

## Special points of interest:

- \* Practice gratitude
- \* Learn from videos
- \* Use technology
- \* Embrace multi-disciplinary research
- \* Collaborate with others
- \* Prepare for success
- \* Apply for funding
- \* Use appropriate research practices
- \* Thrive!

## Inside this issue:

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## Finishing 2016 ... with Gratitude

We are acutely aware of the challenges facing us in Africa and the world. For example:

- To find optimal ways to promote health and well-being. When people aren't healthy and flourishing, they can't focus their attention on education, working and raising a family.
- To find ways to ensure high-quality education through the optimal use of educational technology.
- To ensure relevant and quality higher education to launch the next generation of scientists, entrepreneurs, educators, and government leaders.
- To create economic opportunities to channel the energy and ideas of Africa's youth.
- To enhance governance in order to accomplish effective and efficient service delivery.

Considering the challenges and turmoil, one might feel discouraged, alone, anxious, and even angry. Such emotions will make it hard for us to feel grateful. It has been shown that people who practise gratitude will experience positive emotions, sleep better, and express more kindness and compassion. Instead of worrying about the future, gratitude brings



us back to the here-and-now. We are grateful for the following:

- More than 106 peer-reviewed articles (71.31 article equivalents) were accepted in 2016, of which 75% are in ISI listed journals. Optentia participants published 28 chapters in peer-reviewed handbooks.
- A total of 17 Master's and three PhD candidates submitted their studies for examination in November 2016.
- In 2016, 28 Master's and 11 PhD proposals, as well as five new research projects were approved by the Optentia Research Committee.
- Optentia presented 15 workshops in 2016, affecting the competence of more than 400 participants.
- Prof. L. van Zyl and Prof. M. Stander both received C2 ratings from the National

Research Foundation. Prof. A. Fouché was appointed as Editor of Social Work Practitioner-Researcher.

- Our research makes a difference in communities. We thank Melinda du Toit for championing many community projects.
- Optentia has developed more networks with researchers and universities in the United States, Europe, and Africa.
- Optentia researchers were invited as presenters, examiners and contributors in international projects.
- A record number of new funding applications during 2016.

We thank all Optentia participants for their engagement and contributions towards making Optentia a great research entity!

## Performance of the Optentia Research Focus Area

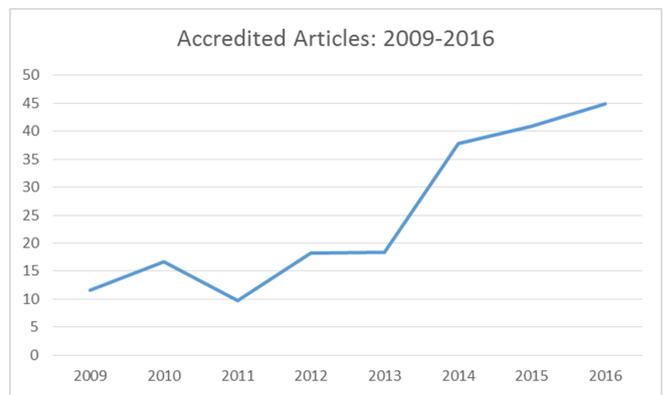
The scorecard of Optentia shows that 106 manuscripts were accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals in 2016. Click [here](#) to see the list of publications by Optentia-affiliated staff. In addition, 28 chapters were accepted for publication in books.

The scorecard shows that 15 Optentia PhD students were awarded degrees during 2016. Also, three PhD and 17 Master's students submitted their theses and dissertations in November 2016. A total of 58 students have completed Master's research proposals, while 31 students have completed their PhD proposals.

The graph shows the increase in peer-reviewed publications by Optentia participants since 2009.



"How do the year end numbers look?"



"... 106 manuscripts were accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals in 2016."

## The Optentia Scorecard *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Output	2013	2014	2015	2016
Peer-reviewed publications	49	78	73	106
Peer-reviewed articles*	18.45	37.82	40.85	71.31
Peer-reviewed publications (ISI/IBSS)*	8.68	25.80	28.34	55.52
Peer-reviewed chapters	5.00	3.00	5.66	28
Papers: International conferences	5	19	21	20
Papers: National conferences	12	8	24	25
Number of NRF rated researchers	2	2	3	4
Participating Master's students	42	57	53	59 (31)
Completed Master's students	14	12	14	9 (17)
Participating PhD students	18	35	25	31 (15)
Completed PhD students	4	6	7	15 (3)
Post-doctoral fellows	0	2	5	7
Number of workshops presented	-	32	24	15
Number of workshop participants	-	293	468	460

Note: Outputs as on 16 November 2016

\* Expressed in terms of equivalents

## Two NRF-rated Researchers for Optentia

Llewellyn van Zyl (PhD) is currently an associate professor in Industrial Psychology with the North-West University (VTC) where he leads the Optimising Performance Sub-Programme of the Optentia Research Focus Area. He also holds an extraordinary researcher position with the University of Twente's e-HRM department in The Netherlands and acts as past president for the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology of South Africa. He is also an active consultant, managing a part time management consulting business in South Africa. Academically, he has completed a Doctorate degree in the field of Industrial Psychology, specialising in the development and evaluation of Positive Psychological Interventions aimed at happiness, under the supervision of Prof. Sebastiaan Rothmann. He also holds a Master of Commerce degree, an Honours and a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Psychology, which were obtained from the North-West University (cum laude) at the top of his class. These qualifications provided him with a means to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as a psychologist (Category: Industrial).

Professionally, Llewellyn is a respected researcher and published author of various scientific articles and books. He is known for his academic work as Associate Editor of the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology as well as his work on the editorial board of the Journal of Leadership and Organizational studies.

Llewellyn has experience within the tertiary educational environment (as a lecturer and researcher), as well as within the private and public sectors (as a consultant). He has a passion for Online Positive Psychological Interventions.



**Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl**

Specifically, strengths-based people development, strengths-based coaching psychology, happiness at work, e-Health interventions and social media.

Prof. Marius Stander is a lecturer, researcher and a management consultant specialising in the assessment and optimisation of talented people and teams. He started his academic career at the PU for CHE (Potchefstroom) as a junior lecturer in Industrial Psychology in 1983. Since 1985 he has been a lecturer at the Vaal Triangle Campus where he was promoted to Senior Lecturer as well as Head of the Industrial Psychology department. In 2002 he was appointed as General Manager of an outsourcing company. In 2005 he returned to the NWU Vaal as Senior Lecturer and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2008.

He has been lecturing Industrial Psychology on postgraduate level at the Potchefstroom University for CHE, North-West University as well as the University of Johannesburg (4 years) and the University of Namibia (3 years). He has supervised more than 55 Master's and PhD students (22 graduated the past 8 years). He is a Life Long Honorary member of the Society for Industrial/Organisational Psychology of South Africa, a registered Industrial Psychologist (HPCSA), Mentor and Master Human Resource Practitioner (SA Board for People Practices). Over the years, he has been actively



**Prof. Marius Stander**

involved with SIOPSA, SABPP, IPM, PsySSA, Black Management Forum, local and district educational units, various subject interest groups (HR, L&D, and Employee Relations), as well as an Exco member of the Convocation. He has been a Section Editor of the SA Journal for Industrial Psychology and is currently a member of the Editorial Board. He is actively involved as reviewer for journals, conferences and the NRF, as well as an examiner for master's and doctoral students (more than 100) at various universities.

He has been consulting for various companies in Africa and the Middle-East for the past 30 years, specialising in leadership development, the assessment and optimisation of talented people and team development. He specialises in leadership and executive coaching. His teaching and consulting work support his research preference. He has been teaching a Master's course in People Development, focusing on leadership development and coaching, for the past 30 years. He has presented scientific papers at a variety of national (24+) and international conferences (more than 20 papers). One of his publications (Stander & Rothmann, 2010) was the third most cited while (Mendes & Stander, 2011) is the fifth most cited article in the SA Journal for Industrial Psychology.

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**“Two Optentia participants obtained NRF ratings”**

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## Competence Building in Optentia

Optentia regards competence building as one of its strategic thrusts. The following workshops are planned for 2017:

- The Short Learning Programme (SLP) in Research Design,
- EResearch
- Statistical analyses in R.
- Longitudinal analysis in Mplus.
- Preparing research funding applications.
- Atlas Ti.
- Promoting ethical cultures.

The Optentia website is used to promote the development of research competence in staff and students. The website contains videos, slides, lectures and references to specific articles and books for most study objectives. We have added material that will support learning for 11 study units. We have produced 11



videos on writing skills and 29 videos on qualitative research. The steps to access the material on the website are as follows:

- Go to [www.optentia.co.za](http://www.optentia.co.za) and click on "Education". Click on "Research Methodology".
- Use the password (available from the Optentia research support office) to access the learning resources. Type the password in the block and click on "unlock".

- Select the study unit in the Short Programme in Research Design that you want to have resources for.
- Type the password when requested if you want to watch a video.

Optentia researchers will also participate in international conferences on well-being, inclusive education, psychology, and industrial psychology.

**"Developing competent researchers who have the knowledge, skill and motivation to do good research ..."**

## Learn from Optentia Videos

The Optentia Research Focus Area regularly releases videos to support competence development. The table shows some of the most popular videos (as indicated by the number of views).

The videos show that Optentia addresses critical issues regarding the optimisation of potential, including education, dealing with unemployment, economic development, diversity and inclusive education, learning capacity and meta-cognition, meaningful learning and flourishing, and community well-being.

All the videos are accessible via the [Optentia website](#).

Video	Views
Back to the Basics with Six Bricks	556
Optentia NWU Community Showcase	479
Inclusive Education	471
Unemployment Experiences in South Africa	443
Optentia Research Day	424
Promoting meaningful learning	420
Care (Prof. A. Baart)	303
Assessment of learning capacity	279
The Origins of Economic Growth	279
IAGESA Conference	187
Meaning in Life	165
Evaluation research (Prof. B. Thyer)	128
Thinking schools	103

## IACESA 2017 International Conference Progress Update

Registrations for the 2017 IACESA International Conference are well underway! Please visit the IACESA [website](#) for more information and online registration and reservations of accommodation. Click [here](#) to watch a short video about the upcoming conference. The conference programme boasts a number of prominent keynote speakers who will set the scene for conference delegates to deliberate and re-define pathways to promote the development of thinking as an important academic and life skill for the 21st Century. Click [here](#) to read more about the keynote speakers. Click [here](#) to see the final programme of the conference.



## Funding your Research *by* Anjonet Jordaan

The year is steadily drawing to a close, which saw several new projects undertaken and new research partnerships established. As the project manager for Optentia I sought to learn, explore and conceptualise new possibilities for research funding and other resources to better enable Optentia members in their quest for new knowledge and understanding. Optentia submitted at least 11 new funding applications during 2016. We expect that it will be difficult to obtain sufficient funding. However, the opportunity to apply for funding helps researchers gain experience on how to prepare funding applications.

Next year will see a much more strategic approach to acquiring funding for research and research activities. To that end, I urge you to please send me the relevant information on any funding opportunities you applied

for during 2016 and the application result. This will help me establish a baseline for funding needs within Optentia.

In addition, I would also request you send me information on the research projects and activities you intend to undertake during 2017 to better guide my plan for 2017 research funding activities. Please send me an email if I can assist you in any way.



Anjonet Jordaan

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“Next year will see a much more strategic approach to acquiring funding for research and research activities.”

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## Cutting Edge Technology for Optentia

Optentia's Indaba Room has been upgraded under the supervision of Mr Marius de Beer (NWU, Potchefstroom Campus). The upgraded room, which is used for workshops, has a new projector, a new enlarged screen, a new sound system and various cutting edge technologies. Lecture capturing is also possible in this room. The third phase of upgrading, which will include the installation of cameras and microphones to enable good quality pictures and sound when presenting international workshops, will probably start in 2017. According to Prof. Ian Rothmann, the new facilities and technologies compare well with the best available at the North-West University and internationally. The investment in excellent facilities is justified because competence building and internationalisation are important thrusts for the Optentia Research Focus Area. Click [here](#) to read more. About new technologies implemented in the Optentia Indaba Room.

“Lecture capturing is also possible in this room.”



Prof. Linda du Plessis, Mr Jonathan Ling, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Mr Marius de Beer and Mr Barend Nel



The newly equipped Optentia Indaba Room

Talking about gratitude: Optentia wants to thank our Acting Campus Rector, Prof. Linda du Plessis, for her support and advice since we started in 2010. She really went out of her way to open doors and create opportunities for us!



Prof. Linda du Plessis

## Prof. Kirsti Lonka Presented a Prestige Lecture

Prof. Kirsti Lonka (University of Helsinki), who was recently appointed as an extraordinary professor in Optentia, presented a prestige lecture on 12 September 2016. She talked about ways to promote meaningful learning and flourishing. She stressed the importance of creating new spaces for learning - physical, virtual, social and mental - that foster collaborative knowledge creation and make people flourish. Click [here](#) to watch a video about the topic of the prestige lecture.



Prof. Mary Grosser, Prof. Tinie Theron (Acting Vice-Rector), Prof. Kirsti Lonka, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Mirna Nel.

## Prof. Marco Hessels Presented a Prestige Lecture

Prof. Marco Hessels, an extraordinary professor in Optentia, visited South Africa from 4-10 September 2016. He presented a prestige lecture on 6 September 2016. The topic of his lecture was: "Assessment of learning capacity and metacognitive intervention in people with special education needs." Click [here](#) to watch a video about the topic of the prestige lecture. Click [here](#) to read more about the research of Prof. Marco Hessels.



Prof. Marco Hessels.

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“... physical, virtual, social and mental resources foster collaborative knowledge creation and make people flourish...”

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## Prof. Frans Cilliers Appointed as an Extraordinary Professor in Optentia

Prof. Frans Cilliers has been appointed as an extraordinary professor in Optentia. Prof. Cilliers completed a D. Phil in Industrial and Organisational Psychology (Potchefstroom University) in 1997. He is currently Professor of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at the University of South Africa. He is registered as a Psychologist

(Category: Industrial) at the Health Professions Council of South Africa. He has published 124 scientific articles. Prof. Cilliers is a NRF-rated researcher. He is both nationally and internationally renowned for his expertise in Systems Psychodynamic Organisational Consulting.



Prof. Frans Cilliers

## Multidisciplinary Thinking: Learning from Economists

The Optentia Research Focus Area, located on North-West University's Vaal Triangle Campus, is renowned for its purposeful drive to search for answers through interdisciplinary research. This is evident in the research project 'Experiences of Unemployment.'

To further augment understanding and invite greater discussion among researchers on the topic of unemployment, Optentia recently hosted a workshop entitled 'The origins of economic growth and the specialisation of labour' with Prof. André Heymans from the Potchefstroom Campus' School of Economics.

While most analysts tend to look at South Africa's unemployment challenge from a singular perspective, social sciences researchers at Optentia realise that a whole host of situational factors are the cause of South Africa's increasing number of unemployed.

Matters such as South Africa's position in the broader international economy, government policy, the state of basic education, the kind of skills taught and attitudes towards certain job types were among the topics of discussion.

In 1994, South Africa changed from a closed to an open system and South Africans must compete with the rest of the world. South Africans have to compete globally to grow and thrive, but what competitive advantage do our people have? Moreover, people in South Africa seem to focus their attention on competing with one another, rather than with the rest of the world. Social cohesion is a big pressure point for South Africa – How can South Africans be united to act as South Africans? Promote tolerance rather than diversity.

A large part of the national budget is spent on education, but does not yield the required results. In many rural and impoverished areas, everyday obstacles must first be removed to enable learners to



Prof. Andre Heymans and Prof. Ian Rothmann

attend and complete their schooling. Both the quality of education and the type of skills developed have been pointed out as some of the primary reasons for unemployment. However, it should not just be about completing school, but which skills are needed when schooling has been completed.

