DISABILITY AND TRANSITIONS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

WELCOME!

The Psychology Department of the University of Johannesburg would like to welcome you to their inaugural colloquium on "Disability and Transitions in the Global South." We are delighted that you have decided to join us at this exciting and thought-provoking event. We invite you to use this time to broaden your knowledge within the field of Disability Studies and to build collaborations with colleagues from across the country. The presentations will include topics such as Disability and African Psychology, Disability and resilience within Africa, issues of identity as a disabled person in South Africa and experiences of higher education for disabled students.

Thank you to all the presenters for agreeing to contribute your valuable work at this colloquium. A special thank you to our keynote speakers, Prof. Tom Shakespeare (University of East Anglia) and Prof. Leslie Swartz (Stellenbosch University) for agreeing to share some of your expertise with us.

Please find the programme as well as the abstract booklet enclosed.

We invite you to enjoy the day with us.

Programme

TIME	PRESENTER	PRESENTATION
08:45	Prof. Maria Frahm-Arp	Welcome
09:00	Keynote: Prof. T. Shakespeare	'Grit in the oyster'? Disability, resilience and success in southern Africa.
10:00	Dr. B. Watermeyer	'Can this white guy sing the blues'? Figuring disability in South Africa's standpoint wars
10:30	Mr. D. Isaacs	Exploring discourses of masculinities amongst young adult men in the Western Cape who stutter
11:00	Tea	
11:15	Dr E.L. McKinney	Too hearing to be Deaf and too deaf to be hearing: community affiliation
11:45	Ms. C. Harvey	Uncomfortable love in mothers of disabled children
12:15	Dr J. Neille	Negotiating safe sexual practices in the context of HIV: The lived experiences of disabled adults in rural South Africa
12:45	Lunch	
13:15	Keynote address: Prof. L. Swartz	Disability and African psychology: some dilemmas and an agenda for action
14:15	Prof. T. Lorenzo	Mapping organisational capacity to facilitate the livelihood transitions of disabled youth through Sports4Work

14:45	Dr O. Mutanga	Students with impairments in higher education: unpacking the intersectionality approach
15:15	Tea	
15:30	Dr R. Vergunst	Psychosocial Disability and Supervision in a University Setting.
16:00	Mr. D. Chiwandire	Constructions of students with disabilities as a threat to academic excellence at historically White South African universities
16:30	Ms. J. Opara	Investigating the Prevalent Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Gauteng Classrooms
18:00	Cocktail event	

ABSTRACTS

09:00: 'Grit in the oyster'? Disability, resilience and success in southern Africa

Keynote Address: Prof. Tom Shakespeare (University of East Anglia)

Drawing on in-depth interviews with 120 disabled people in Uganda, Kenya and Uganda, this presentation will explore the possibility of living successful, included lives for disabled people in sub-Saharan Africa. Predominant disability and development literature stresses poverty and exclusion. But some disabled people are achieving educational and economic success on an equal basis with others. What are the factors that support inclusion?   What can we learn from these individuals which can translate into policies that promote equality and human rights? How can we do justice to these positive stories, alongside the emphasis on the struggle for human rights and recognition?

Tom Shakespeare is Professor of Disability Research at the University of East Anglia. Author of Disability Rights and Wrongs, co-editor of the WHO World Report on Disability, he has been involved in disability research and advocacy for nearly 30 years.

10:00: 'Can this white guy sing the blues'? Figuring disability in South Africa's standpoint wars

Dr Brian Watermeyer (University of Cape Town)

In post-apartheid South Africa, several identity groups (pertaining to race, gender, sexuality, and other markers) vie for access to limited resources. Claims are staked based on a group's perceived historical suffering – that is, the question of whether, and to what extent, its members fit the category of 'previously disadvantaged'. South Africa's colossal racial trauma means that when any interest group competes with race, its claims are demolished, giving rise to the question of 'who can suffer'. Into this melee comes disability, which is known to disrupt categorical assumptions about class, race, exclusion and - via the capabilities approach - poverty   . This paper attempts to figure disability disadvantage against this backdrop, querying how the hegemony of race-based logic can operate as a psychic defence against the complexity which disability brings.

