Development and evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements **ii**

List of tables, figures **iv**

List of addenda **v**

Summary **vi**

Opsomming **ix**

Preface **xii**

Permission letter from promoter **xiii**

Declaration by PhD candidate **xiv**

Declaration by language editor **xv**

Ethics approval of research project **xvi**

PART 1: Introduction and overview **1**

PART 2: Articles **36**

Guidelines for authors: Journal of Psychology in Africa **36**

Article 1: **40**

A critical literature review of employability of new graduates

Article 2: **89**

Stakeholders' perceptions of a curriculum vitae for new graduates

Article 3: **119**

Development of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates

Article 4: **177**

Evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates

PART 3: Conclusions and recommendations **220**

Complete reference list **243**

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

PART 1:

Figure 1: The four phases of the study **9**

PART 2: Article 1

Table 1: Synonyms for attributes **53**

Table 2: Definitions of employability **58**

Table 3: Thematic analysis of definitions of employability **60**

Table 4: Graduate employability attributes **71**

PART 2: Article 2

Table 1: Summary of main and sub themes of different stakeholder groups **100**

PART 2: Article 3

Figure 1: Components of programme development **127**

Figure 2: Components of programme development in the competence-based CV-writing programme **133**

Figure 3: The programme outcome model **145**

Table 1: Graduate recruiters and career consultants' perceptions **134**

Table 2: Findings from literature and theories applicable to the competence-based CV-writing **139**

Table 3: Aim and objectives of the competence-based CV-writing programme **147**

Table 4: Protocol of the competence-based CV-writing programme **150**

PART 2: Article 4

Figure 1: Distribution of rating on aspects of the presentation **196**

Figure 2: Comparison of pre- and post-test results of students **197**

Table 1: Criteria for assessing CVs **187**

Table 2: Elements of the evaluation of the competence-based CV-writing programme **191**

PART 3:

Figure 1: The timeline of the four phases of the study **223**

LIST OF ADDENDA

PART 2: Article 3

Addendum 1 – Facilitator's manual **165**

Addendum 2 - Visual presentation of aspects influencing the CV-writing process **172**

Addendum 3 - CV template **173**

Addendum 4 - Examples of attributes **174**

Addendum 5 - Personal profile examples **175**

Addendum 6 - Cover letter template **176**

Addendum 7: - CD with video presentation (Sleeve in inside back cover)

PART 2: Article 4

Addendum 1 – Test for CV-writing programme **209**

Addendum 2 - Student course feedback form **210**

Addendum 3: - Graduate recruiters – CV evaluations **211**

Addendum 4: - Examples of a well-presented CV and a poorly present CV **212**

SUMMARY

Development and Evaluation of a Competence-based Curriculum Vitae-writing Programme for New Graduates

Keywords: Career consultants; Competence-based; Curriculum Vitae; Employability enhancement; Graduate recruiters; New graduate; Programme development; Programme evaluation.

This study, presented in the format of four articles, contributes to the development and evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae (CV)-writing programme to enhance new graduate employability. A major challenge facing universities, nationally and internationally, is to enhance the employability of their graduates, not only to find any job, but to be able to compete for appropriate and sustainable graduate positions in which they can be satisfied and successful.

A review of literature on employability and CV-writing, found no peer-reviewed publication on competence-based CV-writing programmes, thereby indicating a research gap in the development and evaluation of a programme. Research is needed to develop a CV-writing programme that is based on relevant literature, takes into account the opinions of stakeholders, employs sound programme development principles, and is evaluated for its contribution to graduate employability. Three major stakeholder groups directly involved in the employability of new graduates were identified in the study, namely: graduate recruiters, career consultants in higher education institutions, and graduate students. From a pragmatist point of view the problem regarding new graduates' employability was observed and a research process was set in motion to actively manipulate the environment (development and evaluation of the programme) to enable successful human action (enhancing employability). For the purpose of this research inquiry, a multi-phased qualitative research project was undertaken.

The first article provides an overview of literature of employability as a psychosocial construct and a critical reflection on a competence-based approach to enhance new graduate employability. The findings of this critical literature review confirm that employability is

regarded as a psychosocial construct which relates to individual development and functioning in, as well as interaction with the social environment. The second article reports stakeholders' perceptions of and need for a CV to enhance new graduate employability. Stakeholders involved in the need analysis comprised new graduates (n=7), career consultants (n=10) and graduate recruiters (n=8). The third article combines the literature overview with the stakeholders' perceptions and needs and applied programme development principles to develop and describe the programme. The aim of the programme is to assist new graduates to create competence-based CVs that link their employability attributes to the requirements of jobs and thereby enhance their employability. The fourth article demonstrates how programme evaluation literature and principles are applied to obtain stakeholders' evaluation of the programme. By means of convenience sampling, graduates (n=190) voluntarily attended the programme, wrote a knowledge test before (n=158) and after (n=130) the presentation, and completed feedback forms (n=145). Graduate recruiters (n=11), guided by open-ended questions, evaluated students' CVs which resulted from the programme.

In an economic environment that is characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, this study makes a contribution to empower new graduates, with little work experience to write convincing CVs and so better their chances to gain suitable employment. This study made the following eight specific contributions to new graduate employability as a psychosocial construct. First, the confusing and unsystematic literature on new graduates' employability was critically reviewed to present a coherent summary relevant to all stakeholders involved in new graduate employability. Second, an original definition of new graduate employability is proposed which could guide new graduates in preparing for the work context, career consultants and graduate recruiters to prepare and use in the recruitment process. Third, information of what to include in a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates were obtained from the stakeholders who are directly involved with new graduate employability, thereby ensuring that the proposed programme is developed from a bottom-up approach. Fourth, in the proposed

competence-based CV-writing programme, new graduates are assisted to present contents in their CVs based on an underlying rationale and not ‘as is’ biographical information. Fifth, the competence-based CV-writing programme provides new graduates with a systematic approach to connect the employability attributes that they have developed during the course of their lives or in informal (sometimes) unrelated work experience to fit the needs of employers. Six, the criteria that were developed can be used to evaluate CVs in terms of adding value (creating a positive impression of the applicant) or detracting from its value (creating a negative impression of the applicant). Seven, originality in this study was demonstrated by linking competence words with the skills and contexts in which the experiences developed to demonstrate employability attributes that are transferrable to the work context. Eight, the practical orientation of this research, proposes a step-by-step process for career consultants to provide a structure for new graduates to overcome this challenge. Recommendations are made for theory, practice and future research of new graduate employability.

OPSOMMING

Ontwikkeling en Evaluering van ’n Vaardigheidsgebaseerde CV-skryfprogram vir Pas Gegradueerdes

Sleutelwoorde: Curriculum Vitae; Loopbaankonsultante; Pas gegradueerdes; Programevaluering; Programontwikkeling; Vaardigheidsgebaseer; Verhoging van Indiensneembaarheid; Werwingsagente vir gegradueerdes.

Hierdie studie, aangebied in die formaat van vier artikels, lewer ’n bydrae tot die ontwikkeling en evaluering van ’n vaardigheidsgebaseerde program vir die skryf van curriculum vitae’s (CV’s) met die doel om die indiensneembaarheid van pas gegradueerdes te verhoog. ’n Groot uitdaging wat universiteite, nasionaal en internasionaal, in die gesig staar, is om die indiensneembaarheid van hulle graduandi te verhoog – nie net om bloot enige werk te kry nie, maar om in staat te wees om mee te ding vir geskikte en volhoubare posisies vir gegradueerdes waar hulle tevrede en suksesvol kan werk.

’n Literatuuroorsig van indiensneembaarheid en die skryf van CV’s het aan die lig gebring dat geen portuur-geëvalueerde publikasies oor vaardigheidsgebaseerde programme vir die skryf van CV’s bestaan nie, wat op ’n navorsingsgaping in die ontwikkeling en evaluering van sodanige programme dui. Navorsing is dus nodig om ’n program vir die skryf van CV’s te ontwikkel wat gebaseer is op relevante literatuur, wat die opinies van belanghebbendes in ag neem, wat voldoen aan beginsels van programontwikkeling, en wat geëvalueer kan word vir die bydrae wat dit lewer tot die indiensneembaarheid van gegradueerdes. Die studie het drie hoofgroepe belanghebbendes wat direk betrokke is by die indiensneming van pas gegradueerdes, naamlik: werwingsagente vir gegradueerdes, beroepskonsultante by hoër onderwysinstansies, en gegradueerde studente. Die probleem van die indiensneembaarheid van pas gegradueerdes is vanuit ’n pragmatiese perspektief in oënskou geneem en ’n navorsingsproses is begin om die omgewing aktief te manipuleer (ontwikkeling en evaluering van die program) ten einde

suksesvolle menslike handeling moontlik te maak (verhoging van indiensneembaarheid). Vir die doel van hierdie navorsingsondersoek is ’n multi-fase kwalitatiewe navorsingsprojek onderneem.

Die eerste artikel bied ’n literatuuroorsig oor indiensneembaarheid as ’n psigososiale konstruk en ’n kritiese besinning oor die vaardigheidsgebaseerde benadering om die indiensneembaarheid van pas gegradueerdes te verhoog. Die bevindinge van die kritiese literatuuroorsig bevestig dat indiensneembaarheid beskou word as ’n psigososiale konstruk wat verband hou met individuele ontwikkeling en funksionering in, sowel as interaksie met die sosiale omgewing. Die tweede artikel lewer verslag oor die belanghebbendes se persepsie van en behoefte aan ’n CV om pas gegradueerde indiensneembaarheid te verhoog. Belanghebbendes wat betrek is in die behoefte-analise, was pas gegradueerdes (n=7), loopbaankonsultante (n=10) en werwingsagente vir gegradueerdes (n=8). Die derde artikel kombineer die literatuuroorsig met die persepsies en behoeftes van die belanghebbendes. Beginsels vir programontwikkeling is toegepas om die program te ontwikkel en te beskryf. Die doel van die program is om pas gegradueerdes te help om vaardigheidsgebaseerde CV’s op te stel waarin die attribute van hulle indiensneembaarheid verbind word met die vereistes verbonde aan die werk, sodat hulle indiensneembaarheid verhoog. Die vierde artikel demonstreer hoe literatuur oor en beginsels van programevaluering toegepas is ten einde ’n evaluering van die program vanaf die belanghebbendes te verkry. Deur middel van gerieflikheidsteekproefneming het gegradueerdes (n=190) die program vrywillig bygewoon, ’n kennistoets geskryf voor (n=158) en ná (n=130) die aanbieding, en terugvoer gegee deur vorms te voltooi (n=145). Werwingsagente vir gegradueerdes (n=11), gerig deur oop-einde vrae, het die studente se CV’s wat uit die program voortgekom het, geëvalueer.

Te midde van ‘n ekonomiese klimaat wat gekenmerk word deur wisselvalligheid, onsekerheid, kompleksiteit en dubbelsinnigheid, lewer hierdie studie ‘n bydrae tot die bemagtiging van pas gegradueerdes met min werkservaring om ‘n oortuigende CV te skryf en so hul kanse te verbeter om geskikte aanstellings te bekom.

Hierdie studie het die volgende agt spesifieke bydraes gelewer tot pas gegradueerdes se indiensneembaarheid, as ʼn psigososiale konstruk. Eerstens, die verwarrende en onsistematiese literatuur oor indiensneembaarheid van pas gegradueerdes is krities geëvalueer om ʼn koherente samevatting aan te bied wat relevant is vir alle belanghebbers betrokke in pas gegradueerdes se indiensneembaarheid. Tweedens word ‘n oorspronklike definisie van indiensneembaarheid van pas gegradueerdes voorgestel wat riglyne bied vir pas gegradueerdes in hul voorbereiding vir die werkkonteks, en ook vir loopbaankonsultante en indiensnemers van graduandi vir die voorbereiding vir en gebruik in die indiensnemingsproses. Derdens, inligting oor wat om in te sluit in ʼn vaardigheids-gebaseerde CV-skryf program was ingewin vanaf die belanghebbers wat direk betrokke is by pas gegradueerdes se indiensneembaarheid, en daardeur is verseker dat die voorgestelde program ontwikkel is deur toepassing van ʼn “bottom-up” benadering. Vierdens, in die voorgestelde vaardigheids-gebaseerde CV-skryf program word pas gegradueerdes bygestaan om die inhoud van hul CV’s aan te bied op grond van ʼn ondeliggende rasionaal en nie slegs biografiese inligting lukraak weer te gee nie. Vyfdens, voorsien die vaardigheids-gebaseerde CV-skryf program pas gegradueerdes van ʼn sistematiese benadering om die indiensneembaarheid eienskappe wat hulle ontwikkel het gedurende hul lewensverloop of in informele (soms) onverwante werkservaring te verbind aan die behoeftes soos gestel deur hul werkgewers. Sesdens, die kriteria wat ontwikkel is, kan aangewend word in die evaluering van CV’s in terme van toegevoegde waarde (skep ʼn positiewe indruk van die applikant) of verminderde waarde (skep ʼn negatiewe indruk van die applikant). In die sewende plek, was die oorspronklikheid van die studie aangedui deur die verbintenis van vaardigheidswoorde met die kontekste waarin die ervaringe opgedoen is om indiensneembaarheidseienskappe te demonstreer wat oordraagbaar is na die werkskonteks. Agtstens, die praktiese oriëntasie van hierdie navorsing stel ʼn stap vir stap proses voor vir loopbaankonsultante wat ‘n struktuur bied waarbinne pasgegradueerdes hul uitdagings die hoof kan bied. Voorstelle is gemaak vir teorie, praktyk en toekomstige navorsing oor indiensneembaarheid van pas gegradueerdes.

PREFACE

- The thesis is presented in article format as indicated in general rules A.4.4.2.9 and 5.4.2.7 of the yearbook of the North-West University.
- For purposes of examination, the articles are presented as part of a single document consisting of three parts including an introduction, four articles, and conclusions and recommendations, followed by a complete reference list.
- In order to present the thesis as a unit, the page numbering is consecutive, starting from the introduction and proceeding to the references.
- References and editorial style in this thesis are formatted according to the American Psychology Association (APA) guidelines (6th edition).
- Author guidelines for the Journal of Psychology in Africa were followed in the writing of the four articles with the exception of double spacing after punctuation and the length of the articles. When articles are submitted for publication these two matters will be attended to.
- An abbreviated version of Article 1, focusing only on the critical review of definitions of employability and the development of a specific definition of new graduate employability, was submitted for publication in the Journal of Psychology in Africa and is currently under review.
- The co-authors of the articles comprising this thesis have provided consent for their submission for examination purposes for a PhD degree.
- The thesis was submitted to Turnitin and the report was within the norms of acceptability.
- Language editing for this thesis was conducted by Mrs Kareni Bannister.

PERMISSION LETTER FROM PROMOTER

Permission is hereby granted for the submission by the first author, Peet Roos, of the following four articles for examination purposes, towards the obtainment of a PhD degree in Psychology:

1. A critical literature review of employability of new graduates
2. Stakeholders' perceptions of a curriculum vitae for new graduates
3. Development of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates
4. Evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates

The role of the co-authors (promoter, co-promoter and assistant promoter) was as follow: Dr. Werner de Klerk acted as promoter and project head of this research inquiry and assisted in the peer review of the PhD thesis. Prof Alida W. Nienaber (co-promoter) assisted in the conceptualization of the PhD thesis as well as the peer review of the research proposal, article 1 and article 2. Prof Marius Stander (assistant promoter) assisted in the peer review of this PhD thesis.

Dr. W. de Klerk

Promoter

DECLARATION BY PHD CANDIDATE

I

Petrus Gysbertus Roos

hereby declare that the thesis entitled

Development and evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates

which I herewith submit to the

North-West University, Potchefstroom campus,

in compliance with the requirements set for the

Philosophiae Doctor in Psychology

qualification, is my own work

and has been language edited

and has not been submitted to any other university.

STUDENT SIGNATURE	13233041 STUDENT NUMBER

DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

I hereby declare that I have language-edited the manuscript

Development and evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduates

by P G Roos

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for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Psychology

at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University.

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ETHICS APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT

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ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

The North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-RERC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: Development and evaluation of a competence-based programme to enhance new graduates' employability

Project Leader: Dr W de Klerk

Ethics number: N W U - 0 0 0 0 1 - 1 4 - A 1
Institution | Project Number | Year | Status
Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Approval date: 2014-03-06 **Expiry date:** 2019-03-05

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- *The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-RERC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-RERC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-RERC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-RERC retains the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;*
  - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
    - *any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,*
    - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-RERC or that information has been false or misrepresented,*
    - *the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,*
    - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Linda du Plessis

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Prof Linda du Plessis
Chair NWU Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC)

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Development and Evaluation of a Competence-based Curriculum Vitae-writing Programme for New Graduates

Contextualising the Study

The modern global job market can be compared with a competitive battlefield, with implications for the employability of new graduates. There are limited graduate employment opportunities world-wide, and in combination with rapid growth in the number of graduates, this means that there is no guarantee of employment, despite having a degree (Abel, Deitz, & Su, 2014; Chang, 2016; Selingo, 2014; Torpey, 2013). The rate at which graduate jobs are created also fails to keep up with the increasing production of graduates (Scott, 2016). In addition, global research indicates that the value of tertiary education and educational achievements has diminished significantly over time in terms of social and economic value (Boden, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2013; Butrica, Smith, & Iams, 2012; Carr, 2013; Dixon, Mercado, & Knowles, 2013; Fagan, 1998; Olive, 2014). Finding employment is difficult because it is associated with uncertainty and rejection (De Witte, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2012). It is therefore not surprising that many unemployed people (including graduates) describe the process as discouraging and unpleasant with associated feelings of boredom, loneliness, uncertainty about the future, concerns about financial matters, emptiness and conflict (De Witte et al., 2012).

The process of securing employment is difficult. It demands an individual effort for which the onus is mainly on the job seeker to obtain career information, and to develop and display the competence and attributes valued by graduate recruiters in order to find employment (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). However, it is not only an individual process. Social pressure comes to bear when people have to find employment to improve their situation and to comply with social standards (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008).

Definitions of employability have evolved over time, indicating a shift from merely *getting and keeping* a job (Hillage & Pollard, 1998) to securing occupations in which the employee can be

satisfied and successful (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007) and increasing the job seeker's suitability for *appropriate and sustained* employment (Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Definitions of employability also depend on the ontological and/or theoretical framework adopted or the context in which it is used. One of the oldest definitions defines employability simply as the capability to acquire and keep a new job (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). This definition alludes to the fact that some people may possess certain capabilities (personal graduate employability attributes), which make them employable and successful in securing employment, while in others those capabilities may be absent or lacking, thus making them less employable. A definition proposed by Forrier and Sels (2003) emphasises the chance factor in finding employment while most other authors highlight the active adaptability of potential employees and their ability to employ a range of career meta-competencies, such as being adaptable and flexible (proactive career behaviours) (Coetzee, 2008; Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Fugate et al., 2004). Some definitions of employability refer to it as a psychosocial construct (Fugate et al., 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013) which places this study in the realm of psychology.

From a process perspective, employability is regarded as a continuous process, which aims to acquire or create work through the optimal use of competence (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2003) use the theory of economics to define employability in terms of the laws of supply and demand within the job market. On the basis of this definition, all graduates with the appropriate qualification and skills would probably get jobs. However, this is highly unlikely given the realities of the current labour market (Abel et al., 2014; Selingo, 2014; Torpey, 2013). It would be fair to conclude that the existing body of knowledge of new graduate employability and competence is un-integrated and confusing.

The importance of this study is emphasized by a global need for higher education institutions to focus on employability and further research on the topic (Baldry, 2016; Scott, 2016). In an effort to enhance the employability of new graduates national and international professional associations were established, such as the South African Graduate Employers

Association (SAGEA, 2015), the Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services in the UK (AGCAS, 2015), the National Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services in Australia (NAGCAS, 2015) and the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the USA (NACE, 2015).

Problem Statement

Globally and in South Africa the prevalence of unemployed graduates remains an issue that deserves attention (Baldry, 2016; Bantham, 2017; Chang, 2016; Scott, 2016). International statistics differ between countries, which makes it difficult to obtain an accurate indication of the extent of the challenge worldwide. In the current socio-economic environment of South Africa, the prospects for new graduates of obtaining employment remain bleak. The most recent information available (Statistics South Africa, 2016) reports that the unemployment rate of graduates in South Africa was 5,1% and that only 85% of the working-age population who are graduates were employed in the fourth quarter of 2015. It is clear that South Africa is faced with huge challenges given the poor involvement of young adults in the country's economy. Youth unemployment, according to the Youth Enterprise Development Strategy 2012 - 2023, seems to make up almost 75% of the country's total unemployment figure (See South Africa, 2013). Unemployed youth in South Africa perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and also contribute to diminished quality of life of young people and communities (Bantham, 2017), which makes this study relevant for the field of psychology.

Despite the efforts of South African universities in their graduate placement programmes, the South African Qualifications Authority found that the number of unemployed graduates has remained stubbornly high (Maake, 2013). Maake (2013) further reported that Statistics South Africa's labour force survey data in 2013 showed that 6.2% (about 279 062) of those who were unemployed had a tertiary qualification. Other sources also quoted by Maake (2013) estimate that figure at 600 000, more than double the official estimate. The concern, then, is the high numbers of unemployed, and the high proportion of unemployed graduates within those estimates.

Whether the actual figure for unemployed graduates is close to 300 000 or 600 000, it remains a big number and indeed presents a challenge for higher education institutions in South African to deal with (May, 2012). Instability and changing international economics and various other influences on an already vulnerable South African economy raise the possibility that more graduates will remain unemployed for longer.

A study in 2012, based on 2011 data (Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012), found that in South Africa, just under 5.0% of people with university degrees were unemployed, while in May 2013 the same researchers found graduate unemployment to be 6.0% and took a very optimistic view by referring to it as "a much exaggerated problem" (Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012. p. 1). Van Broekhuizen and Van der Berg (2013) state that over the past fifteen years the numbers of graduates in the labour force have more than doubled, showing that the popular view that the possession of a university degree no longer guarantees success in the job market is simply not correct. With a high overall unemployment rate graduate unemployment also increases (Oluwajodu, Blaauw, Greyling, & Kleynhans, 2015). In contrast to Van Broekhuizen and Van der Berg (2013), Oluwajodu et al. (2015) showed much greater concern when they reported that the actual unemployment rate for graduates has increased from 5.4% during 1995 to 7.0% in 2012. Another alarming perspective is that 27% of employed graduates consider themselves to be underemployed and the majority of these graduates reported underutilisation of their skills (Baldry, 2016).

Whether graduate unemployment is indeed rising in South Africa or not is a dispute not easily settled due to the following reasons according to Baldry (2016): i) research published on the topic is irregular and sporadic; ii) various definitions of the construct 'graduate' are used; iii) most research is of a cross-sectional nature; iv) and the total restructuring of the South African higher education system negatively impacts researching the topic. While the debates in South African literature continue about the extent of graduate unemployment, how it is measured (unemployed graduates as percentage of total graduates or as percentage of total unemployed) or whether or not

we should be concerned about it, research still focuses rather narrowly on measuring the fact of getting a job or failing to do so.

Psychological Implications

The psychological implications of unemployment and the concern of not finding employment are well-documented (see Aslund, Starrin, & Nilsson, 2014; Barnard & Nel, 2009; Boyce, Wood, Daly, & Sedikides, 2015; Brand, 2015; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Fugate et al., 2004; Helliwell & Huang, 2014; Luciano, Bond, & Drake, 2014; McQuaid, 2017; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Reeskens & Vandecasteele, 2017; Rohde, Tang, Osberg, & Prasada Rao, 2017; Sanchez, 2004; Teijeiro, Rungo, & Freire, 2013; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005; Van der Meer, 2014; Van der Noordt, IJzelnberg, Droomers, & Proper, 2014; Yorke & Knight, 2007). The process of finding employment is not easy and is associated with feeling bored, lonely, uncertain, empty and rejected and the unemployed process as discouraging, unpleasant and associated with concerns about financial matters (De Witte et al., 2012). Pathologies might arise or feelings of leading a barren and meaningless life when individuals struggle to obtain employment or remain unemployed because unemployed people showed consistently higher levels of psychological distress and depression, and lower levels of self-esteem (Cloete, 2015; De Witte et al., 2012; Graham & Mlatsheni, n.d.; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). According to Cloete (2015) “being unemployed influences the total well-being of a person in a very negative, almost destructive way”, and a study by Strandh, Winefield, Nilsson and Hammarström (2014) found that there are long-term mental health scarring effects of exposure to youth unemployment.

Challenges Facing Universities

One of the biggest challenges facing universities, nationally and internationally, remains therefore to ensure the employability of their graduates (see Arrowsmith, Bagoly-Simo, Finchum, Oda, & Pawson, 2011; Barnard & Nel, 2009; Bridgstock, 2009; Harvey, 2000; Holmes, 2011; Mason, William, & Cranmer, 2009; Scott, 2016; Van Lill, 2005; Yorke & Knight, 2007; Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008). This means not only to find a job (any job), but being able to compete

for positions graduates view as appropriate and sustainable and in which they can be satisfied and successful – what they perceive to be ‘dream jobs’.

A comprehensive review of literature on new graduate employability and curriculum vitae (CV)/resume-writing, found no peer-reviewed or scientific publication on competence-based CV-writing programmes. Keeping the warning of Oades, Robinson, Green and Spence (2011) in mind that a competence-based educational approach at the tertiary level will quickly descend into faddism unless it: is based on relevant literature on new graduate employability; be informed by a relevant field of scholarship, such as psychology; take into account the opinions of stakeholders of new graduate employability; be developed from a basis of sound programme development principles; and be evaluated for its contribution to the CV-writing ability of graduate job seekers with limited to no relevant work experience.

Graduate employability enhancement is without a doubt a complex issue and develops through the life course, socialising processes, obtaining an education (including a tertiary qualification), participation in extra- and co-curricular activities, writing a convincing CV and how graduates conduct themselves in the job interview. However, the CV remains the most important job-hunting tool for graduates (see Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross, Beggs, & Young, 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008) because it captures and displays graduate employability attributes and the potential to do the job competently. The CV creates the first impression of the applicant since it contains information about the applicants’ knowledge, skill and attitude (Athey & Orth, 1999). This study attempted to develop, describe and implement a competence-based CV-writing programme to benefit new graduates in the first place, but also career consultants and graduate recruiters and by extension, the various professions and society.

The phases of which the research consists are illustrated in Figure 1 (see page 9) and explained as part of the research design of the study below.

Purpose of the Study

The overall aim of this research is to develop and evaluate a competence-based CV-writing programme that will assist graduate job seekers with limited to no relevant work experience to present their competence to potential employers more convincingly and thereby demonstrating an optimal person-environment fit (Bergman & Jean, 2016; Caplan, 1987; Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011; Kristof-Brown, Reeves, & Follmer, 2014). To address the aim of the research, the following questions are asked and will be addressed in separate articles:

- What knowledge currently exists about new graduate employability enhancement and a competence-based approach to enhance new graduates' employability?
- What are the perceptions of different stakeholders (career consultants, graduate students and graduate recruiters) about CVs for new graduates?
- What should a competence-based CV-writing programme consist of for new graduates and how should it be developed and described?
- How do stakeholders (graduate students and graduate recruiters) evaluate a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates?

The aim of study will be to address the following objectives:

- To provide an overview and a critical reflection of literature with the aim of conceptualising new graduate employability and developing a competence-based approach to enhance the employability of new graduates.
- To obtain stakeholders' perceptions of and need for new graduates CVs.
- To use programme development approaches and principles to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates.
- To use programme evaluation literature and principles to obtain stakeholders' evaluation of a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates.

Methodology

The research design was informed by the philosophy of pragmatism as described below (see page 13). The qualitative approach of this study was inductive in nature. This implies that the specific methodology used by the researcher and the information (data) obtained from the research participants in this study guided the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kawulich & Holland, 2012; Mayan, 2009). Therefore the competence-based CV-writing programme in this study is not developed on the basis of a specific theory within a specific field, but rather informed by the specific research paradigm (worldview: philosophy of pragmatism) that determined the research design used as suggested by literature (see Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kawulich & Holland, 2012; Mayan, 2009). This is a multi-phased qualitative research project, in which the overall principles of programme development and evaluation are used for the purpose of the study. The four phases were detailed in separate articles, which capture and describe the complete research project, and are illustrated in Figure 1 below (see page 9). The research methodology applicable to each article will be described in the relevant article. This four-phase structure of the complete research project will address the research objectives in the following ways:

Phase one will provide an overview of literature and a critical reflection on the concept of new graduate employability and a competence-based approach to enhance the employability of new graduates. The understanding of and insight into the concept of graduate employability and various definitions found in literature will inform the subsequent phases.

Phase two will obtain the stakeholders' perceptions of and needs for new graduates' CVs. The expressed needs of stakeholders, together with insight from literature, will inform the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme.

Phase three will draw on the insight acquired from the literature, together with the stakeholder needs applied to programme development approaches and principles, to develop a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates.

Phase four will use programme evaluation approaches and principles to obtain stakeholders' evaluation of the effectiveness of the competence-based CV-writing programme developed in phase three.

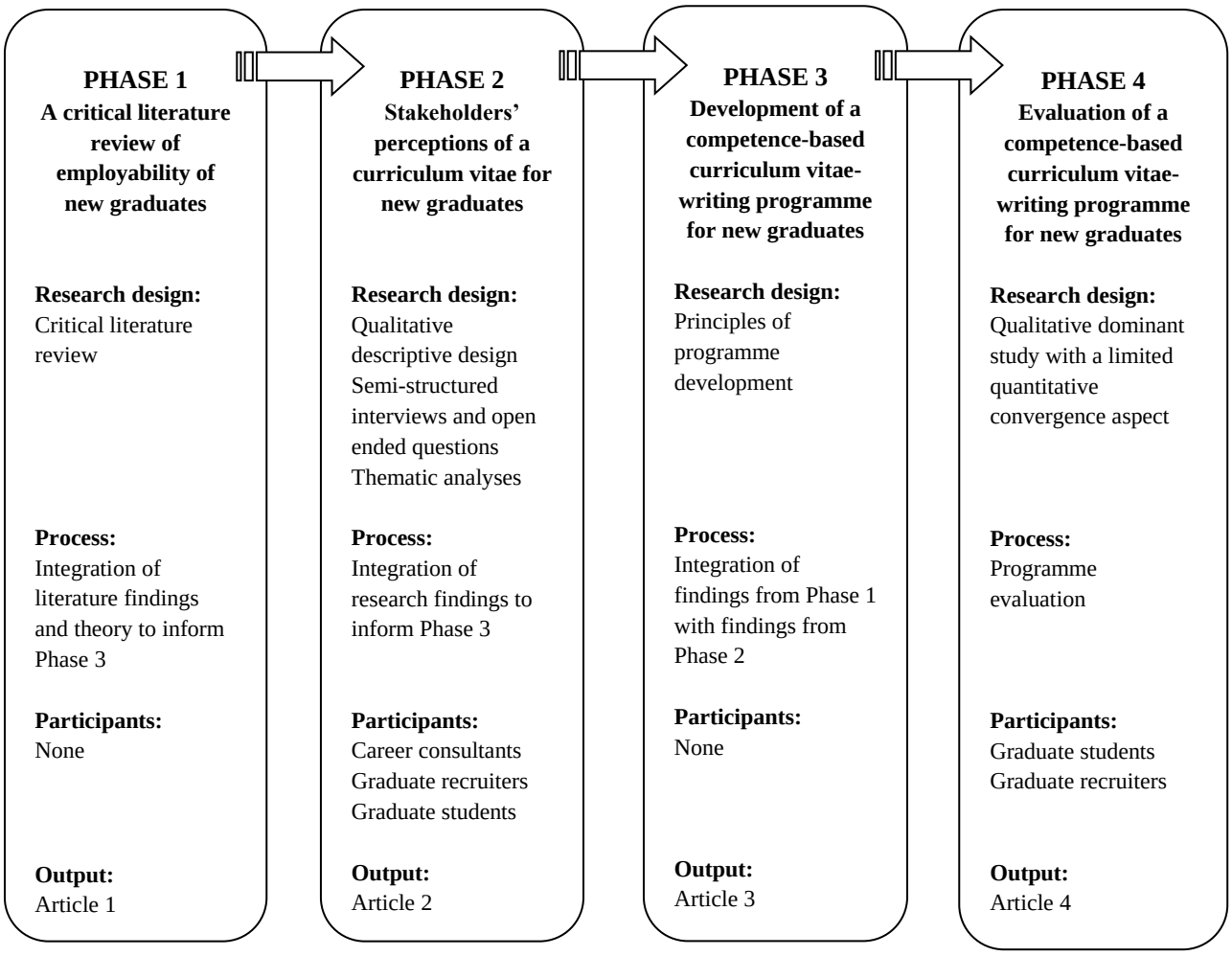

Figure 1. The Four Phases of the Study

Research Population: Stakeholders in New Graduates' Employability

There are at least three major stakeholder groups that are directly involved in the employability of new graduates, namely: graduate recruiters (employers), career consultants at career services in higher education institutions, and the graduates themselves (Jackson, 2012; Lowden, Hall, Elliot, & Levin, 2011; Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008). There are also stakeholders who are indirectly involved or who benefit indirectly from graduate employability, but for the purposes of this study only those who are directly involved will be discussed.

Graduate Recruiters

From the employers' point of view, employability is the graduate's propensity for demonstrating attributes they anticipate will be necessary for the future effective functioning of their organisation (Acevedo & Yancey, 2011; De Cuyper, Raeder, Van der Heijden, & Wittekind, 2012; Evans, 2000; Harvey, 1997). Evans (2000) states that the employers' first approach is to select employees which possess skills and capabilities (graduate employability attributes) of interest to the company.

Graduate recruiters try to find the right person-job match by taking into account both the new graduate's individual employability attributes and the job requirements (Acevedo & Yancey, 2011). Graduate recruiters within employer organisations drive the recruitment processes and decide what graduate employability attributes are of interest and are required for employment. They are involved in advertising or marketing graduate opportunities and are involved in the recruitment, screening, interviewing and placement of graduates in those positions (Prospects, 2016c). This includes any size of organisation, and organisations employing graduates from any field of study. Most graduate recruiters are schooled in the humanities, such as psychology or industrial psychology (Prospects, 2016c). Their interest lies in the contents and quality of the job application and the CV provided. They are also involved in defining the competency requirements for appointment.

Career Consultants

Most South African higher education institutions established career centres to assist their graduates in job search processes, and administering graduate placement programmes. Universities' career centres develop their own in-house programmes, career guides and/or workshops to enhance their students' employability and to develop their graduates positive attributes (Oades et al., 2011) so that new graduates are empowered to secure the best possible jobs in a very competitive job market; in other words, enhancing their employability.

Career consultants are employed by tertiary education institutions to scout for employment opportunities and enhance the employability of their graduates by assisting them in job search processes, CV-writing, interview preparation, graduate placement programmes and the like (Prospects, 2016a). Even though they may have different job titles, career consultants are mostly graduates in the humanities, such as education, psychology or industrial psychology (Prospects, 2016a).

Employability has become, and continues to be, a major concern for higher education institutions in seeking to give their students the best possible advantage to compete for available job opportunities (May, 2012; Scott, 2016). To best prepare new graduates for employment, higher education institutions should take cognisance of how employability impacts on society and industry if they are to understand the opportunities for and limitations in their preparation of graduates for jobs in business and industry (Arrowsmith et al., 2011; United Kingdom Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [UK BIS], 2011). Two aspects are important from the perspective of higher education institutions, namely: to educate graduates to perform in graduate jobs by including employability in their curriculum; and to develop the ability of the graduate to find a job - any job (Knight & Yorke, 2001; Yorke, 2001). First, higher education institutions seem to be concerned primarily with the notion of graduates' competence (ability or capability) to equip them for a job and to be capable of being employed, rather than with job acquisition (Harvey, 2001; Scott, 2016; Van der Heijden, 2001). However, the educational process is criticized because even though students can master academic content, it does not necessarily equip them with employability skills (attributes) (Avramenko, 2012). Teijeiro et al. (2013) therefore suggested that higher education institutions should change their traditional focus and make a specific effort to help their students to develop those attributes that best foster employability. Although employability does not assure employment, Fugate et al. (2004), argue that it enhances an individual's likelihood of gaining employment.

Second, higher education institutions do not have any control over the labour market and cannot guarantee employment outcomes. Higher education institutions can however, provide good student learning and the curriculum, teaching and assessment that accompany it should provide a good basis for employability of new graduates to enhance the likelihood that their graduates will gain appropriate employment (Holmes, 2011; Knight & Yorke, 2000). The expectations are that higher education institutions should become more complex; instead of building only academic knowledge they should be enhancing personal traits and building employability skills (attributes) in students by introducing and creating work experiences, entrepreneurship programmes, improving careers advice and using portfolios (Knight & Yorke, 2003). Findings of a study by Cranmer (2006) on the impact of employability skills teaching and learning on graduate labour market prospects in the UK indicated, however, that intentions to enhance graduates' employability consistently produced mixed outcomes.

New Graduates

A new graduate is regarded as student "who has completed a first degree or post-graduate degree within the last two years" (Professional CV Services, 2016, p. 1). These new graduates possess domain-specific occupational knowledge, which includes course content and theories that were mastered during their studies (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). New graduates also develop competence or employability attributes throughout the course of their lifetimes, including their educational and extra-curricular activities (Acevedo & Yancey, 2011; Arrowsmith et al., 2011; Avramenko, 2012; Bridgstock, 2009; Coetzee, 2012; United Kingdom [UK BIS], 2011). Counselling psychologists suggest possible career options derived from the accumulated competences and attributes in combination with the individuals' cognitive abilities and career preferences (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011, Cherry, 2015c; Prospects, 2016b; South Africa, 2011). To enhance their employability, new graduates' should accurately identify graduate recruiters' expectations of the graduate employability attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes), or the competence required for the job (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Fugate et al., 2004;

Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Teijeiro et al., 2013). In preparing for their employment opportunities they should continuously update and showcase those attributes to navigate the world of work proactively and self-manage the career building process so that they can compete successfully for employment by convincing graduate recruiters that they possess the necessary graduate employability attributes for the position and the organisation, thus showing the best person-job fit (Bridgstock, 2009).