Unemployment is a significant problem in South Africa. There is a high demand for jobs, but attitudes towards traditionally 'blue collar jobs' are often negative and viewed as much lower status jobs among school leavers. This is despite the demand for these skills and good remuneration associated with these jobs. Career counselling can play a crucial role towards changing these attitudes, though career counselling in South African schools tends to be inadequate. Young people pursue qualifications that often do not equip them with knowledge and skills that are most relevant and required in the economy.

Many people are educated, but do not have the right skills. In the past, South Africa could sell what the world wanted. However, the past is no guarantee for future success – we are still successful in providing some things the world want, but the trends internationally are to develop robotics, artificial intelligence, and 3D printing. It is not clear what should be done to change the futures

of adults who are poorly educated and cannot afford to return to formal education to change their skills set.

Though South Africa obviously has quite a number of obstacles to overcome to turn the tide of unemployment around, it does have some positives to call on: South Africa has innovative people, good infrastructure, and is strategically located.

Prof. Mary Grosser, leader in Optentia's sub-programme 'Holistic learner development in diverse contexts', noted: "After the discussion with Andre Heymans, I argue that a 12-year investment in advancing the potential of all students to achieve advanced performance that focuses on developing and reinforcing thinking skills and dispositions required for the 21st Century, could assist in addressing the mentioned issues in the long term. It is reasonable to assume that skills and dispositions such as perseverance, concern for society, persistence, innovative thinking, resilience, flexible thinking and seeing alternative perspectives (to mention a few) could benefit the search for solutions to deal and cope with the aforementioned problems."

Watch the [interview](#) we had with Prof. André Heymans.

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**"... researchers at Optentia realise that a whole host of situational factors are the cause of South Africa's increasing number of unemployed."**

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## Optentia Research Day: Bringing All Together

The Optentia Research Focus Area on the Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University (NWU Vaal) recently showcased the vast range of research being done by its students and researchers at its very first Research Day.

Researchers were challenged to depict their research efforts in the form of a poster. The posters were then clustered together in different themes. Some posters were submitted by international contributors who were unable to attend the day's events, but contributed gladly to its success. The posters were then exhibited to prospective postgraduate students and researchers to showcase the methodologies, samples, strategies and contribution of the research towards the overall success of this dynamic research focus area.

Prof. Ian Rothmann, Director of Optentia, says a large part of the vision of the Research Focus Area is the distribution of knowledge. Therefore, the contribution of the research conducted is deemed to be especially important. Prof. Rothmann continued to introduce the work being done by Optentia and walked attendees through the progress that he, together with his team, has made at the Focus Area in the five years since its inception.

Optentia is a multidisciplinary research entity at the NWU Vaal. Its mission is to develop and organise knowledge for the optimal expression of the individual, social and institutional potential in Southern Africa. More than 80 master's degrees and 30 PhD degrees have been produced by

the entity which boasts 16 extraordinary professors, 3 extraordinary researchers and 7 post-doctoral fellows from all over the world. The output from Optentia also includes more than 200 peer-reviewed publications over the last 5 years.

Prof. Linda du Plessis, acting Rector, praised the Focus Area, calling it a flagship on the campus which continues to build capacity, publishing in high impact journals and fostering valuable international collaboration.

Click [here](#) to watch a video about the Research Day. The posters presented at the Optentia Research Day are available at [www.optentia.co.za](http://www.optentia.co.za).

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**“Prof. Linda du Plessis, acting Rector, praised the Focus Area calling it a flagship on the campus ...”**

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## Promoting Responsible Research Practices *by* Prof. Rens Van De Schoot

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“Early career scientists feel uncertain of how to act and who to talk to.”

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Science has always been a dynamic process with continuously changing rules and attitudes. While innovation and new knowledge production are essential in academia, making sure the best practices in research are widely known is vital. However, rules and traditions on responsible research practices differ greatly between research disciplines and often different rules apply in different fields. Most of these rules are subjective and in fact ‘unwritten’, which makes them difficult to identify, differentiate and grasp. The current debate about appropriate scientific practices is fierce and lively and has moved from academia to the public domain, resulting in many public opinions, not solely driven by objective information, but instead loaded by emotions. Many early career scientists feel uncertain of how to act and who to talk to.

The Young Academy of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) ([www.dejongeakademie.nl](http://www.dejongeakademie.nl)) has started a project titled ‘The living room of science: promoting responsible research practices through an interactive discussion’. The ultimate goal of this project is to create an accessible online open platform for early career scientists (ranging from PhD students to young assistant professors) to acquire information about appropriate research practices. We hope that arguments such as “this is how we always do it”, or “get used to it, this is what it takes to publish your paper”, will no longer be used.

Recently, I gave two presentations on this topic and I will

discuss some of the results here. For a detailed description of the results go to my [website](#): Results VNOP, ISED & CAS Research Days and Results National PhD Day.

Rens Van De Schoot is associate professor at the Department of Methods and Statistics at Utrecht University. He is a member of the Young Academy of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). He is also extraordinary professor at Optentia.



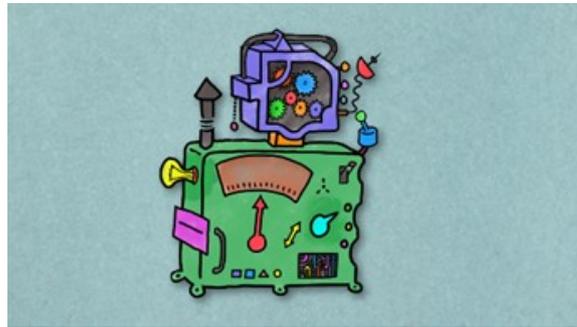
**Prof. Rens Van De Schoot**

## Promoting Responsible Research Practices *by* Prof. Rens Van De Schoot

During the presentations, we watched a video about researchers' degrees of freedom: some buttons can be pressed while others are considered scientific misconduct. As a researcher, you have to learn which buttons belong to which category. This is a very challenging task, especially because the rules are often unwritten and may change over time. I asked the audience to what extent the practice proposed in this video is 'scientific fraud'? They rated the question on a 10-point scale (1 = not at all – 10 = yes, completely). The results are very mixed. (Click [here](#) to see the results). Would you consider this behaviour misconduct? Or can you indeed re-analyse the data until you find the desired effect?

Then, we proceeded with a vignette about a ghost author. Consider the following situation: You are working with your professor on an article for your dissertation; the two of you wrote equal parts of the paper. However, when you check the final paper before submission you see that a full professor has been added as a third author to the paper. He/she did not provide a substantial contribution to the paper.

A total of 44% of the audience replied with 'yes'. O, come on people (I said jokingly!)...this is how science works. The conclusions in your article are groundbreaking. You only need a famous (ghost) author on the paper and it will be accepted by the highest journal in your field. Still not convinced? Well, your supervisor just tells you to add this person and you are kindly asked not to question this...



Within the category "NO" of the first question, 43.8% changed their opinion because of what I had told them. After these results had appeared on the screen, I literally cried out and said: No ... what the \*\*\*\* Did you change your mind? And the audience replied (some examples):

- "It's just the way research works. If you don't like the rules, don't play the game."
- "It's not right, but its high impact and I need to finish."
- "Publish or perish pressure; especially if it is someone well-known in your field."
- "Obey my Promoter."
- "This would help to get my research out to a better journal, increasing future chances in academia."
- "My work will get published in a higher impact journal reaching more people, having more impact on the science community."
- "Because I need it to graduate."
- "Because of how the system works."
- "To publish higher for my career."
- "Pressure from my supervisor."

So, what to do in this situation? A solution could be, as offered by one of the participants: "Can

this co-author make a contribution to my paper and I say yes". At our faculty it is a new rule that on each paper written by a PhD-candidate, there is an acknowledgement included in which the roles of each co-author are explained and each co-author should have at least two roles.

QRPs can be placed on a dimension where, on the far end side are really fraud-like behaviours (Falsification, Fabrication and Plagiarism; FFP) while on the other side misses and mister perfect reside. In between is this huge grey area. The main lesson of the day is that we should all strive to become miss/mister Perfect, but we should realise this takes many small baby-steps.

So, what would be the very first baby-step you could take? For inspiration of what other researchers are going to do, go to my [website](#).

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**"At our faculty it is a new rule that on each paper written by a PhD-candidate there is an acknowledgement included in which the roles of each co-author is explained ..."**

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## Boredom in Schools in Denmark *by* Prof. Hans Henrik Knoop

The most important thing I did this Fall was to publish a report on boredom for the governmental unit for optimising well-being in education. Our sample was no less than 265.000 pupils - that is almost all pupils attending public school in Denmark from 4th to 9th grade.

The most important findings were that:

- there was a steady rise in boredom (defined by responses to the item "I am bored during class", station "often" or "very often" - from approximately 1/4 in 4th grade to more than 1/3 in 9th grade
- boys were significantly more bored than girls
- all the main ambitions stated in our act of education correlated strongly with the occurrence of boredom. We do not know the direction of causality, but we can comfortably state that the oc-



Prof. Hans Henrik Knoop

currence of prolonged boredom is a secure warning sign, typically found when there are academic, social and personal problems.

Some schools reported almost no boredom - others had more than half their pupils suffering from this mildly stressful state.

In conclusion, there are really legitimate reasons to accept prolonged boredom. Everyone suffers thereby, and every noble ideal is compromised. For two centuries significant boredom in school and education has been

the order of the day and has been accepted as a given. All this is now about to change. For just as many years ago organic solvents through scientific study were found dangerous to inhale, so scientific insights regarding stress, boredom and anxiety are becoming so convincing that effective measures can be installed to counter excess occurrence hereof. We are not quite there yet, but studies such as ours pave the way.

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“... boys were significantly more bored than girls ...”

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## Thuli Studies Economic Empowerment of the Youth

Thuli Ramatsheng, a Junior Lecturer in Social Work, is currently doing her Master's degree in Social Work under the supervision of Prof. Ansie Fouché and Prof. Chrizanne van Eeden. The topic of her dissertation is: Economic empowerment of youth: Views of unemployed youth and community stakeholders

The qualitative study aims to gather information on the views of unemployed youth and community stakeholders regarding the implementation of youth economic empowerment programmes in Evaton-West. This will be achieved by interviewing unem-

ployed youth from Evaton-West who are between the ages of 20 and 24, using a semi-structured interview schedule, and by also conducting two focus group discussions with community stakeholders (professionals, community members and businessmen/women) involved in youth economic empowerment programmes in Evaton-West. Thematic content data analysis will be used in order to identify, analyse, and report patterns within data from both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group discussions.

Ms Ramatsheng is currently

awaiting ethical clearance for the study. Thereafter, she will continue with her study by collecting data and preparing her manuscript for submission in 2017.



Thuli Ramatsheng

## Prof. Mirna Nel Appointed in Optentia

Mirna Nel was born and bred in Sasolburg. After completing Grade 12, she did a B Logopedics (Speech Therapy and Audiology) degree at the University of Pretoria as well as a Higher Education Diploma. She worked as a Speech Therapist in Betlehem in service of the Free State Department of Education for a year and was then appointed in the support services of the Transvaal Department of Education in Carletonville. After 10 years in Carletonville, she moved to Vereeniging and worked as a curriculum facilitator tasked with supporting schools on inclusive education in the Gauteng Department of Education. During this time she completed a B.Ed Honours in Sociopedagogy, as well as an M.Ed in Orthopedagogy on the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University. Her PhD in Educational Psychology was completed in 2004 under the supervision of Prof. Linda Theron on the Vaal Triangle Campus. Because language difficulties are such an integrated feature of working with different kinds of speech and language pathologies, her interest grew in the barriers that learners experience as a result of learning in a second language. Consequently, her PhD thesis had the following topic: A story-based language enrichment programme for Grade 4 English second language learners, with inadequate English proficiency. In 2006 she was appointed as a senior lecturer in the School of Education on the Vaal Triangle Campus of North-West University. She was responsible for the development and teaching of the newly introduced Life Orientation and Learner Support modules in the B.Ed,

Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) as well as B.Ed Honours programmes. In 2010 she additionally took the position of B.Ed Programme Manager which she held until May 2015. During this time she was part of the intercampus steering committee to design and develop a new B.Ed, PGCE and B.Ed Honours programme. She is also an appointed curriculum reviewer for the Council of Higher Education (CHE).

Her research career started with her PhD, but escalated with a grant awarded to her for a two month research visit to Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia in 2007. In 2010 Prof. Petra Engelbrecht, together with Prof Hannu Savolainen from the University of Eastern Finland, invited her to become part of an international comparative research project. The focus of this project was on the role of the teacher within an inclusive education system. In 2011 she became the South African project leader for this project. The project ended at the end of 2015, but she is currently collaborating with several international colleagues on a variety of projects.

After she had co-organised a symposium on teacher education for inclusion in October 2015, she was requested by De Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelings-samenwerking en Technische Bijstand (VVOB) to take part in a funding proposal for a project on inclusive education, financed by the European Union. The universities of the Free State and the Witwatersrand as well as Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA) were also invited as research partners. This project will focus



Prof. Mirna Nel

on teacher education for inclusion and will run from 2016 until 2019.

At the beginning of 2015, Prof. Mary Grosser and Mirna started a research sub-programme within Optentia, focusing on holistic learner development in diverse contexts. Inspired by Prof. Deborah Eyre from Oxford University in England, Mary and Mirna will embark on a research project in 2017 with a Full Service school in Sharpeville. They will apply a whole school approach to teaching and learning with the goal to enhance high performance learning for all learners. Since Mary is immigrating to Germany in 2017, Mirna will take over the leadership of the research sub-programme.

During her academic career, she has published several articles, presented at conferences, written book chapters, and edited/co-edited books on learner support and life orientation. Several Master's and PhD students completed their studies under her supervision. Mirna regularly supports and trains teachers on inclusive education and learners who experience barriers to learning.

From 1 December 2016, Mirna has been appointed as a research professor in Optentia.

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**“They will apply a whole school approach to teaching and learning with the goal to enhance high performance learning for all learners...”**

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## Prestigious Prize for Optentia-affiliated Researchers

Prof. Susanne Schwab has been awarded the Cardinal- Innitzer prize for her research habilitation. The Cardinal Innitzer study foundation is a highly regarded institution for fostering science (inside and outside Austria), because of its high standing scientific selection criteria. Every year, a limited number of excellent young Austrian scientists are rewarded for their outstanding contributions. The prizes will be delivered by the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Dr Christoph Schönborn, during an official ceremony at the bishop's palace. The list of prize winners has become the "who is who" in Austrian science."



Prof. Dr Susanne Schwab (honoured with the Cardinal- Innitzer research prize) and Prof. Dr Marco Hessels (her habilitation mentor), together with Cardinal Dr Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, Austria who delivered the research prize

"Prof. Susanne Schwab has been awarded the Cardinal- Innitzer prize for her research habilitation..."

## Holistic Learner Development Plans Research

To establish a research culture and become a successful researcher, it is necessary to spend time on planning individuals' research and discuss helping and hindering factors. Therefore, Prof. Mary Grosser, Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Anjonet Jordaan led a workshop with participants in the sub-programme Holistic Learner Development in Diverse Contexts on 4 August 2016. The following topics were discussed:

- Research at the NWU
- Optentia: Past, present and future
- Important research themes in education: The focus and functioning of the research sub-programme
- Research project funding
- Own research objectives, milestones and needs

Prof. Ian Rothmann discussed the role of research leaders. First, it is not the role and intention of research leaders to put



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Mary Grosser, Prof. Mirna Nel and Anjonet Jordaan planning research with colleagues in the sub-programme Holistic Learner Development in Diverse Contexts

pressure on participants to become involved in projects that leaders find useful, or to force people to conduct research. Second, we believe in creating and maintaining pulling (rather than pushing) forces. Without intrinsic motivation, researchers will not make it. Third, research leaders will make suggestions based on

their discussions with participants, but they would like to support research rather than force people into it. The role of research leaders is to assist researchers with decision making regarding their research (content and methods), to get inputs from them, and to provide advice about researchers' careers.

