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Practitioners' perceptions on the value of cognitive assessment measures within the South African context

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APPENDIX E

Zainub Cassoojee

Recorded interview with Psychometrist

Date: 20/06/2016

Duration: 38.08 minutes

Location: PsyCaD - University of Johannesburg

No of Pages: 27

Conducted by: Nomsa Palesa Radebe, Masters Student at the University of Witwatersrand

I	**Interviewer**	**Nomsa Palesa Radebe**
P	**Participant**	**Participant 2**

I: Interview on uhm, my research project. Which I'm looking at the cognitive well the use and value of cognitive assessments within the South African context

P: Okay

I: And as you as a Psychometrist I am just trying to understand what you as a Psychometrist and other Psychologist what their views are how useful they think these cognitive assessments are and just your opinion solely your opinion.

P: Okay no problem

I: Okay

P: Okay no problem

I: And I'm just going to ask you can just quickly to just sign for us these consent forms.

P: Sure no problem

I: And this is participant information sheet in your own time for you to understand further.

P: Thank you so much

I: And this is just a consent form for the participant and this for audio recording.

P: Okay sure [pause], [signing forms]

P: And todays date?

I: 20th June [laugh]

P: Yeah, I obviously never know the date.

I: Yes, and our computers do that for us now a days.

P: Yes, that's so true and cell-phones.

I: Yes. [pause] Watches even as-well.

P: True I don't wear a watch.

I: Oh!

P: Since I've got my cell-phone.

I: You good.

P: And I have left my cell-phone in my office I didn't want it ringing while I'm in the interview.

I: No, but thank you so much for giving us your time.

P: No-problem.

I: So you'll just read the information sheet as you wish.

P: [sneezes], Sure no problem.

I: Bless you.

P: Thank you so much, excuse me

I: Uhm so just for the purposes of the interview I want to repeat again. Today is the 20th of June 2016 and we with Fatima [laughter] so can I get right straight into it? Do you have any questions before I start maybe anything you want me to clarify?

P: No, no that's fine I just need to confirm with you that I work with the other participant.

I: Okay.

P: So I work with as a psychometrist but I'm more involved with the computerised assessments I don't do a lot of the one on one uh individual cognitive assessments as such.

I: Yes, yes, okay, no no-problem I think just in terms of what you can answer and in terms of your realm that's perfectly fine we just here to understand everyone who kind of engages with the assessment processes.

P: No problem.

I: It's perfectly fine. Okay so just the first question F, what in your opinion is a cognitive or rather what does a cognitive assessment entail would you say?

P: Uhm …, so its assessment, assessment of cognitive abilities of aptitudes and uhm usually your cognitive assessments focus on three realms. So your verbal, non-verbal and your numerical abilities. So as far as I am aware that's what we focus on. In terms of intelligence testing and cognitive testing yes.

I: And then within the South African context how would you say cognitive assessment kind-off play a role or what role do they play considering the different cultures that we deal with the different you know context that we come across every single day?

P: Okay I hope I'm answering what you trying to get at so just direct me, redirect me if I'm not.

I: Okay.

P: Uhm, but in my …, in the work that I do the cognitive assessments play a role we use it for career based assessment right so when you want to direct someone in terms of a career option we use cognitive assessment and the idea is not to only focus on cognitive. Uhm but to look at the person holistically and also be realistic about it because sometimes you have the APS requirements they don't meet so they may have a cognitive ability deficit that's when we use it very often and then we do use it for selection as well.

I: Okay

P: And that's uhm I guess where the South African context would come in, in terms of fairness for all cultural groups.

I: Yes

P: And uhmm, it is unfortunate because we do not have, we do not have South African developed tools that we use so a lot of the time what we do end up doing is we end up using assessments that are developed overseas

I: Yes.

P: and then applying it within the South African context. Uhm whether it's always fair to everybody that's something that's debatable. Uhmm [pause] we do use at times learning potential assessments

I: Okay.

P: and we very lucky that we've got a very good base uhm or assessment South African base

I: Okay.

P: Uhm it's a South African tool so its developed by a South African but that's more not your cognitive assessment as say as we understand it not verbal, non-verbal and numerical it is more just your abstract reasoning.

I: Okay

P: So the idea is to take out that cultural uhm bias.

I: Yes, biases yes.