These new graduates, as first-time job seekers, aim to secure employment in positions that require a graduate qualification (Abel et al., 2014; Bezuidenhout, 2011; De Cuyper, De Witte, Van den Broeck, & De Meyer, 2009; Mason et al., 2009; Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012). Increasingly, therefore, graduates need to be flexible in response to the growing number of career changes expected to be experienced through life (Harvey, 2000). New graduates have to reflect resilience and an ability to navigate themselves in the environment (De Cuyper et al., 2012). This presupposes an active form of adaptability and the optimal use of competence. It also requires individuals to know what components of competence (employability attributes) are needed in the jobs they apply for and what competences they can offer employers. Even though graduates have what Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) refer to as domain-specific occupational knowledge (the course content and theories that were mastered to obtain the qualification), together with their personal employability attributes, they may or may not be employed. The employability of new graduates is further compromised by their limited knowledge of the employment and job hunting process, implying that they may not always be sufficiently prepared to deal with the fierce competition for limited graduate job opportunities (Abel et al., 2014).

Paradigm Approach: Pragmatism as Method in Philosophy

Following Dewey (1938), a problem or obstacle regarding new graduates' employability was observed and a research process was set in motion to actively manipulate the environment (development, implementation and evaluation of a competence-based CV-writing programme) to

stimulate human action (writing CVs that will show an optimal person-environment fit), placing this study within the realm of pragmatism. Pragmatism is defined in terms of the value of an idea or a tool (programme) that is developed in terms of surrounding conditions (challenges associated with the employability of new graduates) and linked to practical consequences (enhancing the chances of new graduates to obtain employment) (Campbell, 2011; Rorty, Putnam, Conant, & Helfrich, 2004). The value of the development, implementation and evaluation of a competence-based CV-writing programme is the "set of possible effects" that may emanate from it – pragmatism's "cash value" (Campbell, 2011, p. 9).

Pragmatism guides research that is interested in practice and how to change it (Goldkuhl, 2012; Rorty et al., 2004). Research that aims to intervene and change is often described as action research. It is proposed, however, that action is pivotal to change, and that change occurs as the result of interplay between knowledge and action (Goldkuhl, 2012). The knowledge of new graduates about the world of work develops gradually and it develops through feedback from direct practice (Langford, 2004). Direct practice is associated with action, intervention and constructive knowledge (Brandom, 2002; Goldkuhl, 2012; Putnam, 2002). Informed by pragmatism, the action intended in this research enquiry is to develop, implement and evaluate a competence-based CV-writing programme as an intervention for constructive knowledge development in new graduates so that they are able to present (participate in the recruitment process) their employable potential to prospective employers and thereby change their employment status, the economic landscape and society at large. This implies that the enhancement of new graduates' employability takes place within a particular context, which includes the actions of new graduates to accomplish their goal of finding employment (Campbell, 2011).

Departing from a pragmatic approach (Gascoigne, 2004; Goldkuhl, 2012; Putnam, 2002), the following problems are thus identified. There are increasing numbers of new graduates but limited job opportunities in a competitive labour environment, thus impacting on the

employability of new graduates (see Abel et al., 2014; Selingo, 2014; Torpey 2013). In addition, even though employability has been recognised as a subject field, it has only recently evolved to a significant area of study with research conducted and published increasingly.

New graduates lack the experience to present themselves convincingly to prospective employers (see De Witte et al., 2012). First-time entrants to the workplace face the additional challenge of having limited work-related experience and competence, and that the competence and abilities they do possess were developed mostly in voluntary, temporary and/or informal settings (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). They thus have to rely on two most important initial encounters with the professional working environment: the CV and the interview (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). These two elements are crucial in presenting a holistic view of the applicant and must convince the recruiter of the suitability of the applicant for the specific job. New graduates therefore require assistance to understand, react, and compete successfully in the process of recruitment.

Conceptual Framework

Literature on employability is extensive and covers different disciplines, such as labour economics, management science and psychology, each of which has foregrounded a specific perspective (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011). Employability seemingly emerged in the overlap of subject-specific psychology disciplines. The contribution of the related fields of psychology (developmental, counselling, industrial, and educational psychology) to a better understanding of employability will be discussed separately below, starting with the broad field of psychology.

Psychology contributes by explaining human behaviour (Cherry, 2015c) in the context in which people function (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005), the optimal fit between people and the contexts in which they function, including the work context (Cook, 2012), relational interactions between people (Vorster, Beukes, & Roos, 2013) and identity development (Brown et al., 2003; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2001; Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008). The psychological aspects of employability as a psychosocial construct describes the affective states of people, their

motivation and their knowledge, skill and attitude attributes (Athey & Orth, 1999). The general ontological view of employability is centred on the construct of person-environment fit. Kristof-Brown and Guay (2011) defines person-environment fit as the compatibility that occurs when individual and work environment characteristics are well matched. Person-environment fit is a multidimensional construct (Chuang et al., 2016) consisting of and emphasizing both the person component such as abilities and aspirations, and the environment component such as job demands and rewards (Caplan, 1987). Person-environment fit also recognises that people are differentially compatible in particular work environments (Kristof-Brown, & Guay, 2011) and positive outcomes occur only when people fit to situations. Trait activation theory (Bergman & Jean, 2016) argues that people have a variety of characteristics but only some of those characteristics are relevant to any given situation. When the situations call upon a particular trait or characteristic, it is brought into use. Sometimes the trait is sufficient which leads to success in the situation and sometimes it is not sufficient leading to failure. This study however takes a broader view than Bergman and Jean (2016), by not only focussing on traits or characteristics, but on the full scope of employability attributes that include knowledge, skills and personal traits. Good person-environment fit is established by more than simply hiring people who are qualified to do a particular job. It requires employees who are a good match with the company's value system and culture, with incumbent employees, and with the future goals and strategic direction of the organisation (Kristof-Brown et al., 2014). Therefore, new job seekers have to present employability attributes which will enable graduate recruiters to determine the optimal fit to the work context (setting). However, new graduates' limited and/or no relevant work experience make this assessment difficult because their competence can't be easily translated to the work setting.

Developmental psychologists study the psychological development of people that takes place throughout life, from the formative years of childhood and adolescence, through to aging (APA, 2011; Cherry, 2015c; South Africa, 2011). Following the lifespan development

perspective of developmental psychology, the innate psychological attributes developed in relation to social systems, cultural environments and familial impacts are influential on a persons' employability. Developing individuals are exposed to normative and non-normative events during the course of their lives that inform their career interests, identity and eventually a career decision which are determined by counselling psychologists through using different psychological instruments.

Counselling psychologists help people recognize their strengths and resources to cope with everyday problems and serious adversity. They do counselling or therapy with individuals of all ages, families and organizations. Counselling psychologists also help people understand and take action on career and work related problems (APA, 2011, Cherry, 2015c; Prospects, 2016b; South Africa, 2011). The focus on employability, however, is much broader than traditional career counselling because, according to Savickas (1993), the goal is shifting from supporting careerism to fostering self-affirmation and improved decision making.

The field of industrial psychology similarly contributes to a better understanding of employability because it studies the application of psychological principles and research methods in the workplace in the interest of improving productivity, health, and the quality of work life (APA, 2011; Cherry, 2015b; South Africa, 2011). The same competence (employability attributes) that indicates employability during career development processes after appointment, applies to employability in the recruitment and selection processes at the time of appointment. More specifically, industrial psychology adds to knowledge of employability that includes recruitment, selection and assessment processes, as well as sustained employment, career development, productivity, identity and personal adaptability in the workplace. Although competence is important throughout every employee's career path and career development, it is particularly relevant for new graduates who want to present their potential to prospective employers (Vorster & Roodt, 2003; Weightman, 1994) to enter the world of work. To be employable, a graduate must prove competence by possessing and demonstrating graduate

employability attributes. Pedersen et al. (2005) suggest a framework that embraces the promotion of positive adaptation, or competence development, through a programme that targets the social contexts in which individuals engage. The programme developed as a result of this study will aim to help graduates to adapt to the unfamiliar field of seeking employment by helping them to describe the job-related competence attributes they developed in the different contexts they have encountered in their lives thus far.

The field of educational psychology contributes to a better understanding of employability as the study of teaching and learning across the lifespan as well as the demonstration of performance and development of competence (APA, 2011; Cherry, 2015a; South Africa, 2011). Applied to employability, educational psychology adds to the knowledge of the processes and strategies of learning and building competence across the lifespan, thus illustrating graduates' competence. Literature describes competence as a set of observable performance dimensions expressed as the sum total of what a person knows (knowledge), what he/she is able to do (skills), and how he/she feels about or reacts to a situation or task (attitude) (Athey & Orth, 1999; Cranmer, 2006; Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998). These authors use the acronym KSA to refer to knowledge, skill and attitude. At close inspection, the observable performance dimensions, KSA, correspond with Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, according to which learning consists of the cognitive domain, the psycho-motor domain and the affective domain (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Forehand, 2005). This taxonomy is used by educational psychologists to administer and assess learning, to build competence and improve performance. Knowledge represents the cognitive domain; skills the psycho-motor domain and attitudes the affective domain in Bloom's Taxonomy. From the above insights it is clear that there are strong links between competence and employability. Competence is a prerequisite for employability. A person is employable if he/she displays the competence attributes required for the job. Weightman (1994) as well as Vorster and Roodt (2003) state that competence has a wide application and serves as a foundation for various human resources processes, such as recruitment

and selection, training and development, performance management, and career and succession planning.

The different contributions from the various fields of psychology, will inform the development and implementation of a competence-based CV-writing programme. The competence-based approach to CV writing will be investigated deeper and will be supplemented by insights from research findings and theories in the literature review of the study, to obtain a fuller perspective and deeper insight into the phenomenon of competence. This is in line with the inductive nature of the research approach.

Ethical Aspects Considered for Research Study

In this study ethical considerations were considered as very important to protect the participants as well as the researcher. Throughout this study the researcher adhered to all ethical guidelines stipulated by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA Act 56 of 1974) as well as by the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee with reference number NWU-00001-14-A1. The following ethical considerations were adhered to and will be discussed below: respect for persons; relevance and value; scientific integrity; risk of harm and likelihood of benefit; informed consent; distributive justice; professional competence; privacy and confidentiality; and publication of findings.

Respect for Persons

During this research study the best interest of the participants was always taken into account. Consideration for their well-being and safety was uppermost at all times and all participants were treated with respect. The researcher ensured this by always acting in a professional way towards all participants, and by treating everyone equally. Using empathic listening techniques, the researcher also ensured that the participant felt respected and understood during the interview process. The participants were also ensured of support (debriefing) if needed after the interview process. The researcher was at all times honest with participants by ensuring

that they were given accurate information and by being forthcoming about the research goals and the purpose of the data gathering.

Relevance and Value

This study contributes to the available knowledge about graduate employability. In particular, it will lead to a greater understanding of the contribution that a competence-based CV can make in enhancing employability. Furthermore, by contributing to a better understanding of graduate employability, this research also assisted in the development of a programme to teach students to compile a competence-based CV that could enhance their employability. The research process gave participants a chance to reflect on their own job search behaviour and habits and on the role the CV plays in their employability.

Scientific Integrity

Research method and research design were considered at all times and were also kept in mind when findings were interpreted and conclusions drawn. During the interviewing process the researcher asked probing questions to clarify what a participant was saying or what they meant and to keep interpretations subjective.

Risk of Harm and Likelihood of Benefit

Although the participants ran no risk of physical harm or other negative consequences, ethical issues were taken into account throughout the research process. The research topic and the interview questions were not in any way embarrassing or uncomfortable since they covered only the matter of employability and CV writing. Throughout the study voluntary participation was emphasised as an ethical requirement and participants could decide not to participate at any time they wanted to withdraw from the study. Due to the nature of this study, no direct benefits to the participants were foreseen, and they were informed accordingly. The contribution and benefits of this study include the development of a competence-based CV writing programme, which will probably benefit future graduates, consultants developing and presenting CV-writing programmes, and graduate employers.

Informed Consent

Informed consent required informing the research participant of the overall purpose of the research that was to be conducted as well as any potential benefits or risks that they might encounter. The participant was made aware of the fact that he or she could withdraw at any time or at any point in the research process. The participants gave voluntary written consent that they were willing to take part in the research.

Distributive Justice

A purposive sampling method was used and the number of participants interviewed was determined by the point of data saturation.

Professional Competence

The researcher at all times conducted himself in a professional manner. The researcher holds a master's degree in human resources management. With more than thirty years' experience in human resources management, including graduate recruitment, job evaluation and performance appraisal systems, the researcher has been employed as a career consultant for the past five years at the career centre of a tertiary institution in South Africa. He spends a substantial amount of time contributing to the employability enhancement of graduate students to prepare them for their entry into the job market by teaching them how to write a CV and how to prepare for job interviews. The researcher was well-prepared and objective.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality was an important consideration and entailed informing participants that the personal identifying information they provided would remain confidential and anonymous. Anonymity was maintained by allocating participants numbers and by coding the data during transcription. This ensured that no link could be made to a specific participant. Confidentiality was further ensured by the way data were captured, by changing identifying data during the transcription phase. All voice recordings on the audio recording device were transferred to the researcher's computers and the original recordings were deleted. Only the transferred recordings

on the password-protected computer of the researcher exist. Reporting of findings was done anonymously. All research data will be kept safe by the North-West University for five years.

Publication of Findings

Participants were not promised feedback or reporting of the findings of the study other than the finalised PhD thesis. If the submission of research publications in the form of peer reviewed articles is successful, findings of the study will also be available when they are published. The complete study will be presented in three parts. In Part 1, the importance and relevance of this research is set out to provide a background for the problem statement and research questions. The philosophy of pragmatism applied to the research and the conceptual framework guiding the research are discussed. In Part 2, four articles will be presented, and lastly, in Part 3, the contribution of the research is discussed in terms of practice, theory and method. A critique of the research is provided and recommendations for further research are suggested.

Conclusion

There are limited employment opportunities for graduates, and in combination with an unprecedented and large increase in the numbers of graduates it means that there is no guarantee of employment, despite the possession of a degree. In addition, the value of tertiary education and educational achievements has diminished significantly over time in terms of its social and economic value. Globally and in South Africa the prevalence of unemployed graduates remains an issue that justifies attention.

The process of obtaining employment remains difficult. An individualistic effort is required, with the onus mainly on the job seeker to obtain career information and to develop and display the competence attributes valued by graduate recruiters in order to obtain employment. Job seeking is often discouraging, and associated with rejection and uncertainty, which locates it within the study field of psychology.

Literature on employability generally regards it as a continuous process, which aims to secure employment through the optimal use of competence (employability attributes), but it would

be fair to conclude that the existing body of knowledge on new graduate employability and competence is un-integrated and confusing.

The research gap identified is the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates to present their employability attributes in such a way that could enhance their employability. A programme is proposed that is based on relevant literature on graduate employability, takes into account the opinions of stakeholders of graduate employability, is developed on the basis of sound programme development principles; and is evaluated for its contribution to graduate employability.

The research is designed on accordance with the philosophy of pragmatism and is a multi-phased qualitative research project in which the overall principles of programme development and evaluation are used for the purpose of the study. The four phases of the research were illustrated in a diagram and explained.

There are at least three major stakeholder groups directly involved in the employability of new graduates, namely: graduate recruiters (employers), career consultants at career services in higher education institutions, and the graduates themselves. These stakeholders and their interest in graduate employability were described together with the rationale for including their perceptions and needs in developing a programme.

From a pragmatist point of view the problem or obstacle regarding new graduates' employability is observed and a research process is set in motion to actively manipulate the environment (development, implementation and evaluation of a competence-based CV-writing programme) to enable successful human action (finding suitable employment based on a convincing CV).

As a conceptual framework, employability exists in the overlap of subject specific psychology disciplines: developmental and counselling psychology, industrial psychology and educational psychology.

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PART 2: ARTICLES

Guidelines for Authors: Journal of Psychology in Africa

Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be written in English and conform to the publication guidelines of the latest edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual of instructions for authors. Manuscripts can be a maximum of 7 000 words.

Submission

Manuscripts should be prepared in MSWord, double spaced with wide margins and submitted via email to the Editor-in-Chief at elias.mpofu@sydney.edu.au. Before submitting a manuscript, authors should peruse and consult a recent issue of the Journal of Psychology in Africa for general layout and style.

Manuscript Format

All pages must be numbered consecutively, including those containing the references, tables and figures. The typescript of a manuscript should be arranged as follows:

- **Title:** this should be brief, sufficiently informative for retrieval by automatic searching techniques and should contain important keywords (preferably <13).
- **Author(s) and address(es) of author(s):** The corresponding author must be indicated. The author's respective addresses where the work was done must be indicated. An e-mail address, telephone number and fax number for the corresponding author must be provided.
- **Abstract:** Articles and abstracts must be in English. Submission of abstracts translated to French, Portuguese and/ or Spanish is encouraged. For data-based contributions, the abstract should be structured as follows: *Objective* – the primary purpose of the paper, *Method* – data source, participants, design, measures, data analysis, *Results* – key findings, implications, future directions and *Conclusions* – in relation to the research questions and theory development. For all other contributions (except editorials, book reviews, special announcements) the abstract must be a concise statement of the content of the paper.

Abstracts must not exceed 150 words. The statement of the abstract should summarise the information presented in the paper but should not include references.

- **Text:** (1) Per APA guidelines, only one space should follow any punctuation; (2) Do not insert spaces at the beginning or end of paragraphs; (3) Do not use colour in text; and (4) Do not align references using spaces or tabs, use a hanging indent.
- **Tables and figures:** These should contain only information directly relevant to the content of the paper. Each table and figure must include a full, stand-alone caption, and each must be sequentially mentioned in the text. Collect tables and figures together at the end of the manuscript or supply as separate files. Indicate the correct placement in the text in this form <insert Table 1 here>. Figures must conform to the journals style. Pay particular attention to line thickness, font and figure proportions, taking into account the journal's printed page size – plan around one column (82 mm) or two column width (170 mm). For digital photographs or scanned images the resolution should be at least 300 dpi for colour or grey scale artwork and a minimum of 600 dpi for black line drawings. These files can be saved (in order of preference) in PSD, PDF or JPEG format. Graphs, charts or maps can be saved in AI, PDF or EPS format. MS Office files (Word, Powerpoint, Excel) are also acceptable but DO NOT EMBED Excel graphs or Powerpoint slides in a MS Word document.

Referencing

Referencing style should follow latest edition of the APA manual of instructions for authors.

- **References in text:** References in running text should be quoted as follows: (Louw & Mkize, 2012), or (Louw, 2011), or Louw (2000, 2004a, 2004b). All surnames should be cited the first time the reference occurs, e.g., Louw, Mkize, and Naidoo (2009) or (Louw, Mkize, & Naidoo, 2010). Subsequent citations should use et al., e.g. Louw et al. (2004) or (Louw et al., 2004). 'Unpublished observations' and 'personal communications' may be cited in the text, but not in the reference list. Manuscripts submitted but not yet published can be included as references followed by 'in press'.

- **Reference list:** Full references should be given at the end of the article in alphabetical order, using double spacing. References to journals should include the author's surnames and initials, the full title of the paper, the full name of the journal, the year of publication, the volume number, and inclusive page numbers. Titles of journals must not be abbreviated. References to books should include the authors' surnames and initials, the year of publication, full title of the book, the place of publication, and the publisher's name. References should be cited as per the examples below:

Reference Samples

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ARTICLE 1: A Critical Literature Review of Employability of New Graduates

A Critical Literature Review of Employability of New Graduates

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Abstract

This article provides a critical review of literature on employability of new graduates as a psychosocial construct. A critical literature review method was adopted, including thematic analysis and conceptual innovation, on i) Different point of view on employability, ii) Definitions of employability and iii) Graduate attributes. The findings of the review are reported in three parts: a) An overview of literature on employability; b) A thematic analysis of fourteen definitions to propose a specific definition for new graduates' employability; and c) A list of graduate employability attributes. The review confirmed employability as a psychosocial construct and responded to the need to clarify the confusing employability terminology used in literature; to develop a definition of new graduate employability; and to identify and categorise graduate employability attributes under three main headings, of knowledge attributes, skill attributes and characteristic attributes.

Keywords: Attributes; Critical literature review; Competence; Employability; New graduate; Skill.

Introduction

This article is the first in a series of four articles addressing the aim of a broader study to develop and evaluate a competence-based curriculum vitae (CV)-writing programme to enhance the employability of new graduates (see Roos, 2016). The first objective of the broader study and focus of this article is to conduct a critical review of literature on new graduate employability and competence associated with the employability of employees in general and new graduates specifically. The second objective is to obtain the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the contents of new graduates' CVs. The third objective is to combine the findings of the first two objectives to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme. The final objective is to evaluate the programme to determine the extent to which this programme achieved its goals.

Literature on the subject of employability presents a fragmented and fuzzy picture (Forrier, Verbruggen, & De Cuyper, 2015). Employability literature lacks a coherent theoretical framework, methods and application (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006), is studied from different perspectives and levels across a wide range of academic disciplines (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and therefore the authors use terminology inconsistently. For instance, the terms 'skill' and 'competence' are often used interchangeably (Jackson, 2012; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) in literature. Employability is defined broadly and confusingly. Peer-reviewed articles specifically aimed at employability of new graduates are rare. The employability of new graduates is compromised by the fragmented and fuzzy nature of literature on employability because they find it difficult to develop a clear understanding of new graduate employability which they need to successfully enter the work environment for the first time while lacking appropriate graduate work experience (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013).

A research gap was identified in the understanding and definition of new graduate employability. To address this gap in the supply of different views, definitions and descriptions of

employability, a critical literature review was deemed necessary. The review would investigate: i) different points of view on employability in order to combine these viewpoints into a simple concept of employability as it applies to new graduates; ii) specific definitions provided in literature of employability so that a single definition for new graduate employability might be formulated; and iii) specific attributes new graduates are expected to possess in order to be deemed employable.

Research Methodology

The choice of research method was based on Grant and Booth's (2009) definition and description of a "critical review" (p. 93) because it is characterised by a search strategy that identifies the most significant items in the field, includes an appraisal of the literature according to its contribution, provides a synthesis that is typically narrative and conceptual or chronological, and conducts an analysis that seeks to identify conceptual contribution to embody existing or derive new knowledge. A critical literature review is used because it includes both an extensive search of literature and a critical evaluation of the quality of the literature (Grant & Booth, 2009).

Steps Followed for the Critical Literature Review

Carnwell and Daly (2001) describe the following five steps required for a critical review of literature: i) Defining the purpose of the review; ii) Defining the scope of the review; iii) Identifying and selecting the sources of relevant information (including the use of inclusion and exclusion criteria); iv) Reviewing the literature; and; v) Constructing the review report. These steps were followed in this review, as described in more detail below.

Purpose. The purpose of the critical literature review is to determine what knowledge exists and/or definitions are provided in literature regarding employability of new graduates, and to identify and define what personal attributes make new graduates employable. The resulting findings should help new graduates to better understand the concept of employability and could contribute to the enhancement of their own employability.

Scope. The critical literature review included peer-reviewed journal articles that provided knowledge of or described employability attributes applicable to new graduates. The scope of definitions of employability covered a 10-year period between 2003 and 2013. However, it was found that definitions of employability citing employability pioneers such as Hillage and Pollard (1998) and Harvey (1999, 2000, & 2001) should also be included because their works are referred to so frequently and constitute some of the earliest published research on employability identified in the literature search and review.

Identification and selection. A systematic and thorough search of published literature to find as many items as possible relevant to the particular topic was conducted (Ridley, 2008). Potentially relevant literature was identified by using the following search engines for peer-reviewed journal articles: EbscoHost (Academic Search Premier, Africa-Wide Information, CAB Abstracts, CINAHL with Full Text, E-Journals, ERIC, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, MasterFILE Premier, MEDLINE, Philosopher's Index, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, SocINDEX, Google Scholar, and Science Direct.

The following search terms were used in all possible combinations to search in abstracts and titles of peer-reviewed journal articles: employability, graduate, new graduate, competence, competence-based, knowledge, skill, attitude, attributes, and strengths. The inclusion criteria for reference screening were articles published in the decade up to 2013, when the literature search was initiated, with the exceptions of Hillage and Pollard (1998) and Harvey (1999, 2000, & 2001) as mentioned above. Other inclusion criteria were articles written in English in peer-reviewed journals focusing on employability in general or specifically for graduates. The exclusion criteria were: literature outside the selected time frame (with the mentioned exceptions), not written in English, not in peer-reviewed journals, and with a focus on only one of the search terms.

All articles were appraised according to the focus of the article, and the relevance to graduate employability, definitions of employability and graduate employability attributes. After the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, 85 articles were finally included in the critical

literature review. This literature review was conducted over a four year period, from January 2013 to November 2016, but most of the literature was identified and integrated in the first three years, while the last year was used to complete the writing of the review.

Review of the literature. The critical review was conducted from the literature available and in the light of "what is of value from the previous body of work" (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 93). The selected literature was read to obtain insights into the views, viewpoints and definitions of employability and employability attributes. Principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Nieuwenhuis, 2016) were used for analysing and synthesising specific definitions of employability as well as graduate employability attributes found in literature. For the review of the definitions of employability, 85 articles were initially identified, of which 27 contained heuristic constructs related to employability but not completely formulated definitions. Of these articles 14 contained stated definitions of employability and are used in this critical review.

Reporting the findings. The findings of the review are reported below in three main parts: i) General overview of literature on employability and related concepts; ii) Thematic analysis of 14 specific definitions of employability that were identified in the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Nieuwenhuis, 2016); and iii) Thematic analysis and presentation in Table 4 below (see page 72) of the specific graduate employability attributes that were identified in the course of the review.

Rigour and Ethical Considerations in the Critical Review

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee on 6 March 2014 with reference number NWU-00001-14-A1. Despite Grant and Booth's (2009) statement that critical reviews "do not typically demonstrate the systematicity of other more structured approaches to the literature" (p. 93) and that "there is no formal requirement to present methods of the search, synthesis and analysis" (p. 93), this critical review endeavoured to achieve high levels of rigour by following and describing the Carnwell and

Daly (2001) steps, as described above. The following additional criteria for ensuring rigour in the critical review, as proposed by Jesson and Lacey (2006), were also kept in mind throughout the process, namely, to: i) Provide the reader with the key academic theories in the chosen topic; ii) Include the current opinions of the key writers in the topic; iii) Demonstrate an awareness of theory and the use of concepts; iv) Assess the strengths and weaknesses of previous work; v) Enable others to follow up the works cited through clear, accurate and complete referencing.

Wagner and Wiffen (2011), point out the ethical considerations regarding authorship, duplication of publication, plagiarism, transparency and accuracy. In this paper, no "guest authors or ghost authors" (Wagner & Wiffen, 2011, p. 130) contributed to the research and the writing, and the body of work is solely that of the acknowledged authors. This critical literature review will not be published in multiple publications. In this critical literature review care has been taken to avoid plagiarism by acknowledging every author and publication cited, and page numbers are provided for all direct quotations. It is also free of deliberate misinterpretations of anybody's work. This work is not influenced by any funding from any source and there are no competing or conflicting interests to be declared. Care has been taken to ensure accurate and complete literature searches and accurate data extraction.

Findings

The findings in the critical view of existing literature regarding employability are presented in three parts: Part 1 is an overview of literature on employability as it applies to new graduates which covers the following topics: i) Understanding the concept of employability; ii) Ontological views of different authors in explaining and studying employability; iii) Constructs of competence and skills and their relation to employability; iv) Different synonyms used by different authors for the word attributes; v) Relationship between 'graduate identity' and graduate employability attributes; and vi) Employability viewed on different levels. Part 2 analyses the different definitions used for employability and Part 3 lists the specific personal attributes associated with enhancing employability.

Findings Part 1: Overview of Literature on Employability

The critical literature review revealed different viewpoints, basic constructs and terminology used by various authors to study and describe employability. This overview of findings endeavours to bring synergy and clarification on: i) The concept of employability; ii) The ontological views adopted by certain authors in explaining and studying employability; iii) The constructs of competence and skills and its relation to employability; iv) The different synonyms used by different authors for the word attributes; v) The relationship between 'graduate identity' and graduate employability attributes; and vi) Employability viewed on different levels.

(a) The concept of employability. Specific definitions of employability found in literature will be discussed in more detail in Part 2 of the findings. What follows is a broad overview to put the concept of employability in perspective. Some views of employability emphasise the chance factor in finding employment (Forrier & Sels, 2003), which gives the impression that fate decides and there is not much a new graduate can do about it. Most other views, however, emphasise the active adaptability and proactive career behaviour of potential employees (Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Fugate et al., 2004). This proactive behaviour includes the ability to employ a range of generic competence attributes or career meta-competence (Coetzee, 2008), such as being adaptable and flexible. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) also view employability as a continuous process to acquire work through the optimal use of competence and employability attributes. One reason for the confusing and different points of view might be that employability is a relatively new discipline in which the existing body of knowledge lacks a coherent theoretical framework, methods and application (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). A second reason might be that employability is studied from different angles and distinct levels across a wide range of academic disciplines (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) and it draws theories, methods and applications, mostly from the fields of psychology, industrial psychology and educational psychology. A third reason for the confusion in the employability domain could be that the use of terminology is not always consistent. For instance, the terms 'skill' and 'competence' are often

used interchangeably (Jackson, 2012; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006), while skill concerns the execution of a single task, and competence deals with the execution of a whole series of different tasks within an occupational domain, all performed well and in an integrated manner (Mulder, 2001; Onstenk, 1997).

The literature review confirmed that employability is not an easily defined construct and that terminology is used in a confusing manner.

(b) Ontological views on employability. An ontological view refers to the perspective or point of view from which the topic is explained or studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The ontological assumptions underlying the different ontological views of employability in literature inform not only the understanding of the construct but also have implications for how employability is applied in practice (Mayan, 2009). The general ontological view of employability is centred on the person-environment fit (Bergman & Jean, 2016; Caplan, 1987; Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011; Kristof-Brown, Reeves, & Follmer, 2014) which includes "career identity, personal adaptability, and social/human capital" (Fugate et al., 2004, p. 19). Thus, following Fugate et al. (2004), employability is the synergistic combination of the three dimensions of identity, adaptability and social/human capital. For Barnard and Nel (2009), graduate employability has to do with: i) Graduates' actually obtaining jobs; ii) Graduate students' being developed by their experience of higher education (including academic and extra-curricular processes); and iii) Graduates possessing relevant achievements and potential. A critique of Barnard and Nel's (2009) view of employability's first construct (graduates only obtain jobs) is that it reduces employability to concerns with how many graduates are successful in finding employment. The second construct (of being developed), however, alludes to the very significant fact that graduate employability is a process of development, and of becoming (identity and adaptability). The new graduate's individual responsibility as well as the specific contribution by higher education institutions to graduate employability of their graduates are also emphasised by this viewpoint. This view (of being developed) relates to the constructs of

developing a career identity and personal adaptability put forward by Fugate et al. (2004). The third construct of Barnard and Nel (2009) (of employability as possession and potential) relates to the Fugate et al. (2004) constructs of social/human capital. Employability is viewed by Dacre-Pool and Sewell (2007) as being influenced by four main individual elements, namely: i) Employability assets (the individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes); ii) Deployment (the individual's career management skills e.g. job search skills); iii) Presentation (the individual's skills of applying for a job, for example CV writing and interview techniques); and iv) Circumstances in which a great deal depends on personal circumstances (such as family responsibilities) and external factors (such as the current level of opportunity within the labour market). This is in line with Hillage and Pollard's (1998) view that individual employability depends on the "knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they use those attributes and present them to employers in the context within which they seek work" (p. 2). Thus, the views of Hillage and Pollard (1998) and Dacre-Pool and Sewell (2007) are that employability consists in the possession of employability assets, and their use, deployment and presentation in specific circumstances in a specific context. Holmes (2011) explores three main ways of considering employability: i) The possessive approach, whereby graduate skills and attributes are seen as being possessed and can be used; ii) The positional approach, which views higher education as a system that reinforces social positioning and status; and iii) The processual approach, which examines the process of interaction between graduates seeking employment and those who are gatekeepers to such employment.

The critical review of literature revealed, from different ontological views and as a basic orientation to employability, that inherent in the person (identity) are certain attributes (capital/assets/possessions) that must be owned, developed, presented, demonstrated and manipulated (adapted/processed) to prove that the person is employable in a specific context. The general ontological view of employability is centred on the person-environment fit.

(c) Understanding competence. The words 'competence', 'competences' or 'competencies' are frequently found in relation to employability, and need to be understood in context. Teijeiro, Rungo, and Freire (2013), use the collective term 'professional competencies' to refer to employability attributes. Sanchez (2004, p. 518) notes: "The competence perspective has brought both significant theoretical extensions and important practical benefits to contemporary management thinking". Sanchez (2004) says management thinking in the 1990s focused on conceptualising and analysing competences of organisations. Many authors (see Cranmer, 2006; Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998) refer to competence or personal employability attributes as KSAO's, an acronym for knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes. Mathison (2005) uses the slightly different term KASA as an acronym for knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations. It is suggested, however, that the undefined 'other attributes' in the acronym KSAO should be ignored, as it is sufficient to state that competence consists only of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This suggestion is in line with Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Forehand, 2005), according to which learning (and therefore competence) consists of the cognitive (knowledge-based) domain, the psycho-motor (skills-based) domain and the affective (attitudinal-based) domain. Athey and Orth (1999) also support this view by referring to competence as a set of observable performance dimensions including knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The critical review of literature revealed that the term 'competence' is a collective word indicating a measurement of a person's employability because it refers to the sum total of the personal employability attributes which includes knowledge, skill and attitudes.

Literature on employability overemphasises skills and neglect, to a certain degree, knowledge and attitudes. For example, many participants in the study by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, (2012) felt that the term, 'employability skills' (which they equate to graduate employability attributes), at the very least implies a focus on entry level skills, and at the very worst, implies that if an individual does not

have these skills, he or she is unemployable. Some participants felt that 'employability skills' has currency and is a widely understood term, while others suggested that it does not matter what the framework is called as long as everyone understands what it means (Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012). However, to equate attributes to skills only is a narrow view to adopt. Deep technical skill may get you through the door, but what will keep you inside is a broader perspective (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). A broader perspective recognises not only skills, but the knowledge, skills, and attitudes individuals possess as well as the way they use those assets and present them to graduate recruiters and the context within which they seek work (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Graduate recruiters' preferences regarding employee values, attitudes, personality and other personal qualities go beyond work-related technical and interpersonal skills (Parker, 2008). Harvey (1997) also notes how graduate recruiters talk about the sort of person they want, for example, 'proactive', 'a self-starter', 'confident', and 'enthusiastic'. These are characteristics or personality attributes and not skills or abilities, according to Harvey (1997). The use of such characteristics and personal qualities may be regarded as recruiters' expectations about how personal characteristics and traits influence the way in which graduates go about their work – their behaviour and how they perform – because characteristics influence behaviour and therefore both skills and characteristics are required as attributes (Holmes, 2001). An important contribution of Teijeiro et al. (2013), in addition to generic and specific attributes, is the mention of a subset of attributes, related to personal and personality characteristics. Personal qualities pervade employability; an appropriate personal manner, for example, is an asset in any situation involving interpersonal contact. Less visible are qualities, such as the disposition to get things done, initiative-taking, and being prepared to stick at difficult tasks (Knight, 2001; Yorke & Knight, 2007). Personal qualities are also influential in both the acquisition of subject understanding (knowledge) and the development of skills. A willingness to learn (often from mistakes) implies a preparedness to tolerate some kind of stress in

order to achieve success (which, for some, may simply be not failing). Yorke and Knight (2007) also claim that discussions of employability are transformed by the inclusion of personal qualities.

Therefore, as the literature revealed, graduate employability attributes are not skills only, but include personal qualities and traits together with knowledge to create competence.

(d) Synonyms for attributes. This critical literature review revealed that the following words, in Table 1 below are used as synonyms for the word attributes.

Table 1

Synonyms for Attributes

Synonym	Reference
Ability	Berdrow & Evers (2011); Van der Linden & Mendonça (2006); Weinstein (2012).
Achievements	Arrowsmith, Bagoly-Simo, Finchum, Oda, & Pawson (2011); Bajunaid (2008); Barnard & Nel (2009).
Adaptive cognition	Fugate et al. (2004); Knight (2001); Knight & Yorke (2003); Potgieter & Coetzee (2013).
Behaviour and affect	Knight & Yorke (2003); Potgieter & Coetzee (2013).
Behaviours	Fugate et al. (2004); Knight & Yorke (2003); Potgieter & Coetzee (2013).
Being equipped for a job	Harvey (1999); Van der Heijden (2001).
Capability	Brown, Hesketh, & Williams (2003); Hillage & Pollard (1998).
Capacity	Bridgstock (2009); Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000).
Career-related attributes	Knight & Yorke (2003); Potgieter & Coetzee (2013).
Competence	Fugate et al. (2004); Potgieter & Coetzee (2013); Teijeiro, et al. (2013).
Competencies	Teijeiro et al. (2013).
Competency	Athey & Orth (1999); Kamen, Veilleux, Bangen, Van der Veen, & Klonoff (2010); Perera, Pearson, Ekundayo, & Zhou (2013).
Graduate identity	Brown et al. (2003); Hinchliffe & Jolly (2011); Holmes (2001); Zhiwen & Van der Heijden (2008);
Individual characteristics	Fugate et al. (2004)
Knowledge, skills, attitudes and other attributes (KSAO)	Cranmer (2006); Fugate et al. (2004); Hillage & Pollard (1998).
Knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations (KASA)	Mathison (2005).
Personal resources	De Cuyper, Raeder, Van der Heijden, & Wittekind (2012).
Personal attitudes	Mason, Williams, & Cranmer (2009); Scotland QAA (2009).
Personality attributes	Harvey (1997).
Personality preferences	Potgieter & Coetzee (2013).
Person-environment fit	Brown et al. (2003).
Professional competencies	Teijeiro et al. (2013).
Qualities	Confederation of British Industry (1999).
Skills	Cranmer (2006); Dacre-Pool & Sewell (2007); Mason et al. (2009).
Strength	Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000).
Understandings	Little (2004); Yorke (2004)
Work-readiness	Mason et al. (2009).

