



# Department of Industrial Psychology

## NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020

### FROM THE CHAIR'S OFFICE

**Harnessing the power of reflection:  
towards new ways of thinking and acting.**

**W**elcome to the last newsletter for 2020. We have reached the end of a very challenging year during which we have become accustomed to constant and sudden change to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amid the continuous disruptive change, we can look back with full appreciation that we have collectively achieved the goal that we set out to achieve – to successfully complete the 2020 academic year. There remains much uncertainty about what the coming year will hold for us. However, as you will see from the content in this newsletter, we have developed the agility and resilience necessary to bounce back and adapt.

In this newsletter we share stories on how we navigated the stormy waters of change. We recognise and celebrate achievements of staff and students, and we acknowledge the leadership role of academics in professional societies that serve as an example to our students and provide presence and visibility to the Department. The biggest challenge for students and staff was adapting to emergency online teaching and we use this opportunity to reflect on e-learning experiences and to provide a list of critical success factors based on lessons learned.

We also had the privilege to host our first postdocs in the Department during 2020, and we asked them to reflect on their year at Stellenbosch University.

We are proud to announce that during this challenging time the Department launched a new Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic

Human Resource Management as well as a short course in Basic Applied Psychometrics. We further added two new modules to our Human Resource Management undergraduate programme: Introduction to Intercultural Communication and Human Capital Metrics.

The joint social impact project between the Departments of Psychology and Industrial Psychology adapted successfully to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and increased the number of learners reached in 2020.

As part of our strategy of being better connected with all our stakeholders, both locally and internationally, we are pleased to announce that we recently established a social media presence on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook. We invite you to stay connected and engage with us utilising the important hashtags as provided.

I trust that you will enjoy this newsletter as much as we have enjoyed reflecting and putting it together.

From the Department of Industrial Psychology, we wish you a period of rest. Please take care and protect yourselves and your loved ones during the festive season.

Prof Aletta Odendaal



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1918 · 2018

*forward together · saam vorentoe · masiye pbambili*

# Prof Aletta Odendaal commences term as ITC President 2020-2022

**After serving on the council of the International Test Commission (ITC) in different capacities since 2010, Prof Aletta Odendaal, Chair of the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University, commenced her term as President in 2020.**

**"I** have always had a passion for psychological testing and culturally appropriate assessment practices and was introduced to the ITC Guidelines and especially Guidelines for Adapting and Translating Tests early in my psychological assessment practice. The ITC provided the network to expand my knowledge and expertise," says Prof Odendaal.

"This year, the disruptive changes caused by the current pandemic provided a unique opportunity to strengthen our core business, to maintain and expand our existing projects, and to develop the agility and resilience necessary to bounce back from future challenges. The transition to new ways of conducting our business and relying more on technology to connect with our members, allowed us to develop new initiatives, such as converting the postponed 12<sup>th</sup> ITC Conference to a virtual Colloquium from 9-12 July 2021 with the theme Diversity and Equity in a Globalised Digital World: Opportunities and Challenges for Assessment.

"During the next two years I believe it is time to look outward, beyond our own reach and community towards fair and ethical assessment practices in multicultural and multilingual contexts. I see the ITC as operating and influencing standards and practice not only on international, but also on regional and national level."

Prof Odendaal believes there are different reasons for academics to be actively involved in professional societies in their respective disciplines.

"The first is the credibility it provides to your teaching, research, and social impact role, especially if you are preparing students for professional registration in a discipline. You are continuously kept abreast of the latest global developments in your area of expertise, you have the opportunity to disseminate research outputs and as a member of a community of practice you are connected to like-minded individuals and thought leaders to contribute and influence standards of practice, and if in a leadership role also regulatory and policy formation.

"Secondly, to advance your academic career it is further important to be nationally and internationally recognised as an expert and academic leader in your discipline. In addition, each academic has an ambassadorial role in representing the University on national and international level.

"Personally, I have a passion for the profession I have been actively involved in since 1996 and I enjoy the professional engagement and development opportunities. It is an honour, and I treasure the opportunity to invest and participate in its continuous growth and advancement."

## Lecturers receive recognition for SABPP's performance

**T**he Western Cape received an award as the top-performing province in 2019 at the AGM of the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP) this year.

Chaired by Dr Michelle Visser, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Industrial Psychology, the Western Cape province received an award for extraordinary service and outstanding contribution to the HR profession. According to Dr Visser, the province generated the highest number of new membership registrations in the country.

"This award made me realise again how important teamwork is. Everyone brings something to the table, and those talents must be used. Trust in the team's abilities is crucial, as well as continuous communication and acknowledgement," she said.

Prof Aletta Odendaal, chair of the Department, congratulated Dr Visser and her team.

"We acknowledge with appreciation your leadership and contribution to the HR profession and know that this award would not have been possible without hard work and absolute dedication."

Prof Odendaal congratulated another Senior Lecturer, Mr Marius Meyer, as chairperson of the SABPP, on the first virtual AGM that brought together both national and international members in one meeting, celebrating global connectivity whilst uniting in solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Marius and Michelle, your leadership in the HR profession serves as an example to our students and provides presence and visibility to the Department, enabling us to achieve our vision of being regarded as a leading academic department."

