

Special points of interest:

- * Cooperating in flexible ways is vital for human achievement
- * Precarity and capability are fundamental concerns
- * Prof. Monica Ferreira will be awarded an honorary doctorate by the NWU
- * Research day: Cultivating humanity
- * Build capacity to deal with poverty, unemployment and inequality

Inside this issue:

Optentia's performance	2
Our philosophy	3
New research programme	4
Cultivating humanity	6
Optentia webinars	7
Unemployment research	10
Stats Camp	15
Artificial sociality	17
Taking stock	18
Postdoctoral conference	20
Programme news	32

The Future of Humanity: Cooperating in Flexible Ways

The theme of this newsletter is: "Cooperating in flexible ways". Why this theme? Our research shows that large numbers of people in South Africa are not flourishing. Three dimensions, namely emotional, psychological and social well-being of people could be studied to understand their flourishing or languishing. The social well-being of people relates to their experiences of connectedness, which affect their mental health. Mental illnesses can be attributed to isolation (egoism) and anomie (lack of regulation). Keyes (2003) identified five elements of social well-being. Social integration refers to the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others as well as the degree to which they feel they belong to their community. Individuals who are socially accepting hold favourable views of human nature and feel comfortable with others. Social contribution refers to the belief that one is a vital member of a community, with something of value to contribute. Social actualization refers to a belief in the evolution of society and the sense that society has potential which is being realised through institutions and its citizens. Social coherence refers to whether people care about the kind of world they find themselves in, and whether they can understand what is happening around them. Research in South Africa shows that four elements of social well-being (compared to other elements of well-being) have lower mean scores. Social acceptance



(holding favourable views of human nature and feeling comfortable with others), social actualization (feeling that organisations and communities are becoming better places), social coherence (understanding how organisations and communities function), and social belonging (feeling that others involve you) were rated lowest. Low scores on these elements of social well-being could damage the cooperation of people. Individuals will tend to flourish if they are grounded in intimate communities. Intimate communities have been disintegrating over the last few decades and efforts to replace them with imagined communities of nations and political parties will probably not succeed (Harari, 2018).

Any large-scale human achievement is the result of people (on a collective level) cooperating in flexible ways. Harari (2018) states that such cooperation is vital to address three problems the world face, namely nuclear war, climate change

and technological disruption. However, he also pointed out that nationalism, religion and culture divide humans into hostile camps and make it very difficult to collaborate. Social upheavals result from the disintegration of human communities. Although institutions like Facebook wishes to reconnect individuals, user distrust developed because of their recent misuses of information. While Facebook might want to connect people, it does not give people the tools that they need to connect to their own experiences, which results in alienation.

To flourish, people need purpose and support. Although we live in a connected world, social well-being becomes an issue. Inequality, not because of income, but because of technological disruptions further complicate cooperation. Conflict will arise, not because people are exploited, but because they are (and feel) irrelevant for institutions and societies.

Performance of Optentia: 2018

Concerning permanent staff, 20 primary and 6 secondary participants were affiliated to Optentia. A total of 5 support staff members, 6 postdoctoral fellows, and 26 temporary staff members (26 extraordinary professors and 3 extraordinary researchers) participated in Optentia. Prof. Roland Blank, Prof. Todd Little, and Prof. Anne Magriet Pot were appointed extraordinary professors in Optentia.

A total of 26 master's and 11 PhD students have completed their studies in 2018. Moreover, 15 Master's and 4 PhD students submitted their dissertations and thesis for examination during November 2018. Also, 26 master's students and 16 PhD students successfully defended their



research proposals. A total of 31 master's and 3 PhD students have to submit proposals. The first two PhD candidates in a joint PhD programme with KU Leuven, Leoni van der Vaart and Melinda du Toit completed their qualifications.

Optentia presented 25 research events and workshops during 2018 and 750 people participated in these events. We are also proud that the Optentia Research Day was a success.

"We produced 42.06 peer-reviewed articles during 2018."

The Optentia Scorecard *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Output	2016	2017	2018	2019
Peer-reviewed publications	92	98	90	53
Peer-reviewed articles *	45.85	44.81	42.06	26.23
Peer-reviewed publications (Scopus)*	32.55	35.47 (87%)	33.37	24.73
Peer-reviewed chapters	10.49	31	8	18
Papers: International conferences	20	24	14	
Papers: National conferences	25	14	3	
Number of NRF rated researchers	4	4	5	
Participating Master's students	59	37	46 (31)	
Completed Master's students	9	18	26 (15)	
Participating PhD students	31	22	16 (3)	
Completed PhD students	15	3	11 (4)	
Post-doctoral fellows	7	6	6	
Number of workshops presented	15	28	25	
Number of workshop participants	460	393	750	

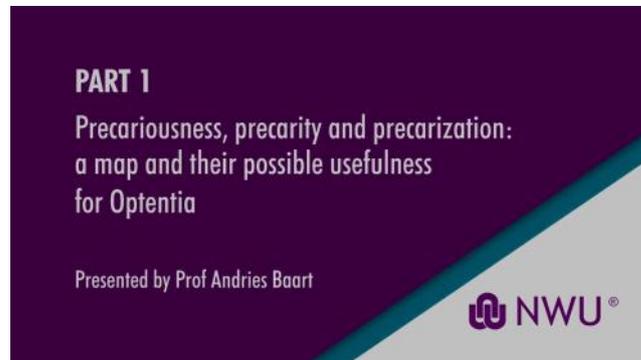
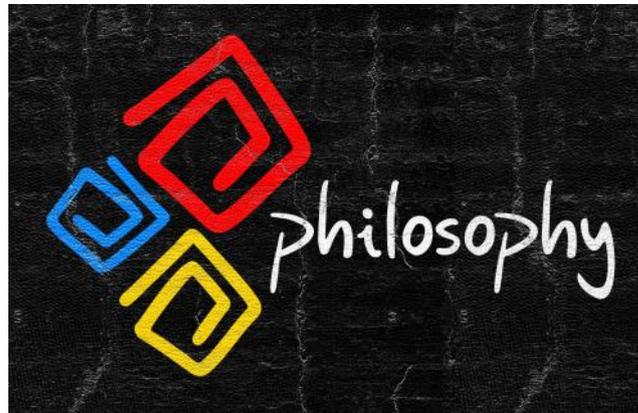
Note: Outputs as on 13 December

* Expressed in terms of equivalents

The Capability Approach, Precarity and Positivity *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Prof. Andries Baart recently presented three workshops directed at assisting Optentia to conceptualise a philosophical framework for research programmes. He highlighted two approaches:

- The concepts and theories of precariousness, precarity and precarization could be useful for (the purposes of) the Optentia programmes as such and for (the identification of) their common core. He described precarity as a condition of a chronic insecure life, dominated by various uncertainties, affecting deeply one's life - physically, socially, economically and also psychologically and existential. Precarity is characterised by the deprivation of fundamental rights, honourable positions, political recognition, effective citizenship or even affective attention - in short: deplorable and worse living conditions. Click [here](#) to view the slides about precarity, precariousness, and precarization that were presented in his first workshop. Optentia produced a video of the second workshop in which Prof. Baart further dealt with the implications of precarity, precariousness, and precarization for Optentia's research programmes. The video can be viewed [here](#).
- The Capability Approach studies all aspects of human flourishing. It analyses the sets of opportunities available to persons in a wide range of life-relevant outcomes and their freedom to choose from those sets. Click [here](#) to view slides about Optentia's approach to research. Optentia also produced a video about the third workshop presented by Prof. Baart. In this workshop he integrates the capability approach in the philosophy of Optentia. Click [here](#) to watch the video.



Click on the picture above to watch Part 1 and 2 of the videos

A research entity that wants to be involved in this complex and rich way of viewing the world:

- Should combine both perspectives (theory and intervention/problem and suffering/distance and nearness/analytical and phenomenological).
- Focus radically on burning issue of precarity.
- Needs to be empirically grounded and expose itself to the burning issue from within.
- Reflect in political moral way.
- Avoid the naivety of the modern concepts of the welfare state, immunizing precarization and reproducing it in terms of gender, power, hierarchy, exclusion, and voicelessness.

He mentioned the following challenges for Optentia:

- To find a basic theory in which the (already) preferred options fit.
- To balance the psychological and sociological approaches: ambivalent (neoliberal) concepts such as resilience, self-reliance, and happiness are risky.
- To avoid on a conceptual and practical level (further) precarization.

Please note: The links to the two videos and the slideshow about precariousness, precarity and precarization mentioned on this page are password protected. Please contact [Lynn Booysen](#) or [Marinda Malan](#) if you want to access these resources on the Optentia website.

“Precarity is characterised by the deprivation of fundamental rights ...”

Enhancing Risk Culture: New Programme in Optentia

The concept of risk culture as critical to the effectiveness of risk management in organisations gained traction after the 2008 financial crisis. The behavioural aspects of risk management have since been seen as the ultimate panacea for optimising the large structural investments made in to risk management. Subsequently, supervisory and professional organisations have provided guidelines on improving the risk cultures in organisations, followed by consulting houses enthusiastically consulting on the topic. Although some academic work has been published, the concept and attributions to its organisational value has largely been untested. This is an under-developed academic research area with many applied research opportunities to provide risk culture with greater formal academic grounding to be sustainable in the long-term.

“... we investigate the definition, understanding and measurement of the concept of risk culture in organisations.”

In this ground-breaking research programme, we investigate the definition, understanding and measurement of the concept of risk culture in organisations across the public and private sectors. Our unique two-year part-time M.Com in Applied Risk Management, started in 2014, has so far delivered 26 master’s degree risk-culture-related mini-dissertations from four student cohorts. These studies have provided us with data to test, validate and improve the UARM Risk Culture Scale (UARM RCS) (click [here](#) for the demo version). This scale measures a focused view of risk culture based on the value attributed to risk in organisations as evidenced by the consideration of risk when decisions are made. The scale has proven to be



Prof. Hermien Zaaiman and participants in the Enhancing Risk Culture Programme

reliable and valid for the comparison between organisational subgroups on two factors: the perception of risk culture and comfort with own risk management role. The scale also provides organisations with indications of what the participants believe need to change to improve the risk culture of the studied organisation. This provides a promising area of future research to which we believe our fellow Optentia researchers will be able to contribute: now that we have shown where possible issues lie, what do we do about it?

Other developing research projects in our programme focus on safety risk culture, using agent-based modelling, and project programme risk management challenges.

We are delighted to have joined Optentia as a research programme and look forward to working with, and learning from, the other researchers in this entity!

For more information on this programme, please contact Prof. [Hermien Zaaiman](#).

Honorary Doctorate for Prof. Monica Ferreira!

Optentia is delighted that the North-West University Council at their 22 November 2018 meeting resolved to confer an Honorary Doctorate on Prof. Monica Ferreira. What she stands for speaks to the research Optentia is committed to do – a better world for all ages. Prof. Ferreira is the most prominent first generation exponent of research and development of policy on ageing in Africa. She not only pioneered the field in Africa but also contributed internationally to the expansion of research on population ageing as one of the major challenges that will face the globe in the 21st Century.

- She drew our attention to the fact that population ageing is not only a developed world challenge but it will equally impact on the developing world.
- She pondered on intergenerational equity and justice in light of the fact that in sub-Saharan Africa people will age in the youngest of all regions.
- She advocated a paradigm shift for older persons not to be seen as a burden or a problem but to acknowledge their considerable contributions.

To this end she established the National Research Programme on Ageing at the Human Sciences Research Council based in Pretoria in 1984. The main purpose of the programme was to stimulate and fund research on ageing in South Africa of which Prof. Jaco Hoffman who now leads the Research on Ageing Programme at Optentia was a recipient for his MA degree at NWU. The programme had a prolific publishing strategy and among the numerous publications to emanate in the 1980s was an edited volume on ageing in South Africa.

In 1991, the programme evolved into the HSRC/UCT Centre for Gerontology at the University of Cape Town with Prof. Ferreira appointed as the first Director. Not only did she integrate research on ageing into aca-

demia, she also contributed to the development of policy on ageing in the changing South African context. It is during this period that she founded the hugely influential Southern African Journal of Gerontology (1992–2001) of which she was the first editor. The centre was later renamed and is now known as The Albertina and Walter Sisulu Institute of Ageing in Africa within the Department of Medicine at the University of Cape Town.

During the 2000s her contribution to African gerontology extended deeper into the continent and beyond Africa during which time she has developed an extensive global network of gerontologists and organisations. She contributed to pan-African policy on ageing and played a major role as consultant to the United Nations and the World Health Organization. She was a member of the UN Technical Committee to draft the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 on which the current Act on Older Persons in South Africa is based; the African Union Expert Group to draft the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing 2003; served as advisor to the UN International Institute of Ageing (INIA); UN expert groups to draft a UN/International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics Global Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century and an Africa regional expert and advisory groups. She also served on the Board of Directors of the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the Panel on Ageing in Developing Countries of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSPP).

On the foundation that Prof. Ferreira laid, the United Nations-endorsed African Research on Ageing Network was established with in 2005 at the University of Oxford with Prof. Isabella Aboderin. This network of which she was a founding member and on which Steering Committee



Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. Monica Ferreira

she served, contributed and still does to the coordination and mainstreaming of the research endeavour in Africa and is now coordinated by Prof. Jaco Hoffman. Towards the end of her formal career Prof. Ferreira was honoured by Dr Robert Neil Butler to head the only International Longevity Centre (ILC) in Africa. ILC South Africa is one of 17 such centres in the [ILC Global Alliance network](#) with an aim to help societies to address longevity and population ageing in positive and productive ways, typically using a life course approach, highlighting older people's productivity and contributions to family and society as a whole. Prof. Ferreira still actively contributes as Honorary President of ILC SA after she had served as Co-President of the Global Alliance with Baroness Sally Greengross (UK).

After her retirement, Monica was instrumental in curating the Directory of Research on Ageing in Africa, as well as the follow-up Directory of Research on Ageing in Africa. The acknowledgement below in the more recent report suggests the extent of Monica's impact. "Special acknowledgement is due to Monica Ferreira and Nana Araba Apt, leaders in research on ageing in Africa, who graciously mentored and encouraged subsequent generations of ageing researchers and advocates." The achievements of Prof. Ferreira as first mover in an underdeveloped field deserves to be honoured. Optentia is proud to be associated with Prof. Ferreira and extend our congratulations to her!

"She drew our attention to the fact that population ageing is not only a developed world challenge but it will equally impact on the developing world ..."

Optentia Research Day: Cultivating Humanity

Poverty, unemployment, poor service delivery, lack of economic growth: there are a lot to be done before we will see the African continent truly thriving. The need for interdisciplinary research has never been greater. The Optentia Research Focus Area on the Vanderbijlpark Campus of the North-West University (NWU) recently hosted a day dedicated to such research. Themed, "Cultivating Humanity", the event aimed to contribute to the three capacities essential to the cultivation of humanity. These are:

"... the event aimed to contribute to the three capacities essential to the cultivation of humanity."

- To critically examine oneself and one's traditions;
- To possess the ability to see oneself not only as a part of a group, but also as a human being, bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern;
- To cultivate the ability to imagine yourself in the shoes of someone who may be different from yourself and be an intelligent reader of that person's story.

During her official opening of the event, Prof Linda du Plessis, Deputy Vice-chancellor responsible for planning at the NWU, said that research cannot be conducted in isolation. She argued that a multidisciplinary approach to solving society's research problems have become essential. Prof. Du Plessis described Optentia as a research flagship of the NWU and praised the focus area for not only focussing on optimising individual and organisational potential, but also succeeding in creating an environment where staff and students can flourish and subsequently



Click on the link above to watch the video about the Optentia Research Day



Dr Laura Weiss facilitated a discussion on postgraduate students well-being and cultivating humanity

contribute to society in a meaningful way.

The research day boasted a jam-packed programme during which experts from all over the world joined the conversation by participating in two different webinars. The Yabelana Community Information Project for older persons was also launched on the day. A story board of the we Deliver project can be seen [here](#).

