

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RESEARCH PROJECTS

- a. Mpofu, E.M., Maree, J.G., & Oakland, T. et al. (2010). **Assessing cost effectiveness of psychosocial support services and mechanisms for delivery in the ministry of education and skills development. . Aims (Mpofu, 2010):** To conduct an audit of psychosocial support services in all departments of the Ministry of Education and Skills Development; conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of the mechanisms of delivery of psychosocial support services and record best practices; determine the degree of accessibility and usability of the services by the beneficiaries; determine the structure required for effective delivery services; provide guidance on the nature of resources that are needed for the provision of cost effective services (human and material); determine the training needs of the officers and teachers involved in the provision of psychosocial support services; assess the roles of relevant stake holders, viz Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, UNICEF, UNESCO and non-governmental organizations in the provision of psychosocial services.
- b. Mpofu, E.M., Maree, J.G., & Peltzer, K, T. et al. (2009). **Consultancy report: Development of the framework for the implementation of psychometric tests in the Ministry of Education, Botswana.** Gaborone. A priority goal in the provision of assessment services is to support decision-making relative to the needs of the participant or client and produce data that might contribute important information regarding treatment, intervention, placement, selection, or other high-stakes concerns. The quality of decisions derived from assessment data depend, in part, on the fairness and equitability of assessment procedures rendered to the customer or consumer of the assessment (Mpofu & Ortiz, in press). For example, perceived equity in assessment administration, test scoring and interpretation may enhance the acceptance by customers of an assessment regarding a proposed treatment or intervention. Equity in assessment also depends on the appropriateness and fairness of the specific data gathering procedures employed. For example, adherence to administration procedures for assessments that require normative interpretations is a condition of equity for standardized tests but not necessarily for other procedures, such as an intake interview. The presumption of equity in assessment, as a foundation for fair and valid decision-making, permeates most assessment settings and contexts. In the Botswana context, use of psychometric assessments to support the school guidance and counselling program is on the presumption that such

test use will result in fair and valid decisions. The research team was invited by the Botswana Ministry of Education to develop a framework for the implementation of such (psychometric tests) in the Botswana. This report is currently under consideration by the Botswana Ministry of Education.

c. Prof Maree's travels overseas and participation in conferences, as well as his activities as the editor of *Perspectives in Education* and *SA Journal of Psychology*, have enabled him to establish a global network of contacts with colleagues and fellow research partners in South Africa and many foreign countries. This may be deduced, *inter alia*, from the contributions to the journals of which he is editor and the names of scholars who have either acted as guest editors or accepted invitations to act as guest editors in the near future.

**d. The theoretical underpinnings of Prof Maree's research are contained in the following premises: (1) Career research and career education are presently prescribed by the outdated perspective that all that we do requires scientific validation. (2) The current career counselling narratives and methods used in South Africa are almost exclusively accessible to white Afrikaans- and English-speaking learners and are unavailable to the millions of black learners whose home languages are neither English nor Afrikaans. In this we see how positivistic approach to career psychology is proving to be its downfall. On the international scene, a major transition from objective to subjective definitions of what constitutes "career" is taking place. This is the movement from a modern to a post-modern (narrative/storied) approach. Some projects based on these premises:**

a. 2006-2011: In collaboration with a number of (national and international) colleagues, Professor Maree and his research colleagues received a basic grant (totalling ca. R 300 000) from the NRF to conduct research in four provinces in the RSA; topic: **Tracing the impact (effect) of a brief, postmodern strategy (based on the principles of career construction counselling for life designing) on learners South African learners.** In this project, we translated "thick" research evidence into comprehensible communication with learners and teachers on what we know about Career Counselling reform on the ground. We implemented a possible narrative for Career Counselling, which would hopefully serve as a blueprint for other schools in South Africa. In doing so, we replicated international initiatives/ perspectives in (South) African conditions. We

illustrated that the constructivist point of view of the clients being active agents in their personal development and the conviction that the development of the self and decision-making according to the client's values form essential components of the process of counselling. These projects have helped to advance the theory base in Career Counselling in SA to one that is more holistic, contextual and multicultural. We (the research team) are helping academics, teachers and practitioners to use Third Wave/ narrative/ life story/ postmodern Career Counselling content in their practices (Savickas, 2003/4/5/6) and we have shown how the traditional Career Counselling approach compares with the postmodern, narrative approach. We have also shown that the latter can be accomplished successfully for all learners, including traditionally disadvantaged learners in (South) Africa. We have highlighted ways in which multiple approaches can be used in the collection of (biographical and other) data for assisting learners to make appropriate career choices.

