



## From the Director's Desk

Dearest Colleagues

Welcome back to yet another year of uncertainties. I know it doesn't sound optimistic but between the lifting of the pandemic restrictions and the Russia – Ukraine conflict, it's the perfect time to help us take a fresh look at our lives, what matters most—and take action!

It's been two years since the Covid-19 pandemic was declared and over 6 million lives lost worldwide and daily life has been upended in countless ways. Some countries, including our own, are now regaining a degree of normality, though the threat of another variant-induced wave of disease remains. On this second anniversary, I want to reflect on certain things the world has learned through the course of the pandemic.

Firstly, infectious diseases are issues for the whole society because it causes economic harm and dislocation that have in the past two years decreased the quality of life for many people. Secondly, the development of the vaccine paradigm has been transformed for emergencies and, potentially, for more in the future. It is easy to forget how notable and outstanding our frontline health care workers were, we salute them and how remarkable the development of COVID-19 vaccines was. Thirdly, the pandemic exposed all of us to the social injustices and inequities that exist around the world, to the detriment of the poverty stricken nations. Therefore, my fourth lesson is trust which is one of the most delicate but critical requirements for an effective pandemic response and like in most things we do we will need agility and speed which will be the new basis for differentiation. Finally, we all know that work will never be the same. The pandemic's first year proved three things: our old definition of essential workers was inadequate; the numbers and kinds of work we do is profoundly different now especially in teaching, learning and assessments; and most staff can do the job from home. So, welcome to the world of digitization and hybrid working conditions, which is a possibility we never thought of because we are traditionalists, in thought and practice.

If there's one theme throughout these lessons, it is the need for humility. Many of our orthodoxies from past decades have been toppled, and the need to continually learn has never been clearer, so that we can continue to adapt to today's crisis and prevent the next one. Unfortunately in the current war situation and the many atrocities faced by the people of Ukraine is the current headlines as the pandemic fades away into the background. As in any conflict, uncertainty is high. It is unclear how the military situation, the political process, and the countermeasures around the world will play out—in either the shorter or longer term. However, it is already certain that, as a consequence of the economic impact of the crisis on oil, energy and food markets, disruptions will affect many in Europe and beyond.

Sometime we have to sit back and reflect on our leaders – the question remains - we will ever fully understand what lies behind the power of leadership? I leave you with that thought as the world navigates yet another crisis and wish you well into 2022.

NBJappie

# Featured articles: NBT Online



## How to prepare for the NBTs online testing sessions

With Online testing, writers are provided with information on how to navigate the online platform before the test. The Q&A session took the writers step by step on how to do ID verification, download the lockdown browser and do simulation. The session was also used to answer questions from the writers as they prepare for the online testing.



## Feedback Session for NBT Online

The Centre for Educational Assessments (CEA) conducted the first NBT online Feedback session in December 2021 as part of the department endeavors to constantly improve the NBT online testing. The team provide feedback from online testing and identify improvement for writers' experience. The team is trained and understand the system, which means a professional and helpful invigilator service is always provided to candidate writing the NBT Online.

## National Benchmark Test

CEA has begun the year with an over-arching assessment of the South African National Benchmark Tests (NBT). For 2023 intake 25 testing sessions have been scheduled. The sessions are divided into 20 Pencil and Paper testing, 5 Online testing from May 2022 to January 2023.

The NBT registrations for 2023 intake opens 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 for writers who wish to write the NBT for the next coming sessions.

More information can be found at the NBT website: [www.nbt.ac.za](http://www.nbt.ac.za)