# Multi-disciplinary PhD addresses medical practitioner compassion

**The first multi-disciplinary study from the Department of Industrial Psychology supported by the Staff Graduate School of Economic and Management Sciences (StEM) programme was delivered in 2020.**

**D**r Michelle Visser, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Industrial Psychology, received her PhD in April. She researched a complex psychological construct called 'medical practitioner compassion in healthcare' and developed a questionnaire that measures this construct. The title of her dissertation is: *The development and psychometric evaluation of a medical practitioner compassion competency questionnaire*.

Dr Visser, who has been a lecturer in the Department since May 2010, started her PhD journey in 2015. The StEM programme aims to support staff to complete their PhD in a period of four to five years and offers access to workshops as well as funding if academic staff want to take a sabbatical to focus on their research and dissertation.

"I appreciate the structured approach and support of the StEM programme, which allowed me to finalise my PhD on time, while working full-time and being a mother to two small children," says Dr Visser. "It helped me to maintain momentum, as I had to hand in quarterly progress reports signed by my supervisors."

Dr Visser describes her supervisors – Prof Callie Theron, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Industrial Psychology, and Prof Bob Mash, Executive Head: Department of Family and Emergency Medicine – as her anchors during the past four years.

"Their advice and experience were invaluable," she says.

Dr Visser embarked on her research after identifying a need to not only conceptualise medical practitioner compassion from a theoretical perspective, but to also operationalise the compassion construct via a Medical Practitioner Compassion Competency Questionnaire (MPCCQ). It was a multi-disciplinary study between the Department of Industrial Psychology and the Department of Family and Emergency Medicine. The psychological construct of 'medical practitioner compassion' was conceptualised by building a structural model showing the internal structure of the construct, as well as the bigger nomological network of other related constructs in which it is embedded.

"This model was built and developed with the help of medical practitioners who acted as co-researchers, since it was necessary to understand their mental models of

compassion from a competency perspective," explains Dr Visser.

The study concluded with managerial implications and suggestions for further research necessary to allow for the confident utilisation of the MPCCQ in practice.

"There is significant scope for further research," says Dr Visser. Currently, two Master's and three Honours students are working on themes connected to the PhD. There is also the possibility of a short course at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. In addition, students in one of Dr Visser's Honours modules – Strategic Human Resource Development – have developed one-day workshops for medical professionals in the Public Health Care sector focusing on stress management, resilience in the workplace, and emotional intelligence.

"A need for these type of interventions was identified during qualitative interviews for the PhD," she adds. The aim of these workshops is to help medical practitioners improve or further strengthen this competency.

"It was a great privilege to work with this target audience (medical practitioners in the Public Health Care sector) and to contribute to the optimisation of others in this competency area."

Dr Visser is currently teaching the modules 'Strategic Human Resource Development' and 'Psychological Assessment in Practice' to Industrial Psychology students and 'Doctor as Change Agent in Communities' to MBChB students at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

She coordinates the Industrial Psychology Internship programme for the Department and is a project leader of the Grade 9 Schools' Community Project in which school learners receive career counselling support from professionals.





# The 20 Ps of successful e-learning: From panic to positivity during the pandemic

**E-learning is 80% about people, and only 20% about technology, writes Mr Marius Meyer, lecturer in Strategic HR Management at the Department of Industrial Psychology.**

**S**tellenbosch University (SU) started with online learning when the second quarter of academic studies resumed on 20 April this year. Having worked at the University of South Africa (Unisa) for 11 years earlier in my career, online learning was not a new phenomenon for me. My own education about online learning also occurred via the National Association of Distance Education and Open Learning of South Africa (Nadeosa), as well as the Association for Talent Development (ATD) in the USA where I was exposed to some of the top thought leaders in e-learning. At ATD and through working with both human resource and learning and development managers at private companies throughout South Africa, it became clear to me that the term electronic learning (e-learning) was preferred in the business world, both globally and locally. At SU we prefer the term “hybrid learning” to denote the philosophy of accommodating a blend of different learning methods.

There are some serious debates about the effectiveness of online learning, and while different schools of thought have emerged over the years, the reality is that schools and universities had no other choice but to use and attempt to leverage e-learning during the lockdown. Many institutions were caught off guard and were unprepared to embark on e-learning, while others went out of their way to ensure that e-learning was used during the period of lockdown.

In general, most e-learning specialists recommend the use of both synchronous (in real time) and asynchronous (in own time or self-paced) learning. Given the devastating and disruptive effect of the lockdown, I decided to first use asynchronous learning, adapting my approach to e-learning by leading students with the content, and then letting them study in their own time by engaging in online discussion forums and learning journals as part of the process of learning and reflection. In this way, students could manage their own learning, while I was available as their facilitator to answer questions and support them when needed.

It is important to first make the paradigm shift not

to try and behave and act “normal” in “abnormal” circumstances. Trying to act normal in abnormal circumstances would be insensitive and just show that you are not in touch with reality. Values such as respect and compassion are more important during a crisis when everyone is stressed – staff and students alike. Let me do a quick reality check to explain how this affects learning:

- Lockdowns led to significant reduction in economic activity and had a devastating socio-economic impact and consequences;
- The lives of students and their parents were disrupted by being forced to study at home full-time;
- Most people – and therefore most students too – experienced increased levels of uncertainty, stress, anxiety and panic, worrying about their health, studies, family members, friends, parents and grandparents;
- Load-shedding, bandwidth and connectivity problems complicate e-learning;
- Students are concerned about the current discomfort, as well as their future studies and careers in a contracted economy where jobs will be scarce;
- Some students were even required to assist their parents or other family members with work;
- It is a traumatic experience to be isolated from the campus, your fellow students, your lecturers and support staff, your friends and other family members, etc;
- If several parties are all working or studying from home it becomes crowded and difficult to concentrate;
- Students also had to make several other sacrifices during these periods of instability and disruption, such as contributing to chores at home, or assisting their parents in running a business or working from home;
- The fear of infection became a reality in some communities and families when people close to them were infected with the COVID-19 virus, while others



lived in constant fear as family members continued to work in essential services;

- All families experience their own challenges, conflicts and crises, and being under the same roof with the same people for 24 hours a day while trying to study is a tall order for many students, especially if space is limited;
- Many families and students have experienced reductions in income, especially those who previously had part-time jobs in sectors which were totally shut down, such as restaurants and bars, during earlier levels of the lockdown.