## Extraordinary Professor Bruce Thyer in Hong Kong

Optentia Extraordinary Professor Bruce Thyer delivered a keynote address titled "Building a better future for young people: An evidence-based approach" at the International Conference on Building a Better Future for Young People, held at Hong Kong Polytechnic University in May 2016. He also presented a research seminar at the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at the University of Hong Kong, titled "Successfully Publishing in Scholarly Journals". In September he delivered a keynote address titled "Evidence-based Practice: Myths and Realities" at the 4th Annual Michigan Autism Conference, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. One of his more recent projects is a submitted article titled "The 100-most Influential Contemporary Social Work Faculty as Assessed by the H-Index", tabulated using the Google-Scholar database and the Publish or Perish software. In



Prof. Bruce Thyer

January Prof. Thyer will assume the Co-editorship of the Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work, and North-West University researchers are cordially invited to submit empirical papers to that journal.

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**"Prof. Thyer will assume the Co-editorship of the Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work ..."**

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## Prof. Robbie Gilligan Presented Plenary Paper

Optentia Extraordinary Professor Robbie Gilligan presented an invited plenary paper 'De-institutionalisation in child welfare in Ireland - what influenced the journey from institutions to family placement?' He presented this paper at the International Seminar 'Foster Care in Europe: Outcomes and Evidence', hosted by The InED - Centre for Research and Innovation in Education, of the School of Education of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal. He is one of 32 researchers and specialists from 12 countries who have co-authored a consensus statement on therapeutic residential care: Whittaker, J. K.,

Holmes, L., del Valle, J. F., Ainsworth, F., Andreassen, T., Anglin, J., ... & Courtney, M. (2016). Therapeutic Residential Care for Children and Youth: A Consensus Statement of the International Work Group on Therapeutic Residential Care. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth*, 33(2), 89-106. 32. One of his current research projects is a study commissioned by PLAN International 'Gender Disparities and Disability: Identifying barriers for inclusion specific to girls with disabilities in Togo', with colleagues, Professors Carol Newman and Trevor Spratt from Trinity College Dublin.



Prof. Robbie Gilligan

## My Experience as an International PhD Student *by* Leoni van der Vaart

Previously, I reported on my experiences as an international (perhaps multinational) student in Leuven. This article serves to provide an update on the adventures of Science and Culture.

Opportunities to broaden our knowledge are endless. Formal lunchtime seminars provide a glimpse of the realities faced by different researchers. Our first seminar, presented by Prof. Dr. Tijs Besieux, insightfully highlighted the importance of disseminating research to the general public in ways that would appeal to them ("From theory to practice: High heels on a bumpy road") through social media. The second seminar focused on "Studies on the Relationship between Servant Leadership, Trust, Conflict Norms and Conflict Types: A Mixed Method Approach" and provided interesting information on leadership in Tanzania through the eyes of Ms Winfrida Malingumu.

Soon we will also attend and present a paper at the confer-



ence organised by WADP (Werkgemeenschap van onderzoekers in de Arbeids- & Organisationspsychologie) which "offers all Dutch and Belgian researchers in Work and Organisational Psychology and Human Resource Management the opportunity to present their current work, to receive helpful feedback from colleagues, and to get together".

Interesting lectures are also presented by Prof. Sharon K. Parker (Work Design: A 100-Year Review and Some New Directions and Managing Your PhD) in November. Our cultural expe-

riences this year are enriched by guided trips organised by Pangaea, providing justice to their slogan "Where worlds meet". My own project has progressed with the theoretical overview and preliminary data analysis for the second article which we will hopefully finalise before my return to South Africa. An expert meeting is also scheduled for December with a number of European researchers working on unemployment, with the purposes of sharing ideas and obtaining input to improve our project.

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**"Create an environment in which people feel free to ask for assistance from colleagues ..."**

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## Key Aspects of Optentia's Strategy

- Present quality master's and PhD programmes, and conduct quality research.
- Develop competent researchers who have the knowledge, skill and motivation to do good research, who enjoy their work, function well at work; and who are known in the community of researchers.
- Ensure sufficient funding, tools and equipment to conduct quality research.
- Develop ways to disseminate research findings in the media.



- Make an impact in terms of optimising the potential of people, relations and institutions in South Africa.
- Market the research entity to the benefit of our research and researchers.
- Create an environment in

which people feel free to ask for assistance from colleagues, and feel that they belong to an entity.

## My Experiences of Leuven *by* Rachele Paver

One of my colleagues recently opened my mind to a thought, and I have been pondering on the idea ever since. When I look at our unemployment project, I see it as a piece of art. All the involved "artists" are busy with their part of the painting, and everyone brings a certain set of skills, special techniques and perspectives to the table. For me, the opportunity that we have to come to Leuven exposes us to a variety of new techniques and perspectives. This experience constantly teaches us new methods and ways that empower us to create our own Picasso. I hope and believe we can take some of these valuable lessons back and apply them to our unique South African situation.

I am excited to share that my part of the painting is well underway. The first part of my project is to compile an inventory of labour market interventions that are implemented in the Emfuleni and Orange Farm communities. The aim of this inventory will be twofold. First, it can serve as a way to make the unemployed more aware of existing programmes and resources within their communities. Second, stakeholders involved in addressing unemployment in these areas may be able to identify possible gaps. I feel strongly about doing research that has an impact, and is not just research that will be a portrait on the wall. I believe that this information will have a positive outcome in communities in which my research project takes place.

On a lighter note, as it is not all work and no play, I would love to share a little something about Leuven. Leuven is a beautiful city,



25km from Brussels, Belgium. The Catholic University Leuven, where we are enrolled in our "arts course", is one of the largest and oldest universities in this city. Leuven is not only rich in diversity, but also culture and architecture. Everywhere I look, I see historic buildings, of which my personal favourite, the Flemish Renaissance-style, University Library (see the attached picture – 300 steps to the top of the tower – the amazing view makes it worth it). I believe that all of these buildings have many stories to tell. Inside, some are filled with incredible interiors and sculptures, others with laughter, music and art. Outside, streets are covered with umbrellas, the smell of coffee and warm Belgium waffles.

I have been here for just over a month. During this time, I've

seen trees change their colour and say goodbye to their leaves. Days are getting shorter, as the sun makes its appearance slightly later than it used to. I've also wandered in the streets, late at night, in soft rain, and have been privileged enough to appreciate this incomprehensible beauty and hear the sound of people playing violin on street corners. Opportunities like these come across your path once in a lifetime, and I most certainly do not take it for granted. A heartfelt thank you to my supervisors, Prof. Hans De Witte, Prof. Anja Van Den Broeck, and Prof. Ian Rothmann, and VLIR, for making it possible. Thank you for helping and teaching me to paint my picture.

**Did you know:** Optentia created opportunities for work (fieldwork) for unemployed people. This affected 25 people during specific months over two years. Although research is our passion, we try to create opportunities for unemployed people to gain some experience and earn money. This was largely done with money obtained from international funders.

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**"This experience constantly teaches us new methods and ways that empower us to create our own Picasso."**

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## Burnout: The Disease of our Time

A person burns out when he/she pushes his/her body too hard for too long. The person gives more than he/she is able to and runs out of energy; like a car with a flat battery. The main symptoms are extreme tiredness and exhaustion. Burnout is caused by prolonged stress, usually mainly work-related.

Stress is the body's reaction to challenges: the body is prepared to take action, a state of readiness. In such a state, more adrenaline is released and change takes place in the body. These changes enable a person to perform or take action. Think, for example, of an athlete before a 100 meter sprint. The athlete is focused and ready to put in every effort when the shot is fired. Imagine the athlete must not only before a race, but always be alert, always ready to sprint. That is unfortunately the state many of us are in: constantly feeling stressed by work demands, financial demands, uncertainty, crime, bad relationships and the list can go on. The body becomes exhausted by constant alertness and it eventually can lead to burnout. Typical symptoms of burnout are:

- Exhaustion: feel tired when getting up and tired throughout the day, getting more and more tired as the day progresses
- Low feelings of personal achievements: the person feels as if he/she works harder and achieves less
- Cynicism: the person loses his/her sense of humour and enjoyment of life; relationships usually suffer
- Disturbed sleeping patterns
- Disturbed eating patterns and sometimes, weight gain for no clear reason
- Lack of work performance: the



person is usually unaware of how many mistakes he/she makes and how the standard of work has dropped

- Bodily symptoms, which could be anything from fluctuating blood pressure to aches and pains in any part of the body, for which there is often not a clear medical explanation

Anyone can suffer from burnout. Typically, any of the following characteristics can contribute towards burnout:

- a high performance drive
- perfectionism
- hard work
- a high need for recognition
- unrealistic expectations of self and others

If a person with any of these symptoms is in an environment that is known for rapid/constant change, with a lack of support, unclear expectations, work overload, mistakes having severe consequences, lack of feedback, uncertainty, lack of boundaries between work and home-life, lack of recognition and intense people contact, it increases the chances of burnout.

Because every person in a high pressure environment with any of the mentioned tendencies, is potentially at risk to burn out,

one needs to consciously take steps to prevent burnout.

- One could prevent burnout by knowing one's potential and not place unrealistic expectations on oneself.
- Closely related to having realistic goals for yourself, is having an internal focus. It is important to get to know who you are and not only measure success in terms of external achievements. Reconnect with nature, your spiritual self and people close to you. Nature includes connecting to horses or dogs and gardening. The secret: find your own preference again.
- Take charge of the things you can. Accept inevitable things you cannot change.
- Do not forget basics: sleep enough, eat healthy, get some exercise and most important: HAVE SOME FUN!

Written by: Industrial Psychologists Dr Danie du Toit and Dr Lourens Van Schalkwyk

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**"The body becomes exhausted by constant alertness and it eventually can lead to burnout..."**

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## News: Flourishing in Institutions

Optentia's Flourishing in Institutions sub-programme has focused on two major projects this year, namely the Flourishing-at-Work project and the Coping with Unemployment project.

A Long and Short Form of the Flourishing-at-Work Scale (FAWS) have been developed and tested in different work contexts. Both forms of the FAWS have shown good psychometric properties in different studies. Furthermore, the reliability and convergent and divergent validity of the scales have been shown in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.

Study 1 (in an alcoholic beverage company) showed that 8% of the total sample was languishing. A total of 65.15% of the employees demonstrated moderate levels of flourishing, while the remaining 34.9% were flourishing. Scores on flourishing were positively related to two job resources, namely advancement, and authentic leadership, and

negatively related to negative work-home interference.

Study 2 (in three universities of technology) showed that 12.4% of academics were languishing, 44.5% were experiencing moderate well-being at work, and 43.1% were flourishing. Role clarity, advancement and co-worker relations were positively associated with flourishing.

Study 3 (teachers in secondary schools in Gauteng) showed that 44.19% of the sample flourished, while 49.22% were moderately mentally healthy, and 6.59% languished. Positive organisational practices were associa-

ted with flourishing at work. A longitudinal study on the effects of person-environment fit on flourishing and intentions to leave showed that flourishing at work, in time 1, affected person environment fit in Time 2.

Concerning the Coping with Unemployment project, three joint PhDs with KULeuven are making good progress. Leoni van der Vaart tested a typology of unemployed people, Melinda du Toit is studying the role of conventions in unemployment. Rachele Paver is reviewing unemployment interventions.




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“... the FAWS have shown good psychometric properties in different studies...”

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## Flourishing of Judges in South Africa by Elna Rossouw

The judiciary, as part of the three pillars of our democracy, is inter alia responsible for a healthy, flourishing, constitutional democracy. The importance of a healthy and thriving judiciary can hardly be overestimated, because their well-being is central to the well-being of our constitutional democracy. Very little is known about the well-being of judges, as no previous studies have been conducted on this topic.

The objectives of the study are to: a) Investigate the antecedents of well-being of judges in South Africa. b) Assess the well-

being of judges. c) Establish the individual and organisational outcomes of the well-being of judges. d) Determine the interventions that should be executed to sustain the flourishing of judges who come from different socio-demographic backgrounds. My intended study will follow a multi-method approach. In order to measure the sustainability of judges' well-being, a longitudinal study will be conducted by way of repeating the initial quantitative study six months later. The research results would hopefully be of benefit during judicial training and contribute towards the

sustainability of flourishing of judges.



Elna Rossouw

## Flourishing of Academics at Universities of Technology

Why do certain people have more energy, others less? Why do some people reach their full potential, while others struggle with day to day tasks? My journey towards my PhD originated through these questions.

The study investigated the aspects, attributions and features of flourishing at work in the academic environment. The results showed the following:

- Flourishing at work requires scales which can measure multidimensional (emotional, psychological and social) work-related factors.
- 12.4% of academics were languishing, 43.1% were flourishing, and 44.5% were experiencing moderate well-being at work.

- Almost a quarter of academics had intentions to leave their organisation.
- Person-environment fit, job resources and supervisor support make an important contribution to the flourishing of academics in higher education.
- Flourishing behaviour can assist in the challenge to retain skilled staff and can predict individual performance.

The study concluded that a shift in attitudes is necessary to ensure that employers and employees recognise the key role the workplace can play in promoting flourishing of employees. Flourishing-specific interventions were recommended to ensure



Christine Janse van Rensburg

higher levels of flourishing which will positively contribute to individual, group and organisational success.

“Flourishing at work requires scales which can measure multi-dimensional work-related factors.”

## Thriving of Academics in Higher Education

Fathima Mahomed is a lecturer at the Vaal University of Technology. She grew up in Port Elizabeth and believes Port Elizabeth is still “home”. She holds a variety of qualifications in Human Resource Management and Industrial Psychology as well as an Advanced Diploma in Higher Education which she has obtained from the University of Free State. Fathima’s passion lies in human resource development, especially self-development. She believes that everyone can be a “better version of themselves”. This motivated her to undertake postgraduate studies.

Fathima is actively involved in shaping human resources in the country and is sitting on two committees of the SA Board of People Practice (SABPP) which is the professional body of human resources

in South Africa. She has won the special SABPP CEO award earlier this year for being the most empowering and dynamic academic. Fathima has co-authored at least five articles and all have been published in accredited journals. She has also won numerous research and teaching awards from the Vaal University of Technology. Fathima lectures full time to B-Tech students and is currently pursuing a PhD at the North-West University (South Africa) at the Vaal Triangle Campus. The PhD title is: “Thriving in a higher education institution: a strength based approach.”

For her PhD, she wants to focus on what thriving at work entails and what the antecedents and outcomes of thriving are. The academic environment will be



Fathima Mahomed

studied from a positive perspective, focusing on changeable aspects of work, to make recommendations to change and/or improve the academic environment in Universities of Technologies.

## My Postdoctoral Study in South Africa *by* Dr Lara Roll

Before departing from Hong Kong, I was told specifically not to be eaten by a large African cat. Those were the exact words of advice I received, verbatim. So it goes without saying that since my arrival, I have done everything possible to ensure I would, in fact, be mauled by some wild beast. From meeting Simba in a jeep with no windows to trekking through the savannahs of the Kruger National Park, it has been my great pleasure to disregard what was probably thought to be rather simple instructions.

But joining Optentia in August 2016 has been about more than traveling to a wonderful new place and experiencing the sweeping visuals of this amazing continent. It's been a story of people. Thanks to the wonderful and welcoming staff, settling in was very easy. Just to name a few and at the risk of excluding someone, Lynn Booysen, Marinda Malan, Khulu Radebe and Johannah from residences have been wonderful. Special thanks to Melinda du Toit for organising those inspiring trips into the community. And, as everyone



Dr Lara Roll in the Kruger National Park

knows, Optentia would not be Optentia without Prof. Ian Rothmann. Working alongside him is an excellent experience, only topped by the fact that our research team is joined by Optentia's extraordinary professor Hans De Witte. This research, my postdoctoral project, will focus on the experience of job insecurity among university staff both in South Africa and cross-culturally.

