

Special points of interest:

- * To grow, South Africa needs health and education interventions
- * Pivotal pedagogy is critical to higher education
- * Optentia performs well in terms of outputs
- * Optentia will implement two new PhD programmes in 2020
- * Optentia is planning a new online short learning programme in research design

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The Foundations of Optimal Functioning

We are facing an unprecedented international crisis in COVID-19, a pandemic that's rapidly unfolding before our eyes. It affects our work, play, health, functioning, feelings, and relationships. Is it possible to function optimal when crises confront you? Where can we find information and inspiration?

The topics in this newsletter address three themes that are relevant to the above questions. The first theme concerns information about the challenges in Africa, insecurity, anxiety, stress, depression, and mental illness. The second theme entails grit, learned hopefulness, coping, and flourishing. The third theme includes topics such as the purpose of higher education, developing capabilities, the transition to online learning, age-inclusive information and communications technology, productivity and outputs, and a growth revolution.

What enables human beings function optimally (that is to flourish)? According to Raworth (2017), a world in which every individual can lead their life with dignity, opportunity, and community and where all can do so within the means of a life-giving planet will enable people to flourish. It is vital that people's fundamental needs be met for them to

realise their full potential (Kaufman, 2020). Individuals and systems need stability and goal pursuit in the face of distraction and disruption as well as the capacity for flexibility to adapt and explore the environment. In fact, security and growth are two foundations for the optimal functioning of people and systems. Individuals' needs for safety, connection, and self-esteem affect their security. If these needs are not fulfilled, individuals become preoccupied with safety and security, become defensive and protective, and neglect opportunities for growth. Concerning growth, three needs, namely exploration, love, and purpose work together to help people grow.

Building on the theory of Abraham Maslow, Kaufman (2020) uses the metaphor of people on a sailboat on the ocean to illustrate the importance of security and growth. The 'ocean' is full of opportunities for discovery and meaning, but also uncertainty and danger. The **boat** itself (representing safety, connection, and self-esteem) offers security from the waves. If the boat is not solid, we will struggle to stay above the water. However, having a boat is not enough for movement, you also need a sail. The boat will



protect you from the water, but you will not go anywhere without the sail. The sail (representing exploration, love, and purpose) helps you to explore and adapt to the environment. Opening the sail means that you can make progress and benefit from people and opportunities in the environment.

During the pandemic we are becoming increasingly aware of the role and value of security and growth to sail in unknown waters. The aim should be to enlarge people's capabilities, such as health, enablement, efficacy, and creativity so that they can choose and be things that they value. Realising capabilities depends upon people having access to the basics of life - adapted to the context of each society - ranging from nutritious food, healthcare, and education to personal security and political voice.

Performance of Optentia: 2020

In total, 24 researchers with PhDs, 12 researchers without PhDs, and five research support staff are part of Optentia. Furthermore, 37 extraordinary professors and six extraordinary researchers are appointed in the entity. A total of 85 Master's students, 39 PhD students, and two postdoctoral research fellows are affiliated with Optentia. From 1 May 2019 - to 30 April 2020, a total of 40 Master's and seven PhD students have completed their studies. Concerning peer-reviewed outputs for 2020 we have produced 52.22 peer-reviewed articles and 13.11 peer-reviewed chapters.



"We produced 55.22 peer-reviewed articles and 13.11 peer-reviewed chapters during 2020."

The Optentia Scorecard *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Output	2017	2018	2019	2020
Peer-reviewed publications	103	94	154	142
Total peer-reviewed publications	49.81	48.05	67.25	65.32
Peer-reviewed articles*	44.81	41.22	49.06	52.22
Peer-reviewed chapters*	5	6.83	18.19	13.11
Papers: Conferences	38	17	35	0
Participating Master's students	37	46	64	85
Completed Master's students	18	26	40	5**
Participating PhD students	22	16	31	39
Completed PhD students	3	13	7	0**
Post-doctoral fellows	6	6	3	2
Number of workshops presented	28	25	10	9
Number of workshop participants	393	750	478	323

Note: Outputs as on 14 July 2020

* Expressed in terms of equivalents

** May 2020-April 2021

Capability Development at Optentia

The Coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns in South Africa and elsewhere were probably unpleasant surprises for individuals and organisations. The lockdown in South Africa affected Optentia immediately. The R and Rstudio training by Dr Duco Veen, Prof. Linda Liebenberg and Prof. Kutlay Yagmur had to be cancelled, the dates for Statscamp South Africa was moved to 2021. Moreover, almost all international conferences were cancelled. All these changes affected capability development in Optentia. However, we started planning new ways to address capability development and found that we had even more staff members and postgraduate students than usual participating in webinars:

- **5 May 2020:** Dr Jakkie Cilliers presented a webinar: Africa First: Igniting a growth revolution (participants = 40). Click [here](#) to watch a video about the webinar.
- **18 June 2020:** Anneke Butler presented a webinar on academic writing (attendees = 70). Click [here](#) to watch a video about academic writing.



- **18 June 2020:** Dr Leoni van der Vaart presented a webinar on QuestionPro (participants = 35). Click [here](#) to watch a video about academic writing.
- **8 July 2020:** Dr Duco Veen presented a webinar focusing on R and Rstudio (40 attendees). This webinar guide researchers on how to download R and Rstudio and how to start using the statistical software. A video about this webinar will be available on the Optentia website.
- **14 July 2020:** Prof. Rens van de Schoot introduced AS Review during a webinar. (40 attendees). Since it is of crucial importance for the advancement of science to produce high-quality systematic review articles, sometimes as quickly as possible in times of crisis, we need to find a way to effectively automate this screening process. With the rapidly evolving field



of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the large amount of manual work can be reduced or even completely replaced by software using combinations of machine (deep) learning models in combination with active learning.

- **4 August - 25 September 2020:** Introduction to Qualitative Evidence Synthesis Short Course.
- **6 August 2020:** Learning R with Dr Duco Veen.

Optentia will in the immediate future implement online training in the following statistical packages: JASP, R and Rstudio. We regard it as a major step forward to train our student and staff in high quality statistical packages that are available for free. Optentia members will find links to the materials on the Optentia website.

“Optentia will in the immediate future implement online training in the following statistical packages: JASP, R and Rstudio.”

Learning about Mediation, Moderation and Conditional Effects

Five Optentia participants, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Dr Leoni van der Vaart, Prof. Marita Heyns, Dr Zandri Dickason and Elizabeth Bothma participated in an online course on Mediation, Moderation and Conditional Effects presented by an international expert, Prof. Andrew Hayes. This online course takes place in a series of four weekly instalments of videos and exercises, and requires about 4-6

hours per week. The seminar is divided into three parts:

- Partitioning effects into direct and indirect components, and how to quantify and test hypotheses about indirect effects.
- Estimating, testing, probing, and visualizing interactions in linear models.
- Integrating moderation and mediation analysis by dis-

cussing how to test whether a mechanism (an indirect effect) is moderated.

Computer applications focus on the use of OLS regression and the PROCESS macro for SPSS, SAS, and R. Participants in this online seminar also got a copy of PROCESS for R (beta form) before it is released to the general public toward the end of 2020.

Africa First: Igniting a Growth Revolution

According to Dr Jakkie Cilliers, the founder and current chairman of the Board of Trustees of the ISS and head of African Futures and Innovation at the Pretoria office of the Institute for Security Studies, Africa is a continent with boundless potential. It has natural resources, the population, and the landmass to become a significant player on the global stage. However, why is the gap between Africa and the rest of the world increasing? Africa has seen improvements in terms of key indicators of human well-being like infant mortality and life expectancy. However, Africa still suffers from massive poverty, weak economic growth, deindustrialization, an underdeveloped agricultural sector, and poor regional integration.

What needs to be done to unleash Africa's potential and ignite a growth revolution? On 6 May 2020, Dr Cilliers presented a workshop (using Zoom) at Optentia. The workshop aimed to examine where the continent is at and where it will be in 2040 if it continues the current path. Dr Cilliers, the author of the book "Africa First: Igniting a Growth Revolution," reported on 11 scenarios that could help to turn Africa's fortunes around and radically improve its growth trajectory.

Click [here](#) to watch a short video clip of the presentation of Dr Jakkie Cilliers. To see a video of his full presentation, click [here](#).

Markle and Cilliers (2020), authors of the report "South Africa first! Getting to Thuma Mina" concluded the following about prospects for South Africa:

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Workshop
Dr Jakkie Cilliers

Date: 6 May 2020
Time: 10:00 - 12:00
Venue: Indaba, Room 13, Building 7, Vaal Triangle Campus, Vanderbijlpark

Topic: Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution

Bookings: Lynn.booyesen@nwu.ac.za

Please note: Depending on the regulations of the South African Government (and the North-West University) concerning the Covid-19 crisis the workshop might take place via Zoom.



- South Africa's weak growth pattern has put it on an economic divergence pathway from both high-income countries and its middle-income country peers to 2044.
- The country's demographic profile is favourable for a period of high growth, but requires appropriate health and education interventions.
- Currently, the lack of technological sophistication caused by poor human development is the most significant drag on long-term economic growth, followed by a lack of investment capital.
- In the Thuma Mina scenario, South Africa regains its economic footing and gets on a convergence path with its peers.
- Reforms in the electricity sector are key to unlocking growth in the short to medium term.

Click [here](#) to read more.

"The country's demographic profile is favourable for a period of high growth."

Insecurity in the New World of Work *by* Dr Lara Roll

Even before the pandemic, Tesla and other car manufacturers released their autopilot software, Amazon offered drone delivery services and universities in Hong Kong started teaching online. The later was due to the political situation in Hong Kong but never did I, as a lecturer in the country at that time, imagine that the whole world would follow suit only one semester later.

The highly infectious nature of COVID-19 means that if we want to save our own and other people's health and lives, we need to maintain social distancing. In consequence, the trend of automation that was evident before the pandemic, has accelerated in speed. Robots and new technology allow contact-free serving at restaurants, offer a contact-free swapping for coronavirus at hospitals to safeguard medical staff and have been implemented in elderly care homes to help residents connect with their loved ones, while visitors are not allowed.

Inevitably, this will have implications for the world of work. A widely cited paper by Frey and Osborne (2013) estimates that 47% of tasks in the U.S. job market can be automated. Thus, in addition to whole occupations being at risk, even if the occupation itself will not disappear, chances are that the tasks employees will need to perform in the future will be very different from the tasks today. This development is not necessarily negative. It opens up a lot of possibilities of how people might be able to shape their professional lives in the future. Yet, these developments raise a whole number of questions: How do employees



Prof. Hans De Witte and Dr. Lara Roll



perceive this trend? To what extent do they perceive occupation insecurity, i.e. the fear that their occupation or a significant number of tasks within will be automated? How does this impact their well-being and organisational performance? How do employees prepare themselves for the new world of work? How should education transform to prepare the younger generation for careers in a transformed economy?

To examine these questions, Dr. Lara Roll, currently an Extraordinary Researcher at Optentia, obtained the Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship from the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 funding programme. Together with Prof. Hans De Witte, she will pursue this research at KU Leuven, including a secondment at the Oxford

Institute of Population Ageing. We look forward to dedicating the next two years to this research field and welcome your thoughts and opinions in this debate.

“How should education transform to prepare the younger generation for careers in a transformed economy?”

Pivotal Pedagogy *by* Prof. Kristen Betts

"There is the opportunity to collaboratively and strategically move beyond a 'new normal' and to provide dynamic educational opportunities."

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has forever changed education worldwide for educators, students, and families. At the end of March 2020, UNESCO reported that there were "more than 1.2 billion children in 186 countries affected by school closures due to the pandemic" (Li & Lalani, 2020, para. 2). In the United States, this national emergency was quickly addressed through a national waiver to move instruction online through Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), which is defined as "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges et al., 2020, para. 13). The challenge is that the pandemic has not abated and the future of teaching and learning is continuing to evolve.

