

Editorial

Special Issue Showcasing Student Research

Amiee-Jade Pember
Advanced Personnel Management

Welcome to the first issue of the *Australian Community Psychologist* for 2009. This issue is a Special Issue Showcasing Student Research, and the purpose of the issue was to provide students with an opportunity to engage in all aspects of the publication process.

I was selected as Guest Editor working alongside Lauren Breen (Editor), who assisted me in developing the skills necessary for overseeing the production of a journal issue, and also developing an understanding of the editorial process. This was quite a commitment, as I graduated from my Master of Psychology (Community) and commenced full-time employment whilst undertaking the Guest Editor role. However, I am pleased to have been given the opportunity, as I learnt so much about the publication process.

I remember publishing my Honours research (Pereira & Pooley, 2007) and feeling frustrated by the time it took from submission to seeing the manuscript in print. I remember wondering why it took so long. Now I know! Those involved in the publication process do so in their own time, often after business hours and on weekends when they are not at their 'day jobs'! Furthermore, Editors not only have to seek submissions, but also reviewers. Editors are responsible for remembering when submissions, reviews, revised submissions and final manuscripts are due, and remind authors and reviewers of these deadlines. And there's the proofing process – typos, spell-checking, grammar, formatting, and identifying missing references or page numbers for references. This is a time consuming process! So aside from refining my communication skills, organisation skills, writing skills, and editing skills, I have now developed a greater

understanding of the work involved in the production of a journal. More importantly, I now have a greater appreciation for the efforts of those who make journals, and other publications, possible. I am glad to have undertaken the Guest Editor role prior to publishing my Masters research. I will definitely take much more time to prepare my manuscript in order to minimise the work of those on the other side of the publication. Hopefully this will make for a smoother editorial process.

Approximately 20 students from around Australia and overseas actively engaged in the production of this issue, either as Guest Editor, authors, or reviewers. Student authors were responsible for submitting their manuscripts, liaising with myself and Lauren, considering the feedback that they received from reviewers, and deciding how to respond to this feedback. Student reviewers actively sought advice on the review process and feedback on their responses to the manuscripts, providing them with an opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and skills in communicating their feedback constructively to colleagues. In addition to the students who contributed to the production of this issue, I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the experienced mentors and supervisors who encouraged students to submit papers and those who participated in the manuscript review process. It is through your recognition of the abilities of the future community psychologists that this Special Issue has come about.

Some people may assume that a journal issue written, reviewed, and edited by students would not be at the same standard of an issue produced by more experience authors, reviewers and editors. I would like to emphasise that throughout the production of the issue, we focused on maintaining the standard quality of the *Australian Community*

Psychologist. With this in mind, all reviewers (students and experienced reviewers) were reminded to review the manuscripts in the same way they would for any other issue of the journal. Student authors therefore experienced a critical review process as they would have if they had submitted to any other issue of the journal.

This Special Issue consists of two sections; Research Papers and Articles. The Research Papers section includes research conducted at fourth year and postgraduate levels in the areas of cultural issues, diversity, resilience and empowerment. Amy Quayle and Christopher Sonn utilise Foucauldian discourse analysis to explore the construction of Muslims as 'Other' in the print media following the Cronulla riots in Sydney, Australia. They demonstrate the importance of considering discourse as a medium through which racism occurs in everyday lives. Lütfiye Ali and Christopher Sonn explore the experiences of second generation Cypriot Turkish people living in Australia using Critical Whiteness studies. They consider how Anglo Saxon dominance and privilege affects the construction of identity for Cypriot Turkish people. Jay Marlowe also considers cultural issues, but with a focus on his personal experience working with Sudanese men resettling in Australia. Marlowe emphasises the need to provide the men with the opportunity to discuss their experiences in a respectful and empowering manner, in order to assist them in the process of liberation whilst resettling. Brent Munro and Julie Ann Pooley explore the relationship between resilience and university adjustment and focus on the differences in resilience and university adjustment between school leavers and mature entry university students. Interestingly, although they found a relationship between resilience and university adjustment, Munro and Pooley found no difference in the adjustment of the two cohorts, and no difference in their levels of resilience. Finally, Daniel King considers excessive video game

playing amongst adolescents and adults, and identifies empowerment, recognition, control, and completion as themes relevant to understanding such behaviour.

The Articles section of the Special Issue includes four papers in which students reflect on issues in practice. Chris Kirk provides an analysis of community psychology through his eyes as a novice community psychologist. Kirk's paper encourages us to reflect not only on where community psychology has come from, but also where it is heading, in the current global context. David Mander and Lisa Fieldhouse reflect on their experience of developing an education support programme for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary school students in Western Australia. They discuss practice issues around working cross-culturally, and within the various systems that impact upon the students' lives. In his paper on the SPECS model, Tim MacKellar examines the interface between health and community psychologies. He considers the relevance of the SPECS model throughout psychology, and argues that it provides a more holistic framework for understanding health and wellbeing. Finally the Special Issue ends with a critical examination of the inclusion of 'culture' in community psychology. David Jackson and Richard Kim argue that substance abuse and mental health need to be understood within the cultural context of a community, using the Federated States of Micronesia as an example.

I am sure you will agree that the papers in this issue serve to remind us of the need for continual reflection on the theory and practice of community psychology, and of considering the perspectives of those new to the field, which often provide a fresh view of issues that our communities, and community psychology as a field, are facing. On that note, I hope you enjoy reading the fantastic work that the students from around Australia and internationally are undertaking as they develop professionally. And students, thanks again for working with myself and Lauren in the development of our Special Issue Showcasing Student Research!

Amiee-Jade Pember (née Pereira) M.Psych
(Community), MAPS
Advanced Personnel Management (APM)

Reference

Pereira, A., & Pooley, J. (2007). A qualitative exploration of the transition experience of students from a high school to a senior high school in rural Western Australia. *Australian Journal of Education*, 51, 162-177.

Address correspondence to:

email amiee-jade@westnet.com.au