

Jacaranda Journal

NEWSLETTER 2 2019

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE (U3A) PRETORIA

Email Address:
u3apretoria@gmail.com

Website:
http://www.u3a.org.za/U3A_PTA/PTA.htm

General meetings take place four times a year, 09:00 for 10:00, at NG Kerk Skuilkrans, cnr Cussonia Ave and Jan Alberts St, Val de Grace. GPS S25°44.580 E028°17.494.

Please adhere to the one-way flow of traffic around the church, absolutely essential for our safety!

The dates of the quarterly meetings for the 2019 are 28 February (AGM), 30 May, 25 July and 31 October.

The 2019 annual subscription is R100. Guests are welcome at a cost of R30 per event.

Payments can be made at quarterly meetings, or online (there is an application form on the website).

Banking Details:
Bank: NEDBANK
Branch: HATFIELD
Code: 160245
Acc. Name: U3A PRETORIA
Acc. No: 1602376972

A full list of courses and interest groups will be issued in February with an update in July.

One-day outings take place on a regular basis and longer excursions are also arranged.

You are encouraged to wear a name tag at every U3A event.

Contributions to the letter are most welcome. Please email U3A, subject: Editorial Team. A short English synopsis is requested if another (official SA) language is used.

U3A Pretoria is blessed with a particularly compatible group of members, many of whom have spent their working lives in this city as teachers, lecturers or researchers at parastatals such as the CSIR and SABS. Pretoria is renowned for its rich cultural heritage with the emphasis on the visual and performing arts: the fact that 70 tickets for *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet (see page 3 below) were sold out immediately is evidence of the appreciation of our members for music and dance.



As everyone filed back onto the bus after the ballet performance on 3 April I was struck by a shared sense of privilege. We possibly all attended good schools which encouraged students to participate in the arts, and throughout our earlier professional lives have been able to attend world-class performances at venues such as the State Theatre, the Linder Auditorium, UNISA and the previous Johannesburg Civic Theatre. Today Pretoria offers concerts and recitals at many newer venues including the popular Brooklyn Theatre, and our members have access to those on a daily basis.

Not so our fellow retirees in townships such as Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Soshanguve and Mobapane who could not benefit from similar educational opportunities at our excellent city schools.

Despite our best efforts we have not been able to recruit members from senior citizens who initially lived in these segregated areas. Perhaps it is still too early, 25 years after the establishment of a democratic South African state, to identify retired individuals who would enjoy membership of our U3A. Many of our contemporaries would have been domestic workers or labourers at the same time as we were professionally employed, without the income and available leisure time to enjoy the arts.

I would very much appreciate any comments and suggestions from members on how to broaden our membership base. U3A will be considerably richer if we move from a homogenous group to an organisation which offers us opportunities for interaction with all our fellow Pretorians.

Gill Udal

TALK: 30 MAY 2019

Modern usage of ancient herbs and spices including essential oils and African Medicinal plants. How scientific is it for solving current health issues? and how sustainable will it be in future?

Speaker: Karen Swanepoel

Karen has studied at a number of universities focusing on botany. She holds an MSc in Economic Botany from the University of Pretoria and has wide experience as a lecturer and consultant in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. She is at present a coordinator of the Southern African Essential Oils Producers Association. She has an extensive knowledge of the cultivation, development and use of indigenous plants and is a consultant and planner for farm projects encouraging the cultivation of indigenous plants throughout the country. A major interest focuses on the health benefits associated with medicinal plants and essential oils.

John Lambert

MESSAGE FROM THE COURSE & INTEREST GROUP CO-ORDINATOR

This year several course leaders (who had waiting lists from last year) presented their courses before the first general meeting and before the publishing of the course list, and interest groups also started up in February. We hope this will happen every year. Once the course list was available, members made full use of the opportunities offered.