Close to 300 researchers and practitioners from various higher education institutions, government and business organisations and communities attended the research day. Participants expressed appreciation for and excitement about the new networks they developed at the

research day as well as the wonderful learning opportunities they experienced. Researchers and students expressed appreciation for the opportunities to learn from many international experts who participated in the events. An exhibition of posters detailing research projects from a variety of disciplines wrapped up the day and offered delegates the opportunity to network. Dialogue groups provided an opportunity for participants from different diverse backgrounds to discuss ways to cultivate a humane society. Optentia participants learned new competencies in presenting webinars and research activities. Lessons learned will be applied in organising events in the future.

Caring Connections Enable Resilience: Presentation by Prof. Linda Theron

"My teacher loves me." "My social worker is like my mother, she cares." "My neighbour cares for me; he doesn't want me to go hungry." These quotes illustrate that caring connections matter for the resilience of South African adolescents facing chronic, unthinkable levels of hardship. Prof. Linda Theron's research among young people has shown the value of these connections. Prof. Theron recently stepped into her new position as extraordinary professor at Optentia.

She describes these caring connections as being broadly inclusive of family, non-family, young and old, all races and abilities. She argued that caring connections that prioritise human solidarity and the well-being of adolescents, can be seen as enablers of the resilience in young people. Prof. Theron defines these connections as a fundamental loving kindness.

Prof. Theron reckons that the findings of international studies done on resilience are similar to what was found in the South African context, with a few significant exceptions. She explained that when Sesotho or IsiZulu speaking adolescents talk about the inclusive human collective that makes a difference to them when it comes to resilience, it is tough to predict who they will include. It may be a biological parent or someone who is like a parent; it may be a peer or even a kind stranger. South African studies are also distinguished by local socio-cultural considerations such as interdependence and other local realities.

Her argument is that a young person is therefore not resilient per se, but that resilience is co-



Prof. Ansie Fouché and Prof. Linda Theron



[Click on the picture above to watch the video about cultivating humanity as a pathway to resilience](#)

facilitated. Young people who show good outcomes despite their circumstances have the support of adults and peers who are pro-socially minded. Her wish is for people to commit to championing the resilience of young people who are at risk. They can do this by joining hands with them, affirming their strengths and showing them that they are not alone. She dreams of adults fighting for societies where there is less risk, enabling young people to feel safe and less threatened, and fighting for meaningful resources such as education.

Prof. Theron shared her experience working with young people who are living what she

calls "terrible lives" yet are still determined to keep going. She urged parents, teachers, family and neighbours of such youngsters to work with them to find a way to sustain their resilience.

Prof. Theron believes that by purposefully committing to research towards humanity and sustainable human solidarity, we will never lose. We will either win, or we will learn.

"Young people who show good outcomes despite their circumstances have the support of adults and peers who are pro-socially minded."

Optentia Research Day: Growing Minds Webinar

During the Research Day on 26 September 2018, Optentia presented a webinar “Growing Minds: Towards 21st Century Competencies”. Information about the webinar and slides of presenters can be viewed [here](#).

The presentation of Prof. Kirsti Lonka focused on the **kinds of skills students need and how to promote them**. Prof. Lonka pointed out that the way to globalisation, digitalisation, and automation is paved with many challenges shared by countries around the globe. Finland is currently developing the school system to a new level and standard. This calls for intensive reforms, both in teacher education and at school. She discussed the latest developments in education, phenomenon-based learning, technologies in education, and new learning environments. A new strategic project [growing-mind.fi](#) was introduced that applies a rich set of research methods, combining surveys, contextual sampling methods, qualitative methods and neuroscience to look at the new generation of learners in Finnish schools. This also involves teacher learning and developing the whole school community. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Hans Henrik Knoop focused on the **flourishing of learners**. He argued that psychology, and especially positive psychology informs us well as on how to view the flourishing of pupils and teachers as a precondition for high academic achievement rather than a result of it. The intrinsic value of the educational experience, the sense of self-determination, the optimal experience of flow, the joy of



employing willpower and truly meaningful self-discipline are moving steadily towards the center of educational thinking. This is not because there is agreement that school and education should be joyful, but because it is more effective, more sought after, more morally just, and more competitive in the long run. No culture or society is served well by disengaged citizens. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Ben Mardell presented about the **pedagogy of play** in South Africa. He focused on playful learning and Ubuntu: Play is a core resource for learning, in early childhood and beyond, and thus should have an important role in school. Even educators committed to their students learning through play can have difficulty articulating what the phenomenon of playful learning involves. Based on in-depth observations and interviews in 11 classrooms, the Pedagogy of Play South Africa project has created a model of what playful learning involves. Prof. Mardell shared the model and outlined the methodology that led to its creation. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Jonathan Jansen focused on **presence as a competence** of teachers. He asked

whether presence is something that can be acquired through learning. He also focused on the dimensions of presence in schools. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Mary Grosser focused on how students can become **smarter in the art of thinking, living and working together**. Academic excellence is important and necessary in the 21st century, but not sufficient. Competencies to think and behave smarter are required to shape students who are passionate about what happens in the future to the world and the communities they live in. Quality education is more than just obtaining qualifications, but also grooms students in the art of living and working together against the background of the theory of High-Performance Learning and the Round Square Philosophy. She argued that curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities and activities should promote a pedagogy that is humane, intellectually challenging and pluralistic in order to groom students to become smarter in the art of thinking, living and working together. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

“She discussed the latest developments in education, phenomenon-based learning, technologies in education, and new learning environments.”

Optentia Research Day: Pathways to Flourishing

During the Research Day on 26 September 2018, Optentia presented a webinar “Pathways to the flourishing of individuals, organisations and communities”. Information about the webinar and slides of presenters can be viewed [here](#).

Prof. Ruut Veenhoven addressed the **kind of society people flourish in**. How well people thrive manifests in how long and happy they live. This can be measured using an index of ‘Happy Life Years (HLY), which combines subjective reports of life-satisfaction and objectively assessed longevity. Data Happy Life Years is available for the population in 158 contemporary nations, scores varying from 14,8 in Togo to 66,4 in Iceland. Analysis of the societal determinants of these differences reveals several pathways to flourishing people, one of which is the proper functioning of government bureaucracy. Analysis of change over time shows that ongoing modernisation is a right path. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Fons van de Vijver argued that **inclusiveness is an important pathway to flourishing**. He said that both flourishing and misery are often man-made. Intergroup relations in plural societies are a source of both flourishing and misery that is entirely man made. Almost all countries harbour multiple ethnic groups. Yet, the relations between the ethnic groups vary greatly across countries. Some countries are much better in fostering a sense of inclusiveness than others. Psychology can help to understand what is needed to bring South Africa closer to the

ideal of the Rainbow Nation. He discussed factors that stimulate and inhibit a sense of inclusiveness in schools, organisations, and society. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Frans Cilliers pointed out that flourishing can be studied from a systems psychodynamic stance in terms of the **systemic unconscious manifestations of flourishing and languishing**, representing the split between good and bad. This split may even be institutionalised through projective identification meaning that both parts of the system will own and act out its received projections, thus ensuring that the split remains intact. The split can only shift when both systemic parts are willing to enter into an open facilitated conversation. This includes making the unconscious material, with its defensive structures, conscious and which needs to be followed by insight into and owning of the projective dynamic. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Prof. Saskia Kelders discussed how **apps can be used to promote flourishing**. App stores are overflowing with apps related to Positive Psychology. And why shouldn't they? Positive psychology and apps seem like a great

combination: they both appeal to large groups of people and provide an opportunity to intervene when needed in a positive way. But do these apps live up to their expectations? What is the quality of these freely available apps? Research has shown that there are serious issues with the quality of apps in the mental health domain. Click [here](#) to see the presentation.

Ms Manoko Ratala presented about **Ubuntu and work**. The cardinal belief of Ubuntu is that one can only be human through the humanity of others. It goes without saying that the human spirit needs to be nurtured, for people, organisations and communities to flourish. African indigenous knowledge teaches that there are different spirits with different roles in the ecology of humanity. Merging indigenous knowledge with current IOP science will help support the integration of the head, heart and hands of each individual, and thus help humanity flourish in a robust environment of authentic Ubuntu. The question is, how can we, through comprehensive research, and a quest for indigenous solutions, bring this reality to the fore of human behaviour in organisations and society? Click [here](#) to watch the presentation.



“... inclusiveness is an important pathway to flourishing ...”

Unemployment Symposium: Sharing Research Findings

Crime, stigmatisation and loss of self-worth: these are only three of the many challenges that come with unemployment.

During the recent international Unemployment Symposium, hosted by Optentia, the spotlight fell on these and other challenges to understand and ultimately work towards the eradication of unemployment. Role players from academia, the community and business - locally and internationally, gathered to discuss the research conducted in the multi-disciplinary unemployment project. The project is a joint research effort between the North-West University and KU Leuven in Belgium, with the financial backing of the Flemish Interuniversity Board.

The symposium shared the research insights and feedback from the community regarding the current unemployment situation in South Africa and the way forward. Community role players



Rachele Paver, Prof. Anja van den Broeck, Dr Melinda du Toit, Prof. Hans De Witte, Dr Leoni van der Vaart, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Linda du Plessis

were invited to share in their experiences.

The heartbeat of the project was the three PhD-students who have been working hard over the last five years to understand unemployment. Melinda du Toit embarked on qualitative research to understand the experiences of people in the townships of South Africa. Leoni van der Vaart did a

quantitative survey kind of study, looking at the different types of unemployment as well as coping behaviour and motivation. Lastly, Rachele Paver developed an intervention to assist unemployed people to get back into the job market.

“Role players from academia, the community and business - locally and internationally, gathered to discuss the research.”



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation, Prof. Refilwe Phaswana-Mafuya and participants in the Unemployment Symposium

Research about Unemployment: Watch the Videos

Psychological well-being and re-employment remains high on the agenda for professionals assisting the unemployed. The well-being, the value one attaches to employment, and the effort that one invests into searching for a job is especially important when transitioning to employment. Psychological interventions are essential to ensure the well-being of unemployed people, but also to ensure that they remain responsive to opportunities.

The JOBS programme has been successfully implemented several countries across the globe, including the US, Finland, Ireland, Israel, China and the Netherlands. With the help of Professor Roland Blank (Tilburg University in the Netherlands), the unemployment research team from Optentia in collaboration with KU Leuven have adapted, implemented, and evaluated the JOBS programme within the South African context. The programme, which is called Qhubekela Phambili (QP) aims to assist unemployed individuals by enhancing their self-esteem, providing the social skills necessary for networking and interacting with potential, but also to inoculate them against the setbacks that are part of the job-search journey.

Rachele Paver, a PhD candidate studied the effects of the JOBS intervention on unemployed peoples' job-search self-efficacy, amotivation, and self-esteem. She focused on 131 unemployed individuals from two low-income communities. Participants in the intervention programme participated in six four-hour sessions. Data collection took place before starting with the intervention,



Click on the picture above to watch a video about the Unemployment Symposium



Click on the picture above to watch a video about the Qhubekela Phambili programme



Click on the picture above to watch a video about participant experiences of the Qhubekela Phambili programme

after the intervention, and four weeks thereafter. Her analyses showed that those who had undergone the intervention showed statistically significantly higher levels of job-search self-efficacy.

“Optentia in collaboration with KU Leuven have adapted, implemented, and evaluated the JOBS programme within the South African context.”

Collaborating to Deal with Unemployment



Dr Leoni van der Vaart, Dr Melinda du Toit, Khulu Radebe and Seipati Phala

“Strong networks resulted from the unemployment research project.”

Thembelihle Lobi, Dr Laura Weiss, Seipati Phala, Dr Melinda du Toit, Nancy Kariuki, and Thokozani Mzizi



Dr Melinda du Toit preparing for her presentation at the Unemployment Symposium

Dr Leoni van der Vaart presenting at the Unemployment Symposium



Building Capacity to Deal with Unemployment, Poverty and Inequality

The Fourth Industrial Revolution presents significant challenges to individuals and institutions. The unemployment research project brought together people from different backgrounds and disciplines to tackle unemployment, poverty and inequality.

- The project brought national and international experts from various disciplines together: from the KU Leuven (Belgium), Tilburg University (Netherlands), North-West University, University of the Free State, and University of Johannesburg. Click [here](#) to see the presentation of Prof. Roland Blom (TNO Arbeid and Tilburg University). Click [here](#) to see the presentation of Prof. Danie Meyer. Click [here](#) to read about the research of Prof. Frederick Fourie.
- We learned from community leaders in the Emfuleni and Sedibeng Districts. We will not forget the words of Mr Nicho Ntema (“I am 100% unemployable”) at one meeting of the Unemployment Research Advisory Board. Click [here](#) to see how Mr Ntema is taking initiative to develop a community. Mr Isaac Lesolo made significant inputs about dealing with unemployment. Click [here](#) to read more about his business. Mr Dan Sothoane enriched our project with his insights as Director of MCD Training Centre. He is passionate about technical skills training and reducing stereotypes about the work of artisans.

Optentia researchers were asked by community members to present the intervention programme

that we have adapted to more people in South Africa. A need was also expressed for more research to investigate employer perspectives on unemployment. A

need was also expressed for training programmes to empower change agents in township communities.



Prof. Roland Blom, extraordinary professor in Optentia



Mr Isaac Lesolo of Buddibox addressing participants at the

“We learned from community leaders in the Emfuleni and Sedibeng Districts...”



Prof. Frederick Fourie talking about the importance of the informal sector at the unemployment symposium

Three Short Learning Programmes of Optentia Approved

Three Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) of Optentia have recently been approved by the North-West University.

The **SLP on Research Design** is intended as a foundation for research methodology aimed at postgraduate students and researchers in the social sciences. Postgraduate study requires that a student be able to conduct rigorous and cutting-edge research and to communicate the research and the research results in a clear, transparent and understandable manner. Students should now be familiar with the basics of research methodology. The aim of this intensive course is to provide an overview of research methods, how to improve scientific thinking and writing, and how to communicate research findings. The general outcomes of this short learning programme include familiarising the student with the dimensions and methods of research, and to orient the student to make an informed choice from the large number of research designs and associated methodologies available. Students will also be enabled to formulate and present a good research proposal. The programme will aim to familiarise the student with the nature of research and scientific writing, and to empower the student with the knowledge and skills they would need to undertake a research project and to write a scientific article. Click [here](#) for more information about the SLP on Research Design.

The **SLP on Career Enhancement** aims to assist participants to identify who they are, and what they are good at; explore their passions, values, as



Participants in the August 2018 Short Programme in Research Design

well as possible career paths or entrepreneurial opportunities; understand possible job or entrepreneurial opportunities and finding ways to realise them; investigating and using external resources they have at their disposal, and assist participants in discovering the resources they have within themselves. The SLP seeks to enhance the self-esteem of the participants. Participants are equipped with the social skills necessary for networking, trained to contact potential employers and conduct interviews successfully; provided with important entrepreneurial skills; taught critical problem-solving skills; and given information regarding available employment resources within their communities. The personal empowerment of the participants is the real underlying mission of the workshop. Click [here](#) for more information about the SLP on Career Enhancement.

The **SLP on Harnessing Individual, Relational and Organisational Capabilities** aims to equip people with the necessary competence to successfully identify and harness individual,

relational and organisational capabilities. The Fourth Industrial Revolution represents a significant challenge to individuals, communities and organisations. This revolution is accompanied by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. As people are creatures of habit, the constantly changing context of work may bring a sense of despair, helplessness, incompetence, pessimism, and a lack of control. To respond to these changes, individuals need capabilities. However, developing new capabilities is a challenge in the South African context, characterised by poverty, inequality, unemployment. To overcome this negativity and prosper in today's economic climate, organisations and communities will have to be adaptable, creative, innovative, proactive, and positive. Click [here](#) for more information about the SLP on Harnessing Individual, Relational and Organisational Capabilities.

“To respond to these changes, individuals need capabilities.”