The interchangeable use of these words is problematic. The different terminology used for individual attributes is confusing and plagues empirical studies in which the meaning of certain skills may differ significantly (Jackson, 2012). Jackson (2012) further notes that the problem is aggravated by the conceptually ambiguous nature of certain skills, such as emotional and social intelligence, initiative and confidence. A recurring theme throughout a project of the Australian Department of Education (2006) was difficulties with terminology, and by far the most problematic was the term 'employability skills'. Holmes (2011) says a variety of initiatives had been undertaken, concerned with enhancing what would now be called 'graduate employability'. In most cases, these initiatives adopted the terminology mentioned above, but the word 'attributes' and the combination term, 'graduate skills and attributes' have been frequented lately (Holmes 2011).

To prevent further confusion, the word 'attributes' and the phrase 'graduate employability attributes' will be used in this paper to refer to all those concepts that are mentioned as requirements for employability and which refer to the individual attributes a graduate may own or display and that make him/her employable.

(e) Graduate identity. As a psychosocial construct, employability is linked to psychological development (graduate identity) and how well the individual functions in and interacts with challenging elements of the social environment, in this case the employment or recruitment process (Holmes, 2011).

Coetzee (2012) refers to graduate identity as 'a well-rounded person' by concluding that employers generally expect graduates to have "developed as a well-rounded person [identity] and acquired in addition to their discipline-specific knowledge, skills and competencies, broader transferable skills, and attributes which equip them to be capable, innovative and effective in the workplace" (p.120). Graduate identity is shaped through developmental processes which require personal adaptability (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). Graduate identity is social self-positioning (Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008) and therefore students should actively seek opportunities to

enhance their capabilities in relationship to the occupational settings in which they wish to be employed. Brown et al. (2003) particularly emphasise the importance of graduates' identifying those aspects of their own experience to date (academic and non-academic) that meet the requirements of graduate recruiters. Graduate identity requires gathering achievements and building potential which are valuable as social and human capital (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011). This identity underpins employability (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011), and depends on the individual's experience, aims and preferences as well as the specific job applied for.

Graduate identity, in this context, is relational (Holmes, 2011) – the outcome of social processes of identification which is constructed between the individual and significant others (graduate recruiters) in the social setting. The identity presented by the graduate could of course sometimes 'miss the target' when there is contradiction between graduate recruiters' expectations and the graduate's identity (Brown et al., 2003). In presenting themselves as prospective employees to an employer, new graduates are presenting their identity claim on being the graduate 'worthy' of such employment (Holmes, 2001). This requires graduates to develop a narrative of employability (Brown et al., 2003), based on reflections on their experiences – meaning knowing what you have to offer and how to 'sell' yourself (your identity). It is most unlikely that there will be a specific and limited set of terms or a single 'cluster' (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011) that runs through all graduates and all jobs; rather a complex set of graduate attributes that encompasses values, social engagement, intellect and performance. It is the very plethora of terms, the richness of the vocabulary that enables graduates to maintain their warrants, typically expressed in the language of skills and employability attributes (Holmes, 2001).

Literature revealed that the most important actions that new graduates can take in relation to their employability and graduate identity development is to participate actively in the developmental process of their emerging identity as graduates by identifying the employability attributes needed and creating a career identity, which must be adapted and presented to suit the

circumstances while being aware of the fact that the identity thus gained must be treated as a valuable possession which can be traded as capital or assets in the job market.

(f) Employability viewed on different levels. The critical literature review showed that employability as a concept is studied from different levels: i) Society, ii) Industry, iii) Organisation, and d) Individual level (Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008). The society level (i) concerns the different levels of governments, government departments and the general welfare of the broader society in aspects such as education and employment. The industry level (ii) concerns the broader economy and wealth as generated by business and industry, including economic gains, growth and competitiveness. The organisational level (ii) refers to specific businesses and organisations, their strategic goals and mission, and the development, growth and survival of their workforce and the organisation. This includes not only businesses, but also institutions such as higher education institutions. The individual level (iv) refers to the individuals (in this case new graduates) who must compete for employment in a very challenging and competitive environment.

Employability, literature revealed, is a concern at all these levels, albeit from different perspectives. At the highest two levels (i and ii), it concerns strategic plans for preventing unemployment, for productivity and economic growth and for educational strategies and curricula, while at the next level (iii) it concerns plans and strategies by organisations to attract, retain and develop the best human capital, while higher education institutions do their utmost to prepare graduates for employment (Scott, 2016). At the individual level (iv), it is about competing in the recruitment processes for the scarce employment opportunities available.

Lowden, Hall, Elliot, and Lewin (2011) argued that employability is understood as a social construct and stressed that to see it as an individual issue only was to miss important aspects of the concept. They believe that employability is a responsibility shared equally between i) individuals who must be responsible for accepting the consequences of choices they make; ii) businesses which, by employing a workforce and serving customers, inculcate particular values

and attitudes as well as shaping behaviours (employers have a particular responsibility to recruit the right people and then continuously to develop the employability of their staff – for business reasons more than altruistic ones); and iii) public bodies such as schools, colleges, universities, local and national government that have a duty to secure the development and employability of all citizens.

Summary of findings of Part 1. The critical review of literature revealed that: i) Employability is not an easily defined construct and terminology is used in a confusing manner; ii) A general ontological view of employability is that inherent in the person's identity are certain attributes that must be owned, developed, presented, demonstrated and manipulated to prove that the individual is employable in a specific context; iii) The term 'competence' is a collective word indicating a measurement of a person's employability, because it refers to the sum total of the personal employability attributes, which includes knowledge, skill and attitudes and competence, or graduate employability attributes that are not only skills, but include personal qualities and traits together with knowledge; iv) The word attributes and the phrase graduate employability attributes should be used to refer to all those concepts that are mentioned as requirements for employability and which refer to the individual attributes that a graduate should own and display to make him or her employable; v) The most important action that new graduates can take in relation to their employability is to create a career identity through active participation in the developmental process of their emerging identities; vi) The direct stakeholders in employability are graduate recruiters, higher education institutions and individual graduates. There are also indirect stakeholders in employability.

Findings Part 2: Definitions of Employability

Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, and Kaizer (2013) "believe that employability is an attribution employers make about the probability that job candidates will make positive contributions to their organizations" (p. 11). However, literature on the subject of employability presents a fragmented and fuzzy picture (Forrier et al. 2015). It lacks a coherent theoretical framework, methods and

application (Forrier & Sels, 2003); is studied from different angles, across a wide range of academic disciplines; is defined on more than one level, and has acquired different meanings through time (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008). Terminology is also used inconsistently; for instance, skill and competence are often used interchangeably (Jackson, 2012; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Therefore defining employability is elusive and difficult (Chetty, 2012). Fourteen definitions of employability were found and are listed in chronological order in Table 2 below.

The fourteen definitions were subjected to thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Themes and patterns within the data were identified and are reported. Through a rigorous process of thematic analysis and with peer review to a point of consensus, the key themes identified in the text are listed in Table 3 below (see page 61) as: i) Qualifying descriptors used for employability; ii) The specific perspective in the definition (where indicated); iii) Actions or verbs in relation to aspects of the definition; iv) Stakeholders mentioned; v) Outcomes or anticipated benefits. A critical discussion of these themes will follow.

Table 2

Definitions of Employability

Reference	Definition
Hillage & Pollard (1998).	"Employability is the capability of acquiring, keeping and getting a new job in case of need" (p.2).
Harvey (2001)	"Employability is the propensity of the graduate to exhibit attributes that employers anticipate will be necessary for the future effective functioning of their organization" (p.27).
Brown, Hesketh, & Williams (2003)	"Employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain new employment if required" (p.110).
Knight & Yorke (2003)	"Employability is a psychosocial construct that represents the career-related attributes that promote adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect, and increase one's suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities" (p.7).

Reference	Definition
Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth (2004)	"Employability is a psychosocial construct that embodies individual characteristics that foster adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect, and enhance the individual-work interface" (p.15).
Little (2004)	"Employability is a set of achievements, understandings, and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations" (p.2).
Yorke (2004)	"Employability is a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (p.8).
Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden (2005)	"Employability is defined at the individual level as the continuously fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competences" (p.143).
Cranmer (2006)	"Definitions of employability in the UK range from a limited set of threshold skills to a wide range of knowledge, skills and attributes that graduates are expected to be able to demonstrate they have acquired in higher education" (p.172).
Dacre-Pool & Sewell (2007)	"Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make a person more likely to secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful" (p. 280).
Yorke & Knight (2007)	"Employability is a graduate's suitability for appropriate employment" (p.159).
Mason, Williams, & Cranmer (2009)	"Employability, from the perspective of employers (who often seems to refer to work-readiness) is the possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding that will enable new graduates to make productive contributions to organizational objectives soon after commencing employment" (p.2).
Scotland QAA (2009)	"Employability is a set of skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes that make graduates likely to gain professional employment and contribute to society, their profession and their own personal development" (p.9).
Potgieter & Coetzee (2013)	"Employability is a psychosocial construct that represents the career-related attributes that promote adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect, and increase one's suitability for appropriate and sustained employment opportunities" (p.2).

Table 3

Thematic Analysis of Definitions of Employability

Reference	Qualifying Descriptors	Specific Perspective	Verbs (Actions)	Stakeholders	Outcomes/ Benefits
Hillage & Pollard (1998)	Capability	-	Acquire Keep Get		Job in case of need.
Harvey (1999)	Attributes	-	Exhibit Anticipate	Graduate Employer	To meet employer's anticipated needs. For effective functioning of the organisation.
Brown, Hesketh, & Williams (2003)	Capability	-	Have Gain/obtain Maintain	Employment	To gain and maintain employment when required.
Knight & Yorke (2003)	Career-related attributes. Adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect.	A psychosocial construct.	Promote Increase suitability.	Individual Employment	To increase suitability for appropriate employment. To sustain employment.
Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth (2004)	Individual characteristics. Adaptive cognition, behaviour, and affect.	A psychosocial construct.	Embody Foster Enhance	Individual	To enhance the individual-work interface.
Little (2004)	Set of achievements, understandings, and personal attributes.	-	Make likely. Gain Be successful.	Individual The work or chosen occupation.	To make more likely to gain employment in the chosen occupation. To be successful.
Yorke (2004)	Set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes.	-	Make likely. Gain Be successful. Benefit	Graduate Workforce Community Economy	More likely to gain employment in the chosen occupation. To be successful. To benefit themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.

Reference	Qualifying Descriptors	Specific Perspective	Verbs (Actions)	Stakeholders	Outcomes/ Benefits
Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden (2005)	Competences	From individual perspective.	Fulfil, acquire and create.	Individual Work	The optimal use of competences.
Cranmer (2006)	Limited set of threshold skills. Range of knowledge, skills and attributes.	-	Demonstrate Have acquired.	Graduate Higher education.	Demonstrate to have acquired.
Dacre-Pool & Sewell (2007)	A set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes.	-	Have Make likely. Secure	A person. Occupation	To make more likely to secure occupations. To be satisfied and successful.
Yorke & Knight (2007)	Graduate's suitability.	-		Graduate Employment	For appropriate employment.
Mason, Williams, & Cranmer (2009)	Work-readiness Skills, knowledge, attitudes and commercial understanding.	From employers' perspective.	Possess Enable Contribute	Employer Graduate Organisation	To enable graduate to make productive contributions to organisational objectives soon.
Scotland QAA (2009)	Set of skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes.	-	Make likely. Gain Contribute	Graduate Employment Society Profession	Make likely to gain professional employment. To contribute to society and the profession. For personal development.
Potgieter & Coetzee (2013)	Career-related attributes. Adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect.	A psychosocial construct.	Represent Promote Increase Sustain	Individual Employment	To increase suitability for employment opportunities.

Critical discussion of findings in Part 2. The analysis reflects themes in terms of: i) Qualifying descriptors for employability; ii) Specific perspectives in the definition; iii) Actions or verbs in relation to aspects of the definition; iv) Stakeholders; and v) Outcomes or anticipated benefits.

Qualifying descriptors and specific perspectives. Different descriptive qualifiers are used to define or refer to employability. These descriptors, however, create confusion, for three reasons. First, the context in which the construct 'employability' is used is not mentioned explicitly, and without context meaning is obscured (Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson, 2011). Only five definitions provide a context or perspective from which they view employability. Of these, three definitions view employability as a psychosocial construct (Fugate et al., 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013), one presents context from the individual's perspective (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005), and one from the employers' perspective (Mason et al., 2009). A psychosocial construct relates to psychological development and functioning in, and interaction with, challenging elements of the social environment (Fugate et. al., 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Second, if employability is viewed as a psychosocial construct, all the definitions emphasise the psychological side but only some the social side. Psychological qualifying descriptors include: capability, qualities, competence, characteristics, and so on (see list of definitions), while social qualifying descriptors are alluded to by referring to the needs, anticipation and expectations of employers (Cranmer, 2006; Harvey, 1999,). Third, only vague references are made to the interaction between the individual and the social environment, which takes place at the interface between graduate applicant and recruiter during the recruitment process of CV reading and interviewing, by using constructs such as: suitability (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Yorke & Knight 2007); likelihood of gaining employment (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Little, 2004; Scotland QAA, 2009); and ability to demonstrate (Cranmer, 2006). Fugate et al.'s (2004) definition comes closest to including the interpersonal interaction of employability by referring to the individual-work interface.

The confusion is further noted by the use of a variety of synonyms for different attributes graduates should have to make them competent and employable. Cognitive abilities are mentioned in terms of knowledge (Cranmer, 2006; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Mason et al., 2009; Scotland QAA, 2009); understanding (Little, 2004; Yorke, 2004) and cognition (Fugate et al., 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Mason et al., 2009). Observable behaviour or psychomotor skills of a specific task or sets of tasks are called skills (Cranmer, 2006; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Mason et al., 2009; Yorke, 2004) and behaviour (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Knight & Yorke, 2003). Affective qualities are referred to as: affect (Fugate et al., 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013); characteristics (Fugate et al., 2004); and attitudes (Mason et al., 2009; Scotland QAA, 2009). Cognitive abilities, observable behaviour or psychomotor skills and affective qualities are regarded as components of competence (Athey & Orth, 1999), and also correspond to Bloom's Taxonomy, which consists of the cognitive (knowledge-based) domain, the psychomotor (skills-based) domain and the affective (attitudinal-based) domain (Bloom et al., 1971; Forehand, 2005).

The remaining qualifying descriptors are either encompassing constructs describing knowledge, skills, and attitudes on a higher level of abstraction (capability, attributes, qualities, competences and competencies) or descriptions (competence, suitability, readiness, achievements, and work-readiness) that express personal judgement of the performance and demonstration of competence (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).

Actions expressed as verbs. Verbs in the definitions relate to specific nouns which could have relevance for the qualifying descriptors, the specific perspective mentioned in the definition, to stakeholders or to outcomes and benefits. Irrespective of the meaning of the verb in relation to specific noun, employability requires action. In relation to graduates, definitions assume the possession of employable potential by referring to having the capability to gain suitable employment (Brown et al., 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). This employable potential (having a set of achievements, understandings, and personal attributes/qualities) (Fugate et al., 2004) and a

limited set of threshold skills (Cranmer, 2006) or career-related attributes (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013) enhances graduates' changes of gaining professional employment (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Little, 2004; Scotland QAA, 2009; Yorke, 2004), and also contributes to the individual-work interface (Fugate et al., 2004). This individual-work interface could refer either to the interactions between the graduate and recruiter during the recruitment process for a job, or while they are employed but new to employment (Brown et al., 2003; Hillage & Pollard, 1998), although this is not stated explicitly by Fugate et al. (2004).

Apart from having employable potential, graduates should be suitable to find appropriate employment (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Yorke & Knights, 2007). They should be able to exhibit attributes (Cranmer, 2006; Harvey, 1999) "and present them to employers in the context within which they seek work" (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 2). Employability is therefore a continuously evolving process of fulfilling, acquiring (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005) or learning (Jackson, 2012) to acquire employability attributes and to create work. The development of employability thus takes place over the duration of a programme (Yorke & Knight, 2007).

For graduates the goal of finding suitable employment is to be satisfied (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007) and successful in their choice of employment (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Little, 2004; Yorke, 2004), but it should also benefit the workplace, community and economy (Yorke, 2004). Employability of new graduates therefore has a bearing not only on the personal development of graduates but also for their profession and broader society (Scotland QAA, 2009).

Actions are also implied for employers. With their commercial understanding of their own business, they anticipate in graduates the attributes (skills, knowledge and attitudes) that are important for the future of their organisations (Harvey, 1999) and would make productive contributions to it (Mason et al., 2009).

Stakeholders. Stakeholders are identified in terms of their direct or indirect involvement with or benefit from employability. Direct stakeholders include graduates, employers and higher education institutions. Graduates are also referred to as the individual (Fugate et al., 2004; Little,

2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005), and a person (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007). The employer (see list of definitions) is also referred to as the organisation (Mason et al., 2009), work force (Yorke, 2004), and the work (Fugate et al., 2004; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005). Even though only one definition in this list refers to higher education institutions (Cranmer, 2006), they are regarded as direct stakeholders because of the influence they have on the employability of their graduates through their academic offerings. Stakeholders who benefit indirectly from graduate employability include: the profession (Scotland QAA, 2009); community (Yorke, 2004); society (Scotland QAA, 2009); and the economy (Yorke, 2004).

Outcomes anticipated. Analysis shows that the first expected outcome from employability is that the graduate should obtain and maintain employment of choice (see list of definitions). Appropriate employment opportunities can enable graduates to use their competence attributes optimally (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005); to develop personally (Scotland QAA, 2009); and be satisfied and successful (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007). Employability also has beneficial outcomes for employers. By appointing suitable graduates they will be able to meet their needs (Harvey, 1999) and expectations (Cranmer, 2006), function effectively (Harvey, 1999), and achieve their objectives (Mason et al., 2009). The only definition that emphasises the benefits for both graduate and employer is that of Fugate et al. (2004), who mention enhancing the individual-work interface. Secondary outcomes are benefits for the workforce, community and economy (Yorke, 2004); and contribute to society and the profession (Scotland QAA, 2009).

Research implications. From the analysis, it became clear that the various definitions each illuminated specific aspects of employability and together they provided a comprehensive view of employability. Employability concerns graduates' need to find suitable employment in which they are satisfied and successful and to keep their jobs. Employability is also about employers who, through their anticipated needs for the future effective functioning of the organisation, employ graduates who exhibit career-related attributes as well as personal qualities (referred to as

graduate employability attributes) for an optimal person-environment fit. Employability does not only benefit graduates and employers, but also the broader economy and society at large.

Graduate employability attributes refer to all those concepts that are mentioned as requirements for employability and which refer to the individual's competence or his/her employability. An attribute is a quality or character ascribed to any person or thing – a distinguished quality, character, credit, or reputation. (Oxford English Dictionary, 2016); a quality or characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone (or something), associated with and serving to identify a character or person (The Free Dictionary by Farlex, 2015); a quality or feature characteristic of or possessed by a specific person (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1993). The word attribute comes from the Latin verb *attribuere,* which is made up the prefix *ad*, meaning 'to', and *tribuere* meaning 'give, assign or bestow' (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1993; Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). An attribute, then, is a quality, a characteristic, or an inherent part of someone, belonging to that person because it was given to him/her and/or they acquired it.

The definitions mentioned above refer to employability in general, irrespective of the career progress the job seeker may or may not have shown, and irrespective of the type of formal qualification held. However, since this study focuses on new graduates and their first entry into the full-time or permanent job market, it is noted that their employability is often compromised by their limited knowledge of the recruiting process and how to present or exhibit their graduate employability attributes in the individual-work interface during CV writing and interviewing, as well as after being employed. This aspect is not well reflected in the definitions of employability although it is pivotal to the employability of new graduates. Unfortunately, due to the large offer of new graduates and the limited graduate employment opportunities available to them, the onus of proving convincingly that they are employable lies with new graduates.

After the critical analysis and summary of all the insights obtained from the definitions, an encompassing definition of new graduate employability is proposed, namely:

Employability of new graduates, despite their limited experience of graduate work, is the possession of appropriate graduate employability attributes and their convincing presentation to employers who expect those attributes, to gain meaningful employment, thereby benefiting employers and new graduates and, by extension, society.

Flowing from this definition, employability is influenced by (and dependent on) unique and relevant individual employability attributes, which must be observed, identified, described, developed, constructed, combined, and demonstrated to prove that the person is employable in a specific context. Graduate employability attributes must be made visible in a congruent and context-appropriate way to an audience whose needs (expectations) have been accurately interpreted.

Conclusion of Part 2. A critical review of definitions of employability applicable to new graduates revealed that employability is regarded as a psychosocial construct. From the perspective of the individual graduate, much emphasis is placed on graduate employability attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) which new graduates should have developed over a period of time. To find suitable and appropriate employment opportunities, new graduates exhibit and present their graduate employability attributes in the recruiting and job hunting process to employers (represented as graduate recruiters). From the perspective of employers, their needs for an effective future organisation inform their expectations, but they make their decision about the optimal person-environment fit on the convincing presentation of the new graduate's employability attributes. Even though for new graduates, this individual-work interface between them and prospective employers is a matter of being successful or not, it is not explicitly discussed in the definitions. An encompassing definition of new graduate employability is therefore proposed.

Findings Part 3: Graduate Employability Attributes

Introduction. An employability attribute is a psychosocial construct that describes career-related characteristics (Potgieter, 2012). It promotes adaptive cognition, behaviour and affect and

improves an individual's suitability for appropriate and sustainable employment (Fugate et al., 2004; Yorke & Knight, 2007). There seems to be no agreement about the best combination of attributes for enhancing employability. There are many lists of attributes expected of and/or suggested for graduates and a wide variety of words are used in literature to describe the attributes deemed necessary to make someone employable. This critical literature review revealed different views on these words and captured specific graduate employability attributes mentioned in the literature studied.

Individual attributes are a key dimension of the employability of graduates (Teijeiro et al., 2013) and deserve therefore be understood more clearly. Teijeiro et al. (2013) state that for graduates to enhance and prove their employability, they must accept the onus for and be pro-active in defining, developing and displaying graduate employability attributes which are transferable, rather than job-specific, and have currency across companies and industries. These attributes are a requisite for the CV and essential to the job selection and interview process and are acquired through experience, training or by more informal means (Teijeiro et al., 2013). Individuals who have best developed the attributes which recruiters view as the most important are more likely to be in a position to obtain a job. Teijeiro et al., (2013) conclude that developing the right set of attributes increases employability.

The writer scrutinised literature and peer reviewed articles to capture every list of words which, according to the authors, is associated with and/or can describe or enhance graduate employability. Not all the words describing graduate employability attributes were defined by the authors, so for the purpose of thematic analysis, the general meanings in laymen terms were used.

Thematic analysis of graduate employability attributes. The lists of graduate employability attributes found in literature were subjected to thematic analysis to identify, analyse and report themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A process of exploring the data from different angles was used to identify key themes in the text for the interpretation of the data (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). The results of rigorous thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006;

Nieuwenhuis, 2016) with peer review to a point of consensus are listed in Table 4 below (see page 72).

Classification of attributes. Nagendra, Radha, and Naidu (2013) found that the critical employability skills (attributes) identified by different researchers vary considerably in the way they are organised. They give the example of a paper that identified 76 different skills (attributes) in nine categories, while another named 36 skills and traits (attributes) in eight categories. There is, however, a great deal of agreement among the skills and traits identified, but also distinct differences. One possible reason underlying the lack of consensus is the difficulty of measuring competence attributes (Jackson, 2012) and the variety of approaches available for doing so - this generates diverging results. Many lists have been drawn up to set out desirable graduate attributes, but there have been "few attempts to identify the commonalities between various lists" (Chetty, 2012, p.13). It is observed by Jackson (2012) as well as Teijeiro et al. (2013) that graduate recruiters require generic attributes in combination with specific attributes. Contention exists about the exact constitution of employability, and the graduate attributes required to foster employability in tertiary students (Bridgstock, 2009). For Bridgstock (2009), graduate attributes encompasses two main types: Those which pertain to an individual's capacity for citizenship and thus ability to contribute towards a well-functioning society; and those which pertain to an individual's capacity to obtain and maintain work and thus contribute to economic productivity. This notion of capability implies that employability of graduates relates to their being equipped for a job and capable of being employed (Harvey, 2001; Van der Heijden, 2001). Although Bridgstock (2009) does not elaborate on the attributes that contribute to a well-functioning society, they appear to include personal qualities/traits and moral values that are also of interest to the employer. This point of view emphasises the importance of contributing to the economic productivity of the organisation firstly, and by extension, as a secondary outcome, to the broader community. While Bridgstock's (2009) two types are useful, the categorisation of employability attributes appears to be inexhaustible.

Lists of attributes. Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011) note that some higher education institutions have developed lists in which sets of graduate attributes such as scholarship, lifelong learning and global citizenship are identified. These do provide a little more insight than the lists of key skills (e.g. communication skills, problem solving, IT skills and numeracy, research and inquiry, information literacy, personal and intellectual autonomy and ethical, social and professional understanding). The attributes should be understood as a combination or a cluster of skills. The problem, according to Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011), with a list-approach is twofold. First, regardless of the list drawn up, there are bound to be some elements that are superfluous or missing. Second, the idea of graduate employability cannot be reduced to a simple list of attributes that all graduates should acquire. The optimal mix of attributes depends both on the graduate's experience and the position applied for.

This critical literature review revealed that there are the following main categories of attributes, namely: generic, specific and personal characteristics. Jackson (2012) as well as Teijeiro et al. (2013) distinguishes between generic and specific attributes, and Jackson (2012) refers to them as capability and competence respectively, whereby the process of learning requires building capability (generic) before demonstrating competence (specific). During the development of capability, graduates are learning how to reflect on application of disciplinary knowledge in practice, rather than actually developing the practical skills (Jackson, 2012).

This paper prefers to categorise graduate employability attributes as i) knowledge attributes; ii) skill attributes; and iii) attitude attributes. This corresponds well to the view that competence consists of knowledge, skill and attitude, which was derived from Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1971; Forehand, 2005), in terms which learning consists of the cognitive (knowledge-based or generic attributes building capability) domain, the psychomotor (skills-based or specific attributes building competence) domain and the affective (attitudinal-based or attributes of characteristics or traits) domain. Athey and Orth (1999) refer to competence as a set of observable performance dimensions, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Table 4

Graduate Employability Attributes

1. KNOWLEDGE ATTRIBUTES

These attributes are the basic (generic) building blocks of competence, expected from someone with higher levels of education.

1.1. Literacy

1.2 Numeracy

- Quantitative skills
- Master mathematical foundations
- Statistical method of analyses
- Accounting principles and procedures
- Project financial control and reporting

1.3 Learning abilities

- Ability and willingness to learn
- Memory
- Sound academic achievement

1.4 Cognitive abilities

- Analytical thinking
- Critical thinking
- Evaluation and questioning skills
- Reasoning and logical thinking
- Conceptual thinking
- Lateral thinking
- Innovative thinking
- Systems thinking
- Causal connection thinking
- Reflective ability
- Meta-cognition
- Strategic perspective
- Awareness
- Pattern recognition

1.5 Use of information technology and computer literacy

- Multimedia and ICT
- Software skills
- Business informatics

2. SKILL ATTRIBUTES

These attributes are the behavioural application of the above basic attributes in specific combinations, to act appropriately in a specific context.

Main skill attributes	Sub-skill attributes
2.1 Communication • English language (Speaking and writing) • Foreign language (Speaking and writing) • Listening	**2.1.1 Verbal communication** ▪ Presentation skills ▪ Meeting participation **2.1.2. Written communication** ▪ Preparation of various reports or documents
2.2 Problem solving and decision making • Diagnosing • Being resourceful • Proactivity and acuteness/foresight • Judgement	
2.3 Planning and project management	
2.4 Organising • Multi-tasking	
2.5 Learning abilities	**2.5.1 Master the own subject/field discipline at an appropriate level** **2.5.2 Master other/related disciplines at an appropriate level** ▪ Interdisciplinary knowledge ▪ Knowledge of contemporary issues ▪ Legal matters ▪ Contract practice and administration ▪ Procurement tendering ▪ Health and safety ▪ Business knowledge
2.6 Lifelong learning	
2.7 Research and information/data management	
2.8 Team/group collaboration and leadership	

2.9 Interpersonal skills and social interaction

- Social responsibility
- Relationship building and networking

2.9.1 Managing conflict

2.9.2 Giving and receiving instruction, feedback and counselling

2.9.3 Negotiation

2.9.4 Interpersonal sensitivity and understanding

- Cultural and diversity awareness and skills
- Political skills
- Moderation
- Understanding impact and influence on others
- Listening
- Empathy, warmth, genuineness
- Tolerate intense emotion

2.10 Business acumen

- Entrepreneurship
- Commercial, business and market awareness
- Risk taking
- Visioning
- Needs assessment
- Commercial orientation
- Cost-benefit analysis of options
- Economics and cost planning
- Operating globally
- Business strategies developments
- Initiative
- Organisational awareness and understanding
- Environmental and resource awareness

2.11 Creativity, innovation and change

- Initiative/innovation
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Change management
- Creativity and imagination
- Being resourceful

2.12 Accuracy, quality improvement and excellence

2.13 Customer service

2.14 Leadership and management

- Providing direction
- Objective/goal setting
- Coordinating ability
- Influence
- Motivating
- Visioning
- Empowering/developing/mentoring/coaching others
- Time-management
- Autonomy
- Presentability
- Professional development
- Confidence
- Performance efficiency
- Mature and positive attitude

2.15 Ethical conduct

- Honesty/integrity
- Values and morality
- Responsibility/reliability
- Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Trust

3. ATTITUDE ATTRIBUTES

Words used to describe a person's attributes in terms of personal traits characteristics, worldview, or motivation.

Character/personality	Learn from own errors
Attitude	Understand own strengths and limitations
Potential	Able to make difficult decisions
Have work and life experience	Able to defer judgement - not jump to conclusions

Self-confidence	Want to do as good a job as possible
Self-awareness	Willing to perform menial tasks when needed
Self-efficacy	Emotional intelligence
Ambition	Keep perspective
Achievement orientation	Agreeableness
Action orientation	Have a sense of humour
Motivation	Extraversion
Energy	Strategic
Passion	Enquiring
Impact	Conception and planning
Drive	Understand and take directions
Sustainability	Trust
Dynamism	Tact
Persuasiveness	Stress tolerance
Task Execution	Seek support in times of stress
Perseverance	Balance work with personal life
Tenacity	Remain calm under pressure
Take on new challenges	Loyalty
Take responsibility	Honesty and integrity
Engaged/involved	Enthusiasm
Proactive	Reliability
Conscientious	Personal presentation
Commitment	Common sense
Openness to experience	Adaptability
Flexibility	

References

Where lists of graduate employability attributes listed above were found:
Archer & Davison (2008); Arrowsmith et al. (2011); Australian Department of Education (2006); Avramenko (2012); Baartman & Ruijs (2011); Bajunaid (2008); Barnard & Nel (2009); Barrie (2006); Berdrow & Evers (2011); Blom & Saeki (2012); Bridgstock (2009); Bull (2011); Chauchat & Zolotaryova (2011); Dacre-Pool & Sewell (2007); Gibb (2004); Gokuladas (2011); Hinchliffe & Jolly (2011); Jackson (2009); Jackson (2013); Kamen et al. (2010); Khoon, Din, Ahmad, Hamzah, & Samah (2013); Kouwenhoven, Howie, & Plomp (2003); Lowden et al. (2011); Mason et al. (2009); Mbokazi, Visser, & Fourie (2004); Nzama, De Beer, & Visser (2008); Parker (2008); Perera et al. (2013); Pillai, Khan, Ibrahim, & Raphael (2012); Potgieter & Coetzee

(2013); Rothwell & Arnold (2007); Scott & Yates (2002); Sirca, Lesjak, & Sulcic (2006); Smith (2008); Teijeiro et al. (2013); Towlson & Rush (2013); United Kingdom [UK BIS] (2011); Van der Linden & Mendonça (2006); Van Lill (2005); Weinstein (2012); Williams (2003); Winterton, Delamare-Le Deist, & Stringfellow (2005); Yorke & Knight (2007); Young, Stengel, Chaffe-Stengel, & Harper (2010); Yusoff, Omar, Zaharim, Mohamed, & Muhamad (2012); Zhiwen & Van der Heijden (2008).

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The critical literature review revealed that the general ontological view of employability is centred on the person-environment fit where action is required to build an identity around specific attributes which must be developed, owned, and presented to prove that the person is employable in a specific context. The review further revealed that the word 'attributes' and the phrase 'graduate employability attributes' should be used to refer to all those concepts that are mentioned as the individual characteristics that new graduates should possess and display to make them employable. It defines the components of competence (a prerequisite for employability) as knowledge, skill and attitude. It identifies graduate recruiters, higher educational institutions and individual graduates as the main stakeholders in employability.

The critical literature review responds to the need for the development of a unique new definition of graduate employability:

> *Employability of new graduates, despite their limited experience of graduate work, is the possession of appropriate graduate employability attributes and their convincing presentation to employers who expect those attributes, to gain meaningful employment, thereby benefiting employers and new graduates and, by extension, society.*

The critical literature review reveals that there are the following main categories of graduate employability attributes, namely: generic, specific and personal characteristics, which are categorised in this paper as knowledge attributes, skill attributes and attitude attributes.

The findings of this critical literature review confirm that employability is regarded as a psychosocial construct which relates not only to individual psychological development but also functioning in, and interaction with the social environment (Fugate et. al., 2004; Knight & Yorke,

2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). The outcome of enhanced employability, according to the abovementioned definitions is meaningful employment (Brown et al., 2003; Cranmer, 2006; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Fugate et al., 2004; Harvey, 2001; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Little, 2004; Mason et al., 2009; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Scotland QAA, 2009; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2005; Yorke, 2004; Yorke & Knight, 2007). A new graduate who secures the "right" employment finds not only a secure income, but also meaningfulness, fulfilment, motivation and a personal identity.

Recommendation

Further research is recommended into the specific perceptions of the three stakeholder groups. The insights drawn from literature together with the stakeholders' perceptions may be used in the development of a training programme for competence-based CV-writing. The programme thus developed should be evaluated against expressed needs and by using programme evaluation methodology.

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ARTICLE 2: Stakeholders' Perceptions of a Curriculum Vitae for New Graduates

Stakeholders' Perceptions of a Curriculum Vitae for New Graduates

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Abstract

As the initial step in seeking employment, new graduates must decide what to include and how to present their graduate employability attributes (competence) in a Curriculum Vitae (CV) to enable recruiters to assess an optimal person-environment fit. The CV presents the first evidence of competence to a recruiter but graduates typically do not have much work experience to include. This article aims to obtain stakeholders' perceptions regarding the contents of a CV for new graduates. Research was conducted in a tertiary education context. Stakeholders involved in employability comprised new graduates (n= 7), career consultants (n= 10) and graduate recruiters (n= 8). A qualitative descriptive research design was used and data were obtained using semi-structured interviews, analysed thematically. Graduates expressed uncertainty about what to include in the CV and how to present it convincingly to recruiters. Consultants and recruiters highlighted specific contents for a CV confirmed in literature. The rationale or underlying principle for inclusion in the contents of the CV and how they should be presented was, however, omitted with the implication that new graduates are left with little option than to use recipe-like headings listing 'as is' information without using their competence to indicate an optimal person-environment fit. The development of a competence-based CV-writing programme is therefore proposed to assist all stakeholders in this regard.

Keywords: Career consultants; Competence-based; Curriculum Vitae; Employability; Employability enhancement; Graduate recruiters; New graduates; Perceptions; Stakeholders.

Introduction

This article is the second in a series of four articles addressing the aim of a broader study to develop and evaluate a competence-based curriculum vitae (CV)-writing programme for new graduates (see Roos, 2016). The first objective of the broader study was to conduct a critical review of literature on new graduate employability and competence associated with the employability of employees in general and new graduates specifically (see Roos, De Klerk, Stander, & Nienaber, 2016). The second objective and focus of this article is to obtain the perceptions of stakeholders regarding CVs that could potentially enhance a new graduate's employability. The third objective is to combine the findings of the first two objectives to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates. The final objective is to evaluate the programme to determine the extent to which this programme achieved its goals.

Problem Statement

All graduates are not equally employable because they are not equally competent (see Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross, Beggs, & Young, 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). New graduates do not always know how to present their graduate employability attributes (competence) (see Abel, Deitz, & Su, 2014; De Witte, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2012; Selingo, 2014; Torpey 2013). Therefore extra effort is required to enhance the employability of new graduates in the job market (Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). A critical review of literature (see Roos et al., 2016) revealed that the term 'competence' is a collective word indicating a measurement of a person's employability, because it refers to the sum total of the personal employability attributes, which includes knowledge, skill and attitudes. Following international trends, most South African universities seek to enhance the employability of their new graduates by setting up career centres.

Graduate employability attributes are usually presented in a CV (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). The CV is the first introduction of a new graduate's competence to a graduate recruiter, and prospective employers should from this be able to obtain a holistic picture of new

graduates' employability attributes. The CV is therefore the most important job-hunting tool for graduates (see Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). The graduate recruiter uses graduates' CVs to determine the possible fit between applicants and employment opportunities. The CV creates the first impression of the applicants since it contains information about the applicants' knowledge, skill and attitude (Athey & Orth, 1999; Roos et al., 2016), and a convincing presentation of specific competence (knowledge, skill and attitude) enhances the chances of becoming employed (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008).

New graduates typically do not have much work experience or a lengthy career path to give substance to their CV, and accordingly the presentation of their competence poses a challenge (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). It is thus important to assist new graduates in this regard. The process of obtaining employment is difficult (De Witte et al., 2012). It involves effort in which the onus is mainly on individuals to obtain career information from various sources, including counselling psychologists. In order to gain employment they have to develop and display the competences valued by graduate recruiters (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013) often with little external support.

