

***AT THE POLICY-PRACTICE INTERFACE: EXPLORING
TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND
TRAINING LECTURERS' EDUCATIONAL REFORM
EXPERIENCES***

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Doctor of Philosophy***

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DECLARATION

I, **Zanele Gladness Buthelezi**, declare that:

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DEDICATION

To God the Almighty who, against all odds, gave me the strength to carry on.

Exodus 15:2 *The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated lived personal and professional educational reform experiences of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College lecturers at the policy-practice interface in the post-apartheid era. A literature search revealed that TVET lecturers' voices in the South African context were a *terra incognita*, as they have been missing and neglected for decades. The study is a contribution towards filling that void.

The study used a qualitative research approach from an interpretive paradigm. Open-ended life history interviews of 12 TVET college lecturers from two different colleges were conducted. The participants have worked in the sector for more than 10 years. Questionnaires were used to elicit lecturer biographical data. The main analysis technique used was narrative analysis. The study draws on a social theory by Norbert Elias, who emphasizes interconnectedness of relations amongst people, rejecting the *homo clausus* image of man.

Findings suggest that educational change was complex and daunting for TVET lecturers. The experiences of TVET lecturers suggest that they were not adequately engaged during the conceptualization stages of the reform. Implementation had to start before they had familiarized themselves with the innovations, hence the lament that they were not ready. The reform was perceived as rapid and ephemeral. Rapidity led to the development of unrealistic timeframes, ambitious scope and inequitable practices in the distribution of resources. Educational reforms fell short of continuity and conformity to system norms and yielded a myriad of unintended and unanticipated consequences.

Because of the prevalence of feelings of inadequacy precipitated by curricular changes, this study recommends that TVET lecturers be adequately capacitated. TVET lecturer development strategies need to fortify different kinds of knowledge such as disciplinary, tacit, pedagogical, work-place and knowledge of the heart, such as values, attitudes, intuition and situated learning. The study recommends that strategies to alleviate onerous administrative duties for lecturers be devised. The study recommends that solutions to NCV challenges, such as mixed ability classrooms, compounded student workloads, complex courses that are pitched higher than the level of the targeted student and lack of technical background, be found.

The study highlighted adverse effects of prescriptive, top-down reforms which have been cited as silencing professional input. This study concludes that challenges could have been minimized if the lecturer was considered to be one of the key factors for educational reform to succeed. The study recommends that policymakers and college management utilize prudent participative and consultative strategies that include lecturers for enhancement of future policy conceptualization, implementation and evaluation.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
BGCSE	Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DNE	Department of National Education
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
EFC	Expected Family Contribution
ESASS	External Summative Assessment
ESETA	Energy Sector Education and Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Colleges
FETMIS	Further Education and Training Information Systems
GET	General Education and Training
HET	Higher Education and Training
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HoD	Head of Department
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICASS	Internal Continuous Assessment
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
INDLELA	Institute for the National Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments
ISAT	Integrated Summative Assessment Task
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
JC	Junior Certificate
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MERSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training
MEST	Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NATED	National Technical Education
NCFE	Northern Council for Further Education

NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD	Occupation Specific Dispensation
PoA	Portfolio of Assessment
PoE	Portfolios of Evidence
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACPO	South African College Principals Organization
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Skills Education Training Authorities
TOC	Targeted Oriented Curriculum
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
VIP	Very Important People

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CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background and focus of the study

Forty six years of authoritarian apartheid in South Africa brought imbalances and inequalities to all spheres of peoples' lives. As part of a broader social, economic and political context, education was also negatively impacted. The education system was racially segregated and South African children were exposed to unequal educational opportunities. A new democratic system of governance in 1994 meant that new policies be formulated to transform society. Part of these policies focused on transforming education and training to address and promote democracy, human rights, nation building and social equity in general.

Initial broader policies formulated by the Ministry of Education saw education and training being categorized into three bands which were General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education and Training (HET). Colleges for vocational education and training, which are the focus of this study, fell under the FET band which was ambiguous, as secondary and high schools also fell under the same band. As shall be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, they were later moved to the Department of Higher Education and Training in 2010.

From the year 2000, the FET College¹ sector has been undergoing a barrage of major institutional, structural and curricular changes. As has been explained in laying out a broader context above, colleges are a relatively new phenomenon that started 13 years ago. Formerly known as technical colleges, they were racially and ethnically segregated (Sayed, 2003), as all South African education used to be. They were used as a form of social control to reinforce the apartheid government's policies of separate development (Chisholm, Motala & Vally, 2003; Hlophe, 2003; Siqubashe, 2005). But from 1990, when processes for formulation of new policies started, it became evident that the segregated education system had no place in the post-apartheid South Africa because reform in education must be the starting point towards meaningful change (Nyerere,

¹ Now known as Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVET)

1974). This has been the case in South Africa, as confirmed by the Chisholm Report (2003), that the focus of all education policies in the post-apartheid era have revolved around “the restructuring of school education, the integration of education and training, the transformation of the curriculum, the reconstructing of the bureaucracy and the improving of the educational infrastructure in general” (p 5).

There were four major educational changes that transformed the TVET landscape drastically. Firstly, with regards to the college sector, the education system overhaul was conceptualized through amalgamating 150 technical colleges, that had existed for many years, into 50 multi-sited colleges that were to be accessed by learners, irrespective of their race, class, gender, or religion. Amalgamations of colleges ‘were based on physical location, for example, colleges to be merged being in the same geographical vicinity, and resource allocation, for example, state and state-aided colleges, or public and semi-independent colleges, being merged in the process’ (Cosser, McGrath, Badroodien & Maja, 2003, p 2).

Secondly, new governing bodies known as College Councils were formed in each TVET college. The College Councils are responsible for developing strategic plans, mission statements and acquiring substantive strategic planning capabilities (FET ACT, 1998). This meant a shift towards institutional autonomy and financial control. As shall be discussed later, the dearth of human capacity to implement policy has compelled the new Department of Higher Education and Training to put plans in place to minimize autonomy initially afforded to College Councils. Existing research indicate that top college managers, including Council members, ‘lack management skills and knowledge to successfully implement the new policy imperatives’ (Moyo, 2007, p 5).

Thirdly, the FET Colleges Act of 2006 endorsed that management staff will be appointed by the MEC, while employment of all other staff, including lecturers, is the responsibility of the colleges. The Council was given power to approve conditions of employment, including the determination and review of salaries for lecturers and support staff and all

other forms of remuneration, in accordance with the rules (The FET Colleges Act of 2006, p 34).

Fourthly, the new National Certificate Vocational (NCV) curriculum, which commenced in January 2007, was introduced. It was a new TVET college qualification that was to give learners industry-focused vocational alternative to the academic grades 10–12 offered by senior secondary schools in the mainstream education system. The programme sought ‘to overcome outdated divisions between ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ education, and training, and is characterized, not by the ‘vocationalisation’ of education, but by a sound foundation of general knowledge, combined with practical relevance’ (DoE, 1998a: p 30).

Akoojee (2008) cautioned that the education reforms that have occurred in TVET colleges presupposed that teachers employed to teach there were already geared to implement the new policies and face all the challenges that may have arisen from then to date. This study sought to investigate what the lecturers’ lived experiences have been due to the policy reforms that completely changed the landscape of this crucial sector. This included how the ‘radical revision of the nature of college staff employment’ (Akoojee and McGrath, 2008), through the FET College Act of 2006, has impacted on the lives and work of TVET lecturers as a focal point. Furthermore, the FET Act of 1998 led to the establishment of new governance by College Councils. The study therefore also interrogated how this drastic shift in governance from being state-run to College Council run impacted on the personal and professional lives of lecturers.

With regards to curricular changes, the introduction of the NCV meant a new role for the TVET college lecturer. The already inherent identities needed to be reorganized or restructured in ways that had not been researched. As a result, part of what the present study investigated included lecturers’ experiences in reorganizing their professional and cultural identities due to the amalgamation of colleges and the introduction of the NCV, with its new pedagogical practices.

It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate and explore how lecturers teaching in the KwaZulu-Natal TVET colleges have experienced working in these colleges in the post-apartheid era, with specific focus on how their personal and professional lives have been affected by the transformation.

1.2 Revitalization of TVET globally

Besides ridding the education system of apartheid practices, TVET colleges were restructured and prioritized by the government as an instrument for addressing the critical skills shortages, particularly artisans, to achieve sustainable economic growth in the country. This approach to vocational education and training is not unique to South Africa. Transformations in technical and vocational education and training systems (TVET) have taken place internationally over the past 20 years (Crouch, Finegold & Sako, 1999; Wolf, 2002; McGrath *et al.*, 2006). The reasons for these changes are because of the perceived ‘learn and work’ benefits, which are tied not only to human development strategies and poverty eradication discourse, but are also considered to be building blocks for economic growth (McGrath 2003a, 2005; McGrath *et al.*, 2006; Akoojee, 2008). As a result, in many countries, government officials, policymakers and other stakeholders believe that education and training systems have to be responsive to the needs of the economy, with further emphasis on personal development and citizenship (McGrath *et al.*, 2006).

A study conducted in 1994 by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (MEST) in Canada reported that TVET systems in the United Kingdom, Scotland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand had introduced quite specific reform measures to achieve a more vocational focus in education (cited in Chappell 2003). The revitalization of TVET is also evident in many African countries, including southern African states like Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland (Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath, 2005; McGrath *et al.*, 2006). The policies of this ‘new vocationalism’ (Chappell, 2003) emphasizes the need for ‘some educational sectors to contribute to national economic imperatives and are embedded in human capital theories of economic importance’ (p 22).

Echoing this argument, Rauner and Maclean (2008) posit that many countries consider TVET ‘a key factor in improving competitiveness of enterprises and national economies’ (p 13). As a result, they reason, education policy reforms have been undertaken globally to revitalize TVET for economic growth and solving socio-economic problems like poverty and unemployment, particularly unemployment the youth. Also supporting the argument is Towani (2010), who asserts that ‘the FET college sector is a pivotal and diverse segment of the overall education system in South Africa and perhaps the most complex’. It is seen as pivotal because it is perceived to be a tool for expanding the economy, bridging the gap between school and university and being a link between education and opportunities of employment.

Discourse and debate with regards to the revitalization of vocational education and training, and the urgency with which this should be done were confirmed through research by Akoojee *et al.* (2005); McGrath *et al.* (2006), and Crouch, Finegold & Sako (1999), whose findings reveal that a transformed TVET would address the problem of youth unemployment and ‘provide skills development geared to current and projected economic opportunities and challenges’ (McGrath *et al.*, 2006, p 88). There is consensus amongst various stakeholders that TVET transformation is necessary if this goal is to be realised. In describing the youth unemployment crisis the Higher Education and Training Minister, Blade Nzimande (2010), confirmed this when he argued that ‘to have three out of seven million 18–24 year olds sitting at home doing nothing is a ticking time bomb’ (p 5).

As part of the global community, there was no way in which South Africa would have escaped the powerful influence that the economic discourse has in the formulation of TVET educational policies. Although, in the South African context, the term TVET encompasses a wide variety of practices and ‘its content and meaning has shifted many times’ (Badroodien, 2004, p 20), the notion that performance of an economy is inextricably connected to how skilled and capable a country’s workforce is, has become very common in educational discourses pertaining to the technical vocational education and training college sector on which this study focused.

It should be emphasized that the discourse of revitalization of vocational education and training and the perception that it is the gateway to economic growth and global competitiveness has not escaped criticism. Ashton and Green (1996), and Crouch *et al.* (1999) argue that there is no direct correlation between the assumption that vocationally oriented education and training automatically lead to employment and employability. There are a lot of factors that come into play, such as training that matches supply and demand. Crouch *et al.* (1999) maintain that government often relegates the responsibility to judge what skills are to be provided, and by what means, to individual firms. To delegate such decisions to businesses is to negate the collective responsibility with society of the need to develop necessary skills.

McGrath *et al.* (2006) add to the criticism by arguing that the relationship between education and training and increase in productivity is not that simple and straightforward. The atomistic approach claiming high returns on education and training, has limits and is not as solid any longer. McGrath *et al.* (2006) feel that ‘a better, even a far better, VET system may not have dramatic positive effects on employment, growth and competitiveness or poverty, as these indicators are shaped by a far more complex set of factors and interactions’ (p 89). Internationally, there is evidence of an increase in the loss of jobs, stagnation of earnings, underemployment, short term employment and worsening unemployment rates, even for qualified, skilled young people.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Educational reform is one of the strategies that many governments use as a tool for societal transformation, particularly in countries where there is a transition from dictatorship to democratic governments. There seems to be a belief, generally, that education has ‘the potential to support this process of democratization, and that reform to schooling can be linked causally to the creation and maintenance of a democratic society’ (Schweisfurth, 2002, p 9). In South Africa, this belief is one of the reasons that led to the

revitalization of the TVET sector, by putting into place a barrage of reforms which completely changed the landscape as we knew it before 1994.

The problem that this study undertook to investigate was that there was no documented evidence of how TVET lecturers have experienced the post-apartheid educational reforms in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface. Considering that reforms of this nature affect all aspects of education, such as restructuring of institutions like amalgamations, governance, finance, curriculum, pedagogy and staff working conditions, the lecturer is bound to become affected. As lecturers are role-players in the realization of educational reform, there was a need for their lived experiences to be researched and documented.

It would be problematic in the South African context not to know lecturers' experiences because their work is linked to the shortage of, and demand for, artisans (Kraak and Press, 2008) in the country. They are the troopers in the TVET colleges that the government has targeted for rescuing service providers. As artisans are the backbones of and are at the heart of economic growth in South Africa (Kraak and Press, 2008), because of the skills they possess, this has put pressure on the colleges to prioritize producing the necessarily skilled students who can augment the artisan skills that the government is lamenting about. The urgency of the artisan shortage, and the rapidity at which reforms have taken place in the TVET sector over the years, demanded research on how lecturers have been impacted on and how they have coped with the transformation in their personal and professional lives.

The present study reasons that achievement of the aspirations of a revitalized TVET is highly dependent upon effectiveness of staff, particularly lecturers, as adopters and implementers of policy at a practice level in the colleges. Goodson (1992) warns that researching teachers' lives is an activity fraught with danger, but the alternative is more dangerous: to move on in substantial ignorance of the people who, in spite of many historical shifts and cycles, remain central to the achievement of educational transformation. This argument is confirmed by Akoojee (2008), who argues that college lecturers are an indispensable component of the skills development challenge in South

Africa. Metcalfe (2010), then director-general of the Department of Education and Training (DHET), commented that ‘if the strategies and solutions we wish to adopt are to succeed, both those who are to benefit from, and those who are expected to implement the strategies must be persuaded ...’, thus confirming the importance of beneficiaries such as lecturers in educational innovations and their role as crucial implementers of curricular reform.

1.4 Rationale and significance of the study

In this section I briefly discuss personal context and what motivated me to conduct this study. The section provides an understanding of how I locate myself in this study as well as the rationale and significance of the study.

After spending the first 18 years of my teaching career in two different secondary schools in the schooling sub-sector, I was employed by the Adult Education unit of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This is where, after having worked for six years in the literacy project as a materials developer, I was awarded a post as a lecturer in the programme that offered training and development to under-qualified and unqualified teaching staff in some of the FET colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. My job entailed teaching, coordinating some of the modules and involvement in organizing, supervising and conducting teaching practice activities. I served as co-ordinator of the whole professional development programme for two years. As I spent more and more years engaging with trainee lecturers as a teacher, and with management as a co-ordinator of the programme, I became familiar with, and fascinated by, the ever-transforming TVET college sector. For me this was a complex sector undergoing challenging structural, institutional and curricular changes. From formal and informal reflective discussions with the lecturers, especially after teaching sessions and practical teaching observation sessions, I realized that there were too many challenges and thousands of unanswered questions. For me this presented opportunities for research, particularly around empirically finding out how lecturers in this sector were experiencing the myriad of changes that were, and are still, engulfing the sector. These were some of the factors that sowed the seeds and developed the passion for research in the sector.

Familiarity with the sector and exploration of the literature relating to the South African vocational education and training systems revealed that there is minimal empirical evidence on how lecturers in the sector have experienced working in the transformed TVET college context.

The general reforms in the technical and vocational education and training sector, and particularly areas like governance, policy and curriculum, have been relatively well documented (Gewer, 2001; McGrath, 2003a, 2004a, 2005; Sooklal, 2005; McGrath & Badroodien, 2005, King & McGrath, 2002, Boonzaaier, 2003, Akoojee, Gewer & McGrath, 2005, McGrath *et al.*, 2006, Young, 2006, Akoojee, 2008 and Wedekind, 2008 & 2010). Although it is noted, in Wedekind's (2008) review of available research literature in the South African TVET sector, that most research done in this field, since the 1990s, is dominated by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), a few Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and a few individuals, these research contributions are commendable. But massive gaps still exist.

Many researchers have specifically lamented the gaps regarding TVET lecturers' experiences. For example, Wyngaard and Kapp (2004) commented on the absence of data dealing with the effects of mergers on TVET academic staff. Wedekind (2008) pointed out that there is a growing body of published and 'grey' literature available on the TVET college sector, but that the development of the field is still very uneven, with strengths in some areas and serious weaknesses in other critical areas. Of note is the limitation of empirical research on how the fundamental institutional, structural and curricular changes have affected lecturers working in the TVET college sector. These include their experiences, ability and challenges in implementing the new National Certificate – Vocational and the impact that other reforms like mergers, new governance structure and revisions of employment status have had on their lives and work. Getting empirical evidence through participants' life histories could lead to a better understanding of these experiences and it is hoped, inform future policy interventions and professional development of the TVET lecturer.

When reviewing the literature on the experiences of teachers in relation to educational change, literature available does not provide a picture of lived experiences of South African teachers in the TVET sector. The bulk of the literature available focuses on international studies and exclusively on South African mainstream school teachers with regard to outcomes-based curriculum. Part of what this study aimed to achieve was to make a contribution towards filling that void.

I believe that key to the ability of TVET colleges to respond to the country's workforce developmental needs, and the changing requirements of the labour market, is the question of their staffing. The notion that the quality of an education system is highly dependent on the value and commitment of the educators, (Morrow; 2007) has come out strongly in the present research. Empirical evidence concerning how the new management structures, conditions of employment, support structures, post structures and reward systems impact on the lives and work of lecturers in this sector is of great significance. I, as a result, sought to understand lived experiences of TVET college lecturers, the meaning they attach to these experiences and how these experiences have impacted on their work and their lives.

This study cannot claim to provide solutions to all problems and challenges that lecturers in the college sector have faced, but it is hoped that the findings will shed light on staffing issues, staff retraining and staff development. Through their life stories lecturers interviewed shared their experiences and these could be analyzed for models of good practice. They could contribute to strategies for helping lecturers to respond to new institutional and classroom practices and to assessment in more effective and meaningful ways.

I think that understanding the lecturers can lead to a better appreciation and recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of any education system (Wedekind; 2008). Although this study does not claim to eventually provide all the answers to TVET college academic personnel challenges, I do believe that exploring and theorizing about issues of lecturers' experiences regarding educational reform will contribute to a growing body of

knowledge in the field of TVET especially vocationally-oriented teacher development in South Africa.

1.5 Axiological assumptions and subjectivity

Axiological assumptions have to do with the nature and role of values for both the researcher and the researched. Creswell (1998) explains that research is value-laden and that it may be influenced by biases. It is therefore important to ensure that values and bias do not whittle, shape or influence how what is being researched is understood.

As discussed above, I have worked closely with TVET college lecturers in general for more than six years. I acknowledge the value-laden nature of the data elicited. Due to continual interactions with colleges in KZN, I brought into this research some knowledge of the changes that have occurred and some of the experiences of the lecturers, cited as casual comments. Notwithstanding efforts in an attempt to be as objective as possible, ‘personal opinions, preferences, modes of observation, views, interests or sentiments’ (De Groot, 1969) might have shaped understanding and interpretation of the data. This is confirmed by Babbie’s (2000) statement about the ‘insider-outsider’ dialogue that expatiates on the tension created between description (insider perspective) and interpretation (outsider). Scott (2000) echoes this by arguing that the researcher must be aware that a ‘fusion of horizons’ (p 19) occurs when own interests and preconceptions interfere with the collection and interpretation of data.

To minimize this baggage, and to elicit comprehensive empirical data, I chose to use a life history methodology. This methodology has an ability to capture unique details and focus on ‘the meanings that people attach to their experiences’ (McAdams, 1993, p 11). Values of lecturers who participated were explored, interrogated and analyzed through digging deeper into their life histories. As a researcher, it was also important that I be open by foregrounding the indeterminacy of the interview process, highlighting the baggage and naming my social positionality (Babbie, 2000) to all the research participants.

1.6 A note on literature review and theoretical framework

Chapter 3 is specifically dedicated to the literature review in this thesis, but I thought that it is worth mentioning that reviewing literature is not limited to that chapter only, but occurs continuously throughout the thesis. This includes specific literature reviewed during analysis and interpretation of the findings.

In Chapter 3 the literature review focuses on what research has generally said about the personal and professional lives of teachers, nationally and internationally. Chapter 1, as well as Chapter 3, provides reasons to justify why the literature reviewed goes beyond experiences of vocationally oriented teachers and TVET college lecturers, to include teachers in mainstream education.

This research study used and excerpted theoretical contributions of Norbert Elias. From Elias's (1978) social theory I borrowed his notion of interconnectedness amongst people, and between people and their social environments. Applying this notion to the research study, his work acknowledges the existence of interplay between lecturers who are participants in this study with their colleagues, management in their colleges and campuses, students, the state and the social milieu. Lecturers cannot be dissociated from contexts in which they work as they are social beings (Elias, 1978). A lecturer as a human being is a social being, not a closed box or a *homo clausus* (p 119), as there is no dividing wall between them and their work environments. The Eliasian approach provides a useful analytical tool to enable better understanding of the lived experience phenomenon in a social context.

1.7 A note on terminology

Defining what terms mean in a thesis is very important. Firstly, terminology is dependent on contexts and some of the terms are confusing, even to South African readers themselves, as meanings have been tailor-made to be symbols of the new democratic egalitarian state. This has also affected the meanings of terms in education contexts.

Secondly, some of the key terms may have different meanings and connotations in international contexts. Knowing terms, as used in the thesis, is important for both local and international non-South African readers. Key terms used in this study will therefore be described.

(a) Further Education and Training (FET), Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The Vocational Education and Training sub-sector ‘has been described variedly overtime’ (Jjuuko, 2009). Different countries have always used a variety of terms to describe their varied activities and different foci, for example, skills development and training for the world of work. This section distinguishes between FET, TVET and VET.

In the second international conference on TVET in 1999 there was unanimous agreement that the phrase ‘technical vocational education and training’ be adopted to describe the combined process of education and training that recognizes the common objective of employment as their immediate goals (UNESCO, 2002, p 1). In South Africa, this term was not adopted initially. The technical colleges were called FET colleges and were only renamed in 2015 as TVET colleges.

According to the South African National Education Policy Act (2006) and the Further Education and Training Act (2006), the term ‘vocational education and training’ (VET) ‘is viewed as referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life’ (DoE, 2008, p 16).

The two Acts further explain that VET covers initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET). Examples of IVET in South Africa include the vocational college curriculum, the National Curriculum Vocational (NCV) and higher education qualifications, such as those offered in Universities of Technology. CVET include apprenticeships, learnerships, internships and short skills courses (DoE, 2008, p16). The original Department of Education stipulates that South African vocational colleges, originally known as Further Education and Training Colleges (FETCs), encompass both IVET and CVET (ibid).

As research sites for this study, FET/TVET Colleges in South Africa are seen to be offering a combination of formal, informal and non-formal programmes which are covered in both the TVET and VET descriptions above. As a result, to refer to the programmes, the sector in different eras and the colleges themselves the terms TVET and VET is used interchangeably. The term FET is used in contexts that refer to policy issues, *verbatim* expressions and Acts passed before colleges were called TVET colleges.

(b) Lecturers, teachers and educators

In the context of this study, the term ‘lecturer’ refers to a person who teaches at a TVET college. This understanding of the term is in line with the definition provided in the FET Bill (1998), which says that the term ‘lecturer’ refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons, or who provides professional educational services at a college and who is appointed in a post at a lecturer establishment under the Act.

Most people easily confuse the term with that of academic personnel who teach in South African universities. They are also called lecturers. But the two are not at the same level in terms of the nature and scope of their work, especially because a university lecturer’s job is not only about teaching but a larger part of it includes knowledge creation and advancement through research.

A larger part of the literature reviewed in this study concerned teachers in general, both nationally and internationally. This is due to minimal availability of literature focusing on experiences of college lecturers in the process of educational and political change. College lecturers in the South African education policy context are regarded as teachers. This is due to the role of imparting knowledge, attitudes and values that they perform in formal educational institutions, the TVET colleges. This is evident in the Teacher Education Policy: Norms and Standards for Educators (2000). Although this policy extends the definition to ‘educator’, to include promoted staff in management positions, reference to further education and training institutions ropes in ‘TVET’ colleges. This is regardless of the fact that colleges now fall under the Department of Higher Education and Training:

... persons who teach or educate other persons or who provide professional educational services at any public school, further education and training institutions or departmental office ... (Gazette No. 20844, p9).

This study therefore regards TVET college lecturers to be teachers as well as educators.

(c) Black, African, White, Indian and Coloured

Any discussion of educational reform in South Africa has to refer to the historical racial classifications of society designated by the colonial and apartheid regimes. The Population Registration Act, No 30 Of 1950, legislated the classification of the South African citizenry according to race.

Staff demographics in TVET colleges depict this scenario as they are a combination of Black/African, Coloured, Indian and White lecturers. Although these were the original racial designations, in post-apartheid discourses there are many debates and contestations about who is African or Black.

In the new dispensation, all racial groups claim to be entitled to being called ‘African’. The argument behind this claim is that they were born in South Africa, which is situated on the African continent. There are also debates to the same effect with regards to the

term 'Black'. Many official government documents have used this term as a collective noun to refer to all non-White groups, i.e. Africans, Indians and Coloureds. Although this has been challenged by many political analysts as perpetuating a racial hierarchy of suffering (McKaiser, 2012), the majority of Blacks, who were pejoratively referred to as 'Bantus' or 'Natives' by colonial and apartheid masters, most of the time claim full and sole legitimacy to the term 'Black' (Brown, 2000), as this is the term that was legislatively used to put them at the bottom of the ladder and rubber stamp all their alienation and deprivation of opportunities in all spheres of life. In this study, the terms 'Africans' and 'Blacks' will be used interchangeably, to mean South Africans who speak indigenous languages, particularly IsiZulu, as the study focused on the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The term 'Indian' will mean South Africans of Indian origin, while 'Coloured' will refer to South Africans of mixed racial backgrounds. Lastly, the term 'White' will mean a combination of Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, who are descendants of the Dutch and Germans, and English-speaking South Africans who are descendants of those who originated from Britain and other Anglophone countries.

1.8 Methodology

This section briefly describes the methodology that was used in this study (details are provided in Chapter 4). The study falls within an interpretive research paradigm, which advocates naturalistic approaches to studying the social world (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Using an interpretive approach was an attempt to capture the lived experiences of lecturers and the meanings they attach to those experiences.

The research design of the study was qualitative. A research design is described by Creswell (2008) as a plan or a proposal to conduct research which focuses on the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods. Qualitative research methods are often associated with the collection and analysis of written or spoken text or the direct observation of behaviour (Fryer, 1991; Cassel & Symon, 1994). Due to the adoption of life history methodology using open-ended life history interviews

and documentary analysis, the study focused more on the written and the spoken word to explore the phenomenon from diverse perspectives.

Two TVET colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, one rural and one urban, were selected as sites for this research study. The study adopted a life history methodology. Data was elicited through open-ended life history interviews of twelve lecturers who had worked in the vocational colleges for more than 10 years. I believed that this sample would be able to reflect on their experiences from both the apartheid and the post-apartheid eras. Most of the participants come from the engineering sector, which is the most valued and targeted by the government to satisfy the scarcity of artisans needed in the country (McGrath & Akoojee, 2007; Akoojee, 2008; Mda, 2009; Breier & Erasmus, 2009; Bird, 2010; Godongwana, 2011; Mateus *et al.*, 2014).

Official government documents were used and some of their contents analyzed and interrogated in order to obtain in-depth understanding of some of the policy issues related to this study. Cohen *et al.*, (2000, p 147) point out that non-human sources like documents and other artefacts have an advantage of being always available, cheap and factual.

In research it is necessary for the researcher to explain the process that was used in analysing data. In qualitative research, data analysis is not a distinct stage, but initial analysis commenced informally and superficially when data collection processes were in progress and intensified during transcription and coding stages. During these processes, collected data was further explored to identify themes that cut across all the cases and condense data into identifiable categories. I then wrote the thesis according to the themes that emerged and the interconnected main domains, such as looking at lecturers as teachers, employees and as colleagues in their professional milieu.

1.9 Ethical considerations

According to Neuman (2003), ethics in research specifies the type of research procedures that are morally acceptable. The conduct of the researcher during and after research is of great importance to the credibility of a study. Gay (1996) argues that one of the most important rules of ethics is not to harm the participants in any way, whether physically, emotionally or mentally. Other key aspects of ethical considerations include soliciting informed consent, explaining the purpose of the research study, the methods of data collection to be used, how data will be disseminated, confidentiality and anonymity and explaining that participation of respondents is voluntary.

The institutions that were used as sites for the study were approached for consent to conduct the research. Permission to use the colleges and campuses was sought from relevant management. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research and asked to participate in the research. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, and were told that they would be free to withdraw from the research at any point they wished to, without any negative consequences or loss to themselves. Ethical clearance was sought from the university ethics committee to proceed with the study.

1.10 Research questions

The study attempted to answer the following key research question:

How have Technical Vocational Education and Training College lecturers experienced the post-apartheid reforms in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface?

In order to unpack the key research question, the three subsidiary questions were:

- (i) How do lecturers understand and interpret their TVET college context in relation to educational reforms that have taken place?
- (ii) How do lecturers perceive their relationships with students, colleagues, management and other stakeholders in the midst of educational change?
- (iii) What do the lecturers' experiences illuminate about issues such as educational reform and teacher development in the TVET college context?

1.11 Delimiting the study

I consider the aspect of setting boundaries in research as very important. This is particularly crucial in this study, because major transformations are still ongoing in the South African TVET College sector. New developments at different stages may be experienced differently by the lecturers involved. The never-ending changes in the sector are evidenced by the ‘the resurrection of South Africa’s struggling further education and training (FET) sector’ (Freeman, 1993, p 2), through the formation of the new Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), after the Ministry of Education split into two in 2009. Firstly, this development located colleges in the post-school sector rather than parallel to the last three years of mainstream schooling. Secondly, this move meant that the tensions between the Department of Education and the Department of Labour were resolved, as SETAs were brought under the control of the new Department of Higher Education and Training.

Moreover, the FET Colleges and the Skills Summits, both happening in 2010, symbolized a commitment to further re-structure the sector and this began to materialize through the Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2012). Its publications as a White Paper in 2013 saw a shift in the employment status of TVET lecturers from College Councils back to DHET in 2015. Current discourse points to the future colleges as fully fledged post-school institutions, much more industry-oriented, the existence of councils under the watchful eye of the central government with a less fragmented system and the emergence of ‘a differentiated model of governance dependent on capacity’ (Wedekind, 2010, p6). All these new developments may impact differently on lecturers working in the TVET college sector. Participants purposefully selected for this study have lived experiences of both worlds to share. But with regards to the post-apartheid era transformations, the study has used data reflecting lived experiences from 1995 until 2012. The year 1995 is, in this study, regarded as the fountain-head of the TVET transformation landmark, through the establishment of the National South African Education and Training system and the South African Qualifications Authority Act. The role of these two landmarks is discussed in Chapter 2.

1.12 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters, which are arranged in the following manner:

Chapter 1: The first chapter introduces the study by providing a brief background locating the study within broader South African and international contexts. The chapter further presents and discusses the researcher's personal context including her motivation to undertake this research, the rationale for the study, critical questions that the study aimed to answer and axiological assumptions. A brief description of the thesis structure concludes the chapter.

Chapter 2: This chapter gives a historical background of vocational and technical education and training over three significant periods in South Africa: the colonial era and its influence (1910 – 1961), the apartheid era (1948 – 1994) and the post-apartheid era (1994 – the present). It gives a historical perspective and highlights policies that gave rise to the new TVET structure and economic shifts that occurred as a result of colonialism and separate development. The chapter is premised on the belief that to be able to understand lecturers' lived experiences it is crucial to come to grips with the wider TVET college development context and its historical roots.

Chapter 3: This chapter provides a review of the literature and the theoretical framework that underpins the study. Due to minimal availability of literature on TVET-based lecturers in South Africa, most of the literature reviewed focuses on mainstream education teachers' lives and educational reform. In international contexts, the literature includes experiences of both teachers and TVET lecturers. Generally, literature identifies a number of challenges with regards to policymaking, their implementation and how these have impacted on teachers.

The chapter discusses the theoretical framework that informed the study. Norbert Elias's social theory was used as a lens to make sense of the findings. In his process of sociological approach or figurational sociology, Elias argues that processes of change in institutions cannot be straightforward, because people exist within intertwined webs of relationships which make them interdependent.

Chapter 4: The fourth chapter presents the research design and methodology. I began by identifying and discussing ethical considerations taken to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants. Second, I described the design, broadly positioning the study in the qualitative research approach and adopting a life history methodology. Third, I presented methods of data collection and the process of data collection and a description of how data was analyzed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of issues of reliability, validity and transferability of findings and limitations of the study.

Chapter 5: The fifth chapter describes the research context and setting. It provides brief profiles of the two TVET colleges and their campuses elaborating on historical, social and economic contexts in which they are positioned. The chapter provides brief profiles of all the lecturers who participated in this study.

Chapters 6 presents and discusses the findings of the study, categorizing them into two interconnected main domains, which are lecturers as teachers and as employees in the TVET college context. This chapter brings to the fore the critical role played by a lecturer as a teacher, without whom the rate of adoption and implementation of innovations could not be realized. It also highlights issues of professional identity and socio-psychological variables such as job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and staff morale, including how these factors have affected retention.

Chapter 7: This chapter focuses on collegial relations and experiences of collegiality as lived by lecturers in their TVET college sector, highlighting the interwoven nature of human relationships (Elias, 1996).

Chapter 8: This chapter focuses on the discussion and interpretation of the main findings. It draws a conclusion to the study by discussing the lessons learnt and the implications of the study for educational reforms, policy and practice and professional development experiences.

As explained above, Chapter 2 presents a historical overview of TVET in South Africa, particularly focusing on policy and economic shifts.

CHAPTER 2: THE SHAPING AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA: POLICY AND ECONOMIC SHIFTS

2.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore how KwaZulu-Natal Technical Vocational Education and Training College lecturers have experienced the post-apartheid era reforms in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface. This chapter is premised on the notion that to be able to understand lecturers' lived experiences, it is of utmost importance to give a brief historical overview of economic strategies, policies and legislative frameworks that orchestrated and are still moulding the TVET college context in which these lecturers work.

The chapter gives a historical background of vocational and technical education and training over three significant periods in South Africa: the colonial era and its influence (1910 – 1961), the apartheid era (1948 – 1994) and the post-apartheid era (1991 – to the present). The discussion includes educational reform initiatives (institutional, structural and curricular reforms) that changed the TVET college sector in the past 12 years.

2.2 Vocational education and training and the colonial ideology (1910 – 1950)

2.2.1 Vocational education and training in general

Before 1910, provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) was believed to be a tool used by colonial powers as an ideology to 'civilize' (Kallaway, 1992, p17) non-whites. As was the case with general education for black people under colonial rule, most vocational training was provided by the missionary institutions. Children of Indians, Coloureds and Africans were the only ones given this type of training and it was not good education, because they would have to work as labourers for the rest of their lives in industries and mines and remain at the bottom of the social ladder forever. Colonial masters had already started 'preparing citizens to take their rightful place in society'

(Malherbe, 1977). Part of the origins of VET in South Africa was a combination of an ideological strategy and a response to the emergent growing needs of mining, railways and industries.

It is important to note that, even during the colonial era, VET education was despised and stigmatized as degrading ‘kaffir work’ (Badroodien, 2004, p 23). It was also a kind of education that was evidenced in prisons and reformatories. This added to the perception and association of vocational education as an intervention for the ‘destitute, the defective and the delinquent’ (Malherbe, 1977, p 164), thus crippling its future development.

Badroodien (2004) argues that it was a kind of education that puts emphasis on ‘rehabilitative and ameliorative functions’ (p 23). From many years ago, VET debates were characterized by the use of derogatory terms and highlighted race and class. Although directed at non-white children at that time, the stigma and low status afforded the TVET sector nowadays did exist, even before the 1910 era. The widespread assertion and perception, as confirmed by Moll *et al.* (2005) and Oketch (2006), that VET is particularly for children who cannot cope with academic studies in normal schooling has existed for many decades.

Malherbe (1977) stresses that:

Vocational education in South Africa was born under tremendous handicap. Though the church baptized it and the prisons department nursed it for a time, it was begotten in shame. Placed later on the doorstep of the provincial departments, this foundling was never happy. In fact it was the Cinderella of the school system (p 165).

From the above comment one deduces that VET in this era did not receive the attention it deserved and that it suffered because of the perception that it is ‘an alternative option for the less intellectually gifted pupils’ (ibid). In his article about the origins and development of TVET in South Africa, Badroodien (2004) confirms this in his statement that ‘the history of vocational education has always been preoccupied with issues related to indigence, social and educational inferiority and mental backwardness’(p 21).

After 1910 the policy was reversed to cater for white children to solve problems of accelerated white urbanization, unemployment of white youth and the poor white problem. Part of VET origins in South Africa is also therefore associated with a response to ‘poor whiteism’ (Malherbe, 1977). Chisholm (1989) asserted that the reversal of the provision to white children only might also have been prompted by ‘the growing commercialization of agriculture stimulated by the proclamation of the goldfields, and the number of rural rinderpest and drought disasters of that period’(p 65).

Policy frameworks aimed at controlling VET provision, for example the Higher Education Act of 1923, were passed. This Act aimed at bringing all vocational institutions under the control of the Union Education Department so that they provide ‘training for work’ to fight the above-named social problems. Training focused on apprenticeships and attempts to combine vocational training with academic subjects were optimal.

The tide turned when World War II broke out. Before World War II some of the artisans and skilled labourers were imported from other countries, but when the war broke out, outsourcing skilled labour from other countries was no longer possible. South Africa had to come up with new strategies for human resource development and this ‘effectively made the colour bar economically redundant’ (Terreblanche & Nattrass, 1994, p 195). Other than white children, African, Indian and Coloured children once again got a chance to access technical vocational education and training. Although short-lived, this era saw people of colour entering skilled labour positions in industries, railways and mines.

Post-World War II saw the re-emergence of using alienating racial criteria to decide who accessed technical vocational education and training. Policies of segregation that started to develop between 1937 and 1948 made the situation worse. As these policies of segregation intensified, so did educational policy impacting on TVET. The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 had already laid the foundation by making the requirements almost impossible for African, Indian and Coloured youths to be apprenticed, compared to white youths (Badroodien, 2004, p 40). Apprenticeship boards discriminated against

non-white children and almost always awarded available apprenticeships to white youths (Union of South Africa, 1949, p 247).

2.2.2 Technical education

The literature reviewed for this section differentiates between general vocational education and training and technical education. According to Malherbe (1977), technical education in this era was different from general vocational education in terms of how it originated and why it had to take place. Technical education was not as stigmatized as vocational education, but suffered the same inferiority in the minds of many when compared with universities.

Malherbe (1977) argues that technical institutions were to supply skills needed for the increased commercialization and industrialization, which gradually grew from the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly since 1871. It is noted that these facilities were not available in rural areas, but only in urban areas. This resulted in the exodus of people to metropolitan areas in search of training for skills and opportunities of employment.

Many institutes and colleges, such as the Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Witwatersrand, Pretoria, East London, Pietermaritzburg, Orange Free State and Bloemfontein Technical Colleges, were already in operation from 1923 through the Higher Education Act.

These colleges offered full-time as well as part-time studies. Students were categorized into pre-technical, intermediate and advanced levels. The first level was the lowest level and preparatory for the last two. The middle level was responsible for training students towards attaining National Technical and Commercial Certificates. The upper level did not have high numbers and was for advanced certificates and, in some colleges, included those who were training to be teachers.

The age of students in technical colleges ranged from 15–16 years in the pre-technical level, an average of 17 years in the intermediate and 20 years and above in the advanced

level. Malherbe (1977) notes that 25% of full-time students in technical colleges were under 16, while another 25% were 16 and only 50% were over 16 (p172).

2.2.3 Conclusion

Although enrolment numbers were gradually growing in all technical colleges, it is argued that by the 1950s the technical and vocational education provision for white children was in such a better standing that employability was guaranteed. A contrast to this picture existed in which non-white children not only had limited access but also had a provision linked to instilling ‘discipline, salvation and regulation’ (Badroodien, 2001, p 292). Unequal access, stratified provision according to race, endorsed by different legislative frameworks, continued to be a stumbling block to the development of technical and vocational education for many years under apartheid’s strategy of separate development.

Nevertheless, vocational and technical education in this era was one of the most significant ‘growing points in South African education’ (Malherbe, 1977, p 172). Spencer (1937), in his report after making an investigation into Technical Education in South Africa, stated that ‘... the colleges do provide for industry and commerce the kind of non-university education which has grown up in all modern civilized states. They provide the training which is ‘calculated to produce intelligently equipped personnel for industry’ (p 72).

2.3 VET/TVET and the apartheid era (1948 – 1994)

2.3.1 Introduction

The period 1948 – 1994 is crucial for a variety of reasons in this study. Firstly, the beginning of this period saw the Afrikaner Nationalists taking over the reins of government, with South Africa gradually drifting away from being a British colony until it became a republic in 1961. It is during the early years of this period that the term

‘apartheid’ became more of a reality than a slogan. This term meant ‘separate development’ and it led to the separation of the South African population into four races (African, White, Coloured and Indians). The segregation was enforced through different Acts and policies such as the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Authorities Act, the Land Acts and the Bantu Education policy. Due to their effectiveness in enforcing separateness and upholding white domination, they were later known as the pillars of apartheid to non-whites and other critics of the apartheid ideology.