One such course was a one-off presented by **Ray Spencer**, entitled 'The Certainties of Life', a most worthwhile topic for our age group, but nevertheless crucial for any adult. Ray has gone thoroughly into how to make our exit from life much easier for those who have to 'pick up the pieces', and he has compiled a comprehensive course workbook. The first part, an 'After Death Guide', discusses the setting out of personal details and one's funeral choices, medical and financial information, etc. Another part, 'Life File Records' forces us to consider what we need to think about NOW: questions about our digital life, the making of a living will, the concept of an ethical will, the distribution of personal possessions, etc. Representatives of a nation-wide funeral home and of a financial planning group, invited by Ray, added valuable information. Members are welcome to ask Ray to email the documents to them, and to make an honour donation (minimum R50) to a charity of their choice. His email address is: rayk.spencer@gmail.com. Thank you for this kind offer, Ray.

The new Photographic Interest Group had its inaugural meeting last month and promises to be a popular and creative one. We hope that the rest of us will, at some stage, see the fruits of their labours in this field. How about an exhibition at the end-of-year meeting?

The Walking Group is thinking of how best to cater for both the *amblers* and the *hikers*. Gail will try out having three relatively easy walks and one more challenging hike, possibly further afield, per month. If anyone would be prepared to help with planning the more strenuous walks, please contact Gail Victor on 082-669 3884 or mommyvictor@hotmail.com.

The attractive Easter Eggs pictured below were made under the supervision of **Jannie van Alphen-Hofkamp**. Jannie wrote: "In March four people joined the workshop 'Making your own Easter Eggs' where, in a pleasant and tranquil atmosphere, we exercised our special brand of creativity. At the end we hung up all the eggs in a tree in the garden. Each person went home with the eggs they decorated, and a great sense of personal satisfaction!" Jannie hopes to run an advanced course later in the year.

Jenny Janisch



EASTER EGGS *from Jannie's Workshop*



UPCOMING EXCURSIONS

16 May: The Anton Smit Sculpture Park and Gallery in Bronkhorstspuit. To quote reviews by recent visitors: 'You can get lost for days so be sure to go with a lot of time to soak in all the beauty...' and '...mesmerised by the beautiful sculptures in the serene garden...'

27 June: Aloe Farm near the Hartbeespoort Dam. A botanical talk is included and members will have the opportunity to walk around the nursery, which is on level ground. Our lunch venue after the visit will probably be 'Maggie's Farm -The Home of the Chicken Pie' near Lanseria.

If you wish to be included in either or both of these excursions please email U3A with the subject '**Anton Smit**' / '**Aloe Garden**' and you'll be sent further information. Guests are welcome for the usual guest fee of R30 plus R150 bus fare. There are no entrance fees.

Gill Udal

PREVIOUS EXCURSIONS THIS YEAR

Two cultural excursions were planned to start the U3A year, a JPO morning concert-rehearsal in March of *Mozart's Requiem* at the Linder Auditorium and an April performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* ballet at the Joburg Theatre.

Unfortunately, the JPO concert-rehearsal was moved to the evening, which gave us no option other than to cancel the outing.

Certainly not a dress rehearsal, the ballet performance on 3 April was filmed and so the very best dancers were on stage, with the exception of Shannon Glover who'd been injured. The orchestra pit was used for cameras hence the use of recorded music (performed by the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra), in no way detracting from the overall experience.



The Sleeping Beauty proved so popular that our allocation of 70 tickets was sold out immediately, and a full bus of balletomanes set off happily on 3 April to enjoy a sumptuous performance of this much-loved story. The sets resembled a delicately illustrated fairy tale and provided a magical background for the exceptionally talented dancers.

Thank you, Jenny Janisch, for liaising with Joburg Ballet to procure so many tickets for us. It was a memorable morning indeed.

Gill Udal



Photo on the left by Gill Udal, the other two from the Joburg Ballet Facebook page.

A malapropism walks into a bar, looking for all intensive purposes like a wolf in cheap clothing, muttering epitaphs and casting dispersions on his magnificent other, who takes him for granite.

AN INTEREST GROUP IN ACTION

ART INTEREST GROUP

Like a lot of other things at U3A, the Art Interest Group was instigated by Jenny Janisch. It began holding meetings in the winter of 2015, as far as members can remember, in Brooklyn at the home of Barbara Gilmour. The meetings are still being held there and most of the foundation members still belong to the group.

None of us are art "gurus". We just volunteer to research an art subject and give a presentation to our fellows, using art books, a projector or other means of illustration. We meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Presentations last about an hour and afterwards we have discussion and tea.

