Hope Begins at Home

J Bezuidenhout, F Cilliers, M van Heusden, E Wasserman, V Burch
Department of Pathology, and CHSE, FHS; CTL, Stellenbosch University,
Department of Medicine, UCT

Juanita Bezuidenhout, Ben van Heerden, Henry Campos, Ray Wells, and
Page Morahan, FAIMER Leadership Curriculum Team

"Alienation and engagement in postgraduate training at a South African medical school"

Mann (2001)

- Alienated and engaged experiences of learning - takes account of social and cultural context

- May provide a more contextualised view of the learning experience

Case (2007)

3 domains of student learning experiences

It does not separate "being" a student from learning.

AIM:

To determine the factors that impact upon student perceptions of engagement and alienation in a postgraduate programme at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Method

Study population
individual postgraduate students in Pathology

Research strategy
A cross-sectional case study investigating multiple individuals. Purposive sampling
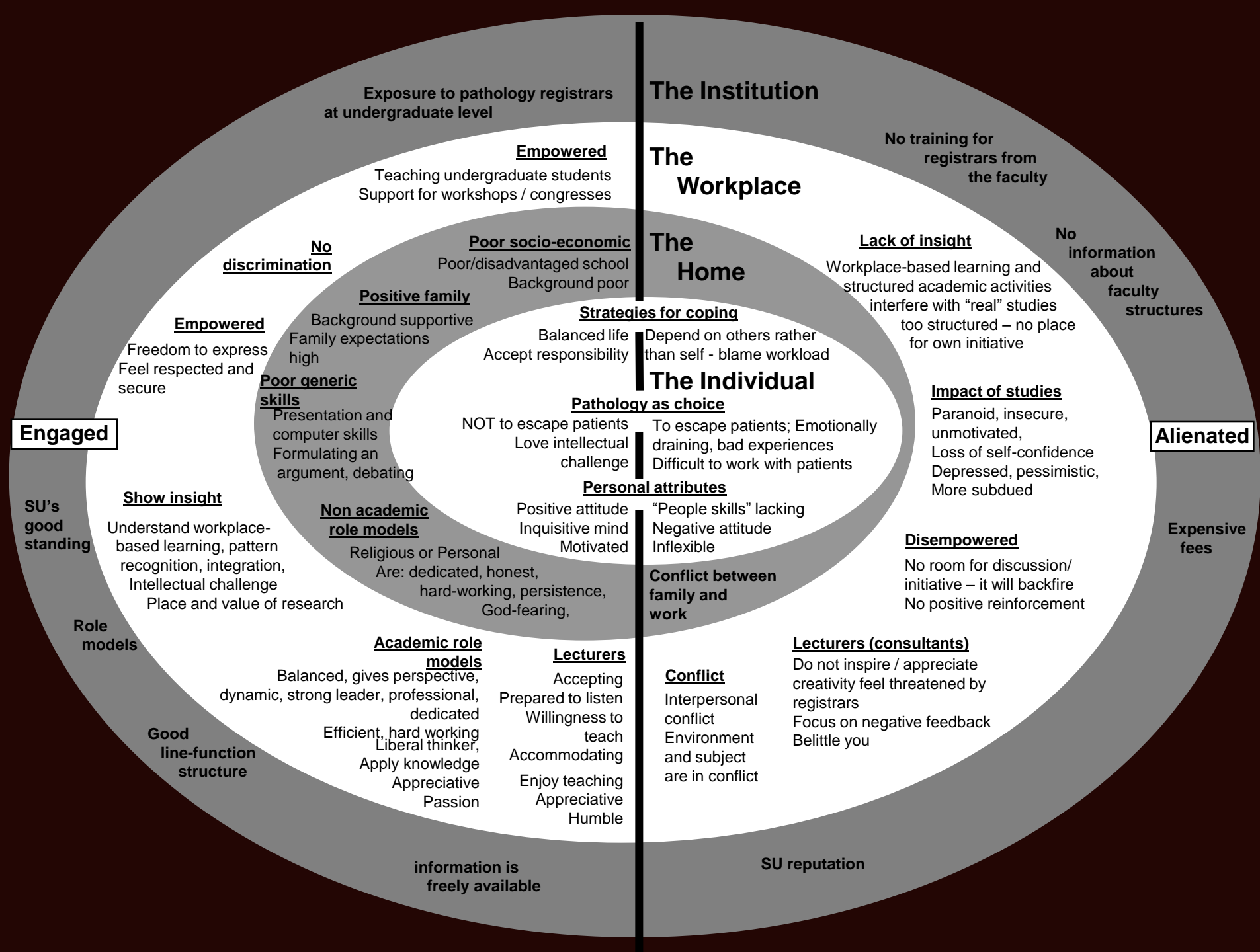
Data collection
Semi-structured interviews