This racial segregation did not only mean a separation of contact amongst races and exclusion of non-white races from all golden opportunities which were reserved for whites, but also meant a segregation of public facilities. This included educational institutions. Racially segregated educational institutions meant that a bigger budget was spent on educating white learners. This implied inequity and separation in educational standards, as the education resources for non-white children was inferior. This did not only happen in ordinary schools but also in vocational colleges that are the focus of this study. Education was therefore one of the areas in which there was a high level of contestation, contention and antagonism, as it was seen as one of the tools for social control to reinforce the government policies of separate development.

Secondly, 1990 is a significant year which symbolized the beginning of dismantling the apartheid regime. Besides significant breakthroughs, for example, political prisoners being released and unbanning of political parties, this period marked the beginning of an end for the segregated education system, as plans for a new one began.

This section gives a narrative account of key developments relating specifically to vocational education and training within this period. The narrative will pay particular attention to the nature of VET provision in this era, key policy frameworks, the rise of technical vocational colleges, their governance, staff development and curricular issues.

2.3.2 Organization, control and administration of Vocational Education and Training (VET)

There are different ways in which educational systems are controlled internationally. Behr and MacMillan (1971) point out that, in terms of structure and control, there are two broad categories. These are centralized systems and decentralized systems. The former are characterized by national government control under the leadership of a Minister of Education. In decentralized systems, powers of control, management and administration become the responsibility of provincial governments and local authorities.

In the case of South Africa, VET provision in the early 1960s was undertaken by trade schools, vocational colleges and technical secondary schools. These institutions were under the control of many racially differentiated departments of education, whether central or provincial, further divided into regions and sub-regions. This section pays particular attention to technical colleges, which are institutions that were built from trade schools that trained apprentices from 1967.

The Vocational Education Act of 1955 classified and segmented vocational education and training provision into four major groups. White VET was placed under the National Education Department and three state departments controlling non-white VET education were created. There were central state departments for non-whites and within each was a department of education in charge of educational matters, including vocational education and training. The central state departments were the Department of Bantu Affairs for Africans or Natives, as they were called then, the Department of Coloured Affairs for Coloureds and the Department of Indian Affairs for Indians. Over and above these were Departments of Education and Culture that came with the establishment of homelands in 1968. The homeland Departments of Education and Culture were found in Zululand, Ciskei, Transkei, Venda and Bophuthatswana.

VET was characterized by centralized control, not through one central national department of education but through vertical decentralization, ‘through the separation of racial groups linked to a policy of regionalization seen most clearly in Bantu education’

(Behr & MacMillan, 1971, p 17). Each race group department of education consisted of centralized headquarters and six decentralized regions, each under a white regional director responsible for general planning and supervision (ibid). The director was assisted by non-white junior and assistant inspectors who were responsible for the day-to-day running of regions and sub-regions.

At a technical college level, white colleges were semi-autonomous and were governed by a college council. They had control over their budgets, but ‘staff remained employees of the relevant department of education’ (Wedekind, 2010, p 303). Although these colleges were believed to be ‘sensitive to local needs and demands’ (Behr & MacMillan, 1971, p 17), they were criticized for not being fully committed to pushing national government ideologies.

Non-white colleges also had bodies that were responsible for governance but these had very limited powers compared with their white counterparts. The non-white college councils performed a strictly ‘oversight role’ (Coetzer, 2008). An oversight role refers to watching with the purpose of monitoring, observing, to note, to oversee, to supervise, to keep track of and to survey phenomena.

A brief overview of provision in other racially segregated colleges follows.

2.3.2.1 Coloured colleges

From 1961, technical and vocational education for Coloured children was put under the control of the Minister of Coloured Affairs. Helping this ministry with governance, planning, provision of apprenticeship training and issuing of certificates and diplomas was the Administration of Coloured Affairs. This body also administered examinations, which prepared students ‘for certificates equivalent to the Elementary Technical Certificate and the National Technical Certificates Parts I and II of the Department of National Education’ (Behr & MacMillan, 1971, p 436).

Comprehensive high schools for Coloureds emerged in 1966. This gave Coloured children a chance to obtain a Technical Senior Certificate, which allowed them to serve an apprenticeship for two years and take trade tests to become artisans. Without this certificate, apprenticeship took students five years before they would be allowed to take trade tests. These schools offered a variety of commercial and technical subjects approved by the white Department of National Education.

The first Coloured technical college, the Peninsula Technical College, was established in 1967 in Bellville, Cape Town (Behr & MacMillan, 1971, p 436). Starting with an enrolment of 201, the college offered technical and commercial subjects and others such as public administration, nursing, printing and hairdressing. In 1997 it was rebranded and became the Peninsula Technikon. When racialized technical colleges amalgamated, the Peninsula Technikon was merged with the Cape Technikon for Whites, to become the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, in 2005.

2.3.2.2 Indian colleges

South African Indians historically originate from the Natal colony under the British in the 1800s. As a result their communities were relatively and comparatively small in other parts of the country. The narrative will therefore focus on VET for Indians in Natal, presently known as KwaZulu-Natal.

From 1962, Indian education was placed under the Department of Indian Affairs. Vocational education and training under this department was built on what started as an Indian Technical Institute established in 1927. From the 1960s, Indian VET education was predominantly provided for by the ML Sultan Technical College, based in Durban. In 1968 this was upgraded through the Indians Advanced Technical Education Act into a technikon.

While it was still a college, it was governed by a College Council, consisting of 24 members, 14 of whom were Indians (Behr & MacMillan, 1971, p 446). The college spread its branches to other areas with Indian communities such as Stanger and

Pietermaritzburg. The main campus in Durban and its branches in other areas had technical high schools, secondary schools, literacy classes and evening schools attached to them.

The college and its branches offered a variety of vocational education courses and subjects, including electronics, health inspection, chemical technology and building draughtsmanship (Behr & MacMillan, 1971). According to Malherbe (1977), the main feature of the Indian curriculum was a hotel and catering division, specializing in training to produce chefs and waiters which were in demand in the hospitality industry around Durban (p 189).

2.3.2.3 African/Bantu colleges

Under the Department of Bantu/Native Affairs was a Department of Bantu Education, established in 1958. This department controlled vocational education and training for colleges that were situated in white areas. With the creation of Bantu Homelands in 1968, other colleges fell under the control of the homelands' Departments of Education and Culture. As has been alluded to above, black technical colleges were centrally controlled, state-aided institutions governed by councils who had very limited governing powers. Councils were responsible for advisory, supervisory and monitoring roles.

Provision of VET for African children occurred in technical secondary schools, trade schools and technical colleges. Adults and young people were trained in various trades. The majority of students were male and they were trained in trades such as plastering, electricity, plumbing, sheet and metal skills, cabinet making, woodwork, building construction, mechanics, brickmaking and bricklaying. The bulk of the trainees were in the lower skills band, followed by the intermediate level and the lowest numbers were situated in the advanced or high skills level.

Although Africans are the majority in the country, by the 1970s only 3 652 of them were receiving vocational and technical training, compared to 6 286 Asians, 3 705 Coloureds and 83 000 Whites (Malherbe, 1977, p 194). Provision of vocational and technical

education for Africans was neglected, especially skilled trades which were reserved for Whites. Malherbe (1977, p 193) points out that ‘White fear of competition in the skilled trades was definitely a retarding factor in the provision made for the vocational and technical education of Africans’. Even where training for skilled trades was provided, standards were not of the same quality. VET training for Africans was of a very poor quality. The unequal provision still accounts for the big differences in terms of skills possessed by the four racial groups with Africans at the bottom of the ladder of skilled manpower.

Things changed a little by the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s when the economic growth rate of the country began to diminish alarmingly. The government realized that all human resources of the country were critical for productivity and for production to grow. Although not as vigorous as one would have expected it to be, from then on the Department of Bantu Education and different Departments of Education and Culture increased provision ‘to ensure the Republic’s economic survival here and now’ (Malherbe, 1977, p 197). Despite continued racial segmentation patterns and ‘huge racial disparities in physical facilities, professional services and teaching quality’ (Greenstein & Mabogoane, 1994, p 127) enrolments in African vocational secondary schools and colleges increased slightly.

By the late 1980s numbers in colleges were gradually increasing in most learning areas, although not much in engineering. This was accompanied by a rise of interest in education as an economic investment. There was widespread belief that ‘successful economies of the future will be education-led (Reich, 1991). This triggered a ‘skills’ and ‘education-led growth’ (Young, 2006) discourse in government policymaking debates that were strategizing the new education landscape. Policymakers, politicians and unions were convinced that it is ‘the skills and knowledge of national workforces that will underpin economic growth’ (Young, 2006, p 1). By June 1990, the government had started debates with trade unions such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) about what vocational education and training policies should look like. As a result, towards the

end of this era, the state had started envisaging a new vocational education and training sector that was not only to respond to industry and economy needs, but also community needs and addressing inequalities of the past.

2.3.3 Student age and entrance requirements

Students in most technical colleges in this era were a mixture of full-time and part-time students. Malherbe (1971) records that in the early 1970s only 14% of the students in technical colleges were post standard X². He adds that the bulk of students in technical colleges were part-time students, most of whom were apprentices on a 'block release' system (p 334). This is a system in which employers allow their employees (usually apprentices) time to attend classes at an institution that would provide them with theoretical knowledge to complement acquired on-the-job knowledge.

Generally, a part-time student in technical colleges was older, from 17 years and above. Full-time technical college students were younger with a median age of 16,1 years. Malherbe (1977) argues that there were quite a number of students in technical colleges who were under the age of 16 years and were regarded by their teachers and government as not mature enough. Because of 'this relative immaturity' (Malherbe, 1977), other non-vocational subjects like languages and arithmetic were added to the syllabus.

In the 1960s entrance requirements differed according to courses applied for and the level at which those courses were offered. Some programmes that provided prevocational training and housecraft courses took students as young as 14 years. This was influenced by the fact that for many years, Standard VI (the equivalent of Grade 8) was considered to be a school-leaving standard even for races in which education was not yet compulsory. As a result, children who passed this standard had a choice of exiting school and sitting at home, looking for employment opportunities, proceeding to secondary schools for academic education or moving to trade schools to obtain vocational training.

² This is now called matriculation (matric) or Grade 12. In the South African context, this refers to the final year of high school education.

For courses such as basic bricklaying, carpentry, joinery, cabinet making, plastering and plumbing, the requirement was a Standard VI (Grade 8). For more technical courses like mechanics, electronics and electrical subjects, the entrance requirement was Standard VIII (Grade 10).

Malherbe (1971) points out that it has always been very hard to demarcate students according to suitability of institutions to go to for prevocational or vocational education and also the time and age at which a student can start this kind of education. There was a time, in 1940, in which the Inter-departmental Committee report on demarcation activities stated that ‘vocational work for a specific trade should not commence before 14 years of age but that full commercial courses should start directly after the primary school course had been completed’ (ibid, p 207). In spite of such reports, this was not adhered to. Age and entrance requirements have always varied substantially and they continued to be ‘a bone of contention’ (ibid) even in the early 1980s.

2.3.4. Financial support

In the apartheid era, technical colleges were financed by the government under different grants-in-aid systems. Funds came from the national government for white colleges and from the Departments of Native, Coloured and Indian Affairs. The widely used formulae were the per-head and the 50/50 or the rand-for-rand system. The per-head system considered the number of students enrolled. Bigger enrolments attracted large amounts of money in terms of funding from the government. Financial support was proportional according to how much a technical college generated through tuition fees and other sources of funding, so the number of students and how much a college generated in a financial year were considered. In the rand-for-rand system the government paid a technical college the equivalent of whatever the local community had contributed.

The systems were shortsighted and disadvantageous to the rural impoverished technical colleges as they and their communities were less capable of paying and financially supporting education for their children. The systems did not consider varying contexts in which technical colleges worked. Non-white colleges were the ones negatively affected

particularly black ones in rural settings. For them each year was clouded by uncertainty as it was hard to attract high student numbers and therefore difficult to determine how much the grant would be.

Government financial support *per capita* did not tally with the demographics of the South African population at the time. This was the case even in primary and secondary school education expenditure, as can be seen in the per-pupil expenditure table below:

Pupils	Primary	Secondary	Average
Whites (1971 - 1972)	R366	R624	R461
Indians (1972)	R112	R156	R124
Coloureds (1972)	R91	R120	R94
Africans (1971 – 1972)	R21	R113	R25

Table 02: Original source: STATISTICS, May 1974

As can be seen from this table, white schools' funding exceeded that of all the non-white racial groups combined. The discrepancies were outrageous in all sectors of the South African education, including VET. Indian technical colleges had an advantage of strong community support as evidenced by the donation of R25 000 by Hajee M.L. Sultan, which helped towards the establishment of the M.L. Sultan Technical College (Malherbe, 1971).

Access to funds determines the kind and quality of education provided. These systems favoured the well-to-do communities, perpetuated inequitable access to resources and retarded development of the already under-resourced colleges.

2.3.5 The curriculum

2.3.5.1 Structure and fields

There were three basic categories of programmes offered in technical colleges in the apartheid era. They were the pre-matriculation National Intermediate Certificates categorized as N1-N2, the National Senior Certificate categorized as N3 and the post matriculation qualifications categorized as N4–N6. The latter could be combined with practical experience of 18 months to fulfill requirements of a National Diploma. They were all affectionately called the NATED courses, a name coined from the ‘National education’ status afforded to each qualification.

A student who passed a full N1- N2 had an option of finding employment, proceeding to N3 or preparing him or herself for apprenticeship to qualify as an artisan. To train as an artisan a student would apply to go to industry to take a time-based apprenticeship and later write a trade test so that he or she was recognized as an artisan. Whilst a student was training as an apprentice, he or she was allowed by the firm to go for continuous training at a technical college. This training was either a one-day-per-week or a ten weeks break at a time also known as a ‘block release system’ (Malherbe, 1971). Artisan trades included training as boilermakers, electro-mechanics, millwrights, electricians, turners, fitters, welders and riggers. These could also be offered as short courses. For example, a course in boilermaking took 40 weeks of institutional training.

The minimum entrance requirement was originally a Standard VI (Grade 8). It is important to note that the bulk of apprentices were whites. The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 that regularized apprenticeships had serious restrictions preventing non-whites from entering.

The fields in the NATED courses were, and are still diverse. The biggest of these is Engineering Studies, which has programmes that fall under broad categories such as electrical engineering, motor mechanics, metal and mechanical engineering, building and civil engineering, horticulture and maritime studies. Mathematics and the sciences were

very important subjects to gain access to programmes in the engineering fields. Some of the technical colleges had orientation courses for students who did not have this background.

The next field in size was Business Studies. This field included programmes in management, such as financial, marketing, public and human resource management and secretarial courses such as public relations, administrative and legal secretary.

Other fields were related to utility industries, encompassing programmes in tourism, interior design, hospitality, clothing production, art and design, hair care and cosmetology. Depending on local demands, other colleges offered early childhood, music, adult basic education and training (ABET) and care for the handicapped and the aged.

According to the lecturers interviewed in this study, the NATED courses were applauded by industries and students from poor communities for a variety of reasons such as the fact that after every trimester, semester, year or two years a certificate was issued. These certificates could be obtained after a short duration, allowing students to seek employment if they could not continue and afforded them a chance to resume studies later without losing credits on subjects passed. A student could always finish part-time if he or she had found a job. Modes of delivery depended on demand and were flexible. Programmes could be offered full-time or part-time regardless of whether they were formal, non-formal or for enrichment purposes.

2.3.5.2 Challenges in apprenticeships

As has been explained earlier, the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 denied many African students access to apprenticeship. But even with the Manpower Act of 1981³ which

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The Manpower Act 56 of 1981 was passed to provide for the promotion and regulation of the training of manpower and for that purpose to provide for the establishment of a National Training Board, a Manpower Development Fund and a Fund for the Training of Unemployed Persons; to provide for the establishment, accreditation, functions and powers of training boards; the registration of regional training centres, private training centres and industry training centres; and the imposition on certain employers of

replaced it, numbers of black apprentices did not grow much because black technical colleges were still de-linked from apprenticeships. Part of this was due to the location of these colleges in homelands, away from industries and business hubs. The flight of whites from craft-related training aggravated the situation as a lower number of apprentices were produced. Colleges also became de-linked to the apprenticeship system and this led to the decline of 'older white colleges' historical articulation with employers' (McGrath, 2006, p 160). This situation created a void in the production of apprentices and, in the late 1980s, numbers had dropped drastically. The sharp decline in the number of apprentices, plus racially fragmented VET provision and lack of articulation between colleges and industry called for an intervention and serious consideration when the new VET landscape was being planned.

Research had already indicated that the few apprenticeships that were still offered were at the expense of other skills (HSRC, 1991, p 125). This fact emerged as one of the findings of the Investigation into Training of Artisans report of 1984. It was argued that 'inappropriate approaches to training' were undertaken, for example, the 'sit-by-Nellie' system, which was criticized as unstructured and unsupervised (Kraak, 1999). The sit-by-Nellie system refers to a kind of on-the-job training in which a trainee or intern works with, watches and learns how to do a job from an experienced colleague. This was one of the ways used in apprenticeships, whereby an apprentice was given an opportunity to work with an artisan for a specified period learning how that particular job is done. This is regarded by many people as an important type of training but critics insist that it needs to be properly structured, well planned and supervised. Some say this was not the case in most apprenticeship training. As a result, there was no certainty as to whether the apprenticeship system adequately met the 'technological skill requirements' (ibid). This gave further reasons for things to be turned around in the post-apartheid era. This led to the introduction of learnerships, which were part of the new curriculum and administered by agencies called SETAs.

a levy in aid of training; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

2.3.6 Teachers in vocational education and training

The training of teachers in South Africa has always been a responsibility of the state. Although it occurred in racially segregated colleges and was meant for primary and secondary school teachers, it dates back to as long ago as 1904. Teacher training facilities had training programmes that led to T3, T4 and T5 certificates, each with a duration of less than a year. This was very basic training meant for people who had chosen the teaching fraternity.

For mainstream education teachers, milestones were reached when teachers could be trained for two years to attain primary and secondary certificates. The two-year certificates were replaced by three-year diplomas in the late 1980s. These continued until the termination of all teacher training colleges in the country in the 1990s.

Teacher training and development briefly described above excluded teachers who taught in vocational education and training colleges and other similar institutes. Papier (2009, p6) states that there has never been formal training of VET teachers in South Africa. Historically, a teacher at a vocational education and training college has expertise in a specific field, for example electronics. He or she came to the college as a trainer, an instructor or a facilitator. They had studied and trained in their specific trades, but had never trained as teachers.

Malherbe (1971) argues that qualifications for people teaching in vocational education and training on the whole were, and are, still poor (p 195). He maintains that they 'were even as low as a mere Standard VI or a J.C. qualification' (ibid). Standard VI is the equivalent of Grade 8, while the Junior Certificate was the end of the first three years of secondary school, presently Grade 10.

This situation persisted during the apartheid era. The bulk of the older VET teachers had trade school qualifications, undergone after completing Standard VI. For example, most of them had done skills courses and were qualified as plumbers, electricians, hairdressers, motor mechanics, sheet and metal workers, bricklayers and other trades. A few newer

entrants in the sector in the 1970s and the 1980s had a vocational skill and a matriculation. Over and above that, some of them had qualifications ranging from Technikon National Diplomas and N 6 from vocational colleges, which could be upgraded to a college National Diploma through apprenticeships. Not many had a Bachelor of Technology degree from a Technikon (a polytechnic).

With the changing landscape in the VET sector came a move towards professionalization and certification of teachers, as the introduction of the new curriculum 'raised the bar for vocational lecturers' (Papier, 2009, p 18). This saw the emergence of a great demand in subject, pedagogic and workplace expertise. As a result, some of the lecturers have had professional training by registering for teaching diplomas, which are adaptations of qualifications for school-based teachers.

2.3.7 Conclusion

The brief overview of provision, organization, control and administration of VET narrated above shows that there were serious problems and challenges in the sector resulting in 'huge inequalities in skills and competences in the nation's labour force' (White Paper, 1998a, p 9).

This section has pointed out that racially segregated departments for non-white South African children were organized and administered centrally by the white Department of National Education and by homeland governments, under the watchful eye of white government officials. VET provision, like other education sectors, experienced central control by the national government and was further decentralized and regionalized along racial and ethnic lines. The system was characterized by a lack of one department that was to unify the racially segregated vocational schools and technical colleges. This was the era in which the whole system of South African education 'had no fewer than fifteen departments of education' (Green Paper, 1996b).

This posed a multitude of disadvantages, including incessant political interferences and bureaucratic control, duplication, lack of uniformity in the qualifications provided to

South Africans and the existence of multiple certification bodies. The Department of National Education ((DNE) report of 1984 confirmed that at that time there were 19 examining bodies, administering 90 examinations per year and that this had led to excessive duplication (DNE, 1984, p 11).

The provision of VET education was never given enough attention with Africans being ‘the most neglected group as regards opportunities for getting vocational and technical education’ (Malherbe, 1971, p 93). It has been highlighted that segmentation of VET provision according to racial lines was not good for the country. The apartheid era’s false assumption that the country’s economy could be ‘split into economies based on racial lines’ (Malherbe, 1977, p 196) was not practical and put the country at a disadvantage, as effective economic production in any given country is a result of the combined effort of the ‘whole economically active manpower of all races (ibid, p 197).

Although the late 1960s witnessed some of the technical colleges acquiring a tertiary status and being turned into technikons, through the Advanced Technical Education Act of 1967, allowing space for non-whites to acquire skills at intermediate and higher levels, this was still not adequate for the country, as provision was fragmented and lacked articulation, mobility and linkages between mainstream schooling, the TVET sector and universities.

These were some of the pre-democratic government issues that led to the overhaul of vocational education and training, which gave rise to the development of a series of policy frameworks, amalgamation of old technical and vocational colleges and the establishment of key agencies and government bodies that were meant to help enhance quality of provision that would yield ‘a good return to the nation’ (White Paper, 1998a, p 19).

The next section narrates key VET/TVET developments in the post-apartheid era.

2.4 Technical vocational education and training in the post-apartheid era: 1991 - 2010

2.4.1 Introduction

This section focuses on development of the TVET college sector and transformation orchestrated by new ideological visions and policy frameworks. The basis for transformation was a result of the sector being identified by the government as of pivotal importance in the education landscape of the country. Besides being the gateway to employment and employability, and progression to higher education, it has been perceived as a tool for up-skilling and reskilling of the South African workforce.

The provision of education in South Africa has a long history of being established, controlled and shaped by the colonial rule and the racial segregationist and discriminatory system of apartheid (Wedekind, 2010). Prior to the 1994 democratic government, South Africa had 152 racially segregated vocational education and training colleges. Different colleges provided programmes that differed vastly in terms of quality, standard, outcomes and curriculum (Moyo, 2007, p 5). A few of these that previously catered for whites were well resourced and comparatively provided better education. Research revealed empirical evidence which proved that predominantly black colleges provided poor education and their programmes were not responsive to the needs of the economy (Pandor, 2008).

Due to this historical influence, education produced inequalities in society, which led to a skewed social, educational and economic landscape. Resistance to policies that orchestrated the skewed setup led to the conception and realization of the democratic government of 1994. When this government had been ushered in, it had to bring about changes which included restructuring education and training as a whole. Overhauling education and training had to take into consideration issues of unemployment, lack of skills and economic growth, poverty and other egalitarian issues, such as inequality, racism, sexism and democracy.

The April 1997 Report by the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE), on ‘A framework for the transformation of FET in South Africa’, which culminated in The Green Paper on FET (1998a) titled ‘Preparing for the 21st century through education, training and work’, recommended that the college sector be developed and expanded into a vibrant further education and training sector which would allow access to all learners. These recommendations culminated into The White Paper on FET (1998a) entitled ‘A programme for the transformation of the FET’.

The aim was to provide a policy framework which would address the fragmented and non-co-ordinated TVET system. The policy clearly outlined the importance of TVET in contributing to Human Resource Development, thus making it the interface between the Education and Training and Skills Development Strategy initiated by the Department of Labour.

As a result, the sector has undergone a repertoire of transformations for purposes of addressing these challenges and fulfilling the economic needs of the country. This section narrates the development and restructuring of the TVET college sector in the period 2001 – 2010.

2.4.2 Organization, administration and governance of TVET colleges

2.4.2.1 The macro level

This section looks at the organization, administration and governance of TVET colleges at national and provincial levels. The narrative will include a discussion of national laws, policies and other initiatives that have had a bearing on the TVET sector.

Education in South Africa is a responsibility of the state. This is evident in the stipulation of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa that ‘everyone has a right to basic education and to further education and training (FET), which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible’(RSA, 1996). This stipulation mirrors the theme of basic education which was voiced out and placed on

the international agenda for the first time at the World Conference for All of Jomtien in 1990 (KZN DoE, 2003, p 7). Policies and initiatives which were responsible for the configuration of the new education system in South Africa, whether national or provincial, were based on the Constitution.

The national Ministry of Education has been responsible for policy formulation and has played a key role concerning funding and curricular responsibilities. Each of the nine provinces has had to receive a budget from the national ministry, some of which is allocated to the TVET sector under the leadership of a provincial director. Colleges had to work directly with the provincial government through the office of the director.

Because TVET colleges are regarded as one of the major contributors to skills development, and the nation's economic growth through education and training, the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Labour (DoL) had to work together until this changed in 2010. The original plan was that the Department of Labour's responsibility would be to promote the notion of applied competence as envisaged in the Skills Development Strategy (DOL, 1997), by supporting the system of learnerships, as opposed to traditional apprenticeship, which were to be administered by the Skills Education Training Authorities (SETAs), as proposed by the Skills Development Act (1998). But contestation and tensions between the two departments resulted due to 'divergent visions of the colleges' focus' (Wedekind, 2010, p 305). The tension affected and weakened policy coherence across FET-skills development, including the National Skills Development Strategy, as seen from the perspective of the Department of Labour (DoL) policy with its enterprise-based training notion (Kraak, 2004) and the Department of Education's vision of 'providing a general vocational programme to 15 – 19 year olds' (Wedekind, 2010, p 305).

There are other management and administration responsibilities of education that were delegated to other state-created independent agencies. One such example is the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) which was tasked to develop and implement the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is responsible for providing a

framework within which the quality of all learning can be assured. All learning, whether informal or formal, had to be recognized through national standards and qualifications. The framework was to ensure that equivalence and portability of qualifications (DoE, 1995) are achieved.

This was followed by the establishment of quality assurance agencies. Umalusi started as a quality assurance agency for General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET). There were some changes in 2010, when the National Ministry was restructured and split into The Department of Basic Education, which caters for Grades R–12, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) which is responsible for universities and post-secondary education. Umalusi still quality assures NCV and some NATED examinations, but there is also the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) responsible for quality assurance in higher education, through the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF), formed in 2009, which from 2010 included TVET colleges under its wing.

Addressing the FET College Summit in September 2010, the Minister of Higher Education and Training pronounced shifting the function of the FET college management system from provincial to national government. Although there is evidence to suggest that this started to happen in 2012, the DHET still relies on provinces in some of the key day-to-day management and overseeing the functioning of colleges. For example, there are provincial structures that are meant to forge collaboration between national and provincial governments, as well as SETAs and TVET colleges. In August 2011 the Minister for Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, launched the KwaZulu-Natal Inter-Seta Forum and oversaw the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement, sealing the KwaZulu-Natal Inter-Seta Collaboration with the Provincial Public Further Education and Training Colleges (DHET, 2011).

2.4.2.2 The college level

When mergers occurred, all racially segregated colleges that belonged to a particular region were aligned as campuses of a unified college (Asmal, 2001). Each college is to be

governed by a council which resides at the Central Office that serves as headquarters in each college. The Rector is the head of the college and is part of the council.

It is the FET Act of 1998 that made provision for, and endorsed, the establishment of governing councils at all TVET colleges. According to the Act, such councils need to have strong stakeholder representation, with powers to develop strategic plans and mission statements for the institution and to determine policy and selection of staff (FET Act, 1998). Each college Council is expected to acquire substantive strategic planning capabilities in order to develop its institutional mission and ‘niche’ area of service delivery (ibid). The Act demands the existence of a college’s relationship with the local economy and society. Kraak and Hall (1999) note that this governance framework in FET required FET colleges to move beyond traditional conceptions of their role, to become more flexible and responsive to the needs of their immediate economies and needs. From the day the DoE’s National Landscape Task Team outlined the institutional merger processes in its 2001a Report, the shift towards institutional autonomy and financial control for FET colleges became evident.

2.4.2.3 The Council

The FET Act defines the overarching responsibility of the Council as the overall governance of the FET/TVET College. The Council is accountable to the Department of Education and other stakeholders that the college serves. In governing the college, the Council needs to fulfill the following responsibilities, as developed by SAQA and published by the eDegree (1998):

- The development of a strategic plan which must, incorporate the mission, vision, goals and planning for the funding of the institution and address the past imbalances and gender and disability matters.
- The determination of the language policy of the institution, which must be published and made available on request.
- Accreditation to provide learning against standards and qualifications as

- registered on the NQF.
- Setting up a structure to advise on the policy for student support services within the institution.
 - Most significantly for this study, the FET Colleges Act of 2006 stipulates that the Council is also tasked to employ staff. While management staff will be appointed by the MEC, employment of all other staff is the responsibility of the college through its Council:

The Council must approve conditions of employment, including the determination and review of salaries for lecturers and support staff and all other forms of remuneration in accordance with the rules (The FET Colleges Act of 2006, p 34).

This is critical for the present study, as one of its focal points is how this ‘radical revision of the nature of college staff employment’ (Akoojee and McGrath, 2008) has impacted on the lives and work of TVET college lecturers.

The composition of Council is explicitly described in the FET Act of 1998. In identifying different members that would constitute Council, consideration must be given to gender equity and other aspects such as competence, experience in FET, interest in the sector and knowledge of local industry and the community.

The Council is the main governance structure and, as such, is interested in how the College implements policy. It is not a passive entity, but involves itself in overseeing the implementation of decisions that it takes, ensuring that these are carried out in an appropriate, effective and meaningful manner.

Each Council has sub-structures serving under it for efficient running of the college. The key structures are the Academic Board, sub-committees and the Representative Council of Learners.

2.4.2.3.1 The Academic Board

The academic board is accountable to the Council for all matters relating to academic quality and provision. It is the key structure that ensures that the demands of the NQF are met. In particular, it takes full responsibility for the establishment of academic monitoring and quality assurance procedures for the college. It is the Academic Board's decision to determine the choice and quality of learning programmes in the college. It is the responsibility of this Board to see to it that people who sit on it are familiar with debates about the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This includes seeing to it that learnerships are put in place and that the college works in tandem with the Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS). The strategy aims to see to it that people are 'provided with a solid educational foundation for social participation, and also be empowered to develop relevant and marketable skills at further and higher education levels' (DoE and DoL, 2001) and the general vision of the Department of Higher Education and Training regarding skills development.

As learnerships are supported and funded by SETAs, it is vital that the Board is in touch with debates in this regard and the demands of the communities in which colleges are based and the needs of industry. According to SAQA (1998), as published by the eDegree, key functions of the Academic Board are:

- Ensuring the academic functions of the institution and the promotion of women and the disabled in the learning programmes;
- Establishing internal academic monitoring and quality assurance procedures;
- Ensuring that the requirements of accreditation - to provide learning against standards and qualifications registered on the NQF - are met; and
- Performing such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to it by the Council.

2.4.2.3.2 Sub-committees

The Council is at liberty to establish committees for purposes of assisting the main structures of the college. Examples of sub-committees may include those responsible for learnerships, SETAs, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), extra-mural activities, corporate services, income generation and other new initiatives. Duties for these sub-committees are delegated by the Council. Accountability remains with the Council. It is therefore the Council's duty to monitor progress and put reporting systems in place so that they know what is being done and if it is done appropriately.

2.4.2.3.3 The Representative Council of Learners (RCL)

This is a body the duty of which is to represent the interests of students registered for different programmes in the college. The RCL needs to be inclusive and students from all campuses have to be represented. This gives students an opportunity to have a say in matters relating to how campuses and programmes are run and how courses and subjects are delivered by lecturers in different fields of study. This is a body that serves as a vehicle for students to relay information and messages to and from management and *vice versa*.

The establishment of RCLs is in line with the move to co-operative governance and decentralization (NQF, 2008) and getting representation from all stakeholders who are important for democratic processes that are no longer top-down but inclusive (SAQA, 1995). The RCL is a forum for learners to express issues and concerns regarding how the institution is being run. Most institutions use the RCL as a way to listen to issues and as a means of sending messages to all learners (eDegree, 1998).

2.4.2.4 The campus level

The old technical colleges were changed into campuses of a college. Each college has five or more campuses. As technical colleges they offered similar programmes and were in competition with one another. The Department of Education recommended that campuses specialize, to avoid further competition and duplication. It was important that

the strengths of each old college be taken into consideration, in order for them to excel in what they knew best and develop their own distinctive identity (Ngcobo, 2009, p 2).

Categorizing campuses according to specializations has not worked for colleges that have sparsely distributed campuses. This is the case for campuses situated in rural areas and in townships. As a result, some of the colleges have campuses that offer programmes in all fields, so that students do not have to travel long distances in search of courses that suit their career paths.

Campus management consists of the Campus Manager as the head, a Deputy Campus Manager and Heads of Departments (HoDs). The number of HoDs depends on the units and the programmes that the campus offers. A large, very advanced campus can have up to six HoDs, for example a HoD for Administration, Engineering Studies, Business Studies, Utility and Social Services, Learnerships and Skills Programmes and Open Learning.

A campus is the place in which lecturers, who are the focus of this study, work. It forms the TVET college teachers' work environment. This is where they meet their 'customers', the students. Day-to-day interactions between lecturers and students take place in classrooms, workshops and simulation rooms. Lecturers report to campus management, with HoDs as their line managers.

Although all campuses conform to what the central office wants, each campus is unique, with its way of doing things influenced by who they were before the merger. Brown (1995) points out that some of the campuses continued to adhere to their own rules and procedures and have been resistant towards complete change. As any change comes with its own set of perils, Kezar (2002) adds that some campuses have managed to adapt to change and have faced challenges of 'changing culture, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, financial pressures and competing values' (p 435) head on.

2.4.3 Curricula reforms in the TVET college sector

In South Africa, curriculum reforms have been precipitated by many issues, stemming from the inherited apartheid system. Kapp and Wyngaard (2004) outline the characteristics that existed in the education system before 1994. They include, *inter alia*, inequalities in student access, unequal distribution of resources, duplication in programme offerings and the impact of new regulation. Krauss *et al.* (2008) posit that ‘in the period 1994 to 1999, curriculum change was primarily driven by the insertion of South Africa into the global community and the need to develop new policy frameworks for a democratic future’ (p 18). Clearly then, the technical vocational education and training landscape, being part of the broader education system, has had its fair share of changes. Particular reasons for curriculum change in the TVET college sector include the desire to produce a citizenry that has the necessary skills to address the skills shortage that is being experienced in the economy of the country. The human capital theory's uncritical acceptance that there is a direct relationship between education and the economy is most pronounced in the FET and Skills Development policies (Vally, 2001).

There was a reconfiguration of courses, as those that were offered by colleges became obsolete and had to be revamped, reorganized and reviewed, through the introduction of the new curriculum, the National Certificate (Vocational), better known as the NCV. The gradual phasing out of NATED courses and the introduction of the NCV was one of the biggest changes that the TVET college sector had to face. The changes involved subject name changes, new subjects being introduced and restructuring of content in those subjects that did not change. Some of the subjects that lecturers were familiar with were combined to form new ones, for example, fitting and turning, welding and metal works, motor mechanics and motor body repair were brought together to form Mechanical Technology.

The new NCV curriculum, which commenced in January 2007, was perceived by policymakers to be a kind of qualification that would give learners an industry-focused vocational alternative to the academic grades 10 – 12 offered by senior secondary schools in the mainstream education system. It is envisaged that the new National Certificate

(Vocational) programmes are poised to address the pressing problem of skills shortages. It is expected that the emphasis on balancing theory and practice that is explicitly articulated in the NCV programme will adequately prepare learners for the world of work. The emphasis on new programmes seeks to overcome outdated divisions between ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ education and training. It is characterized, not by the ‘vocationalisation’ of education, but by a sound foundation of general knowledge, combined with practical relevance (DoE, 1998a, p 30).

In 2004, the Draft Re-capitalisation Plan was announced. According to this plan, funding for programmes to be offered at FETCs was now to be based on responsive programme delivery. In this way, TVET colleges were forced to align their programmes with the needs of the communities they serve and with commerce and industry (Hall, 2005). The implication of this was that programmes offered by TVET colleges would require achieving a balance between theory and practice and would need to include substantial focus on workplace experience. Gewer (2001) claims that the ‘DoE funding regime forms the foundation for orienting FET institutions to outcomes-based education and training’ (p 141). Indeed, it was this funding that became a motivating factor in the transformation of curriculum from the NATED traditional syllabus to a more outcomes-based one that was to meet the requirements of the NQF.

By 2005, the announcement of R1,9 billion for TVET College Re-capitalisation came as no surprise. TVET colleges were expected to build infrastructure that was aligned to the requirements of the new demands of an outcomes-based syllabus. In 2006, the Qualification Policy Framework for TVET programmes was gazetted. The first mention of the National Certificate (Vocational) programmes was found here. The changes in policy signaled that TVET colleges were now to offer programmes determined by thorough analysis of the needs of the community, the regional economy and in line with national priorities (Gewer, 2001; Hall, 2005). Programmes offered were, for the first few years, subject to external quality assurance by Umalusi. By July of 2006, curriculum for the 11 FET priority programmes was published, with implementation of the first level in 2007.

As has been explained earlier in this chapter, South African technical colleges offered the NATED courses from N1 to N6. The entry level for a new student was N1 followed by N2 and N3, all done in a trimester and completed within one year. At the end of this year a student had a choice to seek employment in industries or proceed to N4 – N6. Although some of the TVET colleges still teach the NATED courses, the government introduced the new curriculum, the NCV in 2007. The entry level (Level 2) of the NCV was introduced in 2007, followed by Level 3 in 2008 and Level 4 in 2009.

Although the NCV has been in existence for four years, critics and some experts in industry are dismissive of the NCV, for a variety of reasons. There is widespread concern that the NCV is not flexible enough to cater for the traditional older student, as it originally allowed access to youth with secondary school Grade 9. In 2005, the South African College Principals' Organization (SACPO) issued a statement that this three-year programme does not take seriously the urgency with which the country needed to deal with its skills crisis. The NCV takes three years to finish what an old curriculum structure (NATED) finished in one year. The NATED courses operated on a trimester system and participants in this study stated that it is a programme preferred by many, as it allowed students to move between college and workplace on a three-month cycle, as opposed to NCV graduates who may only be employable after three years. As a result, there are many TVET colleges that never abandoned the NATED courses. Instead of phasing them out, the colleges offered them in the afternoons and on weekends. Due to this shortcoming, the Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training made means to reinstate the NATED courses so that they run concurrently with the NCV where the demand existed.

As the findings of this study will show later, the introduction of the new curriculum has had implications for classroom practice and has posed tough challenges for lecturers teaching in the sector. Young (2006), in recommending the importance of TVET college staff in curriculum change, states that in order to 'implement this new National Certificate (Vocational), the teaching staff at FET colleges should not only be familiar

with the new curriculum and its pedagogic demands but must also have clarity on the new meaning of the vocational role of colleges' (p 153) and their new role as professional educators.

Therefore, if the introduction of the NCV meant a new role for the TVET college teacher, the already inherent identities may have needed to be reorganized or restructured which I think is a serious challenge. Dalton & Smith (2004) affirm this in their arguments regarding VETiS programmes in Australia, by saying that:

New roles are a challenge to the established identities of those teachers and, therefore, represent a challenge for them in their adaptation to these new expectations (p 508).

As a result, part of what the present study aimed to investigate included lecturers' experiences in reorganizing their professional identities due to the introduction of the NCV, with its new pedagogical practices, and the implementation of these practices.

2.4.4 Curriculum structure, fields of study and assessment in the NCV

2.4.4.1 Curriculum and fields of study

The minimum requirement for entry at NCV level 2 is a pass in Grade 9 from a secondary school. According to a DoE guide to opportunities in TVET colleges, the list of qualifications that can be used to access NCV includes a year-end school report for Grades 10 and 11, or a matric certificate. This guide further stipulates that the Grade 9 equivalent to access Level 2 will be any NQF Level 1 qualification, any approved bridging course designed to access NQF Level 2 or a Recognition of Prior Learning assessment specifically prepared to access NQF Level 2.

As a result, Level 2 was accessed by quite a diverse student body befitting all the categories mentioned above. The profile of the student who walks into the TVET College classroom is aged between 15 and 20 years, has passed Grade 9 or the equivalent, or has passed or failed Grades 10, 11 or 12, or has completed Grade 12.

Others are in short courses, skills programmes or NATED courses. Hence the reasoning by Mokgatle (2003) that the college sector is complex because it consists of learners completing formal compulsory schooling; older learners returning to study; full-time and part-time students; those on day release from training schemes; those in the workplace and those in the classrooms of the various colleges (p 617).

Programmes offered come in three broad categories, namely Business Studies, Engineering Studies and General Studies.

Business Studies

NCV: Finance, Economics and Accounting

NCV: Marketing

NCV: Office Administration

NCV: Information Technology and Computer Science

Engineering Studies

NCV: Civil Engineering & Building Construction (Masonry/Plumbing/Carpentry)

NCV: Electrical Infrastructure Construction

NCV: Engineering and Related Design (Automotive/Fabrication/Fitter and Turner)

General Studies

NCV: Education and Development

NCV: Hospitality

NCV: Primary Agriculture

NCV: Tourism

At each level a student has to take seven subjects, four of which should be vocational subjects. The first three, although selected from many options, are compulsory and specific for a chosen field. The fourth one may be chosen from any field in the vocational programmes. The other three subjects are compulsory for every student who enrolls in the

NCV. These are an official language, which is the language of teaching and learning, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation.

2.4.4.2 Financing programmes

The programmes are financed by the government through the FET College Scheme introduced in 2007, with an initial allocation of R600 million to support enrolment into the NCV qualification. DHET also provides a bursary scheme for students, administered by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). The loans and bursaries are not only available to NCV students but also to N4–N6 students.

Each campus provides students with application forms. The forms are returned with documents, including those that will help to conduct an assessment called a ‘means test’. This test helps to determine how much should be contributed by a parent or a guardian. This contribution is called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Other sources of financial support include banks, municipalities and other field-related agencies, for example, the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers Bursary Scheme.