With looming uncertainty worldwide, pivotal pedagogy is critical to higher education faculty and instructional designers as well as K-12 education teachers. Pivotal pedagogy is defined as teaching and learning that actively engages students in educational experiences through instruction, active learning, assessment, alternative equivalencies, and feedback building upon theory and practice to support comprehension, application, and transfer of learning seamlessly across learning formats (in-class/onsite, blended, online) in alignment with student learning outcomes (Betts, 2020). In the United States, many higher education institutions and K-12 schools plan to begin the new academic year in onsite classroom settings with the potential to move to an ERT online format within a few months, if needed. Some plans

include providing a choice between multiple offerings, including face-to-face, hybrid, HyFlex, or online. For faculty, instructional designers, and teachers, the key will be the ability to pivot quickly and seamlessly as needed while actively engaging learners and meeting student learning outcomes.

As colleges, universities, and schools continue to offer courses and plan for the new academic year, there are four considerations that must be discussed for all educational formats. Key considerations include:

- How to support student interaction (instructor-student, student-content, student-student) across all educational formats.
- How to create alternative equivalencies to seamlessly pivot classroom instruction, engagement, assessment, and feedback online at any time.
- How to integrate Universal Design for Learning to optimize learning for all students through multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression.
- How to balance student workload and cognitive load across all educational formats in alignment with assigned hours (e.g., Carnegie Unit, and notional hour).

With all challenges come opportunity. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional education models. However, there is the opportunity to collaboratively and strategically move beyond a "new normal" and to provide dynamic educational opportunities through new models that



Prof. Kristen Betts

meet the diverse needs of students worldwide in an evolving future.

Click [here](#) for more information and resources on Pivotal Pedagogy.

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Two New PhD Programmes for Optentia

During 2019, Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. Vera Roos initiated plans to implement two multi-disciplinary PhDs linked to the Optentia Research Focus Area. These two PhDs will be implemented from January 2021. Both PhD qualifications are in the social sciences.



Prof. Jaco Hoffman



Prof. Vera Roos

PHD (Social Science with Relational Dynamics and Development) - Coordinator: Prof. Vera Roos

The art of interacting with the self and others informed the decision to develop a dedicated research programme to study relationships across the spectrum of diversity (e.g. different languages, ages, gender, and so on), and on multiple levels (e.g. interpersonal, intergenerational, communal, work and/or broader societal). Internationally, various initiatives aim to promote effective relationships in a range of different contexts across the globe. However, it can't be assumed that interventions developed in the Global North or Middle East can be transferred to other contexts, such as South Africa which urgently need research to develop theory and policy to inform (context-specific) practice to address a lack of relational solidarity. It is well-known that South Africa is a country plagued with high and shockingly severe incidents of gender-based aggression, xenophobic attacks, domestic violence and interracial intolerance. More subtle, but just as concerning, is evidence of strained intergenerational relations with serious implications for the care needs of older growing populations. These issues are

relational, complex and require an interdisciplinary approach, for which purpose Optentia is well positioned.

PhD (Social Science with Ageing and Development) - Coordinator: Prof. Jaco Hoffman

Current demographic projections show Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the fastest growing absolute number of older populations globally. While the share of persons aged 60 years and over in SSA's populations will remain lower than in other parts of the world (the share will almost double, from 5.4% at present to 10.6% by 2050); the absolute number of older persons will rise fourfold, from 46 million to 166 million over the same period. This numerical increase will be more rapid than that for any other major region or age group. Population ageing in Africa is occurring within a context of it being the youngest continent (population-wise), of pervasive economic strain and rapid social change, which raises concerns about the heightened vulnerability of older persons to poverty and social exclusion. From a developmental perspective, however, it has to be noted that older people make critical contributions to the welfare of younger generations in their families and communities – most prominently as carers of

children or grandchildren diseased or orphaned by AIDS. Although unacknowledged they are potentially powerful agents to harness the demographic dividend.

The ageing of individuals and populations in SSA, and their emergent livelihood situations present key challenges which African nations must begin to address. Societies need to understand the dynamics and implications of individual and population ageing, and governments need to develop policy responses to enhance the well-being and capacity of older people at present and in the future. However, the lack of evidence and knowledge upon which to build highlights the vital need for enhanced research on ageing, poverty and development in SSA. This multi-disciplinary PhD – a first in Africa – aims to act as a catalyst to promote and inform policy development and to enable researchers to gain a fuller understanding of the ageing-related social processes that shape the development of individuals, families and societies.

“... demographic projections show Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the fastest growing absolute number of older populations ...”

The Transition to Online Learning *by* Dr M. Fourie and Prof. K. Betts

We are excited to announce that Optentia is in the process of re-designing the short learning programme (SLP) on 'Research Design' to be offered entirely online in the near future!

This SLP was previously offered in a face-to-face modality. This is a wonderful, innovative and exciting opportunity for Optentia to recruit more students and participants within the institution, as well as nationally and internationally. The Optentia team convened for an international webinar that was hosted on 'Educational Design for Online Learning' in June 2020. During this webinar, we presented various aspects relevant to teaching and learning, and specifically on how the human brain learns. Irrelevant of the modality (face-to-face, blended, online) for teaching and learning, evidence-based principles on how learning occurs are essential aspects to consider when designing learning environments as well as teaching across environments. As presenters of this webinar, we are grateful to share some of the ideas discussed as part of our dynamic conversation. Firstly, we unpacked online learning (what it is and what it is not) and the benefits and barriers that exist in an online environment. In broad, online learning is learning that happens in a virtual environment. It is important to remember that online learning is a mode of delivery, a manner of delivering education to participants, not a particular method of teaching (Bates, 2016). Online learning is further evidence of pedagogical strategies for instruction, student engagement, and assessment that are specific to learning in a virtual environment. The secret in a virtual environment is to be able to 'TEACH' online and to actively engage students to support the

transfer of learning within a course and across real-world contexts. Subsequently, online learning is not a platform for only posting announcements, availing teaching and learning material and resources, and making assessments available. Various benefits exist when designing for online learning, including flexibility, increased enrolments, engagement, and self-paced learning. The opportunity for networking and collaboration across institutional, national, and international borders is most beneficial for research projects.

Unfortunately, there are also some barriers to online learning of which misconceptions on how learning takes place is most evident. As apparent in higher education teaching and learning, various neuromyths exist that can harm the learning process, and how we design for successful learning.

The notion that (a) we only use 10% of our brain (b) some of us are 'left-brained', and others are 'right-brained' due to hemispheric dominance and how this helps explain differences in how we learn, and (c) individuals learn better when they receive information in their preferred learning styles (e.g., auditory, visual, kinesthetic), are amongst the most common neuromyths and can create fixed mindsets. Recent research on the brain provides sufficient evidence for debunking these existing neuromyths. As indicated through research on neuroplasticity, the brain changes every time we learn a new fact or skill as well as through experience.

Therefore, teachers are in a profession in which they are brain changers (Whitman & Kelleher, 2016). Neuro-variability amongst humans explains that like fingerprints, no two brains are alike.



Dr Mariette Fourie and Prof. Kristen Betts

According to CAST (2019), there is no average brain or a single way the brain will perceive, engage with, or execute a task. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework based on scientific research on how the human brain learns that can improve and optimise teaching and learning for all people. In the absence of the application of the UDL framework, especially in an online environment, teachers in many instances assume that the application of technology can 'fix' ineffective pedagogy. In addition, a lack of online human touch, a guided and scaffolded approach to teaching and learning, and the application of pivotal pedagogy, can consequently hamper successful student learning. In some instances, students may suffer from imposter phenomena due to the unfamiliar online environment combined with limited prior learning in a discipline. In this regard, instructors have to take aspects relating to cognitive load into consideration. In conclusion, redesigning an online programme, course or SLP, is more than only transferring learning materials online. Reimagining the pedagogical approach to online teaching and learning is essential in optimising student success.

"Reimagining the pedagogical approach to online teaching and learning is essential in optimising student success."

Do Management Handbooks Represent Theories Correctly?

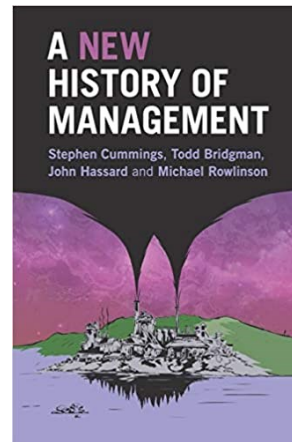
Have you ever wondered whether that what you read in management handbooks is accurate? According to Cummings et al. (2017), management handbooks present the history of management theory and practice based on the assumption that this will put the present into perspective and help us to understand current management theories and practices. However, the way management history is presented in management textbooks is an unnoticed barrier to innovation. The problem is that this approach justifies current practices as part of an evolutionary advance and makes it less likely that substantive change will occur.

Let us consider how Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation has been misrepresented in management textbooks. The idea that human needs exist in a hierarchy with basic, extrinsic needs at the bottom, and that individuals are motivated to satisfy each need level as they progress up the pyramid until they realise their true potential through the gratification of their self-actualization, is regarded as a fundamental approach to understanding and motivating people. A pyramid or triangle is used in many management books to illustrate the theory. However, Maslow never created a pyramid or triangle to represent the needs hierarchy. In fact, he argued that human development is constantly a two-steps-forward-one-step-back dynamic (Kaufman, 2020). It is not about reaching a certain level and then other things are not important. Furthermore, Maslow never used the label "social needs". He used the labels "belonging" and "love." Moreover,

Maslow's emphasis was less on a rigid hierarchy of needs, and more on the notion that self-actualised people are motivated by health, growth, wholeness, integration, humanitarian purpose, and the real problems of life. For Maslow self-actualisation is healthy self-realisation on the path to self-transcendence. However, his work was misrepresented by Douglas McGregor, Davis and McDermid (1960s), textbooks and consultants who were selling the pyramid (1970s-1980s), and the perpetual power of the pyramid (1990s-today) (see Bridgman et al., 2019).

Unfortunately, more theories have been misrepresented in management handbooks. Cummings et al. (2017) point out that wrong interpretations have been added to the work of Adam Smith, F.W. Taylor, Kurt Lewin, Max Weber, the Harvard Case method, Elton Mayo (Hawthorne Studies), and McGregor. It has implications for how we understand our field's historical foundations, and how those foundations shape our conception of what management is, what it could be, and how we teach our students as a result.

It is vital to take a critical-historical approach to both research and teaching. This means moving beyond the idea that the reason for examining management history is to get an understanding of what happened in the past. It means seeing history as a narrative that can interpret past events in many different ways, depending on the perspectives taken and the values underpinning them. Acknowledging that historical interpretations are socially constructed and reflect deep-seated value commitments,



opens up the possibility for creating new histories of management from different perspectives. We should foster a critical-historical philosophy to help students to think creatively. Studying management theories should not, be about the memorisation of facts. It should foster thinking critically about how conceptions of theories. Moreover, textbooks could do a better job of representing the past.

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"... the way management history is presented in management textbooks is an unnoticed barrier to innovation."

The Dawn of a New Age of Anxiety by Dr Danie du Toit

"The 'new' anxiety seems to affect many more people and have different quality to it than before."

Anxiety has long surpassed depression as the most prevalent psychological condition in the world. Before COVID-19, about 19% of adults suffered from clinical anxiety. The pandemic itself and its ramifications created a world rife with anxiety. Everyday actions require elaborate procedures. Activities that used to be simply part of daily life are now potentially dangerous. Most aspects of the future are uncertain with potentially negative consequences for most people. Early indicators are that far more people are currently suffering from mild to severe anxiety; some countries report more than 50% of the population (Souvik et al., 2020). In South Africa, some counselling institutions reported a tripling of individuals seeking assistance for anxiety since the beginning of lockdown. The 'new' anxiety seems to affect many more people and have a different quality to it than before. Dealing with anxiety might very well be one of the main challenges of the future.

Anxiety can be described as a feeling of dread, usually concerning the future. Often in the treatment of anxiety, irrational fears and worries are challenged and dispelled in order to reduce anxiety levels. During the pandemic, many of the fears and worries that feed anxiety is real. We thus have to learn to deal with anxiety when we have very good reasons to be anxious!