P: Cultural bias and then test people on their innate ability and their ability to then take that information and learn it and reuse it so we do have that option as-well.

I: Okay.

P: But it's not always the case that you use the ten thousand different assessment yes yes.

I: Yes, yes you brought up a very good point about how a-lot of the assessments that we use at the moment especially for career assessment and that type of thing are not at all South African standardized such as the WISC and the Benders test like that. Uhm so now I'm just wondering you said that you work in the computer side.

P: Computerised, yes

I: Computerised portion of it. What assessments do you guys use in particular? Because I am not really familiar with.

P: No-problem, so there's a company by the name of SItac SA.

I: Okay

P: Uhmm you can google them uhm maybe to get a little bit more understanding of them. But they've got a tool that's called the General Reasoning Test

I: Okay.

P: Uhm it's more it's a cognitive assessment and that assessment was developed in the UK. But the nice thing about their products and I don't know if it, it makes you feel a little bit easier when you use the tool is that you do you are able to because it's a computerised assessment you able to take it and if you do multiple assessment on the system 100 or more you can develop your own norms okay so when you do the assessment at-least then you have norms that you've developed in-house.

I: Okay, okay.

P: Uhm that applies, but still the tool is developed for for in in the UK.

I: You saying that it is computerised, I'm assuming that the child works with the computer. So then how do you again looking back in terms of the South African context a-lot of people, we know that a lot of people are illiterate, and then computer illiteracy is just something else completely. So how do you guys manage both the illiteracy and the computer illiteracy?

P: Computer literacy, okay the nice thing about using it in the University setting is that if you think about it most of the candidates that come through to us are sort of screened prior.

I: okay, okay.

P: Because they would need to meet a certain level to be able to be here at University right so uhm I know when we started and I've been working here for about 11 years now, I know when we started that would be our first uhm we would always do that check. Do you know how to use computers? And are you comfortable with computers? Now we get lots of smirks when we ask that question because most people are like

I: [laughs] yes, technological age like hello.

P: Yes, but initially when we started working we would have to literally take candidates through it and teach them this is a mouse this is how you use a mouse. Uhm that's not the case anymore I think we've moved forward in that sense. But like I said they've sort of been pre-screened before they get to us already because they have to meet a certain level to get into the University. I mean from the onset. Yeah so then

I: I would assume but never the less there are some differences with regards to the levels of literacy for some and others.

P: Uhmmm, yes that is the case

I: Or it might be very vague at time or it might be very limited

P: Depends on what type of candidate we assessing

I: Okay, okay

P: So because we do careers work, your careers assessment I wouldn't say I noticed a noticeable difference, generally those are the students that sort of have a good idea that they not they not in the right place so if you have that level of knowledge sound knowledge then you sort of know a lot more about the world and what's happening

I: Okay

P: Out there and around you so they are able to function in that computerised uhm setting it's our candidates that we do assessment for that have failed uhm or are at risk of failing or have failed that generally you'll notice a bit of a difference.

I: Okay

P: Ya, like where they may be struggling a little bit more with understanding instructions or yeah.

I: So I would assume that's a bit of a factor that you guys need to take into consideration based on what uhm whether or not you would conduct that particular assessment with them. So apart from that what other factors do you find you engage with or come across when dealing with uhm assessment yeah assessment? Let's talk about it in that regard.

P: Uhmm, I'm not too sure what you want more [laughs] sorry.

I: I mean I'm just thinking in terms of how I get that [pause] literacy could be the biggest issue.

P: Yes.

I: But apart from that is there anything else that you guys need to factor in and consider prior to uhm you know assessing the child in computerised type of setting? Is what I'm asking.

P: You would need to I mean screen for language

I: Yes.

P: So, do they understand everything that you saying. And then the literacy then stems to the language and then to the computer literacy. Uhmmm any other factors that you would consider [pause] nothing that I can think of right now.

I: Okay

P: Let me think about it if there's anything else that comes up

I: [pause] but then how would guys negotiate if the person does come and they definitely need some sort of assessment and uhm you find that the language is probably very poor or just you know very limited how do you guys than manage negotiate assessing that individual how do you or the steps you take should I say?

P: Generally, my my feeling on the matter the process at PsyCaD is very disjointed if I can put it that way so if a candidate comes in and they see by a psychologist most of the time right and that's where the screening should take place right so initially your psychologist should be in the room and know whether or not the person is going to cope

I: Yes.