10:30: Exploring discourses of masculinities amongst young adult men in the Western Cape who stutter

Mr. Dane Isaacs (Stellenbosch University)

Stuttering is a complex speech production disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. Over the last two decades, international as well as South African research has begun to explore the personal experiences of people who stutter, focusing largely on identity formation. What is less understood, however, is the role of stuttering in the construction of gendered identities. According to my knowledge, and based on a search of the literature, no South African study has explored this issue. The current study thus proposes to respond to this gap by exploring the discourses of masculinities amongst 10 young adult men in the Western Cape who stutter. This study aims contribute to current understandings of how men who stutter construct and negotiate their masculinities in response to hegemonic or dominant constructions of masculinities in South Africa. Furthermore, within the literature of disability studies, surprisingly little research has examined the social experiences of individuals living with communicative disabilities as such, especially in low or middle income countries. Thus, this study seeks to locate stuttering as an exemplar of communicative disabilities within the existing literature. Guided by a psychosocial framework, the study will explore: a) how men who stutter, perceive themselves in relation to hegemonic or dominant constructions of masculinities in South Africa; and b) how does subjective stuttering impact on men's views of themselves? Data will be collected via semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a whatsapp chatroom and analysed according to Hook's (2001) approach to discourse analysis. Implications for future masculinities and disabilities research will be discussed.

11:15: Too hearing to be Deaf and too deaf to be hearing: community affiliation

Dr. Emma Louise McKinney (Stellenbosch University)

This presentation explores my journey of being hard of hearing and transitioning between both the Deaf and hearing worlds. Researchers in the area of deafness and culture identify a three-tier specific entrance requirement that needs to be met before 'full membership' can be obtained. This includes having a hearing impairment, being fluent in sign language, and identifying and affiliating with the Deaf community. While I meet the requirements, I attended a mainstream rather than Deaf school and also socialise and speak with hearing communities, and for some this excludes me from membership to the Deaf community.

11:45: Uncomfortable love in mothers of disabled children

Ms. Clare Harvey (University of the Witwatersrand)

The talk will focus on specific manifestations of maternal ambivalence in mothers whose children are visibly physically disabled. The mothers' feelings of love and hate for their children appear to be particularly stretched, and they show creative ways of managing this ambivalence. One form of ambivalence arises from the loss of the fantasised (non-disabled) baby. Tolerating her sense of guilt and responsibility for her child is possible by finding meaning for her child's disability, and through religious reasoning. Ambivalence is also ignited through the gaze of the other – in family members' and strangers' responses to her child as something unfamiliar. Mothers are left perceiving their children as uncanny. This form of ambivalence is managed by projecting feelings of anger and aggression into these others, and protecting their children by avoiding such encounters. Mothers also positively identify with their children and concentrate on hope to manage their ambivalence. The talk will conclude with a discussion on how mothers 'used' the disabled presenter in an attempt to cope with their contradictory feelings.

12:15: Negotiating safe sexual practices in the context of HIV: The lived experiences of disabled adults in rural South Africa

Dr Joanne Neille (University of the Witwatersrand)

Discrimination against disabled people in the area of sexual relationships has been reported to be one of the deepest forms of oppression. In the South African context this is of particular concern, given the high prevalence of HIV infection and the potential double discrimination that disabled persons may face in negotiating safe sexual relationships. This presentation will explore the lived experiences of negotiating safe sexual practices among 30 adults with a variety of disabilities living in rural South Africa.

13:15: Disability and African psychology: some dilemmas and an agenda for action

Keynote Address: Prof. Leslie Swartz (Stellenbosch University)

Psychology has a long, and problematic, history of interest in disability issues.   For example, psychologists have advocated for eugenicist programmes, and have been complicit in medicalization and incarceration of disabled people. More recently, a growing number of psychologists have aligned themselves with emancipatory disability scholarship, but disability remains under-researched as an issue of concern for social, community, and health psychologists.

There is much common cause theoretically between critical disability studies and calls for Africanization, decolonization, and indigenization of psychology. Both traditions emphasise the extent to which knowledge is constructed by the powerful, and both call for practices which value the voices of those who have been excluded from dominant modes of knowledge production. It is also true, however, that disablist attitudes and research remain a feature of African scholarship, and of African psychology.

In this presentation, I reflect on my engagement with issues of disability politics and disability knowledge in Africa. A background in psychology has been helpful in this engagement, but I remain concerned at contradictions which are glossed over in projects to indigenise disability studies, and at the continuing problematic relationship between psychology and disability studies. I suggest some ways forward to develop thinking and practice.

Leslie Swartz is a distinguished professor of psychology at Stellenbosch University. He has a long-standing interest in disability and mental health issues and is founding editor in chief of the *African Journal of Disability.* Current projects include work on disability and development gaps, disability and sexuality, and disability and access to physical activity.

14:15: Mapping organisational capacity to facilitate the livelihood transitions of disabled youth through Sports4Work

Prof. Theresa Lorenzo (University of Cape Town)

Purpose: The benefits of engaging in recreational sport is known to empower disabled youth as they learn social and life skills. This paper explores how organisations facilitate skills transitions for disabled youth and young parents of disabled children that contribute to their livelihoods development.