2.4.4.3 Assessment

Assessment takes the form of tests written as the Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS). These tests assess the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values of learners, internally throughout the year. About six per year have to be written and are standardized across the various college campuses. At least a week is set aside in all the campuses to allow for the seven subjects that learners are enrolled for to be written. If a learner performs poorly in an ICASS, re-assessment can be done. Part of continuous assessment includes marking and assessment of Portfolios of Evidence (PoEs) and Portfolios of Assessment (PoAs).

At the end of the year, when continuous assessment has been completed, students do the Integrated Summative Assessment Task (ISAT). This is a compulsory, standardized and

prescriptive practical examination set by the DoE, done by all students around September. It is a component task that draws on the learner's cumulative learning throughout the year.

Two to three weeks thereafter students sit for trial examinations. After two more weeks, all students undertake the External Summative Assessment (ESASS) which is a single or set of written papers set to the requirements of the Subject Learning Outcomes by the Department of Education.

Towani (2010) argues that TVET college lecturers have 34 weeks of contact time per year, four of which are used for student registration at the beginning of the year. A college that religiously undertakes six ICASS per year, one week ISAT, one week trial examinations minus four weeks of enrolment time, has only 22 weeks of actual teaching time.

2.4.4.4 Artisan trade tests

The original plan is that the NCV produces artisans to increase the number of artisans, thereby addressing skills shortages in the country. In November 2010, the Minister of Higher Education and Training launched the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB), to achieve the goal of artisan development. This body is part of the Institute for the National Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments (INDLELA), in the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Over and above the apprenticeship route, the two other options are the learnership route and the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) route.

There are two trade test categories, a section 13 trade test and a section 28 trade test. Section 13 can be taken by only those who have registered for apprenticeships. A candidate needs to have passed N2 or a NQF 2 and 3 in the chosen field and must have served a period of 18 months as a registered apprentice.

A section 28 trade test is for people who have been exposed to practical experience for a long time and have, as a result, accumulated sound knowledge in the trade, even though they do not have a formal qualification in that specific field. The duration of the on-the-job experience varies from four to six years, depending on the basic technical knowledge before entry, or how quickly the individual is able to learn. Candidates with no formal training at all take the longest, but when they are ready principles of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) apply.

All trade tests training can only be undertaken by providers registered and approved by specific SETAs. For example, the Metal & Engineering Industry Education Board as a training board, is registered with MERSETA (Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training). This is crucial to ensure adherence to national standards and relevant training.

2.4.5 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were instituted to ensure that the skills and training objectives in different industries and sectors, as set out in the National Skills Development Strategy, are achieved.

Originally, 25 SETAs were established by the Minister of Labour, under the Skills Development Act, in March 2000. Some of these have been scrapped for many reasons, including underperformance. SETAs were, and are still, responsible for the development of sector skills plans, approving, registering and promoting learnerships, quality assuring training and administering levies and grants (RSA, 1998). They are largely funded through the 1% levy paid by employers, of which they get 80%, and 10% is spent on administration. SETAs disburse mandatory grants on receipt of workplace skills plans and implementation reports from employers. Over and above this responsibility, they disburse discretionary grants for projects that address specific sectoral needs identified in the sector skills plans. SETAs have also worked as implementing agents for the National Skills Fund responsible for providing funding to address issues of national importance,

including job creation, small business development and special assistance to women, youth, rural people and people with disabilities (DoL, 1997).

As Further Education and Training Colleges are educational institutions that have to reconcile their programme offerings to address the compelling development of human resources for the economy of the country, they have, for many years, worked with the Department of Labour that housed the SETAs. One of the aims has been to fulfil the notion of applied competence, as envisaged in the Skills Development Strategy (DOL, 1997), by supporting the system of learnerships, as opposed to traditional apprenticeship, through the SETAs.

Legislated by the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998e), learnerships aimed to enforce a relationship between the learner, the TVET College, as the provider, and industry as the employer. Gewer (2001) explains that the introduction of learnerships potentially lends itself to a holistic approach to learning because of its focus on the assessment of observable performance in a work-related environment. He further argues that this holistic learning:

Comprises practical (observable skills), foundational (embedded knowledge and understanding), and reflexive (linking, understanding and adapting performance) competence (p 146).

Learnerships were said to have been designed to provide a setting in which TVET colleges have a close relationship with industry as the employers. Although TVET colleges are educational institutions under the DoE, they, for many years until recently, have had to comply with DoL by carefully providing programmes that will meet industry needs, ensuring the transferability and applicability of skills acquired.

Since the establishment of the new Department of Higher Education and Training in 2009, both the TVET colleges and the SETAs have been brought under the management of this new department. SETAs are no longer under the auspices of the Department of

Labour. Part of this move is due to criticism that labels them as being incompetent. According to Blaine (2010):

Few people outside government like them. The Democratic Alliance wants to scrap them entirely, while industry, commerce, private training providers and further education and training colleges (FETCs) want to pour salt on the wounds (p 4).

Many critics and detractors argue that SETAs have been controversial since their inception. They argue that SETAs have been very unpopular with industry, commerce, private providers and TVET colleges. Critics argue that SETAs put too much emphasis on theoretical education at the expense of practical on-the-job skills. Another outcry is that, instead of producing between 20 000 and 25 000 artisans a year, the current system with SETAs produces only between 8 000 and 10 000 (Mabena, 2010). Bird (2010) pointed out that research by the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority indicates that most of the graduates who have undergone training through the SETAs have failed their trade tests.

Despite this criticism, the state has plans to make SETAs effective, for the benefit of the country. Of significance for this study would be to explore what TVET College lecturers' experiences have been throughout these never-ending adaptations.

2.4.6 The lecturer

According to the FET College Act of 2006, a person who teaches at a TVET college is referred to as a lecturer. As lecturers, they teach full-time and part-time students in either the NATED courses or the NCV, or in both.

Vocational education lecturers have, over the years, been recruited from industry, have technical qualifications and are artisans and trainers, but not professional teachers. There have never been any dedicated institutes for vocational teacher training in South Africa. The curriculum necessitates that lecturers be re-skilled through top-up in-service training and other possible means. Although some staff development work has taken place since

transformation occurred, most of these have been short courses and sporadic workshops that last a few days or a week.

As a result, TVET colleges still face lecturer capacity challenges in the form of unqualified and under-qualified lecturers. According to the Employment of Educators Act no 76 of 1998, a qualified college lecturer needs to have an M + 3⁴ diploma qualification, which will include professional teaching training. This definition implies that a lecturer with a degree only is unqualified and any lecturers with qualifications below M + 3 are under-qualified. Powell & Hall (2002) revealed that unqualified and under-qualified lecturing staff in South African TVET colleges constituted 12% in 2000. This number has grown significantly, due to challenges brought about by the new curriculum. Most researchers believe that the transformation of technical colleges to TVET colleges brought in a new dimension for teaching and learning, which has implications for staff competencies.

With regards to employment, the FET College Act of 2006 states that the college is the employer of a lecturer who works at a public TVET college. Through governance by Council, a college has the power to appoint, remunerate, resolve disputes and spell out the functions, conditions of service and privileges of its lecturers. A lecturer shall be paid from funds allocated to the college through funding norms and also from funds gained from other sources. The Act stipulates that the appointment of lecturers needs to take into consideration the ability of the candidate, the principle of equity, redress of past injustices and the need for representivity.

For lecturers, this Act had advantages and disadvantages. When it came into existence, it counteracted that college lecturers were employed under the Employment of Educators Act. This Act provides the framework for the employment of school-based educators. This was disadvantageous for TVET colleges, as they had 'to draw from school vacancy

⁴ M + 3 refers to a matric plus a three-year qualification, which has to include professional teacher training. According to the Employment of Educators Act no 76 of 1998, a qualified teacher is as follows: In order to qualify for appointment as an educator a person must have at least a recognized three-year qualification (REQV 13) which must include appropriate training as an educator (Chapter B 2.2 (i))

lists' as a first source of staff employment. Thus, even if a college is in need of a skilled technical person, it may be required to employ a language educator who is on the vacancy list (Pandor, 2006). The FET Act of 2006 gave lecturers, although to a limited extent, a badge of identity.

The original plan was that all lecturers employed by the provincial government at the time would be moved to Council employment. Lecturers who did not want Council employment would be deployed to ordinary schools. This plan was not carried out to completion. Most of the old lecturers are still employed by the provincial government. Some have been deployed to schools. It is only newly appointed college lecturers that fell under Council employment right from the beginning. Due to different challenges facing Councils, such as inadequate capacity to manage funds, many of these new lecturers have been given short-term contracts and salaries that are not market-related. Contracts vary as they are demand-driven. For example, some of the lecturers are employed in projects-based curricula which are usually one-year contracts. Many are offered cost to company contracts and this eliminates accountability of management to pension contributions, medical aid and housing benefits.

Each college therefore has a combination of lecturing staff paid by Council and those still paid by provincial government. There is bitterness and dissatisfaction from the former, who feel looked down upon because the latter enjoy better benefits and status. The Department of Higher Education and Training has signalled that the lecturer employment dilemma is being attended to and all systems will be in place in 2015.

2.4.7 Proposed developments until 2012

Addressing the FET College Summit in 2010, the Minister of Higher Education and Training pronounced the focus related to FET Colleges as:

- shifting the function of FET college management system from provincial to national government,
 - quality improvements, which include increased success and throughput,
-

- improved access by increasing the student body from approximately 400 000 to one million by 2015, with the aim of denting South Africa's serious problem of youth unemployment,
- closer alignment with skills development strategies and funding including training partnerships and work placements,
- increasing apprenticeships and learnerships and production of quality artisans as one of the key goals of FET colleges.

Unveiling the turnaround strategy for FET colleges in 2012, the Minister of DHET emphasized the need for further improvements for the effectiveness of the college sector.

Proposed developments included the following:

- improving lecturer qualifications and student pass rates
- institutional management and governance
- administration and curriculum delivery
- improving quality of teaching staff and systems
- student support services
- infrastructure, facilities and equipment management
- partnerships, linkages and stakeholder management

Funding initiatives included a state funding increase to R4.8 billion; R47 million to support students with disabilities and special learning needs; the National Skills Fund and SETAs committed R2,2 billion to fund programme-related activities in the colleges.

The Minister of Education cautioned that the key challenge was for the TVET college sector to grow fast enough to be accessible to unemployed youth and to drive economic growth, as well as increase quality of training. He stipulated that facilitating work placement for college students and graduates must be at the heart of the 2010-2030 HRDS. Part of what the Minister of Education said is in line with the State President's State of the Nation Address of 2010, in which he emphasized expansion of access into FET colleges to develop a skilled and capable workforce to support economic growth and job creation.

As a result of rekindled commitment to use TVET colleges as one of the major role-players in socio-economic development, further institutional changes have occurred:

- Management of all TVET Colleges has now been put, with universities, under the new Department of Higher Education and Training.
- The Minister of Education has established the new Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF).
- The SETAs, which had always been under the Department of Labour, have now been brought under the auspices of the Minister of Higher Education and Training.
- TVET colleges have been encouraged to prioritize post-school youth and more flexible versions of the new curriculum; the NCV are being explored to meet this proposed shift in focus.
- The Ministry of Higher Education and Training has made moves towards reinstating the NATED courses and apprenticeships.

The present study aimed at investigating how lecturers working in TVET colleges have experienced the series of transformations discussed in the foregoing sections.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter 2 has given a brief historical background of VET/TVET development during colonial rule, the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era. The chapter highlighted historical frameworks that led to the 1994 regime inheriting a poor, fragmented and racially segregated TVET system. The chapter narrated a barrage of institutional, structural and curricular changes that shaped the TVET college sector to be what it is today. A brief discussion of these shows a shift towards equitable TVET provision and will by the state to develop a skills profile that ‘signals a greater correspondence between

economic development and human capital' (Pandor, 2006). An integral part of the narration pointed to the existence of systemic challenges that have a bearing on the implementation of some of the policies and on lecturers' personal and professional lives.

Chapter 3 presents a review of the literature and the theoretical underpinnings of the study.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Through exploration of the life histories of 12 TVET College lecturers, the study sought to understand how they have experienced the post-apartheid educational reforms in their personal lives and professional work, as they teach and train to achieve the country's skills mandate. The study aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of their lived experiences, the meaning they attach to these experiences and how they have impacted on their work and their lives.

In the previous chapter I contextualized the study, by giving a brief background of educational changes that have occurred in the TVET college sector, from their conceptualization and operationalization in 2000, to 2012. Part of the discussion focused on briefly discussing the motivation and rationale for the study, the statement of the problem, axiological assumptions and subjectivity, clarification of key terms used in this thesis, delimitation of the study and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on teachers' lives in the midst of educational and political reforms. Setting the scene for this study in Chapter 1, I pointed out that gaps exist with regards to how lecturers teaching in public South African TVET colleges have experienced educational reforms since 2000. Literature reviewed in this chapter casts the net wider, to include experiences of teachers in TVET education globally, as well as experiences of teachers in mainstream schooling nationally and internationally. It should be noted that presentation of literature in this study is confined not only to this chapter but is continuously done in other chapters, as part of the discussions and analysis.

This chapter will also discuss theoretical lenses that have been used to unpack and make sense of the findings. The theoretical tool that guided this thesis was Norbert Elias' social theory which has been widely used by many researchers to interrogate and understand interdependencies that exist in human relationships. This social theory was deemed

relevant for this study because of the notion that people, and South African TVET college lecturers in the context of this study, do not exist in a vacuum or in isolation, but their actions, activities and experiences intermesh with those of their colleagues, learners, managers and the TVET College environment as a social institution. The Eliasian approach provided a useful generative framework for thinking about ‘lives’ in a social context (Wedekind, 2001).

3.2 Review of literature

As explained above, this section reviews the literature on teachers’ lives and their experiences during political and educational change. Due to minimal availability of literature directly relating to the experiences of the South African TVET college teaching staff, the literature reviewed included examples of teachers’ lives and educational change worldwide, South African teachers’ experiences of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Basic Education sector and teachers’ experiences in international TVET contexts.

3.2.1 Teachers’ lives and experiences in the midst of educational reform

3.2.1.1 Introduction

Educational reform has been defined in different ways by different people. Explicitly expressed and embedded in all the definitions are conceptual characteristics of improvement such as renewal, transformation and amendment (Schweisfurth, 2002). International trends reveal that education has been used by governments to support new democracies, in just the same way as it has been used by authoritarian governments to indoctrinate people into values of their ideologies (ibid p 16). Decisions to embark on educational reform involve policy legislations which lead to institutional, structural and curricular adaptations with the hope of achieving equity and comparatively education of better quality.

Most theorists on educational reform agree on the complexities of the processes involved (Ball, 1990; Gillborn 1994; Wallace & McMahon, 1994). Fullan (1993) describes

educational reform as dynamic, non-linear, unpredictable and challenging. Schweisfurth (2002) argues that ‘confusion and stress associated with processes of change become more acute when the reform innovations are multiple’ (p 15), as is the case in the context of the present study. Fullan (1993) highlights complexities and the chasm that exists between legislation and the experience of implementation, by defining educational change as ‘a planned journey into uncharted waters in a leaky boat with a mutinous crew’ (p 24). Critical to this study are the lived experiences of legislated reforms by lecturers teaching in South African TVET colleges in the context of multiple innovations.

Schweisfurth (2002) argues that reform legislation usually ignores the ‘teacher factor’. Findings of her study conclude that teachers are left out of the equation in policy formulation, hence the problematic nature of its translation into practice (p 22). The literature reviewed in this study indicates that problems are bound to arise if this happens because teachers are the ultimate key to educational reform. This is particularly the case if the reform also involves curricular changes as ‘policy making and implementation are not discreet entities but overlap’ (Morris *et al.*, 2000, p39). Echoing this assertion is Huberman (1993), who warns that change in educational policies, reconfiguration of institutions, curricular innovations and ‘development of benchmark assessments are of little value if they do not take the teacher into account’ (ibid).

Supporting this argument are Day *et al.* (2000) who, in the introductory pages of their book on the life and work of teachers, stress that ‘the key to the successful fulfillment of the vision for reconstructing education is the teacher’. Attesting to these are Ramparsad, (2001); Fullan, (1999); Morrison, (1998) and Sarason, (1993), who all emphasize that in order for any educational change to succeed, teachers, who are the implementers of such change, particularly curricular change, must be considered in a more involved way in the whole process of change. Shimabukuro (2010) testifies that even in developed countries, where advanced shifts to digital infrastructure are evidenced, a teacher is still one of the most important factors if educational change is to work.

Research suggests that in most countries where drastic educational change has occurred, teachers have been affected in a variety of ways. Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) stress that educational change, which policymakers usually believe to be ‘a finished and perfected product that is not amenable to revision or adaptation (Morris *et al.*, 2000, p 43), has many times had adverse effects on the lives and work of teachers, regardless of whether they are affected as individuals or as a collective.

Resistance to change by teachers is well documented (Lightfoot 1983, Fullan 1993, Elmore 1990, Schlechty 1990, Morris *et al.*, 2000, Day *et al.*, 2000, Schweisfurth 2002) and a few anecdotes will be highlighted later in this chapter. For example, Morris *et al.* (2000) explored the impact of policy initiatives and experiences of primary school teachers in Hong Kong, after the end of colonial rule in 1997. They record that reform had a ‘turbulent reception from teachers’ (p 39). Their research suggested that the extent of reform was radical and that the teachers were frustrated by the centralization of the process of policymaking. This resulted in the maximization of the gap between the reformers and the teachers. Day (2000) argues that ‘the theme of the 45th session of UNESCO’s International Conference on Education in 1996 was the role of teachers in a changing world’ (p 111). The majority of member states narrated evidence of how educational reform policies had led to ‘a significant deterioration in the working conditions of teachers’ (ibid p 111). Tedesco (1997) records that:

The deterioration produced, in its turn, a series of well-known phenomena: demoralization, abandonment of the profession, absenteeism, the search of other occupations and, finally, a negative impact on the quality of education offered (p 24).

The few citations above attest to the fact that the proliferation of new educational policies has arguably caused enormous stress for lecturers and teachers. This is partly due to the fact that, as Fernandez (2000) reasons, lecturers and teachers are ‘frontline workers’ whose shoulders are burdened with the responsibility of implementing change and also becoming ‘ultimately accountable for the outcome of the implementation’ (p 239).

Despite the many examples that will be cited below, focusing much on negativity and criticism, positive feedback has been obtained not only from the courageous, easily accepting persevering type of teacher but also from those who perceived educational change as having the most adverse effects on teachers as a collective. Two of the contributory factors cited for positive responses are a supportive culture within the educational institution and personal-professional qualities. For other teachers, reasons for less condemnation revolved around relatively unchanged subject content, for example ‘Maths is Maths’ was a frequent comment in studies conducted in England (Day *et al.*, 2000, p 97).

Some of the teachers in the England study were not shaken much by reforms, because they still continued to enjoy freedom of pedagogy and classroom management. One teacher stressed that this freedom was of key importance and went to the heart of his professionalism:

If I was told exactly what to do when I went into my classroom during every lesson, which would impinge on my professionalism ... but the National Curriculum hasn't done that and it hasn't actually changed my feelings of professionalism in any sense whatsoever (ibid)

The comment is positive, but too simplistic, because we cannot shy away from educational reform and its impact by ‘closing our classroom doors’ (Robertson, 1996, p28). Although ‘teachers are at liberty to interpret, change, ignore, and selectively choose how they will implement a centralized curriculum’ (Ball and Bowe, 1992; Cohen and Ball, 1990; Bertram, 2008) the relationship between a teacher and wider society is much more complex than this.

Not all teachers voiced negative comments about educational change. Some of them gained lifelong learning experiences. According to Day *et al.* (2000) one teacher stated:

I learnt things about my own leadership, the political agenda and about the qualities of those around me – their huge capacity for loyalty and disloyalty, their

own insecurities and tremendous strengths. The most important thing that I learnt was the fundamental imperative for integrity to underpin my work. I also learnt that alligators need treating with respect. I have become a strong advocate of teamwork and I have developed an interest in process improvement ... (p 97).

The above example demonstrates that not all is doom and gloom, but some positive learning experiences in times of educational change do exist, regardless of personal and professional cost such as ‘changing balance of power, deteriorating conditions of service, ideologically driven economic market imperatives and increased intensification and complexity of teachers’ working lives’ (Day *et al.*, 2000, p 125).

3.2.1.2 The lecturer as a worker in the process of educational change

3.2.1.2.1 Introduction

As a point of departure in understanding lecturers’ work and their lives in and outside work, particularly in times of educational change, it is important to emphasize that they are ‘workers’. They may be performing a variety of roles in their lives in general but formal education, and also informal and non-formal education, is their everyday work. The TVET college context is for them, a workplace. Connell (1985) cautions that these simple factors must not be forgotten as ‘in understanding them it is essential to analyze their work’ (p 69) and to be able to understand their experiences. Even teachers themselves need to view themselves as workers, argues Densmore (1987), because ‘viewing themselves as workers may help teachers to recognize both the sources of troubles schools face and potential means of effective action’ (p 132).

According to Connell (1985), an industrial sociological approach to analyzing an educational institution as a workplace puts emphasis on ‘the nature of the labour process, the division of labour and the pattern of control and autonomy in the workplace’ (p 69). The present study views these as very useful categories in analyzing lecturers’ professional work as teachers working in a TVET college context.

3.2.1.2.2 The nature of the labour process and the division of labour

Lecturers in VET contexts are involved in educational labour processes. The human activity that they perform is education, which is based largely in our society on related processes known as teaching and learning. In the context of this study, teaching is defined as ‘a system of activities intended to induce learning, comprising the deliberate and methodical creation and control of those conditions in which learning does occur’ (Curzon, 2004, 36). In this sense, teaching is not seen as a single isolated activity but a system of activities. Furthermore, definitions of what constitute learning vary. In the present context where the focus is on FET colleges, definitions of learning preferred are those that advocate interconnectedness between theory and practice.

One such definition is that of Curzon (2004), who refers to learning as ‘the apparent modification of a person’s behaviour through his activities and experiences, so that his knowledge, skills and attitudes, including modes of adjustment, towards his environment are changed, more or less permanently’ (p 12). In this sense and context, teaching and learning are seen to be incorporating training and instruction because of socio-economic imperatives associated with vocational education. Although these terms cannot be easily differentiated, as they all affect learners in such a way that education takes place, the training part puts emphasis on the know-how while the instruction part concentrates on the know-what and the know-why. The latter encompasses the original popular labour activities of ‘talk-and-chalk’ teaching (Connell, 1985) which is labelled as teacher-centred, as opposed to the most preferred but most misunderstood additional style, the learner-centred approach which encourages increased learner participation and critical thinking. In VET contexts, all these approaches need to be combined, because a distinctive feature of a lecturer’s work in VET contexts is a combination of classroom-based work that focuses on theoretical knowledge and workshop, simulated, workplace or on-the-job based work that involves doing practical work.

Although the division of labour changes with the times, due to technology and the emergence of specializations, the craft of teaching needs the presence of the expert such as a lecturer or a teacher, learners and the ‘content to be learnt’ (Connell, 1985). This is

decided as blueprint in the form of policy by the government and as interpreted and designed by teachers at a practice level. In general, education mainstream day-to-day activities involve spending most of the time in a classroom setting. Besides face-to-face teaching, there is time set aside for preparation, marking and assessment. In TVET contexts the work of a lecturer stretches beyond the aforesaid normal routine of educating and incorporates training in an attempt to destroy the divide between theory and practice as stated by Jansen (1993) that curricular reform needs to ‘eliminate the distinction between mental and manual labour, to engage students in productive activities in preparation for the world of work ... (p 61). Although the desire and vision to integrate theory and practice initially underpinned and dominated the curriculum reform discourse for all educational sectors post-apartheid, it was more championed in the TVET sector than in the main schooling system.

Small wonder therefore, that the great debate of theory vs. practice in TVET contexts is quite intense. Debated the most is the nature of knowledge considered to be appropriate for the TVET sector. Moll *et al.* (2005) argue that theoretical, practical and tacit knowledge are equally valuable in TVET contexts, since the concept underpinning VET provision, ‘skill’, has considerably evolved over the years. TVET pedagogy used to be informed by ‘technical skills’ but other elements now emphasized are generic and soft or behavioural skills. In an attempt to prepare students for the world of work, the ultimate goal is that of developing abilities of action competencies that use strong theoretical knowledge as foundation. Students need to be taught skills and competences required by the world of work but need ‘to draw on general, principled knowledge to understand the particular in the workplace’ (Young, 2006b). Young (2006a) adds that, while all work situations need context-dependent knowledge, ‘many jobs also require knowledge involving theoretical ideas shared by a community of specialists that are not tied to specific contexts’ (p 115).

Barnett (2006) supports this thought by adding that the students that VET education and training produces need to be able to go beyond contexts and use decontextualized theoretical knowledge in different contexts. This demands that they be grounded in

theoretical knowledge within their specific trades. This notion adds a new dimension of site for practical work or for on-the-job kind of learning necessitating the presence of a workshop or a relevant work environment in which to apply knowledge acquired. Emphasis is exerted on applied competence. Gewer (2001) explains that the notion of applied competence comprises ‘practical (observable skills), foundational (embedded knowledge and understanding), and reflexive (linking, understanding and adapting performance) competence’ (p 146). In TVET contexts this can be evidenced by the introduction of learnerships in which the college and the employer expose a learner to practical situations in a work setting for ‘observable performance and inference over a suitable period of time’ (ibid). This setup forges a relationship between the student, the college, as a provider, and the employer and serves as a mechanism to ensure that programmes offered are relevant and responsive and that skills acquired are successfully transferred and applied in the workplace (ibid). Therefore, for TVET contexts, a teaching-learning situation goes beyond the confines of classroom walls to settings that allow theoretical knowledge to be applied to authentic or simulated settings.

To qualify as artisans, students have to undergo apprenticeship experiences. In this encounter, a student learns or reinforces what has been learned through observing an expert in action and practises to perform the craft under his or her watchful eye. Contemporary versions put emphasis on cognitive apprenticeship, because the experience is not only about observation but includes thinking and analyzing what is being observed. Farmer, Buckmaster and LeGrand (1992) confirm that in a cognitive apprenticeship relationship an expert models the strategies and activities needed to solve problems, and students approximate doing the activity while articulating their thought processes. A combination of diverse experts, knowledge of various kinds and settings for practical work make the professional work of teaching and learning in TVET contexts unique.

Besides teaching and learning duties, research shows that teachers also assume ‘*in loco parentis*’ roles. This is a Latin phrase that means ‘in the place of a parent’. As learners spend most of the day in education institution premises and campuses, some of the functions and responsibilities of parents fall on the shoulders of teachers. This includes

situations in which teachers have ‘to perform pastoral roles within their activity systems’ (Mukeredzi, 2009). These roles are part of the division of labour as specified by South African Norms and Standards of Educators (1998). Over and above being a teacher roles include an educator being a leader, an administrator and a manager; an assessor; a learning area specialist; a scholar, a researcher and a lifelong learner; a community, citizenship and pastoral role; a learner mediator and an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials.

The *in loco parentis* and pastoral roles might be overwhelming, but cannot be avoided as lecturers and teachers are not immune to problems and challenges affecting society. Teachers’ lives are considerably influenced by factors outside educational institution premises. Such factors include societal conditions such as family situations, drug and alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS and general economic situations like fluctuating economic conditions (McGrath, 1995) poverty, unemployment, retrenchments and shrinking job markets. This confirms what Nias (1996) argues about in her research, that a teacher’s life is interconnected to other people in her world of work, that a teacher cannot be disengaged from the cultural, social and historical contexts and the fact that ‘the unique sense of self which every teacher has is socially grounded’ (p 294).

Having painted a picture of what the labour process in TVET contexts entails, the process of educational change that comes with circumstances which interfere or become a hindrance to the smooth running of the daily work is suggested by research as being repugnant to lecturers and teachers in general. Examples include interfering with time-tabling, class size, type of student, infrastructure, availability of resources, discipline of students and dealing with conflict, assessment and record-keeping, relationships and liaison with fellow workers. Connell (1985) states that ‘class size both directly defines a teacher’s task in whole-class teaching, and limits the teacher’s ability to pursue alternatives such as one-on-one work on learning problems’ (p 75). From my own experiences as a practitioner in education, class size does contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and has an impact on stress levels of a teacher or lecturer concerned. Smaller class sizes are usually associated with easier teaching.

According to Goodson and Hargreaves (1996), other themes that underscore teachers' dissatisfaction include working conditions, better, market-related salaries, standards of practice, ways of recruitment and training. They further argue that teachers often see educational change as bringing with it 'reprofessionalisation of their work by presenting broader tasks, greater complexity, more sophisticated judgment and collective decision-making among colleagues, while other parts of the work are becoming deprofessionalized in terms of more pragmatic training, reduced discretion over goals and purpose and increased dependence on detailed learning outcomes prescribed by others (ibid, p 3).

It is further argued that when educational change takes place, 'teachers' professional identities are also at risk, and sometimes under threat' (Connell, 1985, p 201). This has, in many countries, manifested itself in a variety of ways, such as giving regulatory bodies and authorities control over educational institutions, thus taking away professional autonomy. It is thought that such change may even expose lecturers and teachers as weak even in situations they have no control over, such as the discipline of students.

A teacher's sense of self is of great significance for this study, because conceptions of themselves have an influence on their performance at work and in their professional lives. Due to their whole emotional economy (Connell, 1985), teachers will react in different ways to different situations. Examples can be found in Huberman's (1993) research on teachers' lives, where he researched the complexity of the life cycle of teachers throughout the span of their careers as a heuristic for comprehending the influence of psychological and sociological factors on their work lives. His study highlighted the critical relationship between teachers and their place of work, particularly in the context of educational reform. Of significance to this study are his themes of:

(i) Exploration: survival and discovery

Although Huberman aligns this with the initial year in a teacher's career, in the context of this study this theme relates to the initial stages of working under merged FET colleges, adapting to new institutional changes and the pangs of implementing a new curriculum.

Applicable to this study is his aspect of survival, focusing on 'reality shock'. Huberman states that 'reality shock' includes:

... initial confrontation with the complexity of professional work to be done, continuous trial and error, discrepancies between instructional goals and what one is able to achieve in the classroom, inappropriate instructional materials, wide swings from permissiveness to excessive strictness, concerns with discipline and management that eat away at instructional time and recalcitrant pupils (1993, p 5).

Huberman added that, for some of the teachers, the experience became inimical to 'survival' and shifted towards positive 'discovery' whereby they were filled with enthusiasm and looked forward to becoming 'a colleague within a guild of professionals' (Huberman, 1993, p 5). For these teachers, exploration was followed by stabilization in which they committed to the new responsibilities and the new professional identity, i.e. a 'positive approach to affirmation of the self' (p 5). Depending on the teacher's sense of self and the emotional make-up, others reacted differently to similar situations.

(ii) Stock-taking and interrogation

In this theme, Huberman argued about the existence of increased vulnerability and reflectiveness which might be expedited by psychological crisis and an unacceptable structural reform in the teaching context. Stock-taking and interrogation occurred where teachers were experiencing uncertainty, inadequacy and self-doubt due to the introduction of new educational reforms. Depending on individuals, teachers took decisions to either 'entertain the prospect of continuing in the same path' (Huberman, 1993, p 9), or attempting to diversify and try other careers or explore other employment opportunities.

(iii) Conservatism

In Huberman's study, conservatism was characterized by negativism towards educational reforms and was prevalent among older staff members (participants in this study fall under this category). These older members of staff are notorious for being 'ardent complainers' (Huberman, 1993, p 10). Levin (2001) opines that most of these staff members are often more discreet, shrewd and very skeptical of reform, are less tolerant of

younger staff members who are usually less committed to their work and young badly mannered students. Levin (2001) further argues that older members of staff are generally more 'dogmatic and rigid in their thoughts and actions' (p 3). As shall be seen later, these characteristics were evidenced in some of the life stories of participants of this research study.

(iv) Disengagement

Under this theme, Huberman argued that disengagement is characterized by being either serene or bitter for teachers with more years of experience. Although not always in a negative way, signs of gradual internalization, described by Huberman (1993, p11) as 'interiorization' and withdrawal might be evident. Some of these older teachers may feel marginalized by management and other colleagues because they oppose changing policies and practices.

Teachers respond in many different ways to reform contexts. Although policy reform usually spells 'disaster for public education' (Connell, 1985) affecting the majority of the teachers due to labour related challenges, teachers do not react as one cohesive social body. One of the reasons is that reform finds them at 'different phases of their professional and career development' (Day *et al.* 2000). Responses to new labour processes and restructured divisions of labour may also vary, depending on experience, gender, educational levels, educational backgrounds and personal matters such as upbringing and family contexts. Teachers' responses may therefore be 'shaped by their own subjectivities' (Schweisfurth, 2002, p26).

3.2.1.2.3 The pattern of control and autonomy in the workplace

As with other workers, lecturers and teachers in general 'have a legitimate interest in the content of their jobs' (Connell, 1985). It is important for lecturers as teachers to have space in which they can do their work without constant pressure and to have an adequate democratic environment in which to do their work adequately. Connell (1985) elucidates:

They have an interest in doing socially useful work, in having a satisfying work experience, in not being under destructive personal pressures, in having space to be creative and exercise their skills. They have a legitimate interest in the control of their workplaces, in not being subject to other peoples' control without their consent, not being pushed around, having the opportunity and resources to make decisions collectively for themselves (p 203).

Teachers are susceptible to surveillance from government, educational institution management, and people and parents from communities that they serve. The majority of teachers and TVET college lecturers who complain about bureaucratic practices cite bureaucratic rigidity, forced transfers and appointment in distant areas particularly, rural contexts. A rural area as opposed to an urban or a metropolitan area is perceived by the majority of people to be characterized by a simple, inexpensive life, subsistence agriculture, poverty, dullness, isolation and powerlessness. Research shows that being deployed in these areas is a serious challenge, due to under-resourcing as posited by Tabach and Friedlander (1997):

Teaching aids and materials, particularly those that relate to local context, are often in short supply in rural areas. Small classrooms with large numbers of learners make practical teaching and evaluation of learning difficult. Physical constraints in the classroom and an absence of regular professional support lead to low motivation levels among rural teachers and learners (p 39).

Perceived unreasonable control by management and government through prescribing enormous amounts of paperwork, reports and other administrative duties are seen by teachers as an unnecessary interference with the way they have always done their work. Connell (1985) warns that measures that aim at too close supervision 'contradict the ideology of professionalism' (p 129), because the majority of teachers are able to supervise themselves, as they are guided by human capital which they possess in the form of knowledge and expertise as well as professional ethics.

The findings of many research studies reveal that close supervision causes resentment and has been one of the causes of strikes and industrial action in education in many countries. Those teachers who complain or become ringleaders in protests are victimized

by authorities who always possess ‘reserve powers’ (ibid), as evidenced in this comment by one of Connell’s respondents:

Well, I’ve had arguments with them (the senior staff) before. Like why we had to hand up our tests, every time we set a class test it’s supposed to go back to them so they check it.... I didn’t realize when I was doing these things and having the arguments that when my probationary point came up they would all be used against me in evidence, but they were. The deputy would bring up things like being late for lessons by a few minutes or something, and actually every trivial thing that I’ve done wrong in the school was brought up, and they decided that I was going to stay on probation (p 129).

Assertive teachers are vulnerable to this kind of victimization. Those teachers who are vocal suffer consequences and may even lose their jobs. The less vocal ones are prone to high levels of stress, because suffering in silence naturally affects people emotionally and psychologically. In the same breath, the latter scenario may be pointing to strategic compliance, as described by Schweisfurth (2002), who feels that other teachers may resolve to co-operate, thinking that they have no choice but ‘to implement reforms and that they will be punished if they choose not to, no matter what their reason might be’ (p 82). Some of them therefore comply as a strategy to protect themselves against their own well-informed judgment.

The existence of hierarchies of power such as governing bodies, for example, College Councils in South African TVET contexts, and provincial and national government authorities have compounded teachers’ dilemmas. Research conducted at one of the KZN colleges, the Mnambithi FET College, before the FET summit in September 2010, suggests that educational reform has adopted a top-down style of innovation and renovation. This is not unique to South Africa. In a study of the impact of educational reform on teachers conducted in Hong Kong in 1990, Morris *et al.* (2000) point out that the Targeted Oriented Curriculum (TOC) had features of a top-down style, initiated by politicians who were not fully cognizant of the realities of schooling (p 44). Exacerbating the situation were perceptions by the teachers that:

... it was developed by an overseas team with no experience in the local context, designed to impose western practices on a Chinese context, attempting to redefine Chinese-language education in terms of the precepts of English as a foreign language, and overall, an attempt to perpetuate the colonial influence beyond 1997 (ibid. p 45).

This is another example of research revealing how teachers may feel under siege due to perceptions that bureaucrats are imposing policy when they usually know little about what they as teachers go through at a practice level. Reflections from the case of Finland reveal that it becomes hard for most teachers to commit themselves to new reforms. There might be many reasons for this, including animosity towards policy borrowing, dictatorship and other top-down procedures. One vocational education teacher described her feelings towards reforms: "... and most frustrating was that they were commands from outside" (Heikkinen, 1997, p4). This is an indication that teachers are not comfortable being dictated to by authorities, but would rather be treated as participants, not passive recipients, in educational reform planning.

The top-down educational innovation styles reflect global trends, as they are influenced by forces beyond government control, since states have lost sovereignty due to globalization. Porter (1999) argues that 'the imperatives that shape the nation state and the perceived threats to political nationalism from religious and ethnic forces, transnational corporations and international agencies, have caused the state authorities in all nations to exercise increasing control over education policy and practice' (p 46).

The notion of centralization, decentralization of accountability and competency-based performance measurement tampers with teachers' professional judgment (Smyth, 1995) exacerbating uncertainty. Day *et al.* (2000) point out that the role of teachers in the curriculum domain has been considered to be a key source of their professionalism over the years (p 270). Worldwide, there were eras in the twentieth century in which teacher freedom, where curriculum is concerned, was uppermost and it was accepted that a teacher is a 'professional who must be directly implicated in the business of curriculum renewal; not as a mere purveyor of other peoples' bright ideas, but as an innovator himself' (ibid). In recent years that liberty has immensely diminished, rendering

curricular freedom meaningless. The imposition of national curricula is viewed as ‘marking a major and unprecedented threat to teacher professionalism’ (Helsby & McCulloch, 1996; McCulloch 1997a). Educational reforms characterized by limiting teacher autonomy through centralized control and external accountability, have led to dissatisfaction amongst teachers (Day *et al.*, 2000).

In TVET contexts this bureaucratic skepticism is aggravated by being under the watchful eye of industries who are potential employers of the college by-product. The labour market, which ‘has become an increasingly important ideological mechanism’ (Connell, 1985) in educational change, compounds tension between industries, management and teachers. This is particularly so because curricular discourse and visions for its reconstruction are influenced by labour market demands and aspirations of skills and human resource development for economic growth. Moll *et al.* (2005, p 39) suggest that ‘labour market demands are those arising from employers’ expectations of their workforce’. The economy nowadays demands a skilled workforce that is able to ‘change and adapt their types of skills and knowledge’ to the requirements of the trends in the labour market. Teachers at vocational education and training colleges are under pressure to produce ‘what employers seek at any point, and make sure that their courses and programmes are responsive to their demands’ (*ibid*, p 39). My assumption is that this expectation tends to complicate the roles and competences of a person teaching in the TVET sector because, over and above being knowledgeable in the field and possessing tacit knowledge, the situation demands that he or she knows more about the industry through engaging with the labour market so as to be appropriately responsive to the curriculum change.

3.2.2 Teachers’ curriculum reform implementation experiences

The term ‘curriculum’ has been used, defined and understood by people in many different ways. In the context of this study the term will be used to refer to curriculum as a plan, meaning that it is policy, a blueprint prescribed by the government, a legislated document applicable to all educational institutions concerned or educational sectors targeted. This study further looked at the experiences of TVET lecturers and considered how they have

made sense of the prescribed curriculum, the NCV and the interpretation of the curriculum as practice or process.

Worldwide, one of the tallest trees troubled by the winds of political change is curriculum. Examples of this in Africa are found in Kenya and Zimbabwe. In Kenya, curriculum reform focused around changing the *status quo* of education *vis-à-vis* a “different socialisation process” and the desire to influence the “racial and ethnic prejudices” (Nieuwenhuis, 1996, p 56) nurtured by the colonial era. Debates revolved around preferences for either the academic curriculum or a vocationalised curriculum, or a concoction of both. This is the same debate that has brazenly dominated political, social and educational change in South Africa.

Giving an account of educational reforms in Kenya, Nieuwenhuis (1996) argues that ‘these countries had inherited underdevelopment, and racially segregated educational systems that were characterised by inequalities...’ (p 5). Zimbabwe’s initiation of curriculum reform was to “make education more relevant to the needs of its people” (Nieuwenhuis, 1996, p 82). This led to the concept of ‘Education with production’, a view that strove to integrate academic subjects with practical aspects to enable people to solve real-life situations. It is for this reason that I concur with Harley and Wedekind (2004) who state that there is a close relationship between national political visions and national curricula (p 195). South Africa is no different.

It is therefore not surprising that curriculum change has been one of the most crucial buzz-words in South Africa since 1997, when the first post-apartheid educational reform was introduced in an attempt to reverse inequalities by adapting discriminatory content and merging syllabi from 18 different education departments. For mainstream education, reform was conceptualized through the launch of Curriculum 2005 which had to commence in Grade One in 1998. Curriculum reform, for TVET colleges, was evidenced by the introduction of the NCV in 2000. This vocationally oriented curriculum was meant to replace the NATED courses, in an attempt to destroy the divide between theory and

practice, to achieve the skills mandate for the country's economic benefit and to provide options for progression to higher education institutions.

According to Robertson (1996), dramatic changes are planned and finalized outside educational institutions, usually at national and provincial government levels, but their impact is felt in campuses and classrooms through curricular reforms. The intensity of the impact is even felt in educational jargon that usually comes with the change. For example, in South Africa new terms such as 'outcomes-based', 'learner-centred', and 'integrated pedagogy', and strategies like group work became popular in the build-up towards the 1994 transformation. Robertson (1996) asserts that post-world war mass schooling terminology changed and was 'replaced by new language such as outputs, performance, added-value, choice, markets, quality, competencies, excellence, flexibility, deregulation and school-based partnerships' (ibid p 28).

Connell (1985) adds that curricula changes aggravate the situation, as they create more work with less support for staff, or any reduction in class session hours, but with heavier workloads and criticism of teachers' competencies in which their professional skills are rendered inadequate (Morris *et al.*, 2000).