The emphasis is on the INTEREST part of our group name. Our curiosity ranges far and wide, from conventional paintings and sculpture to concepts such as images of love in art and when does a photograph become art? We have had presentations on South African Art, Irma Stern, Alexander Rose-Innes, Gregoire Boonzaaier, Johannes Meintjies, Tretchikov, Maggie Laubser, Pierneef, the photographer David Goldblatt and a host of other famous artists like Modigliani, Gauguin, Canaletto, Renoir, Rodin, Chinese Art, the development of Anatomical Art, Botanical Art, Gerard Sekoto and Maurice Escher – to name only a few of our efforts. We also slip in episodes of Johnny Clegg's "A Country Imagined" from time to time.



Picture: Les Labuschagne

Edith Steyn arranged a visit to the University of Pretoria in February to view the historic Merensky Library building, the Mapungubwe collection of exhibits, and works by Eduardo Villa and Anton van Wouw. We were also shown around ceramic collections by our excellent young lady guide. There is so much to see, we recommend two visits instead of just one.

In June we have arranged to visit the Kunsamer in Groenkloof where the director, Alette Wessels, will give us a talk on Art and Photography.

Members of the Art Interest Group learn from one another and a lovely feeling of camaraderie has developed in their ranks. Unfortunately, the group is at maximum capacity for meetings in a private home. We suggest that another group be started for those with similar interests.

Barbara Gilmour

LONGER EXCURSIONS

SAKABULA TOURS 2019

Great North, 3-7 June. The remote northern part of Kruger Park has far fewer tourists and we spend two nights in Punda Maria, one in Shingwedzi, to make the most of it. Then we leave Kruger and spend a night at the Blyde River Canyon. We'll probably self-cater but restaurants are available. More people needed, PLEASE, to make it viable.

Music and Mountains, 8-14 June. DATE CHANGE! Join us on this lovely tour to KZN. We spend two nights in Dundee exploring local sites and battlefields before a 4x4 ascent of Sani Pass in Lesotho (dress warmly!). Passport required. Enjoy a performance by the world-famous Drakensberg Boys Choir and return via the Eastern Free State.

Diamonds, Dunes and Daisies, 21 August - 3 September. Indulge in the scenic diversity of this large area, mainly in the Northern Cape. Discover places like the Robert Moffat Museum in Kuruman, the Mission Station at Pella and, of course the rich diversity of flowers in Namaqualand. We include Clanwilliam, Calvinia, Nieuwoudtville and Carnavon. The stay in Kimberley adds a final flourish to this tour.

Mapungubwe and Azaleas, 9-14 September. Discover one of the earlier Iron Age settlements in SA where the intriguing little gold rhino was found. Learn about the derring-do of the Bushveld Carbineers and others before being bedazzled by Azaleas.

Hinterland, 7-13 October. Enjoy the magnificent Maluti Mountains before exploring some of the Karoo including charming Cradock, graceful Graaff Reinet and Nieu Bethesda with the famous Owl House and Kitching Fossil Exploration Centre. A visit to Philippolis, with the Emily Hobhouse rooms in the museum and the Lourens van der Post memorial, is included.

Groot Marico 3-6 November. Wander westwards to Charles Bosman territory and revel in his stories. Of course, Mampoer tasting is a must. We've ADDED a stop on the return journey to learn more about the Anglo Boer War battles in this area.

Most of our tours are small groups, allowing for greater flexibility. The cost depends on actual numbers (special price for U3A). Please contact me at anne@sakabula.com or 012-460 5251.

Anne Lawrance

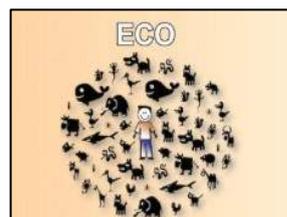
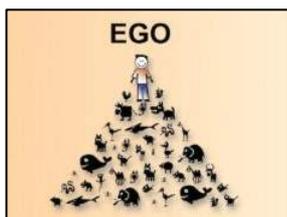
ONE WORLD: TALK BY JONATHAN LEEMING, 28 FEBRUARY 2019

Although Jonathan Leeming could not look less like Greta Thunberg (the young climate activist from Sweden) if he tried, their messages have much in common: our One World is in trouble, and we have to act quickly and decisively if we wish to save this beautiful planet. The cause (man-made or natural) of environmental issues has become irrelevant: what matters is what must be done now. Considering the equation, “My Impact = Consumption X Technology”, it becomes clear that major behaviour change is required, as all of our choices have an impact.