High levels of anxiety impact a person's life in a significant way. The nature of anxiety is such that it taints all aspects of one's life. Because an anxious person worries about the future, it is almost impossible to be in the moment. It may thus steal the enjoyment of the most beautiful moment, and it could furthermore rob one of pleasant emotions and happiness. Anxiety can make small decisions feel overwhelming. Not only does it impact a person's experience of life, but it also affects relationships, work performance, accident proneness



and effective functioning in general. Apart from the impact of anxiety on an individual level, anxiety also impacts on the collective.

In the extreme, anxiety is seen as playing at least some role in the spike of incidents of domestic violence, racism and xenophobia (Jungmann & Witthöft, 2020). When a person who is not mature is very scared, he/she is more likely to try to protect him/herself, look for someone or some group to blame (in the case of the pandemic often 'the Chinese' or the World Health Organisation) or is more likely to revert to aggression in some form. Though misplaced, such incidents create an object to project the anxiety onto, which may relieve the anxiety temporarily.

It is also true that many enjoyed the lockdown and are excited about the changes it brought. They often do not understand the overwhelming anxiety experienced by others, even those close to them. Personal characteristics such as resilience, tolerance for ambiguity, hope and self-confidence has been shown to counter anxiety. Apart from anxiety proneness, the pandemic did not affect everyone in the same way. Early indicators are that people living alone, those living in a foreign country, woman and middle-aged people

(30 to 59 years of age) are experiencing the most anxiety (Jungmann & Witthöft, 2020). Despite general trends, anxiety remains very personal. Everyone's reaction to the pandemic and experience of anxiety is unique.

Many of the widely described actions one could take to manage anxiety has proven to reduce it. Exercise, a healthy diet, mindfulness techniques (such as yoga, meditation and hypnosis) and avoiding negativity do help. Some more actions include:

Breathe. A simple start in managing anxiety is to remember to breathe! When you feel anxious, you tend to breathe shallower and even literally 'hold your breath' in anticipation of something terrible to happen. Breathe deeply and rhythmically. Take a deep and slow breath in through your nose and out through your mouth, not pausing between the inhale and exhale. Diaphragmatic, or belly breathing works well to reduce anxiety. Try to breathe into your stomach, rather than into your chest when feeling anxious. This type of breathing allows the diaphragm to relax, which in turn send signals to the whole body to relax.

The Dawn of a New Age of Anxiety *by* Dr Danie du Toit

Sleep. Most people who suffer from high levels of anxiety report sleeping disturbances. It often forms a vicious circle. Because a person is anxious, the anxiousness disturbs the sleep. The lack of sleep causes more anxiety. A tired person experiences everything as worse, and the fear of mistakes or judgement errors due to tiredness causes more anxiety. The more anxious one gets, the more difficult it becomes to sleep. It is thus of the utmost importance to get back to a healthy sleeping pattern.

To give yourself the best chance to sleep well, strive to be more relaxed by the time you go to bed. Also, try to keep to about the same bedtime. Avoid caffeine intake from late afternoon, stop working at least an hour before bedtime, avoid 'blue light', such as coming from a TV, computer or cell phone. Do something relaxing where no virtual interaction or output is required for the last hour before bedtime. Make sure that the room temperature is comfortable, especially not too hot. Utilize mindfulness techniques, like meditation or self-hypnosis, to relax deeply and 'switch off' the business of your thoughts.

Information. Although people who feel informed tend to be less anxious than people who feel uninformed, an excessive internet search can feed anxiety. Misinformation or information with a negative bias, called 'infodemic' can also add to anxiety. To reduce anxiety, make sure that you get sufficient reliable information. Discuss the information with informed, positive, and realistic people to gain perspective. After discussing it formulate your own view on the issue. When you feel that you have an adequate perspective on the issue, decide on actions regarding aspects within your control. Then let it go: stop worrying about aspects beyond your control and frantically gathering more information.

Realism. Before the pandemic, an effective way to counter anxiety was to undermine the anxiety with a realistic assessment of a situation. Very often, anxiety was built on unrealistic fears. With the pandemic these fears, for instance regarding health, job loss, financial hardship, and changes to many aspects of life as we knew it are realistic. Nevertheless, being anxious does not help. One still needs to take a realistic view of what is real and what is our subjective reaction to reality.

Identify fears. As stated, anxiety is built on specific fears. A fear has an object: one is fearful of something. Fears, when not dealt with, combine and form anxiety. Anxiety usually is vague, and unlike fear, does not have a clear object. Fears often come from our beliefs and expectations of how things should be. In dealing with anxiety, it can help to identify the fears the anxiety is built on. Facing exactly what you are scared of in itself can reduce anxiety. Because fear has an object, it is more manageable than anxiety; one can make plans and take decisions.

Focus on what is. When feeling anxious one tends to ask oneself too many questions consistently. Many of these questions being 'what if' questions. These questions are bound to increase anxiety. When feeling overwhelmed by many questions, take a moment to answer each question. The answer does not need to be positive. Focus on what is real and answer the questions truthfully. Unanswered questions create more anxiety. Substitute 'what if' questions with 'what is' questions. 'What if' questions are likely to induce an emotional reaction and more anxiety, whereas 'what is' questions tend to focus your brain on what is real rather than to dwell on negative possibilities. Asking yourself consistently, particularly at 03:00 when you cannot sleep: "What if?" is bound to increase your anxiety.

Medication and Counselling. When severely effected by anxiety, do not wait too long to seek professional assistance. Key indicators that it is time to seek help is persistent sleep disturbance, constant feelings of dread and the inability to function effectively. Medication can bring short term relief, whilst counselling usually assists with longer term coping strategies. A combination of both medical and psychological assistance usually yields the best results.

Purpose and meaning. The best antidote for anxiety, particularly during very trying times, is to keep your life purpose and meaning in mind. When anxious, it is all too easy to function in survival mode and to completely forget about purpose and meaning. We are told that to survive in very turbulent times, we need to create structure and rhythm and focus on one day at a time. This is true and valuable. It is pointless to plan too much when everything is in total flux and some structure do give one a sense of control, which reduces anxiety. Paradoxically, we also have to remember that we are more than our circumstances, even in times when individuality and freedom is squashed and when what gave us meaning and pride is stripped away.

To end with a very academic quote: In the film 'The Lion King' when the main character, Simba, lost everything and was living with a warthog, he received a message from his ancestors: "Remember who you are". This pandemic stopped all of us in our tracks and gave us time to reflect on who we really are and what really makes our lives meaningful. Meaning places anxiety into perspective.

"Make sure that you get sufficient and reliable information."

Towards Designing Scientific Research *by* Dr Japie Greeff

Before I introduce myself, I would like to first express my gratitude at being welcomed into the Optentia family. I look forward to many interesting discussions and collaboration in the future!

I joined the NWU School of Computer Science and Information Systems in 2017 after 15 years in the industry where I worked in various areas of electronic engineering and programming. Currently, I serve as the subject chair for IT in the school and teach Artificial Intelligence in the third year and Honours.

My research interests are largely related to the creation of gameful interventions, spanning gamification systems, serious games and game-based learning interventions as they relate to education.

This is also the area in which I guide my postgraduate students where I supervise in the School of Computer Science and Information Systems as well as in the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Johannesburg. I prefer to work on projects that also create an artefact as part of the research

endeavour, and as such, my preferred research methodology is design science research.

I started branching out into positive psychology during my PhD, where I used self-determination theory to guide my design and then became very interested in the concepts of motivation and engagement as they relate to ICT artefacts. This interest highlighted the benefits of multidisciplinary research and reaching out to psychology experts has helped me to gain a better understanding of the concepts, but also helped me to create better artefacts through collaboration.

I am deeply involved with community engagement and this year have been spending a significant amount of time working with the department of basic education on the creation of a curriculum for coding and robotics for learners in grade R-9 which will be piloted this year and will hopefully start rolling out in 2021. This community engagement also spills over into my research and supervision as I am currently engaged in work around imple-



Dr Japie Greeff

menting eHealth occupation therapy interventions in schools where learners don't have access to supplementary health services. I believe that the best research is that which impacts the community the most and to steal a quote that I heard once at a conference "South Africa is the perfect country to solve problems in because all of the world's problems can be found here".

I look forward to working with you colleagues, and I am sure there will be many opportunities to do so in the future!

"I believe that the best research is that which impacts the community the most."

2020 Outstanding Research Award for Prof. Sufen Chen

Prof. Sufen Chen received the 2020 Outstanding Research Award in recognition of her research and practices in science education. An awards ceremony was held on 17 June 2020 after the government lifted pandemic-related restrictions.



President of National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (left) and Professor Sufen Chen (right)

Public Perception of News Media *by* Prof. Hans-Henrik Knoop

A new, nationally representative, study called "News Experiences and Opinions in Denmark 2020" has just been published. The study relates to the domain Constructive Journalism in which Prof. Hans Henrik Knoop of has been involved for the last eight years. The study was conducted by the research agency Epinion with Prof. Knoop being instrumental in the design of the study, the development of the questionnaire used, and in the interpretation of the results. The study can be downloaded for free [here](#).

The background for the study includes the recognition that the influence of news media may well be stronger than ever before, that politicians are bound to communicate through media if they wish to attract the attention of voters, that it is hard to name a business that has been more severely impacted by the advent of the internet and social media than news journalism, and that traditional news providers are being challenged by repeated accusations regarding the production of fake news, questioning their credibility and ethics. The aim of the study was to understand current media trends with a focus on:

- news credibility,
- perceptions of news negativity,
- the tendency of some to avoid the news,
- to what degree constructive journalism holds potential solutions to the issues raised,
- whether reading constructive news content is experienced differently from reading conventional news, and
- whether people's personality traits influence the above.

Also, the study looks at the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak's effect on opinions and behaviour towards news.

An online survey methodology was administrated with more than 2.000 Danes responding in February and March 2020, with a follow-up involving approximately 1.000 Danes in March and April under the COVID-19 crisis.

Important results include

- that 15% of Danes periodically avoid the news,
- that news credibility in Denmark is lukewarm with only 26% agreeing or partly agreeing that the news media paints an accurate and fair picture of the world,
- that most Danes prefer news that focuses on illuminating a case from different sides rather than the partisan simplification,
- that most people prefer to read a news article with a constructive rather than a conventional news headline, (contrary to the assumption that "if it bleeds, it leads!),"
- that people who read a constructive newspaper article are less inclined to feel uncomfortable,
- that people high in the trait neuroticism, who are generally more prone to negative thoughts, are more likely to avoid news and less likely to think that following news is important,
- that people who are high on the traits agreeableness or conscientiousness tend to think that following news is important but are also more likely to experience today's news as too conflict-oriented, and



Prof. Hans-Henrik Knoop

- that at the time after the COVID-19 outbreak, there was increased news avoidance, while also increased news credibility.

The report has already attracted significant attention in Denmark, and thoughtful commentators are de facto enriching the interpretations of the study publicly.

While news credibility has been surveyed for many years, this study is the first of its particular kind. The plan is to replicate it in different parts of the world in the coming years and thereby hopefully contribute to enhanced credibility and engagement in future news journalism.

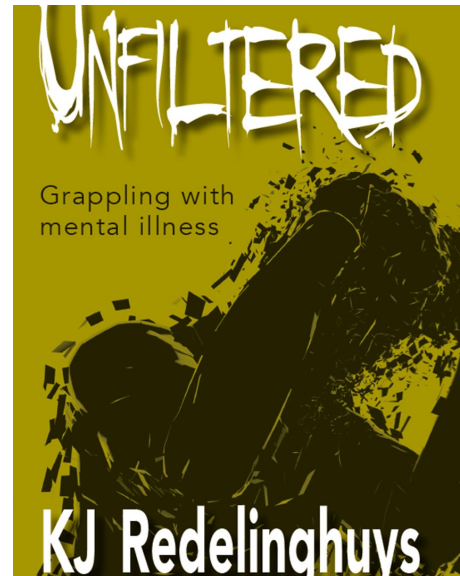
More information can be found [here](#).

"People who read a constructive newspaper article are less inclined to feel uncomfortable."

