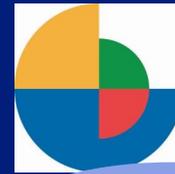


# CETAP News

Internal staff newsletter for CETAP  
September 2017



**CETAP**  
Centre for Educational  
Testing for Access and  
Placement

27 Hoerikwaggo  
Centre for Higher Ed  
IZiko loPhuhliso  
Sept

## Brown bag seminar

Associate Professor Francois de Kock, from Organisational Psychology, was a guest speaker at this month's Brown bag seminar. He presented a study entitled: "Examining the Value of Biodata in Predicting Medical School Success: A Comparison between Students with Low and High Disadvantage Levels in South Africa".

### Abstract:

The present study examined the value of biographical data ('Personal Report'), Senior Certificate Exam results, and National Benchmark Test (NBT) scores, in the selection process for medical students at the University of Cape Town (UCT). We investigated the predictive-, incremental-, and differential validity of biodata between two groups of students differentiated on the basis of disadvantage (High Disadvantage group,  $n = 78$ ; Low Disadvantage group,  $n = 117$ ) to predict 1st year academic success. The disadvantage scores were derived from information on school and family background that students as provided in UCT application forms. Results are reported in the talk and implications for selection are highlighted.



### this issue

Brown Bag Seminar P.1  
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## NBT-by-numbers



Facebook followers



Twitter followers



Institutional reports



Writers

# Meetings



Robert Prince and Emlyn Balarin attended a meeting at the Universities South Africa (USAf) offices this month, with officials from USAf, DHET, CAS, HEMIS. The meeting was convened principally to provide an overview of the NBT project and its goals, and data derived from the project; to explore possible funding (for 2018) for a collaborative NBT Project Proposal in light of the national value of the NBT data; and to discuss developments across the different units within DHET such as Teaching and Learning Development, Foundation provisioning and CAS, as well as the DBE, and possible linkages/partnerships with the NBT project.

The meeting was very constructive with a number of positive outcomes which included the provision of data to support the collaborative project, clarification of funding priorities and confirming the role of CETAP in future initiatives.

# Presentations/papers



Amaal Abrahams (UCT Health Sciences) presented a paper written with Robert Prince and Lunelle Pienaar (UCT Health Sciences) entitled, “A formative assessment to establish student’s foundational knowledge of Life Sciences at entry into university” at the Regional Extended Curriculum (ECP) Symposium, held at CPUT.

## **Abstract:**

The Grade 12 Life Science examinations, administered by the Department of Basic Education, are used to establish whether students have acquired the knowledge and skills needed for tertiary level education. However, given the variation in the teaching and learning pedagogies between the various public and private high schools in South Africa it is difficult to measure a student’s level of competency for their first year health professional courses based on their final Grade 12 Life Sciences grades. The purpose of this study is to develop an assessment to measure whether students possess at entry into university the required foundational knowledge and skills needed to be successful in their first year Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) courses. The conceptual knowledge which informed the questions was based on the Grade 12 final Life Sciences examination papers and content and concepts past students have found challenging. 144 and 227 Health and Rehabilitation and MBChB students respectively in the first year A&P course participated in the online assessment. Preliminary data, using SPSS version 23, showed an association between students flagged by the assessment and a lower final course mark. Classical item and test analysis was also used as a starting point to inform lecturers in the course of the teaching and learning activities needed to help students acquire and further develop the required knowledge and skills. In sum, data gathered suggests that the assessment may effectively reveal which foundational knowledge in A&P is absent or incorrect and assist in identifying students who are “at risk” of failing the course.

## Presentations/papers (cont.)



Darlington Mutakwa attended the EAIR (European Association for Institutional Research) 39th Annual Forum in Porto, Portugal and presented his paper: "The predictive validity of standardised tests on first year performance at university"

### Abstract:

This paper explores how standardised tests can be used to predict first year success at university. The study uses the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations and the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs). The data are drawn from first year Bachelor of Science cohorts from 2011 to 2015 at a South African University. Ordinal logistic regression was used to determine the predictive properties of the NSC and NBTs. The results showed a significant difference in the probability of success between the three levels of performance on the NBTs for students who had the same NSC passes. This study showed that a combination of NSC and NBTs scores is a better predictor of first year performance.



Janine Dunlop attended UCT's first Social Media in Higher Education workshop, entitled "Texting under pressure: lessons from the higher education protests".

Attended by social media and communications managers across UCT, the workshop focussed on lessons learned around communicating via social media during the 2015 and 2016 protests, and included presentations from communications managers from the Communications and Marketing Department, CETAP, the Libraries, CILT, and Health Sciences.

Ironically, Janine's presentation on developing a crisis communications plan was cut short when the Library was shut down for an hour by members of the SRC!



...to the September babies:

Suzanne Rossling (7 Sept.)

Janine Dunlop (23 Sept.)

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by the 20th of each month