In light of these realities, I reflected on my previous experience of e-learning, as well as the more intensified and stressful period of e-learning over the past nine months at SU. Using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous approaches to e-learning, I decided to organise my experience into the most important lessons, with a specific focus on what I consider to be the most important critical success factors in making e-learning work in practice. I call these lessons the “20 Ps of successful e-learning”:

- 1 **People focus:** E-learning is about learning, it is not about the “e” (electronic). While technology is important, learning is more important, thus a strong people focus is key in making e-learning work.
- 2 **Purpose:** Despite using e-learning as an alternative to traditional classroom training, the purpose of your learning should still be clear. In fact, given all the distractions in the home learning environment, it is even more important to make the purpose of learning clear to students. In addition, students must understand how different sub-sections, chapters or learning units fit into the bigger picture, so that they will experience a high level of alignment and integration when pulling all the different sections of the module together.
- 3 **Positivity:** With so much bad news, negativity, uncertainty and anxiety around us, it is even more important for the lecturer to mirror positivity when engaging with students. We are all experiencing increased levels of stress and anxiety, and although it is important to acknowledge the crisis, you must remain positive in all your engagements with students.
- 4 **Planning:** Lecturers must ensure that they plan their content and sessions in appropriate ways. When you present a face-to-face class in a conventional classroom, you have more freedom to use your own personal style and knowledge throughout the period

to share your content with students. E-learning requires more careful planning to ensure that you still achieve your learning outcomes in a different way, albeit in a more flexible manner. The right things must still happen at the right times, and you need to be able to make a plan if something goes wrong.

- 5 **Principles:** Establish clear ground rules for e-learning. General principles of net-etiquette should be observed, for example, the appropriate use of language and showing respect towards others.
- 6 **Partnership:** Make it clear to students that e-learning is a partnership between the lecturer and students. Both parties need to contribute optimally to make e-learning work effectively.
- 7 **Professionalism:** Most academic courses prepare students to follow professional careers. E-learning provides an excellent opportunity for students to prepare for the workplace where they will be expected to conduct themselves as professionals. When the lecturer mirrors the professionalism expected from students, most students will reciprocate with professional conduct throughout the period of online learning.
- 8 **Prioritise:** Be careful not to overload students with too much preparation work and content. This is even more important during the crisis period when students also have other commitments to attend to, such as looking after their siblings. Prioritise key content and use smaller chunks of learning to get your message across.
- 9 **Presence:** Although it is important to encourage students to learn on their own and at their own pace, the lecturer must have a presence – you must stimulate the learning and then enter and exit when necessary. This means that there are times when you let discussion forums continue without you, but you need to moderate and intervene to ensure that students are going in the right direction. Getting the balance right is key – if you are too visible, you dominate the forums too much. On the other hand, if you are invisible, students lose interest. Discussion forums can continue if students display self-directed learning, but they can’t be leaderless.
- 10 **Participation:** The success of e-learning depends on student participation. Hence, the need to continuously encourage students to participate in the discussion forums and their learning in their own time over and above scheduled online classes.
- 11 **Photos:** If the lecturer must have a presence too, students must have a presence too. It is therefore

important for students to also upload their photos on their online profiles. Not only does it make the student look more “professional” – it also assists in creating stronger connections between the lecturer and students, and among the students themselves. It gives a “face” to the comment or contribution of each individual, and it reminds us all that learning is about people and the value you bring to the class.

**12 Pictures:** As the old saying goes: “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Make your learning content as interesting and attractive as possible for students. Use pictures, diagrams, infographics and figures to explain content in more user-friendly ways.

**13 Presentations or Podcasts:** Lecturers must still share their presentations with students. Voice-overs enable the students to go through the slides in their own time, while the lecturer explains the slides to them. Other forms of content such as podcasts or videos can also be used to enrich the content and learning experience.

**14 Platforms:** It is important to leverage the platforms provided by the institution. At Stellenbosch University we use SUNLearn, while other universities have their own platforms. Most of these platforms have similar functionalities. However, some lecturers use these platforms merely as “dumping” sites – in other words, lecturers simply “dump” content for learners to access, read and use. This is one-way communication and therefore an ineffective method of learning. I appreciate the phrase used by Magda Barnard, Curriculum Advisor at the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at SU, when she states: “You don’t upload documents, you build the site”. This is a profound statement for both lecturers and students: We don’t upload and download content, we engage with it, we build on it, and we leverage all opportunities to create a more integrated and engaged approach to learning.

**15 Personal reflections:** Encouraging students to carry out personal reflections is a powerful way of letting them take full responsibility for their learning. When they reflect on their learning, they internalise the content and it becomes a personal journey of discovery and growth. Not only does it build confidence, it also provides an opportunity for lecturers to see whether students have mastered the key aspects of the session or chapter.