Optentia is connecting researchers and facilitating collaboration. It has been the people, facility and staff, that are making this happen and will make it hap-

pen in the future. It has been an amazing three months and, with the efforts already in place and the road ahead mapped, I look forward to seeing our work come alive. It has been more than a mere luxury, I am honored to experience just some of the great opportunities of Optentia to date and to continue this wonderful experience in the time to come.

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“... joining Optentia in August 2016 has been about more than traveling to a wonderful new place ...”

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## Postdoctoral Fellow Visits Cambridge University

Amandeep Dhir, postdoctoral research fellow in Optentia, is visiting "The Psychometrics Centre" at University of Cambridge, United Kingdom from February to April 2017. Amandeep has recently finalised a research project that examined how educational affordances and gratifications of popular social media platforms drive their intensive use among adolescents and young-adults. This research project resulted in three high impact journal articles

that were published in Elsevier's Computers in Human Behavior and Telematics & Informatics. Currently, Amandeep is working on understanding the complex interplay between online privacy and user decisions in online space along with colleagues from the University of Bergen, Norway.



Dr Amandeep Dhir

## The S2T Intervention Programme

As we approach the end of 2016, we reflect on a jam packed, exciting and fruitful year for the S2T research project.

Particular highlights include our three Master's students (Marinda Henning, Baaqira Ebrahim and Ina Theunissen) successfully completing their proposals and ethics applications. Three presentations, by Prof. Fouché, Dr Walker-Williams, Ms Marinda Henning and Baaqira Ebrahim were given at the 6th International Conference on Community Psychology in Durban during May 2016. Dr Walker-Williams and Prof. Fouché visited the Institute for Population Aging at the University of Oxford as visiting research fellows during June with Prof. Jaco Hoffman. They also presented forums at the Oxford Brookes University, Department of Psychology, Social Work and Public Health as well as Brighton University with Prof. Angie Hart at the School of Health Sciences. Dr Franziska Meinck from the Department of Social Policy and Intervention at the University of Oxford visited and presented a workshop at Optentia on "complex interventions" in August. The S2T project was proud to be involved in Optentia's post-graduate research day held during September. Lastly, Prof. Fouché and Dr Walker-Williams submitted a concept article pertaining to the S2T collaborative strengths-based group intervention programme which was accepted for publication in an accredited journal in October.

Plans for 2017 include collaboration with Dunedin University in New Zealand as well as launching a pilot study on "cyber" childhood sexual abuse support



Marinda Henning, Prof. Ansie Fouché, Ina Theunissen and Baaqira Ebrahim

“... this collaborative strengths-based group treatment intervention model does not discount or replace the traditional treatment approaches for childhood sexual abuse ...”

groups nationally. We also commence the final year of our longitudinal study where we will follow up with the three S2T groups and focus on disseminating our findings at conferences and in accredited manuscripts as well as the completion of our three post-graduate studies.

A brief reflection on what we have learnt thus far: this collaborative strengths-based group treatment intervention model does not discount or replace the traditional treatment approaches for childhood sexual abuse. It is rather a secondary intervention which needs to be developmental-

ly and culturally congruent. Strengths cannot be reflected on if initial disclosure and crisis treatment have not taken place. We conclude that there are three core ingredients in effectively treating survivors of childhood sexual abuse in a collaborative strengths-based group intervention and these are: 1) the group context as the vehicle of change; 2) the “expert” companion (group facilitators) as the navigators in the process of change; and 3) social cohesion where membership to a “sisterhood” of belonging allows the fostering of social and emotional connections.

## Female Adult Survivors of Sexual Abuse *by* Baaqira Ebrahim

My research forms part of an emerging research question in the Survivor to Thrive (S2T) research project. The motive behind this topic is the high prevalence of sexual abuse and because there are insufficient studies exploring the experience of loss in regard to child sexual abuse (CSA). It is important to understand loss within the context of CSA and how this can impact treatment outcomes. Bloom's (2007) model on loss was used as the conceptual framework for the study. CSA losses are not acknowledged as real losses and this can hamper general adaptive functioning and quality of life. It is important for survivors to deal with these losses. With the guidance and support of my supervisors, Prof. Ansie Fouché and Dr Hayley Walker-Williams, I successfully com-

pleted the proposal and ethics application in 2016. I am currently busy with the scoping review and qualitative secondary analysis (QSA). Preliminary results of the scoping review and QSA are: Loss of safety, attachment and childhood innocence. Losses of developmental and environmental mastery were also themes that emerged. These themes are unique markers in the recovery portfolio of survivors. The findings of this study will further inform the S2T project and provide an awareness that will lead to meaning making and empowerment. A highlight for me was getting the opportunity to present a paper at the 6th International Conference on Community Psychology in Durban during May this year. My goals for 2017 would be to complete the study and to assist in the continuous develop-



Baaqira Ebrahim

ment, evaluation and implementation of the S2T program. I hope that my research will help to empower vulnerable communities and make a difference in the lives of these women.

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**“CSA losses are not acknowledged as real losses and this can hamper general adaptive functioning ...”**

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## Reports of Traumatic Sexualisation *by* Ina Theunissen

My research forms part of an emerging research question stemming from the Survivor to Thrive (S2T) research project. The motivation behind this topic is the high prevalence of sexual abuse and the lack of studies exploring the devastating long-term sexual difficulties. It is important to understand traumatic sexualisation within the context of childhood sexual abuse and how this can impact treatment outcomes.

Traumatic sexualisation alters a child's cognitive, emotional, self-related and sexual orientation to the world and thus impacts on the childhood sexual abuse survivor's overall functioning. It distorts the survivor's

self-concept, sexual identity, sexuality (including both sexual feelings and sexual attitudes), trust in others and emerging sense of safety. This study's main objective is to explore traumatic sexualisation, as reported by a group of South African women,

who had experienced childhood sexual abuse, and who participated in the Survivor To Thrive (S2T) group intervention programme. The findings of the study could serve to inform further S2T treatment outcomes.



Ina Theunissen

## Exploring Trauma Causing Factors *by* Marinda Henning

"We are what we repeatedly do. Greatness then, is not an act, but a habit". These words by Aristotle inspired me on the research journey for my Master's degree in Psychology. My journey started on a high note where, under the supervision of Dr Hayley Walker-Williams and Prof. Ansie Fouché, my study has been approved by the Humanities and Health Research Ethics Committee of the NWU Vaal Triangle Campus. My study is conducted within a larger research project on an empirically developed strengths-based intervention programme, Survivor to Thrive (S2T) for female adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA), developed by Dr Hayley Walker-Williams and Prof. Ansie Fouché.

My study had three objectives. Firstly, I conducted a scoping review of available literature on adult women survivors' experiences of CSA, in order to provide the first known summary of the factors surrounding CSA which caused so much trauma in their lives. The results of my scoping review indicated eight

factors, namely (1) traumatic sexualisation, (2) betrayal, (3) stigmatisation, (4) powerlessness, (5) developmental traumatisation, (6) secrecy surrounding the sexually abusive experience, (7) traumatic desensitisation, and (8) the CSA context.

Next, I conducted a focus group with professionals working with adult women survivors of CSA in the Vaal Triangle and Johannesburg area. I was interested in the trauma causing factors of CSA they observed in their clients. Similar factors to those found in my scoping review were mentioned by these professionals. Then, I presented the findings of my scoping review to the group, which they validated by comparing them to their practice experience. They explicitly pointed to the CSA context that should be taken into account when assessing the degree of trauma caused by this devastating trauma.

The third objective was to conduct a qualitative secondary analysis on one existing data set (2014/2015) of the S2T interven-



Marinda Henning

tion programme. Preliminary analysis of the data has been done. The end of my research journey will be reached when I submit my dissertation, but it will definitely not be my last contribution to better understand the impact of CSA. Not only will the results of my study be used to inform future S2T treatment practice, but I also aspire to obtain a doctoral degree within the S2T project.

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**"Pathways to Resilience IV: Global South Perspectives will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 14-16 June 2017"**

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## Conference - Pathways to Resilience IV: Global South Perspectives

Pathways to Resilience IV: Global South Perspectives will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 14-16 June 2017. Optentia is honoured to co-host the event with the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University in Canada. This conference is unique, because it is the first Pathways to Resilience Conference to be held in the Global South (and specifically in Africa). To co-host a conference exploring cultural and contextual factors that may

play a role in the well-being is in line with our mission. It is vital for our research focus area to understand how to meaningfully support health, education, well-being, service delivery and social justice. Pathways to Resilience IV: Global South Perspectives will play a crucial role in this regard. We look forward to discussions on how we, as academics and practitioners (e.g. psychologists, social workers, teachers, management, employees, and health

workers), can make this world a better place through understanding and releasing positive human potential. A strong scientific programme is envisioned with renowned international and national keynote speakers and workshop presenters. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Delaying Pre-trial Therapy for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse

In South Africa child victims of sexual abuse who are witnesses in criminal trials need to testify in court, often by means of closed circuit television and with the assistance of an intermediary. However, despite all these measures to protect them from further traumatization, anecdotal reports indicated that therapy for such children is commonly delayed until after testimony in court. This practice rule is based on a belief that therapy might contaminate the child's evidence, and could ultimately lead to the acquittal of a guilty person.

Social workers and other professionals fear being blamed for jeopardising the case. Therefore, they thus delay intervention or referral for therapy. Prof. Ansie Fouché, Mr Frans Fouché (a practicing attorney and lecturer at the Vaal University of Technology) and Dr Liana Le Roux (a senior lecturer in social work from the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria) are currently exploring this unfounded prevailing culture in South Africa.

The first three phases of this research project are completed and included a qualitative exploratory study and a document review. A total of 34 professionals in the Gauteng Province, representing both the legal and social work professions, were interviewed about this contentious issue. Document analysis of authoritative documents included six international, regional and national instruments. The key findings to date are:

- A practice rule exists amongst many social workers and legal professionals to delay therapy to child

victims of sexual abuse until after their testimony.

- There appears to be no directive in this regard in any authoritative documents. In the absence of clear directives in South Africa, the existence of an unwritten practice rule prevails, namely to delay pre-trial therapy for child victims of sexual abuse until after their testimony had been given.
- The need for child victims of sexual abuse to receive therapy is not disputed; however the timing thereof appears to be a contentious issue. Participants from both legal and social work profession acknowledged that: (1) Non-providing of pre-trial therapy is not in the best interests of the child; and (2) a conflict exists between the constitutional rights of the child victim and those of the accused
- Authoritative documents do not specifically prescribe the provision of pre-trial therapy for victims of sexual abuse – only referral to “psycho-social services” and “counselling” in authoritative sources. However, some of those responsible to render “psycho-social services” or “counselling” (practicing social workers) reported that they delay delivering of therapeutic intervention due to the unwritten practice rule.
- The mere fact that there is no confirmation in authoritative sources of the existence of the practice rule; is this perhaps indicative of an



Prof. Ansie Fouché

unfounded prevailing culture in South Africa?

The way forward:

- Policy reform seems imperative - directives in terms of the provision of pre-trial therapy should be formalized e.g. specified in the National Prosecutors Framework.
- The state should be held responsible for the provision of pre-trial therapy for child victims and practice guidelines for therapists should be developed and evaluated.
- Ignorance amongst legal professionals and mental health professionals should be eliminated.
- Conducting a scoping review, to summarise evidence about therapy and the possibility of contamination thereof;
- Employing a community participatory approach in developing guidelines to assist social workers and other professionals in providing pre-therapy to child victims of sexual abuse.

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**“The need for child victims of sexual abuse to receive therapy is not disputed ...”**

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## Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things: How about a Letsema?

On any ordinary day and thus every day, many of us are engaged in all sorts of activities, which if subjected to an experiential well-being evaluation, would prove to contribute to meaningfulness and happiness. Whether such endeavours are for the fulfilment of personal or work-related needs, conducive (read "comfortable") conditions are easily demanded and often interpreted as an entitled right. In this piece, I want to introduce you to a different kind of experienced well-being which is about drawing meaning and happiness from social contribution. Terms such as "Ubuntu" (with its multiple re-corded definitions, descriptions and claims) have been bandied about to describe that which some of us observe as a cultural norm.

Meanwhile, with no level of theorizing at all, ordinary folk like Serame Matsie, and Marvin Sekete together with his friends thrive on being engaged in voluntary organised and non-organised community development activities. Their work and motivation needed no fashionable terminology nor Public Relations campaigns. On extremely limited funding, Marvin and his friends run a community feeding programme where they plant vegetables themselves and serve two meals to a number of people every week day. Serame, on the other hand, is a dynamic community builder and activist who performs this function on a voluntary basis. He is therefore a consultant and adviser to many youth and local authority figures in his community. As he often does, he is seen in this picture delivering pamphlets detailing



Florinah Sizane and Dr Pam Wadende at Nutrition Centre

bursary and job opportunity information to young people at their homes. In another picture, he is seen leading in action a team of young men who were repairing an older women's roof of her house after it had been blown off by a storm. In addition to celebrating such ordinary folk like Serame and Marvin who do extraordinary things, we need to always highlight their work, its impact and learn from them.

We too are ordinary. Perhaps we must engage in more extraordinary actions towards uplifting others. As much as action towards social contribution is needed from all of us, there also needs to be a serious consideration of the inclusion of

folk theories and ordinary people's experiences and stories in our scientific conceptions of our research and teaching. People like Serame teach us that the often elusive "good life" is actually defined by everyday people, as they live their lives every day. Through them, positive social change and social justice are achieved incrementally every day. Let us join them, learn from them, and have scientific writing also represent them. Inspired by them, I call for a collective Letsema towards positive social change and social justice.

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**"Fashionable terms such as "Ubuntu" have been bandied about to describe that which some of us observe as a cultural norm."**

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## Families for Youth Development in Africa (FYDA)

A vast research project with great potential as a platform for teaching, mentoring, research output, community engagement and international collaboration is in its formative stage and taking off successfully. Prof. Tumi Khumalo and Dr Pamela Wadende have named their project "Families as shaping contexts for youth well-being and successful adult transitioning". They have also thought that it could simply be known as FYDA, an acronym representing "Families for Youth Development in Africa".

The aim of this multi-phased and multi-method research inquiry is to explore how families (structure, functioning, contextual embeddedness and communal support) facilitate the well-being and development of young people (adolescents and young adults) in rural and urban Kenya and South Africa. This broad and multi-faceted social and health research goal is to be carried out through the employment of a number of research methods over a period of at least three years, and inviting the participation of samples of people from a variety of populations.

The FYDA team is already excited by the prospect of applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods towards



The FYDA research team outside Madibogo

the achievement of what they view as a meaningful research endeavor. At a basic level, a cross-sectional survey with primary and secondary respondents will be conducted, while on a more complex end, more innovative qualitative research activities such as participatory photography will be employed.

Another exciting element – and this one, equally for the researchers as well as community leaders – is the community engagement activities. Research results will not only be given at the end of the study in the form of obligatory feedback, but the FYDA researchers are serious about community engagement and collaboration. In this regard, the FYDA research team is wor-

king with community conveners and gatekeepers at four research sites to set up Community Collaborative Boards (CCBs). The role of a CCB is, by definition, not limited to an advisory one, but they co-own and collaborate in the research project and its activities. This kind of co-ownership and collaborative knowledge production will certainly add a greater degree of authenticity and awareness for social justice and ethical conduct.

Prof. Khumalo and Dr Wadende invite interested Master's and PhD students who may want to complete their studies in the FYDA project to contact them.

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**"The aim of this multi-phased and multi-method research inquiry is to explore how families facilitate the well-being and development of young people ..."**

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## SMILE: Living with Diabetes Project

As the end of the year draws near, our project is proud of what we have achieved in the first year of its existence! We are very thankful to Handri Fourie who created our project logo, capturing all the dimensions of our project very effectively. The SMILE: Living with diabetes project aims to share the message that those diagnosed with diabetes can live a happy, productive life. We aim to develop interventions to help those living with diabetes to attain positive support from significant others, find meaning in living with diabetes and have positive perceptions about diabetes, as this can improve the effective management of diabetes.