Jonathan’s message was an uncomfortable one: we have a “fatal disconnection” about where our garbage goes, with just nine years of accommodation left in our landfills and our sewage systems. We have a similar disconnection from how our electricity and our food are produced; the amount of water we use; the harmful chemicals that we use (and how they are disposed of). Jonathan believes that the world has “civilisation collapse disorder”, as illustrated by the collapse of the Egyptian Empire after the Nile ceased its annual flood. Jared Diamond, in his book “Collapse”, identified the most serious environmental problems facing past societies: loss of habitat or ecosystem services; overfishing; loss of biodiversity; soil erosion and degradation; climate change; and human consumption levels. These still apply today, but a seventh – population growth – is flattening out, mainly thanks to better awareness and education. At the same time, there is currently enough food for about twice the global population, but inefficiencies and waste prevent it from reaching everyone.

The concept of ecosystem services is a way of recognising our direct and indirect benefits from nature. They “originate from an aspect of the environment that may be a single animal or plant, or a collection of ‘things’ such as a wetland, forest or mountain range”, and are grouped into four categories: supporting services (necessary for all other ecosystem services, such as water), provisioning services (what we receive from nature, such as food and building materials), regulating services (maintaining the world as we know it, such as predator animals keeping animal populations in check), and cultural services (“those intangible aspects that provide recreation, spiritual and historical benefits”, such as beautiful scenery).

Jonathan used an EGO vs. ECO poster to illustrate his points:



MEANING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change is a threat • Development means increased consumption • Wants before needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change means opportunities • Development means quality of life • Needs before wants
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution • Plastic straws • Single use plastics • Bioplastics • Drinking water on garden • Walking with lions / petting lion cubs • Smoking • Rhino poaching (Jonathan is not sure about rhino hunting) • Domestic cats – invasive (this was not well received by all of us!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insects • Turning waste into value (Ecobricks) • Recycling (but best is not to produce it in the first place, as only 10% is actually recycled)

Jonathan summarised what we should be doing as:

“Use less stuff; eat less fast food; use less chemicals; reduce waste.”

For more information, see www.jonathanleeming.com , especially his blog <http://jonathanleeming.com/one-world-blog/> .

Yvonne Shapiro

WHAT IS AN ECOBRICK?

An EcoBrick is a plastic bottle packed tightly with clean and dry, non-biodegradable waste. These bottles can then be used as building materials to create insulative structures and colourful furniture.

See <https://www.aquarium.co.za/blog/entry/how-to-make-ecobricks-reducing-waste-at-home>.

Message from Gill Udal:

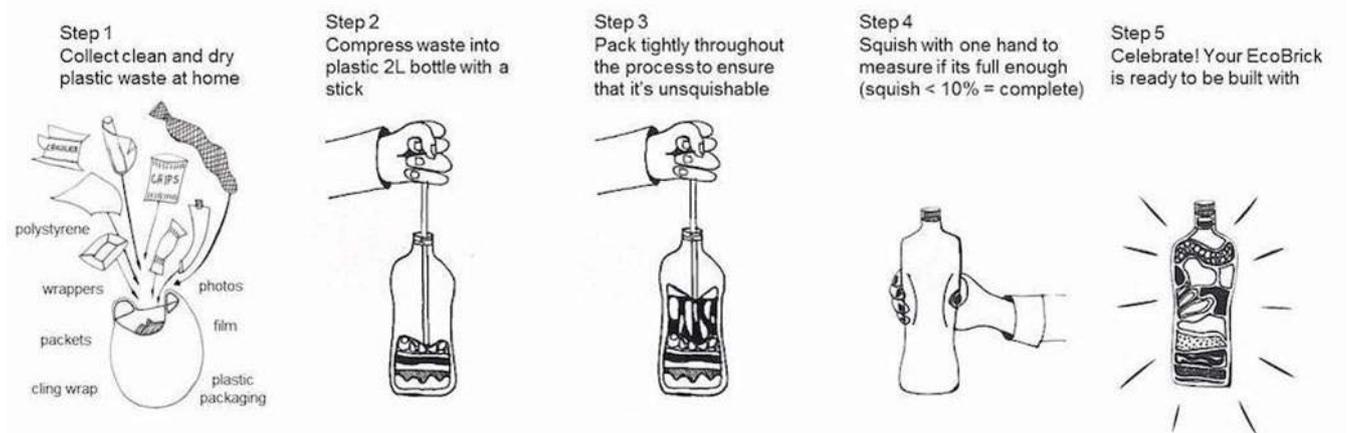
'We are all aware of the threat to our planet posed by single-use plastics, and the devastating effect these have on our environment. Although the ideal solution is to stop using non-recyclable plastic, we are still being sold items packed in this material.