Grappling with Mental Illness *by* Dr K. Redelinghuys

Dr Kleinjan Redelinghuys recently published his mental health memoir entitled: "Unfiltered: Grappling with mental illness". He wrote a big chunk of his book while he was severely depressed – possibly the best time to write about it, to see it in all its hostility from his perspective.

In his book, he tries to let the reader see anxiety and depression through his eyes, to walk the journey in his shoes. He has been dealing with anxiety and depression for over a decade and hopes that he can make a meaningful contribution to the mental health community. Click [here](#) to read more.



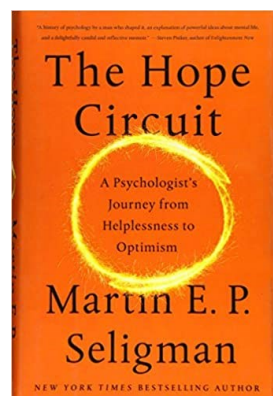
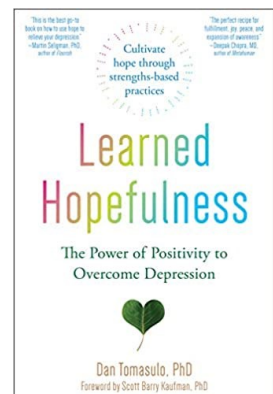
Click [here](#) for more information about the book.

"In his book, he tries to let the reader see anxiety and depression through his eyes."

Valuable Source for Mental Health Practitioners

Dan Tamasulo recently published a new book, "Learned hopefulness: The power of positivity to overcome depression. According to Tamasulo (2020), passivity in response to stress is not learned. The book builds on empirical research and a recent publication by [Maier and Seligman](#) (2016) which showed that passivity and avoidance as reaction the default unlearned response to prolonged aversive events, which in turn, inhibits escape. In their 1995 book on learned helplessness, Peterson, Maier, and Seligman explained that being helpless was a learned response. However, from later neuroscience research, Maier made the most important discovery in our field, which turned the concept of learned helplessness on its head (Seligman, 2018). It was not helplessness, but control and mastery that was learned. Therefore the focus of interven-

tions to deal with stress and depression should be on looking forward to developing strategies to learn control, rather than looking back to unlearn what has happened. Distress causes people to be anxious and passive by default. When something bad happens, individuals might withdraw, to save energy for bad times. However, focusing on ways to detect and expect control creates hope. To reduce distress and depression, individuals must learn the perception that they can control and harness the unpredictability in their environment (Maier & Seligman, 2016). Individuals who score high on self-control scales know how to form habits and they have automated the experience so that they do not need to rely only on self-control (Tamasulo, 2020).



New Book on Grit

Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl and Dr Leoni van der Vaart (together with Prof. Chantal Olckers from the University of Pretoria) recently submitted the final manuscript of the abovementioned publication to Springer. In the book's foreword, Prof. Llewellyn explains: "Performance in its purest form is more than just the culmination of individuals' cognitive (cap)abilities, potential or 'talents'; it has to do with sustained, enduring effort one exerts over time in achieving one's goals (perseverance of effort), the passion one has for one's work/studies (consistency in effort) and the extent towards which one can actively adapt to changing environments (environmental agility)... In effect, it has to do with Grit!

Originally conceptualised by Duckworth et al. (2007) as a non-cognitive trait associated with the perseverance and passion for long term goals, Grit has shown to be an important explanatory factor in achievement theory as a means to explain why some individuals with lower levels of externally perceived "talent" tend to perform better than their highly cognitively gifted counterparts. Research has shown that gritty individuals are more engaged, motivated, happier, healthier, and more successful than those who report low levels of grit. Further, grit has also shown to result in various positive team, family, organisation and societal outcomes. As such, it is not surprising that popular media hailed Grit as "the new gold standard" for predicting life, school, career, and job-related success.

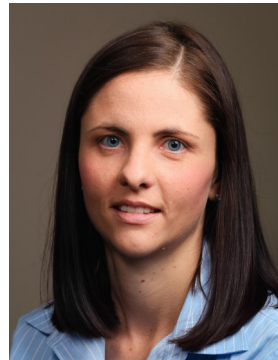
However, despite its widespread popularity within mass-



Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

media and the popular psychology press, academic studies on Grit is still in its infancy. There seems to be little consensus in the literature as to how grit should be conceptualised, measured, or managed and how it differs from other constructs such as conscientiousness, diligence or determination. This lack in consensus has resulted in various specific criticisms of the construct and led to various new 'theories', psychometric instruments, and interventions to rapidly emerge in the literature. This rapid emergence of new theories could lead to either seminal advancements in our understanding of grit or could lead grit to become yet another victim of the 'jingle-jangle fallacy'. Therefore, a thorough reappraisal and consolidation as to the nature of grit, how it should or could be measured, and how it could be developed is needed. Further, a consolidated narrative as to the criticisms of grit is also required in order to ensure that future research can actively address such in a systematic, rigorous and scientific fashion.

As such, the purpose of this book is to address these challenges through providing a plat-



Dr Leoni van der Vaart

form to curate contemporary theories of grit, to discuss ways in which it could be rigorously measured and developed, to investigate its relationship with performance-related metrics and to collate the collective criticisms of grit. This book aimed to provide a comprehensive and balanced perspective on grit with the intent to effectively advance the science of achievement.

The title of the new book is "Perspectives on Grit: Contemporary theories, assessments, applications and critiques. The authors hope that this book will stimulate further scientific debate on Grit and empower gritty-researchers to not shy away from criticisms or critiques, but to actively embrace them". They are looking forward to sharing this publication with academics and practitioners! The anticipated publication date is September 2020.

"It is our hope that this book will stimulate further scientific debate on Grit and empower Gritty-Researchers to not shy away from criticisms or critiques, but to actively embrace them".

The Purpose of Higher Education *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

“It is evident that research in education is increasingly being located in the frameworks of critical and social realism”

In my journey to unravel the complexity of higher education (HE) in pursuit of its real purpose, it is evident that research in education is increasingly being located in the frameworks of critical and social realism. HE institutions all over the world, and more so in developing countries, including South Africa, have been failing the majority of its students in multiple ways (Scott, 2009). Since South Africa has been characterised by its own unique context of social injustices and went through significant social change during the past two decades, deliberate demands are placed on teaching and learning. This is especially evident in HE, as the White Paper on Higher Education of 1997 stipulates that HE, as a significant social structure, has a very specific role to fulfil in the restructuring of an unequal society.

After two decades of democracy in South Africa, it seems that the HE sector has not yet come to terms with the realities of inequality in HE institutions (Swartz et al., 2019), resulting in the painful truth that HE has not come to terms with the educational needs of the majority of our students, especially those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. It also seems evident that the HE context has not transcended the apartheid legacy in that it still does not accommodate the previously disadvantaged majority of students (Scott, 2009). The HE system, vital for a positive future for SA today, shows anxiety in its struggle to adapt to change and is presently not fulfilling its societal obligation. As a result, it also seems that HE has not yet



come to terms with the realities of its purpose, inequalities and social injustices, and has failed to develop an education system that serves the majority of the students.

Many philosophers, scholars, politicians, researchers, critical and social realists, and all stakeholders in the HE context, are still grappling with what the real purpose of HE is or should be. McKenna (in CHE Kagisano Number 9, 2013) points out that there is no clear consensus as to what a university is or what its aims should be. Ahmed Essop, CEO of the CHE, stated that HE institutions should reflect, reproduce, and shape the social, cultural, economic and political values and relations that are characteristic of the broader society. In addition, HE institutions do not exist in isolation from societies in which they are located (Kagisano Number 9, 2013).

Tensions created as a result of these, are still present and reflects the post-1994 policy discourse on the aims of HE in South Africa. HE in South Africa in the post-apartheid era has never been more volatile than it is currently (CHE, 2017). Swartz et al. (2019) argue that the purposes of HE in South Africa re-

main the topic of ongoing debate and negotiation. According to the World Bank (2018), our country is ranked as one of the most unequal societies in the world. A plurality of knowledge, roles and purpose of HE, and racial fractures that exist, seem to make it even harder to (i) address social challenges in our country, (ii) respond to the needs of the students, and (iii) engage in the transformation of HE.

None the less, after two decades of democracy, the purpose of HE still remains indistinct in a post-foundational world driven by diversity on national and international levels. Furthermore, it is questionable whether HE teaching and learning has been responsive to its accountability of social transformation, quality enhancement, and addressing social injustice in South Africa.

The Purpose of Higher Education *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

The continuously implicit or unconscious choices made in HE, not answering to the broader purpose of HE, have critical implications for the nature and outcomes of the student learning experience, and subsequently the success of teaching and learning in HE. Despite research and knowledge generated in the recent years, it is still hard to bring about positive change, transformation, equity, social justice, and subsequently improved student learning in HE.

Student success should be the primary goal of teaching and learning agendas of universities. University skills are needed for personal development and growth of students and also for the social, economic and political development of the country. According to Boughey (2002), HE is seen as a place where high skills could be developed. Ironically, HE has failed the majority of students as evidenced by statistics on high attrition and low throughput rates and is not producing graduates to meet national needs for economic growth, or equity and redress (source).

At the centre of academic failures in universities, several reasons exist that, among others, include restricted and the absence of institutional, epistemic and ontological access at HE institutions. In reflecting on academic failures, the perceived purpose of HE becomes critical to explore, where certain discourses exist, which brings about several challenges associated with teaching and learning in HE.

According to Gee (in Boughey & McKenna, 2016), discourse refers to a socially recognisable identity and a way of being in the

world. This typically express that means of being are acquired through our exposure to the social spaces we find ourselves in, and the easiness of acquisition depends on the 'familiar' connection between primary and secondary discourses. This might be why the socio-cultural backgrounds of students either enhance or inhibit success in HE. Various discourses exist, but the dominant discourse of language issues in HE, for example, has disguised the previous apartheid explanations of cognitive differences (Boughey & McKenna, 2016).

The language problem became the sanctimonious answer to racially differentiated success rates in HE, where structural mechanisms in HE institutions remain unchanged. Consequently, several changes need to take place in response to HE failure in



Dr Mariette Fourie

South Africa in general. Although it may appear difficult to change the fortunes of HE institutions, particularly in South Africa, there are compelling reasons for interrogating dominant discourses, as well as endorsing change towards social justice through the efficacious application of relevant policies and frameworks in HE.

“Student success should be the primary goal of teaching and learning agendas of universities.



Optentia PhD Completed: Sandra Steyn

Sandra Steyn started her academic journey at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, as a BA Law undergraduate student. Her studies saw her completing a BA Law and Psychology, an Honours degree in Psychology and a MA in Research Psychology. During her studies, she worked as a research assistant in the Education Faculty. In 2015, she completed her Research Psychology internship at the African Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR), before embarking on her doctoral studies at the North-West University, Vaal Campus, 2016-2019. Currently, Sandra continues her journey as an independent research consultant and as the head of post-graduate research at AFDA, the school for the creative economy, Johannesburg Campus.

In her thesis titled 'Family and ageing in South Africa: an exploration of family and the position of older people', Sandra, found that:

- Family descriptions are based on the context of each family.
- Older people in families are seen as supporting and strengthening in the family context.
- There is a value-relatedness for family membership indicating aspects such as having a sense of belonging in the family and allowing the inclusion of significant others into the perceived structure of family.
- The position and roles of elderly members were enhanced by family cohesion, flexibility and communication and were related to families' emotional and material needs.



Dr Sandra Steyn

Interpreted in line with the literature, the findings indicate a deep longing to satisfy emotional and material needs within the family context.

The study contributes to psychological and developmental family theory by giving a South African perspective to such theory and by questioning some traditional theoretical views on family. Prof. Chrizanne van Eeden was the promoter of the study.

“... person-centred analyses identified three types of copers, namely active, avoidance, and passive-destructive copers.”