One of the highlights of the year was a meeting, held on 26 September at the CDE in Houghton, with the medical experts supporting this project. The meeting, attended by Prof. Segal, Mr Brown and Sr Davel, was aimed at sharing our main findings and getting input from them. The team of experts were impressed with the findings, providing a new perspective on the psychology behind diabetes.

We are also very proud of three students who submitted their dissertations: Christiaan Bekker explored the experience of meaning in life and psychological well-being of parents living with children with diabetes; Deborah Jonker explored the illness perceptions of adolescents with well-controlled diabetes, and how these perceptions help them to manage their diabetes well; and Bea Mulder explored the lived experience of adolescents with well-controlled diabetes.

As November is diabetes awareness month, we got permission to invite parkrunners of the Heron Bank parkrun to wear blue on 26 November in support of diabetes awareness. We are looking forward to this event as we at the SMILE project not only want to make a difference with the research that we conduct, but also want to create



Social Support +
Meaning +
Intervention +
Illness Perception =
Effective Management

awareness for the bigger cause of diabetes.

With 2017 around the corner, we are excited about two new studies that are already in process for next year: Elne Visagie will be exploring the experienced social support of young adults, and Nico Prinsloo will be conducting a literature review

comparing the illness perceptions of well controlled and uncontrolled adolescents with diabetes. Furthermore, we are hoping to incorporate the findings of the current studies to develop interventions to help those living with diabetes to manage their diabetes more effectively.

**“The SMILE: Living with diabetes project aims to share the message that those diagnosed with diabetes can live a happy, productive life...”**



**Marietjie Willemse, Dr Elmari Deacon**

### Heron Banks Parkrun

26 November 2016

Show your support for **DIABETES** awareness



**WE WANT YOU!**  
**TO WEAR BLUE**

## The Networks for Change Project

The Networks for change project is a collaborative study between South Africa and Canada and focuses on gender based violence. Gender based violence is highly prevalent in both South Africa and Canada. With a great deal of literature available on violence and specifically gender based violence in South Africa, the Networks for Change study qualitatively explores ways of protecting or keeping women safe against violence. Prof. Claudia Mitchell (McGill) and Prof. Lebo Moletsane (UKZN) are the principal investigators. Prof. Linda Theron was a co-applicant and co-investigator and that is how Optentia came to be involved.

In particular, Optentia is involved in the Bethlehem site of the Networks of Change project in South Africa. As in other sites, the work here focuses on young women and young men in rural areas and is grounded in a critical paradigm, meaning that the focus is on promoting change in the participating communities. The researchers working on this study are Prof. Linda Theron (extraordinary professor Optentia), Dr Catherine Adegoke (postdoctoral fellow from Nigeria), Marco Ebersohn and Mosna Khaile (both Research Psychology interns in Optentia), Deidre de Villiers and Yolande Coetzer (both MA students in Positive Psychology). The aim of this study is to find out what rural communities in South Africa are doing, and more specifically, what they can do better to protect young women and young men against violence through qualitative visual participatory methods. These methods include draw and talk/write and participatory video. Participatory video is also an empowering technique that facilitates change through short videos participants make to show their message regarding the research topic (in this case what the community can do



Participants engaged in the meeting with community stakeholders

better to protect young women and young men against violence) to knowledgeable and influential people in the community, who can, in turn use this message to make a change in the community.

We visited a group young people, 5 young men and 5 young women in Bethlehem on the 17th and 18th of September 2016. On the 17th we asked the young people to complete draw and talk/write activities. Extremely valuable data was obtained regarding what the community does and what the community can do better to protect young men and women in the community against violence. On the 18th of September 2016 we asked the young people to make a video, one for the women and one for the men, to tell community members what they feel the community can do better to protect them against violence. This was a really fun activity for the participants and strong messages emerge from the videos.

On the 28th of October 2016, with the permission of participants, we had a meeting with knowledgeable and influential stakeholders in the community where we showed them the videos and facilitated a discussion between participants and stakeholders regarding the use of the messages in the videos to better help keep young women and young men safe against violence. The meeting went really well and it seemed as if the stakeholders and the participants will collaborate to bring about change in the community. A follow-up meeting to evaluate the change that happened as a result of the messages in the videos that the participants made is scheduled for the 25th of November 2016 and another follow-up meeting will also be held to evaluate the sustainability of the change and further progress, in six months' time.

We are very excited to see the change that happened in the community. We are also in the process of analysing the data.

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“... the Networks for Change study qualitatively explores ways of protecting or keeping women safe against violence...”

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Networking with community stakeholders

## A Great Beginning to Community Engagement

Recently leaders of the four identified research sites welcomed the NWU researchers involved in the FYDA (Families for Youth Development in Africa) project with open arms, and were receptive to their ideas. Deliberately choosing to work in rural and urban settings, the FYDA project will be implemented in Madibogo (NW) and Setlagole (NW), both ruled by the Ratlou Traditional Authority, as well as Bekkersdal (GP) and Carletonville (GP) governed by the Rand West municipality and Merafong municipality respectively. While in Madibogo and Setlagole, they were welcomed by Chiefs and invited to make formal presentations to the Traditional Council. They also sat for an extensive discussion at Mogomotsi Tlhabanyane's home. In the urban settings, the arrangements were different in that they were welcomed at municipal offices with a variety of officials, for example the Municipal Manager a Manager of Health and Social Development in another.

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**“While in Madibogo and Setlagole they were welcomed by Chiefs and invited to make formal presentations to the Traditional Council...”**

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**Community engagement: Prof. Tumi Khumalo and the team**



**“It's clear to everyone how big and complicated the challenges (in Africa) are. But Africa has proven its resilience and ingenuity time and again, and there are millions of people, especially young people, who are eager to get to work.”**



**Bill Gates**

## Ageing and Generational Dynamics

The sub-programme 'Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa' (AGenDA), lead by Prof. Jaco Hoffman, focuses on three inter-related research themes, namely 'Ageing and the Family' with Prof. Vera Roos (NWU – Potchefstroom Campus); 'Long-Term Care for Older People' with Prof. Emily Freeman (London School of Economics – UK) and issues of social inclusion/exclusion. It is the latter theme that recently received increased attention.

Social Exclusion – in this case – examines the dynamic, multi-dimensional relational processes that lead to the exclusion of older people from engaging fully in community/social life. This theme will be contextualised within the diverse urban environments in which older persons live their lives and a key strategy is to explore the inclusion of older persons to make their worlds more age-friendly. As the World Health Organisation states: 'An age-friendly world enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to people that are important to them. It also helps people stay healthy and active, even at the oldest ages and provides appropriate support to those who can no longer look after themselves.'

To this end three prospective PhD candidates met with Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. Norah Keating (Director, The Global Social Initiative on Ageing (GSIA), International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics; Professor of Rural Ageing, Centre for



Norah Keating, Hanneen van der Stoep, Carel Basson, Jaco Hoffman en Annabe Tredoux

Innovative Ageing, Swansea University, UK; Co-director, Research on Aging, Policies and Practice (RAPP), University of Alberta, Canada) to discuss and develop their research ideas on this topic. Mr Carel Basson with a M.Phil (Stellenbosch) in Urban and Regional Science is District Manager at Statistics South Africa and will explore the issue on the macro, big data level; Ms Hanneen van der Stoep is Senior Town Planner of the Overstrand Municipality and will explore the

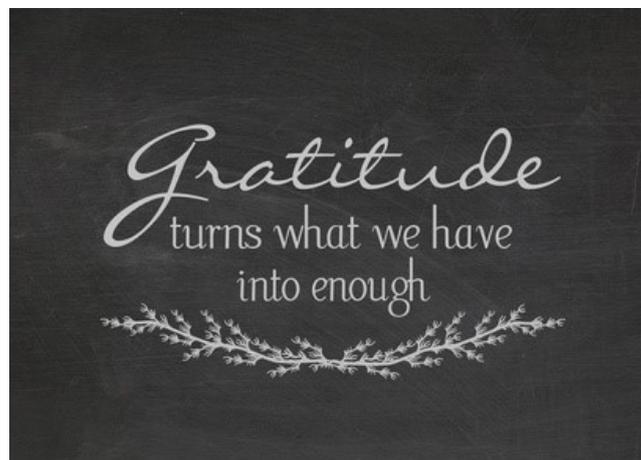
issue on the meso (systemic) level and Ms Annabe Tredoux with a M.Phil (Stellenbosch) in Future Studies will inductively explore the individual/environment fit through a grounded approach.

It is trusted that this corpus of research will substantially contribute to and address the dearth of research towards enabling environments for all ages within the developing world, particularly focusing on older persons.

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**"An age-friendly world enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities"**

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## Ageing and Generational Dynamics

On 1 July 2016, Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. A Zaidi of the School of Social Sciences, Centre for Research on Ageing, University of Southampton examined Ms Burcu Ozdemir, Green Templeton College, University of Oxford for the degree Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) at the University of Oxford. In the viva voce, Ms Ozdemir successfully defended her thesis on 'Intergenerational Solidarity between Adult Children and Older Parents in Turkey'. The candidate's supervisor was Prof. Sarah Harper, Director of the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing, University of Oxford.



Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Dr Burcu Ozdemir

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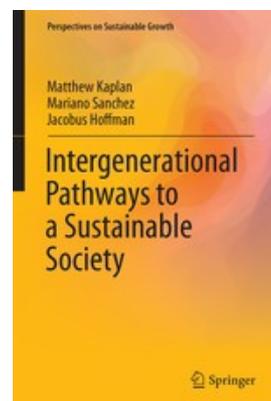
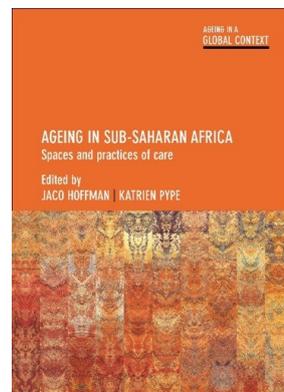
**“His presentation was about Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa: spaces and practices of care...”**

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## Prof. Jaco Hoffman Involved in Two New Books

During the week of 4 July 2016, Prof. Jaco Hoffman presented his work at the British Society of Gerontology Conference at the University of Stirling, Scotland. His presentation was about 'Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa: spaces and practices of care', which is also the title of an edited volume, edited by him and Prof. Katrien Pype. Click [here](#) to read more about the launch of the book.

Prof. Hoffman is also co-author of another book, "Intergenerational; pathways to a sustainable society". This book explores intergenerational practices and their impact on social sustainability with an emphasis on developing programmatic efforts to address profound social challenges. Click [here](#) to read more about the book.



## Long-Term Care Systems for Africa: Setting Agendas

Sub-Saharan Africa is among the world's regions facing an unprecedented challenge wrought by a rapidly expanding population of older people and high rates of ill-health and functional impairment among them. The region must respond by developing effective systems of long-term care for older Africans in the coming decades.

The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), 2nd Africa region conference takes place from 6-8 December 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya. The 2nd IAGG Africa region conference offers a unique opportunity to set a strategic agenda to achieve this goal. Convened as a policy-research-practice dialogue, the event will provide a



**Boniwe Pakkies**



**Sandra Steyn**

platform for joint thinking and collaboration among researchers, service providers, advocates and government stakeholders. Optentia is one of the sponsors of the conference. For more information about the conference and to register, click [here](#).

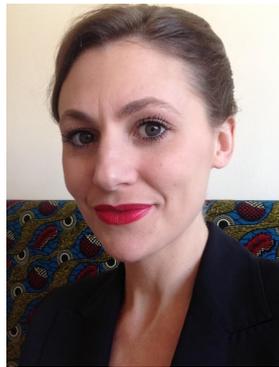
Two PhD students of Op-

tentia, Bongiwe Pakkies and Sandra Steyn will participate in a Master Class in Families, Aging and Care presented by Prof. Norah Keating, Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. Vera Roos.

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

## Acceptability of Formally Provided Long Term Care

I am an Assistant Professor at the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom, and very proud to be an Extraordinary Researcher at Optentia. My research in South Africa considers the acceptability of formally provided long term care (that is, care not provided voluntarily by family and friends) for black older adults and asks what this can tell us for designing and implementing sustainable and equitable models of care. Working with Optentia colleagues Jaco Hoffman, Bongiwe Pakkies and Maryna Venter, along with Janine Van Aardt (School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences, Potchefstroom Campus) and a team of great local research assistants and organisational



**Prof. Emily Freeman**

partners, we will be talking to black older adults in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal who receive residential long term care, day care and home-based care from both families and organisations about their experiences. The work is part of a broader study looking at the future of long term care across sub-Saharan Africa and feeds into governments' and other stakeholders' prioritisation

of care in the face of major demographic and social change. Beyond this project specifically, I am interested in the ways, we as academics, can maximise the impact of our research on the 'real world' and have spent a couple of years working on this, particularly in Zambia and Malawi. I would be very happy to discuss this with anyone interested!

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**"The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), 2nd Africa region conference takes place from 6-8 December 2016 in Nairobi..."**

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## Memories from the Visit by Prof. Susanna Schwab



Visit to Tsoelelepe Primary School in Sharpeville

“Memories from the visit of Prof. Susanna Schwab...”



Wings for Life School for learners with Autism



Presentation: Dr Isabel Payne-van Staden



Presentation: Dr Thabo Makhalemele

## An Exchange of Expertise on Inclusive Education

Prof. Mirna Nel and colleagues from the National, Free State and Mpumalanga Departments of Basic Education as well as Inclusive Education South Africa were invited by De Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische Bijstand to a study week in Belgium from 24 to 28 October 2016. VVOB is the lead partner in the European Union (EU) funded project on inclusive education in which North-West University, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of the Free State and IESA are all involved. This excellently organised week provided opportunities for the South African delegation and Belgian colleagues from schools, support services, the Ministry of Education, teacher university colleges, as well as researchers, to exchange ideas and experiences about good inclusive education practices. The Flemish part of Belgium (Flanders) has embarked on a newly introduced inclusive education policy from 2015, called the M Decreet. In South Africa the policy on inclusive education, namely Education White Paper 6 (EWP6), has already been launched in 2001. Consequently, 15 years of practice and research experiences could be shared with Belgian colleagues.

Besides learning from teachers and support staff about the general education system of Flanders and their move towards an inclusive education system, Prof. Nel attended an advisory research committee meeting on a scientific research programme about individual support programmes and assessment in primary schools.



Some of the workshop delegates engaged in discussions

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“... 15 years of practice and research experiences could be shared with Belgian colleagues ...”

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## An Exchange of Expertise on Inclusive Education

A research project called Potential, focusing on competence development to create inclusive learning environments, was also presented by Drs Marijke Wilssens (Artevelde Teacher Education College and University of Gent), Hanne Vandebussche and Wendelien Vantieghe (University of Gent). Various researchers from different universities in Flanders have received funding to collaborate in this project directed at pre-service as well as in-service teachers. Different research methods will be applied in this research. A valuable exchange of ideas and suggestions as well as



Prof. Mirna Nel

future collaboration between Prof. Nel and these researchers, resulted from this meeting.

**“A specific focus of the workshop was removing labels from learners who experience barriers to learning.”**

Prof. Nel was also invited to do a presentation on teacher education for inclusion in South Africa as well as conduct a workshop, together with Mrs Robyn Beere from IESA, on inclusive education in South Africa. A specific focus of the workshop was removing labels from learners who experience barriers to learning. At both these presentations, stimulating discussions ensued.



A panel discussion with attendees from different spheres of education institutes as well as parents and persons with disabilities were held on one of the days. The South African delegation was represented by Mrs Marié Schoeman (National Department of Education), Mrs Robyn Beere (IESA) and Prof. Nel (NWU and Optentia). Belgian panel members included Ann Martin (Odisee - Teacher Education), Inge Ranschaert (Katholiek Onderwijs Vlaanderen and activist for people with disabilities), Dr Elisabeth De Schauwer (University of Gent)



and Mieke Leroy (parent of a child with Down syndrome and activist for inclusive education). This panel discussion elicited provoca-

tive statements and discussions and left everyone with food for thought.