- b. 2007-2010: In 2007, Prof Maree received an amount of ca R 220 000, 00 from the May and Stanley Foundation (USA) for a project entitled: Educating learners to write their life stories: facilitating a community-based teacher training program. This project is aimed at facilitating a few teachers' understanding and acquisition of a post-modern (narrative) approach to career counseling and to enable South Africa to benefit from such research conducted throughout the world, thereby contributing towards a framework for educator development that develops the broader landscape of counseling, empowerment and affirmation as key ingredients for achieving genuine transformation of counselors, teachers and teaching. The objective is to set a trend that might provide all our provincial Departments of Education with a road map for the future. This project constitutes a pioneering effort that has the potential to impact positively on the lives of millions of people in South Africa.
- c. 2007-2010: Professor Maree, in collaboration with Dr M van der Walt (University of the North-West: Potchefstroom Campus), adapted the Study Orientation Questionnaire (SOM) for use in primary school environments. This new instrument is called **SOM(P)**. Dr M van der Walt, Professor Maree and Dr. Suria Ellis (Dept of Statistics: University of the North-West: Potchefstroom Campus) also developed a cognitive instrument to assess primary school learners' mathematics abilities (Basic Mathematics

Questionnaire (Primary)) as well as an assessment instrument to assess the mathematical language skills in mathematics and vocabulary of learners in primary schools ( Mathematics Vocabulary (Primary)).

- d. 2007-2008: In collaboration with colleagues from the Youth Foundation, Professor Maree developed a selection mechanism whereby scholars are selected to study at Universities across South Africa (bursaries are awarded for study in Engineering and the Built Environment).
- e. 2006-2007: Professor Maree was approached in 2005 by Investec to conduct action research in the Hammanskraal region (Tshwane/Gauteng). He was granted a total of R 220 000,00 over a period of three years for the funding of this project. This project was designed to familiarise Mathematics teachers with the concepts of OBE and to train them in facilitation and assessment in accordance with the principles of OBE.
- f. 2005-2007: Professor Maree collaborated with Ms R Eiselen (Head: Statistical Support Services: University of Johannesburg) to adapt the Study Orientation Questionnaire for use in tertiary environments. This new instrument, called **SOM(T)**, is being standardised for use in tertiary environments. Professor Maree, Ms Eiselen and Professor Steffens also developed a cognitive instrument (called **Basix in Mathematics**) that is designed to elucidate a prospective Mathematics learner's aptitude for this subject. The Manual has only just been completed. This study also comprised the bulk of Dr Eiselen's doctoral studies.
- g. 2006-2008: In collaboration with the United Nation's Peace Corps (The *Kgwale le Mollo Foundation*), Professor Maree has developed a selection process whereby one scholar per year is awarded a bursary to enrol for a period of five years at Uplands College. Each year, a new scholar is identified as eligible for the bursary. The top twenty (20) performing students enter the third phase. This requires the applicant to undergo learner-centred assessment which is conducted by Professor Maree. This phase of the assessment utilises creative and informal techniques to gather information about the students' interests, talents, and aspirations.
- h. 2005-2008: Professor Maree and colleagues' hugely successful research project in the far-away Limpopo Province (2002-2004) and subsequent discussions with a number of stakeholders brought us to the realisation that the facilitation of EQ skills, in particular, was almost completely absent in South African schools, but also in society in general. After receiving

many requests from headmasters and other significant stakeholders, we decided to plan a research study that would specifically deal with this matter. The ultimate goal is to facilitate the Sternbergian ideal (2001) of wisdom, and specifically its supreme ideal of promoting the common good to be practised by every teacher and learner, and to further Passow and Schiff's (1989) dream of developing caring, concerned, compassionate, committed individuals (who have a passion for the common good). Professor Maree and his research colleagues received a basic grant in January 2005 of R320 000 from the May and Stanley Foundation (USA) for a project to introduce EQ (Emotional Intelligence) programmes into a number of disadvantaged black schools in South Africa. Programmes that facilitate emotional intelligence are almost entirely absent from South African schools and from South African society in general. The purpose of such programmes would be) to develop "caring, concerned, compassionate, committed individuals who have a passion for the common good" (Passow & Schiff 1989).