A comprehensive review of national and international literature (Roos et al., 2016) found no peer-reviewed publication on CV-writing for new graduates with little to no relevant work experience. Most resources on CV-writing found in libraries, book stores or on the internet (see https://www.resume surgery; https://www.resume-now.com; https://www. resumehelp.com) are in the form of templates and/or recipe-like examples of CVs. Critique of these resources are that: i) they do not provide sufficient links between new graduates' competence and their CV-content; ii) they do not connect competence from life experience to graduate employers' needs; iii) they do not provide sufficient rationale for the contents of proposed CV headings; iv) they do not support inexperienced CV-writers in developing CVs from the employers' perspective rather than from their own frame of reference, and v) it is unclear which scientific grounds informed their approach

to CV-writing. A competence-based approach must be informed by a relevant field of scholarship, such as education, psychology, social work and organisational theory and behaviour (Oades, Robinson, Green, & Spence, 2011).

A critical review of literature (Roos et al., 2016) revealed that the term 'competence' is a collective word indicating a measurement of the individual's employability, because it refers to the sum total of the personal employability attributes which includes knowledge, skill and attitudes. A competence-based CV is specifically tailored to demonstrate the graduate's competence for the jobs they apply for by naming and giving proof of the employability attributes (De Cuyper, Raeder, Van der Heijden, & Wittekind, 2012; Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Teijeiro, Rungo, & Freire, 2013) the graduate has to offer and which the employer needs. New graduates may enhance their employability by accurately determining graduate recruiters' competence requirements for the job and their expectations of the graduates' employability attributes. In their CVs, graduates should showcase those attributes so that they are able to convince recruiters that they possess the attributes necessary for the position and the organisation, thus demonstrating the best person-job fit (Bridgstock, 2009).

What remains unclear, however, is what stakeholders in employability enhancement of new graduates perceive as important content to include in a CV. Insight into stakeholder perceptions will inform the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme. The research question that will guide this article, therefore, is: What do stakeholders perceive to be necessary to include in a new graduate CV?

Stakeholders in New Graduate Employability

The most important stakeholders involved in assessing CVs and the employability of new graduates include: graduate recruiters (employers), career consultants and graduates.

Graduate Recruiters

Graduate recruiters define the person-job fit and decide what graduate employability attributes are of interest to the company and which of these are required for that specific employment opportunity (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Prospects, 2016b). Very often graduate recruiters refer to lists of attributes to establish if graduates exhibit appropriate attributes (Harvey, 2001), which may not be clear to the job-seeking graduate. Bridgstock (2009) agrees that the often incomplete and confusing lists of graduate employability attributes do not address the full picture of what is required. From a graduate recruiter's point of view, it is not only about the applicant's possessing the necessary employability attributes, but, and probably more important, it is "the way they [new graduates] use those assets [attributes] and present them to employers in the context within which they seek work" (Hillage & Pollard, 1998, p. 2). This makes the CV a critical document in the graduate's presenting himself or herself to a recruiter (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008).

Career Consultants

Career consultants contribute to the enhancement of the employability of their graduates by assisting them in job search processes. They develop career guides and present workshops on topics such as CV-writing and job interviewing to enhance graduates' employability (Prospects, 2016a). In career centres, career consultants seek to help graduates to present their employability skills in more effective and efficient ways. The role of the CV is to provide the first impression a new graduate will make on a prospective employer.

New Graduates

New graduates in this study refer to undergraduate and postgraduate students who are approaching the end of their studies to become first-time entrants into the formal and fulltime job market (Professional CV Services, 2016). However, what all new graduates have in common is that they either do not have any, or very limited work experience particularly relevant

employment opportunities (see Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008).

Research Methodology

Research Approach and Design

A qualitative study (see Nieuwenhuis, 2016b) using a qualitative descriptive research design (see Sandelowski, 2000; 2010) was deemed appropriate for the purpose of the research enquiry. A qualitative descriptive research design is indicated because the study aims to draw up a comprehensive summary of stakeholders' perceptions to determine what to include in a CV and why (Sandelowski, 2000; 2010). In this study, different stakeholders' perceptions are analysed separately before they are combined to constitute a wide range of possible opinions and descriptions from the stakeholders to "capture all the elements" (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 336) of their perceptions of a CV (contents and layout).

Research Context and Participants

The context of this research falls into the nexus of higher education and the business sector in which new graduates endeavour to find employment and are assisted in the process by career consultants. The primary researcher is employed as a career consultant at the North-West University (NWU) in South Africa. He has obtained a postgraduate qualification (Master's degree) in human resources management and has 32 years' experience as a human resource manager in private and semi-state organisations. He has been involved in graduate recruitment and the assessment of CVs for various job levels, as well as the selection of applicants' potential based on their CV presentations.

The participants included in this study are: i) Graduate students (n= 7) of the North-West University; ii) Career consultants (n= 10) from other tertiary institutions in South Africa involved with employability enhancement of graduate students; and iii) Graduate recruiters (n= 8) from employers in South Africa who employ graduates. The participants were interviewed individually, but in two of the interviews with career consultants, two participants were present,

resulting in 8 interviews with the 10 participants. All three groups of stakeholders were recruited using convenience sampling (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Convenience sampling in this study required that participants who were available and willing to take part were invited and interviewed until data saturation was detected or reached as described by Francis et al. (2010).

The criterion for graduate students' participation in the research was that they were enrolled at NWU. The criterion for inclusion of career consultants from university career centres was that they or their institutions were affiliated to the South African Graduate Employer's Association (SAGEA, 2015). The criterion for recruitment and selection of graduate recruiters was that they were from graduate employers who have an affiliation with the career centre of NWU.

Career consultants and graduate recruiters, the two stakeholder groups whose job contents includes regularly giving advice on or evaluating CVs, are expected to be experts in the field. Graduate students, who are not expected to be experts in CV-writing or evaluation, were probed on what they thought they needed to know about CVs. It is proposed that by combining the needs of graduate students with the views of the experts a comprehensive view of the possible contents of a CV may be presented.

Procedure

In line with the ethical approval for the study, the following procedure was used to obtain data from the stakeholders. Lists of stakeholders conforming to the inclusion criteria were developed and telephonic and/or email contact was established to confirm their willingness to participate and to set a date and time for the interview. The informed consent forms, as approved by the ethical committee, were sent to stakeholders by email ahead of the interview with a request to familiarise themselves with the contents and to return the signed form before the interview. On the arranged date and time the researcher or a fieldworker phoned or paid the participant a personal visit, explained the informed consent where necessary and conducted the interview while recording it. As soon as possible after the interview the recordings were transcribed and saved in

a safe place. Field workers were trained in research ethics, obtaining informed consent and conducting semi-structured interviews. They also signed confidentiality agreements.

Data Gathering

In line with the qualitative descriptive research design (Sandelowski, 2000; 2010) of this research study, data were obtained by using semi-structured interviews (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2016b). Semi-structured interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to obtain the participants' perceptions (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a). The interviews were audio- recorded and transcribed verbatim, and treated as textual data. The following semi-structured interview questions as methods of data gathering were used for the different stakeholder groups.

Graduate students. Three questions were asked: Do you need training in CV-writing, and why? What do you need to learn? Where do you usually go for help with CV-writing? Appropriate probing for further elaboration was used where needed.

Career consultants and graduate recruiters. The interview context was created by explaining that information is required regarding new graduates' CVs. The following three questions were asked: What do you expect to be included in a CV? What aspects of a CV might create a positive attitude towards an applicant? What aspects of a CV might create a negative attitude towards an applicant? Appropriate probing for further elaboration was used where needed.

Data Analyses

The transcribed textual data obtained from all three stakeholder groups through semi-structured interviews were transferred into ATLAS Ti (Smit, 2002) a qualitative data analysis tool. The textual data were thematically analysed, using the suggestions of Clarke and Braun (2013) to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes). Clarke and Braun (2013) propose the following six phases: i) Familiarising yourself with your data; ii) Generating initial codes; iii) Searching for themes; iv) Reviewing themes; v) Defining and naming themes; and vi) Producing

the report. The analyses required codes to be assigned to participants' direct quotations. The codes were grouped and sorted into themes in multiple iterations. These themes were organised and were reported in the discussion of the findings. To protect their identities, participants were numbered as follows: Graduate students: GS1 to GS7, career consultants: CC1 to CC8, and graduate recruiters: GR1 to GR8.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is an indication of "methodological soundness and adequacy" (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 254). This study followed the guidelines proposed by Sandelowski (2000) to ensure the integrity of the findings and the suggestions for descriptive and interpretative validity. In this study descriptive validity was ensured by depicting the different aspects of what a CV should consist of, from the perspectives of the participants. The needs of graduate students with the views of the experts (career consultants and graduate recruiters) created a comprehensive view of the potential contents of a CV. Direct quotes from the respective participants were included, contributing to the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The rigour of data analysis was enhanced by involving a co-coder, who was provided with the same data and a coding sheet. The findings of the researcher and the co-coder were compared to determine if the researcher had provided an accurate account of the content of a CV according to the different participant groups. Interpretive validity was obtained by involving peers to assess if participants' perceptions had been accurately accounted for (Sandelowski, 2000).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee on 6 March 2014 with reference number NWU-00001-14-A1. This included obtaining informed consent in writing from every participant. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, that the data collected would be treated with confidentiality and that they could withdraw from the research study at any stage. Participants

were also assured that all the data would be kept confidential under secure control of the North-West University.

Findings

The findings will be presented in two parts: Part 1 is a summary of the themes of the different stakeholder groups presented in Table 1 below. It is important to note that graduates' responses (based on the questions asked) were not similar to the responses of the other two stakeholder groups, who were more prescriptive or provided opinions from a knowledge base. Graduates were more inquisitive, in the form of questions asked, in seeking clarity or pondering the issue. In Part 2 the themes will be discussed with appropriate verbatim quotes to capture the perceptions of the different stakeholders.

Table 1

Summary of Main and Sub Themes of Different Stakeholder Groups

Themes	**New Graduates (Inquisitive)**	**Career Consultants (Prescriptive)**	**Graduate Recruiters (Prescriptive)**
Theme 1: Contents of a CV			
Cover letter	Short summary and marketing tool.	Compulsory to every CV.	Diverse opinions varying from unimportant to a succinct summary.
Letterhead/contact details	Important to obtain contact information.	Letterhead with minimal information.	At least valid contact details.
Personal information	Think it is important.	Most important.	Relevant personal information must be presented upfront.
Personal profile and outstanding qualities/traits	Show strengths and weaknesses.	Unique qualities and graduate employability attributes.	Get an indication of who the applicant as a person is through a self-description.
Career objective	Show intentions about the future.	Provides a sense of career orientation.	No mention.
Formal qualifications	Important and show school and university marks.	For new graduates this is important because of little work experience.	Important and must fit the job requirements. Competence and qualities and traits are derived from qualifications. Include academic transcripts; additional training.

Themes	New Graduates (Inquisitive)	Career Consultants (Prescriptive)	Graduate Recruiters (Prescriptive)
Professional registration	No mention.	Add if applicable.	No mention.
Work and extramural experience	Show work and voluntary experience even hobbies and interests.	Work experience and extramural activities demonstrate potential to develop.	Detail of work and extramural experience. Specifically mention leadership experience.
Achievements	Obvious to include.	Achievements as an indication of personal qualities and traits.	No mention.
References	Previous employers.	At least three people who played a prominent role.	References are important but they should be willing and able to give a relevant reference.
Attachments	Unsure what to include.	Comply with requirements of organisation or use own discretion.	Few, but necessary information to support CV content.
CV Don'ts	No mention.	Poor photos, time gaps, negative attitude, spelling errors, too much irrelevant information.	Dishonesty or false impressions. Inappropriate use of cover letter.
Theme 2: Layout and Presentation			
	Structure and format; how to make it attractive.	Layout and spelling show attention to detail.	Creates impression and shows effort. Logical and chronological presentation. Easily readable, short and bulleted.

In the discussion of the findings, the themes that emerged from all three groups of participants will be discussed jointly below.

CV Content

The content of a CV according to stakeholders (students' needs together with consultants' and recruiters' expectations) includes:

Cover letter. Graduates perceived the cover letter as a succinct summary of the CV content (GS1 & 2): *"A cover letter that basically just sums everything in the CV"* (GS1). The cover letter

could also be used as a marketing tool: *"I think the cover letter should be a little more comprehensive, I should market myself better"* (GS2). Consultants regarded the cover letter as compulsory: *"Every time you send a CV it should be accompanied by a cover letter"* (CC3, 5, 6, 7 & 8). Recruiters differed in their perceptions of a cover letter. Some said it provided a view of the applicant in a "*nutshell"* (GR3), while others used it to determine "*the position that is applied for"* (GR6). Recruiters used the cover letter to compile a short list of candidates but the person who finally makes the decision about the appointment might pay more attention to it: *"The manager may then possibly look at the cover letter, so it is still important because it is the manager who will make the appointment"* (GR5). An email may also serve as a cover letter (GR4), but despite the format of the cover letter, some recruiters (GR4, 6 & 7) mentioned that they did not always read it: "*To be honest, one hardly ever read*[s] *the cover letter"* (GR4), because it gives an unrealistically positive impression of the applicant: *"I am not interested in how loyal or hardworking* [they say] *they are or how much overtime they worked"* (GR6) or it is too long, in the form of an "*essay"* (GR5).

Letterhead/contact details. Graduates (GS2 & 3) thought contact details might be important *"so that they can get a hold of you"* (GS2*).* Some consultants preferred a letterhead: *"I am also a supporter of the personal letter head"* (CC3) while others emphasise the importance of contact details *"... only your name and contact details"* (CC3 & 7). Recruiters required at least a name, a valid email address and a cell phone number (GR4), preferably with voice-mail (GR5).

Personal information. Graduates indicated a need to know which of the following are important: name (GS3, 4 &5); surname (GS4); gender (GS1); race (GS 1); ID number (GS3, 4, 5 & 6); birth date (GS4); addresses (GS3); health (GS 3 & 4); language (GS4 & 6); marital status (GS3 & 4); dependants (GS4); criminal record (GS3); driver's license (GS3, 4, 5 & 6). Consultants singled out personal information as the most important information to be included in a CV: *"Well I think first and foremost it is personal information"* (CC2, 3, 5, 6 & 8). Recruiters confirmed that personal information was important, such as an ID number (GR5 & 8), because

they would like *"to know that they* [applicants] *are citizens of South Africa. Or if they are not, then we know it upfront. And then a driver's licence"* (GR2). Recruiters preferred to *"immediately see how old you are, what your name gender and race are and your telephone number and e-mail address"* (GR4). Other information that recruiters looked for was health or "*any medical conditions that might affect the way in which you work"* (GR2), criminal records (GR2), readiness to relocate (GR4), and whether or not the applicant smokes (GR6).

Personal profile and outstanding qualities/traits. Graduates needed to know if it was important to *"describe yourself"* (GS3) by including your *"traits that are important for the company"* (GS2), your *"personality"* (GS6), *"your life mission and vision"* (GS7). Should a personal profile show a candidate's *"strengths and weaknesses"* (GS2, 3, 4 & 7) in such a way that *"they* [readers of the CV] *think I can't not hire this person"* (GS2). Consultants regarded the personal profile as a description of the unique qualities and graduate employability attributes that are important for employers, since it *"portrays* [students'] *outstanding qualities"* (CC1) or "*characteristics that employers expect from young graduates"* (CC7). Recruiters obtained an indication of the self-description – "*character"* (GR5) – of the applicant from the profile. *"I like it when they write something about themselves"* (GR8). *"We are interested in people. I ask the person: Tell me something about yourself"* (GR7).

Recruiters formed an impression of the applicants' qualities and traits by reading their CVs, and mentioned "*respect"* (GR1); "*humble*[ness]*"* (GR5); *"high emotional intelligence"* (GR1), "*perseverance or self-driven"* (GR3), and *"academically oriented"* (GR5). They concluded that applicants "*must make an impression"* (GR4), and preferably a *"positive impression"* (GR5).

Career objective. Graduates did not comment much about this but two of them thought it concerned *"intentions about the future"* (GS3 & 7). Consultants recommended that students include a career objective (CC2, 5, 7 & 8), because *"it keeps a sort of sense of their career orientation"* (CC6). Recruiters did not mention this aspect.

Qualifications. Stakeholders unanimously confirmed the importance of including

qualifications in a CV. Graduates asked about the inclusion of secondary and tertiary education as well as marks (GS5, 6 & 7). In light of new graduates' limited work experiences, consultants emphasised the importance of qualifications. *"So with a new student I think qualifications usually rank high. They don't often have very much work experience"* (CC6 & 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8). All recruiters regarded qualifications as indicating *"if they have studied what we needed them to study"* (GR2). The qualifications were used to determine "*how does the person measure up against those minimum requirements"* (GR3) of the job. Recruiters associated a degree with a certain level of competence because "*being competent happens when you get your degree"* (GR1). A completed qualification also gave the recruiter an indication of the graduates' qualities and traits: *"A CV of a graduate already speaks of the person. Someone who is prepared to do a little more than the average – a chunk of perseverance and being self-driven"* (GR3). Academic transcripts are important to show how well the applicants have performed academically, because recruiters *"use* [marks] *as a filter to decide who is going to be shortlisted"* (GR2). Recruiters (GR3, 4, 5, 7 & 8) were also interested in additional training. *"If you took supplementary subjects – additional certificates or courses, to really prepare yourself for the workplace"* (GR5).

Professional registration. Neither graduates nor recruiters mentioned this, while consultants noted that *"if you have any memberships then you can mention them ... specifically if it is relevant"* (CC8 & 1).

Work and extramural experience. Graduates asked if work experience included *"volunteering and community engagement"* (GS6) and even *"interests and hobbies* (GS4, 5 & 6) because it could give *"an indication of how dedicated they are"* (GS4). Consultants referred to experience (CC2, 6, 7 & 8), including extramural activities, as an indication of the *"potential to develop"* (CC2). In terms of work experience, recruiters (GR2, 3, 5, 6 & 7) required information about the *"type of work experience and previous employers"* (GR6); "*extra-mural activities"* (GR2), *"sport"* (GR3); "*hobbies"* (GR1) and "*special responsibilities at the university"* (GR4), such as serving on committees. Specific details of experience are required. "*I want to know what*

[kind of] *experience? What did he do there? What was he responsible for?"* (GR4). Even if hobbies are mentioned, recruiters want to know *"what they do or what they enjoy?"* (GR8). The description of the content and nature of the experience provide information about the diversity of exposure (GR3 & 4). Recruiters specifically mentioned the importance of leadership experience (GR2 & 5).

Achievements. Graduate (GS1) thought it was *"obvious"* to include *"everything you have achieved in your life"* (GS7). Consultants viewed achievements as important indications of character traits because it *"convey*[s] *that message that you like to do your best, you are enthusiastic and committed ... and try to reach your full potential"* (CC8 & 3, 6, 7). Recruiters did not specifically mention this.

References. Graduates wanted to know if referees (GS2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) were *"people you have worked for"* (GS3). Consultants regarded referees as *"people who played a prominent role in the person's life* - [at least] *three of them."* (CC7, 4, 5, 6 & 8). Recruiters said *"references are very important"* (GR8) but highlighted that referees should know the applicant well enough to provide job-relevant information and be prepared to provide a reference. *"They provide names of lecturers, and if you call ... sorry, the lecturer does not know the name and is not always prepared to give a reference."* (GR5). Recruiters indicated that it was not ideal to provide *"names of family members as references* (GR6), or *testimonials from high school,* [or a] *minister. References must be current and relevant"* (GR7).

Attachments. Graduates expressed uncertainty about *"what to actually include"* (GS1). Consultants recommend that *"they must look for what the company asks for, but if the company do not say, they must use their discretion"* (CC5, 3, 6 & 8). Recruiters did not emphasise this but required the type information that supports the contents of the CV.

CV don'ts. Graduates did not make any comments. Consultants, however, warned against the following CV mistakes: poor photographs (CC1 & 3); time gaps in the CV (CC7); negativity towards another person/ organisation /process (CC6); spelling errors (CC2 & 3); and too much

personal information (CC1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 8). Recruiters warned against: dishonesty in the CV and creating false impressions (either deliberately or through ignorance) (GR5 & 6); omission of a subject line in an email (GR8); or another company's name in the cover letter (GR8).

Layout and Presentation

All graduates expressed a need for training or instruction on *"what it* [the CV] *should look like"* (GS7) and felt uncertain about layout and appearance. They needed *"a template"* (GS1, 2, 4 & 6) or an example of *"structure and format"* (GS1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7) because they received conflicting and confusing information (GS1) and *"there are so many different formats available"* (GS2). They were also uncertain about details such as: *"the font - is it readable?"* (GS3); *"flushed left or right"* (GS4); *"line spacing"* (GS4); *"length and attachments"* (GS5); *"basic language use and grammar"* (GS7); *"spelling"* (GS7); and *"how to make it attractive"* (GS1 &7). Consultants (CC2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8) perceived layout and spelling as indications of attention to detail (CC2), and the overall impression created by the CV (CC4). Recruiters commented most often by far on the layout and structure of the CV. Recruiters form an impression about the person and the quality of their work, based on the presentation of the CV (GR5). *"If you receive a bad CV, then it says to me: Will the person's work not also be like that?"* (GR3). Recruiters wanted to see (and can quickly determine) the effort put into a CV (GR1, 3. 4, 5, 6 & 8). This is mostly detectable in the appearance of the CV, the grammar used and the absence of spelling mistakes (GR4, 5, 6 & 8). Recruiters preferred a logical, chronological, easily readable presentation (GR2, 3, 4, 7 & 8) because "*there are many applications coming in, especially graduates. One scans them really quickly"* (GR5). Some recruiters (GR6 & 8) preferred a fixed format or template for CVs with clear headings (GR5), while others (GR2 & 3) placed much more emphasis on the contents. "*Even if it is bound with a stapler but it is clear and says everything, then it is exactly the same to me. As long as I find what I want to find in the CV"* (GR3). Recruiters agreed that the CV should be short - ideally up to three pages long - with information bulleted rather than in long paragraphs (GR2, 5 & 6).

Discussion

The data revealed that graduates need guidance and clarity in CV-writing in general. They are uncertain about what should be included (content) and how to set it out and make it attractive (presentation). New graduates with fairly limited experience did not know how to present their potential in a CV so that graduate recruiters could be convinced of their suitability for the employment opportunity in terms of the person-environment fit. Career consultants emphasised the importance for new graduates of anticipating and responding appropriately to the expectations of the graduate recruiters. However, these expectations were not clarified.

Consultants and recruiters mostly emphasised details of presentation and layout more than details of content. These two stakeholder groups mostly proposed a formulaic method of CV-writing specifying what content should be included and how the information should be presented, thereby confirming approaches suggested in social media and other non-peer reviewed sources. Their perceptions are informed by personal preferences, biases or opinions, without indicating the principle or rationale underpinning the recommendations leaving the inexperienced CV-writer without guiding principles or a rationale. In terms of CV-writing, consultants resorted to giving advice or instructions, and recruiters expressed their perceptions of what a CV should consist of and how it should be presented in terms of the realities of their work as recruiters (large numbers of CVs and limited time).

Stakeholders' perceptions of what should be included in a CV and how it should be presented will be discussed next. Their perceptions will be supported with underlying principles or a rationale. The rationale or underlying principle is informed by the notion that every word in a CV must provide evidence of competence required to ensure an optimal person-environment fit and to prove to the reader that the graduate is the right applicant for the job.

All three stakeholders agreed that a comprehensive but short summary of the CV content constitutes the cover letter. However, they have different views about the rationale for including it. Graduates emphasized the selling/marketing value for themselves while recruiters use the

cover letter to short-list. The importance attached to a cover letter was also relative: Consultants regarded it as compulsory while the recruiters were indifferent, but negative if was presented in a narrative form. Recruiters perceived some cover letters as presenting an exaggerated image of the graduate, which may be a valid perception if taking into account graduates' comments that they use the cover letter as a marketing tool. The rationale for a cover letter is to provide a succinct summary of the most important and relevant CV contents for that specific job application to illustrate the person-job fit. Therefore different cover letters should be used for applications for different positions.

Valid and recent contact details must be included in the CV. The most important reason for contact details to be provided is to enable recruiters to contact the applicant. The rationale for including contact details is to make it as easy as possible to contact the applicant quickly and efficiently about the application process (e.g. to obtain more information or to arrange for an interview).

The stakeholders perceived personal information as important, but disagreed about the type of information to be included. Recruiters wanted to form a holistic picture of the applicant. They required biographical details that are unique to every applicant and which include involuntary aspects and aspects of choice that have a bearing on the application. For example, an applicant's decision to learn an additional language might be useful if the job applied for requires communicating in a different language. The rationale of personal information is to include enough, but not too much to give the recruiter an impression of the graduate's uniqueness.

All stakeholders regarded a personal profile in the form of self-description as important. Self-reflection refers to the outstanding personal qualities and traits (attributes) which the applicant regards as important for the organisation and which, from the recruiters' point of view, also meets their expectations. The rationale for a personal profile is to present those personal qualities and traits that would lead to success in the job and constitute a good person-job-organisation fit.

A career goal/objective did not seem to be a high priority for the stakeholders and was not even mentioned by the recruiters. However, the rationale for a career goal/objective is to indicate future intentions/plans and long-term career orientation /vision which confirm the fit of the applicant to the position. A career objective can consist of different career goals. For example, a career goal may be to obtain an internship towards achieving the career objective of becoming a professional.

Stakeholders unanimously confirmed the importance of including secondary and tertiary qualifications in a CV. Consultants emphasised the importance of qualifications in the light of new graduates' limited work experience. Recruiters said they used this information to determine if the applicant measured up to the minimum qualification requirements of the job. Recruiters also associated positive personal qualities and traits with the achievement of a degree. Professional registration is not a high priority for stakeholders but may be mentioned if applicable.

Consultants and recruiters regarded work experience, including voluntary service and part-time appointments, as an indication of the graduate's diversity of exposure and transferrable skills without guidance on how to apply these practically in CV-writing. Extramural activities, according to them, gave an indication of personal qualities and traits such as dedication and the developmental potential of graduates. Work and extramural experience had to be presented in detail to show relevance to the career/job. The rationale for including work and life experience is to mention as many skills, knowledge and personal qualities/traits as possible that were developed in various contexts and which could be transferred to the work context. Therefore, for all types of experience (life and work), actions (skills), formative experiences (traits) or how learning was facilitated (knowledge) to indicate competence should be included. The specific context in which the competence was developed should be described to provide a frame for interpretation of the relevant competence of applicant and may include culture, sports, leadership, community engagement, entrepreneurship, relevant academic activities (e.g. projects, research).

Graduates and consultants viewed academic and or other achievements as 'obvious' because they provide an indication of personal qualities and traits. In stark contrast, recruiters made no mention of achievements. This could be linked to recruiters' perception of a possible inauthentic presentation of a graduate's potential. 'Achievements' is not considered as a separate heading in the CV but awards and achievement may be mentioned where applicable (e.g. culture, sports). The rationale for highlighting achievements is to provide an indication of personal qualities and traits such as ambition, competitiveness, focus and dedication and to distinguish the achiever from the average applicant.

Referees are people who know graduates in a work or extramural context. They should be professional rather than personal contacts, willing and able to provide an objective view of graduates' conduct and actions in relevant contexts. The rationale for references is to put the recruiter in contact with people who can provide more information about aspects included in the CV as well as providing personal testimonials to indicate the suitability of the graduate for the specific job opportunity.

The type of supporting documents to attach to the application is left to the discretion of graduates who are advised to follow employers' specific instructions diligently when provided. No clear guidelines exist for attachments. The rationale for including an attachment is that it should provide additional information and/or confirm facts stated in the CV.

Consultants and recruiters warned CV writers to guard against creating a negative perception due to errors, sloppiness, negativity, incompleteness or excessive information; and against creating a false or exaggerated impression of the graduate.

Recruiters frequently received many applications and have to form an impression of an applicant from a quick glance at the CV. Recruiters in this study often preferred templates to be used, with clear headings and information presented logically and chronologically, easy to read, short, and where possible bulleted. They formed an opinion based on the effort graduates have put into CV writing; therefore requiring attention to be paid to detail, spelling and impeccable

language use. Given the emphasis of recruiters on the layout and presentation of the CV, it is not surprising that graduates express uncertainty about every aspect related to layout and presentation.

Conclusion

In this study, career consultants and graduate recruiters' perceptions provided useful information that should be included in the contents of the CV about the psychosocial aspect of employability (personal knowledge, skill and attitude attributes) that new graduates should reflect in their CVs, even though from a formulaic approach. Very little guidance were provided about the social part of employability as psychosocial construct, in terms of how these employability attributes should be translated to fit the expectations of employers. Therefore, new graduates find themselves in a predicament: the guidelines proposed by consultants and recruiters provide very little advice about how to present their employability attributes to fit the work context in practice.

A summary of CV contents proposed by stakeholders is provided below.

CV Content

A c*over letter* that summarises the CV content in a convincing and believable presentation of the competence (graduate employability attributes) of the applicant and relevant contents for that specific job application to illustrate the person-job fit. A *letterhead* is an obvious place to look for contact details. These could be given elsewhere in the CV, but should be easy to find. Contact details must include: name, surname, valid email address and a cell phone number (with voice-mail). *Personal information* that provides enough (but not too much) biographical information about the applicant and that indicates the formal identity of the applicant and the person-job-fit. It could include involuntary data, such as: name, surname, gender, race, ID number, birth date (age) and aspects that are under partial control of the applicant, such as addresses (willingness to relocate), health (e.g. smoking), language, marital status, dependants, criminal record, driver's license. *Personal profile and outstanding qualities/traits* in the form of a self-description which includes personal qualities and traits that would lead to success in the job and constitutes a good person-job-organisation fit. It would also list perceived strengths and

weaknesses, personal vision and mission. Recruiters form positive impressions of applicants who portray attributes such as respect, responsibility, emotional intelligence, perseverance, self-motivation, passion and academic orientation. A *career objective* should be included that indicates future intentions/plans and long-term career orientation/vision which confirms the fit of the applicant to the position. *Academic background***,** consisting of qualifications, other training and academic achievements applicable to the career/job and could include professional registration. Qualifications refer to school and university results. The person-job fit must be obvious and appropriate from these. Completed degrees and additional qualifications are used to demonstrate personal qualities and traits. *Work and extramural (life) experience,* which include formal work or informal other activities. Mention as many skills, knowledge and personal qualities/traits as possible that were developed in various contexts which could be transferred to the work context. The information needed when presenting formal work experience is: name of the employer, type of work, duties and responsibilities. Informal other activities could include: volunteer and community engagement, interests and hobbies, sport. For informal other activities the specific responsibilities should also be stated. Leadership experience should be indicated specifically. *Achievements* should be presented to support other CV content and provide an authentic view of the applicant. *References* which include people who can provide more information about aspects included in the CV as well as personal testimonies to indicate the suitability of the graduate for the specific job opportunity. Referees should be contactable and include employers (if applicable) and others who are in a position and willing to give relevant and recent testimonials. Avoid family members, principals and ministers. The minimum required *attachments* should include those that support the CV contents, such as: academic record, certificates of qualifications or additional training, copies of ID and driver's licence (if held), and selected relevant written testimonials.

CV Don’ts

CV-writers are strongly advised to avoid the following: poor quality photographs; time gaps; negativity towards others; spelling errors; too much personal information; dishonesty and creating false impressions; leaving out a subject line in an email; or including another company’s name or addressing it to the wrong person in the cover letter. The CV creates an impression and shows effort.

Layout and Presentation

The layout and presentation of the CV should be clear, logical and chronological with attention paid to detail, spelling and grammar. It should be easily readable and information should be presented briefly and bulleted instead of in long paragraphs. Pages or paragraphs in the CV should be numbered. The length of the CV, excluding cover letter and attachments should not exceed three pages.

Limitations and Recommendations

Given the limited evidence-based articles on CV-writing and the plethora of grey literature on the matter, this study provides a baseline for future studies. However, findings reflected only the perceptions of participants involved with one tertiary context. It is recognised that qualitative research does not aim to produce generalizable findings, but it could also be argued that findings are contextually informed. Therefore, more settings could have been included to confirm the findings. Another critique is that little insight about employability as a psychosocial construct has been obtained from the stakeholder groups (new graduates, career consultants and graduate recruiters) directly involved with new graduate employability.

It is therefore recommended that for future studies, participants in the different subject-fields of psychology (developmental, counselling, industrial and educational) be included. In this regard, developmental psychologists’ knowledge of career identity could have been useful. Counselling psychologists could have complemented the study with their knowledge of career guidance and choices to promote individuals’ self-affirmation and improved decision making

(Savickas, 1993). Industrial psychologists' contribution in terms of the recruitment process could have filled the gap of insight of new graduate employability from employers' point of view and how recruiters define competences, qualities and attributes required to fill a position. Educational psychologists could have contributed on two levels. First, how learning takes place across the lifespan and in different development areas; and second, on how facilitators can apply best learning strategies to facilitate learning of new graduates on how to write a CV.

The interface between an individual and the social environment in terms of new graduate employability is also an aspect that has been neglected in scholarly contributions. For future studies it is recommended that the focus is placed on the social part of employability. Context informs behaviour and therefore the expectation of employers can be better analysed in order for new graduates to present themselves in a context-appropriate manner. Little insight has also been obtained of what an optimal fit means in terms of employability which is used as a measure for employment.

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ARTICLE 3: Development of a Competence-based Curriculum Vitae-writing Programme for New Graduates

Development of a Competence-based Curriculum Vitae-writing Programme for New Graduates

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Abstract

New graduates face the challenges of having to find suitable employment in spite of limited work experience, and of being able to demonstrate their competence and employability attributes to recruiters who assess the person-environment fit. The Curriculum Vitae (CV) presents the first opportunity to do so. This article aims to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates by using a programme development process which follows eight stages as identified in literature: a situational analysis; literature and theories; intentions of the programme; context; methods of delivery; ethical considerations; outcomes; and evaluation. In the development and presentation of the programme a context for optimal knowledge transfer is created. New graduates are guided to highlight, in a competence-based CV, their employability attributes applicable to the position(s) they apply for to demonstrate their career identity and person-environment fit. Results from an evaluative process may lead to adaptation of the programme contents and methods of delivery to ensure continuous programme quality enhancement.

Keywords: Competence; Competence-based; Curriculum Vitae; Employability; Employability enhancement; New graduate; Programme development.

Introduction

This article is the third in a series of four articles addressing the aim of a broader study to develop and evaluate a competence-based curriculum vitae (CV)-writing programme for new graduates (see Roos, P. 2016). The first objective of the broader study was to conduct a critical review of literature on new graduate employability and competence associated with the employability of employees in general and new graduates specifically (see Roos, De Klerk, Stander, & Nienaber, 2016a). The second objective was to obtain the perceptions of stakeholders regarding a CV that could enhance a new graduate's employability (see Roos, De Klerk, Stander, & Nienaber, 2016b). The third objective and focus of this article is to combine the findings of the first two articles to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme for job seekers with little to no relevant job experience. The aim of this article is to integrate the findings from literature on employability and stakeholders' perceptions to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme, based on the principles of programme development (see Fink, 2015; Hart, 2016; Mathison, 2005; Prideaux, 2003; Yuen & Terao, 2003). The final objective of the broader study is to evaluate the programme to determine the extent to which this programme achieved its goals.

Background

In a competitive labour environment with increasing numbers of graduate applicants, recruiters have the luxury of being able to select prospective graduates for employment from a large number of applications (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). In addition, the number of unemployed graduates in South Africa remains high (Chang, 2016; Maake, 2013; Oluwajodu, Blaauw, Greyling, & Kleynhans, 2015; Statistics South Africa, 2016; Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012). Consequently, given limited graduate employment opportunities concurrently with an abundant increase in the numbers of graduates, there is no guarantee of employment, despite the possession of a degree (Abel, Deitz, & Su, 2014; Chang, 2016; Selingo, 2014; Torpey, 2013). Many job seekers describe the process as psychologically

challenging because they perceive it to be discouraging and unpleasant with associated feelings of boredom, loneliness, uncertainty, concerns, emptiness and conflict (De Witte, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2012).

The burden falls on the new graduates to prove their employability (Brown, Hesketh, & Williams, 2003; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006) by being able to convince prospective employers in a comprehensive CV that they possess the attributes that employers and their recruiters expect to fit the work environment (Bergman & Jean, 2016; Caplan, 1987; Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011; Kristof-Brown, Reeves, & Follmer, 2014), despite limited relevant work experience. New graduates' employability attributes (knowledge, skill and attitude), which constitutes their competence, are mostly presented by means of a CV (Athey & Orth, 1999; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). As the first introduction of a new graduate's competence to a graduate recruiter and providing a first impression of the applicant, the CV is the most important job-hunting tool for graduates (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross, Beggs, & Young, 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). New graduates' CVs serve the purpose of having to convince recruiters that the applicants are competent for the job, fit the work environment and possess potential that can be developed once employed (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). The term 'new graduate' in this article refers to "someone who has completed a first degree or post-graduate degree within the last two years" (Professional CV Services, 2016, p. 1). The article also refers to graduate students who are approaching the end of their studies and are preparing to become first-time entrants into the formal and fulltime job market (see Roos et al., 2016a).

A comprehensive review of literature on employability and CV-writing (see Roos et al., 2016a) produced no peer-reviewed publication on competence-based CV-writing programmes specifically focused on new graduates. A cursory glance at libraries and the self-help section in book shops revealed a vast array of material purporting to improve CV-writing ability. However, academics or researchers are rarely the authors of these volumes, and even more rarely are their

prescriptions based on scientific evidence. Most resources on CV-writing found on the internet (see https://www. resumesurgery; https://www.resume-now.com; https://www. resumehelp.com) are in the form of CV templates and/or formulaic or recipe-like examples of CVs, thus not providing the rationale for the inclusion of content nor linking graduate employability attributes specifically to the CV to enable easy assessment of the fit to the work environment. While scientists appear to be largely silent on the issue of competence based CV-writing, any number of other authors fills the void. Many of the resources found in books and on the internet also focus on work experience and career achievements, thereby making them irrelevant for new graduates lacking work experience (see Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2006; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). Many types of CVs are mentioned in books and internet resources, such as chronological, functional and academic CVs. In this study, informed by literature and the strong link found between employability and competence, a competence-based CV is proposed. A competence-based CV is written to demonstrate competence for the jobs being applied for by specifically naming and providing proof of employability attributes (De Cuyper, Raeder, Van der Heijden, & Wittekind, 2012; Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Teijeiro, Rungo, & Freire, 2013). New graduates may enhance their employability by accurately determine graduate recruiters' competence requirements for the job and their expectations of the graduate employability attributes. Graduates should show convincingly in their CVs that they possess the attributes necessary for the position and the organisation, demonstrating the best person-job fit (Bridgstock, 2009).

