma
 - b. HIV/Aids Disclosure
 - c. Wellness promotion
3. Development of norms for the NEPSY-II and TOL (Only masters or PhD students in Educational, Clinical or Counselling Psychology registered at the HPCSA with knowledge of neuropsychology may participate in this project)

Students can participate in the following group projects:

1. PRIME project developing
2. Community wellness
3. Neuro-project : NEPSY and TOL

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Creative Arts -

Ms Merna Meyer



Specialisation: Participatory Art-based Community engaged projects, promoting mutual learning in trans-disciplinary ways: Creative Arts students, other academic faculties and community members from nearby townships

4. Recycling of old Rag structures into new contexts: service-learning.

Using recyclable material to revamp old RAG structures which will be displayed in public places and parks. Creative Arts students work with the Youth from Ikageng in the planning, application, and celebration process. What makes this unique is that participants work with recyclable material on 3-D constructions, providing students and the community youths with more skills and aesthetic awareness of creative processes and working interactively.

5. Re-constructing of Education faculty's elephant symbol: service-learning

The faculty's elephant symbol was revamped and changed to fit in with transformational views of diversity in the faculty. Many groups engaged in building a platform with mosaic, and working with unusual material to create a spectacular new symbol for change and transformation.

1. Inter-disciplinary exhibitions with Law faculty on children's rights: collaborative engagement

Creative Arts students work collaboratively with Law students to express difficult concepts such as Children's rights on visual posters. Interactions promote participatory pedagogies and understanding, complimenting each others' fields

2. Beautifying municipal park area with Ikageng youths and Urban Planning faculty

Transdisciplinary engagement between different stakeholders, faculties community youths and students. Upgrading of municipal park area for children to play in. Numerous events took place e.g. Mandela Day, Heritage Day.

3. Painting Murals for Kindergarten school with Ottosdal Minegroup

Mural painting gives more meaning as it communicates messages to the wider public. Students and small kids help to decorate their immediate surroundings

Comber / Creative Arts offer:

- Making meaningful art and promoting artistic and leadership skills.
- Encourage inclusivity and working in trans-disciplinary ways

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