Day *et al.* (2000) quotes one teacher who had been coerced by the bureaucratic system to move to a different part of the community:

I found myself under intense scrutiny from colleagues, senior managers and educationally aware parents. It was raining on my beach. The National Curriculum swept over my beach as a tornado of uncertainty, unwieldy bureaucracy and sophisticated management demands I felt inadequate in the face of demands from colleagues for solutions to the problems presented by the demands of the National Curriculum and distressed that an education system I had loyally served could have spawned such a patently unworkable monster. In short, I lost confidence in those responsible for the system.

The instructions from management meant that the teacher had to adapt to new work situations in which he was affected personally and professionally. One of the issues

evident in this teacher's experience is a relationship between educational change, work context and the sense of self, which includes affectivity. When Nias (1996) investigated teachers' gratification and dissatisfaction with their work and what it means to feel like a teacher, she stressed that educational change may have an impact on the emotional wellbeing of a teacher. She added that the affective, cognitive and practical tasks of teaching play a very important role in professional teachers' lives and work:

Teachers feel, often passionately, about their pupils, about their professional skill, about their colleagues and the structures of schooling, about dealings with other significant adults such as parents and inspectors, about the actual or likely effect of educational policies upon pupils and themselves (1996, p293).

As a result, Nias believes that affectivity, cognition, classroom practices and institution context cannot be separated from teachers' sense of self, because these are central to a teacher's work. The present study took these into consideration, especially 'affectivity' as a meaningful experience. This is because 'emotions are understood as experiences that result from teachers' embeddedness in and interactions with their professional environment' (Kelchtermans, 2005, p 2). This further confirms that a teacher's life is interconnected to other people in her world of work and what those people think of him or her. Therefore, a lecturer cannot be disengaged from the cultural, social and historical contexts. As a result, 'the unique sense of self which every teacher has is socially grounded' (Nias, 1996, p 294).

Similar examples of the experiences of teachers regarding curriculum reforms are gleaned from the General Education sector in relation to C2005 in South Africa, as responses of teachers to this curriculum change and other additional interventions are well documented. For example, Oakes, (2001) investigated the challenges and difficulties Grade 7 teachers were experiencing in the implementation of C2005. One of the major challenges revealed in his findings is identification of lack of resources as a major obstacle in implementing the new curriculum. Additional dissatisfactions they complained about included 'the lack of the necessary confidence and assistance required for successful implementation, increase in workload, required recording and reporting

processes were a threat to them, and that educators were stressed and lacked the necessary qualifications to rollout the curriculum' (Towani, 2010). The findings of this study are not unique to C2005. Worldwide, all educational change comes with a level of uncertainty (Fullan, 1999), leading to disenchantment of the teachers as implementers.

Clark (2005) explored the preparedness of Grade 10 teachers in managing and implementing curriculum changes from the Interim Core Syllabus of R550 to the Further Education and Training programme which was implemented in 2006 in senior secondary schools. The main findings of that study revealed that teachers in disadvantaged schools continued to use traditional teaching methods that lacked effective cognitive interactions with learners. Amongst other things, this evidence points to inadequate readiness and failure to adapt to the new innovation, which may be due to insufficient training and preparation given to teachers to understand and comprehend the further education and training principles and policies (Towani, 2010).

Sibuqashe (2005) conducted research investigating the preparedness of teachers at senior secondary schools in implementing the OBE curriculum and what impact such implementation would have on available infrastructure and material. He concluded that, though teachers had undergone some form of training in OBE methods, they felt that this was insufficient. It was clear that teachers preferred the 'old methods of teaching', as it ensured syllabus control, but it was also because 'the teachers did not hold a good understanding of OBE ...' (Williams, 1999, p 361), due to other factors such as difficult terminology aggravated by shortcomings in teachers' command of the English language.

A further sore point in the process of educational reform that includes curricular changes is the issue of context. Affirming this fact is Blignaut (2005), who posits that the context in which teachers implement curriculum, teachers' epistemologies and learner diversity have an impact on how teachers translate curriculum from policy to practice in the classroom.

The workplace for lecturers is the educational institution, in the present study a college or a campus of a college. This is the context in which lecturers as teachers perform their day-to-day activities. Research reveals that the context in which teachers or lecturers work is rarely considered in the process of educational change. Gultig *et al.* (2002) criticized educational reform in mainstream education in South Africa, claiming that the ‘frameworks have given no attention to the context of implementation and how the new vision could be put in place in the profoundly unequal school context that apartheid left behind’ (p 74). Oakes (2001) pointed out:

the importation of outcomes-based education and the National Qualifications Frameworks may have misrecognized the nature of the relationship between school and society in South Africa, especially in respect to teachers’ personal and professional identities ... in order to implement OBE and the NQF, teachers may well need to first shift their own identities, their understanding of who they are and how they relate to others (p 15).

Fullan (1999) argued that good educational reforms needed to look at immediate environments and adapt local contexts to be conducive to implementing change and contribute towards changing peoples’ beliefs and behaviour, for new innovations to be practical and be carried forward better. Besides providing infrastructure, resources, including skilled human resources, are of great necessity. Capable leaders, highly competent teachers who are ready to learn about the new innovations, students who are willing to engage in learning situations and the creation of contexts, which will allow people to engage with possibilities, can take educational reform initiatives far. In this sense, Fullan’s approach that advocates for all stakeholders in the educational change to be change agents has potential for meaningful change. In this way, culture in an institution is viewed as a social journey, not an individualistic enterprise. Sarason (1995) agrees with this and adds that a comprehensive understanding of any educational institution’s culture is essential for the successful introduction of curriculum reform. But changing and adapting culture requires orchestrating strong strategies for capacity building, especially training of teachers.

Commentators on educational reforms have identified lack of capacity building as one of the factors that derail curricular innovations. Although some staff development work has taken place since transformation occurred, most of these have been short courses and sporadic workshops that last a few days or a week. As a result, the TVET colleges are still facing serious lecturer capacity challenges in the form of unqualified and under-qualified lecturers, staff recruitment (Bird, 2001 in McGrath, 2004) and retention of existing staff. Papier (2009) stresses that training of staff is a priority for implementation of the new curriculum. Lecturers believe that this has been neglected by the government and management of different TVET colleges. Papier (2009) believes that lecturers need pedagogical knowledge, methodologies and adult education strategies. Ongoing debates about what type of initial and continuing professional development TVET college lecturers need are long overdue.

According to Powell and Hall (2002) unqualified and under-qualified staff members in South African TVET colleges constituted 12% in 2000. This is a big shortcoming that could have adverse effects on curricular implementation. Wedekind (2010) states that the formal offering of programmes aimed at training TVET based lecturing staff is so limited that it is not surprising that 'there is practically no literature on technical and vocational teacher education' (p 1). Cited as reasons for this challenge are lack of, and delays in policy-giving frameworks on what form of educational training should be offered to college lecturing staff. Training as assessors is one of the short-term courses that have taken centre stage over the past few years as a consequence of SETA accreditation requirements.

Studies concerning how teachers have responded to curriculum reform in other educational fields and sectors, point to the lack of or the insufficient amount of teacher training dedicated to the process of curriculum reform. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (2006) commits itself to ensuring that teachers are well equipped to undertake the teaching demands introduced by a democratic South Africa. This policy states clearly that it seeks to continually enhance teachers' professional competencies and performance in the 21st century. The document

outlines several ways in which this could be achieved, including courses for new teachers and those already in the system. Not much of this has been evidenced in the TVET college sector, however.

Similar examples of curriculum reform in relation to training are found in Botswana. Koosimile (2005), whose study focused on teachers' experiences in implementing a modified International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) physics syllabus in Botswana, noted that the new curriculum was characterised by a significant shift in the organisational and pedagogic paradigm, moving from a teacher-centred approach to a flexible, non-prescriptive and student-centred curriculum.

The adapted version of this IGCSE curriculum is called the Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE). This programme consists of two components; the core curriculum and the extended curriculum. Both require certain types of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are examinable and also fundamental physics concepts and principles. Koosimile (2005) investigated experiences of teachers in adopting the BGCSE physics syllabus for implementation in senior secondary schools. He notes that teachers felt confused and uncertain about the nature of the syllabus and whether or not the conditions were conducive to implement such a curriculum. His analysis revealed that teachers felt that there was a lack of commitment from the aims of the BGCSE syllabus regarding how intellectual and practical needs of students of different abilities were catered for. Teachers believed that the practicality of the subject was unattainable. Of note was how teachers felt inadequate, due to the perception that the training they had received was insufficient, and that no follow-up workshops and in-service activities were provided.

As I end this exemplar, I want to quote from Koosimile (2005) a profound conclusion drawn from the results of the study, which I believe would hold true for many curriculum innovations:

The considerable overlaps in the core and extended curriculum components of the syllabus blurred the distinction between the two as well as weakened the prospect of fidelity of adoption and implementation. The resulting

innovation gap invariably meant that the ideals of the syllabus and the associated paradigm shift were possibly not realised in teaching in Botswana (p. 219).

The above underscores the importance of making clear policy statements and expectations inherent in any new curriculum.

Many theorists worldwide argue that curriculum changes should be preceded by adequate training in order for teachers to engage effectively with implementation and other curricular demands. For example, Uiseb (2007) strongly recommends that for successful implementation of curriculum reform, teaching staff must undergo retraining and self-improvement. This training should encompass all aspects of the curriculum development cycle, because curriculum reform is a delicate task that requires educators to be involved right from the inception, i.e. from the design to the implementation stage (Uiseb, 2007). Ramparsad (2001) concurs with this notion and offers the following strategies for teacher training in curriculum development: large scale in-service training, dissemination of information to other teachers using thoroughly prepared seminars, workshops, newsletters and brochures, as well as the setting of realistic timeframes for the implementation of the curriculum.

An audit of FET colleges in the Eastern Cape in 2008 produced some thought-provoking results with regards to the views and capabilities of educators in FET colleges, pertaining to the practical components of the curriculum. It revealed that only 38% of educators were confident of their ability to teach and fully convey the practical components of their subjects to learners and 34% revealed a need for a practical up-skilling intervention (Wedekind, 2008).

The implications of practically unskilled lecturers and lecturers who feel they are unable to impart the necessary skills to learners are deleterious. There were miscalculations in terms of teacher capabilities and pedagogy identified as impediments to the implementation of C2005. Jansen (2001) argues that ‘the miscalculation was to think that a teacher lacking professional confidence and falling short of the required subject

competence could be shifted to the margins of the classroom' (p 243). This he regards as one of the harsh realities that the policy failed to take into account. Other critics add that incapacitated teachers and lecturers may hinder the process of skills demands for economic growth, which is the international trend and national view of what TVET colleges should work towards providing (Akoojee, 2008). The strength of TVET colleges and the sector as a whole is dependent on the human capital that exists in the system and that it attracts and retains for the achievement of the skills mandate.

Confirming the above are findings of a study conducted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in the European Union countries. This study identified a few problems with the competency of TVET lecturers. One of these was the inability of teachers to make the link between theoretical and practical knowledge. The second problem was that the lecturers were too far removed from the work-places (Gamble, 2003). These problems show the need for a better understanding of the key role-players and stakeholders to make policy and other interventions, in accordance with these challenges.

Young (2006) offered advice to government, management in colleges and lecturing staff of colleges before the inception of the National Certificate Vocational programmes. He strongly advised that 'FET College staff should not only be familiar with the new curriculum and its pedagogic demands but must also have clarity on the new meaning of the vocational role of colleges' (p 153). This would call for training and retraining of such staff using different models that would fit the situation (Towani, 2010).

The disadvantage of shying away from training lecturers or taking shortcuts is that they are robbed of an opportunity to think, analyze and make sense of educational changes before they are operationalized. Kelchtermans (2005) argues that teachers have to be given a chance to interpret demands for change and make sense of them through social processes, because 'the sense-making determines teachers' eventual reactions to the reforms' (p 2).

Although the above may be true, research postulates that there is no causal relationship between training and proper curricular implementation. One of the arguments is that the relationship between education and training and increase in productivity is not that simple and straight-forward (McGrath *et al.* (2006). The atomistic approach, claiming high returns on education and training, has limits and is not as solid anymore, because of the complexity of the change process and the influence of external factors such as government and other stakeholders. Much can be learned from the findings of Davey (2006) who investigated the decontextualizing process of the National Curriculum Statement from conceptualization to realization, in one of the phases in South African classrooms. The vertical process of role-players from the National Department of Education, through to the provincial, regional, district and eventually the school revealed that each role-player displayed different understandings of the recontextualization process. For example, in spite of some teachers having attended training workshops and cascading this information to others, the results still showed that curriculum policies as envisaged by policymakers were not implemented or disseminated exactly as originally stated. The reasons given for this were that the teacher translates curriculum policy in the context of his/her own experience, management support, learner diversity and the availability of resources. Confirming this assertion are findings from research conducted by Morris *et al.* (2000), in Hong Kong. Their study of the implementation phase revealed that ‘teachers have interpreted the reform in terms of their prior experiences and understandings that are not necessarily in accordance with the intentions of the reform (p 3).

Another thorny issue in relation to curricular issues is assessment. Basson (2007), in addressing the challenge of assessment in an outcomes-based curriculum, points out that ‘lecturers struggle to bring their assessment practices in line with the policies’ (p 4). He adds that even though most lecturers have received training as assessors, this has not provided them with sufficient knowledge to implement the outcomes-based assessment. Also cited in his findings are problems of heavier workloads, excessive administration and paperwork and abnormal teacher-student ratios.

Holmes (2005) emphasizes that these have caused enormous stress for teachers. Confirming what has been said above, she cites contributory factors such as increased workloads, increased administration in the form of paperwork, taking work home, the physical environment of the classroom and a sense of powerlessness regarding influencing decisions that directly impact on their jobs. Research from a number of scholars who have investigated school teachers and the implementation of C2005 and OBE (Oakes, 2001; Clark, 2005; Davey, 2006; Siqubashe, 2005) in South Africa confirm that curriculum change is not a simple and straightforward matter, but is complex. Teachers' roles become more complex and stressful due to increased accountability, heavier workloads, and lack of resources, inadequate training and high levels of uncertainty. Fullan (1999) strongly concurs with these researchers, when warning that teachers may fail to adapt to change because of the stress it produces and the changes it demands.

3.2.3 Conclusion

The literature that has been reviewed suggests that, worldwide, lecturers working in TVET and teachers in general, are affected by state interventions in the form of institutional, structural and curricular reforms operationalized in the education systems in which they work. Educational reforms demand that teachers adapt to new contexts, which include management and administrative structures, teaching environments, attitudes that students bring and the quality of the physical infrastructure.

The issue of curriculum in vocationally oriented education is quite a complicated one, as governments around the world are increasingly seeing vocational education as the answer to long-term global development and competitiveness. This has also influenced education policy discourse in South Africa, whereby the TVET college landscape is channeled towards playing a vital role within labour, by being expected to produce a citizenry that will meet the intermediate to high skills demands of the country (Human Resources Development Review, 2003).

From the foregoing discussions it is suggested that interests of teachers, in general, 'need to be protected in the process of educational reform' (Day *et al.*, 2000). Research suggests, however that, internationally, ideologies on education do not pay much attention to teachers' interests. In the midst of educational reform teachers usually have more dissatisfaction than gratification. Reasons for unhappiness are not unfounded, as 'the consequences have been decisive and tangible through wage roll-backs, an overall decline in salaries, increased funds to the private sector, larger class sizes, more administration, massive budget cuts, the deregulation of wage settings, teacher licensing, to name a few' (Robertson, 1996, p 29).

It has also been suggested that most educational reforms are initiated and largely controlled by politicians. This leads to perceptions of them as primarily political, rather than either andragogical or pedagogical. Although support for the overarching principles is overwhelming, research shows that teachers have not been adequately considered as stakeholders. Issues of uncertainty among teachers, inadequacy of training, job insecurities that cause low morale, and multidimensional challenges of resources and infrastructure, have compounded implementation challenges in many educational reform innovations. As a result, the majority of lecturers and teachers do not embrace educational reform that easily as they become engulfed by skepticism, mistrust of the legitimacy and practicality of the change and fear of becoming part of the unknown. Fernandez (2000) argues that 'a majority of teachers do not readily 'jump on the bandwagon' (p 240), for 'no one, after having drunk old wine straightway wishes for new'; for he says, 'the old is better' (The Holy Bible, Luke 5: 39).

Day (2000) states that we need to remind ourselves that:

teachers, like those in other more commercial occupations, now live in uncertain worlds where systematic change is outside their control and where traditions of respect (that teachers have the best interests of students at heart), trust (that teachers have the knowledge and skills to do a good job), autonomy (in which teachers alone are responsible and accountable for educational decision making at classroom and school level) and guaranteed employment for life (regardless of results) are no longer uncontested (p 111).

Examples cited in this section add value to the understanding of teachers' experiences and provide an insightful glimpse into what ordinary teachers have gone through in processes of educational reforms. Goodson (1995) stresses that:

Periods of reform may be characterized as extrinsic critical incidents in which macro political changes impinge on and interact with classrooms and personal lives. Given that reforms are intended to raise standards of teaching and learning it is important, then, to chart their effect on the teacher as a person as well as a professional in order to establish what has been called 'genealogy of context' (p 96).

I concur with Goodson's statement and add that understanding teachers' experiences, and TVET college lecturers' experiences, in the context of this study, and in relation to how educational reforms have impacted on their work and their lives, is crucial, because lessons learnt from such research could help minimize flaws in future education reconstruction projects and their effects on lecturer/teacher development.

3.3 Theoretical framework

3.3.1 Introduction

In this section I outline the conceptual framework for this thesis. As explained above, I chose the social theory of Norbert Elias, which puts emphasis on the interconnectedness of peoples' lives within a social context. It is a theory that can be applied in a wide range of issues, as its relevance goes far beyond a single academic discipline. It also intermeshes substantive research and theory in different contexts. Mennell (1989) argues that these characteristics added indispensable quality to Elias's work. There are other theorists who have used the same sociological premise as a starting point. Convergence and complementarity can be identified in the works of Parsons (1942a); Arendt (1958a); Foucault, (1967); Bauman, (1979); Coser, (1980) and Pels, (1991), but Elias's theory is a remarkably consistent theory, highly regarded by many, due to its theoretical-empirical excellence (Mennell, 1989). The theory was deemed relevant for this study as a tool to gain a deeper understanding of TVET College lecturers' experiences of post-apartheid

educational change in their personal and professional lives, not as individuals but as part of complex intertwined relationships within a social context.

3.3.2 Background

Norbert Elias was a Jewish German sociologist, born in Breslau (now Wroclaw in Poland) in 1897. Belonging to a despised Jewish community within Germany, Elias experienced conflict, prejudice and discrimination, flowing from out-group pressures, or what he termed ‘established-outsider relations’ (1976) and an identity crisis. Of importance for this study is the fact that he and his family were displaced from Hitler’s Germany by war and he eventually found himself moving to England, where he worked as a lecturer at the University of Leicester until he retired in 1962. All these factors, coupled with the loss of his parents, meant losing a safe haven or a cocoon-like home environment and personally tasting experiences of separation, discontinuity and violence. He dedicated his life to researching German ‘Kultur’ and the civilising process and its ramifications (Smith, 2001, p 40). Although circumstances were different, it will be discussed in the last two chapters how TVET college lecturers went through unpalatable experiences of displacement from their comfort zones due to the mergers of old the technical colleges.

His works were produced in German from the 1920s to the 1960s. It was only in the late 1970s that his materials were translated from German to English. Among his many works, ‘*The Civilizing Process*’ is considered by diverse scholars as his masterpiece. It was first published in 1939, but regrettably only reached English readership approximately 30 years later. Another regrettable fact is that the first English version of this book was first published in two volumes, separated by four years. These ‘historical vicissitudes of publication and translation’ (Loyal, 2009) did not succeed in hindering a resurgence of interest in his works from that time on.

It is a sad reality that Elias’ work became more famous and fashionable after his death in 1990. In the 93 years of his life, his work did not see much upward trajectory of interest. Smith (2001) argues that it was his death that gave his resources more publicity.

According to the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) publications that used his work as a central theme and cited him in their bibliographies started to grow in 1981 and there was a steady rise, which eventually saw Elias entering ‘the gates of the Hall of Fame’ (Smith, 2001, p 13).

Elias published a series of books, with *The Civilizing Process* (1939) as his masterpiece. Other famous books include: *The Court Society* (1983), *What is Sociology?* (1978), *The Loneliness of the Dying* (1985) and, posthumously, *The Symbol Theory* (1991), *Mozart. Portrait of a Genius* (1993) and *The Germans* (1996).

In most of his published work Norbert Elias put emphasis on the interwoven nature of human relationships. Elias (1978, p 15) considers that people live and co-exist as part of complex networks that he called figurations. The figurations ‘make up webs of interdependence or figurations of many kinds’ that link people, groups, communities and institutions. This mechanism of interweaving he called ‘Geflechtsmechanismus’ in German. Such an understanding of the relationship between human beings is inimical to the egocentric ways of comprehending human relationships, conceptualizing each of us as individual people ‘surrounded by social structure’ (Elias, 1978, p 14). According to Elias (1978), this is a very traditional way of viewing individuals and society and it needs to be replaced by ‘a different, more realistic picture of people who, through their basic dispositions and inclinations, are directed towards and linked with each other in most diverse ways’ (p 15).

3.3.3 Why Elias’s figuration sociology?

Figuration sociology of Norbert Elias has become a well-established theoretical framework (Haycock & Smith, 2010) over the past four decades. It has been used in educational research such as Inclusion and National Curriculum for Physical Education (Haycock & Smith, 2010), PE teachers and Figurations (Green, 2002) in the UK and A Figuration Analysis of the Lives and Careers of Some South African Teachers (Wedekind, 2010). It has also been used in non-educational contexts such as Diffusion of Medical Innovations (Bessant, 2008), Health Professionals and identity (Korica &

Molloy, 2010) and Feminism and Figurations (Mansfield, 2008)). But the theory has never been used in researching experiences of lecturers in the midst of educational change in a technical vocational education and training context. Using figurational sociology in this study is viewed as a theoretical contribution to the knowledge base in a very under-researched South African TVET sector.

Elias's theory was chosen because of its emphasis on the interconnectedness of people through their intertwined actions and relationships that they are embedded in. Elias emphasizes intersubjectivity and promotes the notion 'of people in the plural' (Elias, 1978, p 121). This study views TVET college lecturers as social beings who do not exist in isolation from other people. Because of the notion of interdependency, they were understood in relation to other people in their lives. Hence the use of this theory as a tool to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences of post-apartheid educational change in their personal and professional lives, not as individuals, but as part of complex, intertwined relationships within a social context.

Educational reform is a complex process, which involves wide networks (figurations) of people and their intertwined actions at different levels. Elias argues that involvement of large numbers of people, especially at different tiers, produces unequal power relations and that their interests and perceptions may diverge (Elias, 1978; 1987). He opines that relations within a figuration are shaped by power balances. TVET college lecturers have their actions interlinked with those of their colleagues, students, parents, campus management, college management and the government, at both provincial and national levels. In human relationships power relations are always uneven. Within the figurations is the existence of functional interdependence characterized by imbalances in power. Elias's theory was deemed fit to provide a good theoretical framework for analyzing the lecturers' experiences with regards to power relations and relationships with other people.

Elias's figurational model also involves the use of personal pronouns to signify the importance of interaction and interconnectedness amongst people. His use of personal pronouns emphasizes the perspectival nature of human relations (as shall be discussed

later in this chapter). The notion of personal pronouns in the figurational model was deemed relevant in this study for acknowledging the collective, non-egocentric and highly social nature of educational reform.

To understand social phenomena, Elias analyzed the historical and social processes involved. As educational reform was as a result of social change in South Africa, a deeper understanding of TVET college lecturers had to take historical processes into consideration. Elias's figurational sociology served as a relevant theoretical framework in this regard.

Elias's theory recognizes that peoples' actions and experiences involve cognition and emotions (Elias, 1978). This theory was seen as appropriate for this study, because TVET college lecturers are thinking and feeling beings and are affected by other peoples' actions and government's educational interventions. Even if the consequences of educational reform were unintended and unplanned, lecturers were bound to be affected because they are *homines aperti* (Elias, 1978), not isolated monads without feelings. The theory served as an appropriate analytical lens to produce thick descriptions to understand the phenomenon better.

3.3.4 Elias's key concepts used in this study

The first key concept used in this study is that of 'figurations'. Elias argues that human beings live together forming complex networks of social relationships that he called figurations. These, he believed, link people, groups and institutions together. In this concept, Elias (1978) was attacking a false perception of people that 'their actual selves somehow exist inside them ... while an invisible barrier separates their inside from everything outside - the so-called outside world' (p 119). Elias believed that this is a detrimental perception, because human beings are inescapably embedded in the social world around them. The closed self-image he called '*homo clausus*'. The crux of *homo clausus* is the perception of man as a single isolated adult mind. His argument is therefore that a '*homo clausus*' is a myth, as no person can be a 'closed man' or a 'closed-personality'. Elias (1978a) stated that:

The image of man [sic] as a 'closed personality' is ... replaced by the image of man as an "open personality" who possesses a greater or lesser degree of relative (but never absolute and total) autonomy vis-a-vis other people and who is, in fact, fundamentally oriented toward and dependent on other people throughout his life. The network of interdependencies among human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of ... the figuration, a structure of mutually oriented and dependent people (p 261).

In this argument Elias was refuting the concept of the isolated ego, as he believed that all human beings are part of the 'we-images' or 'we-less I's' (1987a, p 266), because we are all interconnected to one another. Elias's conceptual standpoint is that of '*homines aperti*' or 'open people', who are bound together in intertwined relationships in various ways and degrees. Elias (1982) saw this view as an escape from solipsism, because no person's knowledge has its beginning in him or herself (p 31). Each of us depends on other people; each of us stands on the shoulders of others.

Elias (1982) further argued that the figurations are shaped by social processes. For example, human beings possess capacity to use symbols and knowledge that they have accumulated through intergenerational learning processes. One of those processes and human means of orientation is being able to use time and timing to sequence events and be able to synthesize a mental picture of earlier and later. Elias (1984a) believes that 'it is meaningless to say that it is 4 o'clock now, unless one envisages at the same time that it was 2 o'clock before and will be 6 o'clock later' (p 45). This makes conceiving time an establishment of relationships. People need such synthesizing abilities to be able to coordinate and synchronize their activities in the complex webs of ineluctable interdependence that they are enmeshed in.

Over and above the concept of figurations, the notion of interconnectedness is also evident in his interrogation of concepts such as '*habitus*', 'power' and 'function'. Firstly, Elias used empirical evidence to indicate 'how standards of behaviour and psychological make-up have changed' (Mennell, 1989, p 30). He used a German word '*habitus*' to refer to 'make-up'. Elias was referring to the habits and structures that are created by societies

in which we live and work. Elias (1978) stated that individuals are social beings and only exist in and through relations with others, developing a socially-constructed '*habitus*' or 'second-nature' (Elliot, 2001, p2). Elias expanded the term by constantly using the term 'social habitus' to refer to the level of personality characteristics which people have in common with fellow members in their social groups.

Secondly, Elias (1978) argues that balances of power form an integral part of human relationships:

Balances of power are not only to be found in the great arena of relations between states, where they are often spectacular and attract most attention. They form an integral element of all human relationships. ... It must also be borne in mind that power balances, like human relationships in general, are bi-polar at least, and usually multi-polar. ... From the day of his birth, a baby has power over its parents, not just the parents over the baby. At least, the baby has power over them as long as they attach any kind of value to it. If not, it loses its power. The parents may abandon the baby if it cries too much. They may starve it and, deliberately or not, cause it to die, if it has no function for them. Equally bi-polar is the balance of power between a slave and his master. The master has power over his slave, but the slave also has power over his master, in proportion to his function for his master – his master's dependence on him. In relationships between parents and infants, master and slave, power chances are distributed very unevenly. But whether the power differentials are large or small, balances of power are always present wherever there is functional interdependence between people. In this respect, simply to use the word 'power' is likely to mislead. We say that a person possesses great power, as if power were a thing he carried in his pocket. ... Power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another; it is a structural characteristic of human relationships – of all human relationships (p 74).

Elias sees the notion of interdependence as inextricably bound to issues of power. For him power is a central feature of all human relationships. Elias (1978) adds that interdependence does not mean that people are equally interdependent. People who are 'less dependent on others than others are on them have more power chances than those others' (Mennell, 1989, p 95). For him, power ratios in bi-polar and multi-polar

relationships are more or less unstable and may even be extremely unequal, aggravated as webs of interdependence become extensive.

Elias (1978) links dynamics of power with issues of identity. He argues that embedded in the intertwined figurations are concepts of power and identity. He saw the sense of belonging to a group as an inescapable social occurrence. Amongst groups he saw uneven balances of power, in which the oppressed are subjected to inferiority, stigmatization and inequality, difficult to escape from. Issues of inequalities and uneven power ratios took centre stage in the emancipation struggles of the twentieth century. One example he uses to illustrate this is that of the Burakumin group of Japan. Although they are the same as other Japanese racially, they are hereditarily associated with inferior jobs like digging graves, midwifery and leather-work. They are treated as less than human and have become outcasts. These people have assimilated the stigma; it is deep in their minds because of the way they are treated by the established groups. In such webs of interdependence, which are group-based, Elias (1978) coined the terms 'group charisma' and 'group disgrace', to refer to ambivalent relationships between established we-image and outsider social groups, respectively.

Thirdly, Elias investigates a link between the concepts of 'power' and 'function'. Elias argues that an individual or a group of individuals may have 'constraining power' over another. He emphasized that if an individual or a group of individuals 'lacks something which the other has the power to withhold, the latter has function for the former' (Elias, 1978, p78). In the context of this study such functional interdependencies can be illustrated by lecturer-management and lecturer-learner relationships, in which one of them has either to adapt or submit herself more to the demands of the other. Elias (1978, p 77) adds that even antagonists and enemies 'perform a function for each other'. This is because, Elias (1978) explains, 'the interdependence of human beings due to hostility is no less a functional relationship than that due to their position as friends, allies and specialists, bonded to each other through the division of labour'. In the context of this study, interdependence exists between lecturers in Engineering Studies (as a basic unit)

with other units like Business Studies, even if this is due to ‘compulsion they exert over each other’ (ibid, p 77).

Elias used conflicts between hunters and gatherers to argue against assumptions that relationships in social life are characterized by co-operation, equilibration and harmony. Drought, a natural phenomenon beyond their control, forces tribes to fight and kill each other over scarcity of food to be ecologically interdependent. The encounter brings about continual conflict and tensile balances of power until either is wiped out or until numbers diminish, making food less scarce. It is impossible to understand their actions and what they want to achieve, except by analyzing their interdependence with each other.

3.3.5 Personal pronouns as a figurational model

Elias (1968; 1970a) reasoned that social relationships are multi-perspectival in nature. A relationship between two people (dyadic relationship) is constituted by two distinguishable parts. There is an AB side as seen from A’s perspective and the BA side which is person B’s perspective. Elias also uses game models as an example to clarify more complicated multiple perspectives. He explains that every player has a relationship with each of the teammates which he refers to as ‘he’, ‘she’, and ‘you’ and collectively as ‘we’. The opponents from the other team he refers to as ‘them’ and ‘they’ *vice versa*.

Elias believed that we learn a specific language and ways of speech from people in the figurations that we are part of. As people, we are social actors within social relationships; hence we learn to say ‘I’ at the same time we learn to say ‘we’ (Smith, 2001). None of us can therefore escape using the pronouns such as ‘you’, ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘us’, ‘they’ and ‘them’ due to the intertwined nature of social relationships.

The use of pronouns this way reprobates the naively egocentric view of society. Pronouns are relational and functional (Mennell, 1989). They relate to the interdependent, interactive and intercommunicating people in their respective intertwined figurations. The function of the ‘I’ pronoun is to signify a separate person, who cannot be dissociated from ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘we’ and ‘they’, as every individual is connected and influenced by others in a big interwoven social network. Elias (1970a) elucidates:

'One's sense of personal identity is closely connected with the 'we' and 'they' relationships of one's group, and with one's position within those units of which one speaks as 'we' and 'they'. Yet the pronouns do not always refer to the same people. The figurations to which they currently refer can change in the course of lifetime, just as any person does himself. This is true not only of all people considered separately, but of all groups and even all societies. Their members say 'we' and 'they' of different people as time goes by' (p 128).

The significance of this assertion is that people are, as Mennell (1989) in his analysis of Elias's work, put it, processes too. Peoples' 'I' and 'we', and 'they' images change over time. This puts emphasis on the notion that patterns of relationships, structures of figurations and boundaries of constitutions change over longer periods than a single lifetime. Furthermore, the pronoun model helps to highlight the importance of first-person and third-person perspectives, which is a contribution to epistemological debates of objectivity and subjectivity.

3.3.6 Unintended social consequences

Elias (1970a) states that 'unintentional human interdependencies lie at the root of every intentional interaction' (p 95). He asserts that people have an inaccurate, imperfect and incomplete understanding of the figurations which they are part of. Whatever strategies for action they plan based on imperfect perceptions will more often than not lead to consequences they could not foresee. To illustrate the universal nature of the unanticipated action of social life, Elias (1970a) uses the analogy of the effect of dropping a stone into a pool. The consequence of people's actions ripples outward, stronger at the source but moves until it is lost from sight. The consequences are not felt at random, but are specific according to the structure of the figuration, 'to people who may well be quite unknown to each other and unaware of their mutual interdependence' (Mennell, 1989, p 258).

Elias (1970a) believed that people's definitions of situations are shaped over time in figurations of interdependent people. The reality of how their people's actions are intertwined to yield compelling trends can only be understood from a developmental

perspective. Supporting this assertion is Goudsblom (1977a), who adds that ‘in the development of human societies, yesterday’s unintended social consequences are today’s unintended social conditions of intentional human actions’ (p 149).

In his analysis of game models, Elias explained that interactions between and amongst people are like moves in a game. A game involves actions of interdependent people. In games there are rules, which are the ‘*sine qua non* of any patterning or structure in social life’ (Mennell, 1989). Elias (1978a) asserted that games are characterized by uncertainty with regards to the outcome. Even in a game played by two people, like chess, it is hard to predict the outcome, as probabilities change as the game progresses. For Elias, possible outcomes need to be thought of in terms of probabilities. Like social processes, large game models become more complicated, because chains of interdependence grow and lengthen such that an individual has no control over what takes place. Elias (1970a) uses an analogy:

If the number of interdependent players grows, the figuration, development and direction of the game will become more and more opaque to the individual players. However strong he may be, he will become less and less able to control them. From the point of view of the individual player, therefore, an intertwining network of more and more players functions increasingly as though it had a life of its own (p 85).

Elias explained that games become disorganized if players can no longer figure out the overall picture and this brings pressure for them to either split into small groups or remain in large groups, with two or more tiers. The new elaborate figurations have people like leaders, managers, committees, delegates and representatives as specialized functionaries. None between the top tier players and lower tier players is independent.

Elias (1970a) concluded that opacity of social networks can be observed in all stages of social development, ‘but only in a particular phase of this development could people become aware of this opacity and also, therefore, of uncertainty about themselves as a society’ (p68).

3.3.7 People as emotional beings

In his discussion of the concepts of shame and humiliation, Elias (1978) points out that people are emotional beings, but have a tendency to suppress emotions in fear of transgressing against the rules and the fact that emotions will interfere with rationality. Man monitors and controls himself because his social group judges his performance within a social network. The control *habitus* is used as a tool of social control. Control can also be exercised at work by fellow workers and a hierarchical authority such as government officials and management. Elias (1996) argues that when judgments of others in a social network determine one's success or failure, the shaping power of that figuration upon the social personality becomes high.

Elias sees inequality and hierarchy as social processes which humiliate people as individuals or as groups. He gives many examples, such as situations where hunter-gatherers were forced by civilization to become farmers and when Third World countries have to bow to superpowers like the USA. Initially there is always resistance against loss of power and relative autonomy. This is followed by psychologically accepting superiority and legitimizing the position of authority for those in power. In his analysis of Elias's social theory, Smith (2001) describes this humiliation as 'painful feelings of displacement and severance', where victims 'feel cut out from their established niches and ejected from their old haunts' (p 157). Elias (1978) believed that feelings of humiliation cause people to feel despised, inadequate and pushed down by others or by authority. Acceptance softens the blow of humiliation and is redefined by Elias (1978) as an opportunity that should not be resisted.

3.3.8 Norbert Elias's contribution

On reviewing Elias's works, Elliot (2001) confirms that one of his biggest theoretical contributions was positing that 'individuals can only be understood in their interdependencies with each other, as part of networks of social relations' (p 2) thus developing a distinctive approach termed figural or process sociology. Elias has been cited by many theorists as one of the great sociologists of the twentieth century. Mennell (1989) felt that one of Elias's achievements was that of bridging the micro and

macro sociological chasms through encompassing both ‘people’s behaviour and the broad long-term processes of societies’ structural development’ (p 94). He was able to sketch peoples’ psychogenesis and sociogenesis by bridging the gap between individually-centred and society-centred approaches. He is known as one of the strongest theorists to vigorously reject the subject-object dualism.

Mennell (1989) describes Elias as a ‘significant thinker’ (p 269). According to Gellner (1985), what makes a thinker significant is, *inter alia*, that his work displays some measure of unity and that it contains ‘central ideas which pervade and inspire the corpus as a whole’ (p 14). His subject matter of ‘people-in-dynamic-interdependence’ (Mennell, 1989, p 94) achieved this status beyond reasonable doubt. Elias contributed by improving sociological understanding of how human beings relate to themselves, one another and with the environment. He explored the processual nature and development of networks of relationships (figurations) such as courts and power balances within the figurations. Smith (2001) added that Elias’s work has helped in confronting ‘the nature of Western modernity in a way that makes strong links between large-scale social processes and transformations in our psychological make-up and ways of seeing, thinking and feeling’ (p 2). Elias analyzed figurations, concluding that networks become complex, leading to individuals and groups of people acquiring ‘multi-layered sense of identity, distinctive types of habitus and varying degrees of self-control’ (Smith, 2001, p27).

According to Goudsblom (1977a), four major principles that are related to each other can be drawn from Elias’s work. These can be summarized as:

- Human beings are interdependent with each other in a variety of ways and their lives evolve in, and are significantly shaped by, the social figurations that they constitute together.
- The social figurations continually undergo changes of many kinds. Some of the changes may be rapid but ephemeral, or may be slower but perhaps more lasting.
- The long-term developments that happen in social figurations are largely unplanned and unforeseen.
- Development of human knowledge takes place within human figurations.

In summarizing his non-individualistic approach to understanding human relationships, Elias (1978) argues that:

People need each other, are directed towards and bonded to each other as a result of the division of labour, of occupational specialization, of integration into tribes or states, of a common sense identity, and their shared antagonism for others or their hatred and enmity towards each other (p 175).

This non-individualist approach to human relationships was useful in analyzing data in the present study, because data from TVET college lecturers who participated in this study confirmed that, in one way or another, they are interconnected with their peers, their students, the college management, the government and the community in which their institutions are located. This approach helped in shedding light on duality debates related to the interwoven nature of human relationships and interdependence between individuals and society and state and society.

3.3.10 A brief critique of Norbert Elias's theory

Norbert Elias's ideas have made an important contribution as a tool for confronting and making sense of modernity. Like other theorists and sociologists, his achievements are accompanied by blind spots, identified by others as weaknesses in his figurational sociology, or sociological approach process.

Firstly, Elias's use of the term 'figuration' is not easily distinguishable from other sociological concepts. There are many other terms that he and others have used in the same sense, such as webs, networks and chains. Are Elias's concepts such as 'social figurations' and 'figurational dynamics' unique, compared to 'social networks' or 'relational dynamics'? The term that he initially used was a familiar English word 'configuration', which means the process of giving shape. But he considered the term 'figuration' as a more processual and dynamic term. I think the newly coined term signified and emphasized the uniqueness of interdependent networks of social relationships in terms of pliability, plasticity and the potential they possess for change over time.

He has also been criticized by others (Coser, 1980; Chartier, 1988a; Mennell & Goudsblom, 1997; Dunning, 1987; Goody, 2003) that he does not account efficiently for the role played by non-human dimensions of functions of figurations that he was passionate about. Non-humans refer to natural or environmental and technological phenomena which are bound to play a role in shaping figurations. Wedekind (2001) argues that 'Elias's emphasis was almost exclusively on the interactions between people, so that there appears to be a taken-for-grantedness, or even neglect, in his work of the role of environmental factors in the shaping of figurations' (p 88).

After having read Elias's books I do not completely concur with this criticism. I refer to Elias's attempt to illustrate the gap between people who are knowledge rich and those he perceived as poor in knowledge and the obstruction of the growth of human knowledge for very long periods of time. He tells a story of how African troops refused to obey commands from a French general due to the occurrence of a lunar eclipse. Troops were against proceeding to their destination because they interpreted the lunar eclipse as an omen signaling that there was danger ahead.

Although this example touches on a sensitive label of backwardness to those who are perceived by others as superstitious, I see issues of emotionality in relation to non-human surroundings in social figurations. There is a link between the meaning of the natural occurrence and the interdependent people who are emotionally involved in the experience. The main question in the minds of the troops was 'what is the meaning of this event for us', not the mechanics of the event (Mennell, 1989, p 167).

Another gap in Norbert Elias's work is failure to be explicit about issues of gender. Wedekind (2001) raises the fact that Elias did not examine gender relations in any detail, even though he lived across two generations with the 20th century significantly influenced by feminist approaches. Critics point out that the *homo clausus* image that he vigorously attacked in his writings is primarily a male construct. Also, in his discussions of disputes

and violence, he does not focus on issues of masculinity to make sense of what was happening.

This criticism has been challenged by other writers and was found not to be absolutely true. Mennell (1989) thought that Elias was not completely silent about issues of gender particularly uneven balances of power between sexes. The gender aspect of his research was contained in the typescript that was accidentally destroyed around 1971. It was never published and the only people who had read the typescript were those very close to him. Mennell (1989) revealed that:

... the lost book opened with Elias's recollection of an elderly Indian man he used to encounter in the street in London, chatting animatedly to his wife who, however, walked not alongside him but directly behind him (p 132).