P: If they come to us and they insistent on assessment right, uhm then we do that again we looking at the candidate and if we feel that the candidate definitely can't do the assessment then it's a bit of a negotiation between then speaking to the psychologist and saying you know what, the results are going to be invalid.

I: Mmm.

P: But then it also depends on the nature of the assessment.

I: Okay.

P: So sometimes it's unfortunate because you would get like a selection type assessment where the candidates come in then you need to do an assessment for selection.

I: Okay

P: But the idea is to see who

I: Yes.

P: Yes, to sieve through that to see who's going to cope and who's not going to cope.

I: I see

P: And in that instance then, you would then go ahead with the assessment uhm because its meant to be used as a tool to screen whether or not the candidate is going to meet the requirements for whatever the purpose of the assessment is yeah.

I: I'm just wondering does the screening process maybe just work in assisting or maybe being aware of individuals who may require a bit more assistance prior to them having the initial knowledge. So I come in and I might know how to do A, B and C but all I need is for you to assist me but if you are just going to screen me uhm and obviously without any assistance I'm going to obviously fall to the wayside so I'm just wondering how do you guys negotiate that and how do you work on you not pushing people too far aside?

P: Again it depends on the nature of the assessment.

I: Okay

P: So for selection I don't think assistance is appropriate.

I: Okay.

P: Simply because uhm, you can't bias.

I: Ya

P: You bias either or in terms of, I mean we working with a tool that already know we not 100% uhm comfortable with and then if we then take candidates and say okay I think you may need a little extra assistance

I: I see potential. [laughs]

P: [laughs] I see potential in you yeah. You may need a little … it's not fair to the other candidates

I: Absolutely

P: So you have to sort of the way that I navigate, the way that I would we tend to do it is that we decide on a say uhm for a project that we have to do assessment in English.

I: Mmm

P: Uhm because the school is an English speaking school so the children have to uhm function at that level and then you go ahead and you do the test and you know that the children are going to struggle {pause} Uhm because of the fact that that we using English as a medium of instruction but the idea then is to note who's having difficulties with it and who's not having difficulties with it do you know what I mean? At that level

I: No, absolutely absolutely.

P: And uhm it is sad its heart breaking at times but you just go ahead with it so that and then the idea is that the recommendations are that this learner may need assistance or do you understand? Yeah

I: Mmm mmm mmm.

P: Yes.

I: And then do you guys maybe assist or help other children? who may need don't necessarily go to an English medium school is that

P: Like I said I don't do a lot of the the,

I: Yes

P: the individual assessments

I: Ya

P: Where you deal with learning disabilities and you deal with all of that. Uhm we have a project running that we work with the GDE.

I: Okay

P: and then uhm, but the idea is that these children also have been preselected in their school medium so they come in with a lot of uhm uhm history and background

I: Okay

P: and then uhm so when we get when they come to us ultimately the idea is then just to use the assessment to sort of finalise the decision or not do you know what I mean

I: Mmm-mmm

P: and the uhm [clears throat] because it's a GDE project we again a very disjointed type of project so we don't get involved with the recommendations ultimately.

I: Okay.

P: Do you know what I mean?

I: Okay.

P: All we can, all we do is the assessment for them,

I: Pass on

P: and then we pass on the information,

I: Yes.

P: to them simply because of the time constraints and the, and the nature of the intervention as well.

I: Okay

P: and as psychometrist you also can only focus on assessment

I: Yip

P: and what the assessment tells you

I: Yip

P: Uhm I, we not going to look into too much deeper than that because you don't want to be stepping out of scope as-well yeah

I: Uhm it comes across as though you know especially the side of discipline you involved in is very quantitative.

P: Yes

I: You know you work with the numbers [laugh]

P: Work with the numbers.

I: Uh, so I don't know to what extent you will be-able to inform me on this but I'm just wondering what is your idea of informal assessment and maybe using those completely for you know recommending a child or diagnosing a child with any type of SLD for instance?

P: For D [sigh] informal assessments is also very subjective.

I: Yes, yes.

P: Its very subjective uhm so it also depends on the training that the person sitting behind the desk has and then working in the industry for so many years that people generally fall into practice doing the same thing over and over again.