**16 Practical application:** After you have covered the theory and provided some practical examples, create opportunities for students to apply the theory. Also

encourage students to generate practical examples. Use the e-learning platform to stimulate thinking about how the theory can be applied in the real world. Create practical scenarios such as case studies or let them work on projects where they can apply their knowledge in practice.

**17 People analytics:** Unfortunately, some e-learning platforms do not provide metrics such as participation rates, or the number of engagements. However, given the power of technology, it is possible for all e-learning platforms to provide relevant analytics to inform decision-makers about possible follow-up interventions.

**18 Praise:** Recognise the contributions and achievements of students. I award three prizes, or digital badges, per week: Most Active Student, Best Contributor and Best Reflections. Acknowledging the work of students encourages them to stay motivated and to continue focusing on their studies.

**19 Pleasure:** Think of ways in which you can make the content more interesting. Infuse an element of fun into the learning process. While students should see the seriousness of their studies and deal with the complexity thereof, they must still be able to derive pleasure and satisfaction from it. Use a sense of humour or cartoons and create some lighter moments to improve the overall transformative student experience.

**20 Personal touch:** The most important of all these guidelines is the lecturer’s personal touch. Stay human and provide a personal touch in your comments and engagements in discussion forums. Use the names of students as often as possible. Students must never feel that they are only a number, or that they are accessing an impersonal online call centre.

E-learning presented the only opportunity for lecturers and students to continue with some form of facilitated learning during the lockdown. Despite some drawbacks and limitations, most of the typical problems experienced during the transition from traditional face-to-face learning to e-learning can be alleviated by following a more human approach to online learning. E-learning is 80% about people, and only 20% about technology. Most of the 20 Ps presented above are about a people-centred approach to learning. The only difference is that we learn via a human-computer interface, with people on both sides of the technology. In fact, people are at the centre of the technology. While technology provides the platforms, people make it happen.

Lecturers and students were encouraged to leverage e-learning for the benefit of completing the 2020 academic year. Although we all panicked at the start of the lockdown, most of us managed to rise to the challenge in adopting a positive approach to online learning. Optimising e-learning created an excellent opportunity to embrace the power of technology, while empowering students in the process. Moreover, we are

preparing students for the future workplace, and most national and international companies have been using e-learning as a form of learning for more than 20 years.

Let us continue to embrace e-learning as a powerful form of hybrid learning and focus on academic quality, integrity and the achievement of learning outcomes as we prepare students for a business world in which technology is one of the top drivers of business success.

This article is dedicated to Miné de Klerk and Firdows Talip from the Centre for Learning Technologies and Magda Barnard from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at SU for their excellent support in enabling and facilitating online learning at the University. I also want to acknowledge all my Honours degree students in Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management for their active and excellent participation in online learning during the lockdown.

## Faculty identifies top online lecturers

Author: Daniel Bugar

**T**he Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences announced its top online lecturers of 2020 during a virtual prize-giving function in November, and the Department of Industrial Psychology's Mr Marius Meyer and Mrs Lisa Bailey were two of 11 lecturers to receive this accolade.

The Emergency Remote Teaching: Top Online Lecturer Competition 2020 was a departure from the annual competition sponsored by *Die Burger* and presented the Faculty with an opportunity to recognise those lecturers who excelled in emergency remote teaching amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an online poll held from 20 to 28 October 2020, students voted for their best undergraduate or postgraduate lecturer from whom they received emergency remote teaching in the Faculty. In total, five postgraduate lecturers and six undergraduate lecturers emerged as departmental winners after the vote count. During the live virtual broadcast, the winners shared their experiences and tips on how to become a top online teacher:



### MRS LISA BAILEY

"It was a stressful few months, but I needed to remind myself that my students were just as stressed. What kept me going was to be more positive, and I thought if I showed that positivity and enthusiasm then my students would feel it too. A shout out to my colleagues for their amazing support – whenever I felt overwhelmed there was always someone I could phone to have a laugh or chat with."



### MR MARIUS MEYER

"I believe that while technology in the online learning environment is important, the human touch is more important. My online students did 4% better than the face-to-face students I had last year even though I made the assignments more difficult."



# Don't underestimate the mental health impact of COVID-19: The importance of self-care during a pandemic



The mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are emerging, and the results are worrisome, writes **Prof Gina Görgens**, Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial Psychology.

A recent large-scale study by the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Social Change and the Developmental, Capable and Ethical State research division of the Human Sciences Research Council, reported that a third of South African adults reported being depressed, with 45% reporting feelings of fear and loneliness (29%) during lockdown. Between 20% to 30% of South Africans have a history of mental health problems – a situation that will most probably be exacerbated by the pandemic, according to Prof Jason Bantjes from Stellenbosch University's Department of Psychology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated massive changes in how we conduct our daily lives and, probably most significantly, our work lives. The pandemic has introduced circumstances and stressors beyond our control, which taps our coping resources and resilience in a very unique way. It is the perfect storm of workplace stressors.

Examples include technostress (dealing with new technology – and having to say “Can you hear me?” multiple times per day!), managing the conflict between work and family life (given the relocation to home offices), struggling to psychologically detach on a daily basis (which is crucial to maintain a positive recovery cycle), isolation and reduced social support, and loss of both control and predictability with increasing job demands/expectations, as well as loss of job security.