Stats Camp in South Africa: 23-26 April 2019

Analytical competence is of great importance to conduct social and psychological research. Optentia Research Focus Area, in collaboration with two international experts on statistical analysis (Prof. Todd D Little and Prof. Rens van de Schoot), will present a Stats Camp in South Africa. Stats Camp is an internationally recognised award-winning educational event focused on advanced statistical training at a graduate and postgraduate level.

Stats Camp seminars are highly relevant to current trends and practices in modern advanced statistical analysis. They enable researchers to get practical "hands-on" instruction that delivers practical value. Each year, full week-long Stats Camps and Mini Camps are held in locations throughout the world.

The Stats Camp will take place at Mongena Lodge from 23-26 April 2019. It will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Advanced statistical competence of academics and postgraduate students in the social sciences.
- Increased self-efficacy and less fear of statistics of students and staff.
- A national network of researchers who are competent at, and interested in, statistics.
- Networks that individual researchers can access to promote statistical competence.
- Implementation of actions to ensure competence development in quantitative methodologies.
- Development of evidence-based research in the social sciences.



The goal of the Stats Camp is to help participants to run their models in Mplus or R (lavaan, blavaan, stan) and maybe even to finalise their results section. The programme for the workshop is as follows:

- Day 1: Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling (Prof. Todd Little)
- Day 2: Translating research questions into models (Prof. Rens van de Schoot)
- Day 3: Statistical models and syntax
- Day 4: Statistical models and dealing with errors

Topics include scaling and identification, parceling procedures, multiple group confirmatory factor analysis, measurement invariance and rescaling constructs.

The registration fee for the Stats Camp is R6000.00 per person. The cost of the accommodation at Mongena Lodge depends on whether you are sharing rooms or having your own room. The cost for accommodation will vary between R9000.00 and R12000.00 per person.



Prof. Todd Little



Prof. Rens van de Schoot

A website for the Stats Camp will be available soon. Please follow our messages about the Stats Camp on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Contact Prof. Ian Rothmann for more information.

“Stats Camp seminars are highly relevant to current trends and practices in modern advanced statistical analysis.”

Healthy Eating and Happiness *by* Prof. Ruut Veenhoven

Healthy eating adds to health and thereby contributes to a longer life, but will it also add to a happier life? Some people do not like healthy food, and since we spend a considerable amount of our life eating, healthy eating could make their life less enjoyable.

Is there such a trade-off between healthy eating and happiness? Or instead a trade-on, healthy eating adding to happiness? Or do the positive and negative effects balance? If there is an effect of healthy eating on happiness, is that effect similar for everybody? If not, what kind of people profit from healthy eating happiness wise and what kind of people do not? If healthy

eating does add to happiness, does it add linearly or is there some optimum for healthy ingredients in one's diet?

I looked for an answer to these questions considering the results published in 20 research reports on the relation between nutrition and happiness, which together yielded 43 findings. I reviewed these findings, using a new technique. The findings were first entered in an online 'findings archive', the World Database of Happiness, each described in a standardized format on a separate 'findings page' with a unique internet address. Next, I used links to these finding pages in the

review paper and this allowed me to summarise the main trends in the findings in a few tabular schemes, one of which is presented below.

Together, the findings provide strong evidence of a causal effect of healthy eating on happiness. Surprisingly, this effect is not fully mediated by better health. This pattern seems to be universal, the available studies show only minor variations across people, times and places. More than three portions of fruits and vegetables per day goes with the most happiness, how many more for what kind of persons is not yet established.

“... the findings provide strong evidence of a causal effect of healthy eating on happiness.”

Overview of 43 research findings on the relation between diet and happiness

Diet	Correlation with overall happiness		Correlation with affect balance	
	Zero order	Partial	Zero order	Partial
Fruit and vegetables	++	++++	+	+
Fruit	+			++
Vegetables				+
Fast food				- 0/--
Soft drinks	++	+		-
Fat avoidance	+			
Fiber intake	0			
Sweets	--	--		- 0
Cakes	--			
Grains		+		
Milk		+		--
Meat		+/- +		- -
Fish and fish products		+		+
Olive oil				+
Nuts				+
Calories	+	+		
Protein	+			
Fat	+			
Healthy foods	+	+		

+ = positive correlation, statistically significant

+ = positive correlation, not statistically significant

+/- = positive and negative correlations, depending on control variables used

0 = no correlation

- = negative correlation, not statistically significant

-- = negative correlation, statistically significant

Artificial Sociality: Can A.I. Exist without the Human Factor?

In the 21st century Artificial Intelligence has become a buzzword and Hollywood has sparked our interest into machine learning and how it will affect us, as humans. Prof Gert Jan Hofstede, new Extraordinary Professor at the Optentia Research Focus Area, advocates the study of Artificial Sociality: a branch of Artificial Intelligence that brings the human reaction and group behaviour to the table.

In his recent prestige lecture, Prof Hofstede explained that the concept of Artificial Sociality was briefly touched upon in the 1990s, but took a backseat when the World Wide Web came together with the advent of social media, big data and the likes. Meanwhile it had developed into what he calls a “brainy” discipline, exploring how computers can outsmart humans. Prof. Hofstede asserts that humans as a collective will however, still endeavour in acts that machine learning cannot understand. “In order to create models that support policy, we will not only need Artificial Intelligence, but also Artificial Sociality”, says Prof Hofstede. “We need brains, but to understand what people do collectively, we need to understand their sociality.”

He has seen the importance of this understanding when looking at groups and the way that people tend to self-organise and reckons that sociality cannot be imposed from the top by a boss or a government. People are social beings and they respond to one another. Even though certain things must be organised from the top, such as infrastructure, a group will self-organise. Prof Hofstede says this happens in



Click on the link above to watch the interview with Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede



Prof. Linda du Plessis and Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede

ways that may be understood and predicted, but due to a limited understanding, it cannot be predicted currently.

Prof. Hofstede is a social scientist who does multidisciplinary work on information management, social simulation and the cultural dynamics of human behaviour. He graduated as a population biologist at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, where he is currently a professor. He then went on to become a computer programmer. Returning to the academia, he did

a PhD in production planning in 1992, during which time he became convinced that in complex systems, the human element is often understudied. He has since worked on simulation gaming, on trust and transparency in supply chains and during the last decade, on social simulation.

“Prof. Hofstede asserts that humans as a collective will however, still endeavour in acts that machine learning cannot understand...”

Optentia: Taking Stock and Moving Forward

On 30 November 2018 Optentia had its end-of-the-year function. Participants had time to meet new members of Optentia and reflected on their research during 2018. Some vital research projects include:

- Developing advanced performers for the 21st century.
- Academic boredom in schools.
- Employee and employer interventions to deal with unemployment, poverty and inequality.
- Job insecurity, in South Africa and globally.
- Developing the long-term care economy in Gauteng.
- Capability, precariousness, flourishing and performance in organisations.
- Towards inclusive education.
- we-Deliver.
- Survivor-to-Thriver Project.

“Supporting capability, engagement and productivity of (younger) staff members is a challenge.”



Optentia participants celebrating successes during 2018

The following six challenges were identified for 2019-2022:

- Developing an inclusive staff profile.
- Growing research outputs.
- Attracting external funding.
- Implementing SLPs and developing a master’s and PhD programme.
- Supporting capability, engagement and productivity of (younger) staff members.
- 95% publication in Scopus-indexed journals.
- Ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of internal processes



Optentia participants listening to the stories of every participants – a great way to promote multi-disciplinary research

Visit of Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede to UARM *by* Prof. Hermien Zaaiman

Optentia and the Centre for Applied Risk Management (UARM), of the NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, were delighted to welcome our new extraordinary professor, Gert Jan Hofstede from Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands, for a study visit in November 2018.

Prof. Hofstede presented his acceptance speech for this honorary position on 19 November 2018 on the Vanderbijlpark Campus of the North-West University. His presentation 'Artificial sociality: Simulating the social mind' gave an insightful overview of his work on self-organisation, social simulation and artificial sociality.

He also conducted two successful interactive workshops, with UARM researcher Fred Goede, on Culture and Safety in Organisations on 21 and 23 November 2018 at the Institute of Risk Management South Africa (IRMSA)'s premises in Sandton. In addition to him exploring Johannesburg by bicycle as a good dutchman should, his visit gave us the opportunity to discuss and



Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede

work on the topic of sociotechnical systems, agent-based modelling and culture with one of the leading thinkers in the field. We

look forward to further fruitful cooperation in building our risk-culture-related research programme with Prof. Hofstede.



Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede and workshop participants

"... his visit gave us the opportunity to discuss and work on the topic of sociotechnical systems, agent-based modelling and culture ..."



Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede and metro police members in Johannesburg

Postdoctoral Conference in Stellenbosch, 3-5 October 2018

When Prof. Ian Rothmann gave us the chance to attend the postdoctoral conference in Stellenbosch, we did not need to think twice. It was the first Postdoctoral Conference of Southern Africa, hosted by Stellenbosch University in honour of the centenary of the University. The conference aimed to bring together young researchers from all fields of research to create an interdisciplinary forum and emphasise the importance of post-doctoral fellows to drive research for 100 years into the future.

For both of us, it was the first time visiting Stellenbosch and it was a fantastic experience. It was especially nice to meet postdocs from all over Southern Africa and hear about their research. The group of attendees was very international, with people from Uganda, France, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Nigeria, and Zambia.

The conference succeeded in broadening our horizon. Topics were varying from an



Dr Lara Roll and Dr Laura Weiss

interdisciplinary workshop on climate smart agriculture and a workshop on indigenous food, to presentations from the areas of medicine, chemistry, (marine) biology, and more. It was fascinating to see differences and similarities in research methods, challenges and successes across disciplines. We learned many new things, such as never to throw away the pits of a melon because of their health benefits when eating them.

Apart from the exciting content, the conference was

wonderfully organised. The opening took place at the local Brewery Stellenbrau. In the evenings, wine and cheese were served in the beautiful garden of the location at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS).

Both our presentations went well and Laura even received an award for the best presentation. We will keep Stellenbosch in very good memory and look forward to staying in touch with our new contacts from Southern Africa.

“We learned many new things, such as never to throw away the pits of a melon because of their health benefits when eating them ...”



Participants in the postdoctoral conference

Unemployment and Poverty *by* Prof. Frederick C.v.N. Fourie

It is not uncommon to find researchers and commentators viewing informal sector participants as being without aspirations or entrepreneurial skills – as ‘merely survivalist’ and having no meaningful role to play in generating employment or reducing poverty. This often flows from a narrow view of the sector as comprising mostly street traders and waste pickers. As a result, for many decades the sector has remained forgotten or in the margins of economic analysis and policy consciousness.

New quantitative and qualitative, multidisciplinary research shows unambiguously that the informal sector is an important source of employment (and paid employment) with a growing propensity to employ. If South Africa is serious about tackling high unemployment, poverty and inequality, it needs to take the informal sector seriously. Informal enterprises have a significant role to play in providing paid employment and reducing poverty: an enabled, well-supported, more dynamic informal-sector can be a potent instrument in



Prof. Frederick Fourie

more inclusive growth. This will require effective enabling policies, including ‘smart’ formalisation. Otherwise it will simply remain the forgotten sector – and so will the people working in it.

Prof. Johnny Strijdom Making a Difference at the African Union

Optentia has again been busy on different fronts over the past months. Prof. Johnny Strijdom, Prof. Marius Olivier (Extraordinary Professor, NWU Faculty of Law, Potchefstroom Campus) and Dr Tavengwa Nhongo (Zimbabwe) drafted the Social Agenda 2063 as requested for by the African Union Executive Council. It focusses on the investments required into the people of Africa who must drive the realization of the aspirations of AU Agenda 2063, among others, in the social policy pillars of health, education, labour and employment, and of course, gender. The draft Social Agenda 2063 will be considered by the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment in April 2019 for onward submission to the Executive Council for adoption. Furthermore, Prof. Strijdom is involved in a five-year project on the Transformation of the Informal Economy to the Formal Economy in Africa, and has participated in five continental events in this regard over the past three months. This also

affects older persons and their participation in the Informal Economy. Regarding access to pain management drugs, also for older persons in palliative care, he conducted a study with Dr Axel Klein in Botswana and Namibia on

the availability of Tramadol, a synthetic anesthetic. Recent calls for Tramadol to be internationally scheduled, will make access to it when really needed, more complicated.



Prof. Johnny Strijdom

“... the informal sector is an important source of employment (and paid employment) with a growing propensity to employ...”

Networking: Introducing Dr Matthews Katjene

Prof. Ian Rothmann recently linked up with Dr Matthews Katjene, a previous PhD student of him. Dr Katjene is the owner of [PsychWell](#), a dynamic company which offers varied Clinical and Industrial Psychology services. Dr Katjene, who wants to become more involved in academia and research attended the end of the year function of Optentia on 30 November 2018. Prof. Rothmann and Dr Katjene are currently working on three manuscripts on work engagement that they will submit for peer-review in 2019.



Prof. Ian Rothmann and Dr Matthews Katjene

“Optentia has a record year with almost 1000 more users visiting the entity website in 2018...”

Analysing Optentia’s Profile

Optentia had a record year with almost 1000 more users visiting the entity website in 2018 (compared to 2017). During 2017 a total of 5044 users visit the website. The statistics showed that 5968 users visited the website until 13 December 2018. Optentia’s followers on Facebook increased to 625 during 2018. Followers on Twitter increased to 344. We invite you to visit our [website](#), and follow us on Facebook and Twitter. We use these platforms to disseminate information and to share important news with our networks.



Jan 2017 – Dec 2017 (5044 users)
Jan 2018 – Nov 2018 (5968 users)

“If you want to go fast,
go alone.
If you want to go far,
go together”

The Beauty of Uncertainty *by* Anjonet Jordaan

A well-known quote (often attributed to Thomas Jefferson) goes: "If you want something you have never had, you must be willing to do something you have never done". People often back away from change and new ventures due to the uncertainty implied by the second part of this quote. Doing what we've never done before require us to face the uncertainty of how to do it 'right' to get the outcome we desire and whether the outcome is achievable.

This year has compelled us all, some by choice and others by necessity, to do what we've never done before. As project manager



at Optentia, this meant going the extra mile to build relationships with researchers and research entities across the North-West University's three campuses. Establishing work and research relationships outside our usual circle of colleagues are not only necessary steps, but also opens the doors to new and exciting

research ventures that will pay off over time.

Making this mindset shift of embracing the uncertainty outside our comfort zones, allow us to not only discover the previously unknown potential in ourselves, but also enables us to help others to boldly do the same.

Fathima Mahomed Submitted her PhD

Fathima Mahomed recently submitted her PhD study on thriving of academic staff at higher education institutions for examination. Thriving is defined as "the psychological state in which individuals experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning at work". Approximately 11% of academics did not thrive at all. A lack of energy was evident in 22% of the sample and 43% did not function optimally concerning learning.

Thriving, job crafting, and high-performance human resource practices were positively correlated. Additionally, a significant interaction between job crafting and high-performance human resource practices was found. The relationship between job crafting and thriving was found to differ to the extent to which individuals perceived high-performance human resource practices. Specifically, when

human resource practices were perceived to be deficient, employees that obtained high scores on job crafting thrived more compared to employees who obtained low scores on job crafting. However, when human resource practices were perceived to be good, there were smaller differences in the levels of thriving between those with high or low scores on job crafting. Organisational support for strengths use, as well as individual strengths use and deficit correction, predicted thriving at work. Thriving predicted task and contextual performance. A significant interaction was found between thriving and perceptions of performance-related pay. The most robust relation between thriving and performance existed when performance-related pay was perceived to be good.

Strength use had direct effects on autonomy, competence,



Fathima Mahomed

and relatedness satisfaction of employees. Autonomy satisfaction, strength use, and training and development had direct effects on thriving, while low autonomy satisfaction and poor training and development had direct negative effects on intention to leave. Strength use, as well as training and development, had indirect effects on thriving and intention to leave via autonomy satisfaction.