I: Mhm.

P: And sometime not thinking further than that Uhmm so it can be a little dangerous if you if you only base it on informal assessment.

I: yah

P: that's my thinking around it is because its only as good as I am and if I have issues and my training is not and I haven't done any follow up training, haven't bothered to learn more I'm going to base

I: You going to stay

P: I'm going stay within that framework and I'm not going to benefit the client at the end of the day

I: yeah

P: so for me it's a balance, you need to be-able to do both. You need to be as professionally as for you to realise at times you need to interpret qualitatively so that it best meets the client's needs

I: Mmmmh mmh

P: Uhm but sometimes the results are necessary so just that you have something more objective in terms of diagnosing or whatever it is the purpose of the assessment is

I: mmmm mmm, are there any formal assessments that you do in the computerised?

P: [Pause] [clears throat] [coughs] excuse me.

I: Uhm, option of…

P: Uhm we use basically [pause] all the tools that we use is standardised so, classified and standardised uhm but we do we have tried to include a little more of your narrative type tool instruments

I: Okay

P: So it is uhm where there's more open ended questions so it's up to the psychologist to interpret those results.

I: Okay

P: again depending on the nature of the assessment so your career counselling that's perfect, because you need to know a little bit more about the candidate, selection I don't know it depends on the what the purpose of selection is you know what mean?

I: yeah mm mm So would you say that uhm if you were given the opportunity to purely engage with the client in an informal setting would that be not something that you would kind-off vouch for purely because as you said it was very subjective uhmmm do you find that it's not gonna be?

P: I would rather do like a balance

I: aa aa dual

P: Yeah a dual type of approach to the client

I: Yeah

P: Rather and coming from a psychometrist point of view because also you are you can't step out of bounds you do your narrative work a lot of the time you feel like you

stepping into territory that's out of scope makes you feel very uncomfortable, so simply because of that I wouldn't

I: Stay in your lane [laughs]

P: I would stay within using the tools.

I: Yeah

P: Yes, yes.

I: Uhmmm sorry did you want to say more? sorry, sorry.

P: No, no [pause].

I: [chuckle] Sorry about that so I mean considering you working very much in the very technological side of our field you know things are evolving very much and you know as you said people are becoming computer literate and just aware of you know how things are moving forward. So I'm just wondering what is your thoughts on the current climate of cognitive assessment? As I'm saying with the evolution how things from the past demographically it was very different but now there's much more streamlining a lot more equality ya to an extent with regards to our abilities so uhm do you find that South Africa is moving in a more cognitive uhm dimension or a more cognitive capacity what are your views on that?

P: It's a difficult one to answer because there's always going to be a place for cognitive assessment but uhm with what's happening in the broader context in terms of the colonial and decolonisation and talk and stuff like that I was actually discussing this with my colleague the other day is that within the South African context in-order for us to best meet our majority of the peoples' needs is that we need to maybe rethink how we think of intelligence as-well.

I: Okay.

P: Uhmm but depending on and because of also its very Westernised our concept of intelligence and what's important in terms of being intelligent but it also depends on the nature of the work that you going to be doing or the purpose for the assessment ultimately do you know what I mean?

I: M mmhm mmh.

P: Uhm but there's I mean there's room for us to develop in that sense because what we value may not be as valuable uhm in ultimately uhm but it's also very difficult than to say I'm going to use an assessment to assess someone's street smarts.

I: Mmm.

P: Uhm Because you need to develop a concept around it as to what is that identify it and then develop it standardised to and then measure it. Do you know what I mean?

I: Mmmm

P: It's a difficult one to navigate around I think it's easy to stay within your frame of thinking or your framework uhm and its not as easy to break out of it do you know what I mean?

I: Mmmm

P: Uhmm and at Universities lets be honest everyone wants to know, do they have the verbal abilities, do they have the numerical abilities, and can they think abstractly in-order to perform uhm so until we change what's important from that perspective we've it's always going to be something that we need to measure.

I: You mentioned something interesting that when speaking to your colleague that you felt that maybe we should start rethinking our idea of IQ in comparison to what's going on in the West. What are you thinking is different and that needs to be you know kind-off renegotiated in terms of the SA context?

P: It's such a I mean you need an expert in this field and I don't know if I am an expert in the field.