For Elias, this occurrence demonstrated an uneven balance of power, at its best, and a manifestation of inferiority and subordination in which women were 'chattels, under absolute power of their husbands' (ibid). As it is difficult to argue about facts in a document that was destroyed before it was published, analysis in this study will touch on the issue of gender relations in social figurations in which the researched TVET college lecturers found themselves.

In his writings and analysis of processes of human development and processes of socialization Elias made many generalizing claims, even where his conclusions had minimal generalizable features. Generalization needs to take into consideration similarity of context and familiarity with most of the characteristics of the wider context. His critics argue that his samples were not large enough to offer broad variation and to maximize the range of characteristics. If this was the case, it is not easy in any qualitative research to declare interpretations and conclusions as 'unassailable truths' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p 243).

Blok's (1974) and Duerr's (1993) criticisms levelled against Elias touched on cultural relativism. For example, his use of the term 'civilization' was found to be offensive by

other sociologists and anthropologists, due to its negative association with colonial rule and Western norms of racial superiority and dominance over other people, particularly in African nations. They also felt that his sociological perspectives did not consider other civilizations and cultures. Wilterdink (1982) comments on Elias's theory:

is not only ethnocentric, it is evolutionist, it is unilinear-evolutionist, it is progressive; and it is moreover an aspect of a power structure, part of the apparatus of control by a powerful group, legitimizing their dominance... it means that other people, other cultures, can be denied an authentic humanity (p 289).

Duerr (1993, 1997) produced four books in which he rejected Elias's civilizing process as a myth. Elias's critics were therefore against him making assumptions and civilized norms developed in Western Europe being used as general norms for nations outside Europe. It is worth mentioning, though, that his position shifted after his stay in Ghana, as he learnt that Ghanaians did not control their behaviour in the same way as people from Europe. His love of African art also saw a new development of understanding about other peoples' way of living. This led to the commemoration and recognition of his work through the establishment of the Norbert Elias Memorial Artists' Prize in 2004, by Ghanaian scholars.

Norbert Elias was also highly criticized (Coser, 1980; Chartier, 1988a; Duerr, 1993, 1997; Goody, 2003) for paying little attention to approaches other than his own. Elias did not cite other sociologists who worked in the same sociological field. He also favoured sociology over philosophy. He did not believe that philosophers can make a sensible contribution to knowledge and understanding of society because, he argued, philosophy was not a science. Elias challenged the philosophers on the issue of validity of knowledge, arguing that it cannot be timeless and effectively absolute. For example, Kant believed that human beings are pre-programmed with *a priori* ideas or universal concepts that are shared by all of us. Elias refuted this because he believed that human beings have the 'capacity to recognize and communicate symbols' and these symbols 'are not a universal given and fixed all the time' (Smith, 2001, p 28). Elias asserted that knowledge is acquired within and through people over several generations, and that it changes over

time. For him, neo-Kantianism was not enough to deal with problems of society because it is static, abstract, idealistic and individualistic. Elias explained that:

The prevailing theories of knowledge use as their model a condition in which knowledge might be produced by an individual alone. They pay little attention to the problems one encounters if the social conditions of knowledge production are taken into account. If that is done, epistemological questions of the Cartesian or Kantian type lose much of their cognitive value. Questions such as that of the use and meaning of causal terms in society at large move into the centre of the problem field. Kant (like other people) learned the concept of an explanation in general, and, in particular, explanations in the purely secular, wholly impersonal form of a cause-and-effect connection, as part of his mother tongue. Like other concepts, that of a cause-and-effect connection could only be acquired as part of the social usages of one's society. Hume's observation that the concept of a causal connection could not be explained in terms of the personal experiences of a single individual was entirely correct. It represents a level of conceptual synthesis which is beyond the reach of the personal experiences of a human individual. It presupposes a capacity for connecting events at a level which no individual person can attain unaided by the experiences of other persons. It presupposes a biological constitution of a species which makes it possible for its individual representatives to learn, to store and to act upon experiences made and transmitted to that person by a long line of antecedent generations (1991b, p 15).

Elias (1982) was convinced that 'traditional philosophical epistemology, in its transcendental form ... [has] come to the end of its road' (p 135).

Although his hostility to philosophy does not discredit his work, other theorists were not comfortable with his stance, as they acknowledged the existence of a relationship between the two. Parsons (1968) commented:

The distinction of science from all the philosophical disciplines is vital ... But this is not to be taken to mean that the two kinds of disciplines are without significant mutual interrelations and that each can afford to ignore the other ... (p 22).

Critics analyzed his argument that consequences of social change cannot be predicted because social life is full of unintended or unanticipated outcomes of social processes. His stance on uncertainty about the future opened a gap for other theorists to criticize him. They see this as problematic, as he failed to propose any vision for the future.

The most vigorous critic of Elias's work, Duerr (1993, 1997), was counter-criticized by other theorists. Mennell and Goudsblom (1997) and Van Krieken (2005) argued that Duerr's critique was superficial and that he ended up contradicting himself, referring to Elias as 'perhaps the most influential and stimulating sociologist of the second half of the twentieth century' (Duerr, 1993, p 12). His critique gave Elias's work more recognition of its importance and highlighted the profundity of his concepts, which many are still digesting.

Elias is commended for putting emphasis on historical continuity, although other critics assert that he failed to account for the role of discontinuities and ruptures (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Historical continuity is significant for the present study, considering the historical context of educational change in South Africa. His silence about effects of rapid social development, as exemplified by the drastic overhaul of South African education in the post-apartheid era, was of concern to many people. This will be addressed in this thesis in the analysis of TVET College lecturers' experiences of educational change.

3.3.9 Conclusion

This section focused on Norbert Elias's social theory, his works and his key concepts that were deemed relevant for the present study. The key concept, 'figuration' or human interdependency, was interrogated to show that any person cannot exist in isolation, but is connected to other people. By figurations, Elias was referring to interweaving and interdependence of actions in human relationships. Elias (1978) believed that this is a view that sees the 'individual' and 'society' as two distinct, but intertwined, levels of the human phenomenon (p 129).

Other mutually adapted parts of figurations discussed above included the use of pronouns as a figurational model, power balances, power and function, shame and humiliation and *habitus*. These concepts were a useful springboard for thinking about TVET college personal and professional lives in the midst of educational change. They were used in this study for relating lecturers' narratives to the social and historical contexts and also for linking their lives with other peoples' in different figurations they are part of.

Born in 1897 and dying in 1990, Elias's life spanned more than two generations. Elias worked tirelessly as a strong intellectual who believed that he was part of a 'chain of generations' and was dedicated to 'the task of elaborating a comprehensive theory of human society, or, more exactly, a theory of the development of humanity' (Elias 1994b, p 131-2).

It was also highlighted that Elias's theory is widely recognized because it combines theory and research. He did not divorce concepts and theories from empirical evidence, as he believed that it is 'dangerous for wheels to grind without corn' (1984, p166). Although criticized by some, there is renewed interest in his work, as people believe that there is still a lot to quarry from his writings, particularly regarding the nature of modernity, the development of human society and 'questions of the globalization of human society and global history' (Mennell 1989, p 270).

Chapter 4 discusses the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to understand how lecturers working in the TVET college sector in KZN have experienced the post-apartheid transformations in their personal and professional lives, at the policy-practice interface. It aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of their lived experiences, the meaning they attach to these experiences and how these have impacted on their work and their lives.

In Chapter 4 I present the research approach and methodology selected for this study. First, I discuss ethical considerations taken to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants. Second, I describe the design, broadly positioning the study in the qualitative research approach and adopting a life history methodology. Third, I present methods of data collection and the process of data collection and a description of how data was analyzed. The chapter ends with a discussion of issues of reliability, validity and transferability of findings and limitations of the study.

4.2 Access and ethical considerations

4.2.1 Ethical considerations

This study touched on peoples' lives and led to access of personal and professional information that needed to be protected and respected, thus necessitating that the researcher conformed to acceptable professional research practice. As the study touched on personal information, I needed to foreground the ethical dimension before outlining methodology and discussing data-gathering techniques and analysis processes to highlight its significance.

Ethics is part of philosophy that deals with what ought to be done and how it is going to be done, following principles of moral responsibility. Neuman (2003, p 116) states that ethics in research denotes the type of research procedures that are morally acceptable. He points out that the researcher's conduct before the research, during the research and after

conducting the research is of critical importance to the credibility of the study. Moyo (2007, p 102) confirms this, by saying that ethics simply refers to ‘what is or is not legitimate to do’. As there are quite a number of documented cases of unethical research practices that have led to physical, emotional or psychological harm being inflicted upon participants, and that have brought disrepute to researchers and their fields of study (Kimmel, 1996), I needed to adhere to procedures that fulfil ethical responsibilities.

It is very important and ethical that those who are researched be provided with information specifying what the study is about, what it aims to achieve, the process that will be followed, the duration, what the expectations are and what the role of the participants will be. Chilisa and Preece (2005) point out that a violation of the consent ethic is sometimes evidenced when researchers do not reveal all the information about research to the research participants. They warn:

Researchers take advantage of the research participants’ limited knowledge of Western-informed research practices and only give research participants partial information (p 230).

Fulfilling this principle meant getting informed consent. Details about the research were explained to the participants face-to-face and the process was later formalised by writing consent letters for them to read and sign before commitment.

Ethical research planning and implementation meant that I sought ways ‘to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants’ (Terre-Blanche and Durrheim, 2002, p 65). Participants were informed of their right to opt out at any stage should they so wish without any negative consequences or loss to themselves. They were made aware of their right to review what had been documented during the interviews. Interview transcripts and final life stories were sent to them to verify their statements and make amendments where necessary. My contact details as well as those of my supervisors were made available to all participants and gatekeepers as recommended by de Vos *et al.* (2005).

Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Neuman (2003) points out that during the data collection period, researchers learn confidential information about participants. Therefore researchers have a moral obligation towards the participant with regards to confidential information shared. Henning (2005) advises that participants be made aware of which information will be shared with the public and which aspects will be kept confidential. For those aspects that were quoted *verbatim* in the writing up of the thesis and articles, pseudonyms and codes were used. This was to ensure that the identity of participants was not revealed to anyone but known only to myself as the researcher. This served to protect participants and also respected them as people.

The right of participants to 'privacy' was never ignored in this study. Cohen *et al.* (2001) stipulate that the three important perspectives of privacy are the sensitivity of the information given, the setting observed and the dissemination of information. There were times when participants felt that information being probed was too personal. It was up to individual participants to decide for themselves which parts of the information they chose to withhold. Woods (2006) and Henning (2005) caution that questions that lead to anxiety or guilt in a participant are other examples of tampering with a participant's privacy and I ensured that such incidents were minimized during interviews.

Permission to record the interviews was sought from all participants. According to Cohen *et al.* (2001, p 281), a data recorder is useful as it allows the researcher to focus on asking questions and listening, rather than trying to capture detailed data by making notes.

The life history interview schedule was trialled or piloted with a lecturer from a nearby FET college. The purpose of the trial was to ensure that I had asked all the questions necessary to elicit data for the study, to eliminate repetition and to double-check and ensure that questions were not ambiguous. On the basis of these trials, some of the questions were rephrased, others were strengthened, but none of the questions was excluded from the final schedule.

4.2.2 Access to the field

In order to collect data I needed to access the two TVET colleges that I had chosen as the field research sites and also the college lecturers selected as participants. This necessitated asking for permission from authorities of the colleges to conduct the study and also from lecturers to participate in the study.

Bassey (1999) argues that access involves getting both official and social authority to conduct research. Gatekeepers, from whom permission to conduct research is sought, give the official green light to the research site. They have formal and informal authority to control access to a site (Neuman, 2000). Social permission involves the ‘granting of the necessary consent and rapport to the researcher by participants’ (Mukeredzi, 2009, p 109).

I did not experience much difficulty in negotiating access. In the last five years I have taught in the NPDE (Vocational Training), a University of KwaZulu-Natal professional educator qualification, which has as its purpose the upgrading of under-qualified and unqualified TVET college lecturers in KZN. During this period I had already established a relationship with management and some of the lecturers in almost all the Colleges. As a result of this link, I was not new to many in the KZN TVET college community, including the two colleges and campuses that the study targeted. Although this was an advantage, I was always aware that ‘researching the familiar has its own threats, and there is a danger of over-identifying with participants’ (Mthiyane, 2007). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) point out that over-identifying with participants may lead to ‘partial perspectives, where the researcher takes on the participants’ views without question in the analysis’ (p 76).

I used the familiar faces for facilitation of access and initiating and maintaining contact. In terms of participant selection, I followed the advice of Bodgen and Taylor (1975, p 28) and chose ‘subjects that are strangers’ in the sense that I had never met or taught them before. This had its own obstacles, as I had to work very hard at developing confidence, trust and rapport with the subjects (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). The issue of

‘impression management’, which includes personal appearance, as alluded to by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), were crucial:

There is no clear prescription for dress other than to commend a degree of self-consciousness over self-representation. A mistake over such a simple matter can jeopardise the entire enterprise ... the researcher must judge what sort of impression he or she wishes to create, and manage appearances accordingly (p 80).

Nobody dictated dress code to me, but I had to think about urban and rural contexts to be able to choose whether to dress formally or casually. Although TVET colleges, in general, have a very relaxed dress code, I was sure that I could not wear trousers when visiting campuses in remote rural areas. In these communities the women who wore trousers, whether single or married, were looked down upon and taken as cheap and not deserving respect. Urban campuses were a different matter, as these are contexts regarded by many as ‘enlightened’. I ensured that I looked presentable at all times.

Initial negotiations happened telephonically and appointments were made for formal meetings during which I explained my research study in detail to management and invited lecturers to participate. Formal letters seeking permission to conduct the study were submitted to management. They were read and signed. Although it was hard to get dates that suited everyone involved, all these arrangements were made without much trouble. We also negotiated dates on which preliminary interviews would start. I insisted that the dates did not interfere with the college programmes. It was easy to do all this in campuses of the college situated in the urban area. These are located about 120 km from where I live and are not far from each other. The same could be said about the rural college, in which none of the campuses were reachable in less than three hours. For most of them it meant a tiring, long drive to the most remote areas of KZN province. I finally decided that it was best to sleep in one of the hotels the day before, so as to get a good night’s sleep and be ready the next morning for formal meetings and interview sessions.

The next section discusses the establishment of research orientation in this study.

4.3 Qualitative research from an interpretive perspective

4.3.1 Research paradigm

Bailey (2007) argues that paradigms provide information on what exists in relation to a phenomenon and what and how it can be studied and understood. Mouton (2002) adds to the understanding of paradigms by pointing out that a methodological paradigm is ‘not merely collections of research methods and techniques, but also include certain assumptions and values regarding their use under specific circumstances’ (p 37).

As this study focused on exploring, describing, analyzing and understanding differently constructed social realities, examining how TVET lecturers give meaning to their own reality, based on their own preferences, prejudices and interactions with others (Schutt, 2006), the social world of TVET college lecturers was understood within the context of the naturalistic, interpretive paradigm.

According to Blanche *et al.* (2006), the interpretive paradigm assumes an inter-subjective, ontological, epistemological and methodological stance. They further argue that ‘interpretive research relies on first-hand accounts and tries to describe what it sees in rich detail’ (p 276). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) concur, by explaining that the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to ‘get inside the person and understand from within’ (p 22). This was a powerful assertion that encouraged me as a researcher to work directly with TVET lecturers’ lived experiences and to understand the actions and meanings that lecturers attached to them.

The study adopted an anti-positivist epistemological viewpoint. This approach posits that research be undertaken in naturalistic settings, rather than in simulated or artificially created experimental conditions (Cohen *et al.*, 2000; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). The phenomenon being investigated is put at the centre of the social research process and regards participants as actively involved in constructing their social world and assigning personal meanings to the conditions and events that characterize their lives.

As a researcher, it was crucial for me not to impose my interpretation on the participants, but rather understand their interpretation of the social world. An interpretive framework befitted this study, as it contends generalizations and promotes gaining a deep understanding of life through interpreting the meanings that participants assign to their situations. This epistemological stance meant that it was important to empathetically understand meanings attached to their experiences in the college context.

With regards to ontological assumptions, the study emphasized the significance of the subjective experience, as lived by the phenomena being investigated, the college lecturers. This ontological assumption necessitated that college lecturers' experiences be considered as reality, partially constructed by them through the narration of their life stories.

4.3.2 Qualitative design

In this study I worked within a qualitative, as opposed to a quantitative research approach. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings or 'human action in its natural context and through the perspective of the actors themselves' (Babbie & Mouton 2004, p 278). Hammersley (1993) explained that:

Qualitative methods are privileged with the naturalistic approach and thus do not have the problem of inappropriately fixing meanings where they are variable and renegotiable in relation to their context of use (p 16).

Keeves (1998) supports the above definition and adds that:

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the behaviour of real-life events or situations, it enables the investigator to ask people who act as social agents, what they perceive as their reality and what is important and meaningful in their context (p 4).

Adding to definitions of qualitative research are Chilisa and Preece (2005), who point out that 'this is the type of research inquiry in which the researcher carries out research about people's experiences, in natural settings, using a variety of techniques such as interviews and observations, and reports findings mainly in words rather than statistics' (p 142).

This description distinguishes qualitative research, which is based on interaction and dialogue with research participants, from the quantitative type which is based on statistics.

This research stance is in line with the notion of ‘*verstehen*’ in a Weberian sense, which views participants as subjects as opposed to objects, hence the notion of studying human phenomena as it is lived in its context (Blanche *et al.*, 2006). These authors state that:

the commitment of understanding human phenomena in context, as they are lived, using context-derived terms and categories, is at the heart of interpretive research, and the development of methodologies for human phenomena ‘in context’ is arguably the central achievement of qualitative methodology (p276).

In the context of the present study, this means that during life history interviews and interpretation of data I was aware of lecturers’ ‘specific communicative intentions’ and had to always bear in mind their ‘historical and linguistic context’ (Blanche *et al.*, 2006, p 274). This helped in maintaining a strong empathetic affinity during the data collection and data analysis phases. In using qualitative research techniques I had to bear in mind that ‘reality is multi-layered and complex’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p 17). I had to ensure that analysis involved ‘thick descriptions’, as opposed to simplistic interpretations.

The emphasis on the significance of the principle of understanding in context in researching teachers’ lives ties in well with views of scholars that have been quoted widely in this study. Nias (1996) and Huberman (1993) highlight the importance of ‘teachers’ embeddedness to their professional environment’. This is emphasized in Elias’s overarching social theory that sees ‘bonds between people and between people and their environment, rejects the perception of man as ‘*homo clausus*’ and sees individuals as people among other people’ (Elias, 1978, p 121).

The section that follows discusses the methodology that was used in the study.

4.4 Methodology

Methodology refers to a theory of knowledge and how we research complex, multiple realities, as opposed to epistemology, which addresses how we come to know these multiple realities. Henning (2005, p 3) maintains that epistemology and methodology are interdependent, one being the philosophy and the other the practice. Methodology, in this context, refers to specific methods and techniques that were used to elicit data to enable the understanding of the phenomenon: how college lecturers experienced the post-apartheid educational reforms in their personal and professional lives.

4.4.1 Life history methodology

This study adopted a life history methodology. Using this methodology, the study has drawn on narratives of the experiences of college lecturers with regards to how they have experienced post-apartheid education reforms in their lives and work. The study used life histories to elicit how they interpret, understand and define their college context in relation to transformations that have happened in their institutions.

Life histories provide knowledge about how people being studied experience and make sense of themselves and their environments (Cassel and Symon, 1994). For me this meant that life history as a methodology befits the study because the participant's own story is valued and he or she gets an opportunity to talk about the effects of change over a period of time and historical events as they unfolded from the past to the present. This is a methodology that has an advantage of focusing on participants' biographical change and social history of their life-span that other methods do not have.

Faraday and Plummer (1979) state that:

The life history technique documents the inner experiences of individuals, how they interpret, understand and define the world around them. The focus of life history is paramountly concerned with the subjective meanings of individuals (p 785).

The choice of life-history methodology lies in its ability to capture unique details and its focus on ‘the meanings that people attach to their experiences’ (McAdams, 1993, p 11). Cohen *et al.* (2007) feel that these unique details may be critical to understanding the phenomenon being investigated.

Goodson and Sikes (2001) state that, since its early use in documenting the life of Wladek Wisniewski, by Thomas and Znaniecki, the life history approach has been increasingly embraced by many sociologists and other researchers working in the humanities.

Life history as a methodology aims to reconstruct the life history of individuals, by focusing on the story of a participant as told and expressed by the person herself or himself. The technique falls under the genre of narratives and provides researchers with a written picture of ‘real people in real situations struggling with real problems’ (Dhunpath, 2003, p 50).

Nelson (1992) argues that there needs to be further distinctions between a ‘total life history’ and a ‘focused life history’ (p 169). He reasons that the former attempts to capture the full span and depth of an individual’s life in detail, while the latter focuses on specific dimensions of that person’s life. Without denying that a teacher is part and parcel of social, historical, cultural and political contexts and that his or her sense of self is ‘socially grounded’ (Nias, 1996, p 294), a larger part of the study was ‘focused life history’, as the main focus was on TVET college lecturers’ work and career lives. A researcher cannot deal in depth with all aspects of participants’ life histories in one study, due to time constraints and practicability of data management, as long transcripts pose the danger of one losing focus.

Although there are debates challenging the ‘fetishness about the certainty and objectivity of knowledge and the quest for the universal truths’ (Dhunpath, 2000, p 174), life history is useful in educational research, as it provides insights into both the subjective and personal dimensions of lived experience of participants (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). I

believe that this methodology was relevant for this study because it gave college lecturers an avenue to air their own viewpoints. Molteno (1984) points out that:

If we accept that our insight into education is best achieved by trying to understand how life is seen by those living it rather than by accepting uncritically perspectives of those administering the system, we have to begin listening more systematically to teachers (p 8).

It cannot be denied that life history is participant-centred and unapologetically subjective. Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) argue that 'life history requires a historical, cultural, political, and social situatedness in order to avoid the romanticisation of the individual and thus reproduction of a hero narrative which reifies humanist notions of the individual as autonomous and unitary' (p 117). As a result, the phenomenon was not studied in isolation of other people and related contextual factors, hence the adoption of a non-individualistic approach, as espoused by Norbert Elias, through his interrogation of concepts of 'figurations' and '*habitus*', which put emphasis on the interwoven nature of human relationships.

4.4.2 A critique of life history as a methodology

Life history, like other qualitative methodologies, is not without limitations, faults and flaws. Firstly, interviewing may be a lengthy process, because the focus may be limited to only a specific part of a participant's life, but the questions are open ended and this is not easy to control. Still on the interviewing process, Miller (2000) stresses that oral history interviews facilitate recalling of information and incidents through a process of cross-referentiality, as the participant goes back and forth in the account, trying to make linkages between different types of events and incidents in their lives. As the account includes incidents that happened in the past, the memory of the participant is crucial. Some of the facts may not be remembered, some may be distorted, while others may not be true. Other participants may sift the information given and say only what appeals to them. Mthiyane (2007) confirms this, by mentioning that failure of memory, retrospective editing, self-justification, rationalization and myth-building are some of the criticisms levelled against life history as a biographical research.

Other criticism pertains to representativeness, reliability and validity of data elicited and interpreted by the researcher. According to Cohen *et al.*, (2007) the biggest criticism of the life history methodology involves the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered.

Plummer (1983) considers that life history data lacks representativity, as cases dealt with are atypical. He adds that unless an explicit relationship could be drawn on a continuum of representativeness and non-representativeness, the sample cannot be claimed to be representative. If the sample is not representative, then generalisability of such data becomes questionable. Cohen *et al.* (2007), argues that ‘the researcher need not always adhere to the criteria of representativeness’, as each case is unique (p 257).

The issue of reliability and how it was dealt with in this study will be discussed later in this chapter. It is worth mentioning, however, that it relates to how researchers deal with the potential sources of bias resulting from the research. One such source of bias arises from the interviewer’s attitude, opinion and tendency to seek answers that support his or her prejudgments (Powney & Watts, 1987, Cohen & Manion, 1989). Powney and Watts explain that interviewer bias will arise if there are inconsistencies in the way that questions are asked. But Cohen and Manion (1989) counter that, in less formal interviews, the researcher has freedom to change the way questions are sequenced and can also paraphrase them.

Life history involves the subjective perspective of the interviewee. This one-sided nature of the interview raises many questions with regards to validity. Validity refers to the ability to represent the informant’s subjective reality as a true reflection, as the informant presented it (Plummer, 1983). Although Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue that ‘life history involves a collaborative approach in which the informant is, in essence, a partner, a co-worker without whose cooperation and active involvement any study cannot proceed’ (p 73), the information that the participant gives is not easy to substantiate and verify. The interpretation of the findings by the researcher is subjective and distortions are highly possible. Flick (1998) advises that data can be validated through

‘communicative validity’ and that this can be achieved by arranging other meetings with the participants, to give them an opportunity to verify the content. In this study, all transcribed versions of oral history interviews were sent to participants to double-check the correctness of facts.

With regards to the generalizability of data, Cohen *et al.* (2007) cautioned that the goal of qualitative research is not that of generalizing, but rather the ability to gather in-depth and rich data. Chilisa and Preece (2005) confirm this when they discuss context sensitivity. They point out that ‘the purpose of research in qualitative research is not to generalize findings, but to describe each setting in its uniqueness; leaving the reader to decide whether what is described is transferable to other settings’ (p 142). Berteaux (1981) explains that if generalization is the goal, then the researcher needs to take several life histories from the same set of socio-structural relations. If the data supports other data and reaches saturation point, this can make for a strong body of evidence which can enable generalizations to be made. Twelve TVET college lecturers from different backgrounds participated, but proving generalizability of the findings was never part of the plan in the present study.

In spite of all the criticism discussed above, there is still wide acceptance that oral history as a biographical research methodology is valuable in understanding human phenomena (Miller, 2000; Cohen *et al.*, 2000), as it attaches importance to experiences and knowledge of individuals and meanings attached to personal life experiences.

4.5 Methods and the process of data collection

4.5.1 Methods of data collection

The present study used a combination of questionnaires, life history interviews and analysis of documents to collect data. Cohen *et al.* (2007, p 355) support the use of multiple sources of data collection thinking that it may be one of the effective ways of demonstrating reliability and validity in qualitative studies by means of triangulation.

Bell (1999, p 102) echoes this argument, when he describes triangulation as gathering data from a number of informants and a number of sources with the aim of cross-checking information to produce a well-balanced study.

4.5.1.1 Open-ended life history interviews

As this study dealt with lecturers' subjective experiences of educational change and how these have affected them, it adopted an interactional epistemological stance. This means that the study involved intense direct interactions of the researcher with the participants within their contexts and spaces, using open-ended life history interviews as a technique for data collection. Blanche *et al.* (2006), state that 'intersubjective or interactional epistemological stance towards reality relies on a subjective relationship between the researcher and the subject' (p 7). They add that this is characteristic of the interpretive approach, which aims to interrogate 'the subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action' (p 8).

The life history interviews were semi-structured, as I used an interview guide with issues to be covered. The interview guide was very useful, in that it ensured that I collected similar types of data from all participants. Questions were open-ended and their sequencing was not the same for every participant, as it depended on the process of the interview and answers from each individual participant (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). Cohen *et al.* (2007) confirm this by stating that in a 'guided' interview approach, issues and topics to be tackled are expressly named in advance and an outline is provided to make data collection somewhat systemic for each participant.

I found open-ended interviews to be very useful. Plummer (1983) emphasizes that open-ended interviews are the cornerstone of life history data collection. They were deemed relevant for this study because they gave the researcher and the participant a chance to 'engage in creating the meaning of the questions and answers that constitute the narrative as they negotiate understanding through language' (Alvarez & Urla, 2002, p 3). Through dialogue, open-ended interviews allowed the life stories to unfold and eventually helped to capture the salient experiences of participants' lives and their definitions of those experiences (*ibid*).

My earlier experiences of conducting open-ended, in-depth interviews made me realize that they are long and detailed and that not everything can be written by hand. They demand intense concentration, without shift of focus, from a researcher. As a result, a tape recorder was used to allow the interview to flow uninterrupted by the pace of note-taking. Cohen *et al.* (2007) support this when they recommend that data be captured on tape recorders before transcribing, editing, developing codes and finally storing or filing it.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), open-ended interviews may be spread and may consist of a series of interviews. As a result, I collected data over a period of six months and each participant was visited more than twice. The estimated duration of the first interviews was approximately two hours, with two breaks of 15 minutes each. The duration of subsequent interviews depended on the amount of work that still needed to be covered, or gaps in information already gathered. Besides the formal interviews, many follow-ups, telephonically and through emails, occurred from the beginning until discussion and analysis were completed.

4.5.1.2 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was given to participants for them to fill in, about three weeks before interviews started. The questionnaire was used as a baseline survey instrument to elicit preliminary data relating to biographical details, employment status, learning areas and subjects that lecturers teach, qualifications, teaching experience, a brief history of employment, short courses attended and professional development activities that they had been involved in.

4.5.1.3 Documentary sources

More data was collected through analysing government documents, policy documents, manuscripts, files, memoranda and other relevant documentation. McCulloch (2004) states that documents are inescapably an integral and an indispensable part of our daily lives and our public concerns. Arksey and Knight (1999) add that documents bear a set of

contents which need to be analysed by examining their inferences and patterns of production and used in their mundane context. Mukeredzi (2009) asserts that through official documents, researchers can access the official perspective, as well as uncover ways through which communication to staff in the institution occurs.

It was interesting, for example, to analyse the government document that instructed TVET colleges to allow students who have passed three out of seven subjects to be promoted to the next level. This issue kept recurring when lecturers were sharing their experiences of how hard it was to work with students who have nearly double the load of subjects as a result of that government directive. Other documents included ministerial speeches, for example, analysing that of the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, who was quoted in the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) news (October 2, 2009) as saying that teachers in schools would be given a reprieve from heavy loads of administrative and portfolio responsibilities in order to increase productivity. It was interesting when data revealed that college lecturers faced the same situation. This led to more probing in follow-up interviews, to gain insights into the nature of administrative work that college lecturers do. Findings from data prompted by document analysis ended up confirming the existence of too many administrative and management tasks that eat away teaching time, leading to ‘reality shock’ (Huberman 1993), due to the complexity of professional work that comes with educational transformation in teachers’ lives.

Documentary sources proved to be very important. Their importance is confirmed by Blanche *et al.* (2006), when they point out that documents have been, for many decades, a hallmark of professional researchers, but have been used minimally in contemporary society. Due to technological advancement, new kinds of documents such as those available for scrutiny in the Internet and other electronic mail were used as cyber data sources. Blanche *et al.* (2006, p 316) state that documentary sources can be useful in all forms of qualitative research, as they have an obviously ‘constructed’ nature and are a means by which ideas and discourses are circulated in our society.

This study did not distinguish between primary and secondary sources of data, due to debates and scepticism concerning the divide between the two (ibid). Documents were chosen according to whether or not they would yield rich data with the potential for helping the researcher better understand the phenomenon under investigation.

4.5.2 Sampling

The literature reviewed with regards to sampling revealed that the life-history methodology rarely involves a random sample of participants (Van Wyk, 2007; Hart, 2002; Bailey, 2007; Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Goodson, 1992). The author chose purposive sampling as being more appropriate to the study. This form of sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher concerning which participants best fit the criteria of the study. Bhengu (2005) recommends that participants chosen must be information rich (p 58). According to Stones (1998) there are three other important criteria for selecting participants purposively:

- It is of utmost importance that they have experienced the phenomenon that is under investigation. They should be information rich to make in-depth analysis of the phenomenon being studied possible.
- They must be competent in the language or languages used, so that they are able to communicate their thoughts, feelings and perceptions.
- They should be willing to participate and then be committed as participants in the research. They must be prepared and able, both in terms of time and articulation to discuss the topic (Goodson and Sikes, 2001; Goodson, 1992).

The criteria mentioned above were used in purposively selecting participants for the study. I ensured that lecturers chosen had worked in TVET colleges for more than 10 years. Although the majority of the lecturers spoke English as a second language, all of them were fluent and were able to express themselves well. Challenges of code switching and code mixing⁵ that came up during the interviews are discussed further in the sections to follow.

⁵ Code switching refers to switching between two or more languages in a speech.

The fact that lecturers agreed to participate, sealing the arrangement by signing the consent letters, was initial proof of willingness to participate. Lecturers chosen were enthusiastic about participation. Some of them said they were curious about what the research is and how interviews are conducted. I was excited about their eagerness to participate and I started to make arrangements for interview appointments. There were challenges with regards to their teaching times and personal engagements clashing with interview meeting times, calling for repeated rescheduling activities. But lecturers availed themselves for all the series of interviews, whether they were face-to-face or telephonic engagements.

Six lecturers from each of the two colleges (a total of 12) were selected as participants. Eight of the 12 lecturers were chosen from Engineering Studies, while two were from Business Studies and two from Agricultural Units. Engineering Studies received the most attention, because it is a unit that has most subjects or modules that existed in the old era and, although re-structured, is still the strongest in almost all the TVET colleges. This unit has a bigger pool of lecturers who have worked in technical vocational institutions for more than 10 years and I believed that they were the ones who would be able to reflect better on the old era and the new one, with its educational reforms. Moreover, Engineering Studies is said to be receiving a bigger share of attention from management, industries and the state, because this is where the most-talked-about shortage of skills in the country is.

Participants from Primary Agriculture were not part of the plan initially, but I thought that participants working on campuses with this unit are critical, considering the governments' attempts to revitalize agriculture for livelihood and sustainability of rural populations and to boost the national economy for financial survival.

Code mixing refers to using two or more languages in a hybrid form. People may use the terms interchangeably, but code mixing focuses more on formal language structures, while code switching upholds linguistic performance. In the context of this study, the switching and the mixing occurred between English and IsiZulu.

Table 1: A summary of participants

	College A	College B	Total
A. Engineering studies			
	4	4	8 lecturers
B. Business Studies			
	1	1	2 lecturers
C. Primary Agriculture			
	1	1	2 lecturers
Total:			12 lecturers

Brief profiles of participants are presented in Chapter 5, which discusses the research setting in detail.

Not all races were represented, as in both TVET colleges I could not find a Coloured lecturer befitting the criteria set for the study. While it would have been useful to reflect representivity on the basis of race, class and gender, I did not allow this to limit my possibilities of selecting participants who would be willing to participate and who would be considered as key informants.

The KwaZulu-Natal province has nine TVET colleges, each with up to five or more campuses. Any of the colleges could have been chosen as a research site for this study, especially the one located in the area where I stay, for convenience. But I decided against this and chose two KZN TVET colleges that I thought suited my study and exhibited different contexts, with the potential for yielding rich data for the study. One college is in

an urban area, with campuses based in cities and in townships⁶. The other college is situated in a rural area, with one campus in a very small rural town and most of its other campuses situated in remote rural areas. I strongly believed that experiences of lecturers working in rural colleges and those based in urban TVET colleges were different, hence the choice of these two sites. Brief profiles of the sites are given below but details will be found in Chapter 5.

(i) **FET College A:** This is the largest TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal, currently averaging about 10 000 full-time equivalents and approximately 380 staff members. The college has a wide catchment area compared to the other two which are based in the same business hub in the province. The college responds to diverse skills development needs in the areas such as small, medium and large business enterprises, engineering, business studies, hospitality and art & design.

(ii) **FET College B:** This particular college covers the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal, from Vryheid to the borders of Mpumalanga province, Swaziland and Mozambique. The areas of skills development are engineering, agriculture, tourism, business development and forestry.

4.5.3 Reflections on the data collection process

As alluded to earlier, rural campuses were very far away from where I stayed. This meant either driving more than 600km to and from the sites or making arrangements for accommodation the day before, so that I could rest before interviews the next day. Neither of the two options was without challenges. The first option meant arriving at the venue tired and not giving each interview the undivided attention it deserved. The latter was expensive, as funds to support this research were inadequate.

Either way, driving to distant research sites was exhausting. It took a long time for the next round of interviews to happen, as it was depressing to even think about those long,

⁶ Township: In South African context, this term refers to semi-urban residential areas set aside for non-Whites (hence its association with racial segregation) by the apartheid government through the Group Areas Act. All townships were built on the periphery of towns or cities.

tiring driving experiences. Sparsely spaced interviews and other challenges prolonged the duration of the fieldwork. Bailey (2007) warns that ‘however long you think your particular research will take is probably an understatement of time you will actually need’ (p 36). This situation was further aggravated by rough topography and limited service provision in rural campuses. For example, most areas in the northern part of the country were characterized by steep hills due to mountainous landscapes. Roads were tarred but had narrow, single lanes. Due to forestry as one of the prominent activities in the area, there were many trucks transporting logs and other raw materials to factories and they clogged the lanes, causing a slow traffic flow and long delays.

In terms of keeping time, male participants were better. Female interviewees were the most problematic in this regard. Most of them were at child-rearing stages of their lives and they were either late or wanted to finish as soon as possible. As a woman myself I understood the challenges of juggling work and chores like fetching children from school and rushing home to cook. Fitting interview schedules in between would have been problematic for me, too, but as a researcher I was frustrated by this, because it interfered with, and prolonged, my fieldwork schedules.

Emotional distress in lecturers was another factor that tended to interrupt some of the interview sessions. Throughout most of the interviews, I had to consciously fight getting too deeply and emotionally involved in experiences that were full of resentment and negativity. For example, the frustration they expressed around lack of job security due to the contract nature of their employment evoked feelings of sadness. On separate occasions, three of the lecturers wept at some stage during the interviews. Although I learned from the participants that life history interviews had afforded them an opportunity to reflect on their lives, my role was that of being a researcher, not a therapist or a counsellor. I had to ensure that I did not deviate from my role as a researcher through being sensitive and empathizing with participants with regards to some of their frustrations and dissatisfactions because it would have interfered with my ethical stance. Providing advice and therapy was never part of what I had come to do and I do not possess the skills for that kind of engagement. Bunio (2008) points out that a researcher

may encounter these situations and sometimes an interview encounter ends up being a therapeutic session. Silverman (2007) warns that the researcher must enable some emotional distance, to enhance space for critical analysis.

The last issue that I want to reflect on is language. Most of the participants were Zulu speaking, like myself. It was very hard to stick to an English-only interview. We therefore ended up code switching and code mixing IsiZulu and English. The critical thing was for me to have strategies for ensuring the correctness and accuracy of the translation to the English-only version during transcription. I therefore had to listen to tapes and rephrase utterances and articulations many times before I was satisfied that the original meaning was maintained.

4.6 Data analysis

According to Benard (1994), data analysis refers to ‘searching for patterns and ideas that help to explain the existence of those patterns’ (p 360). Chilisa and Preece (2005) point out that ‘the purpose of analyzing and synthesizing data is to make sense out of disaggregated information, showing relationships, their root causes and possible solutions’ (p 56).

Although data collection and analysis are discussed under different headings in this study, the two are not completely distinct phases. Blanche *et al.* (2006) point out:

There is no clear point at which data collection stops and analysis begins. Rather, there is a gradual fading out of the one and a fading in of the other, so that you are mainly collecting data and towards the end you are mainly analyzing what you have collected (p 321).

In qualitative research there are reasons why data analysis cannot be left until the end of data collection. Cohen *et al.* (2000) add:

Qualitative research amasses huge amounts of data, and early analysis reduces the problem of data overload by selecting out significant features for future focus (p 147).

As a result, data collection and analysis occurred concurrently (Baxter & Jack, 2008) but at the beginning data collection was the main focus. When data collection gradually declined, data analysis became my main focus.

4.6.1 Narrative analysis

The main analysis technique that was used in this study was narrative analysis. This refers to ‘a family of methods for interpreting texts that have in common a storied form’ (Riessman, 2008). Although narrative analysts are a diverse people with different perspectives, most of them are in agreement that narrative analysis allows them to interrogate oral, written and visual data effectively.

Riessman (2008) proposes four models of narrative analysis, namely: thematic, structural, dialogic or performative and visual analysis. The two models deemed relevant for analyzing text and non-verbal communication are the thematic and visual analysis. Thematic analysis puts emphasis on the content of data and the recurrent or underlying themes that exist within and across data.

In working towards thematic and visual analysis, the articulations of participants had to be transcribed. As this study adopted the notion of ‘*verstehen*’, it was critical to ensure that transcription did not become just a record of data, but ‘a record of social encounter’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p 281). One of the ways to do this was to consider the verbal communication contained in the tapes, but not neglecting visual and non-verbal aspects of the life history interview. According to Cohen *et al.* (2000), this helps to minimize decontextualisation of data from ‘the social, interactive, dynamic and fluid dimensions of their source’ (p 282). Riessman (2008) argues that words are only one form of communication. There are other forms, including gesture, body movement, sound, images and other aesthetic representations. This study did not ignore these visual and non-verbal aspects of data.

Transcribing data *verbatim* from audio recordings to a written format was a worthwhile experience. It gave me an opportunity to revisit data and familiarize myself with participants' articulations, to make sense of and reflect on, the overall meaning (Cohen & Manion, 1989).

Thematic analysis is preceded by content analysis. Nieuwenhuis (2006) defines content analysis as a 'systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarizes message content' (p 116). Moyo (2007) stresses that analyzing content employs checking the presence or repetition of certain words or phrases in texts in order to make inferences about the author of the text.

Moyo (2007) points out that the key characteristic of content analysis is coding. Coding means organizing different codes so that themes and patterns of behaviour of participants are identified (Aronson, 1994). Thereafter three kinds of qualitative data coding methods were used. Data was referred to on three occasions for three different purposes. The first occasion was open coding. According to Neuman (2000) this is the first stage in which the researcher scrutinizes the field notes, interview schedules or any other documents by focusing on actual data and assigns codes for themes. Flick (2006) refers to this stage as the crystallization and condensation of participants' literal words.

The second occasion, according to Cohen *et al.*, (2007), is called axial coding. This is the stage in which I re-looked at initial codes or preliminary concepts, to see if these could be rearranged or improved in accordance with the research questions. I re-examined the research questions and questions that had been used as prompts during the interview sessions, to be able to identify where links could be made. The whole process meant that codes were explored, their interrelationships examined and codes and categories were compared to existing theory (*ibid*).

The third and last occasion involved scanning of data and previous codes. This stage is called selective coding, because a researcher needs to look selectively for cases that illustrate themes and make comparisons and contrasts (Neuman, 2000) after all the data

coding had been done. Selective coding was crucial, as it gave me an opportunity to finalize the organization of themes and to confirm the accuracy of the coding.