"If you want something you have never had, you must be willing to do something you have never done."

Visit to NTUST in Taiwan *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

I was recently invited to the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST). The visit had various purposes. First, I was invited to present a workshop on subjective well-being. A student team led by Ling-Hui Lin (Gina Lin) did a great job to arrange the workshop and make me feel welcome. The presentation ("Towards a comprehensive model of subjective well-being") focused on the contexts in which individuals in different cultures find themselves and the challenges they face, approaches to well-being, subjective well-being, a comprehensive model of well-being, outcomes of subjective well-being and interventions to promote subjective well-being. The presentation can be downloaded [here](#). I want to thank Gina and her team for their professional conduct and kindness. Second, I worked with Prof. Sufen Chen and Dr Aman Dhir on the analyses of various datasets. During my visit, I also had the opportunity to discuss our re-

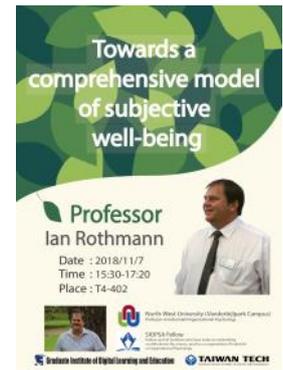


Shu-Yu Yu, (May Yu), Yu-Ting Kao (Sunshine Kao), Dr Hi-Lian Jena, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Ling-Hui Lin (Gina Lin) and Chung Shih-Jun (Sharon Chung)

"I was invited to present a workshop on subjective well-being ..."

search project on academic boredom with Prof. Sufen Chen.

I want to thank Prof. Sufen Chen (extraordinary professor in Optentia) for being such a wonderful host during my visit. I also want to thank Dr Aman Dhir, Dr Puneet Kaur and Chi-Chi for making my visit memorable.



Dr Aman Dhir, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Sufen Chen after his presentation to staff and students at NTUST in Taiwan

Unravelling The Mysteries of Statistics *by* Dr Angelique van Rensburg

Optentia launched a number of new initiatives this year to support competence-building and to stimulate curiosity among (research) staff. Once such initiative was the Statistics Study Group (SSG), facilitated by Drs Angelique van Rensburg and Leoni van der Vaart. The aim of the SSG was to optimise researchers' statistical potential in an empowering space. Each session was chaired by an (emerging) expert which had practical experience in a particular cutting-edge technique.

Six sessions as well as one special session was held. Materials and additional resources were shared via Dropbox for all to access prior to the meeting (to access click on the session).

- [Session 1](#) discussed various alternatives for reliability testing as well as techniques for missing data replacement.
- [Session 2](#) examined the differences between p-values and effect sizes. In addition, parametric and non-parametric statistical methods were contrasted.
- [Session 3](#) debated the differences between mediation and moderation, and participants also learned how to perform these analyses in Mplus as well as SPSS (Process add-on).
- [Session 4](#) provided a platform for Christiaan Bekker, Elizabeth Bothma, Kleinjan Redelinghuys, Angelique van Rensburg to share their experiences of the Small Sample Conference hosted by Utrecht University in the Netherlands in March 2018.

Statistics is the grammar of science (Karl Pearson)



- [Session 5](#) considered a typical syntax in Mplus to conduct Multi-level Analyses.
- Session 6 discussed Bayesian Analyses as a statistical method in which Leoni van der Vaart shared some insights from the Summer School hosted by Utrecht University in the Netherlands in August 2018.
- [Special Session](#), extraordinary Professor, Susanne Schwab, discussed invariance testing for group comparison of latent variables and Professor Hannu Savolainen discussed methods for analysing longitudinal and experimental data.

Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Dr Lara Roll, explained that she "...found it a fantastic initiative and a great start to dig deeper on our own. Sometimes you need someone to explain the basis to you, so that you can build on it during your self-study". Doctoral student, Thembelihle Lobi also indicated that "As someone who has little background to stats, I found the stats study group very practical and laid a good foundation for my understanding of stats." The SSG will resume in 2019 and aim to include practical sessions in Mplus, SPSS and R. Follow the [SSG Etherpad](#) for upcoming sessions and feel free to forward suggestions to angelique@angeliquevanrensborg.com or leoni.vandervaart@nwu.ac.za.

"... Bayesian methods are not a part of the statistics curricula in most graduate programmes internationally..."

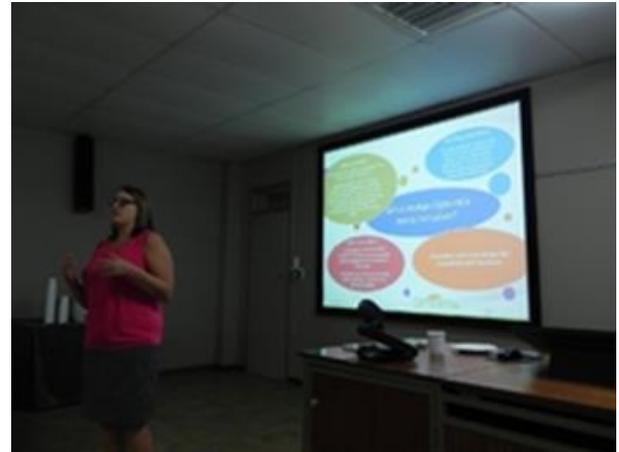
Embracing Inclusiveness

At Optentia's Science Sandwich meeting on Wednesday, 12 September 2018, Optentia participants discussed the topic of inclusiveness and how to promote inclusion on university level. Prof. Susanne Schwab, from the University of Wuppertal in Germany, pointed out several important topics about her research on inclusive education and how an education environment could be made more inclusive. This includes the involvement of all role players (e.g. teacher educators, students and parents) and encouraging them to have a positive attitude towards inclusive education. Also, teacher educators need to have a high sense of self-efficacy to teach in inclusive settings. The availability of resources is also essential, not only the physical ones but also the subjective ones.

In relation to the philosophy of Optentia, namely "Potential is the capacity to develop skills with effort over time" a commitment was made to foster equality. This requires that potential need to be identified and supported to maximise opportunities despite any barriers to learning and development that could be experienced by students

Optentia participants suggested some shared commitments, which are related to all involved parties (e.g. staff members and students).

- We want to be kind and caring towards each other.
- We wish to acknowledge and celebrate each other's achievements (e.g. give concrete positive feedback).
- We want to empower everyone to participate fully.



Prof. Susanne Schwab facilitating Optentia participants about inclusivity

- We want to fully accept everyone the way he or she is and get to know each other's strengths.
- We want to work in teams (e.g. creation of a social network, shared values).
- We should support students with special needs or a low socio-economic status while acknowledging their strength and without taking away their autonomy.

"Optentia participants suggested some shared commitments, which are related to all involved parties."



A Strengths-based Approach towards People Development

Strengths-based development (SBD) has emerged as a prominent sub-discipline of positive organisational psychology and became a meaningful practice domain for practitioners. SBD, from a positive organisational psychology perspective, refers to short to medium term goal orientated relational interventions aimed at harnessing the inner potential (capability) of an individual in order to optimise their performance, to actualise their potential, to enhance their well-being and to achieve work-related goals. From this perspective clients are encouraged to achieve personal/professional goals and aspirations through the utilisation of their personal strengths. Through the identification, utilisation and actualisation of individual strengths, SBD provides a structured means through which to facilitate meaningful personal and professional development. SBD initiatives provides a 'strengths based vocabulary' through which to understand, diagnose, and predict behaviour as well as direct the focus of any associated interventions.

On 19 October 2018, Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl was invited by the University of Zurich in collaboration with the Swiss Positive Psychological Society, to present a workshop to more than 40 psychologists, HR practitioners and teachers on the applications of strengths-based development initiatives in work-related contexts. The aim of the workshop was to provide a brief introduction to the applications of strengths-based development and strengths-based coaching, to provide a model for strengths-based assessment/development,



Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

and to expose participants to practical tools to facilitate the development of others. Specifically, the workshop was aimed at teaching participants (a) how to listen for strengths, (b) how to engage in strengths-spotting, (c) how to utilise strengths-based interviewing to identify the strengths of others and (d) how to utilise these strengths to develop individuals and teams.

Participants were provided with multidimensional model for the diagnosis of strengths. As the main criticism in the strength's literature is that strengths are either approached from a moral/virtuous, a behavioural or competency based-perspective (i.e. latent talents/abilities) or from an interest or aspirations approach and that the impact of the environment in which the individual functions to nothing more than a secondary source of influence, a holistic approach for strengths identification is needed. During the workshop, the participants were exposed to an integrated, multidimensional model which combines all three these approaches, as well as honouring the environment for its impact. This "strengths-based capability" model argues that an individual's strengths are derived from four areas: (a) character strengths (which refers to the moral

strengths or traits which define us), (b) Abilities and Talents (i.e. the natural skills, aptitudes, competencies, values and experiences which we naturally acquire over time), (c) Interests and Aspirations (i.e. the elements which we draw energy and motivation from which fuels our application of our strengths) and (d) Environmental Strengths (which refers to the external resources which individuals can employ or utilize, e.g. social support networks). Participants were taught how to identify the strengths in each domain, and how to employ these strengths in a structured manner in order to achieve personal or work-related goals. Participants were shown how to utilise these strengths through a strengths-based coaching framework to aid a client on managing difficult situations at work, how to use strengths to set and achieve goals and how to aid them to actualise their potential.

Optentia would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to Prof. dr. Willibald Ruch, Dr. Jenny Hofmann and his department for hosting this event.

"This strengths-based capability model argues that an individual's strengths are derived from four areas. "

Visit to Optentia by Prof. Gerben Westerhof

From 22 till 25 October 2018, I had the honor of visiting Optentia. My name is Gerben Westerhof and I am a professor of Narrative Psychology and Technology at the University of Twente and director of the [Story Lab](#). Besides my studies on the relation of life stories with mental health and well-being, my research expertise is in aging studies and positive psychology.

During my stay, I gave a lecture to the MAPP students on "Life review to improve mental health and well-being". I really appreciated this active group, who easily thought along during the lecture and provided inspiring ideas about the application of life review in psychological interventions.

Furthermore, I gave a lecture "Get off that Couch: Technology in Mental Health Care" and a workshop "Memory and Story: An Interactive Workshop on Methods to Assess their Relation to Mental Health and Well-being" for interested staff from Optentia. Our memories are an important part of who we are. However, memories are not set in plaster, but they are retrieved and reconstructed in relation to our current identities. Stories are seen as the most important devices to integrate meanings of memories with our present and future lives. Hence, it is thus not so much the events themselves, but rather the way we story them that matters to our mental health and well-being. Here, narrative psychology has a clear relation to positive psychology: storytelling is seen as a creative act in which it is important to maintain a balance between recollecting vivid positive memories and providing



Prof. Ian Rothmann,



Prof. Gerben Westerhof

new meanings to negative memories.

We explored technological possibilities for storytelling, both in interventions and research. For example, I told about a project on Online Life Story Books for people with early dementia and about a project where we use text mining as a tool to gain more insight in the characteristics of stories that are related to mental health and well-being. Both the lecture and the workshop led to interesting questions and discussions.

I got the chance to speak with some Optentia researchers, not only during a Braai (which my sons who came along also en-

joyed very much!) but also during lunch (thanks for the good food!). I came to know them as very engaged and competent researchers and very friendly persons. We found many common interests and I hope that we can work together in the future.

Last but not least, I want to thank Laura for organising my trip for and her hospitality!

“... my research expertise is in aging studies and positive psychology ...”

Job Crafting for Academics

Award-winning teacher, researcher and tenured associate professor at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, Prof. Mark van Vuuren, presented a workshop at Optentia during September 2018. The workshop was entitled "Job crafting for academics".

The idea of job crafting arose when researchers witnessed that two people with identical job descriptions were doing different things. Depending on what professionals regard as good or important to their work (or boring and degrading), they had made adaptations in their tasks,

relationships, contact, or way of thinking about their work. Exploring these strategies with a number of professionals led Prof. Van Vuuren to write the first practical handbook for job crafting in the world. This is not a shortcut towards one's dream job, as all jobs include less popular chores. Prof. Van Vuuren however believes that improvements are definitely possible. During this workshop, he shared his experiences and stories, summarising job crafting research, methodology and strategies, with the aim of developing concrete ideas for personal job



Dr Mark van Vuuren

improvement during the session, which can be implemented the very next day.

Open Science and Research Improvements in Positive Psychology

During September 2018, Dr Emir Efendic, presented a workshop on open science practices and research improvements for positive psychology. In recent years, psychological science has been under increased scrutiny and criticism. Experts have been unable to replicate some of their most widely recognised and significant findings and stark realisations were made about the validity of the way in which research have been conducted. "It is safe to say that we are going through an important period of change and self-reflection," says Dr Efendić, who is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands. "In the process of changing and improving the way we do research, a strong movement of open-science has been focusing on increasing transpar-

ency and improving our research practices." Dr Efendic is of the opinion that this is the reason we have seen shifts in research practice, various changes in journal and editorial policies, as well as changes in funding policies.

He discussed what precipitated these changes, various practices that have been suggested and how to improve the research process (e.g. sample size and power justifications, and pre-registration). The workshop also looked at how these changes apply to a whole swath of areas within psychology, including positive psychology. Dr Efendic obtained his PhD in Social Psychology from the University of Bordeaux in France, where he focused on studying the impact of multiple affective reactions on decision making. However, he is

also interested in research methodology and increasing the reproducibility of psychological science.



Dr Emir Efendic

"The idea of job crafting arose when researchers witnessed that two people with identical job descriptions were doing different things."

Prestige Lecture About Grit: Welcome Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl!

Llewellyn van Zyl (PhD) is currently an assistant professor of Work and Organisational Psychology at the University of Eindhoven in the Netherlands. He holds a C2 rating with the NRF in South Africa. Llewellyn has completed a PhD in Industrial Psychology, specialising in the development and evaluation of positive psychological interventions aimed at happiness. It is the year 2000. A multi-billion dollar, Fortune 500 company's share price peaks at \$90. Their recruitment strategy reads: Hire the best, fire the rest. At the time it seemed to work, only it didn't. That company was Enron.

"Grit" is a positive, non-cognitive trait based on an individual's perseverance combined with a passion for a particular end-goal. Would the Enron story have ended differently had they rather focussed on recruiting individuals with grit? Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl, Extraordinary Professor at Optentia, reckons it would have.

During his prestige lecture, he argued that organisations become obsessed with finding and recruiting the best individuals. In the process, however, they create a narcissistic ego-driven environment: the perfect climate for unethical behaviour to thrive in. He shared the findings of his research which indicated that individuals with the highest potential and best qualifications are not necessarily the best performers. Initially, such individuals perform above and beyond expectations. This level of achievement eventually dwindles, however, or at best reaches a plateau. Individuals who exhibited grit seemed to start slower, but



Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl, Dr Leoni van der Vaart, Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Yauw Amuteng, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Elrie Botha, Prof. Jaco Hofmann and Dr George Leeson and Prof. Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy

achieved more over time. They exerted a lot more effort in achieving their individual goals and were able to maintain their efforts due to their inherent high levels of perseverance.

The components of grit are passion, perseverance and environmental agility. A person with grit will show special interest in a long-term goal and invest a lot of time and energy in achieving that goal (passion). Such a person will push him/herself even beyond the point of furthest efforts (perseverance) and adapt to challenges experienced (environmental agility). An individual can be helped to identify their interest, deliberately work at develop-

ing it and be given purpose and hope. The good news, according to Prof. van Zyl, is that grit can be developed. When an individual is given the opportunity to develop and work autonomously in a programme in which they are interested or talented, grit may be developed.

Could the Enron story have ended differently? No-one knows. What we do know is that recruiting individuals with grit, results in an organisational culture where narcissism and ego plays a much smaller role: a culture that nurtures a happier employee towards sustained optimal performance.

"Grit is a positive, non-cognitive trait based on an individual's perseverance combined with a passion for a particular end-goal."