'An innovative way to use single-use plastics is through the creation of EcoBricks. These have been used very effectively to build walls and furniture in many parts of the world, and in fact there are projects currently under way in schools and townships around Pretoria which are asking for donations of EcoBricks.

'The information on this page tells you how to make an EcoBrick, starting with a clean, preferably clear 2L plastic bottle. One bottle is all you need as it can take a couple of months to fill! Some members may find it difficult to obtain this starting bottle, so we are asking everyone with spare bottles to bring them to each meeting.

'When your bottle is so tightly packed with non-recyclable material that it is rigid, bring it to the next general meeting and place it into the marked container. We will make sure it is taken to a collection point if there is not one near you.'

<https://www.ecobrickexchange.org/>:



<https://www.getaway.co.za/travel-news/eco-brick-today/>:

Non-recyclable waste that can go in EcoBricks:

- Laminated paper
- Photos and transparencies
- Polystyrene cups / trays
- Plastic vegetable and fruit punnets
- Silvery packets (chips, chocolates, etc.)
- P.E.T. trays
- Wax paper
- Dog food bags
- Straws
- Cellophane
- Styrofoam
- All plastic packaging
- Plastic shopping bags (despite being reusable) are a must for EcoBricks as the majority of them end up in landfills

Tips for making an EcoBrick:

1. Waste should be twisted as it is easier to insert into the bottle
2. Compress waste with a wooden stick
3. Once the bottle is unsqueezable (no space left) the brick is complete
4. Take your EcoBrick to a drop-off point

More tips from Jenny Janisch:

1. It's best to cut up bigger pieces of plastic
2. Also cut up straws into small sections
3. Ensure that the four hollows at the bottom of the bottle are tightly packed before filling higher up
4. Styrofoam (except for the netting that goes around pawpaws etc) is not easy to squash down to reach the required weight of 500 g but takes up space.

GILL'S ECOBRICK AND EXAMPLES OF HOW ECOBRICKS HAVE BEEN USED IN SOUTH AFRICA



Thanks to **Jean Richter** for her initial research, and to

Ian Dommissie
Director & Project Manager

www.ecobrickexchange.org
www.facebook.com/EcoBrickExchange
www.instagram.com/ecobrickexchange
[Introduction Video](#)

for providing comprehensive information.



BOOK EXCHANGE

Do you have a good book that you've really enjoyed reading and would like to share with other U3A members? Bring it along to the meeting and put it onto the table provided for this purpose. Write your name and contact number inside if you would like it returned to you. You are welcome to take home any other book contributed by members to our new U3A Book Exchange. Please note that this is a reading group and not a venue to dispose of your unwanted book collection!

DVD LIBRARY

We lend DVDs to members at every general meeting for a deposit of R50 per series, which is refundable only if the DVDs are returned no later than the next meeting. You are welcome to contact John Lambert (072-373 0677 or lambertb@mweb.co.za) if you have suggestions for new DVD series, or would like to donate / lend any of your own DVDs to our library. The complete list of available DVDs can be found on the U3A Pretoria website.

New DVDs this quarter are: Simon Schama's *History of Britain*; *Koyaanisqatsi/Powaqqatsi*; *The Choir*, Series 1; *Secret Gardens*; *Treasure Gardens*; *Africa's Elephant Kingdom*; *Andre Rieu Live in Maastricht*; *Barbara*.

John Lambert

Jacaranda Jottings...