I: I'm here for your opinion to be totally honest so in your, in your understanding what do you think how does it need to be kind-off refocused?

P: It's, it's such a …[pause] like maybe we need to consider that there are other factors that are important.

I: Okay.

P: Uhm as-well, uhm do you know what I mean? That we uhm but then it was also, also the argument was a very circular argument if I can say this.

I: Okay

P: Because she was arguing that as a black institution we must develop a black model uhm and then research it and evidence it and, and then we never. My argument on the converse was that why then is research important uhm because research is such a Western concept uhm so why must we then fall into the framework of then doing it according to Western standards

I: Okay

P: [Pause] If you want to develop a new standard then we need to develop a new standard to measure it.

I: Yes.

P: But, it's such an out of the box idea because then it also then like I said I am limited by the fact that I still think verbal is important to an extent and mathematical is important depending on what you studying.

I: Mmm mmm

P: Definitely abstract is still important

I: Always

P: Because then you need to know someone's innate ability to logically look at something.

I: and adapt and manage enable

P: Yes. to be flexible and to be able to yes so you then again your grounding is still within that Western ideology

I: Yes.

P: Do you know what I mean?

I: I mean seeing they kind of need to work together absolutely.

P: Yes.

I: Uhm what additional factors because you mentioned additional factors that need to be considered can you maybe think of some of that come to mind for you what factors would you say need to be considered in renegotiating rethinking?

P: Of cognitive assessment?

I: Mmmm.

P: Possibly then including that learning potential. Uhm where you give someone and that sort of levels the playing field.,

I: Ya.

P: Uhm, but my argument with that always has been that the instructions are still language based so you still biasing people uhm, because if the instructions are overly complicated and you speaking in English you are still biasing people uhm, and negatively

biasing their performance but I like the idea that it levels the playing field because what it does is it gives you a completely new set of instructions so basically you'll get like a symbol and the symbol will then translate into something else and you have to learn how that translates so there is an underlying thought process to it so there is a connection between the translation uhm, if you see that then you do well from the onset but then the nice thing about the test is that it gives you the opportunity to learn so then you thought that this is what it becomes and then when you retested on it then it sees whether you've taken it in and were able to adapt so that could be something just to see if they have the ability so maybe not pure cognitive add in an element of learning as-well.

I: That would be very beneficial actually if you think about it in terms of how and in the long term as-well.

P: For the University setting.

I: Yes.

P: Yes.

I: Your negotiability like you said flexibility and just going beyond just the University state and going out into the world I guess to an extent.

P: Yes, yes.

I: Okay, and I'm just wondering in terms of the cognitive, well the computerised assessments that you use how beneficial do you think they are in terms of uhm adopting recommendations for interventions how successful do you find?

P: It's as good as the person that reads the information.

I: Oh okay, so as in the participant themselves? Assessor.

P: No, as the assessor it's as good as the assessor. Uhm, I mean your computerised assessments are very limited in the sense that they template based if I can put it that way so if you an E then the same write up is going to come up about an extrovert it's not taking into consideration other factors.

I: Ya.

P: It's not looking at the person holistically.

I: Yes.

P: It's just going to give you the information that this person is an E and generally E's are like this.

I: Okay.

P: So it's only as good as the person that actually reads the information and makes it meaningful for the client

I: So it's a little bit limited you would say? In terms of uhmm

P: You still need the your main interaction.

I: Yes.

P: Yes.

I: How do you think that negotiates though if for instance like you were saying it's based on the assessor so if the assessor is really bad would you then kind of suggest that a person should get multiple uhm what's the word I'm looking for [pause] [clicks fingers] what's the word I'm looking for? go for like get multiple uh …

P: Referrals almost?

I: Yes, like get [pause].

P: To go to a number of different people?

I: Yes, thank you, yah that's

P: That's what you trying to say?

I: Yes.

P: Uhmm, how logistically possible is that?

I: Very true.

P: And, and let's be honest we all need to make money. So I mean if your [pause] within this context of I've seen a client am I really going to pass them off to the next person? If we've sort of dealt with it. You need to sort of move on and move on to the next person.

I: Yes.

P: Do you know what I mean?

I: Yes

P: Uhm so logistically that may not be possible, it's up to the I think training institutions need to realise that what you need to instil in the people that leave you is that if you feel incompetent or if you feel unsure then

I: Step back.