Click on the link above to watch the interview with Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

Master's Students at CuriousU Summer School *by* Dr Marita Heyns

Refiloe Digomaye and Natasha D'Oliveira, two of the students on our MAPP 2018 programme, leaped into the air for joy when hearing that they were the lucky recipients of two "wildcards" to the value of 875 euro each, which enabled them to attend the CuriousU Summer School at the University of Twente in Enschede from 12-21 August 2018.

The news triggered enthusiastic preparations for the one-of-a-kind experience of a joint summer school and festival where inquisitive minds, including entry level Master's students, are offered the opportunity to share learning experiences in an academic yet relaxed environment with other students from all continents and nationalities. The program include inspirational speakers, music, sports, theatre, serious gaming and a host of other activities – a healthy balance of work and fun.

A typical day at Curious U would involve waking up in a tent surrounded by natural beauty and looking forward to a hearty breakfast coupled with an early morning inspiring talk, followed by a refreshing walk to class amidst the buzz of bicycles. Lectures were presented on a broad range of topics that incorporated many elements of health, happiness and other positive psychology related topics with ample opportunities to share ideas and perspectives from multicultural backgrounds.

Meeting with Prof. Bohlmeijer, one of the authors of the book "Using Positive Psychology Every Day: Learning How to Flourish" stands out as a highlight of the visit for Natasha, who aims to apply her knowledge and skills

towards improving the well-being of South African teachers. She also recalls with fondness that "presentations formed part of the interactive learning experience, with our team being involved with the creation of a smiling app called 'Glimlach', which won us a delightful happy socks prize. On the fun side, lunch and after supper activities were arranged featuring virtual reality parachuting, a volleyball tournament, a live concert, escape rooms, a visit to the Nano lab, nitrogen ice-cream, Dutch Olympics and 3D printing, to name only a few....."

Indeed, work hard and then play hard is the overarching theme of the CuriousU Summer School, with such an experience particularly meaningful in the



context of connecting to multifarious cultures and making friends from all over the world. I am deeply grateful for Prof Kelders who made this possible, and for Dr Laura Weiss who helped to facilitate the process; the satisfaction to see MAPP students flourishing as a result of such opportunities is deeply satisfying and surely a memory that they will both cherish forever.

"Indeed, work hard and then play hard is the overarching theme of the CuriousU Summer School ..."



Refiloe Digomaye



Natasha D'Oliveira and Prof. Ernst Bohlmeijer



Refiloe Digomaye and Natasha D'Oliveira

News: Human Flourishing in Institutions *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

The news in the programme over the last five months can be summarised as follows:

- Various manuscripts were submitted to peer-reviewed journals and various others are currently being finalised.
- At least six peer-reviewed chapters are currently being developed.
- Prof. Ian Rothmann visited Taiwan to further develop relationships with the National Taiwan University for Science and Technology.
- The research programme played a leading role in developing and registering three short learning programmes.
- The research programme presented a symposium on unemployment.



- The research programme contributed to a significant number of publications.
- One funding application has been developed and submitted.
- Prof. Ian Rothmann was appointed as an external examiner for a PhD study at Tilburg University.
- Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl did a presentation on Flourishing at work during the research day. Click [here](#) to watch his presentation.

“At least six peer-reviewed chapters are currently being developed.”

PhD Candidates Make Good Progress

Six PhD students in the research programme “Human Flourishing in Institutions” are making good progress with their studies. Rachele Paver has completed the empirical work for her thesis on unemployment and plan to submit her thesis in February 2019. Kalashni Narainsamy successfully defended her PhD proposal and got ethics clearance for her study, while Tessa de Wet successfully defended her proposal. The title of Kalashni’s proposal is “Capabilities and flourishing: The role of sports and social network support in previously disadvantaged African Communities”. The title of the PhD study of Tessa de Wet is “Capabilities and ways of functioning of secondary school teachers in Gauteng: A longitudinal multilevel study”. Diana van Jaarsveld also successfully de-

fended her proposal with the title: “Profiling employee substance use behaviour: The effects of user-generated social content and personal variables”. Elna Rossouw completed the empirical work for her PhD study

on flourishing of judges in South Africa and plans to submit her PhD for examination in May 2019. Thera Lobi is making good progress with his PhD proposal and will defend it in January 2019.



Kalashni Narainsamy



Elna Rossouw



Tessa de Wet



Thera Lobi



Rachele Paver

How to Climb your Mount Everest *by* Rachele Paver

"The man on top of the mountain didn't fall there." Vince Lombardi. The peak of my mountain is in sight, but towards the end every step becomes steeper. Along the journey I have picked up on tips and ways to make the journey possible. Firstly, a significant change in the time spent working and playing during visits to Leuven over the last three years had to take place.

Secondly, seeing your progress yields the necessary motivation to continue. In that light, I am excited to share the first findings of the Qhubekela Phambili programme. The programme aimed to enhance participants' job-search self-efficacy skills, increase their self-esteem and lower their level of a-motivation. With the exception of the anticipated lower levels of a-motivation, the programme successfully achieved its goals. After a 4-week follow-up, we asked the participant about the status of their employment, it seems as if

23% of the participants were reemployed in either permanent, part-time or entrepreneurial positions. Although the sample was relatively small, it serves as a good basis to determine if and what changes are necessary.

Thirdly, having resources and opportunities to expand your knowledge, makes the steepness of the mountain bearable. During my visit, I also had the privilege of attending a Gentle Introduction to Bayesian Statistics workshop, held in Utrecht, presented by Prof. Rens van der Schoot. The workshop provided interesting insights to dealing with smaller sample sizes, which may lead to promising outcomes, considering our population. I've also attended and presented at the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (EAOHP), held in Lisbon, Portugal, in the last week of my visit to Europe. At the conference, a number of researchers' focused on job crafting in various fields, but of particular



Rachele Paver

interest was how researchers applied these theories to the unemployment context and found exciting results. It seems worth further investigation, which may be applicable and could be integrated to the QP programme.

Finally, an important lesson that life has taught me over the last three months was that conquering your mountain requires more than just skills and proper equipment, it requires exceptional perseverance, and not until near the end, but to the bitter end.

"... seeing your progress yields the necessary motivation to continue ..."

Dr Melinda du Toit's Big Moment

Melinda du Toit recently received her joint PhD degree from the North-West University and KU Leuven. In her thesis, Exploring experiences of unemployment in South African townships, Melinda investigated experiences of unemployment as well as enabling and constraining contextual factors that influence the informal township entrepreneur. The thesis provides an in-depth insight into the lived unemployment experiences of unemployed people in South African townships and how contextual factors impact the experiences of unemployment. Her review indicates

the lack of depth in understanding the experiences of the unemployed (specifically black unemployed people in a township context). It is the first time that this kind of research was conducted with people living in townships. The distinctive chapters provide a fascinating picture of the experiences of the unemployed in their daily life, including the various contextual factors and the interrelationships among the contextual factors. Two peer-reviewed articles have already been published from her thesis. Melinda is well-known for her work in townships. We hope to

further collaborate with Melinda in the future.



Khulu Radebe, Dr Melinda du Toit Seipati Phala

Job Insecurity in Higher Education: The Data Is In *by* Dr Lara C. Roll

We started the Job Insecurity in Higher Education Project because we noticed that worldwide the landscape of higher education is changing and becoming more challenging for academics and support staff alike. Ironically, those very challenges made it very hard to collect data in our 10 participating countries. For example, in the UK, university staff members went on strikes over their pensions during our data collection phase. Nevertheless, our country teams remained strong, so that we now have data from South Africa, the USA, UK, Belgium, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Croatia, Switzerland and China.

In September 2018, Prof. Haijiang Wang (China), Dr Eva Selenko (UK), Prof. Despoina Xanthopoulou (Greece), Jasmina Tomas (Croatia),



Prof. Haijiang Wang, Dr Eva Selenko, Prof. Despoina Xanthopoulou, Jasmina Tomas, Dr Lara C. Roll, Prof. Jurgita Lazauskaite-Zabielske and Dr Ieva Urbanaviciute

Dr Lara C. Roll (South Africa), Prof. Jurgita Lazauskaite-Zabielske (Lithuania) and Dr Ieva Urbanaviciute (Lithuania and Switzerland) had the chance to get together at the EAHPD conference in Lisbon (Portugal). In addition, Prof. Hans De Witte visited Optentia in South Africa. These meetings were excellent

opportunities to discuss the road moving forward. Some of the ideas, next to peer-reviewed publications, include a joint symposium for EAHPD 2020, and a book publication about this project.

“... we now have data from South Africa, the USA, UK, Belgium, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Croatia, Switzerland and China.”



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Dr Lara Roll and Prof. Hans De Witte

Presentation at the ATKV by Prof. Ian Rothmann

During July 2018, I addressed the Annual Meeting of the "Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV)". The theme of the meeting was innovation and training. My presentation was about the flourishing of organisations and communities. Click [here](#) to see the presentation. Following the presentation, I assisted managers in the ATKV to do an analysis of strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results (SOAR). ATKV managers used Mentimeter to get the inputs of more than 300 people who attended the meeting. ATKV managers are currently participating in the Short Learning Programme on Harnessing Individual, Relational and Organisational Capabilities.



Mr Johan Schoeman and Prof. Ian Rothmann



ATKV staff with Dr Laura Weiss, Dr Kleinjan Redelinghuys, Dr Marita Heyns and Prof. Ian Rothmann

"My presentation was about the flourishing of organisations and communities."

Optentia is Developing Relationships with Countries in Asia

Optentia is increasingly building relationships with universities in India, Taiwan, Thailand and Taiwan. Recently Prof. Ian Rothmann met colleagues from IIM Kashipur (India), Srinakharinwirot University (Thailand), and National Taiwan University of Science and Technology. Prof. Rothmann hope to spend time in India during 2019 to further develop networks. We thank postdoctoral fellow, Dr Aman Dhir for exceptional efforts to help us setting up networks in India and Taiwan.



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Dr Pond Seetee, Prof. Shirley Chen, Dr Puneet Kaur, Dr Aman Dhir, Prof. Safal Batra, Prof. RK Padhy and Prof. Sufen Chen

Best Master's Student in Faculty of Health Sciences

Mrs Baaqira Kays Ebrahim was recently awarded the Vice-Chancellor's medal for the best Master's student in the Faculty of Health Sciences at a Gala Event in Potchefstroom on 26 October 2018.

Baaqira obtained her Master's degree in Psychology Cum Laude in May 2018 at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, entitled "Stigmatized loss in female adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse in South Africa". She worked under the supervision of Prof. Hayley Walker-Williams and Prof. Ansie Fouché. This study forms part of the a research project entitled the Survivor to Thriver (S2T) Collaborative Strengths-based Intervention Programme for sexually abused women.

She is an active member of Optentia in the programme Strengths-Based Studies and Interventions. She recently published her first internationally article in the Journal of Loss and Trauma. This journal has an impact factor of 1.243. The manuscript is entitled "Stigmatized loss in woman survivors of childhood sexual abuse in South Africa". Furthermore, she attended and presented two papers at international conferences entitled: "Promoting resilient driven coping in women who experienced stigmatized loss as a result of childhood sexual abuse" at the Pathways to Resilience Conference IV: Global South Perspectives in June 2017 and "Stigmatized loss in female adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse: Emerging themes" at the 6th International Conference of Community Psychology in May 2016.



Prof. Ansie Fouché, Baaqira Ebrahim and Prof. Hayley Walker-Williams

"The S2T team are exceptionally proud of Baaqira..."



Lastly, she has been promoted to Lecturer (effective 1 January 2019) in the School of Psychosocial Health, Psychology Subject Group.

Baaqira plans to enrol for her PhD in 2019 and the topic will extend on her Master's study and

look at a specific group intervention module for treating stigmatized loss in women survivors. The S2T team are exceptionally PROUD of Baaqira and look forward to her continuing her PhD in the S2T research project!

Welcome to Prof. Tess Patterson - Extraordinary Professor

Dr Tess Patterson has been appointed as extraordinary professor in the sub-programme strengths-based interventions. Dr Patterson is Senior Lecturer and Head of Behavioural Science in the Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. She is also a Specialist Clinical Psychologist in assessing and treating adults who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviour.

Dr Patterson's research interests are in applied clinical and forensic psychology domains. Her research currently focuses on two key areas: a) childhood sexual abuse, the impact of male childhood sexual abuse, and investigative interviewing of those who may

have been sexually abused, and b) harmful sexual behaviour and sexual offending, male versus female sexual offending and court outcomes, the developmental pathways to harmful sexual behaviour.

Dr Patterson began collaborating with Optentia in November 2015 when she became interested in the Survivor to Thrive (S2T) research project headed by Dr Hayley Walker-Williams and Prof. Ansie Fouché. In March 2017 a collaborative meeting took place at the University of Otago in Dunedin New Zealand where a Memorandum of Understanding was constituted. Dr's Patterson, Hobbs, Prof. Walker-Williams and Prof. Fouché are currently con-



Prof. Tess Patterson

ducting a joint project examining the impact of childhood sexual abuse on the subsequent sexuality development of male survivors of sexual abuse. They are also planning to roll out the S2T intervention in New Zealand in 2019.

Smile: Living with Diabetes *by* Prof. Elmari Deacon

November was diabetes awareness month, with 14 November being World diabetes day and I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate each participant in our project up to date.

Living with diabetes is a challenge, and we need to take time to celebrate our successes, and be encouraged to keep on working towards managing this condition well. I want to thank each and every participant, who, despite their daily diabetes care plan, took the time to share their experiences with us. We have learnt that living with diabetes is hard, even if you manage diabetes well. There are times when peers and general society show little compassion and understanding toward adolescents, while young adults are forever struggling to make sense of living with diabetes and managing eating plans. Parents are focused on striving towards creating a new normal in their homes, including the rest of the family, while managing the stress and uncertainty that the condition brings. In this project we have met participants who showed

us that despite the challenges faced as mentioned above, their lives are proof of the quote from Scott Hamilton: "The only disability in life is a bad attitude". Thank you for showing us that you can "SMILE with diabetes". In 2018 we completed the study on experiences of social support by young adults living with well-controlled diabetes (by E Visage), and is in process of gathering data to better understand the illness perceptions of adolescents who do not manage diabetes well (by S Lesage), and workplace factors that contribute to managing type 2 diabetes well (by G Naudé). The systematic review on interventions to assist parents of children living with type 1 diabetes to improve their quality of life (by L Santilli) is in the process of

submission. Two new projects is in the process of gaining ethical clearance. The first is a study of the effect of CGM (continuous glucose monitoring) on illness perception of adolescents. The second study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning making process of young adult woman living type 1 diabetes using interpretive phenomenological analysis.

The second annual parkrun in Potchefstroom was hosted on 10 November. Again, this was a fun event with friends and family doing the parkrun with those living with diabetes.

While we are reflecting at the end of a challenging year, I invite you to read a beautiful poem. Click [here](#).



Prof. Elmari Deacon and Dr Marietjie Willemse

"Dr Patterson's research interests are in applied clinical and forensic psychology domains."

Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa (AGenDA)

On 28 August 2018 the inaugural meeting of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG): Africa Region was held at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, hosted by Optentia. This meeting was attended by delegates from three national gerontological/geriatric societies, namely those of Kenya, Tunisia and South Africa. Four African research institutions were represented: Kenyatta University, African Policy and Health Research Center (APHRC), Kenya; University of Sfax, Tunisia; University of Witwatersrand. The IAGG aims to promote the highest levels of achievement in gerontological research and

training worldwide, and to interact with other international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in the promotion of gerontological interests globally and on behalf of its member associations. The Association pursues these activities with a view of enhancing the highest quality of life and well-being of all people as they experience ageing at individual and societal levels. The IAGG has 73 member organisations in over 65 countries worldwide with a combined membership of over 45,100 professionals: key opinion leaders in health and social services, housing and income support, research and education,



Prof. Isabella Aboderin

public policy, administration and other areas, disciplines, and professions that impact older people and affect their quality of life. North-West University (Optentia) is proud to have hosted this historical meeting under the leadership of Prof. Isabella Aboderin (extraordinary professor in Optentia).