Optentia PhD Completed: Vasti Marais-Opperman

Vasti Marais-Opperman recently completed her PhD thesis with the title: “Stress, coping strategies, perceived personal control and well-being at work of teachers.” Her first study showed that three latent profiles for stress of teachers, namely distressed, moderately stressed, and self-efficacious differed statistically significantly regarding coping strategies and mental health. The distressed profile and self-blame as a coping strategy predicted low mental health, while the self-efficacious profile and turning to religion predicted mental health. The distressed profile had the largest negative effect on mental health when positive reframing and active coping was low.

In her second study, she found that perceived distress

impacted teachers' intentions to leave directly and indirectly (via low flourishing). Perceived self-efficacy indirectly and negatively impacted teachers' intentions to leave via flourishing. She identified three types of copers, namely active, avoidance, and passive-destructive copers. Active copers experienced statistically significantly less distress than avoidance and passive-destructive copers. Also, they reported a statistically significantly higher level of positive stress than passive copers.

In her third study, she found that positive mental health reported in Time 1 had a significant influence on teachers' emotional, psychological, and social well-being at work in Time 2. Perceived self-efficacy had large

indirect effects through mental health on flourishing at work. Stress, mental health, and flourishing at work differed significantly depending on the personal control (or its absence) and teachers' perceptions of their behavioural control. Prof. Chrizanne van Eeden and Prof. Ian Rothmann were the promoters of the study.



Dr Vasti Marais-Opperman

Optentia PhD Completed: Elna Rossouw

Elna Rossouw recently completed her PhD in Industrial Psychology. The title of her thesis was: "Flourishing of judges in South Africa."

Elna was born in Krugersdorp and matriculated from Hoërskool Monument in 1979. She completed a B.Com at the Potchefstroom University for CHE in 1982 and a B.Com (honours) in Industrial Psychology at UNISA in 1997. In 2000, she obtained an M.Com in Industrial Psychology at the Potchefstroom University for CHE. Elsie entered the open labour market in 1983 and worked for ten years in administrative, financial and teaching positions. In 1993, she had commenced working at Roodepoort Technical College and was appointed in the position of Director: Human Resources and Student Support at the Johannesburg Technical College. She registered at the Health Professions Council of South Africa as Industrial Psychologist. With effect from 2000, she has been the owner of Human Interaction, an industrial psychology practice, specialising in psycho-legal work. Elsie is married to Jan Rossouw, an advocate and master's student in Cognitive Psychology. She also has two daughters, Nicole and Janine.

Three peer-reviewed articles from her thesis were accepted for publication. In the first article, she found that a variety of job demands, such as judges' heavy workloads and time constraints, emotional demands of their work, negative work-home interference and their safety concerns, had a negative effect on their well-being. Despite the stressors and occupational demands to which judges were subjected, some

judges experienced high levels of well-being because of, inter alia, the autonomy they had over certain aspects of their work, the nature of their work and positive relationships with their colleagues.

Findings from qualitative analyses in her second study indicated that most judges were flourishing in their roles, with a strong calling orientation to their work. The judges perceived serving the public, making a difference to people's lives, and contributing to justice as more rewarding than financial compensation. Results following multidimensional scaling indicated two work-related well-being dimensions, namely subjective well-being versus behavioural intention, and fitting in and doing good versus discontented withdrawal. Concerning fitting in and doing good, work-role fit among the judges was strongly related to organisational citizenship behaviour. Regarding discontented withdrawal, judges' intentions to leave was strongly related to reduced emotional well-being. The findings of this study imply that both dimensions of work-related well-being are relevant to

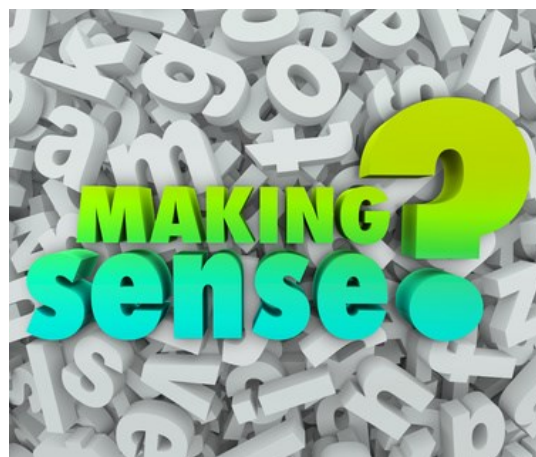


Dr Elna Rossouw

the optimal functioning and retention of judges.

The results from her third article showed that job resources, such as autonomy, positive relationships with senior judges, as well as opportunities for training and development, contributed to judges' flourishing. Despite job demands, such as work pressure and time constraints, emotional demands, and hassles experienced at work, judges generally chose to use the available opportunities for well-being to reach their goals, to feel good and to function well at work. Some judges, however, noted that their heavy workload and limited time contributed to them feeling stressed and burnt-out. Prof. Ian Rothmann was the promoter of the study.

"Regarding discontented withdrawal, judges' intentions to leave was strongly related to reduced emotional well-being."



Coen
Welsh

Motivation @ Work in Small and Medium Enterprises

In the previous newsletter, we reported on the aims and rationale of our latest NRF-funded project. In this newsletter, we wish to share the progress that we have made thus far.

The two master's students (Mr Simeau van Nieuwenhuizen and Ms Nadia Jordaan) collected data from 691 South African employees to validate the General Causality Orientations Scale (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and the Interpersonal Behaviour Questionnaire (Rocchi et al., 2016). Both of them aim to submit their mini-dissertations in August 2020. The PhD student, Ms Lynelle Coxen, is busy finalising her article in which she performed a systematic review of diary studies focusing on basic psychological needs in the work context.

The results of the two master's studies will be used to inform the next phase of Lynelle's



study in which she will collect quantitative data using diary study data collection methods.

Dr Leoni has also obtained ethics clearance and will soon start conducting interviews to gain a better understanding of interpersonal relationships in small and medium enterprises.

We want to encourage readers to keep an eye out for the next edition in which we will

share some of the preliminary findings emanating from the validation and systematic reviews studies.

"The financial assistance of the NRF towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily attributed to the NRF."

"The pursuit of the ideal of the "Africa We Want", as set by African citizens in AU Agenda 2063, calls for putting the well-being of people at the centre of all systems."

Want to Learn about Decent Work in Africa? Meet Mr Oumar Diop

Mr Oumar Diop is employed by the African Union Commission (AUC), the AU's secretariat that is undertaking the day to day activities of the Union. It is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He is Coordinator of the AUC-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration. Previously he was a consultant on Labour, Employment and Social Protection for the African Union (2016-2018), Senior Policy Officer, Labour, Employment and Social Security for the African Union (2007-2015) and National Director, Employment, Senegal (1996-2006). I am working on continental issues related to labour migration governance for

development and integration, decent work for the transformation of the informal economy, and as labour, employment and social security policy advisor for the African Union Commission. These sectors contain challenges which will shape the current and future landscape of the African labour market and human resource development and management. The pursuit of the ideal of the "Africa We Want" as set by African citizens in AU Agenda 2063, calls for putting the well-being of people at the centre of all systems. It also calls for affording every single person and all communities equal opportunity to achieve their value and growth potential fully. "The worth

of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it" (J.S. Mill). If Africa is to flourish, all kinds of licit labour must be valued and rewarded for its contribution to the general wealth of society.



Mr Oumar Diop

Join the Cave by Prof Ansie Fouche and Dr Elmien Truter

"I think it is an absolutely incredible idea and initiative that is going to reach a magnitude of Social Workers and Child Protection service providers." and "The Cave keeps up with the latest info."

Feedback from our South African child protection social workers (CPSWs) who, amidst adverse working conditions, heal, restore and protect the vulnerable of society. So much gratitude fills our hearts when we receive this kind of feedback from the most important persons in this project: our ground-level CPSWs!

Over the last four months, we have had ■ 987 unique visitors ■ 6,665 page views ■ a bounce rate of 51% and ■ visitors from 24 countries. Also, it is interesting to note that 75% of our users visit our site on their mobile devices, which means that our site is mo-

bile friendly. Our average position on Google went from 60 to 25, and we currently have 74 subscribers to our mailing list. Our two most popular pages are Precious Stones (525 page views) and Moonlight (429 page views).

We want to thank every supporter of The Cave and invite every social worker, but especially CPSWs, to check out our two new themes which will be revealed end July 2020! It promises to be relevant and related to one of the more difficult aspects of this work: the legal playground.

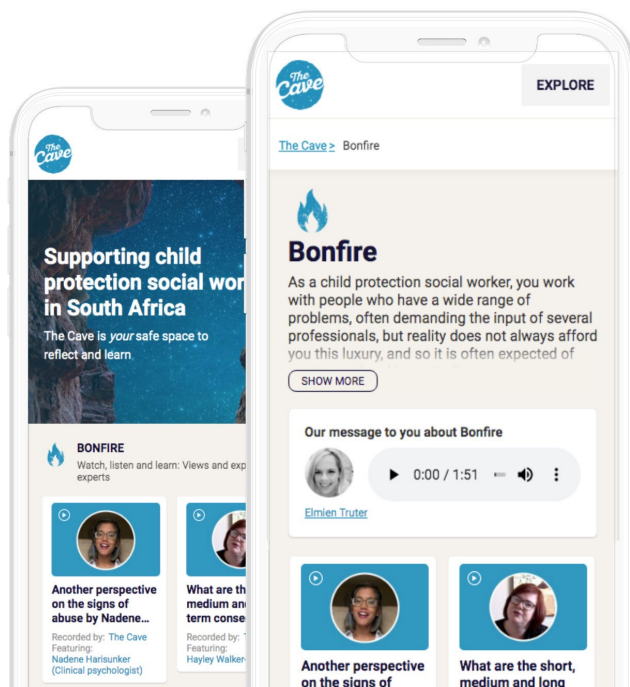
The Cave remains a response to personal practice experience and empirical research findings, which aims to support the protectors of South Africa's exposed children, women and families.



Dr Elmien Truter



"The Cave remains a response to personal practice experience and empirical research findings."



Profile: Kopano Monaisa

One of the projects within Optentia that are currently awaiting the chance to begin is that of Prof. Ansie Fouche and Prof. Franziska Meinck from the Strengths-based Studies and Interventions Programme. Their project is part of an umbrella project called The GCRF Accelerating Achievement for Africa's Adolescents Hub, led by the University of Oxford.

Their project will also include a student busy with her PhD study. She is Kopano Monaisa who completed her undergraduate in Social Work at North-West University's Vanderbijlpark campus and then followed with her Master's Degree at the Mahikeng campus. We asked her to share with us a bit of who she is and what she hopes to achieve:

Tell me a bit about your family background.

"I have a brother (four years younger than me), and we were raised by both our parents. Both my parents are teachers. My grandparents from my paternal side passed away when I was very little, and both my grandparents on my maternal side are still alive and in their 80's. In 2015 I was blessed with a son."

Who motivated you to pursue your dreams and study social work?

"My parents were my biggest motivation to pursue my dream and study social work. They supported and encouraged me throughout the process."

What motivated you to pursue your Master's degree?

"I remember growing up and people asking what I wanted to be when I grew up, without fail,

my answer was always "I want to be a Doctor (medical doctor)." However, as I grew up, I realised that my passion lied somewhere else, and I also learnt that I could be a doctor in any field of work, it just meant studying a little harder. So the decision to pursue my masters was an easy one. I applied and registered as soon as I was done with my undergrad."

What made you focus on your particular Master's topic?

"My topic for my master's, The Psychosocial impact of unemployment on the youth in Mahikeng, was inspired by the fact that I struggled to get work at home after I completed my degree. I wondered if other young people had the same experiences and how this affected them."

What are the most important things your research for your master's revealed?

"The research for my masters revealed that unemployment has a negative psychosocial impact on the youth as well as their families such as mental health issues, and financial implications (e.g. not being able to meet basic needs). More females than males had completed their grade 12, and others proceeded to tertiary education. It also revealed that most of the participants were not even actively looking for work and wanted to start with high paying jobs rather than starting with odd jobs that can help with building industry experience."

Are you in social work practice at the moment and where?

"I am currently one of the directors of a new NGO in Mahikeng, Baagi Awareness project, which focuses on mental health. The or-



Kopano Monaisa

ganisation is an initiative which strives to combat the stigma by educating young people about the importance of mental health. "Baagi" is a Setswana word meaning "builders" and it stems from the key concept of development."