## An Exchange of Expertise on Inclusive Education

Dr Nolitha Vukuza, representing the Department of Higher Education and Training at UNESCO, based in Paris, France, also graced this panel discussion with her presence and thanked the South African members for their good contributions.

On the last day of the week, Mr Bruno Vanobbergen, the Children's Rights Commissioner in the Flemish Parliament, and Mr Jean Pierre Verhaege, a policy advisor at the commission, enlightened the South African delegation about their activities. This was an excellent conclusion to a full week of sharing and learning. The work that this commission does is inspiring and definitely needs to be explored for possible implementation in South Africa.




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**"The work that this commission does is inspiring and definitely needs to be explored for possible implementation in South Africa."**

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## Prof. Mary Grosser Emigrates to Germany *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Prof. Mary Grosser, leader of the sub-programme "Holistic Learner Development in Diverse Contexts" will be emigrating to Germany in March 2017. Prof. Grosser played a significant role in setting up and developing the research sub-programme. Prof. Grosser, who is also the President of IACESA, leads various research projects in Optentia. She is also supervisor and promoter of many Master's and PhD students.

Although Prof. Grosser will resign as a permanent staff member of the North-West University, plans are already in place to appoint her as an extraordinary professor and to use her expertise in Master's and PhD

studies as well as in research projects.

Prof. Grosser is a role model for many students and colleagues. Her competence brings out the best in people. She has the ability to remain calm in difficult situations and to respond in a mature way. She really demonstrates thinking skills.

Fortunately, her expertise is not lost for Optentia. We hope that she will, for many years to come, do what she has done so well: putting Optentia first and instilling a love for research in students and colleagues!



**Prof. Mary Grosser**

## Creating Learning Environments that are Fun, Open and Challenging

On 9 September 2016, 45 Gauteng educators once again had the opportunity to attend an IACESA Cog-Ed seminar at the NWU Vaal campus. The focus of the Cog-Ed seminar was how to create learning environments that are fun, open and challenging as well as how to nurture metacognition during teaching. Nurturing metacognition during teaching implies that teachers employ methods to help students understand the way they learn, think about their thinking and plan, monitor and assess their own understanding and performance.

We were very privileged to have two very special guest speakers at this seminar. Our first quest speaker was Prof. Marco Hessels from the University of Geneva, Switzerland, who is a newly appointed extraordinary Professor in the Optentia Research Focus Area at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus. His presentation demonstrated how regular classroom teaching can be transformed into metacognitive teaching environments, allowing all students to learn better and to progress beyond what was expected previously. The title of his presentation was: "Teaching students how to learn: A metacognitive approach to classroom learning. Prof. Hessels presented results from various intervention studies that involved students with learning and intellectual disabilities in special schools, as well as students with learning difficulties in mainstream classrooms. The results testified to the positive influence that metacognitive teaching has on cognitive processes, the in-

crease in strategic learning and greater school success.

Our second quest speaker, Lurinda Maree (PS0114391) completed her B.A. Drama Honours degree at the University of Pretoria in 2003, where she specialised in Theatre for Development, an approach which applies theatre to socio-political and educational contexts to evoke change and/or to stimulate dialogue. She then embarked on a qualification in Human Resource Management and Industrial and Organisational Psychology. She completed her M.Com HR and IO Psychology at the University of Pretoria in 2010, with a dissertation entitled "The Individual's Experience of Industrial Theatre: An Exploration". Lurinda started consulting independently and the focus shifted to her passion for growth and development on individual, group and organisational levels. Lurinda's diverse and unique skillset is best applied as a so-called supporting act to a bigger-picture initiative. The title of her presentation was: "The supporting act: Creating a learning environment that is fun, open and challenging". Her behavioural training workshop aimed to guide teachers to think differently about their performance in the classroom. Drawing from Theatre and Drama Studies, the workshop showed how the teacher's performance mindset can influence how they convey the IACESA Teaching Philosophy (Habits of Mind) and create a learning environment that is fun, open and challenging. This behavioural workshop was about self-awareness, and about having fun! The workshop emphasized the importance of how Face, Body



Prof. Marco Hessels and Prof. Mary Grosser

and Voice (FBV) can be used to create learning environments that are fun, open and challenging. Teachers are under constant pressure to perform and there is hardly opportunity for release and self-discovery. This workshop focused on where people become people again, by connecting, laughing and discovering together.

The educators were also informed about IACESA's vision, and were encouraged to become members. We are proud to have hosted a very inspiring afternoon for teachers in the community and are looking forward to our IACESA Conference in 2017. We had some lucky draws where NWU Vaal-sponsored gifts were given to teachers!

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**"... regular classroom teaching can be transformed into metacognitive teaching environments..."**

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**The classroom should be an entrance to the world, not an escape from it. (John Ciardi)**

## Creating Learning Environments that are Fun, Open and Challenging

Since February 2016, teachers and learners at Laerskool Fontaine, Sasolburg have collaboratively decided on integrating "respect" intentionally as part of character education into the life and culture of the entire school. For this purpose, the teachers and learners developed a "respect tree" with six different branches that each represents a dimension of respect that will be enhanced intentionally.

Between February and September 2016, the "rules" branch was integrated into all curricular and extra-curricular activities at the school, and reinforced by many of the parents at home. Learners' behaviours were regularly assessed by their peers and teachers against well-defined



- Rules (Red)
- Reverence (Purple)
- Self-Respect (Blue)
- Positivity (Yellow)
- Honesty (White)
- Choices (Green)

criteria that were formulated collaboratively by teachers and learners.

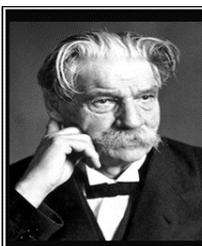
In order to make the focus on "rules" visible in the school, learners and teachers wore red silicon wristbands with the word "reels" (rules) branded on the band. This served as a constant reminder of what the focus in curricular and extra-curricular activities at the school was.



During September 2016, teachers regarded the learners as having become sophisticated in the understanding of the importance of rules, and in adhering to rules. By means of peer assessment, 72 learners in the different grades who were regarded by their peers as setting examples for adhering to rules, were appointed as Rule Officials of the school, and each received a lapel badge reflecting the respect tree and "rules", for which they were appointed as Rule Officials. In addition, each Rule Official received a gift voucher from Kentucky Fried Chicken for a "Kream Ball".



"Learners' behaviours were regularly assessed by their peers and teachers against well-defined criteria ..."



Just as white light consists of colored rays, so reverence for life contains all the components of ethics: love, kindness, sympathy, empathy, peacefulness and power to forgive.

(Albert Schweitzer)

## Creating Learning Environments that are Fun, Open and Challenging

Pre- and post-questionnaire data were collected from the learners to establish growth and development in terms of their understanding of the importance of rules and their effectiveness in applying rules in daily life (at school and at home). The data analysis is in progress.

The third term started off with a new focus, namely on a new branch of the respect three, reverence. Purple wristbands remind the learners of the new focus in curricular and extra-curricular activities, not ignoring or forgetting the previous focus on rules. In order to assist learners in understanding the meaning of reverence, a hand is used as symbol to describe an attitude of reverence.

Each day of the week will focus on practicing another dimension of reverence. The fingers on the hand represent the days of the week and the palm weekends.

“... to assist learners in understanding the meaning of reverence, a hand is used as symbol ...”



Monday – make a difference in obeying rules.

Tuesday – think before you do.

Wednesday – respect friends and adults.

Thursday – do everything to the best of your ability

Friday – peace in your heart for making a difference.

Saturday and Sunday – together we as a family make a difference in homes and in the community.



## Back to the Basics with Six Bricks

Three researchers from the sub-programme Holistic Learner Development in Diverse Contexts and five teachers from Roshnee Preschool and Fontaine Primary (Sasolburg) attended a full day intensive training workshop at Care for Education, Johannesburg on 21 July 2016. The aim of the workshop was to implement the Six Bricks as an essential part of classroom teaching and learning. This training followed a two-hour introductory workshop on 21 June 2016 on implementing the Six Bricks Lego Tool to nurture holistic learner development. Six Bricks is a hands-on tool for learning. Through fun and short activities we



were engaged and challenged in playful ways to learn how to guide learners in practicing and acquiring critical skills for learning and thinking, such as:

- Language
- Problem-solving
- Collaboration
- Keeping attention, resisting distraction and per-

sisting in the face of difficulty.

The Six Bricks will be used as a learning tool in the High-Performance Learning research project that will be implemented during 2017.

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**“The Six Bricks will be used as a learning tool in the High-Performance Learning research project.”**

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## New Book: Developing Critical Thinking *by* Prof. Mary Grosser

A new book with the title “Developing critical thinking”, edited by Prof. Mary Grosser, is a first, comprehensive resource in the South African context that offers a generic, multi-dimensional approach to the development of critical thinking as an academic and life skill in a variety of contexts, namely formal, informal and non-formal. It argues for a breakdown of the divides between the different role players and systems where critical thinking is taught. The book also focuses on the application of theory pertaining to the conceptualization of critical thinking, and provides generic guidelines for teaching critical thinking in the South African context and elsewhere. Various examples of exploratory, evidence-based research in the South African context elucidate the status quo regarding the development of critical thinking skills at school and Higher Education level. The evidence-based research also

demonstrates the efficacy of selected strategies that have the potential to assist in the development of good critical thinking skills in and beyond classrooms. The target audience for this book is a wide market, which includes the role players in education in formal, informal and non-formal learning contexts. These role players include, among others, parents, peers, members of education departments, all teachers; lecturers at Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, departments of teacher training at Higher Education institutions, tutors, therapists, practitioners and professionals and the media.

This book hopes to advocate for a multi-dimensional approach to the teaching of critical thinking, depicted by the maze and labyrinth on the cover. The nurturing of critical thinking requires a multi-professional approach involving all role players in education in a variety of learning

contexts (formal, informal, non-formal), to enable learners to become sophisticated critical thinkers who can apply logical and analytic left-brain thinking skills to solve problems (represented by the maze). In addition, sophisticated critical thinkers also need to overcome life’s challenges by using their intuition, creativity, imagery, and the search for possibility (represented by the labyrinth).

### DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING

A Multi-Dimensional Approach for the  
South African Context



MARY M. GROSSER, PhD  
Editor

## EU Project on Inclusive Education Launched

On 6 October 2016, the Departments of Basic and Higher Education and Training launched a project on Teaching and Learning for Early Learning and Inclusive Education. Four funding grants were awarded by the European Union (EU) to this three year project. One of these grants was given to the Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische Bijstand (VVVB) as co-funder, Inclusive Education South Africa (IESA) North-West University (NWU), the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of the Free State (UFS). This project aims to strengthen the inclusive education approach in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) as well as in the induction of newly qualified teachers. Prof. Mirna Nel (member of the Optentia Research Focus Area on the Vaal Triangle Campus) and Prof. Johnnie Hay (Potchefstroom Campus) will be collaborating with researchers from Wits and UFS on a research project focusing on infusing inclusive education into the ITE programme.

**“A keynote address was also delivered by Mrs Angie Motshekga...”**

The award function was held at the Department of Basic Education’s (DBE) conference centre in Pretoria where His Excellency Dr M Comaro, Ambassador Extraordinary of the European Delegation to South Africa confirmed the support of the EU to develop inclusive education in South Africa.

A keynote address was also delivered by Mrs Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education. In her speech, she confirmed the DBE’s commitment to increasingly making the education system more inclusive, since “The challenges which children and youth who are excluded from school and from learning face, have a profound effect on the rest of their lives”.



Prof. Mirna Nel



Dr M. Comaro



Prof. Johnnie Hay



Mrs Angie Motshekga

## Visit from a Prominent Researcher on Inclusive Education

Prof. Susanna Schwab (born in Austria), from the University of Wuppertal in Germany visited Optentia during September as an extraordinary researcher. Prof. Schwab has an extensive publishing record on the field of inclusive education and has become a full professor at the young age of 30 years. The purpose of this visit was to establish a research partnership with Prof. Mirna Nel, a member of the sub-programme: Holistic Learner Development in Diverse Contexts within the Optentia Research Focus Area. During this very fruitful visit, several collaborative research projects between Prof. Schwab and Prof. Nel have been initiated. An immediate successful outcome of this collaboration was the approval to edit a special issue of the *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. Prof. Schwab will be leading editor and Prof. Nel and Prof. Frank Hellmich from the University of Paderborn, Germany, will be co-editors. The theme of this special edition focuses on: "Insights in the social participation of students with special educational needs in general education". Prof. Schwab, together with Prof. Marco Hessels, also attended the Optentia Research day and had several posters displaying their research.

In the first week of her stay, together with Prof. Hessels, she visited two schools. These two schools included Tsoelepele Primary School in Sharpeville and Wings for Life, a special school for learners with autism. Both Prof. Schwab and Prof. Hessels described this as a peak of their visit.

On the 15th and 16th of September 2016, a two-day colloquium was also held with colleagues, as well as Master's and PhD students who specialize in the field of inclusive education. Prof. Schwab presented two of her projects, namely "A teacher survey about the implementation of inclusive education in Austria" and the 'Laboratory school in Bielefeld'.

Both these presentations stimulated interesting conversations between the attendees and Prof. Schwab, since many similarities and of course some differences were identified between the Austrian and South African contexts. Some of Prof. Nel's Master and PhD students also presented their completed studies or the one's they are embarking on. Researchers all had excellent presentations and Prof. Schwab was very impressed with the high standard of the studies. Prof. Nel also did a presentation about the 'High Performance Learning' project that she and Prof. Mary Grosser are starting in 2017.

On her departure, Prof. Schwab mentioned that she enjoyed Optentia's hospitality, as well as South Africa so much that she will definitely visit South Africa on a regular basis in future. Optentia will also welcome her back with open arms.



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Susanna Schwab, Prof. Mirna Nel and Prof. Marco Hessels



Front: Usha Ojageer, Rodean Booysen, Anne-Marie De Nysschen, Isabel Payne-van Staden, Susanna Schwab, Elmari Deacon, Ivy Serero, Amy Jensen, Debbie Schaffler  
Back: Mallery Devereux, Thabo Makhalemele, Mirna Nel, Mary Grosser, Marinda Neethling

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**"Prof. Schwab has an extensive publishing record on the field of inclusive education and has become a full professor at the young age of 30 years."**

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## Optimising Performance *by* Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

Maintaining performance has become an interesting challenge within the tertiary education system in South Africa during the past 12 months. Besides the traditional high job demands and low resources, academics have become accustomed too. The #FeesMustFall movement has added an additional layer of physical, psychological, financial and emotional demands to an "already highly stressful work environment". Theory dictates that these extra layers of job demands would have a direct impact on individuals' work performance; yet the academics within the Optimising Performance sub-programme seem to have flourished this year.

But how? Bakker and Demerouti (2016) indicated that in the absence of available job resources, individuals employ personal resources (such as resilience and grit) to buffer



fer the effect these extreme job demands have on their individual work behaviours. Through processes of cognitive and/or psychological job crafting, individuals employ behaviours that not only buffer the effect of stressors, but also aids in the generation of positive energy which

could produce higher levels of personal motivation (and in effect ... Performance).

It is these levels of personal motivation that attributed to the success of the sub-programme this year.

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**"... in the absence of available job resources, individuals employ personal resources..."**

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## New Networks for the Sub-programme: Optimising Performance

The sub-programme: Optimising Performance is currently building relationships with two academics from Twente University, Dr Saskia Kelders and Prof. Ernst Bohlmeijer. Both of these experts are working on aspects of technology and well-being. They visited Optentia during July 2016.

