

Annual Report 2017/18 – German Studies

Staff Matters

We are very happy to report that in 2018 Ms Natasha Engelbrecht obtained her Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education with distinction – congratulations! Dr Undine Weber has become a member of the DAAD *Ortslektorennetzwerk*, i.e. the German Academic Exchange Service's Local Lecturers' Network, which fosters cooperation between the DAAD and lecturers of German in sub-Saharan Africa.

Undine Weber took on the role of external examiner for German at Stellenbosch University for the years 2017-2019, and has been serving as co-editor of *Acta Germanica. German Studies in Africa* (ed. Carlotta von Maltzan). Frankfurt/ Stellenbosch: Peter Lang/Sun Media since 2017.

Visitors

In 2017, German Studies hosted Dr Ajibola Fabusuyi, African Humanities Scholar from the Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria for three months. Dr Fabusuyi brought much joy and fruitful debate regarding the translation of African fiction into German – thank you, Dr Fabusuyi!



Student Matters

Firstly, big congratulations to our graduands – small as our section may be, there are always notable German Studies students at our graduation ceremonies. With regard to postgraduates, in 2017 our Honours students Kirani Narshai and Sharon Moses graduated; 2018 saw Morgan Collins obtain her MA degree with distinction, and Duncan Haynes his BA Honours in German Studies and Anthropology, also with distinction.

We had six students and one staff member from another department of the University successfully complete the external Goethe Institute exams (B1 and C1) in 2017 and 2018, which again shows that the curriculum of German Studies at Rhodes is in line with internationally recognised standards. Supporting this statement, our external examiner, Dr. Philip van der Merwe (NWU, Potchefstroom), praised the high standard of the German Studies curriculum at Rhodes. We would like to thank him for his invaluable input, his wonderful sense of humour and his patience.

Our wonderfully accomplished postgraduates will continue to make meaningful contributions to German Studies at Rhodes and to Higher Education in South Africa: Gwyn Ortner, who will complete her PhD studies in 2019, with her research on the acquisition of academic discourse tools in the foreign language, curriculum transformation and blended learning, and Sasha-Lee Schafli, commencing her MA studies on multi-modal discourse analysis regarding selected German teaching materials in 2019.



Workshops and Conferences

Natasha Engelbrecht and Undine Weber attended and presented papers at the biennial conference of the German Studies Association in Southern Africa (SAGV) in Stellenbosch in April 2017, as well as the CLASA (conference of the language associations of South Africa) 2017 conference at Rhodes University

in June 2017.

Undine Weber was invited to attend the Goethe Institute's workshop for licensees at the Munich headquarters in June/ July 2018, and Undine Weber and Natasha Engelbrecht attended and successfully completed a Goethe Institute workshop for accredited examiners in Johannesburg in September 2018.

In November 2018, PhD student Gwyn Ortner gave a presentation at the Rhodes University Teaching Showcase (Teaching with Technology) on blended language learning, to the acclaim of RU lecturers and practitioners.

Teaching & Learning

Besides our own regular teaching commitments, both staff members also contributed to the School's interdisciplinary second-year level course Modern Fiction in 2017 and to the first-year level course CLIA (Cultures and Languages in Africa) in 2017 and 2018. In this course as well as in some of our German Studies language modules, we integrated more online activities (online lectures, forum activities) than in previous years. Not only does a varied approach to teaching and learning keep students interested, it also fosters an engagement with technology and improves learning on how to conduct independent research, which was especially true for our 2017 cultural studies module for second and third years (a research module on the history of German settlers in the Eastern Cape).

In 2017 and 2018, we have been meeting regularly with German teachers in Port Elizabeth. Anna Sliwinski from the Theodor Herzl School is in charge of the Goethe Institute lending library for teachers and lecturers of German language, culture and literature, and we have made new professional connections and, through them, started to attract more local students to German Studies at Rhodes.



Our tutors and mentors, without whom we simply could not operate (or keep sane) assisted greatly with the day-to-day running of German Studies – many thanks to Duncan Haynes, Ndina Kamati, Nadene Kupemba, Luca Milanese, Sibusiso Ngwila, Gwyn Ortner, Marcus Schaefer and Sasha-Lee Schafli. We are rather sad that some of them will not be there anymore in 2019, but happy and proud that they will graduate and spread their wings – best of luck to all of you!



Research

2017 Weber, Undine S.; Domingo, Rebecca S.C.; Fourie, Regine B. "Beyond Language: German Studies in a South African University Context." In: Kaschula, Russell H./ Maseko, Pamela/ Wolff, H. Ekkehard (eds.) 2017. *Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication: A South African Perspective*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 323-335.

2018 Ortner, Gwyndolen J.; Weber Undine S. „Using corpora to inform teaching practice in German Studies: A case study at Rhodes University". In: *Per Linguam*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2018). In press.

In Conclusion

Especially 2018 has been a year of laying the foundations for further research with regard to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; and we hope to continue to grow our student numbers. We are very grateful to our Head of School, Professor Patrice Mwepu, for his continued support of German Studies, and wish to express a heartfelt baie dankie and enkosi kakhulu to our dependable office administrator, Mrs Hannelie Rielly, and our secretary, Ms Babalwa Sidinana, for their kind assistance.