What do you hope to learn and add to your practice as a social worker and on a personal level?

"As a social worker, I hope to be part of the process that gets people to be unashamed about discussing/reporting/disclosing issues that are considered to be taboo such as abuse (child abuse, intimate partner abuse etc.) and mental health. Personally, I believe self-love and self-care are essential because I have to be in a good space in order to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others. So I hope to encourage others in my field of work to take a break now and then to focus on themselves."

What excites you most about being part of this research project?

"I did not realise how big this research project is until the meeting in Cape Town. I am most excited about being part of the team that is working on the broader system issues that impact families in our communities. Travelling and potentially learning a new language is a bonus."

"As a social worker, I hope to be part of the process that gets people to be unashamed about discussing issues that are considered to be taboo."

Meaning-making of Living with Type 1 Diabetes

Sylvia Kruger completed a mini-dissertation on young adult women's meaning-making of living with Type 1 Diabetes. Since the completion of the dissertation, Sylvia has registered as a Counselling Psychologist and is currently working at THUSO at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. Sylvia has been living with Type 1 diabetes since the age of 11 and in this study also shed some light on the practicalities of meaning-making of living with diabetes.

Diabetes is described as an always-present disease and an ongoing process of adjustment (Stuckey & Tisdell, 2010, p. 43). Diabetes has an impact on the psychological, emotional, and social functioning of the young adult (Daneman, Frank, & Perlman, 2002). Managing type 1 diabetes, especially during young adulthood, is a complex process. Type 1 diabetes is primarily researched as a medical condition, and an examination of the subjective experience thereof is neglected. The study aimed to explore young women's meaning-making of living with type 1 diabetes, with the hope of informing clinical practice and improving support to people with diabetes. In this study, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) enabled the in-depth exploration of participants' personal meaning-making of living with type 1 diabetes. Six female participants between the ages of 18 and 25 were recruited from the Centre for Diabetes and Endocrinology, participating in in-depth, semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using



the principles of IPA (Ethical approval NWU-00124-18-S1). The findings of the IPA analysis are considered against the background of existing literature on meaning-making.

Three superordinate themes emerged: (1) the process of reappraising a life with diabetes; (2) the development of diabetes as a lifestyle; and (3) meanings made. The results of the present study demonstrate the significance of meaning-making in adjusting to a life with diabetes. The results of the current study indicate that initially, the participants experienced a wide range of emotions and challenges in reaction to the diagnosis. Similar to the findings by Park and Folkman (1997), the results of the current study indicate that the acceptance of diabetes played an essential role in the participants' meaning-making process and initiated the process of integrating diabetes into the individuals' lives, goals, and views of the world. Knowledge allowed young women to manage their condition by integrating self-management as a part of their lives. The positive impact of support from others assisted the participants in making meaning of their condition and making it manageable.

As outcomes, a reappraisal of diabetes was found, as well as a revision of global beliefs. As such, the participants shifted their view of diabetes in a more positive direction over time and



Sylvia Kruger

"...in these times of confinement (new normal-COVID-19 outbreak), it has never been more important to think about and practice empathy."

reconsidered their view of life. All participants considered diabetes to be manageable and a positive aspect of their lives. All participants reported personal growth. In the current study, all of the participants reflected on newly found benefits, strengths, growth, and opportunities. It was indicated that the participants' meaning-making was a reframing process through assigning a new meaning to diabetes, resulting in a new view of the self and life. In the current study, all of the participants viewed diabetes as a part of themselves, and over time, diabetes was not viewed as a factor that would interfere with their future.

The findings of the study indicate that meaning has a significant impact on peoples' adjustment to living with diabetes. It is concluded that optimal care in diabetes services should incorporate a holistic approach.

Nonviolent Communication and Empathy Development

I hope you are well, warm and safe from this Covid-19 storm. It is a heart-warming privilege to share with you the motivation for my study. I really believe that the timing of my research could not have been perfect as we hear more media reports of femicide and GBV cases daily in South Africa. These cases indicate violent communication exercised within our communities.

More importantly, in these times of confinement (new normal-COVID-19 outbreak), it has never been more important to think about and practice empathy.

Empathy is the ability to direct your attention to another person and to read their emotions well. Still, it can be a difficult skill to master, and it is for this reason that I selected the study -Non-violent communication which promotes empathy development amongst High school learners. Since NVC is a relatively new approach that has had a positive impact globally, this ignites an academic interest in me.

The motivation for the study

On a personal level, my interest in choosing this topic stems from my own experience as a person who grew up and studied in rural communities in Eastern Cape, who understands the social challenges such as poverty and its impact on learners, dysfunctional families and particularly poor schooling system in the province. My participation in different community initiatives in Eastern Cape including informal school motivational awareness talks and the current violent trends in South African schools, as well as the



Tobeka Xoko

overall educational performance of the province have sparked the interest.

For several years I have been interested in behaviour management with an understanding of the iceberg theory of a person's reality and impact of underlying issues in one's life.

On a theoretical level, I am conducting this research project because there is a dearth of empirical evidence that examines and supports the NVC model. With the increasing demand for empirically validated methods in an educational sector, I believe this research may contribute to the growing body of literature on the use of NVC. Humanistic approaches, such as NVC, can offer both teachers and learners insightful, engaging, and meaningful ways to implement and follow educational policies within the confines of governmental and public dominant discourses.

On a professional level, my background as a Social worker and a persistent wish to help address violence in South African schools which stems from an

embedded professional need to help society resolve current issues have also influenced my decision to pursue this study. I believe this is my contribution to help solve a practice problem in South Africa. The social worker has the professional skills and ability to help the perpetrators and victims in a school environment through the implementation of proactive and preventative measures such as NVC programme. There are few scientific studies conducted in the province, and this further motivated the decision. One of the objectives for this study is to address the negative impact of social ills experienced by the learners in inclusive classrooms. I believe that this NVC programme will not only bring a solution to the classroom but will bring a solution to the hurting society.

"... lessons of caring practices ranging from social welfare to palliative care are shared."

Illness Perception of Adolescents with Uncontrolled Type 1 Diabetes

Schvaughn Stewart completed a mini-dissertation on illness perception of adolescents with uncontrolled type 1 diabetes mellitus. This research continues her interest in health psychology following her published research a discourse analysis of Ebola in South African newspapers (2014–2015).

Illness perception is a cognitive belief system that people assume about their condition. Once it has been integrated with existing schemata to enable sense-making of symptoms, this guides their management of the condition. Illness perception has been used to predict physiological and behavioural outcomes in self-management, such as adherence to medication regimes. Cosma and Băban (2017) found that long-term beliefs held by adolescents about T1D predicted their emotional responses. In a study conducted by Scholes et al. (2013), adolescents with uncontrolled T1D found it more challenging than adolescents with controlled T1D to adopt self-care regimens, indicating that they felt that they could not control their T1D.

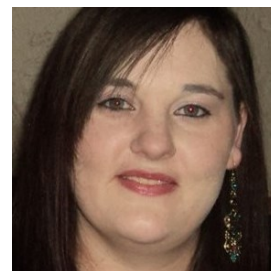
This study explored the illness perception among adolescents living with uncontrolled type 1 diabetes (T1D) and how these perceptions influenced the management of T1D. A qualitative, explorative design with semi-structured interviews was followed. A non-random purposive sampling method was utilised. The illness perception among eight adolescents, ages 12 - 18 years, with uncontrolled T1D were analysed through thematic analysis. This study was granted ethical approval by the North-West

University's Humanities and Health Research Ethics Committee (HHREC) of the Faculty of Humanities (NWU-HS-2017-0167).

Four major themes were generated, namely (1) management of T1D is challenging, (2) perception of T1D is negative, (3) management of T1D is motivated by fear, and (4) living with T1D leads to a sense of being different. Adolescents with uncontrolled T1D believe that T1D is challenging to manage, leading to a mostly negative perception of the disease. This study contributes to the body of literature on adolescents who have found adhering to management protocols challenging, which may give additional insights into the practical application of such research and assist in designing successful interventions.

This study demonstrated that adolescents with uncontrolled T1D assume the belief that it is difficult to manage, which is internalised as personal failure, leading to a largely negative perception of the illness. Ultimately, good versus bad management is predicated upon targets that are usually externally imposed (Watts et al., 2010). Adolescents internalise failure to meet these targets as a personal flaw, perpetuating the belief that managing T1D is difficult and not in their control. By focusing on T1D management as predicated strictly on diet and medication adherence, we, therefore, unfortunately, lose sight of the individual, while successful management of T1D relies on far more than them.

The study provides new information about the illness perception among adolescents with uncontrolled T1D in South Africa,



Schvaughn Stewart

as well as insight into how these perceptions affect management. The findings will prompt health care professionals to look beyond dietary and medication adherence, thus to include psychological factors such as illness perception when implementing diabetes care plans and designing interventions. It also lays the foundation for future research around what differentiates well-controlled and uncontrolled T1D. It may ultimately lead to developing intervention strategies that will assist people living with T1D to manage it successfully.

"This study provides new information about the illness perception among adolescents with uncontrolled T1D in South Africa, as well as

Zooming towards Research Skills *by* Shanae Theunissen

I had the fantastic opportunity to attend a series of workshops on developing a thesis for Mixed Method research. This interdisciplinary program brings together several scholars at the University of Michigan with national and international expertise in mixed-method research. Due to the global pandemic, the program leaders were forced to repack-age their content to an online Zoom format for the first time in the five years that they have been offering this amazing experience to students and faculty alike. With Prof. John Creswell as the keynote joining from Japan, and the faculty members involved connecting from different states in America, coupled with an international participant group - it was truly a digital learning experience on a global scale. The diverse fields in which the presenters and the participants specialize in highlighted how this research approach could be adapted to fulfil research aims in any profession.

The focus during the course was specifically on helping participants developing their skills and constructing a proposal for the mixed methods approach that guides participants to conduct research worthy of publication. In the series of workshops, faculty members guide you through every aspect of mixed methods research from planning each part of your proposal and integrating a conceptual framework right through to the very end of how to structure your article to prepare it for publication. Through this iterative process, we were encouraged to make sure that our projects come across clearly, as John Creswell

states: "Good, sound research projects begin with straightforward, uncomplicated thoughts that are easy to read and understand."

With an intensive format filled with substantial pre-workshop reading, numerous worksheets guiding your research development being completed throughout, and interactive feedback from faculty members and peers during group consultations - this course was engaging and exemplary every step of the way. This was an immensely immersive experience where I could look at my research critically and where I could consider more creative ways of seeking answers and presenting data.

One of the most impactful workshops was presented by Dr Fetters, the editor of the Journal for Mixed Method Research. In this presentation, he gave tips on constructing articles for publication and highlighted articles that they have published that stood out over the years. New trends in publishing include the publication of methodological papers and calls for papers investigating the psychosocial impact of the pandemic on national and international levels (see the journal of mixed methods website for more information).

Besides the valuable content and discussions during the workshops, what stood out for me was the sense of community developed through the interactions of the faculty members with participants. The faculty opened the series with a message acknowledging the context of the unprecedented events. They highlighted their intent to equip participants



Shanae Theunissen

with the necessary skills to advance research focused on health and social equity. In this, I was reminded that we do research to make a difference in our fields and empower others to come to a clearer understanding of one another to affect change. Even though we are disconnected the technology geographically we have at our disposal can assist us in making meaningful connections with others. This experience highlighted how training opportunities could be made more accessible to international participants at reduced costs while remaining engaging and effective. Connecting with a group of international scholars from the comfort of your home or office is an option that we now have at our disposal that could offer significant networking opportunities for impactful research.

There has never been a better time to reach out and upskill in your areas of interest - with more people embracing this new digital landscape, the possibilities are endless.

"There has never been a better time to reach out and upskill in your areas of interest."

Maslow before Bloom: Qua Vadis “Where Are You Marching?”

“I don’t care how much you know until I know how much you care” - The age-old educational aphorism

What do students need?