Dr Kelders graduated in Human Movement Sciences at the University of Groningen in 2005 and is a licensed primary school teacher in the Netherlands. She started her PhD-project at the University of Twente in 2007 and received her PhD for her thesis "Understanding adherence to web based interventions" in 2012. Her research interests are mainly eHealth and eMental health, including positive technology, adherence to e(mental) health interventions, employing persuasive technology and game ele-

ments to stimulate usage and increase the effectiveness of online interventions, developing online interventions, and using log data to improve online interventions.

Prof. Bohlmeijer obtained his PhD in 2007 with his thesis titled "Reminiscence and depression in later life". From 2007 he had been an associate professor and since 2011, full professor of Mental Health Promotion in the Department of Psychology, Health and Technology within the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences at Twente University in The Netherlands. His research primarily focuses on the development and evaluation of innovative web-based interventions that contribute to the positive mental health and individual approach to public mental health. Recent studies covered positive and narra-

tive psychology, mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy and autobiographic reflection. Recently, he also co-authored a book with Gerben Westerhof - *Psychologie van de levenskunst*.

## Optimising Performance *by* Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

The passion, perseverance and collective positive energies manifested in various achievements this year:

- Two National Research Foundation Rating applications were obtained.
- More article equivalents (compared to 2015) were published this year in the form of articles, peer-reviewed chapters and one scholarly book;
- Dr Danie du Toit contributed various chapters to two international peer-reviewed books on leadership and depth-psychology;
- Prof. Marius Stander was promoted to full professor.
- Prof. Marius Stander had delivered 7 master's students this year (5 of which at one graduation);
- Two chapters by Prof. Marius Stander and Prof. Llewellyn E. van Zyl were published in the 3rd edition of the Organisational Behaviour Textbook by Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt.
- Dr Ederick Stander obtained his Doctorate in just over 18 months;
- Prof. Marius Stander and Prof. Llewellyn E. van Zyl co-edited a book on Coaching Psychology;
- Two grant applications were submitted.
- Dr Laura Weiss was appointed as a post-doctoral fellow.
- Prof. Llewellyn E. van Zyl was invited to present three international guest lectures;
- The Programme in Industrial Psychology presented its accredited Master's Programme in Industrial Psychology for the first time as an independent programme



this year;

- Prof. Llewellyn E. van Zyl was awarded both Honorary Life Membership with SIOPSA and the NWU Young Alumnus award this year;
- Prof. Ernst Bohlmeijer and Prof. Saskia Kelders from the University of Twente in The Netherlands visited the school in July 2016 to further collaboration with the sub-programme;
- A large scale online positive psychological intervention programme is under development along with the University of Twente;
- Several keynote addresses and papers at international conferences were presented this year;
- Ms Leoni van der Vaart, along with Prof. Chantal Olckers (UP) and Prof. Llewellyn E. Van Zyl are in the process of completing a book on Psychological Ownership;
- Prof. Marius Stander and Prof. Joppie van Graan were honoured by Optentia for their contribution to the profession, and the discipline of Industrial Psychology within South Africa
- Ms Leoni van der Vaart is almost half way through her

PhD research project and Aysha Ebrahim has submitted her master's degree for examination;

- Members of the staff have been requested to appear on national radio several times this year;
- The Programme in Industrial Psychology will host the 2nd IOP Research Day; and
- We are currently investigating collaboration between the University of Twente's HRM and NWU's IOP department for a joint PhD degree.

We are excited to enter 2017 on this wave of positive energy.

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**"The passion, perseverance and collective positive energies manifested in various achievements this year..."**

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## Finding your Passion *by* Dr Laura Weiss

In my PhD thesis 'Direction: Happiness. Improving well-being of vulnerable groups', I found that the happiness-based approach is effective. This is even and especially true for people with an extremely low well-being, caused by adverse circumstances, such as serious health problems, social isolation and a low socio-economic status. Positive psychology interventions had not been tested with a group with such a broad problematic before. Translating my PhD thesis to practices, I can give the following tips on how to improve your well-being.

- Everyone has a passion. Finding out what motivates you intrinsically is the first step. Thinking back on your childhood (your heroes, your dream job, your hobbies) or nice memories from your past can help you with the search for a passion. Try to do something you are passionate about on a regular basis. This can make a positive change in your life.
- Find ways to use and improve your talents, skills and competencies. We found that doing

something you are good at gives a boost for to self-confidence and can improve well-being on the long-term.

- Feeling to be the master of your own life is vital for well-being. Make your own decisions, be the director of your own life!
- Almost nothing is worse for well-being than the feeling of severe loneliness. Investing in your social network and people you feel close to means investing in your happiness.
- Every human being has the need to feel autonomous, competent and related to others. To reach the full potential of your well-being, tackle all three needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Take a closer look. Which of the needs are fulfilled, which are not? Try to work on satisfaction of needs that might have been neglected. Small changes can make a difference. Your feeling of autonomy could be better. Try to make a deliberate decision right now.
- Taking up an interest, learning new things or other forms of

personal development will be good for your well-being.

- Seeing the good things in life and actively engaging with your environment can have a positive impact on how you feel.
- Having a purpose in life, being kind to yourself and accepting of the negative things in life can help to make positive change.
- Engage in something you love to do with others with the same interest.

Click [here](#) to read more about Dr Laura Weiss.



Dr Laura Weiss

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**“Finding out what motivates you intrinsically is the first step...”**

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## The Life of a First Year I/O Psychology Master's Student

A year full of excitement, laughter, and challenges. The Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University presented their Master's Degree in Industrial Psychology in 2016 together with eight enthusiastic first-year Master's students. On the banks of the Vaal River and with designated learning quarters, the Vaal Triangle Campus provides a tranquil learning environment for their students. We were privileged to be educated by some of the finest lecturers in the field of Industrial Psychology, including Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl (Scientific Reasoning), Prof. Marius Stander (People Development), Dr Elrie Botha (Professional Industrial Psychology), Dr Danie du Toit (Well-being), and Dr Elmari Deacon (Applied Counselling). Not only

does the programme provide the opportunity to understand Industrial Psychological theories and research, but enables students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

The year started off with a bang, with the introductory class starting as soon as November 2015 where we were bombarded with information and assignments. Rightfully so, as this was of course a Master's programme. We received our schedules for the year and each student was provided with the opportunity to select two modules of his/her choice, alongside the daunting Scientific Reasoning module. Although many of us found ourselves somewhat afraid and uncertain, one thing was certain – the programme would take us on a journey of absolute

transformation and this was only the beginning of our journey towards becoming successful Industrial Psychologists.

Looking back at a year full of ups and downs, we can truly say that it was a humbling experience filled with introspection. We have learnt to challenge our own perceptions and have been encouraged to consider new perspectives. Some stated that the programme opened their eyes to “understanding how to bring the person back into the workplace”, and that it was “extremely challenging but fascinating”. With a brilliantly designed programme and the support of lecturers who are experts in the field, we are well on our way to becoming the change we wish to see in the world.

## Mentorship

Mentoring is a long-standing form of training and development which has become a popular tool for personal development. This process can become quite costly for all those involved, so choosing the right mentor (individual and an organisation) is integral to the success of the process. Mentoring is a complex process which involves various stakeholders.

As all the stakeholders invest substantially (in relation to professional time, and finances) in mentorship processes and programmes, it is important to ensure that it has a high success ratio to ensure a high level of return on the investment. Research suggests that mentorship processes can fail because of factors such as a clash in personality between the mentor/protégé, a lack in time investment from stakeholders, and clashing expectations. It is therefore important to select the right mentors for the process with right skills, abilities and experience to ensure success. Consequently, it is essential to identify the core competencies and functions of an effective mentor.

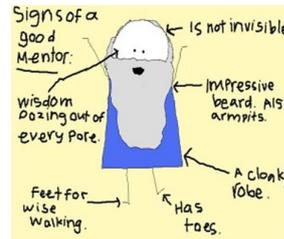
In theory every manager's job should entail a significant amount of subordinate development and indeed some companies make it a virtual condition of each manager's advancement. In practice, however, some people are better cut out for it than others. Moreover, the ability to act as a mentor will often vary according to the manager's own stage of career development, personal competence and his/her personality style. For example, someone who has only been on a middle or senior management level for a short time may not have enough broad experience to offer. Or someone seeking or undergoing a major change in his own career development is unlikely to have the mental energy to spare for another person's problems. In selecting a mentor, you must have clear sense of the qualities which make a good people developer

and also have a clear understanding of what type of person you would feel comfortable with in a mentoring relationship. These qualities may differ from individual to individual, and even from company to company. Equally, the ideal mentor for one person may be a disaster for another. It follows, naturally, that all the different stakeholders within the current world of work will disagree on the criteria to be used to identify good mentors.

Because every case is different, it is extremely difficult to lay down general rules on what the mentor should do with the protégé. However, at its core, the mentor should have the ability to respond to individual circumstances and to work out his own strategies for assisting his protégé.

The general criteria for a good mentor are not necessarily the same as those for a good functional manager. Many organisations run into difficulties early on in mentorship programs if they place too much emphasis on an excellent track record as a prerequisite for being a mentor. While the mentor's performance and his job are undeniably important, if only to ensure the protégés respect, other, equally valuable, skills are also essential. A manager who is outstanding in his field may at first glance seem to be an ideal candidate for a mentor. It is just the sort of flair and expertise the company needs to pass on. However, if this manager's communication skills are extremely poor or he resents being taken from his work because of his mentorship obligations, he is unlikely to function well in this role. The company, the mentor and the protege may all suffer in these circumstances. Companies should choose mentors who cannot only communicate their skills well, but who are also actively committed to the program.

Clutterbuck (2004) states that a mentor who volunteers performance is better than those proverbially



'forced' to do so. It is not necessary for the mentor to dazzle the protege with his superior knowledge and experience; he merely has to be able to encourage the protege by sharing with him his own enthusiasm for his job. The mentor must be ready to invest time and effort into the relationship. So his interest will probably already lie in the areas of communication and in his personal skills. The mentor must be ready to offer friendship to the protégé and be willing to let the relationship extend beyond the normal limits of a business relationship. He should not participate in the program unless he is willing to consider the relationship as a long-term commitment.

Clutterbuck (2004) developed an acronym which can be used to clearly (and notably) sum up the criteria of a good mentor: In summary, a good mentor should have the ability to (a) **manage** the relationship, (b) **encourage** the protégé to move beyond his current level of functioning, (c) **nurture** and invest in the protégé's development, (d) **teach**, encourage and develop, (e) **offer** mutual respect and (e) **respond** to the needs of the protégé effectively.

In the next newsletter, we will be providing an overview of each one of the criteria for a good M.E.N.T.O.R in order to aid you in choosing the right one.

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“... it is essential to identify the core competencies and functions of an effective mentor.”

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## Dr Laura Weiss Defended her Thesis *by* Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

On the 13th of October 2016, Prof. Llewellyn E. van Zyl and Prof. Ruut Veenhoven visited the University of Twente to act as an opponent for the PhD study of Laura Weiss.

In her thesis, titled "Direction: Happiness. Improving well-being of vulnerable groups", Laura investigated the effects of a positive psychological intervention aimed at enhancing human happiness and flourishing of emotionally vulnerable groups within the Twente region. The intervention, aptly labelled 'the Happiness route', was developed around Ryan and Deci's (2001) self-determination theory and aimed to improve the well-being of these vulnerable groups through focusing on the enhancement of autonomy, relatedness and competence.

In the first study, Dr Weiss presented a case study centered around a positive psychological intervention aimed at the enhancement of human happiness which was published in the Springer book 'Well-being in contemporary society'. In this study, Dr Weiss provides an overview of the Dutch health-care system that is systematically changing from a problem-based to a happiness-focused treatment strategy for those with psychosocial behavioural problems. The second study, a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials of positive psychological interventions aimed at psychological well-being, investigated whether psychological well-being could be increased through behavioural interventions. The study, comprised of 27 randomized control trials, revealed that it may be possible to enhance psychological well-being through structured behavioural interventions. The third study was centered around designing randomized control trials for positive psychological interventions aimed at the enhancement of happiness of



Prof. Ruut Veenhoven and Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl



vulnerable groups. This study focused on expanding the theoretical components of such an intervention, the appropriate intervention methodology and the selection of analysis techniques. The fourth study was a randomized control trial evaluating the effectiveness of a happiness-based intervention strategy (in relation to traditional problem-based interventions). Although this study showed no significant changes in positive psychological mood states or in the treatment of negative affect, it did show to be as effective as the problem-based approaches when addressing psycho-social behavioural problems. The study illuminates the need to structure interventions around a solid theoretically and empirically tested model. The final study aimed to investigate the perceptions of basic psychological need changes of partici-

pants in a randomized control happiness intervention. In this study, participants were requested to reflect upon the changes which took place on their level of competence, relatedness and autonomy and the associative changes because of the Happiness Rout intervention.

Laura successfully defended her PhD against her opponents and was awarded the title of Doctor at the closing of the ceremony on the 13th of October 2016. Dr Weiss will join Optentia as a post-doctoral research fellow on 1 January 2017.

For more information about the thesis, please click [here](#).

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“... successful people make their own luck...”

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## New Book on Psychological Ownership *by* Prof. L. van Zyl

A new book on Psychological Ownership, under the editorship of Prof. Chantal Dickers (University of Pretoria), Prof. Llewellyn E. van Zyl and Ms Leoni van der Vaart, is soon to be published by Springer International. The aim of the book is to advance the theoretical understanding of psychological ownership within multi-cultural contexts and aims to present ground breaking discoveries as to its application, measurement and development.



Psychological ownership has emerged as a positive psychological resource that can be measured and developed (Avey, Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans, 2009) and that can affect the performance of individuals, teams and organisations. If a sense of psychological ownership for the organisation can be created among employees, it could lead organisations to become enhanced workplaces, ensuring sustainable performance (Dickers & Du Plessis, 2013). The improvement of psychological ownership can positively assist organisations in retaining talent and influencing the intentions of skilled employees to remain with their organisations (Dickers & Du Plessis, 2015). Psychological ownership is defined as the “state where an individual feels as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is ‘theirs’ (i.e. it is MINE!)” (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2002, p.2). This book will share the theoretical advancements that have been made since the construct has been developed and will share the practical applications of the construct.

The book aims to focus on the theoretical advancements and specifically the practical applications of psychological ownership within multi-cultural and cross-cultural environments since limited research and practice guidelines

exist for multi-cultural environments. The book is positioned as a specialist book for human resource practitioners and industrial and organisational psychologists who not only enhance the performance of their organisations, but who would also like to increase the commitment of their employees and influence the intentions of skilled employees to remain with their organisations. The book aims to provide psychologists with a balance between theory and the practical applications of psychological ownership within a multi-cultural environment. The book will also provide practical tools of how the psychological ownership of employees could be enhanced in the workplace.

This book will attempt to address both the needs of academics, researchers and specialists working within the field of psychological ownership. The aim of this book is to synthesise empirical research-based and theoretical perspectives on psychological ownership in order to provide a comprehensible perspective on contemporary research and practice which is accessible to researchers and practicing psychology professionals globally.

The specific aims of the book will be to:

- Present psychological owner-

ship strategies, methodologies, approaches and practice guidelines for multi-cultural contexts

- Introduce new theoretical frameworks for psychological ownership
- Elaborate upon the fundamentals of psychological ownership within multi-cultural contexts
- Provide new methodologies and approaches for the development of psychological ownership.

These specific aims of the book will culminate in two sections:

- Theoretical perspectives on psychological ownership
- Empirical applications

Those aspects discussed in the various chapters will not only provide context and practice guidelines to enhance psychological ownership, but will also elaborate upon its complexity within multi-cultural contexts. It will aim to provide researchers and practitioners with guidelines on how to enhance the psychological ownership of employees within multi-cultural environments.