- i. 2005- the present: Professor Maree's ***Career Interest Questionnaire (CIP)*** was released in 2006 and the Training Manual published by Dr. J. de Beer & Co, Randburg (the only officially Multi Health Systems (MHS) training institution and test distributor in Sub-Saharan Africa). The CIP comprises a brief questionnaire that can establish the Career Interest Profiles of learners of all ages in a relatively short space of time. This instrument can be used to help many thousands of learners to make accurate and well-informed career choices. Endorsed by five of the leading counselling psychologists globally, at the time of writing (2006), no similar product is available. The need for a concise instrument such as this to help disadvantaged school-leaving learners to choose their future careers in a relatively short space of time cannot be overemphasised. (Five of the leading scholars globally collaborated with Prof Maree on this project).
- j. 2003-2004: Prof Maree facilitated postmodern Narrative Career Counselling in a nodal region (the Sekhukuniland-Nebo-Apel regions of the Limpopo Province). Topic: Facilitating a post-modern Career Counselling approach to learners in the Limpopo Province. Prof Maree led a team research project entitled This was a comprehensive team research project for which a grant of R215 000 was received from the National Research Foundation (NRF). The broad aim of the research was to investigate the status of Career

Counselling in the region and implement the changing global (Third wave/ postmodern/ narrative/ constructivist) perspective on and approach to Career Counselling, and to implement postmodern approaches at a number of schools in the Limpopo Province, and, indeed, SA (by shifting the primary focus from the utilization of the results of diagnostic measuring instruments, to the client's point of view and rendition of events; empowering clients to give meaning to the counselling process).

- k. 2005-6: Professor Maree was involved in the **MSSI (Mpumalanga Mathematics and Science Initiative)** in Mpumalanga. **This project was a major collaborative effort among the Mpumalanga Department of Education, The Japanese Government (with many distinguished Japanese scholars being involved) and the University of Pretoria.**
- l. In 2004, Prof Maree was asked by the South African Academy for Science and Arts to analyse the results of the South African Mathematics Olympiad over the past number of years.
- m. **2000-2002:** Along with Dr J.M. Molepo and Ms M Moletsane, Professor Maree is one of the leaders of a comprehensive team research project entitled *Optimising orientation towards the study of Mathematics of black learners in the Northern Province*. For this research they received a grant of R57 500 from the National Research Foundation. As a result of research thus far, a number of papers have been read at national congresses, articles have been submitted to accredited journals, and a number of NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme) bursaries have been allocated to learners in the schools in the research area (bursaries to a total value of R2.3 million). In June 2003 Anglovaal announced that it would allocate a further R750 000 over a period of three years as a contribution to the successful completion of this project.
- n. Professor Maree has collaborated in numerous projects with doctoral and master students. Since these have been too many of these projects to mention individually here, kindly consult (a) the lists of students whom Prof Maree has supervised, and (b) the list of co-published articles.
- o. **1992-1997:** In co-operation with HSRC, Professor Maree developed and standardised the Study Orientation Questionnaire: Mathematics: Grades 7 to 12 (both Afrikaans and English). During this project, for which R750 000 was granted by the HSRC, they developed the following psychological tests and

test manuals in collaboration with the Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria:

**(NOTE: Both tests were standardised on a nation-wide sample that accurately reflected population composition in terms of black and white learners.)**

- **Study Orientation Questionnaire in Mathematics (SOM).** The SOM measures the study orientation in Mathematics of all learners from Grades 9 to 12. This served as a basis on which a remedial programme to optimise Mathematics achievement could be designed.
- **Manual for the Study Orientation questionnaire in Mathematics (SOM).** This manual contains a test that measures the study orientation in Mathematics of learners from Grades 9 to 12, and research undertaken with it formed the basis for devising a remedial programme designed to optimise Mathematics achievement.

**This test has been widely used and continues to be used in research in many different primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions in South Africa and abroad (in countries such as Malaysia).** In South Africa, this test is widely used by psychologists, universities, child guidance clinics and other tertiary training facilities.