Constant chronic exposure to stress over a prolonged period is likely to result in work-related burnout. Burnout is a psychological syndrome mainly characterised by emotional exhaustion. It typically starts with extreme feelings of tiredness and emotional depletion which is likely to increase irritability and negative attitudes. This, in turn, may well lead to low morale and a reduced capacity to cope, which eventually results in reduced accomplishments and less efficiency.

Self-care is crucial to slow down the development of burnout. By following a few simple steps to ensure that daily recuperation takes place, the long-term effects of exposure to stress can be managed.

### What does self-care entail?

Firstly, self-awareness. If the list of symptoms above describe your daily psychological state, you should be vigilant about exposure to prolonged stress and impending burnout.

Secondly, be intentional about taking care of your own well-being. This could entail you setting clear boundaries to separate your work from the rest of your life. Create daily routines to enforce “down time” to detach (physically and mentally) from your work. Get exercise and sufficient sleep. Clearly prioritise commitments and try to take time off on a regular basis.

Lastly, access mental health and well-being resources. If your company has an EAP programme, make use of the resources. If not, download free apps (such as MoodKit) to help you track your well-being and learn the skills to manage it.

Take active control! The pandemic will undoubtedly be with us for much longer than initially anticipated. Let us learn to build resilience and harness the positive learning experience it presents.

# Postdocs reflect on their year at Stellenbosch University

Although the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown forced Dr Serban Zanfirescu and Dr Enoch Teye-Kwadjo, the Department of Industrial Psychology's first two international postdoctoral research fellows, to stay close to their temporary homes in South Africa, they still made good progress with their work.

**A**s they will both be leaving South Africa soon to return to Romania and Ghana respectively, we asked them to reflect on the past few months.

Serban would have liked to have more opportunities to explore the multiculturalism of South Africa. He did, however, bake his first homemade *melktert*!

"Working from home does not fit my style, and the most challenging aspects were keeping unproductive thoughts and behaviours at bay. Nevertheless, I still managed to work on my projects. Staying in touch with my colleagues at the Department helped me keep my head above water," he said.

According to Enoch, his lockdown experience wasn't so bad because he stayed in a residence full of people with whom he had a personal connection and who encouraged one another. However, the tough South African winter and concern about the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of his family in Ghana made it quite difficult for him.

"Fortunately, lockdown didn't have considerable adverse effects on my work. Despite COVID-19's disruptive impact, it seemed to have offered me rare 'quiet time' with my computer and, by extension, my work. I have, therefore, been able to meet my set targets. Considering that I have almost accomplished a year's postdoctoral work in six months, I'm convinced that there is much to be grateful for."

Serban was grateful to learn about Rasch analysis, a family of Item Response Theory (IRT) techniques used in Psychometrics, during his time at SU.

"By applying the Rasch principle in my research papers, I've managed to connect the theory behind this unique IRT technique and the practicality of the results," he said.

Enoch also focused on Rasch analysis, adding to his growing list of advanced multivariate data analytic skills.

"Thanks to Prof Deon de Bruin, our Postdoc host, and the Department that provided the necessary computers and software for this work," he added.

They will both return home with positive feedback about their time at SU.

"I loved many aspects about working in the Department of Industrial Psychology," said Serban. "Firstly, the working environment is impressive. I had access to resources, support, and professional peers who helped me with my research. Secondly, my colleagues and supervisors gave me their full support during this difficult time. Thirdly, the postdoctoral community shared many resources and information that made my stay here more pleasurable. I felt like I belong here among open-minded, curious, and fun peers. Finally, I am most grateful to my supervisor, as he kept me motivated to pursue my ideas and research objectives and encouraged me to seek and expand my knowledge."

Enoch added: "It wasn't easy to be away from home during a major pandemic but being at Stellenbosch University was worth it. I'm leaving Stellenbosch with a deep sense of accomplishment. Many thanks to Professors Deon de Bruin and Aletta Odendaal, the Postdoctoral Research Support Unit as well as the Postdoctoral Society for their proactive and constant engagement with postdocs to keep us and our work on track."



*Serban baked his first melktert during lockdown.*

# Department of Industrial Psychology expands product offering with new Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Human Resource Management

The Department of Industrial Psychology launched a brand-new Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in management practice this year. Developed during the lockdown period and called the PGDip in Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), the course will prepare graduates to make a strategic contribution to people management in their organisations. It is accredited as a qualification at level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

**T**he new PGDip builds on the current undergraduate programmes in HR Management and Industrial Psychology offered by Stellenbosch University (SU). Our market analysis has shown that there is a big need in the market for senior HR officers and line managers to develop SHRM competencies to drive the successful execution of business strategy. This programme is strategic in its approach and therefore prepares HR managers for senior and top management positions with credentials to gain access to the boards of companies.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic HR Management will be a programme with a modular/blended learning mode of delivery (physical and online contact) at SU's main campus. There are eight direct contact hours of classes per module, eight hours per day for the block of introductory contact time (this introductory contact block is a week long) followed by presentation of outcomes achieved at the end of the programme.

Students will be required to have online contact and to undertake independent self-study, assignments and application in a work environment. The duration of the programme is one year for the full-time option or two years for the part-time option. Information- and communication-technology mediated lectures and discussion groups will be employed to facilitate the learning experience for students.

Students won't have to travel to campus for most of the programme, given the work the designers put in throughout the year in pioneering hybrid learning at the University.

This, coupled with SU's successful transition to a hybrid learning model before the national lockdown, means that the year-long course can be accessed by anyone anywhere in the world – all you need is a passion for people in organisations and access to the Internet. The first group of students will arrive at the campus for the introductory block session from 25-29 January 2021. These students all have a first degree in any field in addition to a minimum of three years' work experience.

