

EDITORIAL

Since its inception in 2009, the Southern African Students' Psychology Conference has succeeded in attracting students from various universities to attend and present papers, posters, symposiums, and have roundtable discussions on various psychological issues. This biennial conference is a joint venture between the psychology departments of Unisa and other universities to bring students (and their lecturers) from Southern Africa together. Thus far, three conferences have been hosted: In 2009 the conference was held at the University of Botswana, in 2011 at the Unisa Sunnyside campus, and in 2013 at the University of the Witwatersrand. The conference is geared towards offering students and emerging scholars a platform to engage and reflect on their on-going learning and research.

This issue of *New Voices in Psychology*, which serves as 'conference proceedings' offers space for some of the papers which were presented at the 3rd biennial conference which was held at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2013. Under the theme of 'Psychology (in) action', the conference aimed to offer space for students to interrogate, engage with, and re-think the role of psychology in our current world. They tackled the question: Is psychology active or inactive in responding to our societal issues? Psychology plays a critical role in making sense of and responding to various issues that affect our society. It therefore becomes crucial to create spaces that interrogate the relevance, challenges, and possibilities that the discipline has to offer; and what better way than creating a platform for future discipline leaders to engage with such issues?

The issue starts with three articles that focus on the experiences of entering tertiary institutions and the challenges that accompany choosing an appropriate degree. The first article, by Giliana Mulalo Maxwell and Pilot Mudhovozi examines transitioning from high school to university and ways in which students adapt to their new environment. The authors focus on students who are from rural schools, thereby highlighting some of the challenges that face these particular students who are often 'ill-prepared' for this crucial transition, which is critical in shaping the paths they choose to take with regard to their careers. The next article, by Sfiso Mabizela, is almost in conversation with Maxwell and Mudhovozi as it also tackles the needs of first year students at tertiary institutions, with a specific focus on distance learning institutions and the role of career counselling. Many tertiary institutions continue to face the challenge of undergraduate student drop-outs and it is therefore pertinent to explore what the needs of undergraduate students and their reasons for dropping out are. The third article, by Daniella Weiss, furthers this interrogation of students' experiences by focusing on the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate studies,

with a specific focus on selection criteria for postgraduate studies in psychology. South Africa continues to struggle with the issue of racism, which manifests in various contexts and institutions, including universities. Weiss's article points to how race continues to be a marker of exclusion and inclusion when it comes to postgraduate selection of students.

South Africa has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. Constance Mabela's article, which explores factors that predict mental well-being, reveals that employment is a positive contributor to mental well-being. The next article, by Kimera Pillay and Sumaya Laher, pays attention to the relationship between personality and acculturation and show how there are significant personality differences between people who have been acculturated and those who have not been acculturated. The article by Blessing Chirisa zooms into the challenges of alcohol abuse. Focusing on Zimbabwean adolescents, Chirisa reminds us of the multidimensional implications of alcohol abuse. The final article, by Davidzo Mashiri, considers the various ways in which Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores can be obtained.

The issue also includes an essay by Claudia Campbell in which she takes us on her personal journey of receiving psychological treatment. She takes on the conference theme of 'psychology in action' and links it to her own experiences of seeing and feeling psychology in action. She provides a very useful critique of the notion of care and asks: Does mental health care really care for mental health?

We conclude with five conference reports in which students and colleagues share their experiences of having been part of organising, attending and presenting at the conference.

I look forward to the next conference which will be hosted by Unisa in partnership with the University of Limpopo. The conference is to be held at the Unisa Polokwane Campus in June 2015. The theme of the conference is 'Psychology in Communities'.

Puleng Segalo

Guest Editor: New Voices in Psychology

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