You may have heard the government's recent proposal that the retirement age of civil servants be lowered to 55. Apart from the financial implications of such a move, senior citizens are living healthier, longer lives, as so many of our members prove. U3A and its European equivalent AVTIA have long been recognised through serious academic studies as highly significant organisations for the over-60s. This article focuses on Dezhou College for the Aged. **Gill Udal**

See http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/08/c_136266199.htm

China Focus: Silver-haired students rise against population ageing

It's never too late to learn. And for China's 230 million elderly, many are too busy studying, picking up hobbies and making new friends to feel old.

Liu Wenzhi gets up early, makes breakfast and sends her grandchildren to school. Before 8:30, the 65-year-old rushes to her own school. She is never late. Her school, Dezhou College for the Aged, is located in east China's Shandong Province. As one of 60,000 education institutions for the elderly in China, it is a government-funded centre that offers local seniors classes ranging from folk dance, calligraphy and Peking Opera to yoga and how to walk like a catwalk model. Liu has studied traditional Chinese stringed instruments, the electronic piano, Peking Opera and paper-cutting. "My life is busy but very rewarding," said Liu, a former clerk in a public institution in Dezhou City. "Outside of work, people of my generation do not have hobbies. Our lives after retirement mainly focus on looking after grandchildren. The universities for the aged have changed everything," said Liu.

The world's first university dedicated to the elderly was established in France in 1973. Ten years later, China also set up its first university for seniors in Shandong's Jinan City. China boasts around 60,000 elderly education institutions with more than 7 million silver-haired students, according to the China Association of Universities for the Aged. Due to longer life expectancy and declining fertility rates, the proportion of people above the age of 60 is growing faster than other age groups in many countries. China is among those with an aging population. The number of people over 60 reached 230 million, or 16.7 percent of the country's total population, at the end of 2016. The growing senior population is a sign of success for health and medical improvements in the country. But how to ensure elderly people live happy, healthy, and social lives? Universities for the aged offer an answer.

"I'm the first in my village to attend the elderly college," said 63-year-old farmer **Yang Ruijun**, who stopped studying after primary school when she was young. She began studying music in Dezhou College for the Aged last September, and has become a singing teacher for residents in Sunhuayao Village where she lives. "Helping others is helping myself," said Yang. "I worked as a housewife and farmer for almost 40 years, doing housework and looking after children and grandchildren. When they grew up, I became old. But old age does not mean lonely and dull," said Yang.



Students learn to play traditional Chinese musical instruments at a school for the elderly on Nantangbang Road in Shanghai. PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

School fees for elderly education institutions are affordable, and study time is flexible to encourage more elderly people who were unable to study when young to fulfil their college dreams. Classes at Dezhou College for the Aged cost only 80 yuan (around 12 U.S. dollars) per class per term. Class is held between 8:30 to 10:30 in the morning and 2:30 to 4:30 in the afternoon. "Picking up grandchildren will not be affected," said [Liu Wei](#), the college's deputy head.

Shandong University for the Aged, China's first university of its kind, now offers more modern classes, such as saxophone, spoken English, and software and smartphone use, to its 20,000-plus registered students. "The aim of elderly people is not only to learn. Through continuing study and upgrading knowledge in these schools, they will be better integrated into society and their sense of belonging will be boosted," said Wang Zhifang, head of continuing education school at Shandong Provincial Institute of Education Sciences.

However, competition for access to schools for the elderly is fierce due to limited resources. In some universities, elderly people even queue overnight for a chance to register for a class. "As the 'wave of silver' sweeps across the country, expanding the existing campus areas is not enough to meet the stronger demand," said [Du Yingjie](#), principal of Shandong University for the Aged. Du encouraged more private capital to invest to improve facilities, increase the number of courses of study and attract more public attention to the aging population.

Shandong University for the Aged has established six branch schools under cooperation with local universities, banks and enterprises. According to China's development plan for elderly education (2016-2020), every city should have at least one university for the elderly, and 50 percent of towns should have schools for the elderly, while 30 percent of villages should have learning centers for the elderly by 2020.

[Liu Wenzhi](#) plans to teach the seniors around her what she has learned in college. "You're never too old to be young," she said.



Dancing is one of the most popular courses among the elderly students.