A gap in research was identified for a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates. The research question guiding this article is: What would a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates consist of and how should such a programme be developed? The findings of this article may be of specific interest to new graduates, programme developers and career consultants in higher education institutions.

Process of Programme Development

Employability is defined as a psychosocial construct (Fugate et al., 2004; Knight & Yorke, 2003; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013) which places this study in the realm of psychology. A competence-based programme could enable new graduates to create CVs that clearly link their employability attributes (psychological part of the employability construct) to the requirements of the job (social part of the employability construct), thereby enhancing their employability. The aim of a competence-based training programme is to provide skills and knowledge that students require for the successful completion of a task (Erasmus, 2015; Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda, & Nel, 2015), in this case the writing of a competence-based CV. According to Erasmus (2015), the requirements for such a programme are that students are exposed to well-planned, high quality, carefully-designed activities and must be able to determine their own pace of learning or mastering a skill, with feedback on their progress readily available.

Informed by pragmatism (Campbell, 2011; Dewey, 1938; Rorty, Putnam, Conant, & Helfrich, 2004), the problem of new graduates' ability to demonstrate their employability attributes will be addressed by using programme development principles found in literature (see Fink, 2015; Hart, 2016; Lather & Sharma, 2008; Mathison, 2005; Prideaux, 2003; Yuen & Terao, 2003) to develop a programme, presented in Figure 1 below (see page 128). Eight components of programme development were identified, namely: i) Situational analysis; ii) Literature and theories; iii) Intentions of the programme; iv) Context; v) Methods of delivery; vi) Ethical considerations; vii) Outputs, outcomes and impact; and viii) Evaluation.

In the following sections of this article the eight components of programme development, illustrated in Figure 1 (see page 128), will be discussed and will then be applied to the development of the competence-based CV-writing programme in Figure 2 (see page 134). The contents and presentation of the programme to an audience of graduate students will be explained in terms of the programme's delivery protocol and facilitator manual, with supporting material and hand-outs (see Addenda 1 to 6).

Figure 1 (see page 128) shows that the eight components of programme development are a cyclical and a sequential process. It starts with an analysis of the situation that informs the rationale or need for the programme and includes identification of relevant stakeholders and their perceptions as well as the assets and resources in the context in which the programme will be implemented. Once the situation analysis has been completed, relevant literature and theories are studied to support the intentions of the programme. The programme is presented in a specific context that should be described and taken into account. Informed by the preceding stages, the programmes' methods of delivery are developed. All human interactions involve ethical considerations (Stacey, 2003) which are programme and context specific and therefore have to be considered. A programme always includes some action with the objective of bringing about change (Fink, 2015; Mathison, 2005; Yuen & Terao, 2003). The outcomes expected from the programme must subsequently be defined and linked to the intentions of the programme, together with the description of how the programme will be evaluated. Due to the cyclical nature of programme development and implementation, evaluation informs a new cycle (Zuber-Skerritt, Wood, & Louw, 2015).

Each of the eight components will be discussed below. In the following sections the underlying rationale and theory will be explained as they apply to the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme.

Situational Analysis

A situational analysis comprises four actions: i) Determine the rationale for the programme; ii) Identify stakeholders; iii) Obtain stakeholders' perceptions, needs and/or experiences; and iv) Identify assets and resources (people, information, and financial or physical resources) for the development and implementation of the programme.

Rationale for the programme. The rationale for the development of a programme can be either to address a problem or issue that was observed and that needs to be changed, or to enhance things that work well (Hart, 2016; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It addresses the 'why'

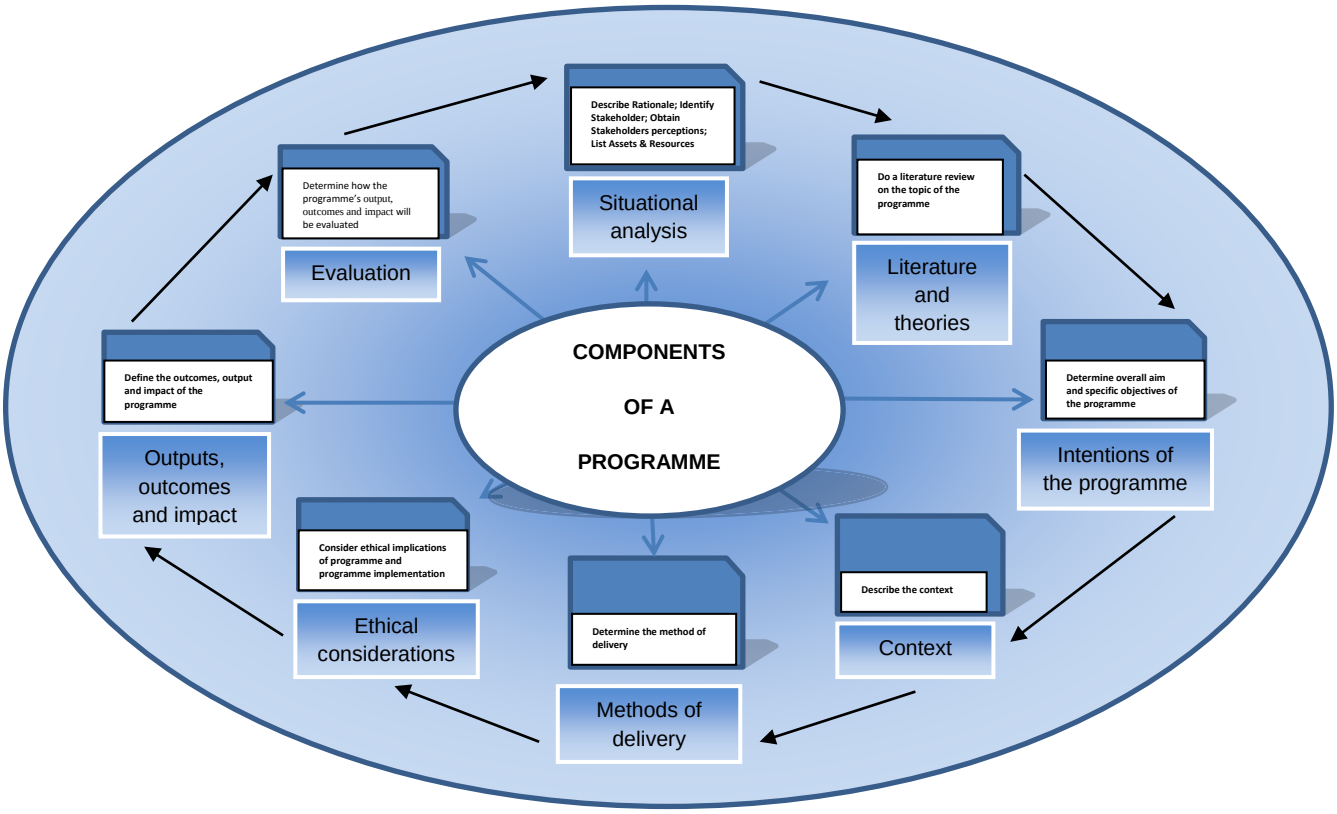

Figure 1. Components of Programme Development

question of the programme. Why is the programme important and to whom is it of benefit? (Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015). Too little emphasis on 'why' leaves a programme without reasons for existence, while overemphasis of 'why' can result in a programme that lacks action and concrete outcomes (Yuen & Terao, 2003).

Identify stakeholders. Stakeholders refer to what Yuen and Terao (2003) call the main beneficiaries. The 'who' question identifies the target population the programme intends to serve. Hart (2016) describes stakeholders as policy or practice influencers that are targeted, and qualifies them in terms of their leverage and entry points to enable the change. Mathison (2005) distinguishes between primary stakeholders with responsibility and ownership of the programme, and secondary stakeholders who are affected by or benefit from the programme.

Stakeholders' perceptions. Data about stakeholder perceptions, needs and/or experiences are obtained using quantitative or qualitative methods. Training needs assessment is defined as the process of discovering what gaps exist between what people know, do or feel, and what they

should know, do or feel in order to perform competently (Erasmus et al., 2015). These perceptions, needs and experiences inform the reason for developing a programme and shape the contents.

Assets and resources. These are identified through a resource inventory by asking what resources are available for the programme. These may include people, information, and financial and physical resources. (Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015). People from inside or outside the organisation are considered in terms of their skills, knowledge and support. Information resources refer to books, articles, software or e-resources. Financial and physical resources include budgets, equipment, and space (Zuber-Skerritt et al., 2015). The venue where the programme is presented is an important consideration among physical resources. Erasmus (2015) suggests that the following aspects be taken into consideration in choosing venues: flexibility, accessibility, isolation, availability of computer and audio/visual equipment, ventilation and lighting.

Literature and Theories

The findings of a thorough literature search and review as well as theories that inform the programme contents must be incorporated in the design of a programme to obtain a fuller perspective and deeper insight into the phenomenon that the programme addresses. A literature review should include the following: i) Defining the purpose of the review; ii) Defining the scope of the review; iii) Identifying and selecting the sources of relevant information (including the use of inclusion and exclusion criteria); iv) Reviewing the literature; and e) Constructing the review report (Carnwell & Daly, 2001).

Intentions of the Programme

The intentions of a programme are the desired results or the vision of success in the short- and long-term (Hart, 2016). Programmes should, according to Yuen and Terao (2003), be clear on their intentions by specifically defining their scope and associated goals, objectives, activities and outcomes, because no programme is a ‘cure all and for all’.

A goal or aim is the broad expectation of what should happen as a result of a programme. The goal or aim of a specific programme is used to formulate the objectives of that specific programme (Yuen & Terao, 2003). *Objectives* consist of actions to achieve the aim. Usually multiple objectives are used to address a single aim. Well-defined objectives will assist in monitoring progress toward achieving the aim of the programme (Fink, 2015; Yuen & Terao, 2003).

Context

Context for programme development has meaning on two levels (Roos V., 2016). The first level is relevant for how the learning space (context and climate) is created to promote optimal knowledge transfer. Creating a learning context is important because meaning is obscured if no context for communication has been created (Vorster, 2011). Presenters create a context for the programme from the very first contact they have with the participants through verbal and non-verbal communication, because all human interaction is communicative interaction (Stacey, 2003). Training climate is created as a result of the interaction between presenters and participants in the context of the training environment (Lather & Sharma, 2009). The climate must be conducive to training (Lather & Sharma, 2008) but individual participants' personal factors (such as their priorities, personal life situation and comfort levels) contribute to the construction of a favourable or unfavourable training climate (Lather & Sharma, 2009). An enabling training climate is created when the presenter displays effective presentation skills, which include: i) Following a plan and use trainer notes; ii) Communicating in a way that is easy to understand; iii) Maintaining eye contact with participants; iv) Projecting one's voice; v) Asking simple and more challenging questions; vi) Displaying a positive sense of humour; and vii) Being an effective role model (Du Toit, 2010).

The second level refers to the context in which the programme is presented. In this context, matters affecting participants should also be taken into consideration (see Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). This means that the presentation of the programme should be planned and presented to

accommodate participants' practical circumstances. Erasmus (2015) and Erasmus et al., (2015) list the following six factors that affect learning, and which should be considered in creating an optimal context: i) Motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and enthusiasm, which is demonstrated in excitement, enjoyment and interest; ii) Organised information that the brain can easily structure and retain –also refers to it as "chunking" (Erasmus, 2015, p. 224); iii) Engagement, participation or "reinforcement" (Erasmus, 2015, p. 224) in the learning process or task; iv) Individually styled learning and learning conditions preferred by individuals for their success; v) Belief in yourself and your intelligence; and vi) Availability of resources and support.

Methods of Delivery

A programme is activity-driven (Yuen & Terao, 2003) and this refers to the method of delivery. Various methods of delivery exist, such as e-learning, on-the-job learning, classroom learning and self-development. Clifford and Thorpe (2007) list 26 different methods of delivery. The methods range on a continuum from unidirectional (Kerres & De Wit, 2003) presentation to co-constructed learning spaces (Hart, 2016). Transfer of learning (Greenwood & Parasuraman, 2016: Grolman, Bar, Shapira, Rokach, & Dayan, 2016; Perkins & Salomon, 1992) or transference (Erasmus, 2015) occurs when learning in one context impacts on performance or implementation in another context. Perkins and Salomon (1992) describe transference as an interesting psychological and educational phenomenon and view it as a key concept in education and learning theory because most learning aspires to transfer – the aim of the training is not achieved unless transfer occurs. In reality, however, Perkins and Salomon (1992) noted that transfer of learning cannot be taken for granted because the hoped-for transfer from learning experiences frequently does not occur if the context of learning differs from the ultimate contexts of application.

Positive transfer, according to Perkins and Salomon (1992), occurs when learning in one context improves the implementation of learning in other (similar or different) contexts. This is more likely to occur under training conditions that include: i) Thorough and diverse practice of the performance in question in a variety of contexts. Erasmus (2015) refers to this as reinforcement;

ii) Explicit abstraction which is grasping the full and sound understanding of the principles involved. Erasmus (2015) refers to this as context - to see the meaning, purpose, relevance or usefulness of the information or skill; iii) Active self-monitoring which is focus on and awareness of one's own thinking processes; iv) Arousing mindfulness - a generalised state of alertness to the learning activities engaged in and to the surroundings; and v) Using metaphors or analogies to study new material in light of previously learned material or to build on previous knowledge and experience (Erasmus, 2015).

The instructional strategy (Erasmus, 2015) must also be considered as part of the method of delivery. This strategy, according to Erasmus (2015) and Erasmus et al. (2015), refers to the instructional aids used, the learning activities that occur, and all resources employed. The learning circumstances should dictate the methods to be used and this can result in a combination of methods and techniques (Erasmus, 2015), among which the facilitator should consider: i) Trainer-led interventions versus greater student participation; ii) Presentation to groups versus individuals; iii) Theoretical versus practical approaches, or a combination; and iv) Levels of student experience.

Ethical Considerations

All human interaction has ethical implications (Stacey, 2003) and in the development and presentation of a programme the following important ethical considerations should be considered (see Crump & Sugarman, 2010; Lather & Sharma, 2009): i) Respect for persons; ii) Risk of harm; iii) Professional competence; and iv) Confidentiality.

Respect for persons. During the presentation the best interests of the participants should always be taken into account. Using empathic listening techniques, presenters should provide participants with positive and encouraging feedback. Participants should also be ensured of support if needed after the presentation. Presenters should at all times be honest with the graduates and emphasise that merely attending a programme and following the guidelines would not guarantee results.

Risk of harm. In the presentation of the programme and feedback to participants, care should be taken not to belittle, criticise or ridicule them.

Professional competence. Presenters should at least have background knowledge of the subject matter and a track record of involvement in it.

Confidentiality. The identity of participants should always be protected.

Output, Outcomes and Impact

Outputs are related to but different from outcomes and impact. Outputs are the tangible products that result from a program's activities (Mathison, 2005). Outcomes and impact are benefits or change for individuals or groups after participating in programme activities. It measures whether, and how much, a programme's participants have changed, how their status has improved, how they have benefited (Yuen & Terao, 2003). The outcomes may relate to behaviour, skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, conditions, status, or other attributes (Yuen & Terao, 2003). Outcomes and impact are changes, results, and impacts that may be short- or long-term; proximal or distal; primary or secondary; intended or unintended; positive or negative; and singular, multiple, or hierarchical. Outcomes and impact are enduring changes, in contrast to outputs, which are more specific.

Evaluation

Programme development and evaluation constitute an evolving process (Yuen & Terao, 2003; Zuber-Skerrit et al. 2002). Evaluation results impact continuously on programme planning, development and implementation and depend on the extent to which stakeholders perceive the programme as having achieved its objectives. As results from evaluative processes are received (during the planning, development, and implementation phases), the programme is adapted to ensure continuous quality assurance (Yuen & Terao, 2003; Zuber-Skerrit et al. 2002).

Application of the Process

Each of the eight components of programme development, illustrated in Figure 1 and discussed above, will now be applied to the development of the competence-based CV-writing programme in Figure 2 below.

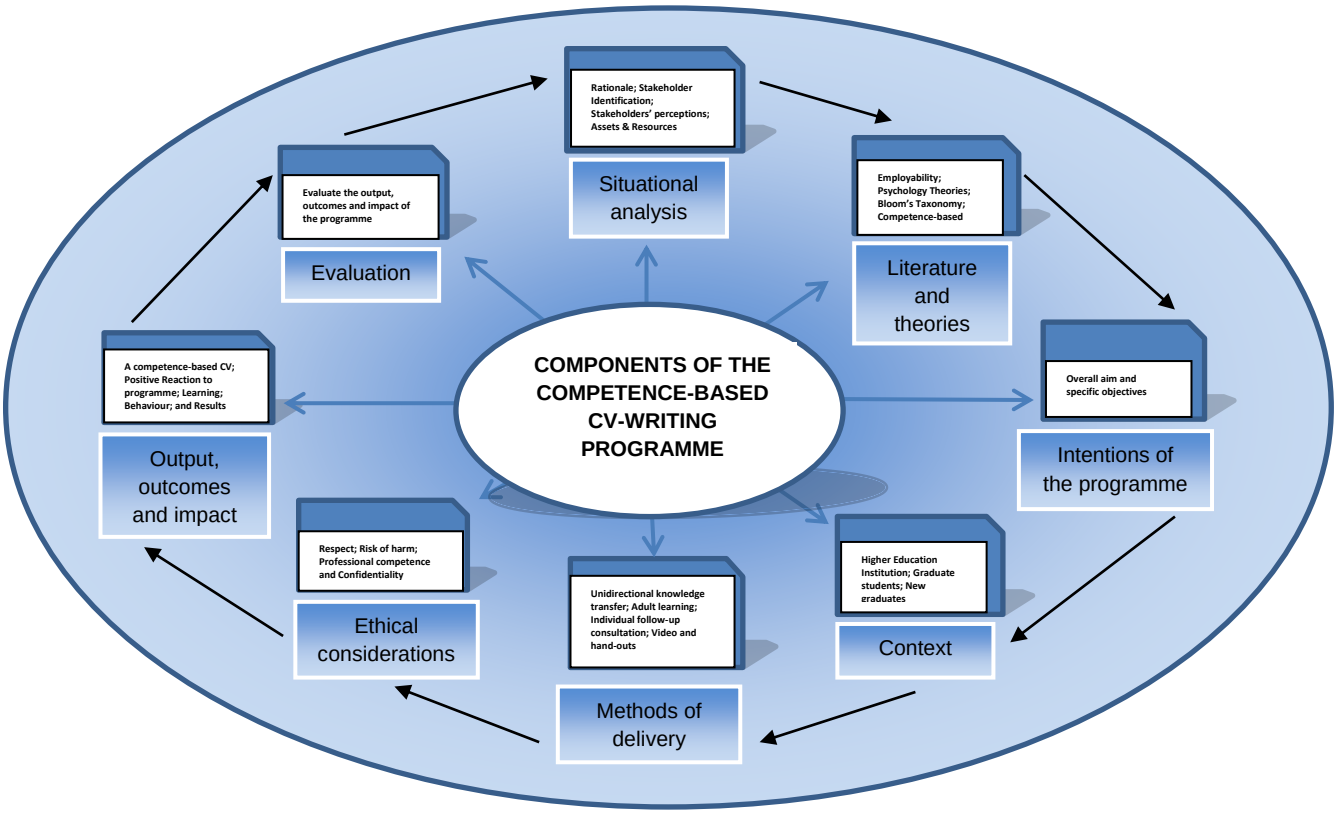

Figure 2. Components of Programme Development in the Competence-based CV-writing Programme

Situation Analysis

The rationale for the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme is contextualised against the growing number of new graduates and a very competitive labour environment (Abel et al., 2014; Roos el al., 2016b; Selingo, 2014; Torpey, 2013). New graduates need to make important life and career decisions after completing their degrees of which the most important is finding suitable graduate employment (Mostert & Els, 2012), and for that they need convincing CVs. New graduates, however, find themselves mostly in a situation of not having the extensive work experience that can demonstrate their competence and employability attributes

(knowledge, skills and attitudes) for a specific job - which leaves them with limited contents to include in their CV (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Roos el al., 2016b).

Stakeholders in this programme are identified as graduate recruiters or employers, career consultants at career services in higher education institutions, and the new graduates (Jackson, 2012; Lowden, Hall, Elliot, & Levin, 2011; Roos, P., 2016; Zhiwen & Van der Heijden, 2008). A summary of the career consultants' and graduate recruiters' perceptions of a CV is presented in Table 1 below. It was found that new graduates seek guidance and clarity on how to write a CV. They are uncertain about its content.

Table 1

Graduate Recruiters and Career Consultants' Perceptions

Cover letter - a short summary of the CV contents which serves as a marketing tool
Letter head - include minimal information and valid contact details
Relevant personal information presented upfront
Personal profile as a self-description that gives an indication of the unique qualities and of the applicant
Career objective to provide a sense of career orientation and aspiration
Formal qualifications and an indication of additional training: fit the job requirements and include academic transcripts
Professional registrations if applicable
Detail of work and extramural experience to demonstrate attributes, developmental potential and leadership experiences
Achievements to give an indication of personal qualities and traits
At least three referees who played a prominent role, and who are willing and able to give a relevant reference must be included
Only attachments to support the CV contents
CV Don'ts include: poor photos, time gaps not explained, negative attitudes, spelling errors, too much irrelevant information, and dishonesty or false impressions
Layout should demonstrate attention to detail, and effort, and must be logical and easily readable. Information kept short and bulleted, in a reverse chronological presentation, is preferred

Adapted from Roos et al. (2016b)

Stakeholders' perceptions were obtained through semi-structured qualitative interviews and presentation (see Roos et al., 2016b). New graduates want to know how to present their potential

in a CV so that they can convince graduate recruiters of their suitability for the employment opportunities on offer. Consultants and graduate recruiters alike emphasised the importance of attention to detail and the presentation and layout of CVs. The findings in Table 1 (see page 135) will be linked to the programme protocol of the competence-based CV-writing programme in Table 4 (see page 151) to illustrate how these perceptions from the study of Roos et al. (2016b) informed and shaped the contents of the programme.

Assets and resources that were identified for the competence-based CV-writing programme are: People; information; and financial/physical resources.

People resources*:* The researcher as a career consultant holds a master's degree in human resources management, with more than 30 years' experience in human resources management including experience in graduate recruitment, job evaluation and performance appraisal systems. In the university setting, people resources also include experts in programme and curriculum development as well as student counselling and development services. There are also student bodies and residence leadership structures by which the programme can be promoted. As part of the mandate of the career centre, contact with employers may be used to identify their requirements for graduate employment.

Information resources*:* Career centres in tertiary education institutions has access to various sources of information, including internet facilities, which enable national and international searches for information on graduate employability to be carried out. Communication channels, such as the career centre websites and Facebook pages, can be used to create awareness of the programmes. Books on CV-writing, cover letters, job interviews and job search strategies are available to students and programme presenters in career centres. The North-West University (NWU) career centre provides access to all the above and prepares and distributes an annual career guide booklet for students containing, among others, employer information and articles on CV-writing, cover letters, job interviews and job search strategies.

Financial and physical resources: These resources include budgets, equipment and space. The NWU established and funds the career centre with the specific purpose of enhancing graduate employability as a free service to its students. In terms of physical resources, lecture rooms are available and equipped with audio-visual equipment. The following aspects in choosing venues are considered as alluded to by Erasmus (2015): Flexibility is ensured in the sense that a presentation can be made in a variety of venues, such as the career centre meeting room, classrooms, and residence meeting rooms; accessibility is no problem although pre-booking is required for some venues. Every building and room is clearly and logically marked on the campuses and every student knows how to find his or her way to a venue. Availability of computer and audio/visual equipment in venues on the campus is easy to arrange if the room is not pre-equipped. All venues are well illuminated, ventilated and isolated (free from distracting sounds or other interruptions).

Literature and Theories

The literature review of employability of new graduates (see Roos et al., 2016a), was incorporated in the development of the competence-based CV-writing programme. In the discussion that follows, words and phrases from literature that are applicable to employability are italicised and summarised in Table 2 (see page 140). Literature on employability and employability enhancement revealed that employability is centred on the *person-environment fit* (Fugate et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2003) for which action is required to prove that the new graduate is employable in a specific context (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Roos, P., 2016; Ross et al., 2011; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). New graduates can actively participate in the development of their employability attributes by creating a *career identity* (Fugate et al., 2004), which should be tailored and presented to suit the circumstances.

Literature also revealed that *competence refers collectively to the sum total of the new graduates' employability attributes, which include their knowledge, skill and attitudes* (Roos et

al., 2016a). These employability attributes must be treated as *valuable possessions which can be traded as capital or assets* in the job market (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Roos et al., 2016a). New graduates *exhibit and present their graduate employability attributes* in the recruiting and job hunting process in a CV to employers and graduate recruiters (Roos et al., 2016a; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). There seems to be no agreement about the best combination of attributes for enhancing employability. A *multitude of lists of attributes* expected of and/or suggested for graduates, and a great variety of words, are used in literature to describe the attributes deemed necessary to render someone employable (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Jackson, 2012; Roos et al., 2016a; Teijeiro et al., 2013; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

Theories underpinning employability and relevant to the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme may be found in psychology sub-disciplines such as developmental, counselling, industrial and educational psychology (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Employability and CV-writing concern the optimal *fit between people and the contexts* in which they function - including the work context (Cook, 2012), relational interactions between people (Vorster, Beukes, & Roos, 2013) and *graduate identity developmen*t (Brown et al., 2003; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2011; Zhiwen & Van der Heijden; 2008).

Developmental and counselling psychology studies developing individuals and how they are, through the lifespan, exposed to normative and non-normative events informing their career interests and eventually their career decision (American Psychological Association [APA], 2011, Cherry, 2015; South Africa, 2011). The psychological aspects of employability as a psychosocial construct describes the affective states of people, their motivation and their knowledge, skill and attitude attributes (Athey & Orth, 1999).

Industrial psychology, in particular, contributes to the knowledge and understanding of employability because it describes recruitment, selection and assessment processes. Although competence is important throughout every employee's career path and career development, it is particularly relevant for new graduates who want to *present their potential* to prospective

employers (Vorster & Roodt, 2003; Weightman, 1994) to enter the world of work. To be employable, a graduate *must prove competence through the possession and demonstration of graduate employability attributes*.

Educational psychology literature describes competence as a set of observable performance dimensions expressed as the sum total of what a person knows *(knowledge), what he/she is able to do (skills), and how he/she feels about or reacts to a situation or task (attitude)* (Athey & Orth, 1999; Cranmer, 2006; Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998). The observable performance dimensions (knowledge, skill and attitude) correspond to Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, according to which learning consists of the cognitive domain, the psychomotor domain and the affective domain (Bloom, 1956; Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Forehand, 2005). Knowledge represents the cognitive domain, skills the psychomotor domain, and attitudes the affective domain in Bloom's Taxonomy. In the presentation of the programme, the analogy of 'head, hand and heart' is used, referring to knowledge, skills and attitude. Reiff and Ballin (2016) noticed that the cognitive, affective, psychomotor model of Bloom (1956) is often referred to as 'head, hand and heart', but sometimes also as 'mind, body and spirit', or 'think, act and feel', and these analogies consistently appear together in literature (Brown, 1971; Cropley, 2001; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Tuckman, 1972; Vella, 2002).

A competence-based approach presupposes an active form of adaptability (Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Fugate et al., 2004) and the optimal use of competence (graduate employability attributes) is required. It also requires individuals to know what competence (graduate employability attributes) is needed in the jobs they apply for and what competence they can offer. In the competence-based CV-writing programme, literature and theories are applied by teaching the students that they present (or sell) to an employer their existing competence as well as their potential to grow in competence, based on their existing knowledge from their studies, skills and abilities developed through work and voluntary experience as well as their attitude towards the career and/or job. Adopting a competence-based approach to employability

contributes to graduates' understanding of the processes and terminology that employers use in recruitment, selection and appointment so that they can respond appropriately in presenting their CVs.

Table 2

Findings from Literature and Theories Applicable to Competence-based CV-writing

Person-environment fit.
A competence-based approach - to know what graduate employability attributes are needed in the jobs they apply for and what they can offer employers.
Competence is a set of observable performance dimensions expressed as the sum total of what a person knows (knowledge), what he/she is able to do (skills), and how he/she feels about or reacts to a situation or task (attitude).
Employability attributes are valuable possessions which are traded in the job market.
Competence collectively refers to the sum total of the new graduates' employability attributes, which includes their knowledge (head); skill (hand) and attitude (heart).
New graduates must exhibit, present and prove their graduate employability attributes.
Sensitise graduates to identify their individual employability attributes that can be displayed in their CVs.
Multiple lists of employability attributes (specifically skills and traits).
Graduate/career identity (the promotion of positive adaptation, or competence development).
The promotion of positive adaptation or competence development from the social contexts in which individuals engage.
References
Sources for literature and theories applicable to competence-based CV-writing: Athey & Orth, 1999; Barnard & Nel, 2009; Bloom, 1956; Bloom et al., 1971; Coetzee, 2008; Coetzee, 2012; Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Cranmer, 2006; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Forehand, 2005; Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2011; Mulder, 2001; Onstenk, 1997; Roos et al., 2016a ; Teijeiro et al., 2013; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006

Table 2 above summarises findings of literature and theories that underpin a competence-based CV-writing programme, which will be justified in the development of the programme in Table 4 below (see page 151).

Intentions of the Programme

The competence-based CV-writing programme is clear about its intentions and has set specific objectives to achieve its aim (Yuen & Terao, 2003). It has a clear and sole aim: to assist new graduates through competence-based CV-writing to: i) Develop an understanding of

recruiters' expectations; ii) Determine what competence (graduate employability attributes) are necessary in the position(s) they apply for; iii) Link those employability attributes to their own experiences; iv) Be able to write a convincing competence-based CV; and v) Write a professional cover letter.

Context

Creating a context for participants to learn from the competence-based CV-writing programme is done by providing a frame for the learning to take place (Vorster, 2011). The first level of context is addressed in the way the presenters create a context for the programme by presenting visually those aspects that influence the CV-writing process (see Addendum 2). To create a learning context, presenters welcome graduates, provide them with appropriate supporting materials and explain the aim and objectives of the CV-writing programme. Participants will engage in a learning context only if they feel safe. Emotional safety, respect, openness and unconditional acceptance are ensured throughout, thereby promoting learning (Theron, 2012). Participants are reassured that their output from the programme (the CV) will not be judged, ridiculed or belittled.

An enabling training climate is also created when the presenter displays effective presentation skills (Du Toit, 2010). These include following a plan and using trainer notes, communicating in a way that is easy to understand, maintaining eye contact with participants, having good voice projection, asking simple and sometimes more challenging questions, displaying a positive sense of humour and being an effective role model.

The second level of context, in which the programme is presented, is also taken into account. In this instance it is a tertiary education context, the NWU, and the university's career centre, which aims to develop both 'hard' and 'soft' employability skills. The development of 'hard' employability skills includes activities such as job searching techniques; helping new graduates with job searches; CV-writing; contact with employers; finding and securing work placements/internships; careers events and fairs; computer and research skills; time management;

and provision of temporary and vacation work. 'Soft' employability skills include activities such as providing career information, understanding career development, practising interviews and communication skills, development decision-making, presentation and team working skills. CV-writing on its own is not regarded as a panacea for employability enhancement, and it is always seen in the broader context and is supplemented with other activities, such as personal development plans, coaching and mentoring, award-bearing units of career development learning and formal accreditation of practice (United Kingdom Department for Business, Innovation and Skills [UK BIS], 2011). However, many of these activities fall outside the scope of this study and the functions of higher education career centres. Zhiwen and Van der Heijden (2008) argue that employability enhancement should be an integrated activity undertaken in close collaboration with other role players, such as academic staff, employers' representatives, and the graduates themselves. However, in this context, matters or issues that affect graduates' employability enhancement are taken into consideration (see Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). This means that the presentation of the programme is planned and presented to accommodate graduates' formal studies and extra-curricular activities. CV-writing is regarded as a non-academic activity and as such should be presented at times that do not interfere with graduates' academic curriculum, or with academic activities.

Thorough preparation before the presentation of the programme also contributes to a context conducive to training. The six tasks that Chan (2010a) proposes for proper preparation are followed: i) Presentations are scheduling ahead of time so that students have opportunity to plan their attendance; ii) Participants are electing (invited) and notifying in good time; iii) Sufficient quantities of training materials (see Addenda 2 to 6) are obtained before the presentation; iv) Participants are prepared for the training before the presentation with a short description of the contents and planned outcomes of the programme; v) Presenters prepare their presentation well in advance; and vi) Lay contingency plans for when something might go wrong.

Methods of Delivery

In line with the view of Erasmus (2015), the learning circumstances (context) dictate the methods and techniques used in the presentation of the competence-based CV-writing programme. For developing purposes, a presenter-led intervention was used but provision is made for individual participation in individual follow-up meetings dedicated to feedback and support after the CVs have been drafted. In this programme, it is not important to choose between presentations to groups versus individuals, because the programme is flexible enough to accommodate a number of students. A combination of theoretical and practical approaches is most appropriate and the levels of student experience are not a very important consideration, because students who had never before attempted CV-writing as well as those who had drafted their CVs previously can benefit from the programme.

The competence-based CV-writing programme is adaptable to the number of participants which can range from a single graduate to large groups of graduates. Accordingly, a unidirectional method is used (Kerres & De Wit, 2003) whereby knowledge is transferred from the presenter to the recipients of the programme, because new graduates need knowledge before they can apply their CV-writing skills to their own situations. The duration and frequency of the presentation fit graduates' schedules and needs. The programme has been developed to be presented in approximately forty to sixty minutes. Presenters keep in mind that graduates may need additional support to apply the competence-based CV-writing programme to their unique situations; this can be addressed during individual discussions and CV feedback after the presentation.

The competence-based CV-writing programme also recognises that adults learn in different ways than children (Erasmus et al., 2015). Adults learn effectively if they have the motivation and want to learn, if they understand the purpose of the learning and are engaged in the learning process (Clifford & Thorpe, 2007). McCain and Tobey (2004) argue that facilitation is particularly appropriate in adult learning because it aids learning through self-discovery and

students learn from each other through the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Incorporated into the competence-based CV-writing programme's delivery method are principles of adult learning and a mix of cognitive learning and humanist learning approaches. The following five adult-learning principles enhance the capacity of students to make knowledge relevant to practice: i) Relevance (one take a greater interest in something that is clearly applicable to one's life); ii) Problem-focused process (a question/problem exists for which one needs an answer); iii) Scaffolding (integrating new information into existing knowledge helps to bind the two together); iv) Hands-on learning (learning through doing increases capacity to integrate and apply); and v) Engineered failure which means failing in a safe, structured, supportive environment to promote risk taking (Steinberg & Vinjamuri, 2014). While Wuestewald (2016) distinguishes between cognitive learning and humanist learning approaches, Reiff and Ballin (2016) state that cognitive learning theories continue to dominate literature (see Clark, Nguyen, & Sweller, 2005; Flannery, 1993). Cognitive learning assumes assimilation of information into learners' pre-existing knowledge and proposes that optimal learning occurs when information is logically presented in a pre-planned sequence and in an orderly, linear progression of subject matter, leading to mastery of a body of knowledge (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2006). A move towards more adult-oriented and experiential learning strategies is seen in humanist learning where the affective, self-directed, and experiential nature of learning is stressed as a process of self-discovery and self-actualisation (Merriam et al., 2006; Rogers, 1969). Adult learning, or andragogy (Knowles, 1990), is a product of this humanist orientation, which recognises that adults bring experiential knowledge to the classroom, have self-recognised learning needs, are highly task- and goal-oriented, and have internal and external motivation to learn (Erasmus et al., 2015; Knowles, 1990).

Chan (2010b) describes three types of learning programmes, synchronous, asynchronous and a combination of the two. The competence-based CV-writing programme is largely a synchronous type with an element of the asynchronous programme type because in presenting the

learning materials the presenter and students are present at the same time and place. The actual writing of the individual CV, however does not take place during the presentation, but later when the students apply the learning to their own unique and personal situation.

Ethical Considerations

In the development and presentation of the competence based CV-writing programme the following ethical considerations (see Crump & Sugarman, 2010; Lather & Sharma, 2009) are considered:

Respect for participants. During the presentation the best interests of the participants are always taken into account. Using empathic listening techniques, presenters provide positive and encouraging feedback to participants. Participants are also ensured of support (individual CV feedback) if needed after the presentation. Presenters are honest with the graduates at all times and emphasise that merely attending the programme and following the guidelines do not guarantee employment.

Risk of harm. In the presentation of the programme and feedback to graduates about their CVs, care is taken not to belittle, criticise or ridicule participants. This also applies to the CVs that are used as examples during the presentation of the programme, irrespective of whether the author of the example CV is present or not.

Professional competence. Only presenters who have background knowledge of writing and reading CVs, who have proven skills in CV-writing and presentation and a track record of involvement in graduate employability, are used.

Confidentiality. CVs are regarded as public documents and therefore confidentiality is not an important consideration. In the exceptional cases in which individual CVs are discussed or used as examples, personal identifying information is removed to ensure anonymity.

Output, Outcome and Impact

The programme's output is the tangible result of a CV-writing programme. Outcome and impact may also result from a programme, but they differ from output because they are benefits or

change (sometimes unplanned and unexpected and mostly intangible) after participating in a programme's activities (Mathison, 2005) when the programme reaches its aim. For example, the competence-based CV-writing programme has as its aim that new graduates are able to write their CVs. It might have an additional outcome or impact of enhanced confidence in new graduates to participate in recruitment processes. This confidence is an outcome or impact and not part of the planned aim and objectives or the output.