The programme covers all areas of Strategic HR Management, ranging from talent management to strategic Human Resource development to HR metrics. The PGDip blends theory with practice and bridges the divide between the academic rigour expected in an undergraduate degree and the high-level rigour of a master's degree. Empowering students with strategic HR skills enables them to build effective people strategies within organisations.

The new Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic HR Management is offered by the Department of Industrial Psychology.

For more information, or to be added to the waiting list for follow-up for access in 2022, contact the course administrator, Rahkeenah Peters on [indpsych@sun.ac.za](mailto:indpsych@sun.ac.za) or visit the website of the Department, [www.sun.ac.za/industrialpsychology](http://www.sun.ac.za/industrialpsychology).

For daily updates about progress with the programme, follow the Department on Twitter [@IPsychologySU](https://twitter.com/IPsychologySU) using the hashtag [#PGDipSHRM](https://twitter.com/IPsychologySU).



### Department introduces new short course

**T**he Basic Applied Psychometrics (BAP) short course, which was presented for the first time in 2020, serves as a bridging course for students who do not meet the course prerequisite of Honours-level Psychometrics for the BPsych Equivalence Programme. The BPsych Equivalence Programme, presented by the Department of Industrial Psychology, affords statutory registration as a psychometrist (independent practice) after successful completion of the professional board examination.

“Our BPsych Equivalence Programme attracts students from various universities, some of which do not include Psychometrics as a core module in their postgraduate programmes. The target audience is therefore students who want to apply for the BPsych Equivalence Programme but who do not meet the entry requirements with regard to Psychometrics – either because it was not included in their Honours programme, or because their marks did not meet the minimum requirements,” explains Mr Francois van der Bank, lecturer in Psychometrics.

“The goal of the BAP short course is to equip students with applied knowledge and practical skills in Psychometrics. It is divided into two parts.

“Part 1 focuses on test construction and psychometric evaluation, while part 2 focuses on the development of assessment procedures.”

The course is offered online and follows an asynchronous (self-paced) approach to learning, supplemented with synchronous components (“live” contact sessions). Students are guided through the course with various learning materials such as class recordings, slides and self-scoring exercises.

“Psychometrics is an applied science,” adds Mr Van der Bank. “To this effect, the course is designed to build practical competence in the construction and evaluation of tests, as well as the development of decision-making rules. The practical exercises present students with case study scenarios and require them to analyse data and to interpret and apply the results within the given theoretical framework. Completion of all exercises and assignments is compulsory and is a prerequisite for passing the course.”

The course was presented in the second semester of 2020 over a period of 16 weeks and will be presented again in the second semester of 2021.

### New elective module available to students

**I**n 2021, Human Resource Management students will have the opportunity to choose “Introduction to Intercultural Communication” as an elective module. The primary aim of this module is to foster and develop students’ intercultural communication (ICC) skills.

According to Ms Marie-Louise van Heukelum of the Department of General Linguistics, the module aims to give students the right tools to cope well with challenging (intercultural) communication situations.

“Typically, strong ICC skills are desirable for graduates who see themselves working in international environments. However, in a multicultural country like South Africa, such skills are, in fact, crucial regardless of where graduates see themselves in the future. Despite the need for well-developed intercultural competence in the workplace, students of Economic and Business Sciences are rarely deliberately equipped with an understanding of what language, culture and communication entail. The module was developed in an attempt to address this gap.”

The module is presented through face-to-face sessions and online. It runs for a single semester and requires that the students complete two formal reports and participate in one group-work assignment.

“The course develops students’ curiosity and awareness, critical thinking skills, knowledge of others and others’ world-views, and increases their knowledge of self. Students learn respect for others, how better to relate to others and how to adapt to different individuals and circumstances. This increases our students’ intercultural competence, making them better prepared for the contemporary (inter)national business landscape.”

# The Department of Industrial Psychology goes social

As part of the Department of Industrial Psychology's strategy of being better connected with school leavers, students, alumni, HR practitioners, industrial psychologists, psychometrists and other key stakeholders, both locally and internationally, it recently established a social media presence on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook. Connect with the Department by following and liking us on these platforms.

**S**ocial media has the following advantages for the Department of Industrial Psychology:

- It improves communication with our stakeholders;
- We become more connected with a broader range of individuals and stakeholders;
- We can share information and news items on a daily basis;
- We can share photos and images with school leavers, students, academics and external professionals;
- We can leverage and expand our national and international footprint;
- We can advance the Industrial Psychology, Psychometry and HR careers and professions;
- We can share our research with the broader community;
- We can update the market about trends and developments in the field;
- We can expand our alumni network and stay in contact.

The first priority of the Department's social media strategy is to inform the market about our new Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic HR Management (read more on Page 10). We will then add other items affecting the whole Department and all our other

programmes and initiatives during 2021.

The Department of Industrial Psychology will manage all social media risks and only share and advance content which meets professional and ethical standards expected from industrial psychologists, psychometrists and HR practitioners who are required to meet the professional standards of the Health Professionals Council, the Society for Industrial Psychology and the SA Board for People Practices.

Thus, no unprofessional content will be allowed or tolerated, and such individuals will be blocked and reported to the necessary university and/or professional body disciplinary committees. We want to use social media in a positive way to improve communication and to raise the profile of the Department of Industrial Psychology, both nationally and internationally. While students on campus have a short- or medium-term relationship with the Department and the university at large, social media provides everyone with an opportunity of staying connected with the Department over the next 40-50 years of their careers.