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**“This book will attempt to address both the needs of academics, researchers and specialists working within the field of psychological ownership.”**

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## Unlocking Potential in Educational Processes

The 8th Annual Teaching Practice symposium took place at the Riverside Sun Resort in Vanderbijlpark on 17 and 18 October 2016. The symposium was initiated by Prof. Elsa Fourie in 2009 to provide a platform for teacher educators, teachers and school principals to share innovative practices with regard to Teaching Practice, but also to discuss problem areas in order to find possible solutions.

This year 56 delegates attended the symposium. Universities and schools from South Africa, Swaziland and Venda attended. A wide range of interesting papers were presented, including: The connection between a mentor and mentee in higher education, Failure factors in teaching prac-



tice in distance education, school/university partnerships, a teaching practice model for first year students and the potential benefit of reflection through DVD recordings of 4th year student

teachers' practical teaching lessons. The symposium will again take place in 2017.

**“A vital facet in adding value to health promotion in schools is the partnership between the departments of education and health at national level.”**

## The Role of Managers in Harmonising Roles of School Nurses

A vital facet in adding value to health promotion in schools is the partnership between the departments of education and health at national level. At the heart of making this partnership effective in achieving potential is the need for synchronisation of school nurses' and teachers' roles by school managers to mitigate sustainability risks. The responsibility to coordinate activities pertaining to health promotion lies with school managers. This obligation starts with the understanding of the roles of the participants. The duty of school nurses include health education, health screening, general health promotion and immunisation. Although these roles are mandated, managers are not aware of them. They, therefore, fail to co-ordinate the activities of teachers which include screening for barriers to learning, health education and health promotion with those of nurses to benefit schools. There is a general lack of understanding of health pro-

motion and a tendency to work in silos between teachers and nurses in schools. This can be attributed to a lack of trust and openness and school managers' inability to provide guidance and leadership. However, the administrative task, which is composed of parents' consent for children's immunisation, provides an opportunity for sharing responsibilities. The main inhibitors to effective

management of these undertakings are the inability to form collaborations and inadequacy in monitoring and evaluating health programmes.



**Dr Siphon Kwatubana**



## Culture Consumption and Happiness *by* Prof. Ruut Veenhoven

All modern nations have a professional 'arts' sector that provides aesthetic experiences. Among the products of this industry are: drama, dance, music, fiction, poetry, paintings and design. Outlets are theatres, concert halls, museums, galleries and bookstores. This trade is also known as the 'Cultural sector' (with capital C). In The Netherlands this sector employs about 2% of the working force and its size equals about 1% of the Gross National Product (Poort et al., 2006).

The products of this cultural sector are highly valued and for that reason many developed nations support its production financially, and encouraging cultural consumption. Involvement in arts is typically seen as part of a civilized way of life and for that reason arts education is in the curriculum of most schools, in particular in schools that aim at 'Bildung'.

This practice has been contested. One objection is that arts consumption is used by elites to distinguish themselves from lower classes (e.g. Bourdieu 1984). In that view there is not much worth in the consumption itself and in this line it has been doubted that elite culture provides better experiences than folk culture or even than other leisure activities, such as watching a soccer game. In response, proponents of the arts sector claim that culture consumption brings various positive effects, such as relaxation, understanding and inspiration, which together make for a more satisfying life.

Does culture consumption really add to happiness? In answering this questions we must distinguish between effects on transient mood and lasting life satisfaction. When it comes to mood, the question is how well people feel when consuming cultural products, such as listening to a concert; and whether they feel better in the concert hall than when passing their free time in another way, such as when gardening. When

the effect on lasting life satisfaction is at stake, a first question is whether culture consumers are happier than non-consumers and whether change in culture consumption is followed by a change in happiness.

The effect of cultural consumption on mood can be assessed using techniques of multiple-moment interrogation, such as experience sampling or mood diaries. These techniques allow comparison of mood before, during and after consumption and also comparison with mood during other activities. In a large scale experience sampling study (over 100.000 moments of some 20.000 participants), mood was at its best in the moments that people make love. Second came cultural activities together with sporting. Among the cultural activities 'theatre, dance concert' ranked first, next 'singing, performing', then 'exhibition, museum, library', followed by 'hobby, art, crafts'. Average mood scores during these cultural activities were higher than among all other leisure activities, such as 'chatting, socializing', 'gardening', 'playing with children' and 'watching TV' (MacKerron 2006, table 18.6).

Research findings on the relation between culture consumption and life satisfaction are available in the World Database of Happiness (Veenhoven 2016). To date (November 2016), this collection involves standardised descriptions of 52 research findings on this issue, of which 8 involve answers to our questions.

Most (7) of the findings concern same-time correlations, which are all positive. People who attend to cultural manifestations or buy pieces of art tend to be happier than people who do not. The difference in happiness is about 0,1 on scale 0-10. This difference remains after control for factors such as income, education and marital status (6 studies). The correlation is similar or stronger than with participation in sports (3 studies). One study found a stronger



Prof. Ruut Veenhoven

correlation among the least happy, which suggests a consolation effect. Another study found a stronger effect among the low educated, which does not fit the above mentioned critic of elitism.

One study followed people over time and found that change in culture consumption was accompanied by change in life satisfaction in the same direction: more culture greater happiness; and less participation lower happiness. This strongly suggests a causal effect, but cannot be proven. The effect size is bigger in this case, equivalent to 0,2 on happiness scale 0-10. This effect of change in culture consumption was stronger than change in visits to cinemas, dancing and sport facilities. Again the differences remained after control for socio-economic variables.

In sum: The available research findings suggest that culture consumption does add to happiness, at least in the developed nations.

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**"... culture consumption does add to happiness, at least in the developed nations"**

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## Join Optentia on Facebook!

Optentia's Facebook page is used to disseminate research results. But it is more than that: it creates an opportunity to join a community of researchers and practitioners who is passionate about enabling the expression of individual, social and institutional potential. Click [here](#) to go to our Facebook page.

Topics that you can read about, include:

- Academics aren't lobbyist—so our research changes nothing
- 5 signs you are giving negative people too much power
- 70% of employees say they are disengaged at work: Here's how to motivate them
- 12 ways to beat procrastination
- For a better workplace, make first moments matter
- Finland will become the first country in the world to get rid of all school subjects
- FBI negotiation tactics you can use every day
- Harvard scientists think they might have pinpointed the source of human consciousness
- A psychiatrist who have survived the Holocaust explains why meaningfulness matters more than happiness

... and more. Join us today!

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## New Senior Lecturer Position in Optentia

A senior lecturer position has been approved in the Optentia Research Focus Area. The position is currently being advertised. The key performance areas of the new position are as follows: to coordinate the Master's in Positive Psychology programme and to present workshops. b) To conduct research. This includes supervising master's and Ph.D. students, applying for funding for research projects; initiating and maintaining national and international networks, participating in the evaluation of ethics and research proposals, ensuring effective research administration, and publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals.




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**"Optentia's Facebook page is used to disseminate research results, information and opinions on positive social science."**

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## Prof. Tinie Theron Retires ...

The previous Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and currently Acting Vice-Rector of Vaal Triangle Campus of the North-West University, Prof. Tinie Theron, will retire in December 2016. It was under his leadership that the Optentia Research Focus Area was established. I asked a few colleagues to share their experiences of Prof. Theron.

Prof. Tumi Khumalo said: "I have recently walked up to Prof. Tinie Theron, and perhaps in a rather socially inappropriate manner, called him 'the coolest dude on campus'. It did not go so badly, he took no offence. Instead, with a little curiosity, he received my comment as a compliment, for which it was! What did I expect anyway? One of the first times when I got to know and interact with Prof. Theron was at a conference dinner. He quickly noticed that I was a little confused and was looking for something, before I knew it he had offered to help me. When I was reluctant to take his offer, he quickly reminded me: 'What is a Dean if he does not dien (serve)'. I knew then, as I continued to encounter, that I had met a dedicated faculty leader who truly and clearly understands his purpose - to serve. More recently, a slightly fatigued graduate assistant, at one of Optentia's prestige lectures, found herself having casually hugged this man, and having a casual light-hearted conversation with him. Upon seeing this, I quickly wanted to intervene. So I did - by formally introducing the young lady to Prof. Theron, almost reminding her of social etiquette and protocol. Well, I was the one who got reprimanded by the Professor. He reminded me

that deans are supposed to be approachable. Although these have been light moments, they deeply demonstrate the character of a man who truly understands servant leadership. I am reminded of the assertions of a theorist and researcher closer to what I am familiar with: Dr Corey Keyes. Keyes (2011) positioned "Authentic Purpose", described as a combination of psychological purpose and social contribution, as a value we should all strive to have and practice, but also to cultivate in students. In a more pessimistic fashion, Keyes (2011, p.292) makes an observation: "The problem is that there appears to be a paucity of success stories of individuals who have found "good work" or merged ambition and authentic purpose that are being taught as role models at business schools". Given this problem of Keyes, we can safely suggest what Prof. Theron can do with this retirement time. Finally, when his sense of purpose has always been a defining characteristic, and his social intelligence has been something that has touched the lives of many, he will also be remembered for his clarity of thought, as well as his kind and wise advice".

Prof. Elsa Fourie said that she knew when she had met Prof. Tinie that this was a man with presence and somebody to look up to. "He never proved me wrong".

Prof. Ansie Fouché said: Prof. Tinie Theron leaves a legacy and not a vacancy. When I heard that Prof. Tinie will retire at the end of 2016, the following crossed my mind: What will become of us when he is no longer here? In 2008, Prof. Tinie appointed me as a senior lecturer with the aim of establishing the social work subject

group on Campus. He guided me through many uncertainties and challenging times, motivating me not to be scared to leave my comfort zone. He was always open to new ideas, has vision and trusted me to try out new things. His trust in me scared me at times! Now looking back, I realise that he allowed me to grow and learn from my mistakes, while simultaneously he was prepared to be co-responsible for my endeavors. Prof. Tinie encouraged and supported me to excel in both teaching and learning and as a researcher. He taught me that my best is good enough and that I have the potential to become the best. In the early phase of my research career, he reminded me that when I doubt myself, I should not focus on what I don't know or can't do yet, but instead to build on what I have learned so far. By applying this principle, amongst other, I managed to build my career. Recently I realised that if I apply what Prof. Tinie taught me over the years, I could very easily rephrase my fears from: 'What will become of us when he is no longer here?' to 'What should we become because he was here?' We should carry his legacy forward by demonstrating fairness, continuous support and encouragement; appreciating others' potential, showing respect to others and not being scared to raise our opinions even if it we stand alone. We should strive to be competent and consistent leaders that are trustworthy. We should also strive to build a legacy".

Prof. Tinie, we wish you all the best. Thank you for everything that you have done for us!

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**"What is a Dean if he does not dien (serve) ..."**

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## Prof. Tinie Theron and the Story of Ferdinand *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Prof. Naydene de Lange visited Optentia on 23 May 2012 to present a workshop on Cohort Supervision to Optentia participants. The previous evening, Prof. Tinie Theron invited Prof. de Lange, myself and a few others for dinner at his home. That evening, I first met Ferdinand, the Bull. After we had a few glasses of good wine, we were talking about research ... and about life. Prof. Tinie said that he wanted to show us the video of Ferdinand. He stressed the message of Ferdinand: "Take time to smell the flowers". That evening the idea of using "Ferdinand Says" in Optentia News was established.

The Story of Ferdinand (1936) was written by Munro Leaf and illustrated by Robert Lawson. The children's book tells the story of a bull that would rather smell flowers than fight in bullfights. He sits in the middle of the bull ring, failing to take heed of any of the provocations of the matador and others to fight.

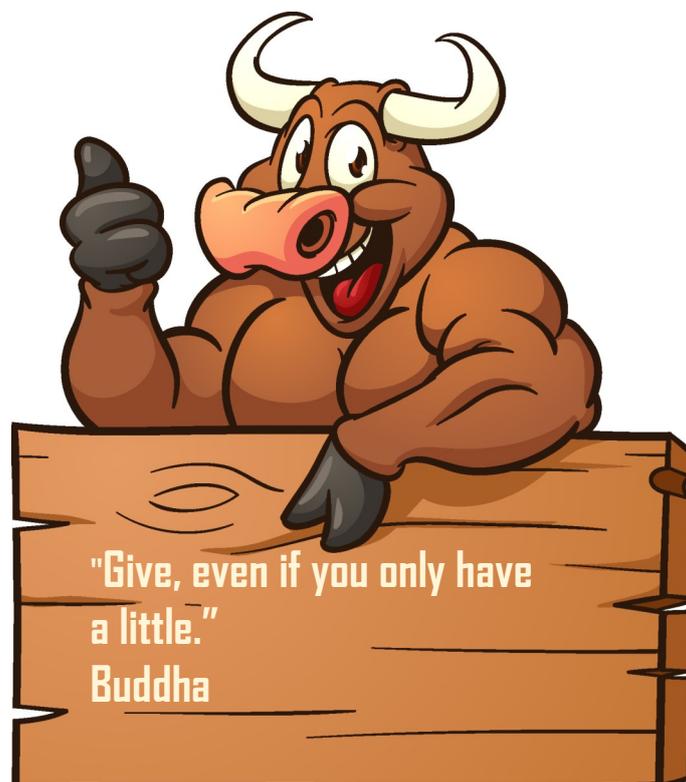
Nobody knew who the person behind Ferdinand the Bull was... It was Prof. Tinie. In every newsletter Ferdinand shared wisdom. Through Ferdinand, we involved the Executive Dean (now the Acting Vice Rector) in Optentia without anybody knowing. Read Ferdinand's words (since July 2012) in Optentia newsletters on the website.

Prof. Tinie, we will miss Ferdinand. But more than that, we will miss the times spent with you. Dreaming about research ... smelling the flowers when you were outside the building smoking, celebrating prestige lectures with good wine. We wish you good health and a happy retirement!



Prof. Tinie Theron

### Ferdinand Says:




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"Through Ferdinand, we involved the Executive Dean in Optentia without anybody knowing."

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# OPTENTIA

## RESEARCH FOCUS AREA

Enabling optimal expression of individual, social and institutional potential

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### Books

- Ariely, D. (2016). *Payoff: The hidden logic that shapes our motivation*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Field, A. (2016). *An adventure in statistics: The reality enigma*. London: Sage.
- Field, A., Miles, J., & Field, Z. (2012). *Discovering statistics using R*. London: Sage.
- Kline, R.B. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Newsom, T. (2015). *Longitudinal structural equation modeling: A comprehensive introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Voss, C., & Raz, T. (2016). *Never split the difference: Negotiating as if your life depended on it*. London: Random House Business Books.

### Optentia Contributions to Books in 2016

- Du Toit, D. H. (2016). Utilising symbolic expressions, art, myths, dreams and fantasies in coaching. In L.E Van Zyl, M.W. Stander, & A. Odendaal, A. (Eds.), *Coaching psychology: Meta-theoretical perspectives and applications in multi-cultural contexts*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Hoffman, J. (2016). Negotiating care for older persons in South Africa: between the ideal and the pragmatics. In Hoffman, J and Pype, K (Eds). 'Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Spaces and practices of care'. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Rothmann, S. (2016). Employee engagement. In M.F. Steger, L. Dades, A. Delle Fave, & J. Passmore (Eds.), *Wiley Blackwell handbook of positivity and strengths based approaches at work*.
- Van Zyl, L. E., & Stander, M. W. (2016). The future of multi-cultural coaching psychology. In L.E Van Zyl, M.W. Stander, & A. Odendaal, A. (Ed.), *Coaching psychology: Meta-theoretical perspectives and applications in multi-cultural contexts*. New York, NY: Springer.

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



- ◇ 29 November 2016: IOP research day (Vanderbijlpark)
- ◇ 27 January 2017: Workshop - eResearch
- ◇ 5 December 2016: HHREC meeting
- ◇ 6-8 December 2016: 2nd Africa Conference of Gerontology (Nairobi, Kenya)
- ◇ 8-9 December 2016: Symposium—Coping with unemployment (KULeuven, Belgium)
- ◇ 19 January 2017: Training in Educational technology
- ◇ 23-27 January 2017: SLP in Research Design