For the competence-based CV-writing programme, the programme outcome model of Yuen and Terao (2003), is used, consisting of input, throughput, output, and outcome as presented in Figure 3.

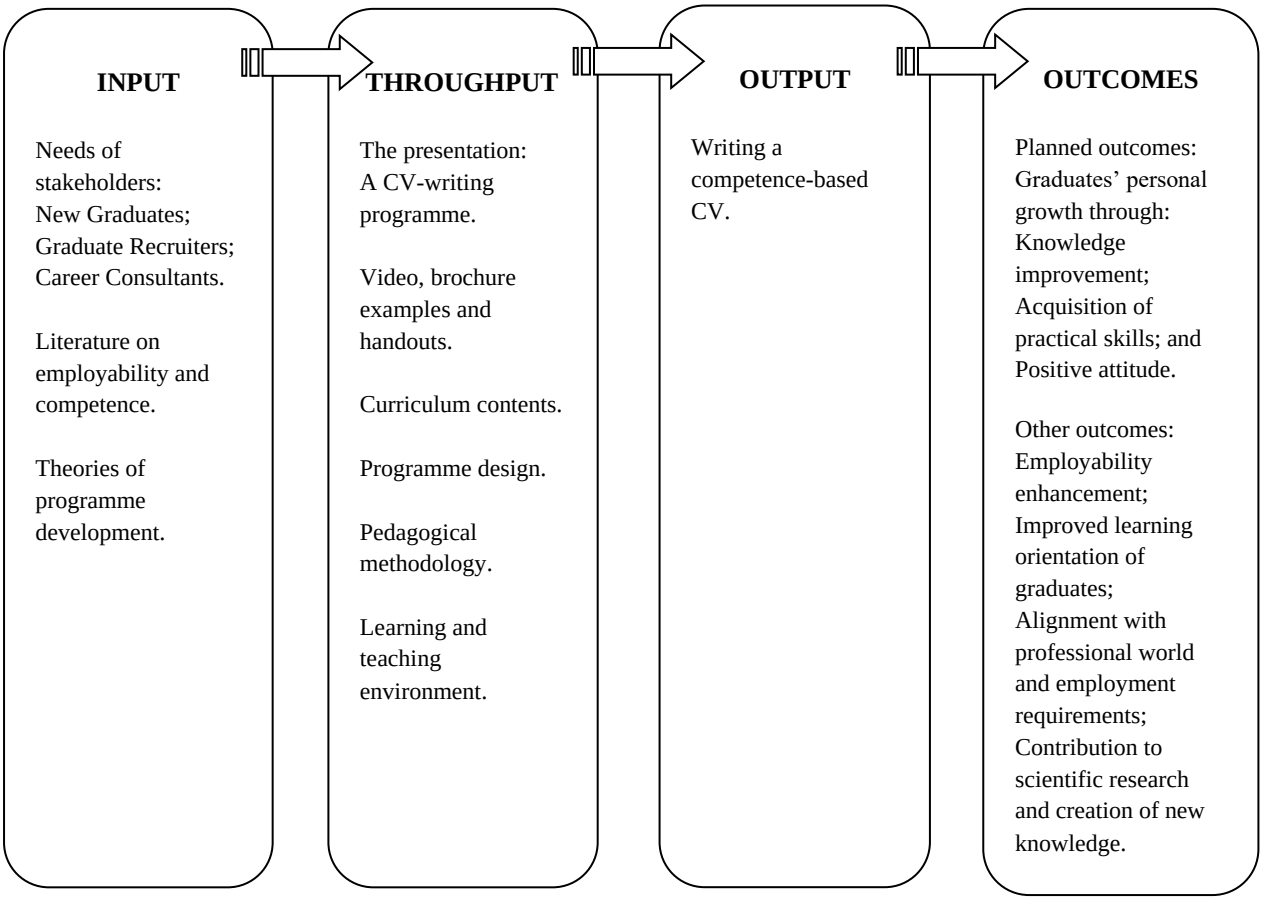

Figure 3. The Programme Outcome Model

Evaluation

Three methods of evaluation were identified and will be used for the competence-based CV-writing programme. These are: i) The KASA model (Mathison, 2005), ii) Kirkpatrick model

(Kirkpatrick, 1996; Praslova, 2010; Yardley & Dornan, 2012), and iii) Return on Investment (ROI) model (Phillips, 2007; Phillips & Stone, 2002) of programme evaluation. Mathison (2005) uses the acronym KASA to refer to Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills and Aspirations as measures for achievement of programme outcomes. The degree of change in KASA indicates the degree of outcome achievement (Mathison, 2005). Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Praslova, 2010; Yardley & Dornan, 2012) identified four levels of evaluation: Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, and Results. Phillips (2007) and Phillips and Stone (2002) identified five levels of evaluation that is comparable to the Mathison and Kirkpatrick models: Reaction and planned action; Learning; Application and implementation; and Business impact and Consequences. Phillips' (2007) business impact and consequences as return on investment (ROI) emphasize an evaluation of the monetary value and contribution of a programme, which is not directly applicable in this study. On closer inspection, the three models use the same four basic concepts to measure programme evaluation, albeit with different names and in different sequences.

Programmes are systematic efforts to achieve explicit objectives for improving education (Fink, 2015) and thus, in evaluating a programme, the explicit objectives of improvements in learning must be assessed. The overall aim and specific objectives of the competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates are reflected in Table 3 (see page 147) together with justification from literature, the means of verification and the method of evaluation. A comprehensive evaluation of the competence-based CV-writing programme will be presented in the larger study (see Roos, P., 2016).

Table 3

Aim and Objectives of the Competence-based CV-writing Programme

Programme Title: Competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates			
Overall Aim and Objectives	**Rationale**	**Means of Verification**	**Method of Evaluation**
AIM: To assist new graduates to write a competence-based CV. **OBJECTIVES:** To provide new graduates with a training programme that can teach them in an hour to: Understand the recruiter's expectations; Determine what graduate attributes (competence) are necessary; Link those attributes to their own experiences; Write a convincing competence-based CV; and Write a professional cover letter.	The CV is the first introduction of a new graduate's competence to a graduate recruiter and is the most important job hunting tool for graduates. A competence-based CV-writing programme, informed by pragmatism, is developed for new graduates. New graduates have to make important life and career decisions after completing their degrees of which the most important is finding suitable employment and for that they need convincing CVs. The achievement of the aim and objectives is indicated by the degree of change in knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations (KASA). A learning programme can be evaluated on four levels: reaction; learning; behaviour; and results.	To what extent do stakeholders perceive the programme to be achieving its objectives? Do students feel the programme contributed to a better understanding of employability, CV writing, recruiter's expectation, and participation in the recruitment processes? Does the programme lead to better practices in CV-writing and better job search strategies? Do recruiters view the resulting CVs as convincing and comprehensive enough to make the graduate employable? Do the students report a change in knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations? Does the programme present favourable findings on four levels: reaction; learning; behaviour; and results?	The programme should be evaluated by means of course feedback forms to capture student's evaluation. CVs resulting from the programme should be sent to recruiters for their feedback and evaluation. Knowledge transfer should be measured in a pre- and post-test for students attending. The programme should be evaluated by application of the principles of the 'KASA' model (Mathison, 2005), Kirkpatrick's model (1996) and the ROI model (Phillips, 2007).

Description of the Competence-based CV-writing Programme Developed

In the preceding two sections of this article the eight components of programme development, illustrated in Figure 1 (see page 127), were discussed and then applied to the development of the competence-based CV-writing programme in Figure 2 (see page 133). The actual contents and presentation of the programme to an audience of graduate students will now be explained in the form of the programme's delivery protocol and a facilitator's manual (see Addendum 1), with supporting material and hand-outs (see Addenda 2 to 6).

Programme Delivery Protocol

A programme's delivery protocol and the facilitator's manual consist of an explanation of the nature, contents and activities required to present the programme (see Mathison, 2005). The protocol of the competence-based CV-writing programme is presented in Table 4 (see page 150),

with the justification from literature (from Table 1 see page 134) and the stakeholders' perceptions (from Table 2 see page 139) to explain to the reader what happens during programme presentation and why. A detailed discussion of the facilitator's manual is presented in Addendum 1. For a better understanding, the reader is also referred to the accompanying video presentation and supporting material included at the end of this article. In the discussion the relevance of the person-environment fit is demonstrated which distinguishes this CV-writing programme from a formulaic presentations.

Supporting Material

Table 4 also refers to the supporting material used during programme presentation, which includes: a CV template as a proposed structure of a CV; an example of a cover letter; examples of personal profiles; a list of graduate employability attributes; and examples of employer brochures to demonstrate how recruiters describe their expectations and requirements for the jobs. The supporting materials for the competence-based CV-writing programme are presented in Addenda 2 to 6. Addendum 2 is a visual presentation of various aspects influencing the CV-writing and job hunting process. It includes a visual image of how the graduate recruiter fits between the applicant and the position applied for and how the applicant must 'offer' their competence and attributes to correspond with the 'need' of the position (recruiter or organisation). Furthermore, it illustrates new graduates' competence consisting of employability attributes and uses the metaphor of head (knowledge), hand (skills) and hart (attitude). It also indicates where to find additional sources of information about the organisation or position to prepare convincing competence-based CVs, such as job advertisements, employers' brochures and websites, and business plans. Addendum 3 consists of a CV template with main headings and descriptions of the content to be included to assist graduates to present their employability attributes clearly to graduate recruiters. Addendum 4 provides examples of graduate employability attributes, listed to stimulate graduates' ideas to identify and describe their own graduate employability attributes.

Addendum 5 provides examples of personal profiles, illustrations of how a personal profile can be formulated to present an applicant's unique personal qualities and traits. Addendum 6 provides an example of a cover letter. It illustrates how graduates can use this as a marketing tool and how relevant information can be presented, but most importantly how to create a professional impression. A DVD presentation (Addendum 7) of the competence-based CV-writing programme was prepared to illustrate how it can be presented. This DVD presentation can be used by new graduates who do not have the opportunity to attend personal presentations.

Table 4

Delivery Protocol of the Competence-based CV-writing Programme

Steps in programme delivery	Specific activities	Justification from literature (From Table 2)	Justification from stakeholders' perceptions (From Table 1)
1. Welcome.	Welcome students. Introduce presenter. Ask students to introduce themselves (in small groups). In large groups, ask a few their study direction.	Creating a learning context and climate is important because if no context for communication is created, meanings are not clear. Creating a context and climate for participants to learn from a programme means providing a frame for the learning to take place. The effectiveness of the created context and climate will impact on the quality of the learning because participants will engage in the learning context only if they feel safe.	No mention.
2. Create a context.	Explain structure and outcomes of programme. Show the hand outs needed for the rest of the presentation (Addenda 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6). Show and explain figure with programme structure (Addendum 2).	A learning space (context and climate) is created for optimal participation. The purpose of an introduction to create a favourable climate is to capture interest, create expectations, review objectives; ask questions about the topic; and share a personal experience.	No mention.
3. Introduce a competence-based approach.	Determine recruiter expectations (sources of information) (Addendum 2). Explain competence as: Knowledge (Head) Skill (Hand) Attitude (Heart) (Addendum 2). Indicate where in the CV-template headings the head, hand and heart symbols are applicable (Addendum 3.)	Person-environment fit. A competence-based approach – to know what graduate employability attributes are needed in the jobs they apply for and what they can offer employers. Competence is a set of observable performance dimensions expressed as the sum total of what a person knows (knowledge), what he/she is able to do (skills), and how he/she feels about or reacts to a situation or task (attitude). Competence refers collectively to the sum total of the new graduates' employability attributes which include their knowledge (head), skill (hand) and attitudes (heart). Employability attributes are valuable possessions which are traded in the job market. New graduates must exhibit and present their graduate employability attributes.	No mention.

Steps in programme delivery	Specific activities	Justification from literature (From Table 2)	Justification from stakeholders' perceptions (From Table 1)
4. Read from employer brochures and job advertisements.	Give examples of competence words most frequently used in brochures and job advertisements.	Person-environment fit. Sensitise graduates to identify their individual employability attributes that could be displayed in their CVs.	No mention.
	Encourage students to identify their own employability attributes that may be applicable to positions they apply for.		
5. Show them the summary of most desired graduate attributes.	Words that describe attributes (skills and traits) in employer brochures and literature are presented (Addendum 4).	Multiple lists of employability attributes (specifically skills and traits). Career identity (the promotion of positive adaptation, or competence development).	No mention.
	Select and link applicable words demonstrating unique employability attributes to the various parts of the CV-template.		
	Use examples to demonstrate how employer brochures can be interpreted and used in a specific context.		
6. Explain every part of the CV-template - Head, hand and heart. (Addendum 3).	Personal Profile (Addendum 3 & 5).	No mention.	A self-description which shows personal qualities and traits that would lead to success in the job and constitute a good person-job-organisation fit. It includes perceived strengths and weaknesses, personal vision and mission. Recruiters form positive impressions of applicants who portray attributes such as respect, responsibility, emotional intelligence, perseverance, self-drive, passion and academic orientation.
	Career Objective (Addendum 3).	No mention.	An indication of future intentions/plans and long-term career orientation /vision which confirm the fit of the applicant to the position.
	Academic Background (Addendum 3).	No mention.	It includes formal qualifications, other training and academic achievements applicable to career/job and may include professional registration. Qualifications refer to school and university results. The person-job fit must be obvious from the qualifications and appropriate. Completed degrees and additional qualifications are referred to, to derive personal qualities and traits.

Steps in programme delivery	Specific activities	Justification from literature (From Table 2)	Justification from stakeholders' perceptions (From Table 1)
6. (Continued) Explain every part of the CV-template – head, hand and heart (Addendum 3).	Life and Work Experience (Addendum 3).	The promotion of positive adaptation or competence development from the social contexts in which individuals engage.	It includes formal work or informal other activities. Mention as many skills, knowledge and personal qualities/traits as possible that were developed in various contexts which could be transferred to the work context. The detail for formal work experience is: name of the employer, type of work, duties and responsibilities. Informal other activities could include: volunteer and community engagement, interests, hobbies, and sport. For informal other activities the specific responsibilities should also be stated clearly. Leadership experience must be indicated specifically.
7. Explain every other part of the CV-template (Addendum 3).	Heading (Addendum 3).	No mention.	A heading is advisable as an obvious place to look for contact details or it could be elsewhere in the CV. It must include: name, surname, valid e-mail address and a cell phone number (with voice-mail).
	Personal Information (Addendum 3).	No mention.	Sufficient but not too much biographical information of the applicant is needed to indicate the formal identity of the applicant and the person-job-fit. It should include involuntary data, such as: name, surname, gender, race, ID number, birth date (age) and aspects that are in partial control of the applicant, such as addresses (willingness to relocate), health (e.g. smoking), language, marital status, dependants, criminal record, driver's licence.
	References (Addendum 3).	No mention.	It must include referees who can provide more information about aspects included in the CV as well as personal testimonies to indicate the suitability of the graduate for the specific job opportunity. References should include employers and other prominent people who are willing and able to give relevant and recent testimonials. Avoid family members, school headmasters and ministers.
8. Other aspects of the CV.	Language; spelling; neatness; lay-out; attachments.	No mention.	CV-writers are strongly advised against errors such as: poor photographs; time gaps; negativity towards others; spelling errors; and too much personal information; dishonesty and creating false impressions; exclusion of a subject line in an email; or including another company's name in the cover letter. The CV creates an impression and shows effort. The minimum required attachments should be those that support the CV contents, such as: academic record and certificates of qualifications or additional training, copies of ID, driver's licence, and selected relevant written testimonials.
	Personalise for every application.	No mention.	No mention.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The competence-based CV-writing programme was developed for new graduates. The same programme development components and stages may be used to develop similar programmes for other contexts. It is proposed that this programme be presented to graduates to obtain their feedback and to adjust the programme following the suggested stages. To further ensure that the programme achieved its aim and objectives, it is proposed that a selection of the CVs complied by students who attended the programme be evaluated by graduate recruiters to obtain their feedback and their evaluation of CVs resulting from the programme. Evaluation by these direct stakeholders will give an indication of the effectiveness of the programme. Results from the evaluative processes may lead to adaptation of the programme contents and/or methods of delivery and will ensure continuous programme quality enhancement.

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Addenda

Addendum 1 - Facilitator's manual

Addendum 2 - Visual presentation of aspects influencing the CV-writing process

Addendum 3 - CV template

Addendum 4 - Examples of attributes

Addendum 5 - Personal profile examples

Addendum 6 - Cover letter template

Addendum 7 - CD with video presentation (See sleeve inside back cover)

Addendum 1 - Facilitator Manual

Step 1: Welcome

Specific activities:

- Make students feel welcome.
- Introduce yourself as presenter.
- Ask students to introduce themselves (in small groups). In large groups, ask a few for their study direction.

Step 2: Create a context

Specific activities:

- Explain the structure , length and outcomes of programme
- Show the hand-outs that they need for the rest of the presentation (Addenda 2 to 6).
- Ensure that everyone have the hand-outs.

Step 3: Introduce a competence-based approach

Specific activities:

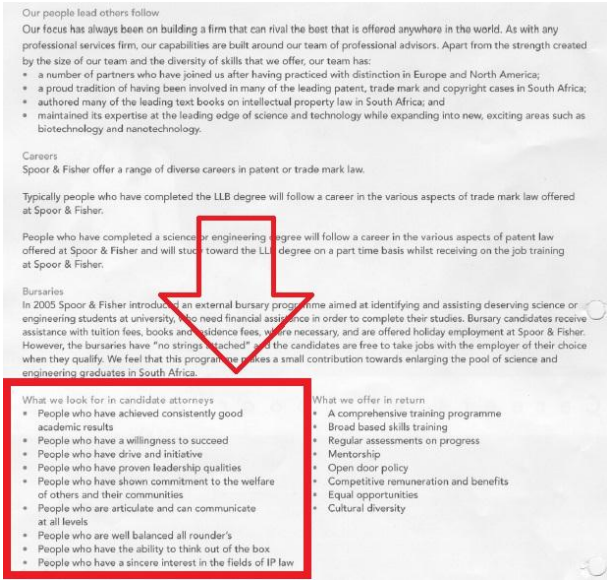
- Show and explain the figure with programme structure (Addendum 2) and emphasise that a strong *OFFER* is needed in the CV from *YOU* (the applicant) to respond to the *NEED* of the *RECRUITER* to obtain *THE JOB.*
- The need of the recruiter is summarised in the word *COMPETENCE* and competence consist of *KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND ATTITUDE* attributes or simply put, *HEAD, HAND AND HEART* attributes.
- Explain competence as: Knowledge (Head) including qualification(s) or additional training or courses; Skill (Hand) referring to observable behaviour and is described as a verb or an action; Attitude (Heart) referring to traits and personal qualities and is described as adjectives describing own personality (Addendum 2).
- Indicate where in the CV-template headings the head, hand and heart symbols are applicable (Addendum 2.).

- Knowledge (Head) is recorded under heading 4;
- Skill (Hand) is described under headings 5 and 6; and
- Attitude (Heart) is captured under headings 2 and 3.

Step 4. Read from employer brochures and/or job advertisements. (Environmental expectations)

Specific activities:

- Explain to students how to determine recruiter' expectations by studying the job advertisements, or job description, the company brochures or web sites, business plans, etcetera, (the sources of information) and to look specifically for employers stated needs for knowledge (head), skills (hand) and attitude (heart) attributes. (Addendum 2).
- Choose at least three examples of randomly selected employer brochures or job advertisements. Use these examples to demonstrate how employer brochures can be interpreted and used in a specific context. It should be emphasised that for the purposes of the training, the facilitator can use any example to demonstrate the principle. Below is an example which can be used even if the word attorneys or fields in the IP law are included in the brochure, because most of these attributes are generic and thus applicable to many professions.
- Read out loud: "what we look for in candidate attorneys".



Our people lead others follow

Our focus has always been on building a firm that can rival the best that is offered anywhere in the world. As with any professional services firm, our capabilities are built around our team of professional advisors. Apart from the strength created by the size of our team and the diversity of skills that we offer, our team has:

- a number of partners who have joined us after having practiced with distinction in Europe and North America;
- a proud tradition of having been involved in many of the leading patent, trade mark and copyright cases in South Africa;
- authored many of the leading text books on intellectual property law in South Africa; and
- maintained its expertise at the leading edge of science and technology while expanding into new, exciting areas such as biotechnology and nanotechnology.

Careers

Spoor & Fisher offer a range of diverse careers in patent or trade mark law.

Typically people who have completed the LLB degree will follow a career in the various aspects of trade mark law offered at Spoor & Fisher.

People who have completed a science or engineering degree will follow a career in the various aspects of patent law offered at Spoor & Fisher and will study toward the LLB degree on a part time basis whilst receiving on the job training at Spoor & Fisher.

Bursaries

In 2005 Spoor & Fisher introduced an external bursary programme aimed at identifying and assisting deserving science or engineering students at university, who need financial assistance in order to complete their studies. Bursary candidates receive assistance with tuition fees, books and residence fees, where necessary, and are offered holiday employment at Spoor & Fisher. However, the bursaries have "no strings attached" and the candidates are free to take jobs with the employer of their choice when they qualify. We feel that this programme makes a small contribution towards enlarging the pool of science and engineering graduates in South Africa.

What we look for in candidate attorneys

- People who have achieved consistently good academic results
- People who have a willingness to succeed
- People who have drive and initiative
- People who have proven leadership qualities
- People who have shown commitment to the welfare of others and their communities
- People who are articulate and can communicate at all levels
- People who are well balanced all rounder's
- People who have the ability to think out of the box
- People who have a sincere interest in the fields of IP law

What we offer in return

- A comprehensive training programme
- Broad based skills training
- Regular assessments on progress
- Mentorship
- Open door policy
- Competitive remuneration and benefits
- Equal opportunities
- Cultural diversity

- Read out the following words from the example brochure:

  "Good academic results; willingness to succeed; drive and initiative, leadership qualities, commitment to the welfare of others and their communities, who can articulate and can communicate at all levels; well-balanced all-rounder; and ability to think out of the box".

- As an example how new graduates can use this information, link the words in the brochure to some of the word in the "what employers want" list (Addendum 4). For example:

Example from brochure	**Examples of attributes (Addendum 4)**
Willingness to succeed	Results orientation
Drive and initiative	Innovation and creativity
Leadership qualities	Leadership
Commitment to the welfare of others and their communities	Dedication and commitment
Who can articulate and can communicate at all levels	Communication
Well-balanced all-rounder	Adaptability/Flexibility
Ability to think out of the box	Analytical thinking/ Innovation and creativity

- Encourage students to identify their own specific employability attributes (or synonyms) which they feel confident to offer in relation to the need of the employer and that may be applicable to the context of the positions they apply for.

Step 5. Show them the summary of most desired graduate attributes.

Specific activities:

- Draw the attention to Addendum 4 and indicate that many of these words (or synonyms) were heard in the reading of the brochure examples.
- Explain that these words that describe attributes (skills and traits) in employer brochures and literature are presented to create awareness of employer needs.
- Explain that if the attributes below is used as a verb it describes a skill but the same attribute can be used as an adjective which would then describe a personal trait. For example: In the adjective form it describes a trait: "I am and *adaptable and flexible* person, who can easily fit into a new environment." In the verb form it describes as skill: "I *adapted* easily to the university context and by doing so, I *demonstrated flexibility*.

Addendum 4 - Examples of attributes

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

MOST SOUGHT AFTER SKILLS; COMPETENCES AND TRAITS

Adaptability/ Flexibility	Analytical thinking	Attention to detail
Business acumen	Career motivation	Commercial awareness
Communication	Compliance	Conflict management
Consulting	Creativity/ Innovation	Customer focus
Decisiveness	Dedication/ Commitment	Delegation
External awareness	Independence	Influencing
Information seeking	IT appreciation	Instruction (Give and receive)
Integrity	Judgement	Leadership
Leveraging diversity	Listening	Negotiation
Numeracy	Organisation	Organisational awareness
Planning	Problem solving	Public speaking
Resilience/ Tenacity	Responsibility	Results orientation
Risk taking	Sense of self	Sensitivity
Teamwork	Trustworthiness/Ethics	

Step 6. Explain every part of the CV-template - Head, hand and heart. (Addendum 3).

Specific activities:

- **Personal Profile (Heart)**

Select and link applicable words demonstrating unique employability attributes to the various parts of the CV-template. In writing a personal profile use, for example, at least 10 adjectives which will describe your personality traits and qualities best but specifically in relation to the specific job/career indicating the suitability of the new graduate. Draw attention to Addendum 5 which provides two examples of personal profiles

- **Career objective (Heart)** (Addendum 3).

The career objective must demonstrate your enthusiasm and passion (heart) for the specific profession/industry and setting to which you are applying and must indicate that you have the right positive attitude that will lead to success in the job in that particular environment/company.

- **Academic Background (Head)** (Addendum 3).

List academic qualifications indicating institution, name of qualification and date and all other types of training and knowledge obtained, such as: excel spread sheet, or a first aid course. Finally, list specific academic achievements, such as, golden key membership, and honorary colours.

- **Life and Work Experience (Hand).** (Addendum 3).

Specific activities:

Life experience is presented thematically (as opposed to chronologically) and where applicable, can include in any order the following themes: culture, sport, leadership, community activities, entrepreneurship, academic activities and interests and hobbies. A proposed procedure that is suggested to give some guidance is:

- Use a table and make a list in the first column of all activities from Grade 10 to now in all the contexts that are applicable to you specifically.

- In the next column, link every activity in the contexts listed to a specific skill (verb) from Addendum 4.
- Make the specific skill (verb) and context clear in terms of its transferrable value to the relevant job or work context.

The next three examples illustrate the point:

Example 1.

Participation in public speaking taught me communication skills and public speaking that will be useful in a pharmacy because you must be able to continually communicate with clients and staff.

Example 2.

During my years of learning how to play the piano, I've learned discipline, commitment, responsibility, and ending a project started. These are traits that help you to solve problems, should they arise. Playing the piano is also a way to stimulate my creative side.

Example 3.

By participating in a wide variety of sports, I learned the importance of team work, how to focus on a specific goal, coping with successes as well as failures, motivation, leadership, managing conflict and how to be reliable.

Any **work experience** is also presented in the same manner (linking skills or verbs to contexts) but in reverse-chronological order to make it easy to identity the most recent experience.

Step 7. Explain every other part of the CV-template (Addendum 3).

Specific activities:

- Heading (Addendum 3). Create a letterhead that contains your name and contact details for easy reference
- Personal Information (Addendum 3). Provide biographical information as indicated, being careful not to include too much and/or unnecessary information.
- References (Addendum 3). Provide a minimum of two and a maximum of four references whom could be contacted for more information on the context and/or verifying knowledge,

skill and trait attributes. References are people who can provide more information about aspects included in the CV. They should be informed that they have been nominated and willing to give testimonials. Referees should be easily contactable and family members, principals and ministers should be avoided.

Step 8. Other aspects of the CV.

- Language; spelling; neatness; lay-out; attachments.

The layout and presentation of the CV should be clear and logical. It should be easily readable with clear headings and sub-headings. Avoid the following: spelling errors and poor quality photographs.

- Attachments

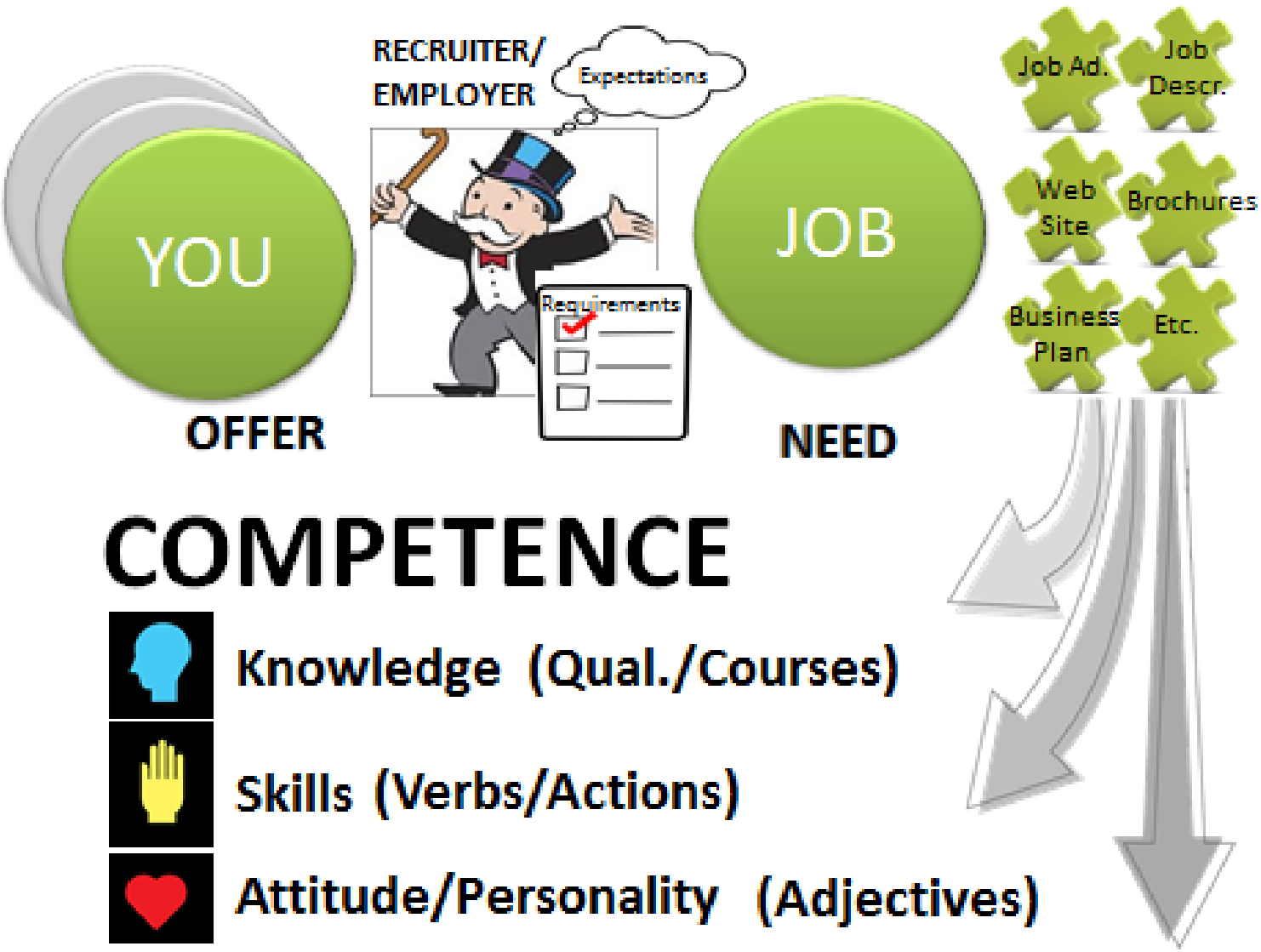
Keep attachments to the minimum. Ensure that it supports the contents of the CV. Include at least Academic transcripts, degree and matriculation certificates, identity document and driver's licence.

- Cover letter

Explain the contents of the cover letter provided as an example in Addendum 6.

NOTE TO READER: For a better understanding of the practical application of this manual, please refer to the video presentation in Addendum 7. The video was created to present the contents to students when the primary researcher is not able to do the presentation in person. .It was also used in the next article to ensure that exactly the same presentation was made to different groups of students during the evaluation stage of the competence-based CV-writing programme.

Addendum 2 - Visual presentation of aspects influencing the CV-writing process



Addendum 3 - CV template

AWESOME STUDENT

084 778 1234 · **awesome.student@gmail.com**

PO Box 1234, Mafikeng, 2531

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname	Student
Name	Gifted Awesome
I.D.-number	900101 0123 456
Nationality	South-African
Languages	Tswana/Afrikaans and English
Driver's License	Code A and B

2. PERSONAL PROFILE

At least 10 words (adjectives) which will describe your personality, personal qualities or traits which will lead to success in the specific job/career, as explained in the presentation.

3. CAREER GOAL/OBJECTIVE

Explain what kind of a job you are looking for at what kind of company. Show how what you look for, matches their position/company. You may want to specify: Functional area (job); level in the organisation; type of organisation; size of organisation; eventual goals and specific skills sets.

4. ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

4.1 List academic qualifications, starting from highest and include only the subjects which are necessary.

Refer to attached academic record for all subjects.

4.2 Other courses attended and/or knowledge obtained. Professional registrations.

4.3 Academic Achievements.

5. LIFE EXPERIENCE

Remember: "VERBS & CONTEXT"

Typical headings are given below. It will be unique in your situation, as explained in the presentation.

5.1 CULTURE - Debating; Music; Singing; Dancing; Acting; etc.

5.2 SPORT - Soccer; Tennis; Ballet; Athletics; etc.

5.3 LEADERSHIP

5.4 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

5.5 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

5.6 ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES - Projects, Assignments, Research, Data gathering/processing; Student Instruction; etc.

5.7 INTERESTS AND HOBBIES - Photography; Gardening; Flower arranging; etc.

6. WORK EXPERIENCE

Name of employer; period, job title **AND** a description of what you **did**.

Remember: "VERBS"

7. REFERENCES

Employer	Mr. P. Wessels; Sunshine Pharmacy, Mafikeng. 082 123 4567
Lecturer	Dr. J. Alison; Department of Statistics; NWU; Mafikeng. 082 234 5678

Addendum 4 - Examples of attributes

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

MOST SOUGHT AFTER SKILLS; COMPETENCES AND TRAITS

Adaptability/ Flexibility	Analytical thinking	Attention to detail
Business acumen	Career motivation	Commercial awareness
Communication	Compliance	Conflict management
Consulting	Creativity/ Innovation	Customer focus
Decisiveness	Dedication/ Commitment	Delegation
External awareness	Independence	Influencing
Information seeking	IT appreciation	Instruction (Give and receive)
Integrity	Judgement	Leadership
Leveraging diversity	Listening	Negotiation
Numeracy	Organisation	Organisational awareness
Planning	Problem solving	Public speaking
Resilience/ Tenacity	Responsibility	Results orientation
Risk taking	Sense of self	Sensitivity
Teamwork	Trustworthiness/Ethics	

This is by no means a complete list, just an indication of what is important to different employers.

Addendum 5 - Personal profile examples

PERSONAL PROFILE EXAMPLES

Example 1

A confident, self-reliant, individual who naturally wants to take the lead and is always results oriented. Not afraid of making difficult decisions and likes to move ahead at a fast pace. She is driven by challenges. Accuracy, being organised and prepared are seen in her everyday work and personal life. She naturally follows rules. This loyal employee prefers structure even though her adventurous nature and risk-taking abilities in business encourage a competitive edge. Never afraid to initiate change, she is very adaptable and always eager to learn.

Example 2

I am an ambitious and energetic student with a passion for making a difference. I believe in strong moral values and that a balanced life is important for family, personal and career success. The strong leadership qualities I possess enable me to inspire others to achieve and to exceed expectations, every day. I am a team player with a noticeable willingness to work hard.

Addendum 6 - Cover letter template

AWESOME STUDENT

084 778 1234 · awesome.student@gmail.com

PO Box 1234, Potchefstroom, 2531

05 September 20xx

Mr Very Important
Fancy Company (PTY) Ltd
ADDRESS

Dear Mr Important,

<u>CV FOR YOUR ATTENTION</u>

1. Why are you sending this CV to him and what is included / attached. Refer to telephone discussion, newspaper add, personal referral etc. Mention position title, number and other details.

2. Make them curious to read your CV. (Grab their attention and arouse their interest.)

- Show the links between what you offer (Qualifications, Abilities and Qualities) and their needs.

  "From my attached CV you will notice that I will be in possession of the ..... degree by ..... I have experience in ..... and my best personal traits are .....
  This sentence must show clearly why you think you should be considered for appointment.

- Tell them if you have reasons to think they are special. (Only genuine compliments.)

- Show how this opportunity fits into your career objectives and future career planning.
  This is the longest paragraph in the letter, but do not go over to a next page.

3. Thank him/her for the time spent considering your CV. Give a positive expectation of a response. Tell them that you are available for further processes or provision of information.

Yours faithfully,

Awesome Student

ARTICLE 4: Evaluation of a Competence-based Curriculum Vitae-writing Programme for New Graduates

Evaluation of a Competence-based Curriculum Vitae-writing Programme for New Graduates

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Abstract

In this article new graduates and graduate recruiters as direct stakeholders evaluated a competence-based CV-writing programme. Through convenience sampling, graduates (n=190) voluntarily attended the programme and completed a knowledge test before (n=158) and after (n=130) the presentation, as well as feedback forms (n=145). Graduate recruiters (n=11), guided by open-ended questions, evaluated students' CVs written after attending the programme. Textual data obtained on the evaluation of the programme were analysed thematically and numerical data were presented in graphs indicating percentages or frequencies. Student data revealed gains in knowledge and skills in CV-writing and enhanced attitudes of competence and confidence for participation in recruitment processes. Recruiter data demonstrated that the graduates had presented themselves as employable in their CVs. The research arrived at the conclusion that the programme is effective, of high quality and adds value. Some critique is offered to enhance the programme.

Keywords: Competence-based, Employability, Employability enhancement, Evaluation, New Graduates, Programme.

Introduction

This article is the last of a series of four articles addressing the aim of a broader study, namely to develop and evaluate a competence-based curriculum vitae (CV)-writing programme for new graduates (see Roos, 2016).

A gap in research was identified for a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates (Roos, 2016). The first objective of the broader study was to conduct a critical review of literature on new graduate employability and competence associated with the employability of employees in general and new graduates specifically (see Roos, De Klerk, Stander, & Nienaber, 2016a). The second objective was to obtain the perceptions of stakeholders regarding CVs for new graduates (see Roos, De Klerk, Stander, & Nienaber, 2016b). The findings of the first two objectives were combined in a third objective: to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme (See Roos, De Klerk, & Stander, 2016). The aim of the programme is to assist new graduates to create competence-based CVs which link their employability attributes with the requirements of the job. Determining the extent to which this programme achieved its goal is the fourth and final objective of the larger study. Therefore the first research question guiding this article is: How should a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates be evaluated? Literature on programme evaluation will be consulted. Subsequent research questions guiding this article are: i) How do students who attended the programme evaluate the programme? and ii) How do graduate recruiters evaluate the CVs drafted by students who attended the programme?