Analysis
Thematic analysis

Research questions:

1. What degree of engagement or alienation do students in the postgraduate Pathology environment experience and

2. What factors generate these perceptions?

3. Is the degree of alienation experienced by students related to their academic performance?

The Institution

The Workplace

The Home

The Individual

Engaged

Alienated

Exposure to pathology registrars at undergraduate level

No training for registrars from the faculty

Empowered
Teaching undergraduate students
Support for workshops / congresses

Poor socio-economic
Poor/disadvantaged school
Background poor

Lack of insight
Workplace-based learning and structured academic activities interfere with "real" studies too structured – no place for own initiative

No information about faculty structures

No discrimination

Positive family
Background supportive
Family expectations high

Strategies for coping
Balanced life | Depend on others rather
Accept responsibility | than self - blame workload

Empowered
Freedom to express
Feel respected and secure

Poor generic skills
Presentation and computer skills
Formulating an argument, debating

Pathology as choice
NOT to escape patients | To escape patients; Emotionally
Love intellectual | draining, bad experiences
challenge | Difficult to work with patients

Impact of studies
Paranoid, insecure, unmotivated,
Loss of self-confidence
Depressed, pessimistic,
More subdued

Show insight
Understand workplace-based learning, pattern recognition, integration, Intellectual challenge
Place and value of research

Non academic role models
Religious or Personal
Are: dedicated, honest, hard-working, persistence, God-fearing,

Personal attributes
Positive attitude | "People skills" lacking
Inquisitive mind | Negative attitude
Motivated | Inflexible

SU's good standing

Conflict between family and work

Disempowered
No room for discussion/ initiative – it will backfire
No positive reinforcement

Expensive fees

Role models

Academic role models
Balanced, gives perspective, dynamic, strong leader, professional, dedicated
Efficient, hard working
Liberal thinker,
Apply knowledge
Appreciative
Passion

Lecturers
Accepting
Prepared to listen
Willingness to teach
Accommodating
Enjoy teaching
Appreciative
Humble

Conflict
Interpersonal conflict
Environment and subject are in conflict

Lecturers (consultants)
Do not inspire / appreciate creativity feel threatened by registrars
Focus on negative feedback
Belittle you

Good line-function structure

information is freely available

SU reputation

Engaged

No discrimination

Empowered
Teaching undergraduate students
Support for workshops / congresses
Feel respected and secure
Freedom to express

Show insight
Understand workplace- based learning,
pattern recognition, integration,
Intellectual challenge
Place and value of research

Academic role models
Balanced, gives perspective
dynamic, strong leader
professional, dedicated
Efficient, hard working
Liberal thinker
Apply knowledge
Appreciative
Passion

Lecturers
Accepting
Prepared to listen
Willingness to teach
Accommodating
Enjoy teaching
Appreciative
Humble

Alienated

Lack of insight
Workplace-based learning interfere with
"real" studies
too structured – no place for own initiative

Impact of studies
"Paranoid", insecure, unmotivated,
Loss of self-confidence, Depressed,
pessimistic, More subdued

Disempowered
No room for discussion/initiative –
it will backfire
No positive reinforcement

Lecturers (consultants)
Do not inspire / appreciate creativity
Feel threatened by registrars
Focus on negative feedback
Belittle you

Conflict
Interpersonal conflict
Environment and subject
are in conflict

The Workplace

Conclusions

It is crucial that experiences of alienation and engagement of postgraduate students working in a service environment be actively addressed.

$\rightarrow$ **poor learning experiences**
$\rightarrow$ **poorer than expected performance**

We identified specific factors that need to be considered when planning support systems that aim to enhance learning and improve throughput.

Implications for lecturers

How can we do this?