Should you have any contributions, suggestions, articles, photos, images or news that will be relevant to the Department, please contact Rahkeenah Peters at [indpsych@sun.ac.za](mailto:indpsych@sun.ac.za).

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### IMPORTANT HASHTAGS:



#PGDipSHRM  
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#Psychometrists  
#psychometry

# COVID-19 leads to creative thinking about career guidance project

Thanks to innovative thinking and problem-solving skills, the career guidance project “Overcoming Career Circumscription and Compromise” – a joint initiative between the Departments of Psychology and Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University – not only adapted successfully to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but actually increased the number of learners reached from 1441 in 2019 to 1684 in 2020.

The nation-wide lockdown and closure of schools could have caused a lull in the project’s activities, but instead the team utilised available resources and skills to ensure the continuation of the project. The project, which offers career guidance to Grade 9 learners in under-resourced communities, is now in its third year.

According to Dr Michelle Visser and Prof Tony Naidoo, the project’s team leaders, they decided to convert the project from a contact-based assessment and workshop format to a context-appropriate self-directed format for the learners.

“This was accomplished by redesigning the content of the previous workshop manual to a new self-directed career guidance booklet supported by additional resources. This booklet is available in Afrikaans and English. To augment the booklet, a supplementary career-related resource kit was developed in both hard copy and electronic format. This stimulated the idea of developing a dedicated website containing additional electronic resources and videos that any Grade 9 learner could access,” said Dr Visser.

The career guidance booklet has a narrative style guiding the reader through different conceptual components and exercises. To support the user-friendly design of the booklet, the learners were introduced to two fictional characters, Thabo and Maria, each with their own personality characteristics, interests and career aspirations.

“The above-mentioned materials, together with a snack pack, were delivered to the different schools during the first week of October. Instructions were also provided to the learners on how to use the booklet. Evaluation of the project from the perspectives of the learners, teachers, principals, student volunteers and project team is under way. This will also provide feedback on how well implementation was accomplished this year compared to the envisioned idea for the project,” she added.

*The new self-directed career guidance booklet, developed during lockdown, was delivered to schools in October.*

“The website is a dynamic resource which can be updated periodically to include relevant information and resources and it will also be a valuable tool when the project is extended beyond the current eight local schools. The adaptations to the project this year will permit the project to be expanded to a provincial and national level with any school learner being able to access resources that are part of the project.

“When contact with schools returns to normal, a blended approach could be utilised leveraging the strengths of both the contact-based and self-directed delivery of the project. This project aligns with the community engagement model proposed by Stellenbosch University where teaching, research and community interaction are consolidated. Through the implementation of this project and improvement of its processes, the opportunity to build collaborative efforts with other universities and governmental structures like the Western Cape Department of Education becomes a reality.”

Since the project is currently in its third year, with the first cohort of Grade 9s who were part of the project in Grade 12 next year, the project team plans to embark on a longitudinal study in 2021, which will be valuable in accessing the project’s impact.





# Top students want to combine passion with academic knowledge

The Department of Industrial Psychology congratulates **Alicia Swanepoel** and **Sonja van der Bank** on being the top Honours and Master's students respectively in 2019.



**Alicia**, who completed her BCom degree in Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University (SU) before embarking on an Honours degree, is currently following her dream of studying in Europe.

"I was extremely privileged to get a full scholarship to study for a Master's degree in Work, Organisational and Personnel Psychology at the University of Valencia (Spain) and the University of Bologna (Italy)."

### Why did you choose to study Industrial Psychology?

I have a passion for analysing the

behaviour and skills of those around me and tend to motivate and empower others to reach their full potential. I decided to enter this field to better my understanding of human behaviour, improve my ability to explain it scientifically, and learn how to intervene and optimise human functioning in various contexts. I chose the programme at SU specifically because of its excellent professors, the collaborative nature of the programme and, of course, the beautiful location.

### In your opinion, what value does Industrial Psychology bring to the world at large?

The field of IP focuses on developing and empowering people. It is so important, especially with the two global pandemics going on (COVID-19 and the mental

health crisis), to make sure that organisations prioritise the well-being of their people. Beyond this, the field of IP explores important topics like ethical leadership development (which is a vital construct for eliminating corruption and improving the decisions and actions of our leaders) and diversity management (which is critical, especially in the South African context).

### What is your long-term career goal?

For now, I believe that the opportunity to engage in idea-sharing with peers and experts from all over the world will enrich the quality of my research, career and life going forward. I have always been in search of a way to combine my studies with my passion for humanitarian action. From doing career counselling and psychometric testing for schools that cannot afford it, to starting a weekly tutoring programme in an impoverished community nearby, I have attempted to use the skills I have gained through having the privilege to study, in order to be useful to those that need them.



After obtaining a BCom Honours degree in Industrial Psychology and completing the BPsych Equivalence Programme to register as a psychometrist, **Sonja** thought she knew enough. But, as soon as she started practicing as a psychometrist, she realised that she needed a stronger theoretical foundation. This realisation led her to enrol for the Master's degree in Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

She is currently practising as an organisational development consultant at Camino Consulting. She also registered as an Industrial Psychology intern at the beginning of the year.