These three stages of re-examination and reading transcribed data many times over, for purposes of familiarizing and immersing oneself in the content of data, were important. I believed that, besides familiarization and immersion, multiple readings helped to identify silences and gaps and thus enhanced coherence in a life story. Todorova (2007), in her study of experiences and lives of childless women in Bulgaria, confirms the above arguments, when she states that multiple readings of interview and transcribed scripts help to ‘unglue multiple voices of the said and the unsaid’ (p 232).

When themes had been analyzed, I examined transcribed data again, to write a narrative for each and every participant. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) identify three modes of presenting a life history. The first one they call a ‘naturalistic’ first person life history, in which the life history is in the words of the participant. The second one is called the ‘thematically edited’ life history, in which the researcher arranges the life history into themes and headings ensuring that words of the participant are retained. This is confirmed by Cohen *et al.* (2000), when they argue that in this mode of presentation the participants’ words ‘are retained intact’ and are presented by the researcher in themes or headings in ‘a chapter-by-chapter format’ (p 166). They add that in life history a researcher needs to decide early enough how far he or she wants to ‘intrude upon assembled data’ (p 167).

In the third mode the feel and authenticity of the participants’ words are retained, but the researcher sifts, distils, edits and interprets these to write a story (Mthiyane, 2007). I oscillated between the second and the third modes of presentation. In writing up this thesis the life stories of the 12 participants were organized into themes and presented in Chapters 6 and 7. I used a combination of extensive accounts of the participants’ words and my own words as the researcher, to ensure that the original authentic meaning of data was preserved.

4.6.2 Documentary analysis

Bloor and Wood (2006) cite three approaches for analyzing data elicited from documents. The first approach, called content analysis, describes the characteristics of the document's content by examining 'who says what, to whom and with what effect' (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p 58). I used some of Huberman's (1993) themes as a lens to examine reactions and experiences of lecturers to some of the government directives related to reforms and how these have affected their personal and professional lives.

The second approach is the interpretive approach to documentary data. This approach explores the meaning within the content. The approach was deemed relevant in this study, because it helped to examine the way meaning was assigned by 'authors and consumers' of the document (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p 58).

Thirdly, documentary data was analyzed using the critical approach, which focuses on the relationship between the document and aspects of social structure, that is, class, social control and power. Using Elias's (1970) concepts of power, function, figurations and *habitus*, this approach provided a useful framework for examining the role of official documents and how these regulate social order.

4.7 Reliability and validity

Much criticism is levelled at the use of interpretive research approaches. According to Mthiyane (2007), critics question the methods of collecting data, the validity of the inferences and conclusions drawn from the data collected using qualitative methods. Merriam and Simpson (1995) feel that producers and consumers of research need to be assured that the findings of a study are reliable and valid. This means that research findings have to be credible, dependable and trustworthy. There are many strategies that can be used to ensure this, such as triangulation, member checks, peer examination of data, collection and comparison, comprehensiveness and thick description (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

In order to address these concerns, the present study engaged in multiple methods of data collection. Cohen *et al.* (2007) support the use of multiple sources of data collection, reasoning that it may be a powerful way of demonstrating validity and reliability in qualitative studies by means of triangulation. Bell (1999) echoes this argument when he describes triangulation as gathering data from a number of informants and a number of sources, with the aim of cross-checking information to produce a well-balanced study. Chilisa and Preece (2005) point out that triangulation is based on the assumption that the use of multiple methods, data sources or investigators can eliminate bias. This study therefore ensured methodological triangulation by using open-ended life history interviews, questionnaires and documentary analysis, to collect data.

According to Maree (2007), reliability implies that research instruments are dependable and consistent. To ensure this, questionnaire and interview research instruments were trialled with a few participants in the local TVET College. This exercise allowed me to test if the questioning techniques and the structure of the interview were appropriate. This led to the adaptation of ice-breaking techniques, interview kick-starting strategies and the adjustment of questions before the actual data gathering phase began.

To ensure validity, three strategies proposed by Maree (2007) were applied. These are peer examination, member checks and researcher bias. Peer examination was done through allowing peers, who are members of a PhD cohort I was part of, to review the research instruments and analysis. Instruments were submitted to my supervisors for feedback before data collection was started. Chilisa and Preece (2005) call this phenomenon peer debriefing. They consider that it is important to ‘engage in discussions with peers on the procedures for the study, findings, conclusions, analysis, and hypothesis’ (p 166). It was useful to allow peers to ask questions, so that I was guided to ensure that I was open-minded during the research process.

Member checks are regarded as the most important criteria in establishing credibility. This involves continuously verifying patterns and themes with participants, as data collection, transcription and data analysis progress. In this study, member checks were

implemented by allowing participants to view transcribed data and narratives so that they could ascertain whether or not their experiences had been reliably recorded.

Researcher bias that I was aware of was clarified upfront by explaining the researcher's baggage, assumptions, bias and views, and any other circumstances that could have affected data in any way.

4.8 Conclusion

Chapter 4 has provided an account of the research design and methodology, giving and explaining the reasons why and the how, what, when, with whom and where to of the research journey. The chapter described ethical considerations and provided justification for the choice of the interpretive research paradigm, life history methodology, and data collection methods used in the study. Experiences and challenges met during data collection and analysis periods were discussed. The chapter outlined the study's approach to reliability and validity in order to render the findings credible and trustworthy to researchers and other users.

Chapter 5 presents a description and an analysis of the research setting.

CHAPTER 5: THE RESEARCH SETTING

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to develop an understanding of how KwaZulu-Natal TVET college lecturers have experienced the post-apartheid era in their personal and professional lives. This chapter aims to provide a description of the setting in which the study was conducted. It provides profiles of two colleges and the campuses in which lecturers who participated work. The chapter gives a brief overview of lecturer, student and programme profiles, as these were deemed relevant in ensuring a clearer understanding of the context from which data was elicited.

5.2 FET College A: The history and context

5.2.1 The college

College A is situated in northern KwaZulu-Natal, which is one of the nine provinces in South Africa. It serves a vast deep rural area with eleven municipalities. In the context of this study, a rural college or campus refers to them being located in former homelands or Bantustans which are many kilometres away from towns and cities.

The majority of areas served by the college are characterized by rugged topography, high levels of unemployment and poverty, economic decline, limited access to communication, HIV/AIDS prevalence, lack of social development, lack of infrastructure and industry and low levels of education. An assessment by Ngqulunga (2005) indicates that the total population served by the college is 1,4 million and only 45% of these people are economically active. The niche areas are in the sectors of agriculture and tourism, with a huge potential in forestry and mining.

The college as we see it today developed from a merger of three old racially segregated technical colleges. It is at present one of the mega multi-sited TVET colleges in the province. It has eleven campuses and various skills centres. The college has a central office that serves as the administrative structure for all the eleven campuses. The central

office is situated in town, not very far from two of the eleven campuses mentioned above. The Rector, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, unit managers and their support staff are all stationed in these offices. This is the head office of the college. All functions except registration, admissions and enrolments are run by unit managers from the central offices. These functions include procurement, human resources, curriculum, community outreach programmes, finance, student support services and quality management systems.

5.2.2 Campuses

Before the merger, what are now campuses used to be racially segregated public technical vocational colleges. As the study focused on lecturers involved in Engineering Studies and Primary Agriculture, three campuses out of the eleven were chosen from this college. The first two campuses cater for the first criterion, while the third one is solely responsible for the latter. One engineering campus is located in a small town, but is different as it offers a multi-cultural and multi-racial lecturer setting, not found in the other one which is in a deep rural area and has black lecturers only. I believed that diverse settings could shed more light on the scope and nature of experiences of lecturers, similarities and differences in experiences, as well as in societal issues such as attitudes, diversity, equality and tolerance.

Campus 1

This campus is located in a small rural town and considered well-resourced, when compared with others that the college serves in northern KwaZulu-Natal. It is a few kilometres away from the central office, a fact which allows easy and quick access for staff, putting the campus at a big advantage. Staff from other campuses travel long distances to reach the central office and this is one of the things that participants from other campuses have complained about, insisting that their campuses are forgotten and are treated like step-children.

This is a new engineering campus, which is an extension of the original campus that used to be a technical college from 1949 until the merger in the year 2000. At the time of data collection, the new campus had already been operating for three years. According to the

Integrated Development Plan of the Municipality, other public educational institutions in the area are 117 primary schools and 50 secondary schools.

At the time of data collection, construction of the administration building was still on-going. It is a beautiful face-brick campus, with three new satisfactorily equipped engineering workshops. The workshops are accredited by the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (MERSETA) and the Energy Sector Education and Training Authority (ESETA) which are SETAs responsible for learnerships for engineering students. A learnership is a learning programme that is structured to expose and equip students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills in a specific workplace environment for purposes of attaining an NQF approved qualification. It is a tripartite contract, as it is an agreement between the company, the college and the student. Participants were elated about learnerships that were soon to be started for engineering students on this campus. One of the participants enthused:

Susan: In May the new MERSETA learnership is starting. We have found host companies already and all of them are based here in this town. We are very excited about it.

What excites the lecturers is that a learnership gives students an opportunity for training and short-term employment, as the learner gets paid during the entire learnership period which usually takes 18 months. In the same breath, lecturers expressed sadness, as employment is not guaranteed on completion of a learnership programme.

On this campus, internet connection is available for management only. One of the participants expressed a wish for wider access:

Thulani: We also would like to have access to the internet. Imagine the benefits if there was an internet café for students too! The ones in town are expensive and most our students are from poor families and cannot afford to pay for this kind of service.

The campus offers Engineering courses to both the NATED and the NCV students. The courses offered on this campus are: electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, engineering and related design, civil engineering and electrical infrastructure.

Lecturers have explained that the government's original plan to gradually phase out the NATED courses has not worked on this campus as their demand is still high. The present Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, is reconsidering the strategy for purposes of reinstating the NATED courses. Popularity for the NATED courses can be observed in the enrolment statistics for 2010 at this engineering campus. Enrolments for the NATED courses are sitting at 67%, while NCV, learnerships and skills courses share the remaining 33%.

The majority of students come from rural reserves around this small town. A larger percentage of students come to the campus using public transport. As students come from families that are poor, sometimes they are absent from school because they do not have transport money. This is emphasized by a comment from Sandile:

In this campus we don't have a boarding establishment. Most students come from very far-away places and must have bus fare every day. Their bursary covers tuition fees only, not transport. As a result, in most of the days they are absent from college because of poor backgrounds. This is one of the reasons why absenteeism is very high.

Campus management consists of a campus manager, deputy campus managers and unit managers. Top campus management is mostly white and female. In addition to management, the campus operates with nine lecturing staff members and four support personnel. One of the participants highlights the need for more teaching staff:

Thulani: Nine lecturers are not enough because we have many students and we offer different programmes. There are times when we become desperate like when some of the lecturers resign and go to the private sector for better salaries.

In most TVET colleges the basic qualification for one to be employed as teaching staff is N6. In this campus all lecturers have this basic qualification. Some have undergone further training, having taken trade tests, leading to an accredited technical National Diploma. This makes them qualified artisans. Trade tested staff members are the only ones officially allowed to work with students in engineering workshops. One of the lecturers explained:

Bongi: Other staff members have N6 plus either a university technical National Diploma or a Bachelor of Technology or a National Professional Diploma in Education. Without practical work expertise a lecturer is inadequate because he or she cannot equip learners appropriately with practical skills for the world of work.

A campus that has many staff members who are not allowed to work with students in a workshop has a capacity problem. The major focus by lecturers is on theory, which is taught in classrooms and practical work is left unattended. This works against the NCV motto, which advocates a marriage between theory and practice.

Compared to other campuses of the same TVET institution, this campus has better infrastructure and the support of local businesses and donors, which enhance resources at the disposal of the campus. The campus enjoys support from senior college management as this campus is 3km away from the central office. Although this is the case, the study revealed the existence of many challenges that lecturing staff still face, considering that literacy rates in the area are low, the community's economic base is poor, the setting is multicultural and multiracial in nature and institutional, structural and curricular reforms affect their lives and work. These will be discussed in detail in chapters to follow.

Campus 2

The second campus is located in a deeply rural area, approximately 350km north of Durban. This area is the heart of the Zulu kingdom, as it is where the hereditary Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu lives. All his four royal palaces are based in this area. These royal palaces are open to the public and are one of the ways to promote tourism in the area. Cultural ceremonies such as Umkhosi Womhlanga (The Reed Dance by Zulu virgins) and Umkhosi Wokweshwama (Zulu King's First Fruits Ceremony), which happen annually in September and December, respectively, attract thousands of people into the area.

Despite opportunities presented by the location of royal palaces in the area and reports by the provincial government that tourism is growing, people are still very poor. Unemployment and illiteracy rates are very high. These factors undoubtedly pose both challenges and enablers to educational development and experiences of lecturers working in the local TVET college campus.

The road from Ulundi leading to the town in which the campus is situated is tarred and the gate into the college is right next to this main road. As this road goes through a rural settlement with a lot of livestock along the road, one needs to drive cautiously. Lecturers spoke about many incidents in which livestock were run over by speeding cars leading to injuries and fatalities.

There were no buildings specifically erected for this particular campus. It inherited space and is housed in the structure that used to be a teacher training college in the area. The TVET college section occupies a few buildings in this structure, for example, the administration building, three residences, classrooms and others that have been converted to workshops.

When one approaches the former teacher training college, the state in which buildings are in is not impressive. All buildings are dilapidated, with signs of further deterioration. Within the same premises other activities not related to TVET college education were

taking place. For example, one of the buildings not far from the administration building is used by uniformed policemen for local policing activities. One of the participants confirmed this by saying that:

Khuba: Other buildings are used by the Nongoma Resources Centre. The Department of Basic Education runs workshops for teachers in this centre. When there are too many teachers attending, our classes are disturbed.

The situation is aggravated by signs that some of the people from the community have moved into residence buildings using them as their family homes. As a result, there are lots of people coming in and out of the college. As students do not wear uniform, it was hard to tell which persons were students or residents. As a visitor I was worried about my safety but one of the participants assured me that:

Khuba: The place is safe as the college is under the watchful eye of a private security company.

Although the former teacher training college used to be very well resourced, almost everything is now broken. Leaking taps, broken windows and unclean lawns can be observed on the premises. In June 2010, the KZN legislature sat at this institution in Nongoma. The Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, begged the provincial government 'not to forget Nongoma' when development initiatives and projects are planned. He further asked for help from the government to renovate the college, to 'turn it into a productive educational institution it once was' (King Goodwill Zwelithini, 2010). It is documented that the provincial government promised to resuscitate the institution, but at the time of data collection no signs of renovations or attempts to curb deterioration were visible.

Shenge remarked that:

This is not a place conducive for teaching and learning. Sometimes there are too many distractions, especially from unfamiliar non-student faces. Also the

buildings are not in good condition. They are unclean with broken windows and leaking roofs.

Participants felt that the governments' recapitalization of infrastructure benefitted other campuses and not theirs. The following were some of the comments:

Shenge: Our engineering workshops are not well equipped. They are far behind new technology in terms of tools and machinery. Compared to other campuses, we are using outdated machines. This will affect the future of our students negatively because industries are using new types of machines.

Corne: There is a shortage of classrooms. Some of the teachers share classrooms. There is also a shortage of furniture in classrooms. We have a library but not enough books and access to internet.

Khuba: In our staffroom there are three computers and only one of these allows access to the internet. All the teachers are sharing these computers. There is no printer and photocopying machine in our staffroom. If resources are scarce it makes our work very difficult.

The campus offers NATED courses and the NCV in both Engineering and Business Studies. NATED programmes are more popular than NCV courses. One of the reasons for this is that they cater for part-time students, an opportunity which the NCV does not offer. Khuba remarked that:

NATED courses are in demand and still very popular. In our campus we have enrolled more than we were supposed to. Those who could not enroll as full-time students have registered as 'exam only students'. They study on their own and come for tests and exams only.

The campus consists of 27 staff members, including the campus head and the deputy manager. The campus also employs eight administrators, eight cleaners, six security guards, and 10 ground workers. As there are two buildings that serve as boarding

establishments, the staff includes one boarding master and two matrons. Lecturers from distant areas also stay in the campus boarding facility:

Corne: It is better to work here because there is a residence facility in the same premises as classrooms and workshops. We don't have to pay for transport daily like our colleagues in other campuses. But renovation is required and that can make the college look better.

The provision of accommodation for lecturers is one of the positive things about their work conditions on this campus.

Campus 3

This campus is located in a small rural town in the north of KwaZulu-Natal. This town used to be the heart and headquarters of the KwaZulu homeland, which ceased to exist in 1994 when the new democratic government was ushered in. The site itself was used by the government as a youth centre, particularly youth of the ruling party, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Historically, people in this area are predominantly Zulu speaking.

The youth centre was acquired by the local TVET College in 2000 and was launched as a campus in 2004. This is one campus the activities of which are primarily focused on agriculture. It is well positioned for this purpose, as agriculture is historically a key driver of the economy (Ngqulunga, 2005) in the whole district. As TVET colleges are meant to be responsive to area needs, this should be the niche for this agricultural campus. One participant remarked:

Rajesh: The College needs to train students not only for themselves but to serve and make a difference in their communities. Skills they get here need to help provide not only food security but see them being self-sufficient and generating income to fight rampant poverty in the area.

Agricultural training should be the focus of the campus, as the area is not industrially developed. Research by the HSRC (2005) confirms that the only way out for this area economically is through agriculture, tourism, mining and self-employment.

It was interesting to note, through informal observation, that farming activities in the communities of this area are informal and very small-scale and therefore not adequate to help alleviate poverty and unemployment. Statistics from the Ngqulunga (2005) report confirm the persistence of rampant poverty and prevalence of food insecurity in these communities. Bheki said that:

The situation is worsened by natural disasters like drought and bad weather conditions because of global warming. This destroys the little that people have planted.

When I approached the campus, it was not hard to tell that this is an agricultural campus. The whole area on the left hand side as one enters the main gate is full of green vegetable gardens and a variety of fruit trees. The other end is inhabited by a variety of farm animals like cows, chickens and pigs.

This was the only campus in which interaction with management was not limited to introductions and the signing of consent forms. The campus manager insisted that I come to his office before I met with the two lecturers. We had a lengthy discussion about my study, from the title to how I thought it would contribute to the bigger picture. This gave me a chance to ask him a few questions, concerning the history of the campus.

Structurally the campus does not have expensive buildings. The campus is electrified, has piped water, with taps in many places, befitting an agricultural campus, fully furnished classrooms and telephones in the administration building and the boarding establishment. Other resources available include computer laboratories, workshops and a huge hall for meetings and other gatherings.

Despite the availability of resources mentioned above, participants felt that these were not adequate. They lamented that essential resources required of an agricultural campus were lacking and this is a challenge:

Sipho: A lot of necessities do not exist or are incomplete. For example in our campus we have two very important resources that were not seen to completion i.e. a fish tank and a piggery. It is very hard to do some of the sections of the syllabus if we do not have resources like these because it means teaching and learning will only focus on theory, no practical work.

The campus is approximately 20km away from residential areas and other amenities in the Ulundi area. Access to the campus is not easy for students, because there is no transport travelling in that direction. As you go up the hill where the campus is situated you pass many groups of students who are hitch-hiking, hoping to catch a lift to the college. It is a long steep stretch from the main road to the campus. One of the participants highlighted the transport challenge:

Bheki: To travel to the college for staff and students who are not boarders is a nightmare in rainy and hot seasons. This area can be very hot, I am telling you. Walking a long distance in that condition is not nice. The situation is worsened if a student is hungry because there was no food at home that morning as most families are poor.

Local students need to pay for transport from the township and the surrounding areas to reach this long walk strip leading to the campus for schooling. Lecturers emphasized this situation as one of the reasons for high absenteeism and dropout rates:

Sipho: This has thus far led to an increase in learner absenteeism. I think an increase in absentee rate affects teaching and learning. I end up finishing the syllabus with only a few learners, mostly boarders. Day scholars from poor families lag behind and most of them fail. Some drop out before the year finishes or give up when they have failed.

Students from very faraway places stay in hostels or boarding establishments located within the premises. The students attending this campus come from as far as Greytown which is approximately 300km away. Most of the students receive a bursary that covers tuition fees only. It does not include boarding fees and food. As a result, most of the students find themselves owing the boarding establishment a lot of money and are

sometimes frustrated when they run out of food. Under such circumstances, lecturers say that it is sometimes hard for students to focus fully on their studies. Bheki confirmed:

The hostel is a big help to learners who come from afar. But as you know this is a service that has to be paid for. Parents are poor and cannot afford the payments because it is very expensive. It is not easy to teach learners who worry about fees as they cannot concentrate on school work.

The campus offers NCV and NATED programmes, with specific focus on agricultural courses such as animal husbandry, poultry production, hydro phonics, organic farming and citri-culture.

As the campus is based in a deep rural area, far away from essential amenities and a vibrant urban life, it is not an attractive location to lecturers who are not agriculturally oriented and are looking for fancier jobs in the TVET sector. The situation worsens if they are employed on short-term contracts. As in most campuses, lecturers who work here leave when they get better employment opportunities elsewhere. One of the participants explained:

Rajesh: This place doesn't have much of a life. I teach computers. I like what I teach but working in a rural area like this, has many disadvantages. I am on a six months contract. That is another reason I am spending a lot of time looking for another job. Sometimes I am absent from work because I have gone to an interview in another college like in Durban.

The good thing is that some of the lecturers who work in this campus are local. These are lecturers who may work at this campus longer. Siphso agreed:

When we were asked to choose whether we wanted to fall under the State or under Council, we chose in writing where we wanted to be. I chose Council because I hate to be deployed to a place far away from home. It's hard to work under Council but I like it here, this is where I was born.

Staff members from distant areas and some of the local ones who do not have cars reside in the staff quarters, located just outside the campus main gate. For some of the lecturers,

such as those on campus 2, being offered a place to stay is one of the good things about this campus.

5.2.3 Conclusion

College A has the majority of its campuses situated in deeply rural areas. Evidently most of them are challenged and constrained in terms of resources. Except for one, all the campuses are characterized by location in areas under tribal authorities and these are associated with, and are affected by, high levels of poverty, illiteracy rates and unemployment. As a result, most communities are highly dependent on national governments' social grants and grandparents' pensions. As will be discussed in later chapters, lecturers' working lives are in one way or another interconnected to community lives and are bound to be affected by settings in which their places of work are situated. Some of the challenges faced by lecturers in the college and its campuses are to some extent, a result of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in that community.

5.3 FET College B: The history and context

5.3.1 The college

This college is the largest in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It came into existence as a result of a merger of three racially segregated technical colleges, a former teacher training college and a variety of skills centres. The catchment area for this college stretches from the south of the KZN business hub, Durban, to the South Coast. The area it serves is urban, but the area includes semi-urban townships in and around Durban.

The central office is in one of these townships, in an institution that used to be a teacher training college. The central office is where top management, including the Rector of the college, deputy rectors, unit managers and their support staff, are based. Unit managers are in charge of the following units: Further Education and Training Information Systems

(FETMIS), General Administration, Marketing, Curriculum, Student Support Services, Human Resources, Finance and Community Outreach Programmes.

The college has international partnerships with the governments of France and India. Locally, partnerships include the University of KwaZulu-Natal, different municipalities, agricultural colleges, industries like the tooling and automobile industries, mobile phone service providers and government departments, such as Education, Defence and Economic Development.

Other facilities are:

- The Training Academy which has facilities for conducting training for short courses. The Academy offers conference facilities, catering and accommodation services.
- The Technology Demonstration Training Centre, built in partnership with the provincial government, to develop and promote small enterprises in the province.
- A Business Unit that is responsible for generating funds for the college.

Campuses in this college are not close to one another. What is offered at any one campus depends on what is in demand in the area. As a result, all campuses cater for the NATED courses and the NCV. Their NCV programmes offer a wider variety of courses when compared to College A. Instead of two, this college offers NCV programmes in three main categories:

1. Business Studies

NCV: Finance, Economics and Accounting

NCV: Marketing

NCV: Office Administration

NCV: Information Technology and Computer Science

2. Engineering Studies

NCV: Civil Engineering & Building Construction (Masonry/Plumbing/Carpentry)

NCV: Electrical Infrastructure Construction

NCV: Engineering and Related Design (Automotive/Fabrication/Fitter and Turner)

3. General Studies

NCV: Education and Development

NCV: Hospitality

NCV: Primary Agriculture

NCV: Tourism

Most NATED courses are offered in the evenings as part-time study. This is where some of the lecturers make extra money for themselves, by teaching these evening classes:

Steve: We are not paid much in these colleges. One has to find ways to generate extra income to survive. I supplement my salary by teaching Public Administration and Engineering in the afternoon classes of the NATED programme. This part-time job pays well.

Students are either day scholars or boarders. Some of the campuses have residence facilities. As a result, their approximately 10 000 full-time students include youth from all over KwaZulu-Natal.

5.3.2 Campuses

As has been explained earlier, the campuses of the college used to be public technical and vocational institutions. After the merger, they ceased to be colleges on their own, but became part of the mega multi-sited college as campuses. The section that follows examines the profiles of the two campuses that were selected for this study.

Campus 1

This campus is located in an urban area, characterized by the existence of a variety of big industries, shopping centres and malls. Not far from the campus are townships like Umlazi and Lamontville.

Right next to the main gate is a public hostel and a big taxi station or rank. Both these institutions have a history of violence that has led to much bloodshed in the country. Firstly, the South African taxi industry has been, for many years, plagued by violent incidents in which ordinary civilians, including bystanders, passersby and motorists have been senselessly killed. This is a conflict that usually involves gunfire between taxi owners of different taxi affiliations over taxi operation routes. Taxi ranks are characterized by loud noise from taxi radios, the prevalent use of swear-words and large volumes of commuters.

Secondly, next to the taxi rank are substantial buildings that serve as residences for hostel dwellers. The 1980s and the early 1990s saw a resurgence of severe politically motivated hostel violence, particularly in the KZN and Gauteng provinces. Although incidents in KZN were not as severe as they were in Gauteng, hostels are still perceived by many as sites of conflict, due to antagonism between people of different political party affiliations. I will never forget the first day I visited this campus. I accidentally missed the campus gate and proceeded to the hostel gate instead. I was so scared and was shaking on realizing where I was, but managed to do a quick U-turn back to the correct gate. This is one example where these perceptions still persist, regardless of government's conversion of most of these originally male resident hostels into refurbished family units. For a campus to be located so close to both such notorious phenomena cannot be a good thing, especially when fights break out. One of the lecturers testified:

Steve: It becomes very hard when taxi violence breaks out. Even us as staff cannot come to work. Many innocent souls die every day because of stray bullets. We can't put our lives and those of students in danger. We just shut down until it dies down.

Structurally, the campus is adequately resourced, with a beautiful administration block, spacious lecture rooms, computer labs, and kitchen facilities for hospitality students, engineering workshops and a big well-built hall. The campus boasts a state-of-the art Enterprise Development Unit, which serves as a centre that works with industries, municipalities and the government for generating external funding through training for the college.

The campus is smaller in numbers when compared to the second one discussed below. Student numbers are around 980, including both NCV and the NATED courses. It has 30 lecturing staff, 19 administrators, 10 full-time security guards and 15 cleaning staff.

Only full-time students are on the campus during the day. But on several occasions I visited, there were students in and out of the main gate continuously. My observation pointed to a lack of strict adherence to the structured timetable by students and also loitering and idleness.

Campus 2

This campus is situated in the largest township in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. It is very well located, as it is close to major amenities like shopping malls, banks, taxi ranks, petrol stations, bus terminals, bookshops, public libraries, sports centres and hospitals.

The campus is not far from the main township highway. From the highway, a small road of less than two kilometres leads to the campus. This road is one of the busiest spots on this campus, as there are always different groups of students walking to and from the college. Others just stand in groups talking and sharing jokes. On the three occasions that I visited the college I came around twelve o'clock and that is after break, but before lunch. On enquiring about college operation times, lecturers explained that classes start at 8:00 in the morning, break was at 10:30, lunch was at 13:00 and the campus knocks off at 15.30 in the afternoon, before part-time classes resume at 16:00. This indicates that the campus has a clear structure, regulated by a time-table, which co-ordinates timeslots,

student and teacher movements and allocates resources such as classrooms and workshops. But there did not seem to be control over when students enter and leave the college. The campus environment did not show orderliness, good discipline and a culture that helps to maintain a good educational standard within the campus. This painted a picture of ill-discipline to me as a visitor. This was confirmed by one of the participants, whom I interviewed later:

Zime: Students attend shifts like workers at a factory. But at a factory even that is done in an orderly manner. Here, students come and go as they please. We always wonder if management notices this. Not much monitoring occurs here. This is like a bush!

From the above comment one deduces that the campus is not a strict environment. A 'bush' in the South African context refers to undeveloped, uncultivated and unsettled land, covered with clusters of naturally growing shrubs. Although beneficial to life in general, natural vegetation is different from a vegetable garden, in which there are straight lines, guidelines and order in whatever is being cultivated. In the context of Zulu culture and the context of the interview, the term is a direct translation of a Zulu word 'ihlathi', which is used figuratively to depict an environment or a person's behaviour characterized by disorderliness and lawlessness. This is not good for any educational institution as students are the future, particularly TVET colleges which have been earmarked to contribute to the economic well-being of the country.

Approaching the entrance during my first visit, I could see the boom gate and security guards manning access to the campus. I was ready to sign the register and explain to them who I came to see on campus. I was surprised when the guard just opened the boom and allowed me to go through without asking any questions. I wondered about the issue of safety of staff and students, since townships are notorious for having higher crime rates compared to suburbs and rural areas. Phaliso (2012) confirms that, due to unemployment and unlicensed shebeens (informal liquor drinking places), townships experience more violent crimes such as murder, rape, theft and house robberies. Fourie (2013) adds that

residents in the townships of KwaZulu-Natal have suffered more severely in the hands of criminals than their affluent counterparts in suburbs.

Signage within the campus was not good. After finding a parking space, I went to the only beautiful building that I assumed to be the administration block for enquiries. On one occasion I got a chance to get into the staff room. The receptionist referred me to the staff room where I sat to wait for the lecturer I came to interview. None of the lecturers inside came to me to ask if they could help me. I had to approach one of them to ask the whereabouts of the particular lecturer I was visiting. I was told to wait as she was out and would be back shortly. I seated myself in one of the empty desks inside. The participant came into the staffroom 40 minutes later.

In terms of numbers, the campus has 1130 NCV and 979 NATED full-time students. Staff is made up of 90 lecturers, 43 administrators and 14 security guards. As in all colleges and campuses, academic staff is a mixture of permanent personnel, paid for by the government, and contract staff, paid for by Council.

Structurally, the campus is not very well resourced. The situation is aggravated by over-enrolment. One of the participants explained:

Zime: At our campus, we have a big enrolment and one workshop per discipline is shared by many students. We don't have effective workshop schedules; it ends up being a survival of the fittest. I think the college and the government were supposed to fix the infrastructure first before implementing the NCV.

Except for the administration building, which houses senior management and administrative staff, all buildings could do with repairs, renovations and refurbishment. They all looked old and lifeless. There was tall grass and weeds everywhere, which showed that the yard and gardens were not adequately taken care of. Zime was not happy that only management work in good air-conditioned buildings:

They think being a manager means getting a posh office. I wish I could get a chance to tell them that it doesn't take a beautifully decorated office to make one a manager. Instead it takes pro-activeness, good leadership, support and the ability to minimize problems that speaks volumes of a manager.

Bongi echoed the lament:

They always say funds for materials and other resources are not available. But how can this serve to be true when their offices are being upgraded and decorated ever so often. Is this where priority of all available funds is?

Shortage of resources and poor infrastructure has been a grave concern for lecturers on almost all the campuses.

5.3.3 Conclusion

College B has campuses situated in cities, semi-urban areas and townships. Campuses in cities are close to industries and are, as a result, better resourced, as they have sufficient classroom space, computers for access to the internet, workshops and simulation rooms. Campuses outside cities are comparatively poorly resourced. This fact was also noted in research by Kraak and Hall (1999), who found that many KZN colleges 'do not satisfy the requirements for an effective VET institution in that they do not have adequate technical workshops' and other facilities on their premises (p 185). Inadequate infrastructure, facilities and equipment have the potential to impact negatively on college lecturers' teaching practices.

Urban campuses have better private funding opportunities than their counterparts. They are close to important amenities such as shopping malls, bus terminals and taxi ranks, for easy access to transport to and from college. Poor transport for students may affect times of student attendance and may lead to absenteeism, which can tamper with lecturers' effective teaching activities.

Prevalence of crime in campuses situated in townships, near taxi ranks and hostel facilities has implications for the safety of lecturers and students and is bound to affect

negatively the teaching and learning environment and the full utilization of available resources, particularly in the evenings and at weekends.

5.4 Biographical data

5.4.1 The participants

Participants in this study were lecturers who teach in two different TVET colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. A total of 12 lecturers were interviewed. The lecturers came from different historical and cultural backgrounds. While the majority of the lecturers are from a Zulu culture, speaking IsiZulu as their mother tongue, the group also consisted of lecturers of Indian origin and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

Of the 12 lecturers, eight work in Engineering Studies units and two are based in Business Studies or General Studies. The other two are on campuses that specialize in Primary Agriculture. As engineering has always been a male-dominated field in South Africa, most of the participants were male. All the participants have worked in the TVET sector for more than 10 years. Some have worked in industries prior to joining the TVET sector.

What follows is a brief profile of each participant, which starts by describing family origins. Denzin (1989) argues that almost all biographical backgrounds start with family histories, which he terms ‘the zero point of origin for the life in question’ (p 18). This is based on the notion that family experiences play a crucial role in shaping one’s life, affecting the way in which the person understands and interprets his or her social world.

1. Bongi

Bongi (not her real name) was born in one of the rural areas outside Pietermaritzburg. She is married and has a lovely three-year-old daughter. She is from a family of seven and is the oldest of the children.

Her father, Mr Dlamini, has always worked at Eskom and her mother, MaZondi, is a housewife. Both parents are caring and supportive people. But the one person who is her role model is her father. She recalls the difficult times in the 1990s when their rural area

was plagued by political violence and how supportive and protective her father was. Many families slept in the bush in fear of being ambushed. These people were poor and did not have options. In their case, her father managed to buy them a house in town, away from the rural areas in which hundreds of people were killed almost every day. 'We were lucky to have a father as responsible as ours. He made sure that we have everything and that each of us got a good education'.

Bongi matriculated at Lwazi High School, outside Pietermaritzburg. She has a National Diploma in Business Administration from ML Sultan, National Professional Diploma in Education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Advanced Certificate in Education from the University of South Africa and is currently doing an education Honours degree through the same university. One of the sisters has a degree from Ongoye (University of Zululand), another one a degree from the old University of Durban-Westville, one is a business woman owning a laundry and dry cleaning service, and the youngest sister is doing Engineering at Mangosuthu University of Technology. Their only brother was, at the time of the interview, trying to finish his Social Science degree at the Durban University of Technology.

Her first job was in 1997 at a white Technical College in KZN. In the new dispensation this institution is now one of the campuses in one of the big newly formed TVET colleges. She had been looking for a job for a long time without luck, when she heard about a vacancy at this college. She had not planned to be a teacher, but this is the only job that was available at the time. She went for an interview and was happy to get the job. She teaches Computer Science. Although she had not planned to be a teacher, it was better than no job at all. At this college she was the second black lecturer. Both of them were females. She thinks challenges of being a black female member of staff in a white institution were enormous, as we come from a history in which education and social life as a whole was racially segregated.

2. Zime

Zime (not her real name) was born at KwaNdengezi Township near Pinetown. Her mother contributed to the resilient kind of person that she is today. Her mother did sewing and sold clothing to support her and her older sister. Their father died many years ago but 'was conservative, saw no reason why girls should go to school'. 'Can you believe that my sister had to quit school because their teacher had asked them to bring a 30c donation for a school function the next day? Her father decided that she should leave school because he did not have this donation. To this day my sister is unemployed, as mother could not afford schooling both of us due to financial constraints'. If it were not for her mother's support, she also would never have finished schooling and be where she is today.

She is presently doing her NPDE, part-time, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Zime is a Maths and Science lecturer. 'You have no idea how long it took me to be where I am today. I completed my matric at an ordinary high school situated in one of the townships

in Pinetown. I did academic subjects, what used to be called ‘general subjects’, namely History, Biology, Geography, Business Economics, English and IsiZulu. After finishing my matric, I went to do N1 – N3, when the TVET campus I work in was still a technical college. I had always loved Maths and Science, but these were not offered at our high school. After acquiring the Maths/Science foundation, I then moved on to a local Technikon (what is now known as a university of Technology or a Polytechnic) to do a National Diploma because I was passionate about working in a laboratory’.

‘I am not going to dwell on my resentment that I never got the job that I went to a Technikon for. But what I want to emphasize is the fact that I benefitted a lot from the way the technical colleges were structured a long time ago, before they became TVET colleges. The NATED structure then provided a lot of options over a short period of time. Can you believe that N1 – N3 that I did took only one year? To achieve what I got within that period, a NCV child takes three years. This is one of the reasons why I think the NCV needs to be restructured. The NATED system worked very well for us who came from very poor families’.

3. Steve

Steve (not his real name) was born in 1969 and brought up in Pietermaritzburg. He spent his schooling years in this area, completing matric in 1988. All his education happened in Indian schools, as education was still racially segregated. He then went to a Technical College to further his studies (1989–1991) in Electrical Engineering heavy current. Here, he obtained a National Diploma at the N6 Level. He then went on to serve an apprenticeship at XX Air-conditioning & Refrigeration in 1992, for four years. He formally qualified as a Refrigeration Mechanic and served as a journeyman until 2000. He applied for a job at the TVET College, where he has served for more than 10 years. He is currently studying the NPDE-VT at the UKZN on a part-time basis, to be professionally qualified as an educator. He loves being a lecturer; empowering the youth gives him satisfaction.

Steve comes from a family of five. He lost his father (56 years) in 2004. His father had a decent job at City Computer Bureau and his mum worked as a cashier at a retail clothing shop in town. When almost everybody in their neighbourhood was poverty stricken, they were fortunate to have a television, a video machine and a geyser for hot water. During open time, back in the 1970s and 1980s, all of his friends used to watch television at their home. Life was very hard for most people in the apartheid days, but he believes that through God and family unity, they overcame all the politics and went from strength to strength. He is a deeply religious person and he wants to retire as a preacher or a pastor in their church, in order to continue to serve God.

4. Rajesh

Rajesh (not his real name) was born in Pietermaritzburg in 1966. He is the oldest in a family of three. He is married with two children.

He started and completed his primary and secondary schooling in Pietermaritzburg. He then did his degree at the Durban University of Technology where he studied Analytical Chemistry. He has subsequently completed diplomas in Project Management and Business Management. He is currently studying for a Diploma in Financial Management and the National Professional Diploma in Education.

His first encounter in the working world was at a company called First Graphics. He was employed as a Quality Control Chemist. He was later promoted to senior process controller. The post required working with engineers from Britain to complete installation and commissioning and thereafter the operation of a completely new and state-of-the-art production line. He was sent for several training programmes which included Health and Safety, Business Management and Lean Principles. He was promoted to distribution and logistics supervisor but later lost his job through retrenchment. He is currently employed by the XX TVET College in XX as a lecturer and Project Co-ordinator.

He believes that the intention of the NCV programme is evident, but the implementation and execution were atrocious and have created an impression of an unsuccessful programme. He thinks what has aggravated matters is lack of infrastructure, inadequate training for staff, no clear and relevant selection policy for appropriate students, poor planning with regards to curriculum, textbooks and other resources for teaching. He believes that it is favourable to run both the NATED and the NCV programmes, as it will provide options to the students on which stream they would prefer to study.

As an employee he believes that college management is too detached from the daily operations of running the college and that some do not have the relevant vocational backgrounds to do so.

5. Bheki

Bheki (not his real name) was born in Johannesburg in 1952, to parents who were not legally married. His mother was from the Eastern Cape and his father was from KwaZulu-Natal and they had come to the Gauteng province to look for job opportunities. When conflict between parents started, his father took him to KZN and this is where he started his schooling journey. He said he was fortunate to get a kindhearted stepmother who raised him like her own. The family was deeply religious and this helped him when challenges in life and at work arose.

He is married with eight children. He is proud of what most of his children have achieved so far. His only daughter holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree, two boys, who are twins, have Civil Engineering Diplomas. One son holds a BSc in Agriculture and others are still finishing their high school education.

Bheki completed his matric in 1975 and proceeded to the local agricultural college to do a National Diploma in Plant Production. After finishing this diploma he was employed by the Department of Agriculture as an extension officer, co-ordinating projects in different

communities. He found himself retrenched in 1994 and decided to start an agriculture related business, like broiler, goat and cotton production. Two years later he got a job as a lecturer at a TVET college, where he teaches Plant Production. Although he never planned to be a teacher, he does enjoy his work as a lecturer. He believes that things could be much better if resources at the college were adequate and there was less bureaucracy from their central office.

6. Siph

Siph (not his real name) was born in Tugela Ferry in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in 1963. He is married with two children. He is from a family of three and is the youngest in the family. He started schooling in KwaZulu-Natal, but due to family problems ended up finishing secondary school education in Diepkloof, situated in another province 400km away from home.

He completed his matric in 1996. After this he came back to the province and got a job as an administrator at a local Southern Sun Hotel. He later went to study a National Diploma in Agriculture at XX College of Agriculture, which he completed in 1999, majoring in Plant Production. After completing this diploma he wanted to become a farmer, but lacked finance to start the project that he had in mind. He ended up teaching at a local TVET college. He later saw the need to do a National Professional Diploma in Education and a Bachelor of Technology in Agricultural Management from two different universities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

At the TVET College he lectures in Soil Science and Plant Production. He also teaches Agribusiness, which plays a big role in helping students to do their business plans. He has been in charge of learnerships that focus on mixed farming. He believes in achieving targets in the anticipated time. He is not happy about the concentration of power at the central office which is miles and miles away from their campus.

7. Susan

Susan (not her real name) was born in northern KwaZulu-Natal in 1966. She is divorced and a proud mother of two boys. She is the only daughter in her family. She has two brothers, both of whom are highly academic; the one is a deacon and a professor at a medical university in Johannesburg. The other brother is a Head of Department at a local high school, with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. All three of them ended up in the teaching profession but they did not start out as teachers.