“... the meeting of the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics: Africa Region was held at the North-West University.”

Prof. Jaco Hoffman at a Forum in Italy

Prof. Jaco Hoffman attended a Forum at The Rockefeller Centre at Bellagio, Italy early September 2018 where he and colleagues discussed New Partnerships to Improve Social Health and Economic Reinvestment in Low-Income Neighborhoods: The Role of Anchor Institutions. The week-session focused on the broad issues of health and wellness and how new partnering combinations are needed to create anchor investments in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in America. These investments can, and do, profoundly affect health outcomes that are the result of inequitable conditions of race, education and poverty. It is increasingly apparent that Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs*) banks, and capital investors are important players on these new teams with health systems. The group also deliberated about other commu-

nity institutions that should be part of the team, like for example universities; how outcomes are demonstrated; the criteria that make for a good anchor partner.

*(CDFIs) are private financial institutions that are dedicated to delivering responsible, affordable

lending to help low-income, low-wealth, and other disadvantaged people and communities join the economic mainstream.



Prof. Jaco Hoffman and participants in the event

In Search of Quality: A New Publication by Prof. Andries Baart

On 21 June the latest book by Prof. Andries Baart was published with the title *The discovery of quality. The theory and practice of relational caring* [De ontdekking van kwaliteit. De theorie en praktijk van relationeel zorg geven]; see <https://www.swpbook.com/boeken/68/kwaliteit-van-zorg/2086/de-ontdekking-van-kwaliteit>. Since the first edition is already sold out and a second print is in process. No wonder with reviews that describe it as: An impressive book with sharp analysis underscored by a grounded and rigorous empirical foundation. The publication is the outcome of a research project that stretched over the past nine years during which Andries has developed a (middle range) theory and an operational model for providing, monitoring and evaluating relational care.

Mainstream quality systems are not (or hardly) able to properly observe and appreciate relational care because they are oriented to 'objective' norms and values. This is generally the case although most care practitioners will also acknowledge that care is mainly 'good' in a particular context, in a specific situation, at a determined moment in the 'tangible' life of a particular person. The book analyses less known problems within modern quality systems and step-by-step develops an alternative approach, based on three pillars: (a) relationality or situatedness of judging quality; (b) the cultivated, self-regulating consciousness of quality and (c) the practical wisdom of the professional caregiver. To tease out these concepts, the author broadly

analysed the literature of the last two decades – national and international. Drawing on the conceptual foundations as deduced from the investigated literature in part one, a second part deals with the operationalisation of a detailed and innovative model of four normative layers:

- humanness (level of the client);
- solicitude (level of the professional);
- hospitableness (level of the organization), and
- justice and decency (level of societal paradigms).

Each of these points of entry into the model is framed by a 'little philosophy' and subsequently elaborated on with concrete and observable examples of qualities of care and social welfare. In part three of the book the model is boiled down into 'working sheets' with which professionals, managers, CEOs, financing and inspecting shareholders may start an inquiry into the quality of specific projects, cases, and programmes of service provision in the domain of care and welfare. Practical do's



and don'ts are added, based on many years of experience in the field.

This radical innovative book has – which is remarkable – two prefaces: one of the highest functionary of the governmental Inspection and Surveillance Health Care (the inspector general) and the other of the CEO of the National Centre of Expertise for Long-term Care in the Netherlands (Vilans). They both applaud the book for its innovative (conceptual) approach to care, recommend it and admit that working through it is hard work. Be warned! This is a serious piece of work and no page turner...

“Main stream quality systems are not (or hardly) able to properly observe and appreciate relational care ...”



Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Monique Baart, Prof. Andries Baart and Rachele Paver

we-DELIVER: Service Delivery to Older People through ICTs

The overall objective of the we-DELIVER project is to improve access to information about municipal and other services addressing older people's needs. The development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be contextualised against the growth of older populations worldwide. Globally, it is predicted that in 2050 there will be more people aged 60 years and older than there will be children under the age of 14. The older population of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), currently the youngest region of the world, will increase from 43 million people in 2013 to 163 million people in 2050. South Africa is the country on mainland Sub-Saharan Africa with the highest proportion of older people with an expected future increase in the 60+ population projected from the current 4 million in 2013 to around 11.5 million in 2050. It follows that this increase and the exponential rise in age-related care needs will present unique challenges for health and social resources, and care provision in particular.

Ageing in South Africa should further be contextualised against previously government enforced discriminatory practices. Given the historical legacy of racial disparities whereby white people were privileged over their non-white compatriots, the majority of non-white older people now find themselves in places with poor infrastructure, limited resources and inferior services, and unable to address their care needs. In addition, many older people are affected by and infected with HIV, AIDS and migration. The majority of older South Africans are therefore particularly in need of basic and municipal services. Yet local governments' service delivery to older people is grossly uncoordinated or even lacking, as demonstrated in a SALGA baseline study.

The potential offered by the deep penetration of cell phones in South Africa prompted the development of Yabelana (referring to shar-



Students registered for Honours in Psychology on the Mafikeng Campus with Prof. Vera Roos

ing of information), an eDirectory system that developed from the we-DELIVER project, which was funded by the Tirelo Boshia programme. A baseline assessment was conducted using quantitative and qualitative data-collection tools in 2017-2018. Older people (n= 301) from three communities in rural (Lokaleng), semi-urban (Ikageng) and urban (Sharpeville) contexts provided information about their phone use, and the basic and municipal services' needs and strategies they apply to obtain the information and services they need. The data were analysed and findings revealed that older participants were mostly illiterate with lower socio-economic levels than their white counterparts, according to the living scale measure (LSM), but with significantly high (more than 90%) access to cell phones. The cell phones are mostly outdated and older people use only very basic functions on their devices, for example to make and receive calls, send and receive messages, and to recharge airtime. The purposes they use it for vary according to individual needs, but cell phones are used to share and receive information, obtain assistance for themselves, or to give and receive help. In order to access existing services, older people obtain information from informal social networks or formally organised social structures. In the rural context, older people have more access to informal and formal social structures from which they can obtain information about services than their counterparts in semi-urban and urban contexts.

Findings indicated that older people use limited functionality of their phones but they mobilise their social support networks if they want to use cell phones. Their needs for services included welfare, medical, emergency, housing, safety and security, childcare, electricity, and sanitation. Although local government provide some basic services, they do not necessarily meet age-appropriate needs. For example, in Lokaleng local government provided water for the residents' use, but it comes out of a communal tap and older adults have to walk far to get it. Municipal services across the rural-urban divide are poorly developed or non-existent, lacking proper roads, safe public transport, community centres, local economic development, improved social security or subsidised electricity, rent and public transport. The majority of older people reported that they lacked services or information about available services because of local government's failure to respond. The Yabelana eDirectory system, consisting of a website, app and code for pushbutton phones, was conceived and developed to provide information about services for them. The app and code were introduced to older people in the three pilot communities and their feedback was used to revise the app. Multiple dissemination strategies have been applied to introduce Yabelana to service recipients and providers to enable sustainability. On completion of the project, students were requested to reflect on their experiences of being involved in the project and engaging with older people.

“The potential offered by the deep penetration of cell phones in South Africa prompted the development of Yabelana.”

Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa (AGenDA)

The official launch of the Yabelana eDirectory system took place on 26 September 2018, coinciding with Optentia's research day on the Vaal Triangle campus. Father David Dinkebogile accompanied 90 members of the Sharpeville Centre for the Aged to the launch. The older people participated in the festivities by demonstrating how they do exercises and entertaining the audience with choir and dance performances. The Yabelana eDirectory system was handed in a symbolical gesture to councillor Segoe from Ward 6 of Lokaleng and the older people. In the photo are representatives of the Sharpeville Centre of the Aged, researchers and students from the three teams of the North-West University's campuses. The day was also used to help older people to become familiar with the Yabelana app and USSD code.

Various presentations were made during the implementation of the project on topics related to the rationale, process and findings of the we-DELIVER project:

- Listening to the care needs of older adults: Critical reflections on intergenerational relations presented at the 24th Psychology Congress on 13 September 2018 by Prof. Vera Roos.
- Unemployment Symposium: Dealing with Unemployment in South Africa: Research and Intervention on 13-14 September 2018 by Prof. Jaco Hoffman.



Prof. Vera Roos and we-Deliver team members



Gwendoline Kgatle an undergraduate student registered in public administration from the Vaal Triangle campus, is helping Ishmael Ludimo to use the app on his phone.



The we-DELIVER project received the annual Vice Chancellors' award for community engagement at the North-West University on 26 October 2018. Gwendoline Kgatle received the award on behalf of the team.



"... older people in developing countries do not have the same access to care as older people in developed countries ..."

The we-Deliver Project: Outputs *by* Prof. Vera Roos

Various publications on the findings of the project are planned and a meeting with prospective NWU researchers took place on 24 August 2018.

The Centre for Community Technologies of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) will be the guardian of the Yabelana eDirectory system. Prof. Darelle van Greunen, Director of the Centre and Prof. Vera Roos discussed the dissemination of Yabelana countrywide.

For more information on the project, visit the [website](#) that was created to explain the nature of the project. A publication, Service delivery to older people: Relevant rights and duties in terms of South African Local Government was published by Prof. Anel Du Plessis in 2017 and can be obtained [here](#).

The Yabelana eDirectory system is dedicated to all older South Africans, but particularly those who suffered from discrimination and exclusion.



Tsitso Monaheng, Mianda Erasmus, Hendri Coetzee, Dzunisani Baloyi, Ngeni Ntombela, Vera Roos, Elizabeth Bothma, Kgomoatso Theledi and Anjonet Jordaan



Prof. Vera Roos and Prof. Darelle van Greunen

“The Centre for Community Technologies of the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) will be the guardian of the Yabelana eDirectory system ...”

PhD Students at Conference on Human Development

Carlien Kahl and Sandra Steyn attended the DST-NRF Center of Excellence in Human Development’s conference titled: Children, Families and the State: Collaboration and Contestation held at Wits 20-21 November 2018. The conference was an excellent opportunity to connect with international and national experts who study families across the life course and to build relationships with family scholars at other institutions. During this free two-day conference keynote speakers called for more family-focused research. Across the board, speakers encouraged qualitative studies that ex-

plore family units as fluid and acknowledge the diversity of how families are socially constructed in an African context. Despite extant research studying families from household perspectives, presenters emphasised that historical frameworks no longer capture who and what families entail. The socio-political impact of Apartheid left fragmented families in its wake. As a result, the roles, responsibilities, functions and obligations of identified family members are questioned. A central question remains: Who is family, and what should they do? When we know and understand what

families should do, the state can better understand and address the balance (imbalances) of state provision (responsibility) and family partnerships to meet the instrumental and affective needs of all family members.



Carlien Kahl and Sandra Steyn

Developing Research Methodologies: The Mmogo-method

The Mmogo-method®, hosted by Optentia Research Focus Area on the Vaal Triangle Campus was presented to researchers (10) and practitioners (10) from the South African Military Health Services in Pretoria on 20 and 21 June 2018 by Dr Avivit Cherrington (NMU) and Prof. Vera Roos. One of the participants, Jabu reflected as follows:

Given the current scepticism surrounding research and the question that is on everyone's mind, 'how do we decolonise psychology and make sure research methods are contextually relevant in South Africa'; it is refreshing to know that professionals and academics alike are always on a quest to tailor make approaches that are contextualised, suitable and therefore efficient enough to tackle home grown issues. Something I was fortunate enough to experience during my participation in the Mmogo-method Workshop that was held on 20 and June 2018. As an intern research psychologist and an active student, I find myself still indoctrinated into doing things the conventional way; at times unable to look for better ways to do things because 'what we have now still works fine', ultimately failing to recognise the change novelty can bring. In this case when I speak of novelty, I'm referring to those approaches that encapsulate the principals of agency in knowledge production and recognise the importance of context. The Mmogo-method does exactly that.

Prof. Vera Roos presented a paper, The transformative potential of the Mmogo-method: a visual data collection method: An older woman's relational experiences, at the Qualitative Health

QM Pre-Conference Workshop Schedule 2019		
Monday, April 29, 2019		
8:30am	Check In Opens	Level 5 Prefunction
8:30am - 9:00am	Breakfast	Level 5 Prefunction
9:00am - 12:00pm	Introduction to NVivo – Instructor TBC	
9:00am - 12:00pm	Learning to approach qualitative data analysis – Jude Spiers	
9:00am - 12:00pm	Developing and writing exceptional qualitative proposals for grant funding success – Alex Clark	
9:00am - 12:00pm	Introduction to Focus groups – David Morgan	
9:00am - 12:00pm	Internationalizing your research: From partnerships to research entrepreneur – Amanda Kenney & Christina West	
9:00am - 12:00pm	An exploration of challenges in undertaking qualitative research - Christina Malatsky	
9:00am - 12:00pm	The Mmogo-method®: A transformative visual data generating method - Vera Roos & Avivit Cherrington	
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch	Level 5 Prefunction
1:00pm - 4:00pm	Introduction to NVivo – Instructor TBC	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	Principles & pragmatics of qualitative interviewing – Jude Spiers	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	The effective academic: Key approaches, tools and resources – Alex Clark & Bailey Sousa	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	Moderating Focus Groups – David Morgan	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	Using the learning pathway grid to ensure reflexivity and optimisation of data collection during interviews and focus groups – Stuart Lane	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	All in the Family: Issues in Family and Family-related Qualitative Research – Virginia Vandell-Walker	
1:00pm - 4:00pm	The Mmogo-method®: A transformative visual data generating method - Vera Roos & Avivit Cherrington	



Monique Baart, Prof. Vera Roos, Dr Avivit Cherrington and Prof. Andries Baart

Research Conference in Halifax, Canada on 29 October 2018. She and Dr Avivit Cherrington have been invited to present the method as a pre-conference workshop at the same conference which will be held in Brisbane in 2019.

Prof. Vera Roos and Prof. Andries Baart, extraordinary professor at Optentia, visited NMU in Port Elizabeth from 14 to 16 November 2018. Andries presented a workshop on visual data analysis using data obtained from the Mmogo-method to a group of postgraduates. Prof. Baart, Prof. Roos and Dr Cherrington facilitated a data analysis discussion with Linda Jackson who used the method in combination with other visual data collec-

tion methods as part of her PhD studies at NMU.

Prof. Baart, Prof Roos and Dr Cherrington also used the time to plan a joint article on the philosophical underpinnings and practices of the Mmogo-method as an opportunity for participants to develop awareness that may stimulate significant change.

"The Yabelana app and the USSD code serve as a directory of service providers ..."

Contributions to the Optentia Research Day

On 25 October 2018 an exhibition on Age(ing), *Grey is the New Pink*, opened at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt, Germany. The exhibition asks: **Who is old – where and when? Can we meet the ‘challenge of ageing’ optimistically? And what untapped potential lies slumbering in the process of aging?**

Grey is the New Pink presents diverse ideas and models of ‘age(ing)’ from the perspective of cultural studies and the visual arts, as well as personal and individual experience. Like fragments in a lifetime’s memories, the exhibition combines into an anthology of ageing the individual ways of dealing with such topics as lifestyle, love and sexuality, transmission of knowledge, longevity, illness, health, and death. The exhibition will run through September 2019.

Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Mr Osborne Macharia, a photographer from Kenya explored the ageing process in Africa. More background can be found in the catalogue, which is published by [Kerber Verlag Publishers](#). See some photos of the opening ceremony and exhibition in Frankfurt, Germany.

“Grey is the New Pink presents diverse ideas and models of ‘age(ing)’ from the perspective of cultural studies and the visual arts, as well as personal and individual experience”



Going beyond Academic Achievement *by* Prof. Mary Grosser

Prof Mary Grosser, an extraordinary professor in Optentia, was one of the presenters in a webinar focusing on growing minds towards 21st century competencies. This webinar was chaired by Prof. Mirna Nel and had several internationally renowned education experts such as Prof. Mary Grosser, Prof. Hans Henrik Knoop, Prof. Kirsti Lonka, Prof. Jonathan Jansen and Prof. Ben Mardell.