- Awareness

- Communication skills

- Teaching and supervision skills

- Role modeling

- Leadership
  - Management skills
  - Leadership skills
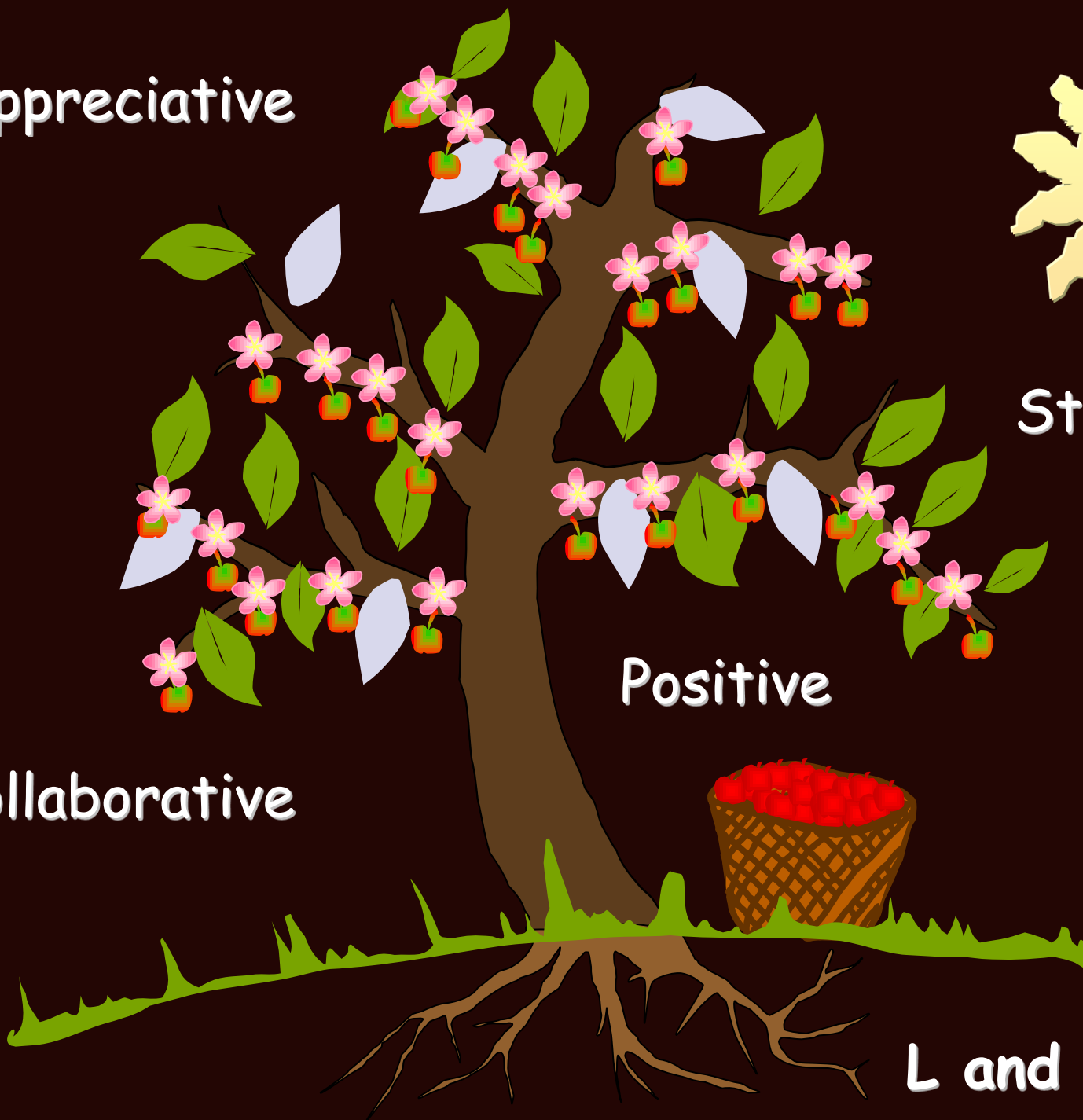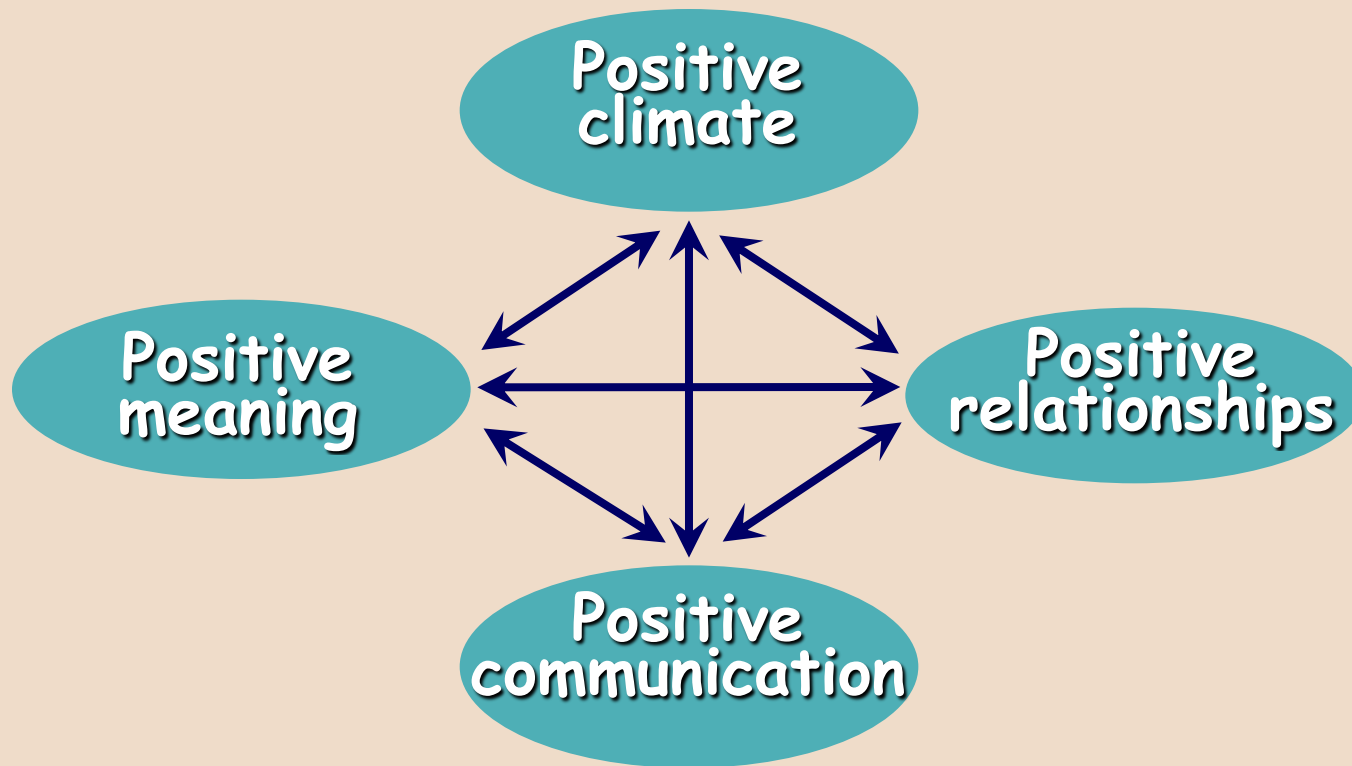 - Conflict management
  - Change management
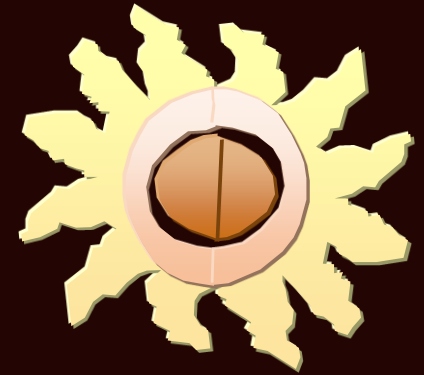
Positive leadership

- Affirmative orientation
  - Focus on strengths and capabilities
  - Affirm human potential
  - Enabling, thriving, flourishing
- Facilitate the best of the human condition
- Positively deviant performance

Kim Cameron. Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance. BK Publishers, San Francisco, 2008

Rule of four: positive leadership

Kim Cameron. Positive Leadership: Strategies for Extraordinary Performance. BK Publishers, San Francisco, 2008

"ortho just dumped another train wreck onto my service"

orthopaedics has given another vote of confidence in our clinical skills . . .

Appreciative Leadership Approach

Positive Communication (Reframing)

Strengths based Leadership

Trust
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Respect

Stability
- Security
- Strength
- Support
- Peace

Rule of four

Compassion
- Friendship
- Happiness
- Love

Hope
- Direction
- Faith
- Guidance

Tom Rath and Barry Conchie. Strengths based Leadership: Great leaders, teams and why people follow. GALLUP Press, NY, 2008.