Programme Evaluation

The evaluation of a (training) programme serves the following four purposes (Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda, & Nel, 2015): i) Proving - demonstrating that something positive has happened as a result of the training activity; ii) Improving - ensuring that the current or future programme or activities in the programme become better that they are at present; iii) Learning - utilising evaluation activities to aid and reinforce individual learning both in the students (programme

contents) and the programme developers (programme development knowledge and skills); and iv) Control - ensuring that learning is delivered as required and aiding decision making regarding programme effectiveness, programme continuation, programme improvement, and individual performance.

Literature agrees that programme planning and evaluation are interrelated (Fink, 2015; Hart, 2016; Mathison, 2005; Prideaux, 2003; Yuen & Terao, 2003). Yuen and Terao (2003) describe them as two sides of the same coin. This implies that the evaluation of a programme should already be included in its planning and development. Programme development and evaluation are iterative processes, because once the evaluation has been conducted, revisions to the programme are made, until the next cycle of feedback is obtained from the evaluation (Fink, 2015; Hart, 2016; Mathison, 2005; Prideaux 2003; Yuen & Terao, 2003), which is again incorporated for further improvement.

Programme evaluation is an inquiry process to obtain evidence about the programme's effectiveness (Fink, 2015; Mathison, 2005. Erasmus (2015), and Erasmus et al. (2015), conclude from various definitions that evaluation is a dual process where on the one hand it is concerned with the evaluation of the student's ability to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes, and on the other hand with the evaluation of the learning system.

Programmes are regarded as simple when it is possible to capture the programme theory in a linear causal path including some variation on five categories: inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2012, Mouton, 2009; Yuen & Terao, 2003). Inputs and processes deal with the development of the programme content and presentation, while outputs, outcomes and impact deal with evaluation. Outputs are the tangible products: for instance, the number of students who attended the programme (Mathison, 2005). Outputs are more specific than outcomes, which are characterised by their prolonged nature (Yuen & Terao, 2003). Outcomes may be detected in behaviour, skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, conditions,

status, or other attributes (Yuen & Terao, 2003). Impact refers to the sustainability of the programme and positive changes affecting the broader environment (such as unemployment of graduates) (Hart, 2016).

Educational programmes, such as the competence-based CV-writing programme, usually have clearly defined goals (aim and objectives) that can be quantified and achievements that can easily be observed and measured (Loots, 2008; Mouton, 2009).

Literature mentions various indicators, measures or elements of a programme that can be evaluated. Fink (2015) describes three elements (effectiveness, quality and value) of her definition of programme evaluation as follows:

> An *effective* program provides substantial benefit to individuals, communities, and societies greater than their human and financial costs. A high *quality* program meets the users' needs and is based on sound theory and the best available research evidence. A program's *value* is measured by its worth to individuals, the community and society. (p. 4).

The principles involved in programme evaluation (Erasmus et al., 2015) include that: i) It is a continuous process; ii) It is well planned in light of aim, objectives and outcomes; iii) Accurate and applicable measuring instruments must be used; iv) It is a form of quality control; and v) It is not directed only at the assessment of students, but also at the broader training and development system as a whole.

Mathison (2005) describes the standards against which a programme is evaluated in terms of four distinct areas: "utility (needs), feasibility (reasonable, prudent, and cost effective), propriety (legal and ethical responsibility), and accuracy (technical adequacy and appropriateness)" (p. 339). These measures of evaluation are however not directly observable and therefore the more pragmatic approach of Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation model of training (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Praslova, 2010; Yardley & Dornan, 2012) is followed. This model

delineates four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behaviour and results. Reaction indicates students' reaction to the quality and relevance of the programme. Learning is the quantifiable indications that learning has taken place. Behaviour is demonstrated in the visible outcomes in terms of knowledge applied and/or improved performance. Results determine the impact of behaviour changes on broader goals and objectives. The Return on Investment (ROI) model (Phillips, 2007; Phillips & Stone, 2002) identifies five levels of evaluation which are labelled: Reaction and planned action; Learning; Application and implementation; and Business impact and Consequences. The three models of programme evaluation (KASA, Kirkpatrick and ROI) basically use the same four concepts to evaluate, albeit in different sequences and by different names. To indicate the achievement of targets and outcomes of a programme, Mathison (2005) uses the acronym KASA, referring to knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations. Mathison's (2005) KASA-model is not presented in the same progressive sequence as Kirkpatrick and ROI, but if the acronym is scrambled, and knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations become attitudes, knowledge, skills and aspirations, it corresponds with the other two views by asking the following questions: Did they like/enjoy the programme or found it useful? Did they learn from it what the programme intended to teach? Can they demonstrate the skill of writing a CV (application of the knowledge)? Did it improve their attitudes or prospects of employability or brought some positive consequence? Applied to this study, the first three questions relate to new graduates' evaluation of the programme and the last two questions have relevance for graduate recruiters to determine if new graduates have acquired the skill of CV-writing and if their employability has been enhanced after they have attended a competence-based CV-writing programme. Even though the literature review on employability (see Roos et al. 2016a) identified three stakeholders, namely graduate students, graduate recruiters and career consultants in higher education institutions, only the stakeholders who benefit (directly or indirectly) from the competence-based CV-writing programme were involved in the evaluation.

It is argued that although career consultants contributed to the needs assessment, they are not direct beneficiaries of the programme. Moreover, they would not necessarily be able to express an opinion about the employability of students. Therefore only new graduates and graduate recruiters were involved in the evaluation of the programme.

Research Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The evaluation of the competence-based CV-writing programme was done as a qualitative dominant study (Nieuwenhuis, 2016), with a limited quantitative convergence aspect. Qualitative programme evaluation provides a number of ways to make direct contributions to programme development and implementation for the benefit of individuals, organisations and communities (Patton, 2015; Potter, Basson, & Laauwen, 2007), in this case through a competence-based CV-writing programme.

Participants

To participate in the research, the criteria for inclusion of graduate students were that they were enrolled at North-West University (NWU). Students were not selected based on biographical data such as gender, race or field of study. Biographical data is irrelevant in this study because new graduates are exposed to principles that they could use to apply to their personal biographical data in their respective CVs. The purpose of this qualitative study was not to generalize the findings of new graduates' performance but rather to develop knowledge that could be generalized to other contexts (Keating, Eales, & Phillips, 2013; Keating, & Phillips, 2008). The criteria for inclusion of graduate recruiters were that they represented employers of graduates who have an affiliation with the career centre of the NWU. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Convenience sampling in this study entailed that participants who are available and willing to participate voluntarily were invited until data saturation was detected or reached as described by Francis et al. (2010). Graduates

(n=190) voluntarily attended two separate video presentations of the programme and completed a knowledge test before (n=158) and after (n=130) the presentation as well as course feedback forms (n=145). Eleven recruiters participated in the research.

Procedure

Findings obtained from a critical literature review of employability (see Roos et al. 2016a) and stakeholders' perceptions were used to develop a competence based CV-writing programme (see Roos et al., 2016b). This programme, with its supporting materials (hand-outs), was prepared and a video recording (pre-recorded CV-writing presentation) was made (see Roos, De Klerk, & Stander, 2016).

Graduate students. Students were invited to voluntarily attend the pre-recorded CV-writing (video) presentation. They had the choice of attending on any one of two separate days. An independent person welcomed the students and informed them before the hand-outs were distributed and the video was played, that data would be collected as part of this research enquiry, but that nobody would be disadvantaged if they chose not to participate in the research. The informed consent papers were distributed and the consent information was presented to them. A cooling-off period following consent was offered by explaining to participants that those who opted not to participate in the research could stay on and still attend the full presentation and receive the hand-outs and after the presentation they could simply leave all forms blank on their desks. They were all provided with the knowledge pre-test papers (see Addendum 1) to complete anonymously. To enable the researcher to match the pre- and post-tests, they were requested to choose, and provide on the test paper, a unique number or any pseudonym (nickname, a pet's name, anything but their real name) and to use the same name on the post-test. The completed knowledge pre-tests were handed in. On completion of the presentation the participants were asked to complete another test paper (identical to the first).

Students were also provided with course feedback forms (see Addendum 2) to complete anonymously. This form was developed by using a completion technique whereby students were provided with an incomplete sentence stimulus (Patton, 2015; Reber, Reber, & Allen, 2009). According to Patton (2015) truly open-ended questions are critical in qualitative research to permit respondents to respond in their own terms and to minimise predetermined responses when gathering data. Using completion techniques enables the researcher to obtain responses from participants' frames of reference. The incomplete sentences were deliberately begun with prompts to obtain data about students' knowledge, skills and attitudes (see Addendum 2). The attendees were also given the email address of the researcher with the request to send their completed CVs for research purposes if they chose to do so. A total of 53 CVs was received. From these a selection of CVs was sent to the recruiters for their evaluation. Following the recruiters' previous feedback about the numbers of CVs they were prepared to evaluate, 10 CVs were sent to each. The selection of the 10 CVs deliberately included well-presented and poorly presented CVs, following a set of criteria developed on the basis of insights from the literature review (see Roos et al., 2016a), consultation of employability theories and stakeholders' perceptions (see Roos et al., 2016b), as presented in Table 1 (see page 187) below.

Addendum 4 provides an example of a well-presented CV and a poorly presented CV

Table 1

Criteria for Assessing CVs

CV Template Headings	Rationale for criteria	Positive criteria Adding value to a CV	Negative criteria Detracting from a CV's value
Technical aspects			
• Length of CV and apportioning of space to each heading	CV assessment is time consuming	• Short CV (up to 3 pages) • Compact presentation of information • Functional use of space	• Lengthy CV: e.g. five pages and more • Big, unused, open spaces
• Layout	First impression of CV informs first impression of applicant	• Clear headings • Readable font • Combination of narratives and bulleted information appropriate to the content	• No headings • Fonts are too big or too small • One method of presentation (only narratives; or only bulleted information)
• Convention	Present content in a uniform manner to ensure clarity	Same format for listed presentation of information	Varying presentations of listed information
CV header	Find information of applicant easy and quickly to ensure that the application is user-friendly	• Applicant's preferred/nick name • Surname • Contact details (telephone numbers, email, address) • Prominent and easily readable	Information is: • difficult to read • difficult to find • omitted
Photo	Optional and depend on requirement for application, provided that certain criteria for choosing the photo is applied	• Small file size • Clarity of printed version • Photo appropriate for career/job	• Inappropriate background information • Obscured/inappropriate presentation of the applicant
Contact details	Obtain information at a glance to enable easy contact	Information is: • complete – email and cell phone • easy to find • easy to read	Information is: • difficult to read • difficult to find • omitted

CV Template Headings	Rationale for criteria	Positive criteria Adding value to a CV	Negative criteria Detracting from a CV's value
Personal information	Enough but not too much biographical information of the applicant that indicates the formal identity of the applicant and the person-job-fit	• Information about formal identify of application (names as in ID document) • Relevant information to indicate person-job-fit may include: surname, name, ID number, age, nationality, language proficiency, driver's licence • Inclusion of additional information should be relevant for the career/job • List information with sub-headings to ensure easy readability • Tabulated presentation with sub-headings and content	• Inclusion of irrelevant information • Lack of explanation for inclusion of information and may include: gender, race, marital status, health, criminal record, dependants • Narrative presentation of content
Personal profile	Personal profile in the form of self-description gives personal qualities and traits that would lead to success in the job and constitutes a good person-job-organisation fit.	• Description include adjectives indicating applicant's traits (personality, personal qualities) • Description indicate applicant's fit with the functional area (career/job), • Narrative description • Not fewer than 4 and not more than 6 – 8 lines	• Too general description of the applicant's traits and a person • No or limited use of adjectives about the applicant's traits and person • Bulleted list of characteristics without clarification
Career goal/objective	Indicate future intentions/plans and long term career orientation /vision which confirm the fit of the applicant to the position	• Description should clearly express career expectations and/or preferences • Description include applicant's specific skills set for the career/job; envisaged level in the organisation; type of organisation; size of organisation; eventual goals • Simple, descriptive language • Descriptive words indicating aspirations of applicant and potential fit with proposed career/job/organisation • One paragraph in narrative form • Same length as career goal	• Description is too general and could be applicable to all careers/jobs • To many and diverse foci in the description • Description is too technical • Description gives very little information about own expectations in broader career/job sphere • Bulleted list of information

CV Template Headings	Rationale for criteria	Positive criteria Adding value to a CV	Negative criteria Detracting from a CV's value

Academic background	Formal qualifications, other training and academic achievements applicable to career/job. May include professional registration	• Reverse chronological presentation of information
		• Information presented in tabulated format
		• Information about qualifications and other training include: where (institution), what (qualification) and when (date) of the qualification or other training
		• Easily readable with important information highlighted
		• Mention only subjects that:
		  ○ are applicable to the career/job);
		  ○ explain the qualification;
		  ○ are explicitly required for the specific career /job
		• Prominent, relevant information for the specific career/job
		• Information presented gives competitive edge to the application
		• Modules or training are explained if academic record is not clear in terms of its relevance
		• Describe academic achievements succinctly and as applicable to the specific career/job
		• Explain qualification if the name of the qualification does not indicate the majors and relevance for career/job
		• List academic achievements in bulleted format in reverse chronological order
		• Explain achievements in terms of what the mean
			• Difficult to find information in narrative presentation
			• List all academic modules/training that are also presented in the academic record/supporting documents
			• Inclusion of marks/percentages of academic modules without explicit explanation of relevance
			• Include other training irrelevant to the qualification and specific career/job

Life experience	Mention as many as possible skills, knowledge and personal qualities/traits that were developed in various contexts and could be transferred to the work context.	• Description includes action words (verbs) of what were done (skills) • Description includes adjectives to indicate forming experiences (traits) or learning (knowledge) • Description indicates competence (knowledge, skills and/or traits) in terms of relevance for the career/job • Description includes particular contexts in which skills or traits were developed to demonstrate transferability of previous experience to current context/organisation of career/job • Description supports competence of candidate mentioned in other parts of the CV applicable for career/job	• List activities without indication of specific skills, traits or knowledge(competences) • Inclusion of descriptive words that are not context-specific and not explained in terms of transferability to other contexts

CV Template Headings	Rationale for criteria	Positive criteria Adding value to a CV	Negative criteria Detracting from a CV's value
Work experience	Mention as many as possible skills, knowledge and personal qualities/traits that were developed in various contexts and could be transferred to the work context.	• Description includes action words (verbs) of what were done (skills) • Description includes adjectives to indicate forming experiences (traits) or learning (knowledge) • Description indicates competence (knowledge, skills and/or traits) in terms of its relevance for the career/job • Description includes particular contexts in which skills or traits developed to demonstrate transferability of previous experience to current context/organization of career/job • Description supports competence of candidate mentioned in other parts of the CV applicable to career/job • Reverse chronological work experience presented in tabulated format • Clearly distinguishable indication of: Employer, period of employment, job title, and description of duties/responsibilities and competences • Presented previous duties/responsibilities and competences to demonstrate applicability for current application • Information included in other parts of CV confirm career goal and relevance to current career/job • If applicable to current career/job, include career-specific technical knowledge	• Specific information about previous work experience difficult to find • Information presented as narrative description • Listing of information of previous work experience (employer, period and job title) without indication of duties/responsibilities and competence relevant for current career/job • Inappropriate presentation of work experience in relation to other parts of the CV
References	Include people who can provide more information about aspects included in the CV as well as personal testimonies to indicate the suitability of the graduate for the specific job opportunity	• At least two but not more than 4 references are listed • Information about references include: Name of referee Capacity or relationship with applicant Contact details • Referees are people who can provide more information about applicant's traits, knowledge or skills • Desirable referees are previous employers or people involved in contexts of life experiences	• References do not include: ○ Name of person ○ Capacity or relationship to applicant ○ Contact details • Undesirable references include: ○ Same-age, university friends ○ Parents (unless previous employers)

Sources for literature and theories for criteria of assessing CVs:

Athey & Orth, 1999; Bloom, 1956; Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Barnard & Nel, 2009; Coetzee, 2008; Coetzee, 2012; Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010; Cranmer, 2006; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Forehand, 2005; Fugate et al., 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2011; Mulder, 2001; Onstenk, 1997; Roos et al., 2016b ; Teijeiro et al., 2013; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006

Graduate recruiters. A list of recruiters (n = 812) conforming to the inclusion criteria was compiled. An email from a person, not affiliated with the NWU, was sent independently to all recruiters to inform them of the proposed research. Those who were interested and willing to participate were requested to reply to the email, following which, a second email was sent with informed consent information and information about the nature of the research. Only those recruiters who agreed to the second email received a further email with a link to Survey Monkey (online survey development software) where they could sign the consent forms, read ten CVs and respond to the questions (see Addendum 3). For each CV the same set of open-ended questions was asked regarding the particular CV.

Data Collection

In Table 2 the different models of programme evaluation are indicated as well as the methods of data collection to obtain evaluation feedback from the respective participants. During the programme development phase the Kirkpatrick four-level model (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Praslova, 2010; Yardley & Dornan, 2012), the Return on Investment (ROI) (Phillips, 2007; Phillips & Stone, 2002) and the KASA model (Mathison, 2005) of programme

Table 2

Elements of the Evaluation of the Competence-based CV-writing Programme

Kirkpatrick Model	ROI Model	KASA Model	Method of Evaluation	Participants Involved
Reaction measures	Reaction and planned action	Attitudes	Open ended questions and course evaluation	Recruiters and new graduates
Learning measures	Learning	Knowledge	Pre- & post knowledge tests	New graduates
Behaviour measures	Application and implementation	Skills	CV evaluations	Recruiters
Results measures	Business impact and consequences (ROI)	Aspirations	Open ended questions Improved employability?	Recruiters and new graduates

evaluation were identified from literature as appropriate evaluation models for the competence-based CV-writing programme. Table 2 (see page 192) shows how the three models are interrelated, what specific part of each method is to be used in evaluating the competence-based CV-writing programme, and the participants who will be involved in each method of evaluation.

Data were obtained from: i) students' rating of the programme on a six-point Likert scale from unacceptable to excellent (see Addendum 2); ii) students' performance in the pre- and post-tests (see Addendum 1); and iii) students' responses to the incomplete sentences (see Addendum 2), which are related to the four elements of programme evaluation (reaction, learning, behaviour and results).

Graduate recruiters. The recruiters were asked to: i) rank the CVs, and ii) comment on them as prompted by open-ended questions (see Addendum 3)

Data Analysis

Two types of data were gathered, namely textual data from the incomplete sentences and numerical data from the test scores and the course evaluation on the six-point Likert scale. The textual data were transferred into ATLAS Ti, a qualitative data analysis tool (Smit, 2002). The textual data were thematically analysed, using the following six phases of Clarke and Braun (2013) to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes): i) Familiarising oneself with the data; ii) Generating initial codes; iii) Searching for themes; iv) Reviewing themes; v) Defining and naming themes; vi) and Producing the report. The analyses involved assigning codes to the direct quotations of the participants. The codes were grouped and sorted into themes in multiple iterations. The themes were organised and were reported in the discussion of the findings. To protect their identities, the graduate recruiter participants were numbered GR1 to GR11. Students completed all data collection forms anonymously and the CVs that were sent to recruiters had all names coded and any identifying details removed.

The pre- and post-tests were marked by the presenter from a memorandum drawn up at the time of the development of the test. The questions were selected in such a way that the answers were provided during the presentation. The main purposes of the test were to establish a baseline of students' knowledge before they attended the presentation and to determine if new knowledge was disseminated during the presentation.

Trustworthiness

Criteria suggested by Tracy (2010) were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The eight criteria are: i) A worthy topic; ii) Rich rigour; iii) Sincerity; iv) Credibility; v) Resonance; vi) Significant contribution; vii) Ethical considerations; and viii) Meaningful coherence.

This study addresses a *worthy topic* contextualised against indications that limited resources are available on competence-based CV-writing and graduates' difficulty in finding employment, making this study relevant, timely and significant. *Rigour* was enhanced by using appropriate theoretical constructs such as employability and competence to inform the study (Mayan, 2009). The prolonged period the researcher spent in the field (five years as career consultant and four years involved in this research) contributes to rigour of the study as well as the fact that data were obtained from stakeholders who are actively involved in graduate employability in the context of higher education. Methods aimed to fulfil the criterion of *sincerity* include that the researcher adopted a critical attitude to the literature and findings throughout the study and through peer review discussions (and study supervision) the researcher's inclinations and sincerity were scrutinised. *Credibility* was obtained by using different resources of data from different relevant stakeholders and by supporting the findings with thick descriptions and direct quotes from the participants. Contributing to *resonance* of the study, in light of the limited resources available on competence-based CV-writing, the accumulative process followed in this study to develop and evaluate a programme enables the

transferability of findings to other processes of programme development and evaluation. The uniqueness of the study, its methodological approach and its practical and hands-on value hold out the promise of it making a *significant contribution* to the field of graduate employability. Throughout the study, procedural, situational and relational *ethics* guided the actions and an ethical attitude was adopted by the researcher in the development and presentation of the programme. A final indication of trustworthiness in programme evaluation is *meaningful coherence* whereby the aim (objectives) and targeted output, outcomes and impact are aligned, which in this instance was by writing a competence-based CV to enhance graduate employability. Trustworthiness was also achieved through aligning the paradigm, literature, research questions, research context, sampling, and methods of data collection and analysis to arrive at unbiased conclusions about the programme's effectiveness, quality and value (Fink, 2015). Graduates' and recruiters' evaluations of the competence-based CV-writing programme were obtained in terms of output (CV), outcomes (enhanced skills and knowledge and positive attitudes) and potential impact (employability enhancement).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee on 6 March 2014 with reference number NWU-00001-14-A1. This included obtaining informed consent in writing from every participant. The researcher is not involved in any formal assessment of the students and nobody was excluded from the CV presentation. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, that the data collected would be treated with confidentiality and that they could withdraw from the research study at any stage. Participants were also assured that all the data would be kept confidential under secure control of the North-West University.

Findings

The findings will first be presented from the perspective of students and then from the perspective of graduate recruiters.

Findings from Students

The evaluation of students included: i) Rating the learning content and presenter on a six-point scale from unacceptable to excellent (limited quantitative convergent aspect of this qualitative dominant study); ii) Performance in the knowledge pre- and post-tests (limited quantitative convergent aspect of this qualitative dominant study); and iii) Four elements of programme evaluation (reactions, learning, behaviour and results).

Rating the learning content and presenter. Students rated the video presentation in terms of content and the presenter's subject knowledge, ability to explain the learning material and application in practice. In Figure 1 (see page 196), the distribution of the ratings is presented (number of students selecting a specific rating). The majority of students indicated ratings in the categories of satisfactory, good, very good and excellent.

Knowledge pre- and post-tests. The distribution of the test results are shown in Figure 2 (see page 197). The graph shows the normal distribution of both sets of scores (pre- and post-test) on the same graph. This is a clear indication that the students' knowledge of the subject matter increased significantly. The average score of all students from the pre- to the post-test increased by 29%, from 57% to 86%, which is an indication that effective transfer of knowledge occurred. The same questions were asked before and after the presentation, thereby determining a baseline assessment from which it could be concluded that knowledge was disseminated during the presentation.

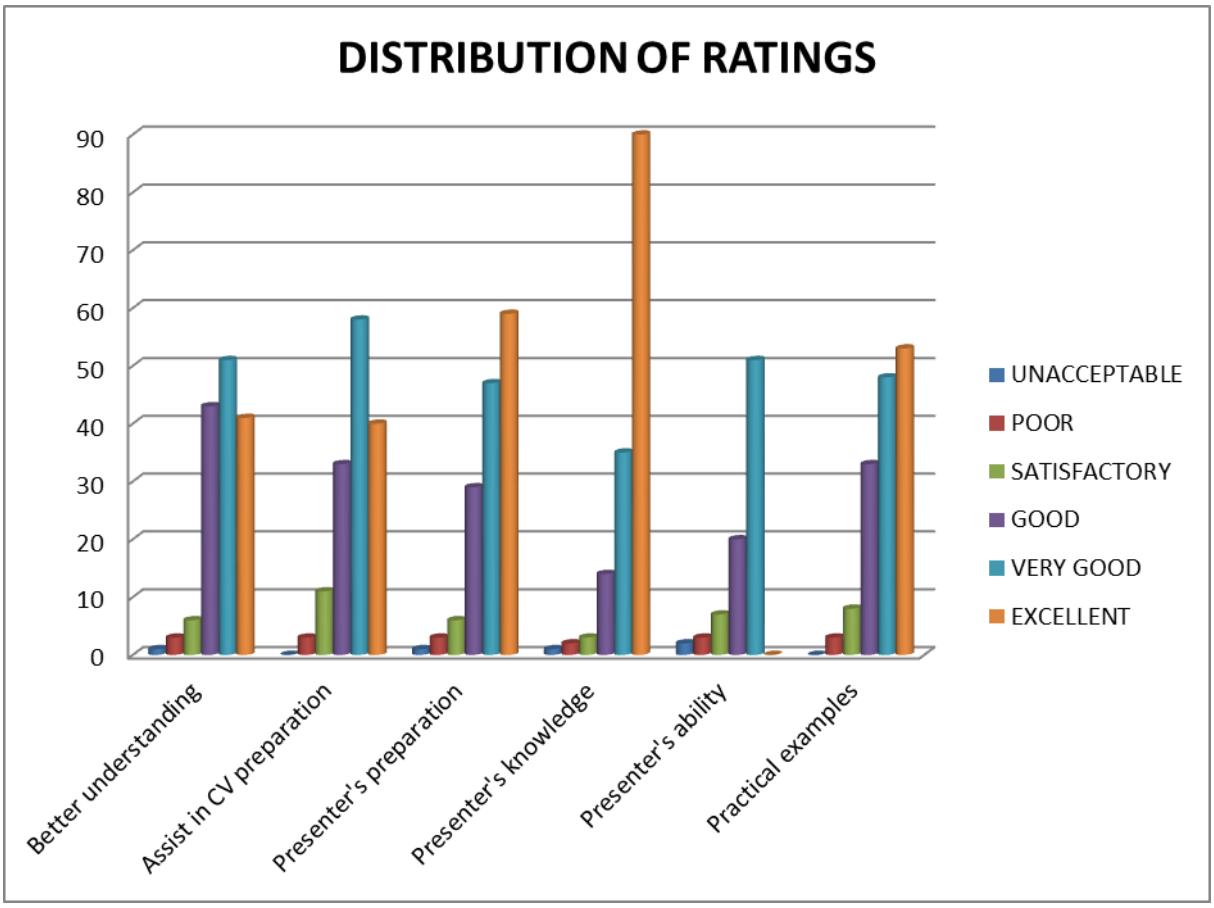

Figure 1. Distribution of Ratings on Aspects of the Presentation

Four elements of programme evaluation. The findings are reported in terms of reactions or attitudes; learning or knowledge; behaviour or skill; and results or aspirations. The first three (learning, behaviour, reactions) coincide with Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1971; Forehand, 2005), cognitive, psycho-motor and affective skills, which were translated to simpler and more accessible terms of head, hand and hart in the presentation. Results refer to the expected end product of the programme.

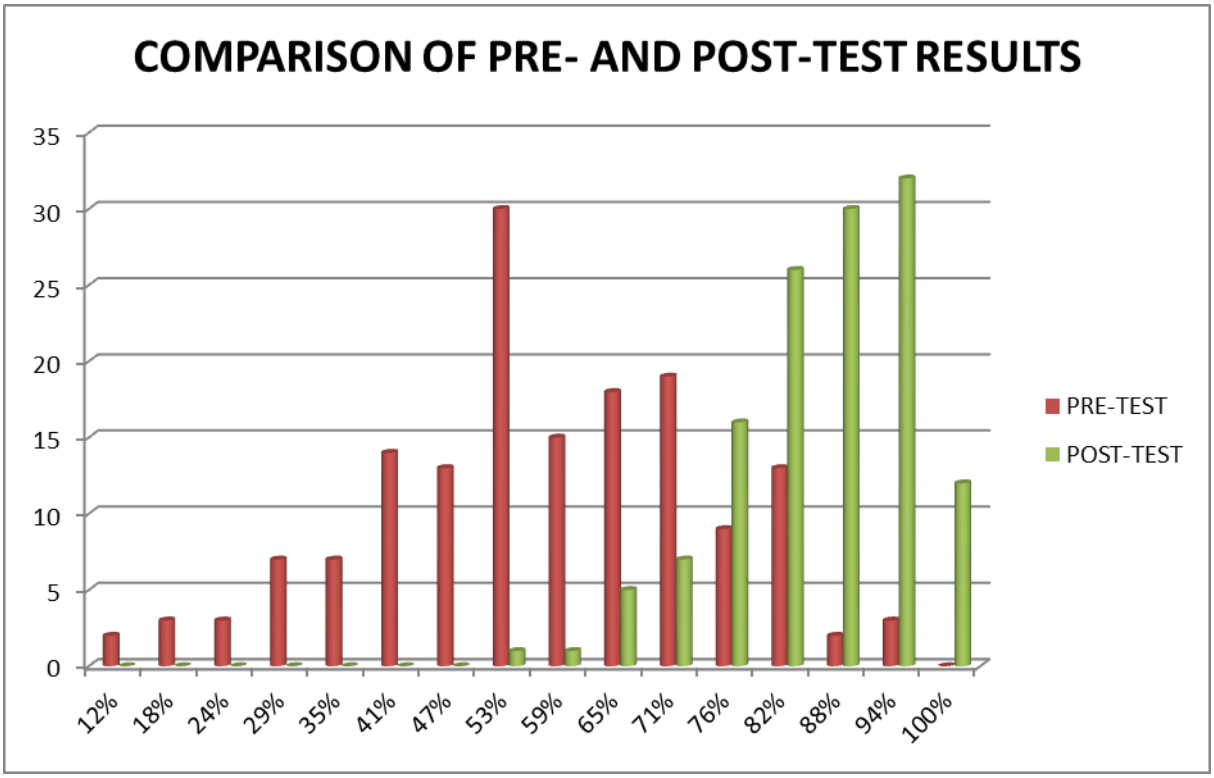

Figure 2. Comparison of Pre- and Post-test Results of Students

Learning/knowledge. Regarding self-reported learning, students said that they had gained knowledge. *"I now know more about writing a good CV than I did before."* Gained knowledge contributed to awareness "*it has made me aware"*, gave insight and "*clarified things that were confusing".* Acquired knowledge and insight enabled students to "*compile my* [their] *CV*[s]*".*

Behaviour/skill. The aim of the programme was to develop students' skills to write their CVs. In this regard students reported that they learned *"a new skill",* namely to *"write a better CV",* and *"a cover letter".* The knowledge motivated them to apply their new skill and prepare their CVs. "*Now I can start preparing my CV".*

Reactions/attitude. Students reacted with appreciation "*incredibly informing"*, and enjoyment and said that the presentation had inspired them "*get my dream job"*. They expressed positive emotions, gratitude and reported increased motivation: "*It encourages me to write a perfect CV.*"

Results/aspirations. The end goal of the competence-based CV-writing programme is to equip students so that, despite limited work and life experience, they are able to present their employability attributes with confidence: "*go for job opportunities; improve my job application skills",* and as clearly as possible. "*I feel more confident about writing my CV and sending it out."* However, the programme did not only produce the expected results in terms of skills for writing a convincing CV, it also created awareness that students should engage in more activities. Students reported that they were "*driven to do more activities; get more involved"* and *"accumulate more experiences".*

Findings of Graduate Recruiters

Feedback of recruiters on the CVs was mainly positive: "*Good CV's and candidates; all the CV's were great"* keeping in mind that it is "*what you would expect from young adults".* However, they also indicated limitations in CVs, such as "*lacking some information"* and not convincingly presenting their employability attributes: "*Many have not sold themselves well and so when competing with others they may battle."*

The ten CVs were ranked by the recruiters. CVs 5, 7 and 9 were ranked highest by all recruiters while CVs 6 and 10 were rated lowest. In response to the question to give an indication if recruiters would consider not appointing the candidate based on the CV presented only one recruiter selected this option for only one of the CVs.

The following section will discuss recruiters' comments about five of the CVs - those that were ranked highest (CVs 5, 7 & 9) and lowest (CVs 6 & 10) and it will summarise their comments on the specific questions asked about the CV namely: i) First impressions; ii) Likes and dislikes; iii) What appealed to them or did not appeal to them; and finally iv) What they would suggest to improve certain CVs.

First impressions of a CV are positive for recruiters when it is "*well formulated and organised, key information is easy to find"*. First impressions of a CV are negative when nothing in the CV stands out, the "*layout is very basic and old fashioned"* and there is "*no uniqueness"* to the CV. Too little information, very *"short"* sentences, as well as "*too much information or rambling"* creates negative impressions.

Recruiters value the "*use of great* [descriptive] *words to explain personal profile and career goals."* They also value "*a personal profile that links with the career profile"*. Recruiters are attracted to CVs were they are be able to "*see the advantages of hiring"* the applicant and must find "*enough information"* in the CV to be able *"to make a decision"* to assess the person-environment fit. They would value CVs of applicants with "*experience in different environments."* The CVs that do not appeal to recruiters are those that do not present "*what* [the] *recruiter needs to see"* and where the new graduates *"did not try hard to stand out - not selling themselves"*. CVs where the "*career objective is vague"* and where there is not enough "*proof of employability skills"* will also not appeal.

Some advice from recruiters to CV writers for enhancing the quality of their CVs is to "*use descriptive language to show strengths".* Recruiters feel graduates "*need to show more specific work experience"* and they must "*ensure that it is descriptive enough."* Recruiters believe that "*qualities and strengths are important"* because they "*show balance and one may also add your achievements".* Graduates should "*back up [their] abilities with experience".* They must "*show the link between personal profile and career objective". "Even if it is well written but not supported by rest of CV",* recruiters will not be convinced.

Discussion

In essence, programme evaluation comes down to the question: Does the programme achieve what it set out to achieve for whom it was intended?

New graduates reported that they valued the presentation, had gained knowledge, were more skilled in writing a competence-based CV and that their attitudes towards their CV and potential employment had changed positively. However, despite the improved knowledge and skills of at new graduates, the findings should be treated with caution. For practical reasons (it was not possible to get hold of the same students at a later stage due to ensuring their anonymity) it was decided to conduct the post-knowledge test directly after the CV-writing presentation. Not surprisingly, the average scores of the new graduates who attended the presentation improved. Different findings may have been obtained after a period of time has passed. Another aspect that might have influenced the interpretation of findings is that it does not mean that if new graduates' knowledge and skills improved that they can actually write convincing CVs. That explains why some CVs didn't reflected the CV-writing content keeping in mind the underlying rationale and presenting transferrable competence to the work context specifically. This confirms Perkins and Salomon's (1992) concern that transfer of learning cannot be taken for granted if the context of learning differs from the context of application.

However, even though graduate recruiters indicated some room for improvement on individual CVs they did not find any of the new graduates, on the basis of their CVs alone, unemployable. Graduate recruiters emphasised the usefulness of descriptive words and the triangulation of content across the CV confirming new graduates' employability attributes, convincing. The more clearly new graduates presented themselves in terms of their employability attributes, specifically personality traits and skills applicable to the work context, the more graduate recruiters were able to assess a person-environment fit. Graduate recruiters confirmed that it is helpful if to take decisions when new graduates provide sufficient appropriate information relevant for the work context, despite limited graduate work experience.

Recommendations and Critique

It is recommended that the feedback and suggestions of students and graduate recruiters be used to enhance the competence-based CV-writing programme. In future, the effectiveness of the programme may also be assessed by using quantitative measures.

Graduate employability is not only of concern nationally but also internationally (Roos, 2016). It would therefore be interesting to determine the transferability of the programme to other contexts.

Participants' feelings contribute to the creation of a favourable or unfavourable training climate. In this study individual factors of students' performance are related to their priorities, personal life situations and comfort levels (Lather & Sharma, 2009). It is recommended that it be kept in mind that not all graduates react to the training climate or learn in the same way and not all will integrate the principles of the competence-based CV-writing programme in exactly the same way, or use it with equal effectiveness; and not all graduates are equally employable. Learning is an individual process and therefore a 'one-size-fits-all' approach in programme presentation is to be avoided. It is recommended that multiple learning methods and opportunities should be investigated to cater for the different learning needs of different students. The learning environment can be optimised by exposing new graduates to well-planned, high quality, and carefully-designed activities that enable them to determine their own pace of mastering the skill with feedback on their progress readily available (Erasmus, 2015).

Some critique regarding the duration, tone of voice and lack of liveliness of the actual video presentation will be addressed to improve the presentation.

Conclusion

A competence-based CV-writing programme was developed from a systematic and critical study of literature, definitions of employability, employability of new graduates and

by obtaining stakeholders' perceptions (new graduates, graduate recruiters and career consultants) involved in new graduate employability. However, the programme developers and presenter cannot guarantee success for individuals based solely on their participation in the programme. The programme and its supporting material are not prescriptions or step-by-step instructions for CV-writing, but it rather focus on creating awareness of the underlying rationale for including certain content. The focus is on the clear presentation of employability attributes. The contents are presented as basic principles for individual students to incorporate into their own unique CV-writing and recruitment practices. Recruiters' perceptions and evaluations of CVs are not all the same. Although there is enough agreement on broad principles, individual recruiters displayed subjectivity in their preferences for and expectation of certain aspects of a CV. Graduate recruiters' (and their organisations) can be expected to have different views on what they consider optimal person-environment fit.

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Addenda

Addendum 1 - Test for CV-writing programme

Addendum 2 - Student course feedback form

Addendum 3 - Graduate Recruiters – CV Evaluations

Addendum 4 – Examples of a well-presented and a poorly presented CV

Addendum 1

Test for CV-Writing Programme

DATE: _____ 2016

UNIQUE NUMBER: _____

1. The main purpose of the **Personal Profile** in your CV is to?

[a] Give a short summary of your "life story".