Students are facing challenging times, with special reference made to the challenging contexts exasperated by remote online teaching and learning during COVID-19. Students need to be motivated through an ethics of care pedagogy. The phrase Maslow before Bloom is popular in education circles. It is typically used to communicate how humans need their basic needs met before academic learning can be fully embraced. With students now experiencing school-at-home during this COVID-19 epidemic, we all may gain some insight from this phrase Maslow before Bloom.

The NWU Centre of Teaching and Learning (CTL) hosted a webinar with Naomi du Plessis, towards the academic, professional development of NWU staff on this topic during May 2019. Naomi is a passionate lecturer, and the Deputy Director of the



BLOOM'S
Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

MASLOW'S
Classification of Needs

Maslow before Bloom

School of Communication, Faculty of Humanities. During this webinar, lecturers had the opportunity to share some challenges their student's experience, and possible pedagogical approaches evident of an ethics of care. Naomi shared some [fundamental principles for compassionate teaching and learning](#) during troubling times (Searles, 2020).

This was a wonderful experience. Thank you to excellent NWU lecturers in keeping our students engaged, motivated, and committed to complete the 2020 academic year successfully! In summary, I am grateful to share this powerful poem below by Joshua T. Dickerson.

Cause I Ain't Got No Pencil

I woke myself up because we ain't got an alarm clock
Dug in the dirty clothes basket, cause ain't nobody washed my uniform
Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark, cause the lights ain't on
Even got my baby sister ready, cause my mama wasn't home
Got us both to school on time, to eat us a good breakfast.
Then when I got to class, the teacher fussed.
Cause I ain't got no pencil

“The phrase Maslow before Bloom is popular in education circles.”

Long-Term Care in Sub-Saharan Africa *by* Prof. N. Keating

In 2019-2020 Swansea University through its GCRF Support Fund and University of Stirling through its GCRF ODA Fund-/CONNECT received funding for a planning session around LTC in SSA, which was held during September 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Nairobi, Kenya and OPTENTIA Research Focus Area, North West University, South Africa, in cooperation with the Universities of Swansea and Stirling and other African and international partners came together to pursue an urgently needed multi-country programme of research and policy engagement in SSA to advance the region's agenda on forging LTC systems and economies for its ageing populations.

Two outcomes of the meeting were a statement of principles and broad approaches developed by the African partners and substantive knowledge gaps and areas of evidence need as follows:

Guiding principles and broad approaches

- Africa-led and research-policy civil society partnerships. Any research endeavour to be developed must be Africa-led and grounded in a partnership of key African regional (and national) research, policy and civil society bodies.
- An inclusion of local research institutions (within project countries) and key faith-sector partners in this constellation is critical.

Capacity strengthening

- A focus on promoting the strengthening of research or substantive capacities especially among local institutions must be integral to the project.



Prof Isabella Aboderin (2nd from the right), Prof. Norah Keating (5th from the left), Mr Lefhoko Kesamang (Africa Union—10th from the left), Prof. Anne Margriet Pot (right end)

- Direct relevance to Africa's development agenda.
- Any research endeavour must be oriented towards advancing the continent's overarching development aspirations, as articulated in Agenda 2063, and generating insights that are directly relevant to Africa's specific agendas on gender and women's empowerment, youth, economic growth, social protection, universal health coverage, and the achievement of a demographic dividend.
- Future scenarios and forecasting, and estimates on 'returns on investment' and other consequences that would accrue from establishing and scaling up identified models of organised long-term care provision.
- Direction on design, implementation and financing approaches needed to establish and scale up the models.
- Recognition and capture of context dependence and gendered realities.
- Recognition that realities and experiences of LTC are gendered and will depend on the geographical and social contexts within which they unfold.
- Recognition of the imperative to capture – and identify potential responses to – gendered LTC realities and experiences across a relevant spectrum of different contexts.

Kinds of evidence

To ensure its relevance to the promotion of policy development and programming, evidence must, among others, provide:

- Models of appropriate, effective and quality organized LTC provision – building on case studies of already existing practice – that is able to support or supplement existing unorganized LTC giving by families

“Any research endeavour must be oriented towards advancing the continent's overarching development aspirations, as articulated in Agenda 2063.”

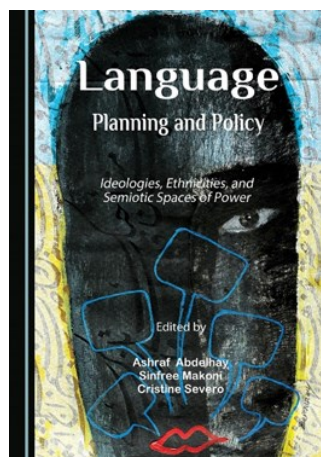
Two New Books Co-edited by Prof. Sinfree Makoni

Prof. Sinfree Makoni (Professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics and African Studies at Penn State University, USA and extraordinary professor at the NWU) co-edited two new volumes on the important cross-cutting issue of language and its contexts.

Language Planning and Policy: Ideologies, Ethnicities, and Semiotic Spaces of Power offers unique cross-cultural perspectives on language planning and policy in diverse African and Middle Eastern contexts, including South Africa, Bahrain, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Zambia, and Algeria, to explore the intersection between language policy discourses and their social, political, and educational functions.

Innovations and Challenges in Applied Linguistics from the Global South provides an original appraisal of the latest innovations and challenges in applied linguistics from the perspective of the Global South. Global South perspectives are encapsulated in struggles for basic, economic, political and social transformation in an inequitable world, and are not confined to the geographical South. Taking a critical perspective on Southern theories, demonstrating why it is important to view the world from Southern perspectives and why such positions must be open to critical investigation, this book: charts the impacts of these theories on approaches to multilingualism, language learning, language in education, literacy and diversity, language rights and language policy;

- provides broad historical and geographical understandings of the movement towards a



Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Johan Strydom, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Sinfree Makoni, Prof. Monica Ferreira, Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Prof. Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy and Prof. Pamela Maseko

Southern perspective and draws on Indigenous and Southern ways of thinking that challenge mainstream viewpoints;

- seeks to develop alternative understandings of applied linguistics, expand the intellectual repertoires of the discipline, and challenge the complicities between applied linguistics, colonialism, and capitalism.

Prof. Makoni drew on these initial ideas when he delivered his Prestige Lecture as Honorary Professor at Optentia during May 2019. Click [here](#) to read a review of the book in the International Journal of Multilingualism.

These are important perspectives for all scholars across disciplines and contexts because - to paraphrase Wittgenstein - the limits of your language imply the limits of your world.

“... the limits of
your language
imply the limits
of your world...”

Unique Springer Book about an Optentia Project

Prof. Vera Roos signed a contract with Springer and is currently editing a volume on Age-Inclusive ICT Innovation for Service Delivery: A developing country perspective for publication in 2021.

Scope and subject of the book

The volume focuses on the development, implementation and sustainability of an innovative ICT system, called [Yabelana](#). This system provides people of all ages access to information relevant to their tangible and intangible care needs within the South African reality, generally and more specifically the position of older people with regard to basic and municipal services. Yabelana is a first of its kind digital self-sustaining services and events directory for effective service delivery. The Yabelana system shares context-specific information through mobile phone technology – accommodating both older (USSD code) type phones and smart phones (google app store and website).

Rationale

Worldwide, it is anticipated that the care needs of older-growing populations will be greater than available resources. Sub-Saharan Africa lacks long-term care systems and technology could play a crucial role in supporting families and government systems in care management. By capturing relevant information in an appropriate (easy to use and sustained) ICT system, it is envisaged that an avenue will be available to serve the constitutional rights of people (including older individuals) to have access to information and to keep service providers accountable for the services they offer.

Contribution of the publication

The book comprises three parts. Part 1, in three chapters, situates the book in the delivery of services to older persons in a developing country, and focuses on the case of South Africa. Against the legislative background for service delivery to older persons it presents the case for the we-DELIVER community-based project. Chapter 1 contextualises the study within the phenomenon of population ageing and the pressing need to develop information and communication technologies (ICT) appropriate for developing countries. Chapter 2 focuses on constitutional rights and legislative frameworks, indicating what ought to be in place to deliver basic and municipal services to older persons; it highlights the gap between that and what actually transpires, drawing on the perspectives of local government officials and older service recipients. Chapter 3 presents the we-DELIVER project as an example of the process of developing age-inclusive ICT (Yabelana) to promote holistic service delivery to older persons in developing-world contexts. Part 2, in five chapters, discusses the principles and methods followed and the applications of ICT together with its outcomes. Chapter 4 critically engages with proposed ethical protocols informed from a principalist philosophical perspective and its (ir)relevance or even at times harmful application when context is not considered. It then proposes a more relational and situational perspective. Chapter 5 presents the processes of developing appropriate age-inclusive quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. Chapter

6 presents the findings of a baseline assessment of older South Africans' mobile phone use across rural, semi-urban and urban settings. Chapter 7 elaborates on the experiences of older persons and younger people in the public and private domain for assistance with their use of mobile phones. The findings in chapters 6 and 7 are used to guide the development of appropriate ICT (Yabelana), discussed in Chapter 8. Part 3 consists of two chapters. Drawing on the theory and practice relating to impact and sustainability of such projects, Chapter 9 highlights implications that could mitigate or limit the impact and sustainability of community-based projects centred on the use of ICT and considers the impact and sustainability of the Yabelana ICT solution. Chapter 10 reaches into the future of the sustainability and impact of ICT as tools to assist older persons in accessing the information and services they need.

Target group

It is anticipated that the book will attract a wide reader audience. First, it is aimed at academics and researchers interested on the use and impact of ICTs on older persons. Second, it will guide community planners and intergenerational programmers who plan to use ICT interventions for older individuals. The practical examples will particularly make it useful for NGOs, local governments and community-based initiatives.

"The Yabelana system shares context-specific information through mobile phone technology."

Memories of Frans Vosman (1952-2020) by Prof. Andries Baart

"This eulogy was delivered by Andries Baart in an international online meeting of the Critical Ethics of Care research network on Thursday 18 June 2020 in grateful commemoration of Frans Vosman's life and work."

Frans got cancer in 2015. From the very start this radically affected his life and ruined it in many ways. Eventually, when the disease returned in 2019, it killed him. Frans knew his chances of survival were slim, but this didn't stop him from fighting the disease. He never accepted it, he loved life and had pressing reasons to hold on to it. Whenever he managed to regain a little strength and hope, he was ready to try a new form of treatment, a new attempt, to continue. Only a fortnight ago, his doctors told him that the disease had outpaced the therapy: they had no further treatment to offer, his body was worn out and emaciated. Even though he was very ill, this news came as a huge blow – his mind never gave up and he remained as clear and sharp as ever. His 'form of life' for survival was hope – against hope. He received the Sacrament of the Sick on 6 June and when the minister asked him if he was ready to let go of life, his reply was a resounding no! The thread of his life broke on 10 June, and to our great sadness Frans is dead. We are left with our grief: we have lost a good human being, a beloved friend and a gifted colleague. I had the privilege of being his friend and of working with him very closely for 36 years, and I have therefore been given the opportunity to pronounce a short eulogy. I do this on the day he would have turned 68. Person If you ask students, fellow teachers, field workers, or managers who Frans was, the replies are likely to agree on a few traits in particular: Frans was extraordinarily warm and gentle, and approachable and attentive if you had something to say to him or to ask him. He had not a trace of professorial aloofness or arrogance. On the contrary. But his warmth went hand in hand with acuity and discernment: gentleness for Frans didn't mean docility. He could utter the word 'empathy' as if he had taken a bite of something that had

gone off. Frans had boundless interest, first and foremost in people: whether it was a former student who came to see him or a taxi driver who took him to some meeting or other, an elderly lady walking with difficulty down the street, a sick colleague abroad or a young gay man struggling to find his way – Frans talked to them. When he talked to people, he was often serious, sometimes light-hearted and always disarming – he called this *effe bepen*, taking time for a chat. And, typically, he offered help: he gave the taxi driver directions to the trade union, the former student to a therapist, he sent the fellow lecturer cuttings from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* or *Le Monde*, he tipped off someone looking for a new home about a nice little street in Utrecht, and his friends about a restaurant that had just opened somewhere or about what handywoman to engage. Was there anything Frans didn't know? It must have been his unrivalled erudition and his wide-ranging curiosity, as well as his excellent memory, that enabled him to help people like he did. We also remember Frans as a practising Catholic – we may well ask what on earth inspired a young gay man from Brabant to want to become, of all things, a moral theologian in the Roman Catholic Church. Surely that combination is bound to come to grief – and so it did, dramatically, and he paid a high price for it. He never hid his homosexuality and long looked for all kinds of subtle possibilities to stay within the church as a gay person. This is the point where his deepest longings, his critical mind, his childlike piety, and his loyalty to tradition and to the people he loved were at cross-purposes with each other, and his friends often found it difficult to make sense of his choices. Who was the real Frans? Part of him was that he was conflicted, a man full of contradictions. This was both his strength and a cross he had to bear, a source of cheerful ab-



Prof. Frans Vosman

surdity and of constant pain. Frans was all these things at once. Others will fondly remember Frans as the rotund guy who wore baggy pants, threadbare shirts and always carried a plastic bag full of paper. Or as the man sitting at his dining table at home reading piles of newspapers in many languages, who read all his books pencil and ruler in hand, who could be spotted slowly peddling his old-fashioned roadster bicycle through Utrecht, and who covered the walls of his study with artwork ranging from Saint Therese of Lisieux to mildly obscene homoerotic pieces. Frans's artistic taste was for the heavy and the dark: he was interested in how power works, in the primeval force of sex, the raw, ragged edges of society, the art of survival, a mixture of highbrow and lowbrow art. None of it was sweet or lovely. He had a few little altars at home, for his parents and his sister who died young, and whom he adored, and for friends he had lost to AIDS. Frans was at home in so many worlds, he straddled boundaries.