P: Refer step back its it's I mean at the end of the day or ask somebody go to your supervisor get information from other people uhm that if you feel you lack in that specific area.

I: Absolutely I hear that. I guess it always comes back to, again to where you started much like how the children you guys deal with where your start dictates much about where you going to go.

P: And that is so unfortunate.

I: It is.

P: In our, South African context it is so unfortunate its actually heart breaking when you think about it because uh like some of the assessments that we do with the small ones and you just know it's a language problem it's just a language problem and had they just had the foundation to build on they may not even be there do you know what I mean?

I: Absolutely.

P: and they've got that they've got that quick thinking they can see the connections you can see it as a person you just can't measure it.

I: Yes.

P: And give evidence for it.

I: Well in terms of foundation I think the first thing that comes to mind for all of us is curriculum in education our education system what would you say is probably the biggest difficulty that we have in terms of the education system apart from the language because I think that's something we obviously know but apart from the language or building on from the language should I rather say what is the biggest issues that we facing and how those impact our assessment outcomes?

P: Everything [laughs].

I: [laughs].

P: Education is a problem I think everywhere and it's it's a very negative outlook

I: Ya.

P: But if you sending someone into a government institution the problems are the teachers sometimes I mean it depends also its very specific to specific schools so you'll

get outstanding teachers in certain schools and not so but I think teacher training is the key.

I: Support yes.

P: The teachers support, the fact that I did my PGCE I was thinking of venturing then do educational psychology so I said a good stepping stone is to do the PGCE.

I: Yes

P: And I'm a mum so I would like to maybe stay at home.

I: Yes.

P: And do that, teaching half day, not half day [chuckles].

I: Yes, [laughs]

P: I did it I did the PGCE, I got through it and when I was in that context I realised the teachers are over worked and underpaid. If you not passionate about it, you are not benefitting the students and that's one of the reasons why I didn't even go through if you not passionate about it if you really don't have a passion for it.

I: Stay away

P: Stay away and I did the with a number of people and a lot of them were just there to sort of work and if you just going to sort of work you not benefitting and then it's the curriculum.

I: Yes.

P: The curriculum has issues. Uhm, I think even the way that people like when I was in school and the periods were a certain length of time I mean we had a 35-minute period.

I: Mmm

P: You basically get the students settled down you have 10 or 15 minutes to talk to them and then.

I: No ways.

P: And that's I mean checking homework and, and then it's over and then you need to move on how can we teach a subject for 10 or 15 minutes you not getting anything across to them do you know what I mean?

I: Ya ya, especially with a child who's struggling I mean they need that extra 10 minutes just for themselves to kind-off attend to whatever. So my question also is thinking about

maybe more rural based schools the pure context the size of the classrooms is also another thing.

P: Yes.

I: How how do you see?

P: We had people in the PGCE that said they have learner's classrooms with up to 80 students in a classroom that's, that's.

I: That's not functional.

P: I mean chances are you only going to be teaching to that 5 or 6 in the front.

I: Absolutely.

P: The rest of them are not paying attention to you because when you that age you really don't care what your teacher is telling you.

I: No, mmm mmm.

P: Uhm it's a big problem, education in South Africa is a big problem.

I: Ya

P: If we don't address it we are going to its ongoing.

I: Mmmm mm

P: It's not coming to an end and uhm I don't see it happening because I don't see them making good decisions,

I: Okay.

P: in terms of education or taking it in a different direction I think we just repeating past mistakes uhm ya I don't know it's a big one.

I: It's unfortunate though you sit here and you think about it it's like a big black hole.

P: I would like to go in there and sort things out [laughs]

I: [laughs] Exactly

P: But it's, it's not and it's also bigger than we even realise.

I: Absolutely.

P: And like you said it's, it's there's so many different context, that you teaching in we are only aware of your urban school type of environment.

I: Mmmhm

P: Strangely enough I listen to 702 and last week uhm on Friday there was a woman from Wits no, no she's not from wits I lied uhm Mamokgeti.

I: Oh! she was a witsie she was one of our yes so I can understand ya ya.

P: And she was so dynamic.

I: She really is.

P: And then she interviewed three female black learners that are excelling in mathematics from rural schools.

I: Wow!