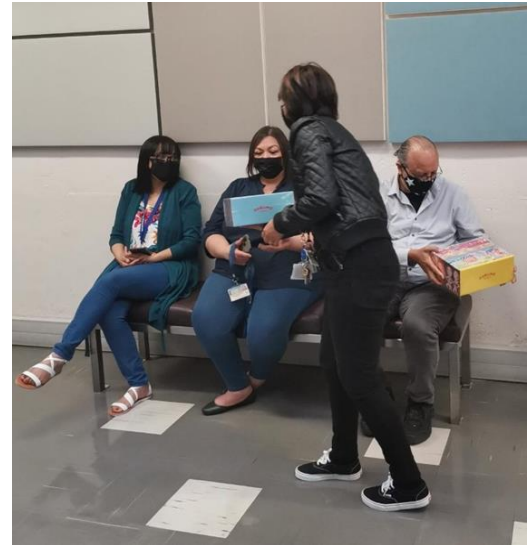
# Featured articles: Staff news

## Test Assembly

The Research Team conducted the test Assembly in November 2021, the team is currently completing the Test Assembly process for the 2022 Test Cycle. The assembly involves a rigorous process for quality assurance with panelists of experts assisting with the compilation, and refinement.



## CEA End Year Function

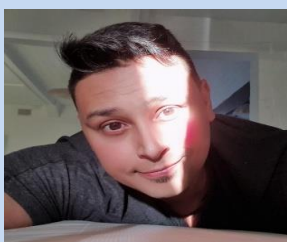


CEA end the year in higher spirit despite Covid-19 pandemic. The staff of CEA were committed to providing the best for the year 2021 and the team brought nothing less than quality and looking forward to a productive 2022 for the department.

## Staff Achievements



Heartfelt congratulations, Dr Naziema Jappie for obtaining her PhD from the University of Johannesburg. Dr Jappie's degree is titled "*Social Justice Leadership: Challenges and Practices in HE in the Western Cape, South Africa*"



Congratulations to Ashley Hattingh-Niekerk for completing his MSc in Information Systems Management at University of Cape Town (UCT).



Congratulations to Hlamulo Makelane for completing her Advanced Business Analysis with Faculty Institute of Training and completing Communication and Influence in the Digital Age with UCT GetSmarter

"Congratulations on their well-deserved successes!"



Congratulations to Robert Prince and co-authors on the recent publications for proceedings  
SEFI 2021

49th Annual Conference | BERLIN | 13.09. – 16.09.2021

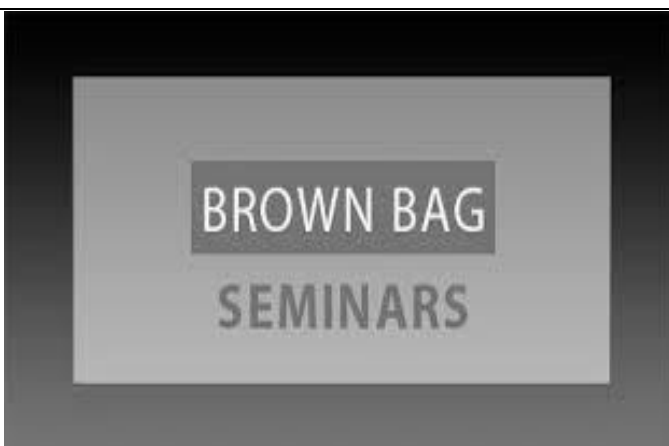
### “Do Higher Education Entrance Exams Predict Success in Engineering Study”

<https://www.sefi.be/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/SEFI-Annual-Conference-2021-Blended-Learning-in-Engineering-Education.pdf>

Congratulations to Tatiana Sango and co-Authors on the recent publications for Perspectives in  
Education Journals, 40(1), 212-233.

### “High stakes online assessments: A case study of National Benchmark Tests during COVID-19”

<https://journals.ufs.ac.za/index.php/pie/article/view/5313>



CEA Hosts a Monthly **Brown Bag** Seminar to discuss commonalities in teaching, learning, assessment, and research.

In February 2022; **Ms. Tatiana Sango**, Maths Research Lead, CEA, UCT, presented on the topic “*Test preparation: Lost in Resources*” in February 2022

In March 2022; **Dr. Amaal Abrahams**, Senior Lecturer, Division of Cell Biology, UCT, presented on the Topic “*Assessing prior knowledge: Development of a baseline assessment tool which aligns content of the Grade 12 life sciences curricula with content relevant to the first-year anatomy and physiology medical curricula*”



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