Prof. Mary Grosser's topic focused on: Grooming students to become smarter in the art of thinking, living and working together. She asserted that academic excellence is important and necessary in the 21st century, but not sufficient. In addition to well-rounded academic knowledge, competencies to think and behave smarter are required to shape students who are passionate about what happens in the future to the world and the communities they live in. Quality education therefore involves more than just obtaining qualifications, but also grooms students in the art of living and working together. For this purpose, students need to develop seven competencies (core character, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creative thinking, citizenship and connectivity) related to different types of minds, namely a disciplined mind, synthesizing mind, creating mind, respectful mind, ethical mind and introspective mind.

The Master's and PhD students involved in the programme presented their studies in poster format. These include:

- Mr Phefo Mokghatle (PhD student): The effect of Problem Based Learning on



Prof. Mary Grosser



Prof. Mirna Nel



Dr Magda Kloppers



Dr Stef Esterhuizen



Byron Bunt



Phefo Mogatle

- Mr Byron Bunt (PhD student): Potential benefits of a puzzle video game - cognitive enrichment programme (PVGCEP) for the development of critical thinking among first year B.ED. Students.
- Mrs Jennie Stols: From teacher to community leader: Understanding the transformational dynamics
- Mrs Mallery Mitchell (Master student): Secondary school teachers' perspectives on collaborative support to learners with behaviour problems

The findings of the High Performance Learning project: Developing Advanced Performers for the 21st Century, which was conducted by Mary Grosser, Mirna Nel, Magda Kloppers and Steffie Esterhuizen, were also displayed at the poster presentations. The different aspects of the project that were presented in four post-

ers included:

- Advanced performance: Going beyond academic achievement to embrace inclusive approaches to teaching and learning
- Teacher preparedness to nurture Advanced Performance: The Status Quo
- Towards achieving Advanced Performance with the Six Bricks teaching tool
- Nurturing Advanced Performance: The way forward

Prof. Mirna Nel also led a dialogue group where a rigorous debate ensued around the topic of cultivating humanity: Towards inclusion.

"The presentation highlighted the potential of High Performance Learning (HPL) theory with its aim to achieve advanced performance among all learners ..."

Prof Mirna Nel Presented Inaugural Lecture

On 14 September 2018, Prof. Mirna Nel presented her inaugural lecture on the topic: Inclusive Education: All about humanity and yet... Since the adoption of the Universal Human Rights Declaration (UDHR) in 1948 the world has attempted to move towards a more humane society where human rights and social justice were integrated as fundamental principles to foster humanity. Education was regarded as a guiding force to achieve a more humane society which culminated in the Education for All (EFA) movement. The primary goal of the EFA is to develop inclusive education systems in order to provide equal access to education for all children and eradicate discriminatory attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender, and ability. South Africa is an ardent signatory of the movement towards a more inclusive education system and through its policies encourage a growth mindset in asserting the belief that all children can learn. However, the implementation of a successful inclusive education system continues to be a challenge. Through an autoethnography she has identified her main concerns that she believes contests the conceptualisation, philosophical framework and practice of inclusive education. These include understanding inclusion, a fixed mindset, and curriculum inflexibility – stuck in a fixed mindset.

In order to address these concerns, she pleaded for a total re-thinking and re-approaching of policies and practices to thoroughly address the principles of humanity. In order to achieve this



Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Prof. Johnny Hay, Prof. Attie de Lange, Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Linda du Plessis, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Mary Grosser and Prof. Hans van der Merwe



North-West University colleagues at the inaugural lecture of Prof. Mirna Nel during September 2018

she recommended a transdisciplinary inter-sectoral collaboration between national and provincial Departments of Higher Education, and Basic Education, Higher Education Institutes (HEI), District Offices, principals, teachers, parents, Non-governmental Organisations (NGO) and Community-Based Organisations (CBO). This is critical in order to bring policy, research and practice together. She also asserted that all teaching practices (developing knowledge, as well as cognitive, technical, technological and life skills) should be infused with a

strong philosophical approach in which a growth mindset, the capability approach and positive education should be integrated and used as a foundation and building blocks. In addition she deems that an inclusive pedagogy should be applied at teacher education and school level, which requires that teacher educators, as well as field trainers of in-service teachers, should be role models of inclusive pedagogists, as well as train the theory and practice of an inclusive pedagogy well.

“The primary goal of the EFA is to develop inclusive education systems ...”

Workshop on Longitudinal Research

One of the highlights of our methodology training in 2018, was the workshop by Prof. Hannu Savolainen, professor in special education in the Department of Education at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland and extraordinary professor at Optentia. Prof. Savolainen's workshop focused on quantitative longitudinal research methods describing the logic of different quantitative designs and the most common analysis and statistical modelling options for them. The objective of the discussion was to challenge the participants into thinking what kind of research questions can be answered with different research designs and analysis options. Analyses from past and on-going research were used as



Prof. Hannu Savolainen presenting a workshop on longitudinal research

examples of different approaches in answering research questions in a quantitative longitudinal research design. These include e.g. factor analysis, path analysis as well as latent growth curve modelling and latent profile analysis. Examples of analysis done with SPSS and M-plus were used.

“Analyses from past and on-going research were used as examples of different approaches in answering research questions ...”



Prof. Hannu Savolainen, Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Susanne Schwab. We will remember September 2018 as an important month for focusing on inclusive education.

Visit of Vives College of Applied Sciences by Prof. Mirna Nel

Drs Els Callens, Eveline Le Roy and Nele Vandeputte from the Vives College of Applied Sciences in Belgium visited Optentia in the week of 28 September to 4 October 2018 with the aim to establish a multidisciplinary collaboration agreement with the NWU. During this time they had a range of meetings with colleagues from education, nursing, social work, sociology, as well as industrial and clinical psychology and also met with Dr Shernice Sabroomoney from the global development office. They visited the School of Nursing in Potchefstroom, where Theresa du Toit took them on-site visits and showed them the simulation hospital on campus. Dr Elmien Truter and Prof. Ansie Fouché also took them to one of their community social work project sites in Sebokeng.

At the end of the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed upon under the leadership of Prof. Mirna Nel and Prof. Linda du Plessis, who will coordinate the project for the next five years. Colleagues from the different disciplines who will assist with the project coordination of the implementation include Prof. Ansie Fouché (Social Work and Psychology), Prof. Elrie Botha (Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management) and Dr Suegnet Scholtz (School of Nursing). Prof. Mirna Nel will coordinate arrangements with the Faculty of Education. This is a multidisciplinary and cross-campus project which will include short intensive training programmes, as well as the exchange of students and lecturers for short periods.

“... a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed upon ...”



North-West University staff meeting with colleagues from Vives University in Belgium



A project team of the North-West University and Vives University was formed



Prof. Mirna Nel accompanied staff members of Vives University to various schools at the North-West University

Visit to Vives College of Applied Sciences *by* Prof. Mirna Nel

Four Optentia members from different disciplines were invited by Dr Els Callens, Eveline le Roy and Nele Vandeputte to Vives College of Applied Sciences in Belgium during the week of 18 to 26 November. These members included Mirna Nel (Education), Ansie Fouché (Social Work and Psychology), Elrie Botha (Industrial Psychology) and Suegnet Scholtz (Nursing). The purpose of this visit was to discuss and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from 2019 to 2024, which entails a Short Intensive Programme (SIP) for two weeks, as well as a funding application for the exchange of staff members and students in these different disciplines. During these meetings Francine Depae (Nursing) and Nele Ducatteeuw (Education) from Vives also joined the multinational and interdisciplinary team.

It was agreed that the overarching theme of the MoU will be inclusion and well-being. During the SIP of next year 12 students and 4 staff members from Vives College will visit the Vaal Triangle campus of North-West University (NWU). These Vives students together with 12 NWU students and 4 staff members from the above-mentioned disciplines will be challenged to fully comprehend what inclusion and well-being mean. They will also be expected to apply the principles and values of these two concepts, as defined by them, with a community project in an area of poverty. An important objective of this SIP is to help the students gain experience in approaching their professions in a multi-perspective and trans-disciplinary manner as this could



Eveline le Roy, Suegnet Scholtz, Els Callens, Elrie Botha, Mirna Nel, Nele Ducatteeuw, Ansie Fouché



Francine Deplae, Ansie Fouché, Eveline Le Roy, Suegnet Scholtz, Els Callens, Lies Verstraete and Mirna Nel

stimulate a growth mindset. A research project, exploring the value of the SIP in terms of the students' and staff members' experiences, is also envisioned. A long term goal of this collaboration is to create opportunities for students and staff members from various disciplines (besides the current four disciplines) at the two universities to network and learn from each other.

We thank the Vives team for the site visits to schools, hospitals and support centres, as well as the introduction to colleagues from our different academic

fields and the practice.

Note: Vives College is named after Juan Luis Vives who was born on 6 March 1492, in Valencia, Aragon, Spain and died on 6 May 1540 in Brugge, Belgium. He was a Spanish humanist and student of Erasmus. His work is eminent in education, philosophy, and psychology. He strongly opposed Scholasticism and emphasised induction as a method of inquiry. "There is no mirror that better reflects the image of man than his words". Juan Luis Vives.

"... the overarching theme of the MoU will be inclusion and well-being ..."

Prof. Mirna Nel Keynote Speaker at Education Conferences

On 19 July 2018 an inclusive education conference was held for teachers and district officials in the Fezile Dabi District in the Zamdela township near Sasolburg in the Free State. Prof. Mirna Nel was requested to give the more than 100 attendees a better understanding of what inclusive education entails. In her presentation, Mirna emphasised a social approach to inclusion and a move away from the medical-deficit model. She asserted that education should be the tool through which inclusionary values can be identified and learned to be respected; and diversity can be regarded as something to learn from and enrich one's own way of thinking and believing. Prof. Nel was accompanied by Me Lisa Hoffman, a PhD student from the University of Wuppertal in Germany.

The 4th Annual Inclusive and Special Education conference, organised by Maphosa Management Consultants and ECL 168 Africa, was held at the Emperors Palace Convention Centre from 21 to 22 August and had more or less 80 participants. The theme of this conference focused on policies and strategies to accommodate all learners as equal citizens and technology developments for learners. This is the fourth time that Mirna was invited back as keynote speaker. Her topic addressed the critical issue of early childhood and inclusion in which she emphasised the critical need for government and society to develop an adequate number of early childhood centres providing access for all young children, including those who experience barriers to learning. An age relevant teach-



Mr Knysna Motumi (Fezile Dabi District), Prof. Mirna Nel and Lisa Hoffman

ing and learning approach should be applied, with an emphasis on constructive play as the elemental strategy, to develop perceptual-, motoric-, cognitive and psychosocial knowledge and skills. This is essential as a stimulating and caring environment in the critical, formative early years provide important foundations for a successful and fulfilling life. In such an environment, possible barriers to learning can also be identified and supported early to ensure that every child has the opportunity to experience success at school.

The annual South African Principals Association (SAPA) conference was held at Sun City in the North West Province from 16 to 19 September with 680 school managers in attendance. At this conference Mirna's topic focused on unleashing the learning ability we all have. In her presentation, she asked the question: What kind of child do we want to nurture for the future? A flourishing or languishing human being? Developing a flourishing human being implies that all role

players in the education environment (such as governmental departments, local communities, teachers and parents) must provide an inclusive and quality education for every learner. This requires a growth mindset, believing that ability can grow and develop and giving all learners every opportunity to achieve the actualisation of their human potential. This should be done through a flexible curriculum which ensures that learners' diverse abilities are catered for, is not prescriptive and provide a broad framework for teachers within which they are allowed to adapt the curriculum to the specific needs of learners.

"... education should be the tool through which inclusionary values can be identified and learned to be respected ..."

Lisa Hoffman, PhD candidate from the University of Wuppertal

Lisa is a PhD student of Prof. Susanne Schwab, an extraordinary professor in the Inclusion, Capability and Optimal Functioning programme of Optentia. She is also a research assistant in the Department of Methodology and Didactics in the Research Areas Learning and Emotional and Social Development, at the Institute for Educational Research, University of Wuppertal (Germany). Lisa visited Mirna in July and August in order to assist with the collection of data for a collaborative project between the University of Wuppertal and Optentia. This project focuses on the social participation of learners with special education needs in mainstream



Lisa Hoffman

schools. During her visit she also presented a paper at the third symposium on teacher education for inclusion held at the Emerald

Conference Centre in Vanderbijlpark.

Rodean Booyesen Awarded a Master's Degree with Distinction

Rodean Booyesen received her Master's degree in Education, specialising in Learner Support with distinction on 10 October 2018. Her topic focused on the perspectives of secondary school teachers regarding the flexible implementation of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement.

The South African education system has implemented numerous policy documents in order to ensure that the curriculum has been designed in such a way that it caters for all the educational needs of learners. However, the implementation thereof seems problematic. Hence, the purpose of this sequential exploratory mixed-method research was to explore the perspectives of teachers regarding the flexible implementation of the CAPS in secondary schools. Teachers are central in ensuring

that classroom practices, which include teaching strategies and assessment approaches, are flexible enough to accommodate for all learners. Teachers in this study indicated that they believe that the flexible implementation of CAPS will be beneficial for all learners. However, they asserted that its effective implementation is hampered by too many challenges including the number of learners in classrooms, a strict syllabus, the type of learners, a lack of resources context of school, illiteracy levels of learners, learning capabilities, Language of Learning and Teaching, parental involvement, social issues, administrative workload, rigidity, support, training, limited time and a focus on pass percentages. Despite the challenges noted by them, they declared that a flexible curriculum has benefits related to learner



Rodean Booyesen and Prof. Mirna Nel

empowerment, differentiation, inclusion, a decrease in the drop-out rate, the promotion of a curriculum that includes more practical subjects, and cooperative learning by means of grouping activities.

“Teachers in this study indicated that they believe that the flexible implementation of CAPS will be beneficial for all learners ...”

Prof. Susanne Schwab and her Team at the European Conference

Optentia's Extraordinary Prof. Susanne Schwab and her team from the University of Wuppertal (BUW, Germany) had been very active at this year's European Conference on Educational Research (ECER). Surrounded by the beautiful landscape of Bolzano, Italy, they organised several symposia, gave numerous presentations and served as discussants in the broad topic of inclusive education.

Prof. Susanne Schwab together with Prof. Umesh Sharma (Monash University, Australia) and Lisa Hoffmann (BUW) talked about "Do Teachers Practice What They Believe: An Exploration through Student Experiences". In their recent study the authors examine if teachers' intention to teach in inclusive classrooms and teachers' self-efficacy is correlated with students' perceived inclusion climate.

Prof. Schwab and Lisa Hoffmann together with Andrea Kulmhofer-Bommer (University of Graz, Austria) and Janka Goldan (BUW) also presented a study about "Student specific differences in teachers' self-efficacy" in inclusive settings. They found no differences between female and male teachers and between teachers of different subjects (Maths, German and English). Further, students' gender shows no influence on teacher's student specific self-efficacy while the correlation between the student specific self-efficacy of two teachers rating the same students is rather high.

Further on, Prof. Schwab talked about "How well integrated do students feel in class? Mothers', Fathers' and Teachers' ratings in relation to students'



Janka Goldan, Lisa Hoffmann, Prof. Susanne Schwab and Stefan Markus

self-perception". The research question focused on the consistency of the different ratings. The results indicate that the Perceptions of Inclusion Questionnaire (PIQ) represents a reliable instrument to capture social inclusion, emotional inclusion and academic self-concept from student's, parent's and teacher's perspectives. High to moderate correlations between the four different perspectives can be shown.

She also chaired a symposium regarding "Friendships, Friendship Quality And friendship Stability Between Students With And Without Special Educational Needs" in which Lisa Hoffmann's presentation ("Mutual Friendships And Their Quality In Inclusive Classes") focused on differences in the quality of friendship when one or both students have SEN. Using the sociometric nomination method this study shows that students with SEN have fewer (stable) friends than their classmates without SEN, however the quality of friendships does not differ between these groups.