P: I think the idea was to put them on there to say maybe our concept of it is also wrong.

I: Okay.

P: That there are the rural schools that are doing wonderful things which we are just not aware of it because all we aware of is the negative and they were very dynamic the one girl was turning 25 and already she was going to be doing her doctorate I think. Amazing, amazing, amazing stuff so uhm maybe we just not aware of it.

I: Absolutely, but I mean it gets that's also a bit of a needle in a haystack type of a situation I mean three out of how many thousands?

P: Out of how many thousands that's. Also true or maybe they just opted to only interview three I don't know I don't know but I mean it's happening.

I: No, absolutely.

P: So let's not be maybe we not as aware of it as we need to be

I: Ya,

P: Ya, I think that opened my eyes

I: Ya,

P: To the fact that it is happening.

I: Not so pessimistically viewed

[laughs]

P: Its difficult thought, its difficult and I have like I said my 2 small ones and I'm thinking to myself where am I going to send them and uhm she also interviewed like your wits representative from the SRC she interviewed someone from EFF as-well and the wits representative I think uh that Kala girl, I don't know her first name she was she was part of the student.

I: the leading one I know exactly who you referring to yes.

P: Yes, and she mentioned something about the fact that people that can afford it I'm quoting out of context is that we then take our children and put them in the private schools and we don't actually attend to the problems.

I: Yes.

P: And let's be honest that's what we do and I'm if I'm not going to be part of the solution

I: Part of the problem.

P: then obviously I'm contributing to part of the problem.

I: Absolutely double standards.

P: Yes, that's what she was getting at you know what I mean but as a parent and you've got just two small ones you going to be wanting to put them in school you going to think

I: About their careers absolutely.

P: Ya, ya.

I: How do we deal with that?

P: And how do we make it better?

I: [sigh]

P: [sigh][giggles]

I: Without being so parentally inclined and involved oh its difficult

P: Very difficult

I: Uhm so just in terms of closing off I just want to ask you what are your thoughts on the use of psychometric test uhm in comparison to the information processing? Uhm so I mean the psychometrics are the WISC , SSAIS I know you said you not very involved in.

P: I'm really not involved

I: But I'm just asking do you have some awareness of them?

P: I'm really not involved.

I: Okay that's perfectly fine because you do the computerised its kind-off the same thing the very standardised

P: Yes

I: In comparison to the more information processing such as the KABC, I don't know if you know? The Kaufman Assessment Battery

P: Not I mean we don't use the

I: Don't, so you don't know them at all?

P: Ya, not really.

I: Uhm so I guess then my question would be more a if I were to rephrase it a little bit is, how useful would you say a standardised test is in comparison to a more information processing? Which is you have a standardised where you have a box which you need to fit in and you need to work according to those you know limitations whereas information processing is how does F process how does she make sense of things its more of a

P: Its more on yourself so the standardising according to your own norms.

I: Yes, so not to anyone else. Absolutely very individually based I think.

P: Yes, again its wonderful if you can do that for one thousand applicants uhm not always possible.

I: So feasibility always comes in?

P: Feasibility also comes into play.

I: Okay

P: Uhmmm, but if there's a tool that can be used to quickly determine that and its going to help for a specific purpose and wonderful because

I: Mmmhm

P: Its actually playing against someone's own strengths.

I: Yes.

P: you know what I mean?

I: Yes.

P: Ya.

I: So you are definitely more on the idea that either way the standardising needs to come into play as appose to just looking at the child? Because I mean what I'm getting is that we need to kind-off have a base where we comparing the child to what the outside world is expecting of them?

P: That's exactly.

I: So would you agree with that? Or is it just okay, I guess it comes back to the informal verses uhm you know standardised.

P: You looking at learners that are now going into schools, the thing is you need to compare them to where they going to be performing.

I: Who they'll be dealing with.

P: And who they'll be dealing with. Let's to be honest with you as much as we want to be idealistic about it

I: Ya

P: As much as we want to be idealistic about it and we want to take little Jhonny and we want to look at him as an independent sole and you want to at the end of the day little Jhonny is going to a school where there's 25 other learners that he is competing against and then he is entering a University where there are 1000 learners that he is competing against and then he is going to a work place where he has to be number one out of the three or four candidates that get there uhm at the end of the day he needs to meet the because that the society been

I: Absolutely.