Susan studied librarianship but started working as a loans consultant in one of the big banks in the country. As a child she had always wanted to be a mechanic, but her parents saw that as a man's job that is also not prestigious. When she married an Electronic Engineer, her love of being a mechanic was rekindled. When an opportunity to be a mechanic presented itself she resigned from the bank and went for training. She became a qualified motor mechanic and joined BMW. She quickly climbed the ladder, got into management as a service advisor and later as a service manager. 'Why I came to the

TVET colleges? To give my experience and share the knowledge to the students because they are our future'. She now holds a National Professional Diploma in Education.

She thinks one of the saddening experiences she has had as a lecturer is that of their students not getting employment. She had a class in which four out of 40 students passed. To date, one is unemployed, one is working at the local butchery, one is working at PG Glass and only one got a proper mechanical engineering job at a gearbox centre in town. She sees this as one of the biggest challenges facing the TVET college sector.

8. Sandile

Sandile (not his real name) was born in Vryheid, northern KwaZulu-Natal, in 1970. He is from a family of eight and is the oldest of the children. Both parents have always been supportive, even though they were poor when he grew up. His mother is a housewife and the father works as a mechanic in one of the workshops in town. He had to leave mainstream schooling to study at a technical college due to financial constraints at home. In the area where he was born, people believed that with vocational education one found a job sooner, compared to academic schooling. He was not very enthusiastic about it, though because of the stigma of vocational education being labelled as for poor academic performers.

At the technical college he did the NATED courses up to N6 and completed the National Diploma in Electrical Engineering. He worked in industries for many years and was employed as an artisan, trainer and later as a lecturer by the same college in 1998. At the college he teaches Mathematics in the Electrical Engineering section. He is involved in teaching both the NATED and the NCV groups. He wishes to get sponsorship to enroll at one of the universities in order to gain an educational qualification.

Sandile thinks the NCV needs to be restructured because, as it stands, it is not recognized by employers. 'For me this is a problem because it means that our students will not be employable'. He also thinks that some of the students can start their own businesses, but the challenge is start-up capital, as the majority of the parents are poor.

9. Thulani

Thulani (not his real name) was born in Durban in 1968, but their family had to move to Northern KwaZulu-Natal due to political violence that claimed many lives in the 1980s. He is married with four children.

Before coming to work as a lecturer at the College in 1998, he had worked in a variety of engineering firms in Durban and Newcastle. He is a qualified artisan who teaches Civil Engineering and Mathematics to both the NATED and the NCV students. He holds a Bachelor of Technology in Civil Engineering and a National Professional Diploma in Education that he obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2007.

He is one of the participants who strongly believed that TVET college lecturers are at a big disadvantage if they are not affiliated to any trade or labour unions, because it is not easy for their voices to be heard with regards to dissatisfaction about employee benefits, better working conditions and equity issues.

Thulani believes that most of the students who get admitted to his engineering class do not cope with the work. He thinks content prescribed is above the level of a Grade 9 student that they enroll for first year of NCV. He also worries about his colleagues being on different payrolls as some have better benefits than others. He thinks that this affects collegial relations on campus.

10. Shenge

Shenge (not his real name) was born near Kranskop, a rural area in northern KwaZulu-Natal in 1968. He is from a family of six. Both parents worked in a nearby farm and did not earn much. Growing up was difficult because the family was poor. Circumstances were aggravated by faction fights between clans in the area and this made schooling very unstable, as classes were disrupted now and again.

His uncle was an engineer and this led to the seeds of the love for engineering being sown. After completing matric he went to one of the then technical colleges to do a Diploma in Electrical Engineering. He stayed at home for a long time without a job from any of the companies or government departments in the area. He was later employed by a TVET college in the area to teach electrical engineering.

What worried him most as an employee of the college was that he was appointed under a three-month contract. After six months it was upgraded to a one-year contract. He said that contract positions make one feel insecure. This situation tempted him to apply to private companies for a job as an electrical engineer, which is what he studied for. Things changed when he was employed permanently by the state. He enrolled for the National Professional Diploma in Education offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Once this diploma was passed his salary improved significantly. 'I am still here and I am not going anywhere because my salary improved, I am finding it difficult to run'.

11. Corne

Corne (not his real name) was born in the city of Pretoria in 1962. He is from a family of four in an Afrikaans-speaking white family. He started and completed his primary school education in Pretoria. His father was then transferred from Iscor in Pretoria to Iscor in northern KwaZulu-Natal. Here he completed his secondary school career, served in the army from 1980 until end of 1981, and went to Technikon in Vanderbijlpark. He obtained the National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering in 1985 and worked as a technician at Iscor in Newcastle until the end of 1990.

He went to study at the University of Pretoria (1991 to 1994) for the degree of Mechanical Engineering, which he obtained. He worked as a mechanical engineer until

the end of December, 2001. All these years he was more of an engineer and an artisan in the private sector. Due to retrenchments at work he began to look at other places for employment. In 2002 he was offered a job as a lecturer at the XX Technical College, which is now one of the campuses in a Northern KwaZulu-Natal TVET college.

Corne has taught on this campus for a period of 10 years. His area of specialization has always been Mechanical Engineering. He likes teaching the subject. He plans to study further to acquire a teaching qualification because of the introduction of the NCV, which has introduced a lot of classroom focus.

12. Khuba

Khuba (not his real name) was born in one of the rural areas in northern KwaZulu-Natal in 1967. He is the oldest in a family of three. He is married with three children.

His father works for the Department of Health and his mother is with the Department of Agriculture. He was born out of wedlock and the stigma that comes with being illegitimate in society made his life as a child difficult. Growing up without a father-figure made matters worse. 'But my mother was always there for me from my childhood until I reached tertiary institution. I am where I am because of my mother's support. My two sisters are very well educated too. One is a Chemical Engineer and the other one is an Electrical Engineer'.

Khuba holds a National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from one of the TVET colleges and a National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He started working as a trainer at a technical college in 1999 and was employed as a lecturer by one of the rural colleges in 2003. He became a senior lecturer in 2007 and is currently working as a Head of Department in the Engineering Unit.

5.4.2 Participants' work and education history

Historically, the majority of people who have worked in engineering-related units have always been male trainers, facilitators and artisans, but not teachers. Their job was concerned with training youth and adults for the job market and producing apprentices who need to eventually undergo trade tests and become artisans. The focus was the NATED courses that provided many options over a short period of time; N1 – N3 took only one year.

The introduction of the new curriculum, the NCV, turned things around, brought a new kind of pedagogy, demanded that theory and practical skills, classroom and workshop

dimensions be inseparable in practice and placed emphasis on exposure to industry experience for all. Even though they possessed trade qualifications, because of NCV lecturers indicated that they started yearning for teaching qualifications, so as to fit in with the new dispensation. The biographical profiles supplied above show that lecturers added a teaching qualification over and above the trade qualifications they acquired before the introduction of the NCV.

In addition to the National Diploma, some of the participants, especially those in Engineering Sciences, have undergone trade tests and are qualified artisans. A lecturer in possession of a National Diploma and a trade test is the only one allowed to help students with practical work in a workshop. Only six of the participants fit into this category. It is not good for the sector if very few lecturers qualify as artisans. Godongwana (2011) revealed that in 1975 the country was producing 33 000 artisans compared to 3 000 documented in the year 2000. He added that this is a major concern for the country and the skills formation needs to change urgently. One of the participants emphasized the importance of artisans and their contribution to the workshop practical work component:

Thulani: When the NCV was brought in, it demanded that staff be highly qualified. This new curriculum is a combination of theory and practice. Practical work is allocated more than 60% but not all staff is qualified as artisans to enter a workshop and take students on practical skills, particularly the young lecturers employed when curricular changes happened...

This is a serious problem in many ways. Firstly, students are short-changed. Secondly, more theory than stipulated is taught. This is very much against what policy demands and was cited by participants as one of the reasons for the high failure rates. Participants pointed out that if the country is to make a difference in the fight against the skills shortage, some of the focus needs to be directed towards lecturer development.

Susan, from another campus, echoes this comment when she said that she is saddened by the fact that the new curriculum structure does not allow them to produce new artisans:

In the old NATED system, two years and six months I've got a mechanic and the trade. But now it takes five years or more to get an artisan. We've got a shortage of mechanics in South Africa and the NCV packaging is not helping to produce more. The NCV takes 3 years and at least two more to learn the trade but practically it takes more because they fail and repeat classes. Even then the students will be inexperienced new artisans and in junior positions where they will need to gain experience before being fully productive. There are teething problems in this whole set up. As it stands it is not working! I become very sad when I think about this.

The Engineering News (2010) added to this concern when it reported that South Africa has a severe shortage of artisans and one of the main concerns is that, at present, the average age of a tradesperson in South Africa is over 50 years.

Six of the participants have university degrees. These include a Bachelor of Education (Honours), three Bachelor of Technology degrees, Bachelor of Arts (Librarianship) and a Bachelor of Agricultural Management. Due to the introduction of the classroom-oriented NCV, which came with a demand for new andragogical and pedagogical methodologies, some of the participants felt inadequate and have made means to do a part-time National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE), with the aim of becoming qualified teachers. Although this teaching diploma is an adapted version of the school teacher training programme, some of them have done and completed the vocationally-oriented NPDE to fill the void and the inadequacy they feel as teachers in their professional work lives.

For some who are not happy to teach in the TVET college sector permanently, this teaching diploma is seen as a stepping stone to work in ordinary schools:

Zime: You know what; I am looking forward to finishing this diploma. The day I finish I will look for work in an ordinary school or may be a technical secondary school. Maybe things are better there. This place has too many frustrations.

Biographical data reveals that none of them began their careers as teachers, but started somewhere else and changed career paths later. One female lecturer lamented that her family refused her a chance to follow her passion of being a mechanical engineer.

Besides being male dominated, this was a field that her parents did not associate with high status and upward mobility.

Susan: I said to my mom I want to become a mechanic. She was so shocked and said no ways, you going to study. A mechanics job won't take you anywhere in life. I can't describe the frustration I went through trying to think what other jobs I could study for. I ended up studying librarianship which I did not like at all.

Regardless of the discouragement from her family, she pursued her passion later in life. She says it was not easy but she loves being a teacher:

Susan: I didn't start as a teacher but as an artisan. When I came to the classroom environment, it was totally different than the trade environment. But, ja I adjust very quickly because its two passions of me to teach and to trade. So, I'm one of the unique people that do what they want to do. I got two passions and ja I will stay in the teaching profession because I see people grow and that's very nice for me. I'm giving back what I learnt from the trade to our future, the students.

There are other participants who have come to accept being teachers because of benefits, especially those who have passed their professional teachers' diploma and are on the government payroll. Even though they had joined the profession out of desperation, due to socio-economic factors like poverty and limited employment opportunities, they have now decided to stay:

Shenge: I wanted to be an electrical engineer, which is what I studied for up to N6. So now what I think is that if I moved it would be to a private company to do what I initially wanted. But since I got my teaching diploma my salary improved. I have all the good benefits. Now I'm finding it difficult to run. That's why I'm still here.

Others expressed a desire to stay in the TVET sector and be lecturers if it could be turned into an attractive, noble profession that it once was, with improved monetary benefits and better conditions of service.

Sipho: College council appointments are associated with 'worse pay' and poorer conditions of service. We are in a sector in which conditions of service are worse and full time jobs are shrinking. This needs to change if they want us to stay.

Some of the lecturers, for example Thulani, who teaches Mathematics, enjoy teaching on the campus where he works:

Ja, when I am in class it is nice to work with students. There are new challenges all the time especially when you teach Maths like I do. This is one of the subjects that give students a problem. But I enjoy teaching it. I like helping students.

The situation with non-engineering participants is not different. Although they are not artisans, they have for years worked in very informal, non-classroom focused technical environments. Some of them have been teaching subjects like Mathematics, while others have provided training in Primary Agriculture, with the aim of producing subsistence farmers. One of the lecturers explains that she started to feel she was becoming a teacher when she was asked to teach English:

Zime: Before the NCV was introduced we were specialists, teaching core subjects in the NATED programs. Now we have been turned into language teachers. You find yourself teaching English. I am a Science and Mathematics person. We people are very non-linguistic. But you find yourself being instructed to teach a language. It is teachers in schools who teach languages. You can't refuse because you may lose your job.

Evidently, there are lecturers, who do not want to be, and are not happy to be, teachers but will keep on working because it is the only available opportunity to earn a salary.

The qualification picture painted here may not be representative of all staff in the two TVET colleges, as it was not used as one of the criteria for selecting participants. The sentiments expressed by the lecturer above is indicative of the temporary nature of college employment, due to dissatisfaction, the human capital possessed and its potential transferability, lack of identity as a college teacher and how some of the lecturers in the

TVET college sector use the institutions as a ‘waiting station’ or jump-off point for better opportunities that might come their way.

Although there are draw-backs like these, the presence of enabling factors is noted. One of the lecturers talks about collaborative efforts amongst staff in which the knowledgeable ones give advice or lend a hand. Susan acknowledges this:

Ehm, luckily I had a very good mentor that helped me, saying no, no, no don't do this do this, alright, that's how you handle, and from that experience I'm helping some of the lecturers here also to say no, no, do this and don't do this. But the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) gave me a more philosophic point of view and I am able to help others better.

Although the sharing of information and knowledge occurs informally during tea breaks and staff meetings, the presence of collaborative efforts on some of the campuses contributes towards professional development and may be central to the enhancement of work environments.

5.5 Conclusion

Presented in this chapter is the context in which this research was conducted for purposes of providing a useful background that would help to make sense of lecturers' experiences. It would not have been possible to give complete detailed accounts of the colleges and their campuses, due to space constraints. The research setting described above presented situations which are enhancing and those that are disabling for the TVET College lecturers. One of the most cited challenging experiences was related to the shortage of resources. Although the government spent millions of rands on recapitalization, not all the campuses in both colleges are adequately resourced. Lack of equal distribution of resources in campuses of each college was observed. Campuses in rural areas are the most disadvantaged.

Over and above shortage of resources, rural campuses are situated in communities affected by abject poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. These factors are bound to make

circumstances under which lecturers work disabling. For example, a poor, hungry and HIV positive student who also has to worry about owing the college tuition fees is not easy to work with. Working in a college that is located within an economically disadvantaged community cannot be easy for lecturers employed there.

Other shortcomings noted included feelings of inadequacy expressed by participants, ill-discipline in students, systemic ineffectiveness contributing to high failure, absenteeism and dropout rates and constrained commitment from disgruntled staff members.

Enhancing experiences noted in this research setting related to positive interpersonal relationships in which knowledge and information is shared by staff in some of the campuses. Such collegial relations were encouraging.

The section on biographical data of participants reveals that TVET lecturers are diverse in terms of historical background and the qualifications they hold. The majority of them are black people from financially constrained families. All of them have TVET related qualifications, but not all of them are professionally qualified teachers. Most of them have, for many years, worked as artisans, trainers and facilitators and bring to the sector vast industry and workplace experience. But, with the introduction of the NCV, most of them began to feel inadequate. Expertise in the TVET theoretical knowledge seems insufficient for them to teach in very classroom-based NCV programmes.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 6: THROUGH THE VOICES OF TVET COLLEGE LECTURERS: RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

Drawing upon aspects of Norbert Elias's figurational sociology, the aim of the study was to investigate how lecturers teaching in Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal have experienced the post-apartheid educational reforms in their personal and professional lives, as they strive to contribute towards the achievement of the purpose and mission of college existence, which is 'to respond to the human resource needs of the country for personal, social, civic and economic development' (FET White Paper, 1998, p iii).

Chapter 5 focused on describing the research setting in which the study was conducted. Such description is essential, as it is important to have a good understanding of the context from which data was gathered. Elias (1978) argues that developmental explanations are the essence of sociological theorizing. This is particularly the case because personal and professional identities of teachers, as shall be discussed later, are bound together and operate in the context of, and are affected by, historical backgrounds and wider society.

Chapter 6 presents and analyzes the research findings of the study. The findings were categorized according to two broad figurational domains signifying some of the 'chains of interdependent relationships' (Elias, 1991b, p 13), in an educational context. These domains are: lecturers as employees of the government or College Councils and lecturers as teachers in the midst of educational change. Key concepts such as figuration, power, *habitus* and personal pronouns drawn from Norbert Elias's social theory were used to analyze data.

The study revolved around the following key question:

How have KZN TVET college lecturers experienced the post-apartheid reforms in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface?

In order to unpack the key research question, the three subsidiary questions were:

- (i) How do college lecturers understand and interpret their TVET college context in relation to educational reforms that have taken place?
- (ii) How do college lecturers perceive their work and relationships with students, colleagues, management and other stakeholders in the midst of educational change?
- (iii) What do the lecturers' experiences illuminate about issues such as educational reform and teacher development in the TVET college context?

6.2 Experiences of lecturers as employees

6.2.1 Introduction

This section presents data on the experiences of lecturers in relation to themselves as employees of the TVET colleges. Connell (1985) explains that teachers are workers and, in understanding them, it is important that we do not analyze them in isolation from what they do as work. A barrage of educational reforms aiming at restructuring the TVET college landscape has directly and indirectly had consequences and implications for lecturers, not only as teachers but also as employees in these institutions. Crucial reform aspects that will be discussed in this section include changing of identity for colleges after amalgamations had occurred, change of employment status for teaching staff, adaptations to new governance structures and curricular transformations.

6.2.2 Experiences in relation to change of college identity due to mergers

Firstly, merging old technical colleges into bigger multi-campus institutions led to a significant shift in lecturers' personal and professional identities. Their old institutions were different in terms of vision, mission and niches and, as these were blurred in the new structures, lecturers' psychological *habitus* or make-up was interfered with (Elias, 1978). Lecturers come from backgrounds which had socialized them racially and

culturally, a factor which had a bearing on who they were in their professional environments. Reorganizing technical colleges not only tampered with their social *habitus*, as what they shared in common with fellow members in the old social groups was dismantled (Elias, 1978), but it also had major implications, as their work environments were destabilized. In his analysis of Elias's social theory, Smith (2001) describes such experiences as 'painful feelings of displacement and severance', where victims 'feel cut out from their established niches and ejected from their old haunts' (p 157). As the institutions had 'died', lecturers had to adapt to new college names, roles and the diminished status of old colleges to campuses. Steve and Sandile commented thus:

Steve: As a college we functioned independently, really served the communities with skills development and short skills to sustain a job and we used to excel in what we were doing. As a college we were not battling like we are now financially. We had ways of accumulating millions from the various fields of study that we offered. In status and performance, we were once a leading college in this province. When we became a campus things sort of died down, lost all that zest...

Sandile: I know the merger was necessary especially to foster standardization and uplift those colleges that were previously disadvantaged but things got so reshuffled. Everything changed and I was not getting used to our college becoming a campus. Things were different, many people had been moved, new colleagues arrived and all top management was also new. I think we are now used to the setup but the transition to the new was not easy to handle.

Lecturers perceived mergers as a destruction of their powerful, safe cocoons and felt that their sense of self and belonging to old networks of relationships or figurations was weakened, as identity and power are deeply embedded within human relationships (Elias, 1978). Elias (1994a) resisted protected existence and warned that the secure cocoon would definitely be affected by broader social processes beyond those walls hence his regarding '*homo clausus*'⁷ as a myth and his choice of '*homines aperti*'⁸. Although Elias (1978) emphasizes historical continuity, in his analysis of de-civilising processes he

⁷ Closed self-image

⁸ Open to the influence of others and influencing them in turn.

acknowledges that planned or unplanned critical incidents leading to discontinuities and breach of situations perceived to be harmonious do occur because society is not static.

Secondly, some of the lecturers felt that change was not properly communicated to them as employees; they were not given an opportunity to ponder and analyze the information in order to prepare themselves mentally and were also not given a chance to participate in the processes:

Zime: We talked about this change as hearsay in the staffroom. By the time our manager told us about it officially in a meeting, he was saying change will start the following month. I was still wishing for a chance to contribute to the change process. I for one did not get a chance to think about it seriously and consider how it will impact on me and my job. Even if the impact was going to be negative there was no time to plan what to do because implementation was just around the corner ...

Rogers (2003) emphasizes that communication is crucial if educational reform has to succeed and he recommends more interpersonal channels, than mass media channels as the former are perceived to be more effective in forming and changing attitudes towards the new reform. From Zime's comments, the mass media were prominently used by government officials to communicate proposed educational reforms. To achieve better results, human interaction aiming to achieve effective communication needs to be amongst people who are homophilous in terms of attributes and understanding of the vision and the mission of the reform. Zime's comments point to a disjuncture in this aspect, hence the challenges in achieving effective communication between officials and college lecturers.

The above assertion points to poor preparation, planning and communication, and that the pace was too rapid and timeframes impractical, considering that there were too many campuses to be managed and that infrastructure was not properly in place:

Steve: It all happened so fast. With this merger I could say some problems arose from the administration side. As the college has different campuses, managing of these campuses, timeframes given to colleges in preparation of the NCV

programs needed thorough planning. The college had for years provided the NATED courses which mostly focused on theoretical information, but the NCV demands that there should be theory and practical work. Attention had to be paid to infrastructure availability in the form of workshops and computer laboratories. These were not ready when all the change was implemented. There was too much happening at the same time. It was not a nice time for me. It was a stressful time in my career.

Khuba: I think that things were done in a rush. Our college was not ready for the changes. I was still thinking long and hard about all what was happening when the adverts about the new programs were in the print media, television and radios. My colleagues and I wondered how programs will start before facilities were ready. First impressions last. For me it started on the wrong foot, I still see a lot wrong with the way things happened.

The themes emerging from the comments by Steve and Khuba above are a strong presence in the majority of the life stories of the participants of this study. The overwhelming pace, poor planning and lack of resources and infrastructure added to the frustrating experiences of TVET College lecturers. They all believed that reform aimed at overhauling the entire TVET college sector needed sufficient time. They perceived it as an anomaly, that implementation of the NCV was not staggered to allow gradual ushering in. This raises the issue of trialability. Rogers (2003) states that reform needs to be piloted before it is rolled out to a wider audience, as a trialable reform represents less uncertainty to its recipients. The advantage in trialling on a small scale, to determine utility and usefulness of educational reforms proposed, will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

6.2.3 Experiences in relation to redeployment

Specializations resulted in a major reshuffling, as the majority of teaching staff was redeployed to different campuses according to their qualifications, capabilities and specializations. Some of the lecturers felt displaced, as adapting to a new environment became emotionally and financially draining. Being redeployed to a campus very far from home meant that an employee had to find accommodation and pay rent. This added to the existing expenses, as the lecturers were breadwinners in the families that they left behind. To the lecturers who were married it meant relocating the whole family to a new

area. This was not only about finding a new house, but also entailed finding a school or a university for children and a job for the employee's spouse. This was seen by lecturers as intruding immensely on their personal lives:

Corne: I had to move the whole family. I ended up spending a lot of money. It also took a year and a half before my wife got a teaching job in the area where the new campus was. We stayed apart for a long time. It was not a good experience for my whole family. But jobs are scarce I did not have a choice, half a loaf is better than no bread at all.

Experiences described above were humiliating to some of them, particularly to those who could not afford relocation and travelling expenses. Humiliation brings with it 'painful feelings of displacement and severance', where victims 'feel cut out from their established niches and ejected from their old haunts' (Smith 2001, p 157). Elias (1996) describes a humiliated person as feeling outraged, violated and not strong enough to go on and perform better.

Goodson (1995) views these occurrences as 'extrinsic critical incidents', in which macro political changes impinge on the personal lives of teachers, leading to dissatisfaction and low morale. He emphasizes that 'an uncommitted and poorly motivated teaching body will have disastrous effects for even the best of intentions for change' (p 112). According to Elias's game models, interdependence between players exists and, if disparity in strength occurs, the team becomes disorganized, affecting the figuration of the game (Elias, 1970a).

Some of the lecturers, like Thulani, did not go through the same kind of experience and he considered himself fortunate:

Thulani: I believe I was one of the lucky ones. I was deployed to a campus closer to home and also closer to central office. People pay a lot of money to come here but for me it's just a walking distance ...

The lecturer above didn't undergo the misery explained by lecturer K. Instead he gained an added advantage of being closer to the head office of the college. As explained in

Chapter 5, campuses closer to central office are comparatively better off than those far away. They have all the resources and good infrastructure. Management is within easy reach for enquiries, requests, feedback and follow-ups on critical matters, which means that some campuses are more equal than others. Lecturers expressed this concern when interviewed, but they have never done anything about it due to fear of victimization:

Bongi: It is not easy to complain about these things to management. We talk about it amongst ourselves only. We are all scared because if you complain you can be victimized by those in power in the college. You can be seen as the initiator of trouble and be fired.

Comments from Bongi showed a manifestation of the control *habitus*, whereby lecturers suppress themselves in fear of transgressing against the rules and being judged by others within the social network (Elias, 1978).

Amalgamations and staff redeployment also came along with the dismantlement of emotional attachments between lecturers as employees and their colleges as workplaces. Lecturers had become attached to their social environments, including people they work with. Previous social relationships will always matter. Gleichmann *et al.* (1977) emphasize this fact by asserting that ‘a person is born into the world not as a pristine and isolated individual, but as a nexus in a social network’ (p 30) and that we bond with people and the environments we are embedded in. Even those who escaped redeployment were disgruntled by the colleges’ new branding, through changing of institution names. A dismantled bond was also perceived to be a contributory factor to a shaky cultural fit in the new social structures and, in some instances, led to employee behaviour like poor performance and attrition. This emotional bond is crucial as a driver of employee retention. Some of the lecturers resigned, as evidenced in comments from the following lecturer:

Zime: Some of my colleagues lost confidence in the system. Very few people trusted that the new reforms will take off. I also saw a lot of insecurity coming my way but I was not ready to leave the sector. But most of my colleagues resigned and went to search for greener pastures in industries. Even now we are

still losing staff, this trimester alone five colleagues left and are now working in firms in town.

6.2.4 Experiences in relation to existence of central offices

What also resulted from amalgamations were new structures called central offices, which served as headquarters for each new college. The idea of having central offices was met with cynicism from lecturers, because they were far away from where these employees conduct their day-to-day teaching and learning activities. They are perceived to be too detached from practice and symbolize depersonalizing, isolating tendencies of modernity (Elias, 1985a). Some of the things the lecturers require urgently, for example procurement-related issues, need approval from these offices which are not within easy reach. Delays and other administrative hiccups have led to perceptions that management at central offices lacks the ability and capacity to run the colleges effectively:

Khuba: Central offices are isolated from campuses. As a result procurement becomes ridiculous as it results in major delays as well as the wrong items being ordered. It also allows for corruption in the sense that the procurement office uses whomever they deem suitable – the lecturer who placed an order does not have any major input as to whom the final service provider will be. We lose faith in this type of structure, I do not see any transparency due to lack of contact with our senior management team. Serious mistakes happen and I think some of them do not have what it takes to run a college.

Steve: It takes us away from our core functions when we have to attend meetings at central offices. We travel a long distance to go there and a lot of time is wasted on the road. I see the existence of a central office as an added expense and the money used to sustain a central office and all the travelling could be better utilized for the effective running of campuses.

According to Hoppers (2001), there were too many problems when the new institutional governance and management structures were set up. She maintains that teething problems, aggravated by being understaffed, created ‘an uncomfortable distance between management and the rest’ (p 34) leading to staff believing that management is incapable, authoritarian, alienating, inaccessible and aloof. Day (2000) believes that for educational

reform to succeed, it is critical to prevent isolation and disassociation, and to foster a sense of belonging, meaningfulness, worth and confidence in teaching staff.

Further merger related issues explicitly voiced by participants is that of specialization by campuses. Due to the introduction of new qualifications and programmes, campuses had to specialize. Some became engineering campuses, others business campuses, while those that were isolated geographically catered for both. Firstly, specialization meant removing some of the programmes from communities, thus working against the principle of responsiveness to community needs which colleges have to comply with. Students looking for qualifications that have been moved away have to commute daily to the campuses to which these have been relocated. Lecturers saw the travelling as expensive and not affordable for people already highly affected by unemployment and abject poverty.

6.2.5 Lecturer employment issues

(a) Change of employment status

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that teachers, college lecturers in this study, are employees involved in a labour process called teaching. Lecturers in this study are either employees of the provincial Ministry of Education or College Council. Originally, all TVET college lecturers were employees of the provincial Ministry of Education, but this was restructured as part of transformations that were taking place to revamp the sector. Revision of lecturer employment status was legislated through the FET Colleges Act of 2006. The latter endorsed that management staff will be appointed by the MEC, while employment of all other staff will be the responsibility of the college:

The Council must approve conditions of employment, including the determination and review of salaries for lecturers and support staff and all other forms of remuneration in accordance with the rules (The FET Colleges Act of 2006, p34).

Lecturers indicated that, at first, they were given a chance to choose, in writing, to either remain with the provincial department or move to be employees of the College Councils.

All lecturers said that the change was overwhelming, a hard time in their lives and taking a decision was difficult, as one had to consider many factors before making the choice.

Shenge: It was hard. I chose to be under the Council because they said if you remain under the state you could be deployed to any school in the province. I was not ready. I realized that it was possible to be deployed to a remote rural area where living is not good. We were not feeling good about this and we were also scared of losing our jobs. Most of us here chose the Council, only a few still remain under the state employment. Thereafter, all new appointments were taken over by Council...

From Shenge's comments the sudden change of employment status presented a difficult time in lecturers' lives as government employees and teaching staff in TVET colleges. This was compounded by fear of placement in deep rural areas, which are notorious for poverty and lack of amenities and resources. Under the prevailing circumstances, in which unemployment and retrenchments were rife in the country, thoughts of losing a job evoked stressful feelings of insecurity.

(b) Remuneration

New appointments after the revision of the nature of lecturer employment saw newly appointed college lecturers being given short-term contracts and salaries that were not market-related. Lecturers said that salaries were very low. Bongzi's comment captured the plight of lecturers:

First and foremost is the fact that the salaries offered to lecturers are not high enough to entice people to join the FET Colleges. Lecturers currently earn less than a schoolteacher, and a lecturer's salary certainly does not even compare to the salaries that are offered in the different industries. This means that very few people are prepared to leave the industry to come and lecture. To be honest, the majority of people who are prepared to leave their jobs to lecture are usually those who are not the breadwinners and who are looking for jobs with less stress and fewer commitments. Others are retirees who are looking to supplement their income and while away their time. Let me use an old phrase 'if you pay peanuts, you get monkeys'.

The use of the words ‘peanuts’ and ‘monkeys’ has a diminutive connotation suggestive of demoralization due to low salaries and short-term employment. It also implies that people of poor quality will be employed, because properly skilled artisans and lecturers will not apply and even highly skilled ones who are in the system may not work diligently. Contracts that lecturers received were not the same, as they were demand driven. For example, some of the lecturers were employed in projects-based curricula which are usually one-year contracts. Many were offered cost-to-company contracts and this eliminates accountability of management to pension contributions, medical aid, housing allowances and other benefits.

Some of the participants reiterated that not all is doom and gloom with regards to the contract issue, because there were some colleagues with longer contracts:

Shenge: No contract employment is good you know, but some are better than others. We have people like Mr XX who is under Council and was given a three year renewable contract. I don't know what criteria they used to give him that kind of contract but this indicates that it is possible to make things better for us ...

Further responses from lecturers who participated in this study showed that dissimilar conditions of employment have caused divisions among staff and have negatively affected relations between colleagues within campuses, amongst campuses and towards college leadership. Susan said:

Susan: I'm not council I'm persal eh very interesting I'm persal. But I listen to the other lecturers eh ja they've got some problems and so on but it looks like they are going to start solving it alright, and so on especially with contracts. And I listen to them complain about Council all the time. Mr XX can tell you more about that type of thing cos he is our union member also.

Researcher: What do they say about Council?

Susan: That the money is not the same like us on persal⁹. Also they are not permanent jobs. I know the union fought for contracts, ja they are on short

⁹ A persal system refers to ‘an integrated transversal system for the administration of human resource transactions and payment of salary for the South African Government at National and Provincial spheres’. Being non-persal means that a lecturer is not employed by government but by Council and is associated with perceptions of poor conditions of service. ⁹

contracts man. Others sometimes are teaching for about six months without signing anything to show they are employed, ja, like they haven't got contracts and so on. Ja, that's what I have heard and it is bad ...

Although Susan is state paid she is aware of frustrations that her colleagues who are on the college payroll have. She mentioned disparities that exist between the two sides and also short-term contracts for the other group. Her tone indicated that she feels for the disadvantaged colleagues. Other respondents had more details about this state of affairs:

Shenge: Staff is divided. Some are on persal with benefits like medical aid, retirement, and housing allowance and leave while others are on Council without any of these benefits. I really feel for those who are on Council. This causes two camps, lecturers on permanent employment and on contracts. It is an awkward situation that divides staff. Those without benefits dislike leaders at the central office and feel let down by the government. It is a bad situation that ends up affecting all of us.

From the above response, one can tell that Shenge is on persal, but is saddened by what is happening to his colleagues. One deduces from the response that the two different statuses of employment have led to divisions, as those on state pay have benefits, while Council employees have none. Those under state pay are resented by those disadvantaged by the system. Resentment is further channeled towards college leadership and the government that orchestrated the reforms. This frustration was evident in Khuba's response:

Khuba: Salary wise, those of us who are not employed by the government are not happy. Our employer, the Council, doesn't give us benefits that match those of the state. We are all on contracts. Others are as short as three months. You are considered lucky if you get a year contract. There is no job security. I am so frustrated. When you are on contract you can't plan long term. It affects my life badly. But I consider myself lucky because I can teach part time classes in the afternoons and on Saturdays. That way I am able to make myself extra cash but still these classes depend on whether there are students who have chosen to study in your learning area. Sometimes even part time jobs are scarce ...

Although Khuba considers himself fortunate because he is able to make extra money through part-time teaching, this doesn't give him security either, because part-time classes are seasonal.

Steve, from a different college, confirmed the plight of lecturers on contracts and how this causes low morale, thus affecting performance and relations among colleagues:

Steve: Lecturers on contract posts are not happy because they are insecure. Even if it's a year contract they are not sure they will have a job the following year as this depends on student numbers and other factors like availability of funds.

Researcher: So you think this is bad for relations at work?

Steve: Ja, because they are always shaky due to insecurity especially towards the end of the year. They do not co-operate when we do things on campus. For example, when we are engaged in extra mural activities they don't come, they don't participate as lecturers. Same response when students are on Plato which is a program of extra classes designed for those students who want to improve their Maths and English. It takes place after hours. So they say they won't do extra work especially after hours because that will not be paid for. This affects us because we need their support but what can we say, they are angry people...

Problems of employment and conditions of service cited above have created a sense of insecurity amongst teaching staff, resulting in fewer suitably qualified lecturers applying for TVET college jobs, or the migration of existing qualified staff to industry and self-employment.

Steve: It is frustrating that we are in a sector of the profession in which conditions of service are worse and full time jobs are shrinking.

Poor remuneration and poor conditions of service have had detrimental effects on the TVET sector. Kraak and Hall (1999) stated that 'the exceptionally poor salary levels especially in key technical fields make it very difficult to recruit top-class teachers and trainers' (p 166). It is therefore very difficult for colleges to attract technical staff of high quality.

(c) Staff-student ratios due to resignations

Due to poor remuneration and poor conditions of service, resignations were rife. As more and more staff left the TVET colleges, expertise was lost and an already fragile vocational education system was further crumpled. Student-lecturer ratios increased (van Wyk, 2010). As a result, the remaining lecturers find it difficult to cope with the large numbers of learners in classrooms and workshops. This confirms the findings of the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Education on Oversight Visit to Further Education and Training Colleges (2006), which pointed out one of the glaring challenges as high turnover of staff which led to increase of workloads, and increase of staff-student ratios, compromising professionalism and interfering with working hours of lecturers.

Lecturers complained that they end up being forced to teach subjects that they dislike, or have no knowledge of, due to staff shortages. This has made lecturers unhappy at work and has increased resentment towards Heads of Departments and campus managers.

Zime: Before the NCV was introduced we were specialists, teaching core subjects in the NATED programmes. But a lot of staff has resigned and we are forced to take their subjects. You find yourself teaching English or Life Orientation. Now we have been turned into language teachers. I am a Science and Maths person and we people are very non-linguistic. But you find yourself being instructed to teach a language. You can't refuse because you may lose your job.

Shenge: It is very stressful. Those of us who remain behind are more of victims than those who exit the system and go for greener pastures. Reshuffling and restructuring occurs and most of us are forced into teaching what we do not like so as to replace colleagues who have left ...

Lecturers' use of words and phrases, such as 'frustrating', 'worse', 'instructed to', 'we can't refuse', 'stressful', 'victims' and 'forced', paint a picture of experiences of discontentment. Comparisons with colleagues from other colleges intensify the feelings of hopelessness:

Sandile: The FET Act transferred us to Council. Things were better when we were paid by the government. I have no idea how HR calculates our salaries. It's so

different from what we used to get from the state. Now we get peanuts! The pay is not standard in the college and when we compare with other colleges it's more disheartening.

Researcher: Not standard? How?

Sandile: If I compare what a lecturer who has the same experience and qualifications as me in another campus earns, it's not the same. It is rarely the same. Worse, our college pays so little compared to other colleges. It is an open secret that college XX and college BB pay better. This is one of the reasons why lecturers will move to these colleges when posts become available. Our college is losing a lot of staff who move to other colleges or the private sector.

Sandile felt that the old days, when they were state employees, were better. He added that other colleagues have moved to other colleges because of differences in salaries and conditions of employment. Sandile also thought that their college suffers when staff leaves to go to another college. Although skills, competences and knowledge are being shared by colleges within the same TVET sector, flight of staff is equated with brain drain for the campus whose staff members have left, especially in specializations like engineering in which human capital is hard to replace. Lecturers have mentioned that an experienced lecturer is rarely replaced by one with equivalent competence and knowledge, to the detriment of the affected campus.

6.3 Experiences of lecturers as teachers

This section presents data on experiences of TVET College lecturers as teachers crucial for the implementation of the process of educational reform. Experiences of lecturers expressed in this regard oscillated between issues of staff development, the phasing out of the NATED courses, the introduction and challenges of the new curriculum, the NCV, lecturers' perceptions of their students and the issue of compatibility between the NCV and the student factor.

6.3.1 Staff development

Education as a field is not static. Worldwide, there are new technological advances, ever-changing labour markets and constant adaptations to legislative frameworks that come with new approaches and methodologies. Education is not immune to these changes and developments. Hence the demand for continuous staff development programmes aimed at

skilling, up-skilling and reskilling of teachers, in order to be able to effectively meet the new challenges.

The introduction of the NCV in TVET colleges necessitated that lecturers be capacitated for their new role in the new curriculum. In the context of this study TVET lecturers are seen to be at the forefront of skills development, as spelled out in the National Professional Lecturer Development Framework (2012), which proposes initial professional education in vocational education and continuing professional development of lecturers for effective implementation of the ‘emerging skills revolution’ (Pandor, 2009) in the country. The majority of lecturers interviewed in this study stressed that they feel the need to be capacitated for their role in the new curriculum. They felt that ‘explicit activities that enhance the ability of people to reach their full potential in productivity in both formal and informal work settings’ (UN, 1995, p 5) also needed to apply to them for optimal implementation and effective curricular change to occur.

Assumptions that it is the responsibility of either the college or the government to train and develop lecturers for effective teaching and implementation of policies to take place have been explicitly vocalized by participants in this study. They maintained that, as employees, they needed to be re-trained to be able to teach in the new curriculum, the NCV. Comments from different lecturers were:

Corne: The Council is accountable for staff development but in our campus no training of lecturers has happened. I think staff development is a must considering that we have a new curriculum. Most of us are not job-fit when it comes to teaching in the NCV.

Bheki: Only a few lecturers are getting training in our campus compared to other campuses. As trainers and facilitators we need to be fully skilled and be experts in conducting practical training with students in the workshops and teaching of NCV subjects.

Sandile: We were never trained as teachers. We don’t have money to get this kind of professional training and we learn through trial and error as we go. I think this is unfair to students who become guinea pigs in the process.

Steve: In our college all I got was training for 5 days to teach the NCV. At the beginning I was not sure at all about what I was teaching. I was not having trust in myself. But I have improved now. I think the college was supposed to make training available prior to the commencement of the new program...

Rajesh: We were given five days of training to teach the NCV when it started. I think this time is not enough. I am a specialist as an artisan in engineering, I am not a teacher. I think we needed more training. Presently, the throughput rate is very low and I think lack of training of lecturers is contributing. As a lecturer with not enough training of how to handle NCV, I am not as confident as I used to be.

Other lecturers stated that many staff members were taken to facilitator training but even this was sporadic and the duration was questionable.

Bheki: There is some training going on but is not enough. I can tell you that 75% of us are Assessor trained and 40% are Moderator trained. I don't think this is adequate. The way I see it is that a NCV lecturer needs to have multiple methods of teaching to reach out to all the learners because they differ and come from different cultural backgrounds. The college needs qualified skilled lecturers who will be able to promote effective teaching and learning. We need a type of lecturer that will help develop skills in our learners, inspire them for lifelong learning and encourage decision making. I don't see that kind of lecturer in our college right now.

Steve: NCV required staff to continuously assess learners. We were taken to workshops for training. These workshops lasted a few days or a week. I don't think these were effective. For example, after a few months Umalusi arrived at the college to assess POEs. They discovered that some files had only one or two tests for the whole year. I think that staff did not know what was expected of them and they learnt through trial and error. I feel training needed to be done systematically. I am not happy with the way things have been done and I think teaching and learning suffers badly because of this.

One of the lecturers felt that too much emphasis is put on assessment at the expense of a focus on lecturer competence:

Khuba: As we were shifting from NATED to NCV we were not ready to teach the new program. Ja, I for one had fears because I was not ready to take on the challenge. I think the Department of Education did not see this shift as a daunting task. They took it lightly. For me it was more than just a program name change. It was the beginning of a new direction and I was not ready for it

Some of the lecturers believed that the Ministry of Education took change for granted. Judging by the tone of lecturers' voices when analyzing the overwhelming pace and timeframes, the perception is that policymakers did not view the reform as a process that required careful planning before implementation. Carl (1995) argues that many educational reforms have not been successful because the importance of implementation is always underestimated. Challenges are compounded by the issue of minimal communicability of the reform to lecturers. Hence the lack of readiness to implement was strongly voiced by the majority of lecturers:

Khuba: As we were shifting from NATED to NCV we were not ready to teach the new program. Ja, I for one had fears because I was not ready to take on the challenge. I think the Department of Education did not see this shift as a daunting task. They took it lightly. For me it was more than just a program name change. It was the beginning of a new direction and I was not ready for it

Khuba's comment concurs with what was discussed in Chapter 3, that reform is much more than just change, as it has embedded notions of the concepts of renewal, improvement, betterment, transformation and amendment (Schweisfurth, 2002). Furthermore, flaws linked to inadequate teacher support and training, highlighted by Jansen (1998), was evident in all lecturers' stories.