Prof. Schwab's team members from BUW contributed with further presentations. Stefan

Markus talked about "Perceptions of Inclusion and Motivational Relationships as Predictors of Emotional Well-being", Janka Goldan held presentations on "Graduation rates of students with special educational needs" as well as "Measuring subjective perceptions of resources in inclusive schools - First results of a newly developed instrument" and "Inclusive schooling and needs-based allocation of teacher resources - Challenges and empirical findings from Germany".

Janka Goldan and colleagues organized a symposium regarding "Resources for Inclusive Education - Outcomes, Risks, and Side Effects of Allocation Modes" while Lisa Hoffmann and Stefan Markus chaired a symposium on the topic of "Measuring Social Participation with Different Methods".

"... many old people suffer from loneliness as they are forever alone due to the fact that their family members are at work; some at school."

New Book by Prof. Susanne Schwab

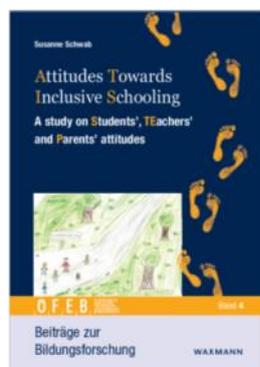
In Europe – as well as in other continents – an increasing number of students with special educational needs (SEN) is attending regular classes together with students without SEN. Moving towards an inclusive school system with big STEPs, it is essential to identify the factors that influence the process of inclusive education. According to empirical evidence, one of the most important success factors in implementing inclusive schooling is the attitudes towards inclusion of the actors involved.

Therefore, a longitudinal mixed-method study called ATIS-STEP by Prof. Susanne Schwab (University of Vienna, Austria and extraordinary professor in Optentia) with 48 inclusive classes (721 4th grade students, 482

mothers, 400 fathers and 87 teachers) provides empirical insights into the attitudes towards students with learning disabilities and behavioral disorders. It is the first study to use longitudinal data that examines the attitudes of all three different stakeholder groups: students, teachers and parents.

Prof. Susanne Schwab accumulates findings of the ATIS-STEP study in her new book „Attitudes Towards Inclusive Schooling – A study on Students’, TEachers’ and Parents’ attitudes“. The interdependency of the attitudes of the three groups, as well as the influence of previous contact experience on the attitudes are analysed and discussed.

The picture on the book cover is the winner of a painting



competition, which 4th grade students from Germany had created on the theme of "inclusion". Meanwhile, the foot STEPs can be considered as symbols for the long way to inclusion and are footprints by the author herself. In this sense, this book may be a step towards inclusive schooling worldwide.

“... this book may be a step towards inclusive schooling worldwide ...”

International Conference on Inclusion 2018

The 6th International Conference on Inclusion took place on the 13th and 14th of July 2018 at the University of Wuppertal, Germany. The exciting and high-quality conference was organised by several professors in Wuppertal (under the lead of Prof. Linderkamp and Dr. Krämer), Prof. Schwab was part of the organizing committee. The conference contained a total of nine sessions and these sessions were held in parallel.



Data Collection for an International Research Project Started

Data collection for an international collaborative research project between the University of Wuppertal, Germany and Optentia: Social participation of learners with special education needs in mainstream schools occurred during September and October 2018 at three different Full-Service Schools. These schools were located in Henley-on-Klip, Sharpeville and Bophelong. Me Lisa Hoffman, as well as three undergraduate volunteers at the Vaal Triangle Campus, assisted in the process. These capable and reliable students were Gwen Kgatle, Khutso Themba and Tshepiso Maenetja.



Prof. Mirna Nel, Tshepiso Maenetja, Gwen Kgatle, Lisa Hoffman and Khutso Themba

"I just wanted to say thank you for the unbelievable course that I attended ..."

Workshop: Developing Support for the Learning Needs of All Learners

On 9-10 July 2018 Optentia presented a workshop on different topics pertaining to the identification, assessment and support of learners on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), behaviour management, differentiated instruction, as well as leadership within an inclusive school. The workshop was facilitated by Mr Francis Young, Dr Vicky Spencer and Dr Alice Farling from the Francis Young International – Consultants in School Improvement, Michigan, USA. Attendees, from different parts of the country, included teachers and school principals from mainstream, as well as special schools. There were also representatives from different district offices and Non-governmental Organisations (NGO). The feedback from the workshop participants was overwhelmingly positive and can be encompassed in the following words of one teacher: "I just wanted to say thank you for the



Prof. Mirna Nel, Dr Alice Farling, Mr Mark Francis, Dr Vicky Spencer and Mr Mark Hayter

unbelievable course that I attended on Monday and Tuesday. It was informative and participants thoroughly enjoyed it. The speakers were knowledgeable and had good tips for the classroom. We also enjoyed making contact with the other teachers".

We appreciate the large donations from Mr Mark Hayter,

founder and Chief Executive Officer of Edtechink, and Prof. Linda du Plessis, Deputy Vice-chancellor on the Vaal Triangle Campus.

Workshop on School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support

On 12 September 2018 Prof Hannu Savolainen from the University of Jyväskylä in Finland presented a workshop on school-wide positive behaviour support at Optentia. Several teachers from the Wings for Life School for Autism in Vanderbijlpark, as well as colleagues from different faculties, attended the workshop. ProSchool (ProKoulu in Finnish) is an effort to build a new environment into Finnish schools which supports the behaviour of all students and aims at preventing behaviour problems. The approach is based on the philosophy and principles of School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports and Interventions (SWPBIS) that have gained in-

creasing attention as an effort to build more inclusive schools in the USA and more recently in many European countries. In this workshop Hannu discussed the background of SWPBIS and how it is different from traditional punitive approaches to address problem behaviours in schools. Prof. Savolainen also described the background of the launch of the programme in Finland and how they adapted the international approach to the Finnish school environment to make it more culturally relevant. The contents of the programme and how it is run in schools were discussed. He also reported some of the first results from the large scale randomized controlled trial (70



Prof. Hannu Savolainen

schools) that took place between 2013-2017. Possible next steps to upscale the programme and extend it to earlier and later phases of schooling were also addressed.

Workshop: Measurement Invariance for Group Comparisons

The presentation of Prof. Susanne Schwab to the Statistics Study Group on 10 September 2018 focused on the relevance of measurement invariance for group comparisons of latent variables. Measurement invariance between different groups (e.g., Austrians and Germans) is a necessary statistical requirement to compare sum scores (e.g., in self-efficacy) acknowledging that 'the same attribute must relate to the same set of observations in the same way in each group' (Borsboom, 2006, p. 176). When comparing variables such as attitudes and beliefs, we may expect differences between countries because educational policies and educational systems vary widely. To compare groups on an observed variable, the questionnaire has to measure identical constructs with the same structure across the

groups. If this has not been affirmed, it could, for instance, be the case that group differences exist as a result of bias (due to differential item functioning), but not because the groups differ on the latent construct (in our case, the self-efficacy scale). If participants of different groups interpret Moreover, if measurement bias exists (meaning that a factor which is not supposed to be measured influences test scores), structural relations in a path model estimated for both groups could be biased. Unfortunately, many cross-national studies lack a concern for measurement invariance, but as long as measurement invariance has not been confirmed these studies' conclusions should be regarded as weak and cannot be meaningfully generalised. A case example has been used to illustrate the individual steps taken



Prof. Susanne Schwab

when analysing measurement invariance items and the underlying latent factor differently (implying that measurement bias exists), factor means cannot be reasonably compared.

"Measurement invariance between different groups is a necessary statistical requirement to compare sum scores ..."

Enabling Risk Culture

A new programme has joined Optentia. The new programme, Enhancing Risk Culture, is led by Prof. Herman Zaaiman. The programme focuses on contemporary risk-culture-related issues in public and private sector organisations, and specifically on how to improve active consideration of risk when decisions are made. The research programme conduct applied academic research to enable organisations to enhance their risk cultures.

Optentia welcomes Prof. Hermien Zaaiman and her team. We look forward to collaborate with you!



Prof. Hermien Zaaiman



Prof. Neels Erasmus



Mr Emmanuel Mulambya



Mr Fred Goede

“The research programme conduct applied academic research to enable organisations to enhance their risk cultures.”



Colleagues celebrating the prestige lecture of Prof. Gert Jan Hofstede on 19 November 2018

Publons: Useful New Tool for Researchers

Publons was launched in 2012 as a profile for researchers to track, verify and showcase their publications and citation counts on Publons profiles. As of December 2018, over 530,000 researchers have joined the site. In December 2018, Publons integrated with Web of Science — Clarivate Analytic's article and

citation network — allowing researchers to also record their publications and citation counts on Publons profiles. As of December 2018, over 530,000 researchers have joined the site. Please create your profile on Publons.



Available in English
 Owner: Clarivate Analytics
 Website: publons.com

Annual SIOPSA Conference

Various staff members of the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management attended the Annual Conference of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. Current volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity is influencing the mindsets and toolsets for decision-making and organisational effectiveness. The conference focused on the blurred ownership and an increase in boundaryless organisations which impact the systems and processes in which organisations function.



Colleagues of the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management

Visit to MCD Training Centre

During October 2018, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Dr Melinda du Toit, Rachele Paver and Hannes du Toit visited Mr Dan Sothoane, one of the owners of MCD Training in Meyerton. Mr Sothoane is a business leader in the Vaal Triangle. He has been a reliable supporter of Optentia's research collaboration with communities in the Vaal Triangle.

MCD Training centre is an accredited trade test training centre specialising in engineering apprenticeship, learnership, skills programmes, surface mobile equipment and lifting training. Engineering trades accredited are: electrical, instrumentation, fitting and turning, fitting, rigging, boiler making, welding, air conditioning and refrigeration.

We thank Mr Dan Sothoane for his contributions to our university and the community. We look forward to collaborating with him in the future.



Hannes du Toit, Rachele Paver, Dan Sothoane, Dr Melinda du Toit and Prof. Ian Rothmann



Dan Sothoane and Dr Melinda du Toit

“... volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity is influencing the mindsets and toolsets for decision-making ...”

Oxford Expert Lectured at Optentia

On 18 September 2018, Dr George Leeson, Director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing at the University of Oxford in the UK, was a guest lecturer at Optentia. The topic of the lecture was: "A gentle introduction to population development for multidisciplinary understandings and operationalization".

Demography is the study of human population development over time and space based on the measurement of the demographic components: fertility, mortality and migration. In recent decades population development has been dominated by unprecedented population ageing in both the developed and developing world. An understanding of demography presupposes an understanding of past development and characteristics of populations. Population composition and development is key to societal planning and the allocation of resources.

Demographic analysis and an understanding of the social and economic consequences and causes of population development and demographic behaviour are vitally important – particularly in the present demographic climate with low levels of fertility, ageing populations and global mobility of people and resources. Dr Leeson's lecture aimed to provide a grounding in demographic methods and development as well as a critical approach to the analysis of the social and economic consequences of population development in an increasingly ageing and mobile world.

Dr George W. Leeson is the Director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing and Senior Research Fellow in Demography at the University of Oxford in the UK. He is also a Fellow of Kellogg College,



Prof. George Leeson

Oxford, as well as a member of the Oxford Martin School and the University's Department of Sociology. His research interests are in the socio-economic-demographic aspects of ageing populations and he is responsible for Oxford's Global Ageing Survey carried out in three waves in more than 20 countries.

"Demography is the study of human population development over time and space ..."

R is the Present and Future of Statistical Programming

"The programming language R is the present and future of statistical programming." Dr Emir Efendic, post-doctoral researcher from Eindhoven University in the Netherlands, attempted to convince his audience of this statement during a workshop hosted by Optentia in Vanderbijlpark on 19 September 2018.

Dr Efendic endeavoured into the core workings of the language and the multiple benefits that come with a large community of R programmers creating interesting and useful packages. He also explained why psychologists are increasingly relying on R to analyse their data. Analyses in R are transparent, easily shareable, and most importantly, reproducible (not only by others, but also by the researcher).

This short workshop contained some basic examples, but the R journey only starts there. R is versatile and powerful, but to optimally use it, will require more training. Dr Efendic said that it is important not to get discouraged in the learning process, as the benefits most certainly outweigh the cost. "Since R and the accompanying RStudio applications are free, by pre-installing them yourself you can also directly follow this short workshop," he added.

Emir Efendic obtained his PhD in Social Psychology from the University of Bordeaux in France, where he focused on studying the impact of multiple affective reactions on decision making by using behavioural and physiological studies. He has published various scientific arti-

cles and his research focuses mainly on judgment and decision making. However, he is also interested in research methodology and increasing the reproducibility of psychological science. Outside of the academic setting he has worked as a research consultant on a number of public policy issues, advising mainly on methodology and data analysis. He is also the associate editor at In-Mind Magazine, which focuses on reporting the latest findings from scientific psychology to the general audience.



Appointments and Promotions

Three extraordinary researchers, Prof. Roland Blank, Prof. Todd Little and Prof. Anne Magriet Pot have recently been appointed in Optentia. We welcome them to Optentia and look forward to collaborate with them.

Prof. Roland Blank (Tilburg University and the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research - TNO) completed a PhD in Clinical Child Psychology at the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. His thesis focused on Self-efficacy and Treatment of Childhood Social Incompetence. He is currently a Principal Scientist at TNO Arbeid in the Netherlands. He was promoter of 8 PhD students and currently supervises 5 PhD studies. He published 68 articles during his career. He holds a professorship in labour expertise and inclusive innovation of labour at Tilburg University.

Prof. Todd D. Little, PhD is a Professor and Director of the Research, Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics program at Texas Tech University (TTU) where, in 2013, he became the founding director of the Institute for Measurement, Methodology, Analysis and Policy

Prof. Anne Magriet Pot is Professor of Clinical Geropsychology at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. Her focus and speciality spans areas of long-term care and dementia and includes the establishment of long-term care systems.

Optentia would also like to congratulate the following staff on their promotions:

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

- Thapelo Chaacha, who was promoted to lecturer.
- Dr Leoni van der Vaart who was promoted to senior lecturer.

Faculty of Education

- Rodean Booysen, who was promoted to lecturer.

Faculty of Health Sciences

- Baaqira Ebrahim, who was promoted to lecturer.
- Elmari Deacon, who was promoted to associate professor.
- Hayley Walker-Williams, who was promoted to associate professor.



Prof. Roland Blank



Prof. Todd Little



Prof. Anne Magriet Pot

“Optentia appointed three extraordinary professors.”



Postal Address
Optentia Research Focus Area
Faculty of Humanities
North-West University
Vanderbijlpark, 1900
Phone: +27(16)9103433
Fax: +27(0)867307905
E-mail: ian@ianrothmann.com
Web: www.optentia.co.za



For a worthwhile existence

We're on the web!
www.optentia.co.za

Proofreading:
Ms Lynn Booysen



Books

- Chugh, D. (2018). The person you mean to be. London: Laszlo Books.
- Davidov, E., Schmidt, P., Billiet, J., & Meuleman, B. (2018). Cross-cultural analysis: Methods and applications (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Harari, Y.N. (2018). 21 Lessons for the 21st century. London: Penguin.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: Intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival.
- Johannessen, J. (2019). The workplace of the future: The fourth industrial revolution, the precariat and the death of hierarchies. London: Routledge.

Thank you to Optentia Support Staff who have worked long hours to help us to reach our goals for 2018!

Upcoming Events (Click [here](#) to go to the Optentia Research Calendar)



- ◇ 23 Jan 2019 - Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 28 Jan - 1 Feb 2019 - SLP - Research Design
- ◇ 20 Feb 2019 - Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 20 Mar 2019 - Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 17 Apr 2019 - Optentia Scientific Committee
- ◇ 17 Apr 2019 - Prestige lecture: Prof. Todd Little
- ◇ 23-26 Apr 2019 - Stats Camp (Mongena Lodge)