But above all Frans was a politically-oriented ethicist, a moral theologian who gradually developed into a brilliant care ethicist of international acclaim and renown. We can see how this happened by looking a little more closely at his career. He acquired certain crucial orientations in his thinking during his time as a student in Nijmegen: ethical arguments must always be linked to the social and cultural sciences.

Memories of Frans Vosman (1952-2020) *by* Prof. Andries Baart

Even at the time that Frans still operated within a classically Catholic framework, he had an open eye for the wider contexts in which moral questions appear and can be – or can't be – resolved. He loved to study classical texts from his discipline, philosophical, ethical and religious, but eventually he began to focus increasingly on disciplines such as sociology, economics, politics and public administration – to such an extent even that some observers wondered where the ethicist had gone. He had a clear preference for the critique of ideology. Apart from the church, Frans didn't believe many things! The fields he worked in were correspondingly wide, ranging from all kinds of theological issues to the body, youth culture, educational and healthcare policy, sex, social marginalisation, multiculturalism, tolerance and indifference. Frans had broad interests. When he became professor of moral theology in 2000, he announced – and this was nothing new for many people – that he was not interested in judging what is good in moral issues by looking at them from the perspective of doctrine, but that he wanted to work in the opposite direction, talking back to official doctrine on the basis of 'what manifests itself as good in practice'. He and I began working together as far back as 1984. It was in early 2000 that Frans started to take an interest in the kind of qualitative-empirical research from which my presence theory also emerged. This became an important turn in his development: connecting ethics with a very specific kind of empirical research. This began around 2000, and it lasted until 2019. He increasingly confronted the conundrums involved in this together with me and with Guus Timmerman. It was through presence theory that he first encountered and became interested in care ethics, and when he was compelled to move to the Faculty of Humanities in Til-

burg in 2006, the newly-formed department also included the care ethicist Annelies van Heijst – who had, like Frans, been educated in Nijmegen. His years in Tilburg (2006-2013) were among the best of his life, also because he was out of reach of the church authorities. He helped create of the first, and so far the only, Master's programme in Care Ethics in the world; and was involved in setting up a wide-ranging research group on care ethics, a series called Ethics of Care published by Peeters in Leuven, and of a website on care ethics. We launched a 5-yearlong care ethical field project in the local hospital and were able to appoint PhD students who connected empirical research with the ethics of care. It was an exceptionally vibrant and creative time, and Frans was at the heart of all of this. He gradually developed a myriad international contacts, putting his fabled language skills and his charm to good use. Intensive interaction with the field constantly led to the identification of new issues that could be connected with care ethics. Frans read frenetically and stimulated his colleagues in their work. Changing faculty policies in Tilburg necessitated the transfer, between 2011 and 2013, of this whole emerging care ethical scene to the University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht, where Frans was appointed to the chair of Care Ethics. But he was no longer in charge. The new structure and culture, the new style of management and the loss of independence were difficult for him to endure. For many years he lamented the fact that in the new setting, the ethics of care was no longer being nourished, reinvigorated and expanded by study, but that it was being adulterated by alien elements that threatened to turn it into a toothless lapdog. He was without a doubt the most popular lecturer, the expert par excellence on care ethics, the man who studied day and night to develop the discipline, but

he was side-lined. To make matters worse, he fell ill for the first time in 2015 and it took more than a year before he was able to return to work. But by then he was much weakened and was disappointed at the direction chosen, and he became increasingly isolated. He chose to concentrate on what he could do outside the confines of the department: he designed and edited – often together with colleagues abroad – seven important and, in many respects, innovative books in the field of care ethics. Two were soon published and three further volumes appeared this year, shortly before his death. Two more books are forthcoming and will be published shortly. He also continued to work on European care ethical networks and focused on his remaining PhD students. He put in incredible effort, and has left an astonishing legacy. He felt he had been badly treated at the theological university in 2006 and ultimately also at the University of Humanistic Studies in 2014/5. He always said that, as a gay man, he had a sixth sense for danger and threats and had eyes in the back of his head. This was true, but what he didn't say was that he rarely defended himself and never really engaged his adversary head-on. I always found this hard and, frankly, it was awful to see how this allowed evil forces to gain ground. After all, he had a great talent that fully deserved to be cherished. Frans's death means that care ethics must now do without a great scholar, a pacesetter, an innovator, a networker across the frontiers of countries and disciplines, a voracious reader who pointed out new directions, and a valued colleague who was sometimes a little strange, not always easy to understand, but extraordinarily kind and gentle. It is almost unbearable to think that we are commemorating him today, precisely two years after his valedictory address, which dealt, of all possible subjects, with the art of survival.

"It is almost unbearable to think that we are commemorating him ..."

The Dialogue *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

Student: "What constitutes a good paragraph or sentence?"

Teacher: "It is obvious. Don't you know that as a proper language student?"

Student: "Knowing? What does that mean, ma'am, and how does that relate to being?"

Teacher: "Never mind, let us get back to your question. It refers to the appropriate application and usage of proper language structure and grammar, and it is off course a prerequisite of good language practice."

Student: "With reference to academic integrity, how does proper language usage contribute to that?" What justifies a paragraph or sentence to be literate in allowing us to adapt to new ways of knowing - new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge?"

Teacher: "You don't pay the necessary respect. How do you dare to challenge my intelligence as a language expert?"

Student: "With all due respect ma'am, don't you as the expert know that language is never neutral? It is based on context and location."

Teacher: "I had enough of your interrogations - you are the learner, and I am the teacher. You will not continue with this nonsense, and you will do as I say!"

Student: "May you kindly explain what a discourse means ma'am, as this refers me back to my second question."

Teacher: "Discourses have absolutely nothing to do with language. You are being a difficult student in my classroom and display an unwillingness to cooperate."



Student: "It seems to me that teachers, especially in higher education, have not come to terms with the specific literacies evident in their discipline. Academic literacies have to do with the mastery of a way of being that is required of students as they engage with the higher education landscape. There is a difference between language and literacy, where the idea of discourse is implicated, and the relationship between knowing and being is to be understood. It is evident in higher education teaching and learning that students have to produce knowledge, not only consume knowledge. How are we being prepared to produce knowledge that is contextualised and located in our socio-cultural backgrounds, related to our identity that would enable us to display academic integrity? Ma'am, I am only questioning the taken-for-granted practices evident in higher education teaching and learning spaces."

Teacher: "Visit the writing centre and don't come back to my class until you have mastered the necessary writing skills ... Class dismissed."

Language, in a broad sense, refers to the appropriate usage of language structures (i.e.

grammar and spelling) in a manner that makes linguistic sense. The use of language also refers to a system of choices based on context and location (Boughey & McKenna, 2016) and thus never neutral. Language focuses on the teaching of the English language, for example, where students are taken through grammatical and spelling rubrics to improve their writing and reading activities. Literacy focuses on the multiple ways of engaging with the production of different types of written text that are valued in various disciplines. Academic literacy, on the other hand, refers to an academic language that provides evidence of propositions or statements supported by literature, testifying of specificity, value, evidence and definitions.

Academic literacy is not only a matter of proper language usage as it is discipline-specific. Academic literacy practices constitute central processes through which students learn these new ways of knowing, and develop their knowledge about the new areas of study. Academic literacies have to do with the mastery of a way of being that is required of students as they engage with higher education (Boughey & McKenna, 2016).

"There is a difference between language and literacy ..."

The Dialogue *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

Furthermore, academic literacy practices refer to reading, writing, and talking within disciplines and developing knowledge about that discipline. This knowledge serves as the currency as students learn to develop this academic literacy. Adapting to new ways of knowing, new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge, is what academic literacy is all about.

The difference between language and academic literacy lies in the fact that language is some kind of prerequisite, but not enough to engage in proper academic writing. What is needed is fluent academic literacy that expresses the beauty of language usage in a proper academic manner, allowing students to write coherently in the formulation of his/her own voice or argument as informed by their different socio-cultural backgrounds. When literacy is understood at the level of language, it becomes evident that language is used as a neutral instrument to still maintain domination in higher education (Boughey & McKenna, 2016). Academic literacies are slightly narrower as the focus is on the various ways of engaging with and producing the different kinds of written text that are valued in the multiple disciplines.

It is not only enough to provide formal access to higher education. Epistemological access is crucial, enabling participation in a particular discipline of study through the provision of access to powerful knowledge in that discipline. It becomes evident in my mind why students plagiarise if not adequately taught. I cannot help but begin to think about the link between academic literacy



and epistemological access as a gap or bridge too far for many. Epistemological access can be best defined as learning how to become a successful participant in academic practice where the student is regarded as a contextualised learner (Morrow, 2009). It also refers to the recognition of the student as a contextualised learner, where students' social accounts and practices, prior knowledge, experiences and expectations; their inherent abilities, talent or intelligence, hard work, efforts, motivation, work ethics, intelligence and language proficiency and other individual attributes, as well as institutional and contextual factors that are necessary for their academic achievements (Clarence & McKenna, 2017). Most literacy specialists would say that these ideas relate to an understanding of the student as decontextualised.

In contrast, an academic literacies approach understands learning as taking place in a specific disciplinary context. Epistemological access, therefore, refers to access to the knowledge and knowledge-making processes of the discipline. If one understands how to read, write, make knowledge claims in the discipline, then one can be said to

have access to the knowledge, epistemological access.

As universities have massified and democratised, there is a need to take into cognisance the multiple structural issues in higher education that might have an impact on student success. It is also important to acknowledge that whereas schools are consumers of knowledge, universities are producers of knowledge and seen in this light; epistemological access is such a necessary ingredient contributing to the successful migration of students from the schooling sector into higher education teaching and learning spaces.

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“it was inspiring to see how many links can be made between disciplines and fields of study to integrate our research and collectively make a real difference in society...”

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Books

- Dunckert, J. & Eastwood, J.D (2020). Out of my skull: The psychology of boredom. Harvard University Press.
- Kaufman, S.B. (2020). Transcend: The new science of self-actualization. Penguin.
- Raworth, K. (2017). Doughnut economics: Seven ways to think like a 21-st Century economist.
- Tomasulo, D. (2020). Learned hopefulness: The power of positivity to overcome depression. New Harbinger Publications.
- Wood, W. (2019). Good habits - Bad habits: The science of making positive changes that stuck. Macmillan.

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