P: Ya.

I: I'm just wondering then how beneficial would you say that is to a child's self-esteem or?

P: Not if you performing wonderfully good for your esteem. If you not meeting the grade not very good for your esteem.

I: I'm just wondering how do we deal with how do we?

P: It stems back down to your teaching, your teachers at the schools in identifying and putting in and helping the child and then also we also have these standards of wanting them to perform in a specific being a doctor little Jhonny need to be a doctor.

I: Yes.

P: Maybe little Jhonny should be a plumber.

I: Ya.

P: And maybe little Jhonny will actually be a very good plumber and earn more than the doctor. Do you know what I mean? I think it's this societal pressures that we put on our children coming into school is a big problem and I mean that's life not everybody is going to perform at the same level

I: Absolutely

P: Uhm maybe we need to change expectations of children.

I: Okay.

P: Or and education system needs to sort of change as-well to adapt and account for these learners as-well uhm and then parents need to be very, very, very involved in their children's development I think I think that's key as-well.

I: I think above and beyond being involved they need to be aware of the realities of what their child can or can't do.

P: Yes.

I: And so in that regard I'm just wondering what are the difficulties that you've experienced dealing with parents who like you said my child needs to be a doctor but no they more of a plumber how do you?

P: It's a, I mean no parent wants to be told that their child isn't a genius right[pause]

I: Yah

P: But generally like, the only comparison I can make is the one the assessment we do with the GDE.

I: Okay.

P: Most of the time these parents are already aware that their children are, are not performing I mean obviously there's that one or two odd parents who thinks their child is still a genius.

I: Yes.

P: Uhm, but majority of the parents are there because they realise that there is a problem. [pause] Do you know what I mean? And they there to address the problem.

I: Do you find that they take that on fairly comfortably easily?

P: I, like I said we not there for the recommendations

I: Yes.

P: But for the assessment they seem so keen just to get the assistance you know what I mean?

I: Mmm mmm mm

P: so there's a way forward for their children.

I: Absolutely.

P: That they not they don't resist like do you know

I: Mmm mmm mm

P: And we don't have much interaction with them so I'm really now putting words into their mouths but the feeling that you get is that they just have this sense of relief that my child is being attended to.

I: Yes

P: And there's hope for them. You know what I mean?

I: Yes.

P: Whether it's mixed in schooling, or sending them to remedial school.

I: Yes, yes.

P: Whatever the recommendation is that I'm being attended to, I'm being heard and there's hope for my child that's the feeling that you get.

I: I can definitely agree with that. One of my clients at the moment, the child is basically going through that type of situation where they experiencing a lot of difficulty in school

but because mommy is just soo relieved and so thankful. I keep giving her recommendations you know what go get speech therapy this that remedial school she's like ya sure no problem it's it's… it makes the process a lot easier.

P: Yes.

I: And I can definitely see the willingness to change grow and support

P: Yes, and that's another problem with our system is that it is wonderful working with your Sandton mothers because they can go to Occupational Therapist (OT) and paying an OT R1000 consultation fee we took my son so I know its roughly R1000 [laughs]

I: [laughs]

P: Uhm to play with your child

I: Yes.

P: You know what I mean? Let's be honest majority of our people can't do that they can't afford it it's a, it's a reality its beyond them their reality they can't pay R50 to do the assessment they not going to be-able to afford.

I: Afford 1000.

P: Yeah.

I: On a weekly basis in some cases which is ridiculous

P: Yes.

I: Okay, noo that's pretty much all I have for you F thank you so much. I don't know Zainub do you have any questions? Really appreciate your time.

P: I hope I answered it

I: No you did a perfect like I said it's just about your opinion so you did you gave us your opinion absolutely

P: Thank you so much.

I: Thank you so much for the time.

P: All the best with this study.

I: No thank you. And uhm in terms of the results if you guys want them we can definitely pass them on to you guys

P: Aah that would be awesome, that would be awesome. I would like to hear other people's opinions

I: Opinions.

P: It's a qualitative research obviously.

I: Yes, yes that's me I love qualitative.

P: Qualitative so you get to know everyone individually

I: Thank you so much for your time

P: It's a pleasure

I: Really appreciate it

P: No problem all the best.

I: Thank you.

P: Right.

I: Bye.