Methodology: The study utilised an exploratory intrinsic case study design (Creswell, 2007) to provide meaningful, context-related knowledge and insight about real-life events (Yin 2009). Participants were selected through five non-governmental organisations in a Metropole and two rural farming communities in the Western Cape.

Findings - the organisations' understanding of disability and their vision and values are aligned to strategies for social and economic inclusion of youth. The resources, services and systems exists, and there are individual skills, abilities and competencies.

Conclusion: The challenge is creating an inclusive workforce that is able to facilitate intersectoral, collaboration systems of service delivery to facilitate transitions and upscale disability inclusive initiatives for social and economic empowerment of all youth.

14:45: Students with impairments in higher education: Unpacking the intersectionality approach

Dr Oliver Mutanga (University of Oslo)

This article revisits a conceptual framing to think about various factors that play out in the lives of students with impairments in higher education. A qualitative study was carried out at two South African universities. Fourteen students with impairments took part in a research study. Data was coded and analysed thematically using NVivo software. Findings suggest that various factors not only *constrain* or *enable* students to achieve what they value at the universities, at times, these factors also *diminish* or *enhance* students' opportunities, and their effect is not the same even on individuals regarded as belonging to the same group. The latter conceptualisation is missing in current discussions and debates of disability. Conceptualising the intersectionality lens to disability in this manner enables us to take into account multiple factors, track how they interact and evaluate which ones are important for the promotion of inclusion for students with impairments at universities.

15:30: Psychosocial Disability and Supervision in a University Setting

Dr Richard Vergunst (Stellenbosch University)

Despite there being much research on the needs of students with more visible disabilities, this is not the case with students with psychosocial disabilities- especially in university settings. The unique needs of students with psychosocial disabilities have received less attention with not much research in this area. Knowledge about the nature of these unique needs as well as developing appropriate responses to these needs becomes important. This paper will explore these issues of having a psychosocial disability in a university setting- with a focus on the supervision experience at postgraduate level.

16:00: Wheelchair users, access and exclusion in South African higher education.[1]

Mr. Desire Chiwandire (Rhodes University)

Background: Following South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) government put in place a range of new laws to address the educational and other needs of those disadvantaged under apartheid, including people with disabilities. This resulted in significant increases in the number of students with disabilities (SWDs) enrolling in South African higher education institutions (HEIs). However, the retention and success of these students continues to be a challenge. While a number of studies have offered the perspectives of SWDs with respect to their experiences in South African higher education, few have focused on Disability Unit Staff Members (DUSMs) who are pivotal to ensuring fair and equitable policies and practices for SWDs in HEIs.

Method: In-depth qualitative interviews with 28 DUSMs based at 10 different universities in four of South Africa's nine provinces. Initial coding of these interviews revealed commonalities in the way in which DUSMs based at historically white universities (HWUs) constructed SWDs and in how they framed the challenges faced by these students. The data was therefore disaggregated and the interviews with the 17 DUSMs based at five HWUs analysed separately from the larger data set.

Results: DUSMs at HWUs invoked various versions of a discourse of academic excellence as part of the way in which they understood their universities' essential identities. SWDs were in turn constructed as a threat to this excellence, -- deficient and inherently incapable of fully embodying excellence.

Conclusions: DUSMs at South Africa's HWUs, who are tasked with advancing the rights of SWDs often perpetuate medicalised understanding of disability which frames disability as an individual deficit requiring, as far as possible, normalising and adaptation on the part of the individual to the demands of existing institutional practices and expectations. In this way the state's purported commitment to inclusive education is being undone by a discourse of excellence which masquerades as neutral and uncontroversial.

16:30: Investigating the Prevalent Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Gauteng Classrooms

Ms. J. Opara (University of Johannesburg)

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD) arise as a result of brain malfunctions especially in the developmental stage of the child. These disorders usually occur during critical periods of child development which could be during pregnancy, birth and early childhood years. Children with NDD typically experience deficits in memory, behaviour, speech and motor skills. Teaching learners diagnosed with NDD is challenging and requires adequate attention and care until the learners can attain an appropriate level of independence. Teachers are expected to provide accommodations and pedagogical adaptations to support these learners in the classroom. In this pilot study, 100 teachers from Gauteng province in various mainstream classrooms were surveyed and the data were analysed quantitatively. A follow up qualitative semi-structured interview was then conducted with some purposively selected teachers. The analysis of this data indicates that the prevalent NDDs experienced by teachers in the classroom are specific learning disorder (SLD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). Teachers maintain that SLD is most prevalent as learners with autism and hyperactivity also struggle with reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. As one of the teacher reported stating that "*my major problem in the classroom is reading, writing and spelling because even the two learners I have with ADHD also struggle to spell, pronounce words, and write*". This implies that teacher training programs should equip teachers with the skills to support SLD, ASD and ADHD in their classrooms.