## In your opinion, what value does Industrial Psychology bring to the world at large?

By understanding human behaviour and the systems within which they need to perform their daily work, we can partner strategically with an organisation. Our relevance was amplified during COVID-19. It is critical that we, as behavioural scientists, understand and effectively manage the economic and psychological impact that the pandemic has on organisations. Our theoretical foundation allows for the provision of evidence-based guidance to organisations that had to make very difficult decisions that were not on their horizons at the start of the year.

We are equipped to identify the symptoms at individual, team and organisational level, and to design interventions to address those problems, both directly and indirectly. Such problems include, for instance, employees who are taking psychological strain and

us knowing when to counsel or refer the individuals to other professionals. It could also entail adjusting task performance to accommodate remote working methods and equipping managers on how to manage and communicate effectively with their teams.

Our value to the world at large is therefore based on providing organisations with strong theoretical insight into how to optimally drive the organisational strategy with the best possible workforce, in the most effective manner, and ensuring that such delivery is done in a sustainable manner for the employee, the organisation and the community within which it operates.

## What is your long-term career goal?

I have an absolute passion for organisational development. By continually applying my theoretical knowledge and skills to assist client organisations, I am striving to change South Africa for the better - one employee, team or organisation at a time.

## IPS goes back to basics in 2020

The Industrial Psychology Society (IPS) represents the academic interests of students in the Department of Industrial Psychology. Outgoing chairperson Tshepiso Latakomo explains how COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown affected her committee's work and introduces the IPS committee of 2020/2021.

**M**any of the 2019/2020 IPS committee's planned activities were severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions. They did, however, organise two important events: A welcome and introduction for first-year students in the Department, and the annual IPS Expo.

Although many of their plans did not materialise, the core responsibility of the IPS – serving and listening to the students and addressing their problems with the Department – became even more apparent during the lockdown.

As chairperson, together with Michelle Karsten who was in charge of the Social Impact portfolio, Tshepiso was also involved in the Grade 9 Career Counselling project which went virtual (read more on Page 13). The project offers learners videos and a booklet to guide them through their career-making decisions.

According to Tshepiso, her term as chairperson of the IPS challenged her in ways that she did not expect.

"I gained meaningful and lifelong relationships with the team I worked with, and a vast amount of experience and lessons going forward. I would encourage students to serve on the IPS because it is a great way to position yourself as a leader of service,

which is an invaluable skill going forward. Being on the team will both challenge and improve your emotional intelligence, among other things, and you will have the opportunity to network and come up with ways to improve the learning experience of other students."

The 2020/2021 IPS committee is: Telisha Voges (chairperson), Karla Botha (deputy chairperson), Jerisca Pillay, Kelly Zakay, Eduan Goosen, Tariro Mapeta, Quinnlyn van der Merwe and Kelvin Shenje.



*The IPS hosted the popular IPS Expo at the beginning of the year.*

## Congratulations

Congratulations to the following students who passed the HPSCA board exam and have registered as Industrial Psychologists:

Philip Botes,  
Jonathan Seland,  
Kelly Ramsden,  
Francois Lombard,  
Kristi Kleingbiel,  
Adelaide de Villiers,  
Ryno Liebenberg,  
Joanna Maingard,  
Marinus de Kock,  
Gita Kriek and  
Hinré Smit.

## BPEP intake

**The second intake of the BPsych Equivalence Programme (BPEP) in 2020 included**

Marli Goosen,  
Gabriella Bailey,  
Imran Abdurahaman,  
Rochelle Jordaan,  
Zahra Dollie,  
Roxanne Neethling,  
Corna Olivier,  
Savannah van der Heever,  
Lyrese Greyvenstein,  
Stephanie Gwen Pennington,  
Antonette Madalane,  
Maria de Villiers,  
Getrud Namtenya Nandie  
Mashuna,  
Megan Jonker,  
Nokulunga Maziya and  
Sibongile Ngomane.

## RESEARCH REPORT

### Master's degrees completed: MARCH/APRIL 2020

**Sigwela, Thabisa.** The relationship between authentic leadership, psychological empowerment, work engagement and team effectiveness.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108272>

**Chipunza, Crispen.** Psychological contract breach and the routes to counter-productive work behaviour amongst academics.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/107967>

**Lombard, Francois De Villiers.** Motivating Potential Score (MPS) as a job resource within the job demands-resources model in the South African mining industry.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108090>

**Du Plessis, Talita.** Interpretation of emojis in organisational Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) contexts.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108066>

**De Vos, Uanne.** Exploring the antecedents of extra-role behaviour: Becoming an empowered consultant.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108188>

**Smit, Yvonne-Louise.** The exploration of job performance and the dark triad: Practical implications for industrial psychologists.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108278>

**Joubert, Kendra Leigh.** An elaboration and modification of the May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) employee engagement structural model.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/107985>

**Louw, Gerrit Ernest.** The development of an executive mayoral competency model.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/107940>

**Fourie, Carmen.** The development of a small business owner competency model.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108132>

**Van Zyl, Petro.** The development and empirical evaluation of a structural model of enrichment among female academics.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108212>

**Kleingbiel, Kristi.** The development and empirical evaluation of a saving behaviour structural model.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108170>

**Mashatola, Ngoako Japhta.** Conscientiousness, work-family-study conflict and general work stress amongst employed non-residential South African Military Academy students.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108280>

### PhD completed: MARCH/APRIL 2020

**Visser, Michelle.** The development and psychometric evaluation of a medical practitioner compassion competency questionnaire.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/108023>

The Department of Industrial Psychology wishes its  
STAFF, STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND PARTNERS  
a blessed festive season and prosperous 2021.