[b] Show that your personal traits and character fit the job.

[c] Prove that you have done some formal personality tests.

2. Should you include in your CV, **the degree** that you are busy with, but which is not yet completed?

[a] Yes [b] No

3. Should you include **extra-mural activities** such as sport, recreation and hobbies in your CV? Please motivate your answer.

[a] Yes, because

_____

[b] No, because _____

4. What is the minimum amount of **references** that you should put in your CV?

_____

5. What is best - many or few **attachments** to you CV?

[a] Many [b] Few

6. Mention at least **five (5) skills, competence or traits** that employers/recruiters value:

_____

_____

7. Mention at least **three (3) sources** where you can obtain more **information** about **the expectation** of your future employer/recruiter.

_____

8. Name at least one item to include in the **first paragraph of your cover letter**.

_____

9. Is it better to write your **cover letter** before or after you have written the CV? Please motivate your answer.

[a] Before, because

_____

[b] After, because

_____

_____

Addendum 2
Student course feedback form

DATE: _____

Dear participant,

The aim of this evaluation form is to obtain your feedback regarding the relevance of the **learning material**, and the **teaching skills** of the presenter and also to note your reflections on your **own learning**.

Your honest opinion is appreciated.

Part 1: Course material

Please give specific feedback to assist us in adjusting the material where needed.

1 = Unacceptable	**2 = Poor**	**3 = Satisfactory**
4 = Good	**5 = Very Good**	**6 = Excellent**

1. To what extent does the course material contribute to a better understanding of CV-writing?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
2. To what extent does the course material assist you in your preparation of a CV?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

Any specific recommendations: ----------

Part 2: Evaluation of the presenter:

3. How do you rate the presenter's preparation and planning for the course?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
4. How do you evaluate the subject knowledge of the presenter?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
5. To what extent does the presenter have the ability to explain the learning material?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
6. To what extent does the presenter explain and discuss the learning content by means of practice-oriented examples and applications?	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

Part 3: Personal reflection

Please complete the following statements and provide examples where possible.

7. In retrospect I am now more _____

---

8. The practical writing of my CV encourages me to ----------

---

9. I appreciate the ----------

---

10. I feel that I still need to learn ----------

---

11. I am positive about this workshop because ----------

---

12. I would like to suggest that _____

Thank you for your time and effort!

Addendum 3

Graduate Recruiters – CV Evaluations

Immediately after reading each CV, please write down your thoughts **separately for every CV** you read:

1. What are your first general impressions of this CV?
2. Is there anything in this CV that you particularly like?
3. Is there anything in this CV that you particularly dislike?
4. If you consider the appointment of this applicant, what specifically attracts you to the applicant?
5. If you do not consider appointing this applicant, what specifically did not appeal to you regarding the applicant?
6. From interviews with graduate recruiters on their perceptions on new graduates' CVs the following themes (in no specific order) emerged. What do you think about these themes in relation to this specific CV?
   Layout and appearance;
   Experience in general (student) life and work contexts;
   Personal profile and outstanding qualities or traits;
   References;
   Contact details and personal information;
   Qualifications
7. Apart from the themes above, do you use other criteria to evaluate a CV? If so, why and how do you use it/them?
8. Specific recommendations you can make to enhance the quality of this CV?

Thank you very much for your time and effort!

Addendum 4a

Example of a well-presented CV

Curriculum Vitae

Echo von Bravo

073 765 4321 echovb@gmail.com

(012)765 4321 P.O. Box 123; Pretoria; 0001

1.Personal details

Surname:	Von Bravo
Full Names:	Elizabeth Laurentia
ID number:	XX06110073083
Nationality:	South African citizen
Languages:	Afrikaans, English
Driver's Licence:	Yes, Code 10
Tax Number (SARS):	3890614153

2.Personal profile

A hard working, friendly, approachable, passionate young lady with a love for helping people. Balance and a healthy lifestyle are very important to her. She is punctual, organised, honest and reliable. Commitment is one of her strongest personality traits. She is an eager learner, a natural leader and acts calmly in difficult situations. She prepares thoroughly for any project at hand and her positive energy and ambitious outlook on life motivates co-workers to give their best.

3.Career-objective

The reason for my application for a position as a pharmacist-intern is that I would like to work in the city as an intern because I would like to get the maximum amount of experience to different case studies by working in a busy pharmacy of the size similar to this pharmacy. I

received positive reactions on enquiries on this specific pharmacy in Midstream Estate. I would like to build a personal relationship with the clients of a community pharmacy.

4. Academic Background

Tertiary education:

Institution:	North West University - Potchefstroom campus
Degree:	**B.Pharm**
	(Expected date of completion: November 20xx)

For subjects, please refer to the relevant attachment.

First Aid Certificate level 1 20xx

Passed first year of study Cum Laude (with distinction)

Secondary education:

School:	Pretoria High School
Grade:	**Grade 12**
Date of completion:	3 December 20xx
Pretoria High School:	DUX Learner

Six distinctions during National Senior Examination

Best academic achievement in English first additional language and Hospitality studies in the region, during the National Senior Certificate Examination, 2009

Pretoria Primary School 20xx - DUX Learner

Computer Skills:

Have exposure to Unisolv, Propharm and Computassist pharmacy programmes.

Computer and information skills completed at NWU (AGLA121)

Microsoft Office (Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint)

Computer typing Grade 8

5.Life experience

- Received full colours in High School for achievements in Cultural, Sports, Leadership, Academic as well as Social activities. (20xx)

5.1 Culture:

Participation in public speaking taught me communication skills and public speaking that will be useful in a pharmacy because you must be able to continually communicate with clients and staff. It is also a useful skill if the leading of a meeting is needed.

During my years of learning how to play the piano, I've learned discipline, commitment, responsibility, and ending a project started. These are traits that help you to solve problems, should they arise. Playing piano is also a way to stimulate my creative side.

5.2 Sport:

North West University: Miss Varsity Cup top 9 finalist 20xx
High School: 1st Netball team 20xx
Netball Deputy Captain 20xx
Midmar Mile 20xx

Pretoria Primary School:	1st Netball team	20xx
	1st Hockey team	20xx
	1st Tennis team	20xx
	Swimming team	20xx

By participating in a wide variety of sports, I learned the importance of team work, how to focus on a specific goal, coping with successes as well as failures, motivation, leadership, managing conflict and how to be reliable.

5.3 Leadership:

Pretoria Primary School:	Head girl	20xx
Pretoria High School:	Class Leader	20xx
	Deputy Head Girl	20xx

The most important skills obtained during times in leadership positions are that of planning, organising, taking lead and control. I also learned how to be adaptable, taking a stand and having an opinion on a topic.

5.4 Community activities:

Pharmacy Student Association (Social Sub-committee) 20xx

"PUK SJGD" (Studente Jool Gemeenskaps Diens")

Community Project: Hospital visits 20xx

Land Service (Springbok-colours) 20xx-20xx

These activities mainly taught me to listen and be sensitive towards others, to respect nature and take responsibility towards the environment and how to work as a team to organise an event or function.

5.5 Academic activities:

Our Pharmaceutical and Chemistry practical sessions exposed me to the mixing of ointments and lotions, making syrups and tablets etc. I learnt to work accurately and neatly and can do the necessary Pharmaceutical calculations. Projects taught me to collect and analyse data.

5.6 Interests and hobbies:

- I am passionate about the improvement of human health and like to work with people.
- I've been a proud resident of "Wag-'n-Bietjie" residence during 2010 where I enthusiastically participated in various activities that the residence offered, for example socials and squash. I love to invite friends for dinner, cook and do creative projects, interior decorating, fashion and beauty, where I can stimulate my creative side.
- I have a passion for travelling and to see the world.
- I love playing sports and participate in squash, netball and other.
- I enjoy outdoor activities (hiking, rock climbing, canoeing), to go to the beach or have a vacation in the Drakensberg with family and friends or to be in nature.
- I love music and dancing and completed my Grade 6 UNISA examinations for playing the piano.

6. Work Experience

Completed a total of approximately 1000 working hours in a pharmacy of which the hours is divided between both community pharmacies (Pillbox Alpha Pharm Piet Retief, Piet Retief Pharmacy) and a private hospital Pharmacy (Piet Retief Life Hospital) where I worked as a pharmacy student under the direct supervision of competent, registered pharmacists since 2010.

The work was mainly according to the scope of practice of a post-basic pharmacist assistant including ordering and receiving of stock, dispensing of prescriptions and giving directions to patients.

In the hospital I also learned more about parenteral products, narcotics and surgical equipment. During a visit to a psychiatric hospital, I gained insight into the treatment of psychiatric patients.

During my training at the NWU, we had two weeks of clinical training at the beginning of our third and fourth year where we did screening tests including blood pressure-, cholesterol-, blood glucose-, lung volume-, and BMI-tests.

The following are references of pharmacists and pharmacies where I gained my practical experience:

7. References

Mr. S. Xxxx, Me.U. Xxxxxxxx:

Piet Retief Pharmacy

29 Church street

Piet Retief 2380

Tel: (017) 826 2117

Mr. G. Xxxxxxxxx:

Pillbox Pharmacy

Piet Retief 2380

Tel: (017) 826 4011

Me. E. Xxxx Xxxxxxxxx

Piet Retief Life Hospital

Cell: 079 459 5911

Addendum 4b

Example of a poorly presented CV

Curriculum Vitae

Ursula Unique

Curriculum Vitae

Personal Information

Surname: Unique

First name: Ursula

Nickname: Ursula

Birth date: 19xx-11-21

Sex: Female

ID: xx11210017087

Motherland: Pretoria

Nationality: South-African

Citizenship: South-African

Home Language: Afrikaans

Marital Status: Single

Dependants: None

Health: Excellent (non-smoker)

Address: Xxxxxxx Dameskoshuis; Potchefstroom

Cell Number: 072 6787 654

Academic History

Xxxxx Xxxxxxx Primary:	Grade 7	20xx
Highschool Xxxxxxx:	Grade 12	20xx
North-West University:	BCom Financial Accounting	20xx (Potchefstroom)
Subjects:	Accounting	
	Tax	
	Financial management	
	Management accounting	
	Internal auditing	

Language Skills

Language	Speak	Read	Write
Afrikaans	Excellent	Excellent	Good
English	Good	Good	Good

Diverse activity history

Year	Activity
2013	SAIPA: Academic Student Association (Portfolio: Marketing and Postgraduates; NWU Puk Wine Guild: Chairperson; VMN committees: recruitment, reunion, culture and social.
2012	NWU Puk Wine Guild: Management (portfolio: Marketing); VMN committees: recruitment
2006-2010	Hockey (2nd Team); Revue; Athletic support team

Emplyment History (Experience)

Start	End	Company	Job description
5 Jan 2013	4 Feb 2013	Highveld Pharmacy	Medicine count, Stock validation check, Record keeping of schedule 7 medicines, Answer telephones, Received and delivered messages.
17 Jan 2012	30 Jan 2012	The Perfume Gallery, Kollonnade	Promotions (hand out flyers)
2006	2010	The Windowdresser	Basic filing and bookkeeping.
2007	2008	BM Consulting	Filing

Refrences

Xxxxx Xxxxxxxx (Highveld Pharmacy)
Tel: (012) 665 1555

The Perfume Gallery (Xxxxxxxxx)
Tel: (012) 548 4906

Xxxx Xxxxxxxx (The Windowdresser)
Cell: 0825739543
xxxxxxxxx@vodamail.co.za

PART 3: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Development and Evaluation of a Competence-based CV-writing Programme for New Graduates

Introduction

In this part of the study, conclusions are drawn from the findings of the articles presented, and critiqued. The contributions of the study are highlighted and recommendations are made regarding the theory, practice and research of employability.

New graduate employability enhancement poses a challenge for national and international higher education institutions (Baldry, 2016; Scott, 2016). The challenge for new graduates to find employment is caused inter alia by an oversupply of new graduates, limited suitable graduate employment opportunities (Baldry, 2016; Scott, 2016), and the lack of a personal track record to demonstrate competence in professional disciplines (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). In addition, new graduates aspire to obtain not any job, but to find suitable and appropriate graduate employment (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Little, 2004; Yorke & Knight, 2007; Yorke, 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). The job-hunting process is taxing for all job seekers, but particularly for new entrants (De Witte, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2012; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). It is associated with psychological challenges such as uncertainty and more often than not is accompanied by feelings of loss and rejection (De Witte et al., 2012), with consequent implications for the field of psychology.

Some attempts are made to enhance new graduate employability and many activities (outside the scope of this research) contribute to graduate employability. Higher education institutions establish career centres, in which career consultants develop in-house programmes to assist new graduates to compile their CVs, prepare for job interviews and meet prospective

employers (Prospects, 2016a). Graduate recruiters visit career centres to recruit new graduates and compile advertisements in which they indicate competence requirements and specific attributes needed to perform competently in the job (Prospects, 2016b). Steps new graduates can take to enhance their own employability is to understand their competence, which consists of their employability attributes - knowledge, skills and attitudes (De Cuyper, Raeder, Van der Heijden, & Wittekind, 2012; Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Teijeiro, Rungo, & Freire, 2013), and specifically how these must be identified, described and/or developed in the job-hunting process. Identification of employability attributes has a two-pronged application: first, new graduates identify their own employability attributes; and second, by perusing job advertisements they identify the employability attributes specifically required for the jobs they apply for, describe these in accordance with the job requirements, and if they identify a gap or mismatch between what is needed and what they can offer, develop employability attributes to enhance their employability (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013; Teijeiro et al., 2013). Stakeholders directly involved with the employability of new graduates therefore are: career consultants, graduate recruiters and new graduates, as confirmed in literature (Roos, De Klerk, Stander, & Nienaber, 2016).

Employability attributes are first and foremost presented in a Curriculum Vitae (CV), which makes it the most important job hunting tool (Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross, Beggs, & Young, 2011; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008). The CV for a specific position represents the applicant's claim to be employable in the position applied for (Holmes, 2001). CVs should describe applicants' employability attributes to recruiters, who evaluate applicants' claim of employability in relation to all other applicants (Holmes, 2011).

However, evidence-based research that might assist new graduates in compiling their CVs is scarce (Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Kaizer, 2013). Sources that are available include career consultants' guidance and books and internet articles, none of which is necessarily based on peer-reviewed research. Career consultants draw on their particular knowledge, background or experience in the field of employability, while books (see Asher, 2010; Howard, 2009; Jellison, 2010; Ross et al., 2006; Walsh, 2006; Yate, 2008) and the internet (see https://www.resume surgery; https://www.resume-now.com; https://www. resumehelp.com) offer formulaic CV examples with biographical information presented in chronological order.

In contrast, this study proposed a competence-based approach to CV-writing, based on relevant literature on graduate employability, take into account the opinions of stakeholders of graduate employability, be developed and evaluated from a basis of sound principles, specifically for new graduates with limited to no relevant work experience. Following this approach, new graduates are encouraged to demonstrate their competence by showcasing the knowledge, skills and attitudes (employability attributes) they have to offer in a context-specific manner with examples to prove their application to the positions they apply for. The literature yielded only limited resources on a competence-based approach, and no competence-based programme for CV-writing was identified. Therefore, by adopting a pragmatic approach, the problem of enhancing new graduate employability was addressed by developing and implementing a competence-based CV-writing programme (see Dewey, 1938). With this programme it is proposed that a process can be facilitated to actively manipulate new graduates' ability to compile convincing CVs, indicating their fit in the work environment and thereby enhancing their employability.

New graduate employability falls into the nexus of industrial psychology (world of work) (Cherry, 2015b); developmental psychology (individuals at a certain point in their development); counselling psychology (implementing career decisions) (Cherry, 2015c); and educational psychology (development of knowledge skills and attitudes through life, schooling and education) (Cherry, 2015a). The combined involvement of these different subject fields of psychology contributes to the observation that new graduate employability is not clearly delineated in literature and is subject to various interpretations (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011; Jackson, 2012; Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006).

Structure of the Study

The following diagram indicates the time line of the broad phases of the development and evaluation of the programme.

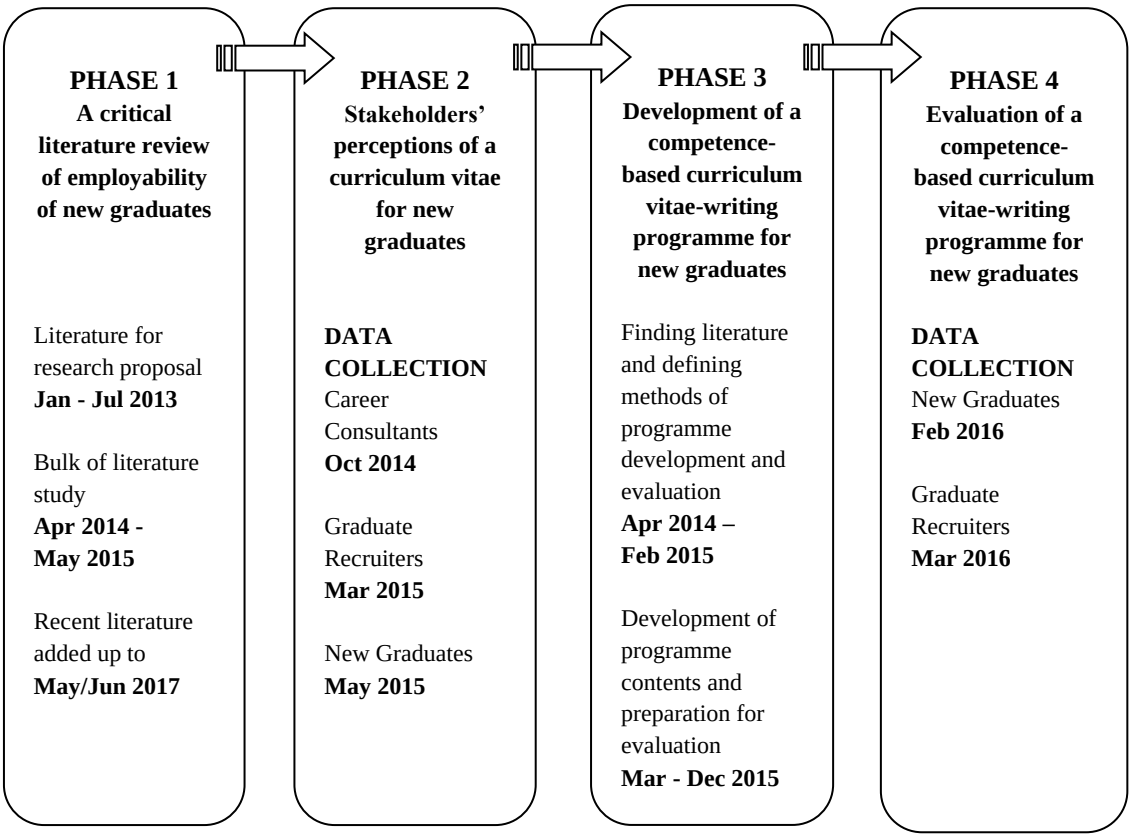

Figure 1. Timeline of the Four Phases of the Study

The first phase in this study comprised a critical literature review of the topics of employability, competence and attributes and competence-based approaches to enhance new graduates' employability. In the second phase, the perceptions of stakeholders (career consultants and graduate recruiters) of what CV-writing entails were obtained, and the needs of new graduates to compile a competence-based CV were identified. Insights from the first and second phases were used to develop and describe a competence-based CV-writing programme in the third phase, which was implemented and evaluated by the direct beneficiaries of the programme (graduate recruiters and new graduates) in the fourth phase. Every phase resulted in a separate article.

The first article, *A critical literature review of employability of new graduates*, had three aims: first, to investigate and synergise literature on employability for new graduates; second, to analyse specific definitions of employability; and third, to list specific attributes new graduates are expected to possess in order to be employable. Findings for the first aim of the article revealed that employability is described in a fragmented and uncoordinated manner and lacks coherent theoretical frameworks, methods and applications, as highlighted by Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006). Employability as a concept is approached from different ontological perspectives and employed in a wide range of academic disciplines. Consequently, the terminology is used inconsistently and the concept of employability is difficult to understand. Constructs of competence and skill are used interchangeably in relation to employability and numerous synonyms are used for these attributes. Diverse and contradicting literature presentation of employability makes it difficult to interpret employability literature and to determine the relevance for new graduates. New graduates may therefore find themselves struggling to obtain information on employability applicable to them, to make sense of it or to use it to enhance their own employability.

The second aim of the article was addressed by critically reviewing definitions of employability. From fourteen definitions identified it became evident that authors use different qualifying descriptors (synonyms) for employability. Definitions of the concept are proposed from different points of view: some specifically from the perspective of higher education institutions or employers, but none specifically from new graduates' perspective. Definitions also refer to different stakeholders, and not only those directly involved with new graduate employability, although all definitions anticipate a certain outcome or benefit flowing from employability. Different verbs are used, with the implication that some kind of action and some employability attributes are required if new graduates are expected to be employable. However, it is not clear what specific actions are required from new graduates, what are regarded as employability attributes for new graduates with limited graduate work experience, and how employability attributes should be exhibited to graduate recruiters. Employability remains a very complex psychosocial construct and although person-environment fit is useful in understanding some aspects of employability, it is only partially explained from the viewpoint of person-environment fit.

Drawing on literature and research, a definition of employability from the perspective of new graduates was proposed by the researcher. This definition implies that new graduates possess unique employability attributes which they have to identify and use to indicate their relevance to graduate recruiters, both in their CVs and in the subsequent interaction with recruiters. Furthermore, employability attributes do not only consist of single attributes (e.g. only knowledge, skills or attitude), but a combination of all the attributes new graduates had previously developed in other unrelated contexts and which they can use to demonstrate transferable employability attributes to fit the jobs they apply for.

The third aim of the article was to list specific attributes new graduates are expected to possess to be employable. Three groups were identified: knowledge, skill and attitude attributes. Knowledge attributes are the basic or generic building blocks of competence which are expected from someone with higher levels of education, such as: literacy, numeracy, and cognitive abilities. Skill attributes were organised in 15 main categories with subcategories and consist of expected, observable behaviour of the basic knowledge attributes required for the jobs applied for, such as: communication, problem solving, decision making, planning and organisation. Attitude attributes are words that describe new graduates' individual traits, characteristics, world view and motivation. Employers mention specific characteristics and traits in job advertisements to describe the ideal person for the job and new graduates should be able to determine if they possess these and how to present them in their CVs, supplemented with specific supportive examples.

Two conclusions are drawn from the third aim. First, new graduates demonstrate the person-environment fit by describing their career identity, which consists of the unique combination of employability attributes as it applies to the job. Second, it is proposed that the word 'attributes' or the phrase 'graduate employability attributes' be used to refer the components of competence given the many and different synonyms for attributes presented confusingly in literature. See for example, ability, achievements, behaviours, capacity, competences, competencies, personal resources, personal attitudes, strengths, and so on.

In the second article, *stakeholders' perceptions of a CV for new graduates*, two stakeholder groups (career consultants and graduate recruiters) were specifically targeted to obtain their perceptions of what a CV should consist of, given their expertise in the field and the fact that their job descriptions include advising on or evaluating CVs regularly. New graduates were not expected to be knowledgeable about the topic and they were asked what

they specifically wanted to know about CV writing. The two expert stakeholder groups (career consultants and graduate recruiters) were very prescriptive of what content should be included in new graduates' CVs and gave specific instructions for presenting content and what should be avoided. From the stakeholders' perceptions and needs, the contents of a CV should include identifying information about the applicant; enough but not too much information to establish if the applicant complied with the minimum job requirements; and content to enable recruiters to form an idea of the kind of person applying for the position. In the presentation of the CV it was emphasised that the CV should be quick to read and information easy to find. However, the rationale for why certain content should be included in the CV or should be presented in a certain manner was not always clear or justified. This leaves new graduates with the option to follow recipe-like instructions without clearly understanding why certain content should be included or how it should be presented in their CVs. Without insight into the rationale, it is possible that new graduates might not be able to adapt their CVs to fit the positions they apply for, or to demonstrate their employability attributes and substantiate it with appropriate examples.

Literature findings on employability and stakeholders' perceptions and needs of CV-writing were combined in the development of a competence-based CV-writing programme, which was described in article 3, *Development of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new graduate*, in eight stages.

Stage 1 consists of the situational analysis which included four actions.

Identify the rationale of the programme. Informed by pragmatism (see Campbell, 2011; Dewey, 1938; Rorty, Putnam, Conant, & Helfrich, 2004), the rationale of this programme was motivated by the competitive labour environment caused by a combination of growth in graduate supply and limited graduate employment opportunities. The programme was not an

attempt to alleviate graduate unemployment, but rather to improve the probability of ensuring appropriate and sought-after graduate employment – enhancement of new graduate employability.

Identify stakeholders. In this case, groups of people who were directly involved in graduate employability included career consultants, graduate recruiters and new graduates. It could be argued that a skewed picture of higher education institutions' views was obtained because the perceptions of career centre staff only were obtained and not those of academics and or programme/curriculum developers. The focus of this study was, however, not on employability as it is embedded in the curriculum or development of graduate attributes, which are as part of the outcomes of academic programmes. The programme focused on new graduates who are nearing the end of their academic programme and who need help to engage in the job-hunting process to secure appropriate employment.

Obtain stakeholders' perceptions/needs/experiences. Career consultants and graduate recruiters' perceptions of what should be included in a CV and new graduates' needs in compiling a CV were obtained through semi-structured interviews. Even though meaningful data were obtained and data saturation was achieved, it is believed that focus group discussions could have contributed to lively debates of all participants, but particularly new graduates whose limited knowledge could have been stimulated in a group discussion. Another point of critique is that career consultants and graduate recruiters could have been probed to provide justification for their recommendations for CV contents and how these should be presented. However, it is possible that knowledge of subject matter accumulated through experience is often implicit and difficult to verbalise or explain.

Experts in the field could also have been probed for their perceptions of competence-based CVs specifically and how they would proceed to develop such a programme for CV

writing. However, literature on competence-based approaches to CV-writing and competence-based CV-writing programmes is scant but in light of the qualitative descriptive research design used in this study it was possible to bias answers from participants, thereby establishing the inductive nature of a qualitative study (see Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Identification of assets and resources. In this programme, assets and resources associated with a tertiary education context facilitate the presentation of the programme and include: people, information, finances and physical resources.

Stage 2 comprised a study of appropriate literature and theories. In this instance literature on employability and competence-based approaches, theories from various fields of psychology informing employability and Blooms' taxonomy of learning were consulted. Insights obtained from the preceding literature study (article 1) were used to: i) Demystify the concept of employability as it applies to new graduates; ii) Make sense of the different components of the definitions of employability; iii) Propose a new definition specifically applicable to new graduates to guide new graduates and research on new graduate employability; iv) Present the numerous and confusing lists of graduate attributes coherently; and v) Propose that competence be used as a collective construct of employability attributes which consist of new graduates' knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In Stage 3, the intentions of the programme were clarified by defining the overall aim and specific objectives. In this research, the aim was to develop and evaluate a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates. To achieve this, specific objectives were to teach new graduates to: i) Understand recruiters' expectations; ii) Determine what graduate attributes are expected; iii) Link those attributes to their own experiences; and iv) Write a convincing competence-based CV. It was assumed that new graduates' employability could be enhanced if an applicant's CV clearly and convincingly indicated the person-job fit.

Stage 4 involved defining the context for which the programme was developed and to create a learning context in which the competence-based programme will be presented. In this instance the context for which the programme was developed is a tertiary education institution where new graduates' employability needs to be enhanced. An optimal learning context is created when a frame is provided for learning to take place. In the presentation of the programme, the frame around the CV-writing programme serves to provide graduates with a diagram (structure) of what the programme entails as well as introducing them to the rationale for including certain CV contents and how to present these.

Stage 5 comprised the methods of delivery which for this programme was a uni-directional knowledge transfer method with individual follow-up consultations. The uni-directional method of delivery was chosen to orientate graduates with regard to employers' expectations, recruitment processes, constructs associated with competence (employability attributes) and a structure (CV-template). The CV-template consists of different headings with explanatory notes and underlying principles for each heading, which graduates can use to apply their own content to compile their CVs. Contemporary learning models propose that a co-constructed learning environment can produce more than the sum of its parts (Hart, 2016; Smith-Acuña, 2011) – by graduates' learning from one another and not only from teacher-learner directed learning. However, given the large number of graduates who need to attend CV-writing presentations and limited time for non-academic programmes (CV-writing), this ideal might only be applicable to smaller groups and over an extended period of time.

Stage 6 addressed ethical considerations applicable to the presenter of the competence-based CV-writing programme. Research ethics do not apply here as they were discussed as part of the research methodology.

Although careful consideration was given to ethical aspects in the presentation of the programme it must be kept in mind that a CV is intended as a public document which could be scrutinised by several people. Also, participation in the CV-writing programme is completely voluntary and does not involve undue power influence which could potentially be harmful.

Nonetheless, cognisance was taken that new graduates' CVs are often their first attempt at promoting themselves and they may feel uncertain and vulnerable to criticism. For this reason the presenter should demonstrate emphatic listening, be encouraging and offer support. Graduates should also be assured that their attempts will not be belittled or ridiculed (avoiding risk of harm). For graduates whose CVs are discussed or used as examples in the presentation, confidentiality is ensured by protecting their identity. The programme is also based on the assumption that the presenter will act in accordance with what is expected of a competent professional who can provide expert advice and who is knowledgeable about CV-writing.

Stage 7 indicated the planned outcomes expected of the programme and which are also linked to its rationale, as discussed in Stage 1. In this programme, the planned outcomes were to improve new graduates' knowledge of what material to include in their CVs; acquisition of practical skills to compile a competence-based CV; and the development of a feeling of competence to present their employability attributes in a competence-based CV. It is anticipated that by reaching these outcomes the aim of the programme will be achieved, namely to enhance new graduate employability. The effectiveness of the outcomes was measured in the evaluation of the programme as discussed in article 4.

Stage 8 described how the programme would be evaluated, which was discussed in article 4, *Evaluation of a competence-based curriculum vitae-writing programme for new*

graduates. Evaluation of a programme is included from the start, in its planning and development. In this programme, the KASA model (knowledge, attitude, skill and aspiration) (Mathison, 2005) together with Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1996; Praslova, 2010; Yardley & Dornan, 2012) four-level evaluation model (reaction, learning, behaviour, and result) and Phillip's ROI model (Phillips, 2007; Phillips & Stone, 2002) (reaction and planned action, learning, application and implementation, business impact and consequences)was used to determine if the programme did what it set out to do.

The two direct beneficiaries of the programme, new graduates and graduate recruiters, evaluated it. The evaluation of new graduates' knowledge, skills and attitude (components of competence) after attending the programme was used to determine if its outcomes had been achieved. Graduates reported that they had developed competence-based CV-writing skills, which was confirmed by the graduate recruiters' evaluation of the resulting CVs. In the open-ended-statements, graduates reported that they had developed positive attitudes towards writing a competence-based CV and engaging in the job hunting process.

However, this competence-based CV-writing programme should not be regarded as suitable for employability enhancement of every graduate. Not all the graduates who attended the CV-writing programme performed equally well in the knowledge test, and even though a noticeable increase in knowledge in the pre- and post-knowledge test was noticed, these scores should be interpreted against the fact that the post-test was conducted directly after the presentation and could not account for confounding variables if the post-test was conducted at a later stage. Also, not all graduates could compile their CVs by following the guidelines underpinning a competence-based CV. This was observed from assessment of the CVs by the researcher and the graduate recruiters.

Contribution of the study

This study made the following eight specific contributions to new graduate employability as a psychosocial construct. First, the confusing and unsystematic literature on new graduates' employability was critically reviewed to present a coherent summary relevant to all stakeholders involved in new graduate employability. Second, an original definition of new graduate employability is proposed which could guide new graduates in preparing for the work context, career consultants and graduate recruiters to prepare and use in the recruitment process. Third, information of what to include in a competence-based CV-writing programme for new graduates were obtained from the stakeholders who are directly involved with new graduate employability, thereby ensuring that the proposed programme is developed using a bottom-up approach and not a top-down approach (which may not necessarily be applicable in practice). Fourth, in the proposed competence-based CV-writing programme, new graduates are assisted to present contents in their CVs based on an underlying rationale and not 'as is' biographical information. This guiding rationale is contra-indicative of a formulaic presentation of CV contents because every CV should be tailor-made for the specific job for which the new graduates apply. Without an underlying rationale new graduates with little or no professional track record can easily resort to a recipe-like listing of content presented from their own frame of reference. Fifth, the competence-based CV-writing programme provides new graduates with a systematic approach to connecting the employability attributes that they have developed during the course of their lives or in informal (sometimes) unrelated work experience to fit the needs of employers. From the graduate recruiters' perspective this added value can assist them to make better judgements to determine an optimal person-environment fit. Given the large numbers of new graduate applicants and the limited work opportunities for new graduates, this quality in their CVs can make the difference between securing

meaningful employment or just another job. Six, the criteria that were developed are used to assess CVs in terms of adding value (creating a positive impression of the applicant) or detracting from its value (creating a negative impression of the applicant). Given the limited human capital in career centres, and the changing landscape of higher education institutions, promoting self-learning in all aspects of the new graduates' development is indicated. The criteria can also assist career consultants and graduate recruiters to assess CVs. Seven, originality in this study was demonstrated by linking competence words ("What Employers Want") with the verbs (skills) and contexts (mostly informal/extramural) in which the experiences developed to demonstrate employability attributes that are transferrable to the work context to convince graduate recruiters of the optimal fit between new graduates and the position. Eight, it is widely accepted that theory informs practice.

However, from a position of pragmatism, this study proposes that practice should also inform theory. The person-environment fit is a construct that is widely used in graduate employability. The person part of the construct developed from a combination of different psychological disciplines. The environment part of the construct is linked to find suitable and meaningful employment in a social (work) context. Demonstrating the optimal person-environment fit from the perspective of new graduates' limited or no work experience can be challenging. To this end, the practical orientation of this research, proposes a step-by-step process for career consultants and Counselling psychologists to provide a structure for new graduates to overcome this challenge.

Recommendations

Recommendations are made for the theory, practice and research of employability.

Theory of Employability

There is a scarcity of theory that is derived from evidence-based research on employability of new graduates specifically (Baldry, 2016; Scott, 2016). New graduates are a unique group of potential employees because of their limited graduate-related work experience and previous job-hunting experience (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). This study was conducted from a perspective of pragmatism, which aimed to address the problem by changing the practice. However, since theory informs practice, it is recommended that further theoretical frameworks be developed to improve new graduates' employability.

Practice of Employability

Despite the development of a programme, it is recommended that graduates be informed that merely attending the programme provides no guarantee for finding suitable employment. Many other factors also play a role securing employment, such as: personal circumstances, interpersonal styles, the economy and availability of employment opportunities (Fugate et al., 2004; Potgieter & Coetzee, 2013). Due to the limited time students have available to invest in their preparation for the world of work, creative ways have to be explored to make a CV-training programme accessible for students, available on demand and not limited to personal presentations.

It is recommended that graduates start developing an awareness of recruiters' expectations early in their studies for the specific jobs they may be applying for. Graduate students can start early in their academic career to maximise opportunities to develop a wide range of graduate employability attributes from extra- and co-curricular activities. If this

programme could be presented over a period of time, and create awareness of employing non-formal work experience as basis for developing employability attributes, which will allow students to grow into the presentation of their competence on paper. For graduate recruiters it is recommended that they should be clearer about the knowledge, skills and attitude attributes they expect for specific positions when advertising. Recruiters could also share their knowledge of CV evaluation with graduate students and participate in collaboration with career consultants in training for CV-writing. Career consultants can enhance graduate employability by adopting a more scientific approach to CV-writing and interview preparation. If employers who are not clear about their expectations of graduate employment, career consultants could take the initiative to find out what is required from new graduates. Not all career consultants have the same academic and experience background (Prospects, 2016a). Therefore it is recommended that, regardless of their particular background, they actively seek knowledge from the psychology disciplines that inform employability of graduates. Career centres are mainly situated in tertiary education contexts, and it is recommended that they consult with curriculum developers and work more closely with academia to ensure a firmer embedding of employability in the curriculum.

Research into Employability

The list of graduate employability attributes may be probed further to group them into descriptive categories and consider the link to specific job profiles. It is further recommended that a similar study on the development of a competence-based interview preparation programme for new graduates be conducted. Finally, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the set of criteria developed for this study to demonstrate its applicability and generalizability to different contexts and with different graduate groups.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it focused mainly on the process of CV-writing to enhance employability, while other factors such as interviewing and job search skills also play a role in enhancement of employability, not to mention the academic programme contents. The study was also limited to the students, practices and career centre of only one higher education institution in South Africa. Deeper insight and more comprehensive stakeholder feedback may have been obtained if the scope of the application of the competence-based CV-writing presentation is widened. Stakeholders' perceptions were obtained largely through semi-structured interviews and even though meaningful data were obtained and data saturation was achieved, the additional use of focus group discussions could have been considered. Career consultants and graduate recruiters could have been probed for justification for their recommendations for CV contents. These experts in the field could also have been probed specifically for their perceptions of a competence-based CV. In the development and evaluation of the programme in the context of higher education institutions, views and perceptions of academics and or programme/curriculum developers could also have been included. Further research could have been done on graduates' individual needs for acquiring knowledge and to develop skills because some graduates may need a different method of delivery to accommodate their learning needs.

Conclusion

It may appear that this study only scratched the surface of the complex notion of graduate employability enhancement but the study was purposively focused on CV-writing as one of the many contributors to employability enhancement. The researcher acknowledge that other contributors to employability include the process of obtaining a tertiary qualification, active participation in extra- and co-curricular activities and how graduates

conduct themselves in the job interview. However, the CV contributes significantly to employability because it captures and displays graduate employability attributes and the potential to do the job competently. Much need still to be done to a fairly young subject discipline. This study attempted to enhance new graduate employability by developing, describing and implementing a competence-based CV-writing programme to benefit new graduates in the first place, but also career consultants and graduate recruiters and by extension, the various professions and society. In general and for the majority of participating graduates, it can be concluded from this study that the competence-based CV-writing programme contributed to enhancing new graduate employability.

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