From the quotations cited above, it is clear that lecturers perceive being trained as critical, because of the belief that curricular changes brought in a new dimension for teaching and learning, which has implications for their competences. Enhancement of their academic vocational knowledge and competence in conducting practical work with students in workshops is believed to have occurred at a slow, unsystematic pace. Lecturer knowledge and understanding of the curriculum is considered by them to be central to successful implementation of the new curriculum. Some of the lecturers feel that they are not 'job-

fit' and this is a hindrance in the provision of quality education, as curriculum innovation was not linked to training that ensures maximum utilization of staff. Some of them felt that inadequacy, fear and low self-esteem affected their performance; hence the perception of these as contributory factors to the high failure rates.

Participants explicitly blamed their employers, college management and the Department of Education, for not training and up-skilling them, so that they were adequately capacitated to perform their duties in teaching the NCV. They believed that interventionist plans for training should have been done before, during and after the new curriculum was implemented as lecturers are the ones responsible for reinventing and designing the curriculum at a practical level.

In addressing challenges befalling the TVET college sector, The Green Paper for Post Schooling Education and Training that was out for public consultation until the end of April 2012 confirmed what lecturers who participated in this study have said:

College lecturers in technical fields have, through the years, been recruited from industry. They usually possess technical qualifications as well as workplace experience and knowledge, but little pedagogical training. Many lecturers in academic subjects like Language, Mathematics or Science entered colleges with school teaching qualifications but little industry experience. Many lecturers are also college graduates who have completed their N6 courses, or graduates from universities of technology who have completed a National Diploma. Many of these lecturers have limited subject content knowledge and little if any workplace experience. Teaching needs to be taken very seriously and a great deal of effort needs to go into improving its quality and supporting teachers at all levels of the post-school system ... (p 24)

From the excerpt from The Green Paper it is demonstrated that assertions of lecturers evidenced in their responses contained in the life history interviews with regards to inadequate training are true. These articulations by both the lecturers and The Green Paper are pointing to an urgent need for long-term interventions that will work towards FET college lecturer development ensuring that they are also exposed to workplace environment experiences. The Green Paper discussions are a breath of fresh air to

lecturers who have been complaining about change for many years. Some of the developments emanating from The Green Paper have given lecturers hope:

Steve: With the immense and varied challenges in all protocols, a change to a well-structured DHET will be welcomed with open arms in our FET Colleges. A draft salary and job designation chart, re-affirmed our peace of minds and motivated us initially to upgrade and up-skill our minds, character and qualifications. An appropriate leader will take our colleges and vision and mission statements to a higher level. This will have a positive ripple effect in our college structures. I think we as lecturers will now be recognized for whom we are and the efforts we make in relation to students, management and our careers.

The comments above put faith in, and applaud, the Minister of DHET for the motivating turnaround strategies that he unveiled in 2012. His new overhaul attempt of the TVET college sector not only focuses on improving lecturer qualifications but also curricular delivery, students' pass rates, institutional management and governance, infrastructure, resources like facilities, books and equipment, funding, as well as partnerships and linkages with key stakeholders.

6.3.2 The NCV and student age

A student forms a vital part of a lecturer's social and work context. Engagement with students is not an incidental occurrence, but a significant part of a lecturer's formal work life. As was described in the theoretical framework chapter, interdependencies exist in human relationships (Elias, 1978). There is, therefore, interconnectedness that exists between students and lecturers. Lecturers' actions, activities and experiences intermesh with those of their students.

Historically, South African technical colleges have offered the NATED courses from N1 to N6. The entry level for a new student would be N1, followed by N2 and N3, all done in a trimester and completed within one year. At the end of this year a student had the choice to seek employment in industries or proceed to N4 – N6, which gave a student a

National Diploma in the chosen field. Lecturers who participated in this study insisted that the student was comparatively older, more mature and better motivated:

Susan: I had students from 16 to 41. I started with N1, N2 and N3. That was for me a very good system, very good system, because the guys that are sitting in my classroom want to become a mechanic. They are there to study. They are serious. They want to finish and go on to do an apprenticeship ...

Zime: Students those days worked with less supervision. I'm not saying all of them were perfect but there was less worry about whether they will do their work or not. If we compare with the young ones we have now I think back then students were serious about their school work.

Participants in this study asserted that with the introduction of the new curriculum, the TVET college sector was accessed by students as young as 14 years, since the minimum requirement is a pass in Grade 9 or the equivalent qualification:

Shenge: They are young and playful. We are not used to strict discipline like high school teachers because we have been dealing with adults for many years. The young ones are impossible to deal with. They don't take responsibility for their work and they bunk classes.

Sipho: NCV is full of young learners who are used to be controlled by teachers all the time. Here we work in a different way. We are more like varsity where a learner has to pull himself together, go to classes and do school work on his own. These young kids are in a different world. Most of them are loose and lost.

Steve: These young learners lack vision of what they want to achieve in life. They are not serious about their work.

Zime: In schools they wore uniform. And this I think was part of enforcing discipline. Here they come in civilian clothes. The campus is not as strict. Most of them are out of hand. They sit under the trees. We don't go check if they should be in class or not. We just assume they have a free period. It is chaos. And when they fail we take the blame.

Sandile: Most boys in the NCV are young and not well behaved. They don't come to class, don't do homework and they fail tests. Girls are much better but are small in numbers. I used to love my job but now I am not so sure.

From the above comments one can see that a younger learner comes from an environment that operates differently. In a school environment learners are under the strict supervision of teachers. They will be reprimanded for late coming, absenteeism, not doing homework and not wearing uniform properly. This was confirmed by Reddy (2001), who argued that schools and colleges differ with regards to institutional culture and ethos, governance and management. The TVET college context is relaxed and not as strict as a secondary school. Lecturers feel that this has had a negative result on how the young learners conduct themselves and this is affecting them and their work as lecturers:

Zime: The college environment is characterized by a prevalence of the 'I don't care attitude' amongst most of our students, particularly the NCV students. I don't know how we can teach effectively under these circumstances. Small wonder the failure rate is so high. Working here is not nice anymore.

Whilst lecturers were adamant about college not being suitable for learners that are too young, they also complained about a large presence of older ones, whom they believe are dropouts from local secondary schools:

Bongi: Some of the students failed in schools and had given up. But when colleges opened they saw a second chance. They thought college will be easier. They see it is no walk in the park. They are still not coping. They bunk classes and are in and out of college as they please.

Zime: Some of the students are dropouts from schools. The ones in this category are usually older and some of them are rebellious due to exposure to drugs. They sometimes bully younger learners for small change. This kind of behavior is very intimidating.

Thulani: Very few benefit the grade 9 criterion and come to our colleges because they are passionate about a particular specialization. Most of them are dropouts from high schools.

Bheki: Some of the older students have already been exposed to many realities of life. Although under the age of 20, some are already parents. In my class some of them will be absent because their child is sick. You can see that they not only have to contend with homework, tests and assignments but they also have to take care of their children. It is very hard to deal with 'child parents'.

From the quotations cited above, it is clear that different campuses of the two colleges in this study have attracted a younger student that has not adjusted well to the college environment. Other participants pointed out that the original setting of the college has not been adjusted to suit the new type of student. The campuses have also been accessed by older students who have dropped out of the main schooling system (Garisch, 2007). Lecturers who participated in this study were not happy about either of the NCV groups.

NATED students, who are perceived to be older and more mature, in most campuses, are part-time students. They are either evening or examination-only students. TVET colleges are dominated by younger NCV students, who lecturers said are problematic in terms of behaviour and motivation.

As this study chose participants who have worked in the sector before the new era was ushered in, one gathers that an older, more mature student of previous times made their work environment comparably more comfortable.

6.3.3 The quality of students and perceptions of the sector

The majority of participants stated that there is a widespread perception from many people that FET colleges are for students who have failed to cope in secondary schools in mainstream education. Lecturers believe that this is a stigma that the TVET sector has been stuck with for decades. Most of them have been through the same system and they do believe that the perception about the sector needs to be corrected as it is wrong. The TVET college sector is not designed for academically less able students:

Sandile: I have worked in this sector for many years. I have had very good students over the years. They came to this technical college not because they were dull but because they loved their trade. I used to produce very good tradesmen in our engineering section.

Bheki: This way of thinking is not correct. We work here and we know what we are talking about. Even during the era in which only the NATED courses were championed, not everyone got through that easily. Many failed and repeated

courses until they give up. Some would repeat the same trade test even five times before they pass and be qualified artisans. Work has always been tough here, always will be. I think the perception that weak students will do better here is not correct.

Lecturers said that because of the false perception of the sector, they have a ‘wrong-type’ of student and this is very frustrating.

Corne: We have received hundreds of students who are not fit to be here. Most of them did not succeed elsewhere. They have come here because they thought the college is easy education. Well, this is not the case. It is not nice to teach a student that you can see will not make it in the end. We see many of them becoming discontented because they are unable to achieve what they came here for. Eventually, most of them fail and dropout.

This is aggravated by the perceptions of management from ordinary schools, who also regard TVET colleges as an alternative for academically weak learners:

Steve: I once sat in the company of principals in which many of them admitted to the fact that whenever there is overcrowding in their schools they call slow learners and advise them to go to FET colleges. This is disheartening to us who work here especially because we know that it is not true.

Lecturers explained that, even if this was the case, with the introduction of the NCV, technical college work has become even harder. NCV courses, whether Engineering or Business Studies, require highly capable students, as do most subjects in schools, especially science:

Corne: There is no way in which slow learners can be expected to pass here. If they couldn’t do science subjects in high schools they can’t win here either. Presence of such learners in our classrooms make the teaching and learning pace very slow and it is not nice to work here because of these things.

Thulani: You find that the students we have, especially in engineering, I’m sorry to put it this way, are not engineering material. A big problem is that we don’t have placement tests to use when admitting them.

The influx of students escalated because they were attracted by bursaries that the government promised to pay to those enrolling for NCV programmes. Government has been funding students from poor backgrounds through its National Student Financial Assistance Scheme, in the form of loans or bursaries. Money received by students had to be used to pay for tuition, food, accommodation and transport. This venture saw an increase of funding allocation to TVET colleges from R310 million in 2009 to R1.75 billion in 2012, with the hope of R2 billion in 2013 (DHET, 2011). This kind of funding came with many challenges:

Rajesh: In our college in 2007 there was a lot of intake because people heard about a bursary. The DoE had promised to offer students 100% bursary to all NCV students. Besides attracting students of poor quality, our college ended up enrolling more than the infrastructure could accommodate. I think enrolment of students should match physical, human and financial resources available. At the end of the day we as lecturers had to deal with huge student numbers in classrooms.

Zime: Many students who were sitting at home because of money problems saw an opportunity for free education. Our college does not have a strict screening process. Admission criteria are still relaxed and inefficient. As a result, a lot of weak students who also do not have a technical background got enrolled.

Seidman (2006) warned against unrealistic enrolments aimed at meeting targets for financial gain: 'Do not recruit students to your campus who will not be successful unless you are willing to provide programs and services to overcome deficiencies; philosophy does not have to follow finance' (p 32).

The bursary promise was short-lived though, as it was not completely honoured by the government. Lecturers explain that the coffers of the state ran dry faster than was expected. They think that this had a negative impact on them and the programmes, as many students dropped out when the state could not pay the full amounts promised.

Sipho: In 2007 many students came to enroll with the belief that they will be paid for to learn. In the middle of the year the college announced that the state will then offer 30% bursary, not 100%. This forced students to dropout because

of insufficient finances as most parents are poor. This was bad because many colleagues who had been hired lost their jobs because student numbers had dropped.

Other lecturers felt betrayed by the college and the government. Zime felt that the empty promises of bursaries damaged her image in the eyes of people who trusted her.

Zime: We were asked to be part of the marketing drive for the NCV. We did it by telling our neighbours, friends and even people we go to church with. Many people responded by sending their children to the college. But bursaries were available only partially for 2007. From 2008 parents were told to pay before registration and tuition per annum is close to R2000. For poor people, this is a lot of money. I feel bad when people ask me about this and I think no amount of explaining will make people to trust me again.

It is clear from the comment above what lecturers feel about what is happening in the colleges in which they work. Feelings of being undervalued and being looked down upon dominated TVET college lecturers' life stories. One of the lecturers stated that as their work environment is looked down upon, they also feel labelled as such:

Bongi: Teachers, friends and neighbours will tell you a story about a child who is struggling to pass and needs information about how to apply to learn at the college. This immediately tells you something about how the sector is viewed by people out there. This makes me feel that my place of work has a low status in society. I don't feel comfortable about my work and my place of work. A double blow is when you work in a small campus that is looked down upon by colleagues of other campuses of the same college!

Lecturers insisted that TVET college courses are not easy and that the low status accorded to their colleges is not warranted. They reasoned that the syllabus and content of the subjects they teach at TVET colleges is much harder than secondary school work:

Susan: We are working here. They are going to work harder here than at high school. Mm, like maths especially for engineering that is done in FET colleges. It's harder than the maths done in ordinary high school. Ja! Even the vocational subjects for NCV it's more difficult than those done in technical high schools.

Shenge: Maths that we do here is different and is difficult compared to the secondary school one. I teach maths for electrical engineering, it is specific maths for this field. When the learner wants to study electrical engineering they are forced to do it and most of them are not coping ...

Lecturers are not happy about false perceptions that colleges are an easy way out for students who are weak academically. Many lecturers feel disheartened about the type of student that their colleges have attracted and also about working in an environment that is perceived as low in status.

6.3.4 Barriers to learning

This section discusses data that gives a general overview of barriers to learning experienced by TVET college students through the eyes of lecturers who participated in this study. This section is essential because anything which hinders full participation and effective learning of students also impacts on the work life of a lecturer. Barriers to learning have been categorized into systemic, societal and pedagogical barriers.

6.3.4.1 Systemic barriers

(a) Shortage of resources

A concern expressed by lecturers is shortage of resources and infrastructure. Scarcity of classrooms, furniture, textbooks, libraries, computers, printers, photocopiers and other resources was evident on most campuses. Lack of physical space (Abrahams, 1997), such as workshops rendered curriculum development by lecturers ineffective, particularly the practical component of the curriculum. This situation frustrated lecturers as it hampered progress:

Rajesh: I remember when the NCV started, there were no textbooks, subject guidelines, lecturer guides and assessment guidelines. Some of these arrived a month late. Imagine how frustrated we were as lecturers. We didn't know what to do but had to make a plan to keep the students busy

Shenge: In terms of textbooks the situation is stabilizing now. It was very bad when the new curriculum started. Most campuses received textbooks in August. This is nearly the end of the year. Students and lecturers suffered a lot as copies

of chapters from books had to be made. It was expensive and time consuming. The worse thing was that some copies were badly reproduced and they were difficult to read. Some staff complained that wrong textbooks were delivered. This left staff morale at an all-time low. We were even questioning the survival of the programmes. The whole thing made me crazy. To compound the problem, authors saw this as an opportunity to create text and make money whether the content was valid or not did not matter.

The outcry about the shortage of resources was confirmed by one of the lecturers in engineering:

Corne: Our workshops are ill equipped, some with outdated instead of state-of-the-art equipment as promised by the government. This will have a negative impact on the quality of students that we produce as industries have new types of machines.

Bheki from a smaller campus in one of the colleges expressed his concerns thus:

Our campus combines engineering and business programs. Both programs have large student numbers. As a result there is a shortage of classrooms and furniture. Most of us find ourselves sharing classrooms and we feel that this is affecting optimal and competent execution of our duties

Other lecturers allege that management allowed the admission of students to escalate on purpose. Resources available do not have the capacity to accommodate all the students enrolled:

Corne: I think the key reason for enrolling more students than the college could accommodate was to ensure that they get a bigger government subsidy. The larger the number of students enrolled the greater the sum of money would be received by the college from the Department of Education. But bigger numbers in class leave us lecturers with overloaded classrooms. There is no time to plan, prepare and teach properly as our work is overwhelming. I think this affects effective teaching and learning.

Another lecturer from a small campus situated in a rural area complained about sanitation challenges:

Steve: There are too many students and not enough toilets. They are never clean and there is no toilet tissue and soap for washing hands. This exposes students and us to health risks. It is very hard to work under such unhygienic conditions.

One lecturer commented that management is quick to focus blame for poor results on bad teaching, without doing much to minimize contributory factors such as shortage of resources:

Sipho: I am constantly fearful that a grave injustice is being done to our learners. Every exam that they write entails a practical component, which makes up for the major part of their final mark. However, this leads to the downfall of learners' progress as they are not given sufficient practical exposure as a result of lack of resources. I think this leads to high failure rate. When learners fail, management is quick to shift blame for poor results on meagre classroom delivery. They fail to realize that we have been resilient and have tried our level best with the little that we have.

From the responses it is understood that campuses affected the most were those which were historically designed for blacks and also new ones geographically situated in rural areas. My observation has been that central offices are either closer or sharing premises with the well-resourced previously advantaged campuses. These are the campuses that are said to be getting preferential treatment in terms of resources and up-to-date information and are perceived to be getting VIP (very important people) treatment. Skills centres have a lower status than campuses, because they are *ad hoc* structures catering for short training courses responsive to temporary community demands. Equating themselves with such structures is indicative of perceiving their campuses as not highly regarded by management.

Lecturers revealed that relations with campus and central office management are further constrained, as students are disadvantaged while management personnel are comfortable in their very well-built and fully furnished offices:

Steve: Part of what I teach is Life Orientation. This includes teaching IT which involves imparting computer skills to my learners but this becomes extremely difficult for me to accomplish when the necessary resources like computers are not available or not in proper working condition. This has been an ongoing

challenge for me for the past five years and all my approaches to management with regard to purchasing and repairing the existing resources have been shelved. The reason cited for not fixing the problem is unavailability of funds. But, how can this serve as true when the offices occupied by managers are being upgraded and redecorated ever so often? Is this where priority of all available funds are given?

The participant alleged that funds allocated to TVET colleges by the government have been mismanaged and inequitably distributed. As alluded to in Chapter 2, TVET colleges were allocated a Recapitalization Grant amounting to R1,9 billion, for upgrading information technology, campus sites, classrooms, workshops, resources centres, learning and teaching materials, as well as central offices and campus administration buildings. All the 12 lecturers interviewed in the study mentioned that building and refurbishing of offices for leadership received a bigger share of the recapitalization grant.

All lecturers interviewed confirmed that the shortage of resources is one of the biggest teaching and learning barriers. It leads to the hindrance of progress and is one of the contributory factors to the high failure rate. Educational innovations in which resources and infrastructure to support implementation are inadequate are bound to fail (Clark, 2005; Townsend and Bates, 2007).

(b) Cultural, racial and linguistic issues

Another aspect that touched on the emotions of lecturers as employees is that of teaching multiracial, multicultural and multilingual classes. As apartheid's Group Areas Act had demarcated people racially, that had a crucial impact on who constituted teaching staff in educational institutions. In all public schools and colleges, teachers and lecturers taught their own in terms of language and culture, as per their own backgrounds. Some lecturers are Afrikaans mother-tongue speaking, others are English, while others are Zulu speaking. Although exposure to multicultural settings can be a very rewarding experience, participants revealed that the emergence of multiracial classrooms posed complex dynamics. For example:

Thulani: The apartheid thing let us down big time as black lecturers. We still carry the stigma that blacks are weak mentally because of Bantu education. There is still an element of being looked down upon not only by students but also by fellow lecturers. I don't know if others feel the same way but I live a life where I have to prove myself all the time, like reassure people that I also can ...

The introduction of multi-racial classrooms came with the demand for high proficiency when teaching in English. Some of the participants believe that without this linguistic competence teaching and learning is crippled, as communication and comprehension of content is tampered with. One of the lecturers said the situation is aggravated if a lecturer and a student do not share a mother-tongue:

Susan: I am Afrikaans speaking and most of my students are speaking IsiZulu, it is very hard to understand each other. You see, examples that I make when I teach are mostly from my background and some students sometimes do not relate to these. Neither of us goes through a lesson easily because of language and different backgrounds. Some of our colleagues sometimes think it is the students who are not clever when they talk about high failure rate. But the truth is that one of the reasons could be the language of instruction which may be a second language to both lecturer and student. It is a big problem.

Lecturers' use of examples from their own backgrounds in class points to the issue of embeddedness of people in cultural contexts and that culture is a significant aspect of human societies and their development (Elias, 1984b). Where classrooms are multicultural, multilingual and multiracial, lecturers as employees are faced with pedagogical challenges due to the pluralistic nature of their audience. This demands the use of inclusive and intercultural approaches to teaching and learning, which lecturers do not possess.

The majority of lecturers interviewed believe that some of the challenges they have are aggravated by shortcomings in teachers' and learners' command of English (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). The medium of instruction at TVET colleges in KZN is English and most students are from backgrounds where this language is not spoken as the first language at home and in their communities:

Rajesh: I believe that the medium of instruction is a problem in our college because our students come from non-English speaking backgrounds. They use their mother tongue at home and in their societies. Teachers who taught them in primary and secondary schools have used mother tongue a lot in their classrooms. The teachers themselves never got a good education because of apartheid. It is difficult to understand content and this contributes to high failure rates.

Most of the lecturers are convinced that failure to understand the subject matter taught in English impacts negatively on teaching and learning and contributes to the high failure rate:

Zime: Most of our learners use IsiZulu, their mother tongue, at home and in communities where they live. When they come to our college, the medium of instruction is English. This becomes a problem for them as they do not understand what is taught in class well. I think this is one of the reasons why many of them fail.

Bongi: The background of these learners is also very diverse and more often than not language is the greatest learning barrier. This wide array of diversity makes it harder to progress well in teaching and learning. Many of them fail. We just have lots of problems related to the student himself.

Susan: I've got a translator in my class. One of my students that's excellent in English, he is translating Zulu because I can't speak Zulu, so that students can understand because they don't understand me, they don't understand English, they can't answer the question paper because they can't understand English.

All the lecturers interviewed believe that learning in their second language contributes to high failure rates, because students neither understand what is taught in class nor the questions when they write exams:

Susan: English is here to stay. We can't avoid it because it is a language of business. I think if I can teach my students to communicate better in English, make them understand English better, I won't have that high failure rate in the NCV. Because then they will know what I have taught. Right now, they don't even know the meaning of the word 'explain'. I said 'explain to me how a four stroke engine works'. Then most of them write 'it's a four stroke engine'. 'Explain', 'explain', it's a paragraph you must write, not one word. So, that's what

I do sometimes in my classes, I take a verb and explain it to them so that they are able to answer the question.

Zulu-speaking lecturers who teach students speaking the same language do a lot of code-switching and code-mixing. Many said this route solves the problem temporarily:

Corne: I teach in English. But I use a lot of code switching and code mixing in my classroom because the majority speaks IsiZulu like me. This does help students to understand. I do understand though that they can't code switch when writing answers in exams. So I have to be careful to allow them to say it in English. This takes a lot of my teaching time. But if this is not done they can't understand concepts. Business is very English they must be fluent in it. Or else we can end up with learners who do not pass or those who pass but won't be absorbed in the job market as job interviews are in English. You can see that the code-switching technique helps but it needs to be done carefully for long term benefits.

Another lecturer felt that students need to devise means of improving their proficiency in English:

Zime: I believe we need to encourage those learners that use IsiZulu at home to at least practice English in class or on campus. I would encourage the use of the library and engaging themselves in debates, story-telling and presentations. I have often told my learners that in order to learn a language you have to live amongst the people who speak it, speak that language amongst themselves and to read books, newspapers and magazines.

It is clear from the quotations cited above that lecturers in the two KZN TVET colleges have experienced challenges relating to students who cannot grasp what is taught because they have had minimal exposure to and are not proficient in the language of instruction. It has emerged several times that this situation is a stumbling block to effective learning and teaching and lecturers are not happy about it.

The experiences of lecturers discussed and analyzed above are characterized by the occurrence of situations or consequences neither intended nor desired by the government policy-makers. This emphasizes Elias's (1978; 1987) argument that processes of reform are never a straightforward phenomenon but are characterized by unplanned outcomes.

What lecturers view as failure is described by Elias as a norm, an occurrence of ‘blind’ social processes (p 99).

6.3.4.2 Societal and economic barriers

An analysis of the research setting shows that a large majority of TVET college students come from economically disadvantaged families. Unemployment and poverty in their homes are rife and most family members are entirely dependent on government grants. Lecturers who participated in this study said that these conditions impact negatively on students, lecturers and their work environment:

Corne: How many of these children have food at home? Remember we are working in a rural area. This place is poor. It is hard to teach a hungry child because she cannot concentrate. I think cities are different. HIV/AIDS is also prevalent in these areas. That’s why some of them are sick. Can you see what we have to put up with?

Susan: Ja some of them are traveling by bus. I’ve got one student whose parent drives from Louwsberg to drop and pick him up. This place is far. They can afford it because they are not bad financially. But most learners do not have cars in their families and have to travel by taxis and buses. This place is far from where most students live, a big area we are serving here. Sometimes they don’t come to the college because they don’t have money. Most parents cannot afford bus fare. This has thus far led to an increase in learner absenteeism. I think an increase in absentee rate leads to ineffective teaching as it becomes difficult to complete syllabi. These things affect our work at the college.

Thulani: This College serves a wide rural area. Most learners come from very far. Sometimes you find that they are absent because they didn’t have transport money. Sometimes a bursary that they get is for tuition fees only, it doesn’t cover transport. I wish the campus had a residence facility.

Besides the above-named barriers, the previous chapter revealed that learners from rural campuses come from families where education levels are low. Lecturers feel that families are not able to help their children academically and this becomes a problem for teaching and learning:

Sipho: Many parents cannot read and write mother tongue. They are unable to help their children with homework. It is a big problem. It is disturbing especially because courses are in English. I think if levels of education were not so low the pace of teaching and learning would be much better.

This comment confirms research that says low levels of education in parents affect teaching and learning negatively, as they lack the ability to help their children because they are, themselves, less educated (Mukeredzi, 2009, p 158).

Over and above all these challenges, the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, which is higher in KZN than in other parts of the country, aggravates the situation.

Sipho: Some of our learners are sick due to HIV/AIDS; others are orphans some of whom serve as parents for siblings in their homes. We don't need to be told when at times we have to act as social workers and pastors to support these learners. One is not only a teacher but has to play these roles when the need arises.

The above comment makes it clear that lecturers experience situations where they are expected to go beyond the call of teaching and help with other things, like pastoral roles to sick and orphaned students.

6.3.4.3 Pedagogical barriers

Under this sub-heading I present data on mixed ability classrooms, lack of technical background and complexity of modules, heavy workloads and assessment procedures.

(a) Mixed ability classrooms

Lecturers stated that curricular reforms and other factors like promises to offer bursaries, the existence of inadequate admission criteria and the stigma attached to TVET colleges have led to the emergence of mixed ability classrooms.

Lecturers revealed that their classrooms are full of students who are not only at different educational levels, but also of mixed learning abilities. They say that in one Level 2

classroom one finds an amazingly diverse group of students, which is very hard to work with. These are some of the things they have said about this issue:

Bongi: We have a problem. Students enrolled for the NCV program have different educational profiles. Our college takes students from grade 9 to 12. Some students have grade 9, others have either grade 10, 11 or 12. It is difficult to teach students with different grades in one class. Students with matric get bored when you teach something they already know.

Khuba: Working here is a tough job because of the profile of learners that the NCV program has attracted. Our colleges were informed by DoE that the entry level for NCV is Grade 9. The curriculum also does not discriminate against learners with special learning needs (LSEN). The profile of the learner that gets admitted into the FET College classroom ranges between 15 – 20 years old, have either passed or failed Grade 9, or have dropped out of the traditional schooling system, some have matric certificates and others failed to obtain it. It's very hard to deal with this combination.

Steve: Learners in one class are too much of a mixture. I do not know why this is the case but I suspect unclear recruitment guidelines and lack of guidance for students. This is very frustrating for us. It is hard to plan lessons for students who are at different levels but combined in one class. If work is easy advanced learners become bored. But harder activities also frustrate those with lower levels of understanding. That's why they attend shifts like workers at a factory! The whole setup is pedagogically and morally wrong.

Zime: Those who already have matric must be denied entry because it is a waste of time for them. How does a student study for three years for an NQF level 4 when he already has matric? It's like a student is repeating matric for three years!

Corne: I do not approve of having learners who have gone as far as matric joining the NCV with Grade 9 equivalents. I think it is unfair to expect these learners to do yet another three years of schooling in pursuit of a vocational certificate at Level 4 equivalent to Grade 12. Other routes to achieve this should be found.

Some of the lecturers have said that mixed abilities not only relate to academic differences, but also to skills that require practical work, such as exposure to modern technology:

Bheki: Our students come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Most of them have never touched a computer because they neither have it at home nor at their previous school. But in the same class you find those who are completely computer illiterate, those who are experts and good typists and some even have computers at home.

Other lecturers said that they take all students who come to their doorstep, because campuses are sparsely populated and students are entirely dependent on the closest campus:

Sandile: We don't turn away students as we have no placement tests and other tools for assessing whether they fit to get into our programs or not. Besides, this is a public FET college and it is the only one in the area. How can we pick and choose because other campuses are very far away? If we don't take them they have no other place to go to. Yes I agree that it is a difficult situation but what do we do under the circumstances?

There is no doubt that a classroom with students of mixed abilities posed another unique challenge for lecturers that even sporadic workshops did not cater for.

(b) Compounded workloads and complexity of courses

The majority of lecturers have had unpleasant experiences in dealing with NCV students who carry heavy subject loads. The NCV is a three-year qualification, offered at Levels 2, 3 and 4. Each level takes a full year of study and a student is required to take 7 subjects for each level. A student has to take three compulsory fundamental subjects, which are a language, Life Orientation and Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy. Over and above this, a student takes four vocational subjects which can be chosen from Business, Engineering or General Studies:

Zime: A student who passes 3 out of 7 subjects is promoted to the next level. It means that the student will do four more subjects in the next level, giving a total of eleven subjects. It is both challenging and very distressing to teach such students. They don't seem to be focusing well on any of the subject. This is one of the reasons why failure and dropout rates are on the rise.

Most of the lecturers feel that the government lets them down by taking decisions that do not work towards solving the problem:

Sandile: The government keeps on adjusting rules and regulations, lowering pass criteria and pass mark requirements in order to benefit failing students. This makes things worse when you think about the quality of teaching and learning and the student that we will produce in the end.

Lecturers themselves are overloaded, as most of them teach in both the NCV and the NATED programmes. Although the NATED courses were meant to have been phased out, there was no clean break between the old and the new (Jansen, 2008), because the presence of the NATED was still felt in the TVET colleges. 'Rather than the new superseding the old, it was clear that much of the time the two co-existed' (Schweisfurth, 2002, p 124). For lecturers, running both the NCV and the NATED courses increased the complexity of figurations in their professional world, as oscillating between the two demanded two different pedagogical approaches (Towani, 2010). Over and above heavy workloads for students, lecturers assert that most students do not cope due to complexity of content in the courses that they do:

Susan: These grade 9s from secondary schools do not understand the work. I think the subjects are difficult for them. The standard of the curriculum is high. They do not cope. I think work that we teach them here is tougher than what they have done in ordinary schools.

Shenge: The younger student, for whom the NCV curriculum is intended, cannot read, concentrate nor participate meaningfully in class. I think the level of materials is too high for them. They are not coping.

Sandile: I feel that the curriculum is too highly pitched for the level of learners who enroll at the FET Colleges. I do think that it is a good curriculum but not suitable for NCV. It is sort of mismatched with the wrong market.

Thulani: In Mathematics what we teach in N5 and N6 we now teach in Level 3 of the NCV. How can work taught at an exit level like N5 and N6 be dealt with at

Level 3? This is a very basic level and I think work needs to be made simpler and be at the level of the targeted learner.

Steve: Those learners who already have matric are the ones who do better. You can see for yourself at what level the NCV curriculum is. It is just not for a Grade 9 child.

Lecturers explained that complexity of work is one of the reasons why students fail so often. Zime felt that the standard of exams needs to be re-examined:

I think that the DoE has to re-evaluate the standard of examinations for NCV. I feel that the standard of examinations has high expectations while the student capacity is low. This leads to high failure rate due to high standard of knowledge required.

Zime took out one of the question papers that Level 2 wrote at the end of the previous year. She said:

Zime: I have heard from colleagues with degrees that this is done at second to third year at varsity. I am teaching these things but it is the first time I have come across such difficult stuff at a TVET college. No matter how hard you have taught, some of the questions are hard and irrelevant to a child who has only passed grade 9. You yourself will have to study hard to be able to answer this question paper. Do Grade 10/Level 2 learners have to learn and write exams on theories and what they mean?

Lecturers expressed concern regarding the balance between theory and practice, and assessment:

Sipho: The official 60/40% theory and practice ratio is not good to our students. It contributes to high failure rates. The overall practical component should constitute 60% while 40% should be theory. But this is not the case. Our students spend most of the time in classrooms and very little time in workshops for practical work.

Bheki: Final examinations make matters worse. They are in the form of long papers that focus too much on theory. This is why lecturers spend more time in classrooms teaching so as to finish the syllabus. There isn't much time to attend to practical work.

Rajesh: Although our learners remember practical aspects better than theory, at the end they are asked to recall more of theory in the final examination externally set by Department of Education. The papers they write are long and very difficult.

(c) Lack of technical background

Participants feel that most students are under-prepared to undertake technical vocational education modules. Lecturers said this is a challenge and it is hard to help because they are pressed for time to finish the syllabus:

Susan: A technical high school is fine because they've got subjects like technology. Ja, they've got mathematics, science and technology and they can go into engineering. So, it's the teaching in academic secondary schools that do not offer a technical background. I know because my children went through those kinds of schools. It is not possible to give them orientation because of time constraints.

Khuba: In Engineering there is 10 weeks in which to prepare learners for national examinations. This time is short and I do not have time to give extra lessons. We are chasing time in order to finish the syllabus. But I feel bad to finish the syllabus when I know that some of my students have not mastered much.

Corne: There isn't enough time to explain all the engineering concepts that students will come across in my lesson. If I do it, it takes me too much time and I may not finish the syllabus. I am not happy about it but there is just no time for extra tuition.

All participants felt that students fail as a result of this and they all agreed that it puts students at a disadvantage. Sandile commented that:

My worry is that learners fail as there is no time for individual attention. Those who have failed several times drop out. It doesn't feel good to work at a place where not many students get through the programmes. Look at the analysis of retention rates in our Mechanical Engineering programme.

Lecturers are under pressure to finish the syllabus. The rush to complete the syllabus puts students without a technical background at a disadvantage. This situation is aggravated

for those students whose language of instruction is not their mother tongue. Lecturers admitted that not much effective teaching and learning occurred under these conditions.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented data on lived educational reform experiences of TVET college lecturers at the policy-practice interface. Data was categorized into two main domains, which were lecturers as employees and lecturers as teachers.

Data on lecturers' experiences as employees reveals that educational reforms have had intended and unintended consequences and implications. Data exposed a variety of underlying issues that have contributed to more dissatisfaction than gratification. Amalgamation of colleges led to a change of college identity, which was not palatable to the majority of lecturers. Merging of these institutions also came with redeployment of staff, which was understood and interpreted by lecturers as one of the factors that affected their socialization and negatively interfered with their economic, emotional and psychological *habitus*. Emotional bonds (Elias, 1978) existed between lecturers, old institutions and the old ways of doing things, because for them the old ways were better. Breaking this bond led to much resentment towards reforms.

Change of employment status and conditions of service were understood and interpreted by lecturers as one of the greatest sources of their misery. Lecturers complained that they were paid exceptionally poor salaries and they interpreted this as unfair, demotivating and demoralizing. There was also rivalry between state paid and council paid lecturers. This caused animosity among staff as council paid lecturers were bitter.

Lecturers' responses as teachers revealed that curricula reforms rendered them inadequate and created a desire within them to be capacitated again. Lecturers expressed the wish that they had been familiarized with educational changes before they attempted to interpret and enact them in different diverse contexts. Illuminated by the experience of inadequacy was the fact that reforms needed to have been preceded by vigorous training and on-going up-skilling and re-skilling programmes for lecturers. These should have

concentrated on understanding the policy, deepening learning area knowledge, pedagogy and methodology issues, as well as assessment and evaluation in outcomes based contexts. Their reflections revealed that it is challenging for most lecturers and teachers, in general, to commit themselves easily to new reforms. They gave many reasons for justifying this perception, including animosity towards policy borrowing, dictatorship and other top-down procedures.

Data further revealed that the present- day TVET college student is much younger when compared with that of the pre-NCV era. Challenges related to student behaviour, curriculum, performance, motivation and barriers to learning were highlighted in the discussion. Demonstrated unequivocally by data in this regard were lecturer perceptions of incompatibility between the NCV curriculum and the type of student. Societal and economic problems faced by students complicated lecturers' job as teachers. Most of these factors were seen to be impacting on lecturers' affectivity, cognition and classroom practice. Also highlighted in this section was how student-related challenges led to lecturers' gratification and dissatisfaction with regards to their work. These included experiences of exploration, complexity of lecturers' professional work and psychological crisis.

There was also the perception amongst lecturers that the challenges existed partially because institutional, structural and curricular changes did not adequately involve them as stakeholders, meaning that the reforms were a closed book to almost all of the lecturers. This was unacceptable to them, as they believed that they are the ones who have to steer and keep the ship afloat. Their understanding was that they needed to be recognized by policymakers and college management in such a way that 'their voices are heard, heard loudly, heard articulately' (Goodson, 1991). Feelings of being devalued thus resulted in low staff morale and high staff turnover.

Chapter 7 presents data on collegial relations and experiences of collegiality as lived by TVET college lecturers in their work environment.

CHAPTER 7: EXPERIENCES OF COLLEGIALITY AND COLLEGIAL RELATIONS

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 presents data on collegial relations and experiences of collegiality, as lived by lecturers in their TVET college work environments. Literature on school change and educational reform emphasizes the crucial role played by colleagues in the personal and professional lives of teachers in general (Nias *et al.*, 1989; Huberman, 1993; Westheimer, 1998; Fullan, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2001). This was also evidenced in the responses of the TVET college lecturers who participated in the present study.

This section starts by providing clarification of terms such as ‘colleague’, ‘collegial relations’ and ‘collegiality’, used in the context of this study. Secondly, data with regards to collegial relations and collegiality experiences of colleagues within a campus are presented. Within a campus, data will be divided into three broad ideological categories, namely generational diversity, specializations and race relations. While focusing on these broad categories the existence of other forms of informal networks such as weight watchers, smokers and devotees of different sports such as soccer, cricket and rugby, will be acknowledged.

The latter part of the chapter will present data relating to relationships with college and campus management, and other colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, as well as with other teachers in the teaching profession.

7.2 Clarification of terms

The net will be cast widely when defining what a ‘colleague’ is in the context of this study. This is because all the 12 participants have, in one way or another, referred to relations with colleagues within their campuses, amongst campuses that form a college, within the college itself, the TVET college context in general and teachers in Basic Education and lecturers in universities.

Firstly, a colleague is generally defined as a fellow employee in a professional environment. The basic unit in this section will be lecturers working on the same campus of a college. Under the basic unit will be further divisions relating to teaching specializations, professional expertise, gender, generational and racial relations amongst lecturers themselves and between them and management. Secondly, the term ‘colleague’ will extend to inter-campus collegial relations within the same TVET college. Thirdly, the definition of the term in this study includes the inter-college context in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. At its extreme, TVET College lecturers are also part of teachers in the education fraternity, united in the same purpose of educating the nation with others in the teaching profession. As a result, this term is stretched to also refer to relationships between college lecturers, teachers in school contexts and lecturers in universities.

Collegial relations in this thesis mean a ‘range and intensity of relations that exist between colleagues’ (Wedekind, 2001, p 150). Ideally, the most important features of collegial relations include co-operation with other colleagues, civil and noble treatment of fellow lecturers, loyalty to the campus and college and enhancement of an environment in which authority is shared (Weeks, 1999).

Collegiality is taken to be a valued end-result of collegial relations that has a connotation of respect for one another as colleagues. Collegiality ‘carries with it a value attribute’ (Wedekind, 2001, p 150) and is generally regarded as beneficial.

7.3 Colleagues and collegial relations within a campus

7.3.1 Generational diversity among colleagues

A generation is a group of people defined by age boundaries, who were born during a certain era and share similar experiences and social dynamics when growing up. In the context of this study, a generation consists of two cohorts, namely lecturers who have worked in TVET colleges for more than 10 years and those with a lower number of years working in this sector. Data reveals that members of a cohort share distinct values,

attitudes, habits, behaviour and needs, due to experiences in their lives and work. These shape who they are amongst other colleagues in the college environment. Differences between them and younger lecturers surfaced. Besides differences due to the generational gap, responses also touch on gender, race and ethnicity.

Participants in this study fit the former description, lecturers who have worked in the TVET sector for more than 10 years. All of them are over 40 years of age. Data reveals that most of them think that changes in TVET colleges opened employment opportunities for many young men and women. There is a perception among older staff members that younger colleagues see them as dictatorial, conservative, ‘dogmatic and rigid in their thoughts and actions’ (Levin, 2001, p 3). Although some of the younger staff members are perceived by older ones to have respect for others, are well behaved, hardworking, are willing to share their expertise and listen to other peoples’ ideas, the majority are perceived as the direct opposite. Here follows an excerpt from an interview with an older member of staff:

Corne: Lately, the majority of lecturing staff in this campus is very young. I began to notice this with when the NCV started. There are about five of us who are between 40 – 53 years old. The majority are young men and women below 35 years, some of whom have been in the college prior to the NCV. The age difference is sometimes a big problem. There are things we do and younger staff members think we are being conservative. Likewise, their way of doing things sometimes seem very immature to older staff like me.

Researcher: Do you mind giving me a few examples of these?

Corne: Ja, sure. For example, the way they dress. I know we have to do practical work in workshops. We may therefore not be in a ‘tie and suit’ work environment. Casual clothing is what we wear most of the time. But I believe that as a lecturer that too has to be smart and presentable.

Researcher: We will go back to that point later. Besides dress code, what other examples can you give me?

Corne: Most of them are too friendly with students. They don’t draw the line as figures of authority. That’s why they can’t discipline them. Secondly, most of them are new in these kinds of colleges with no experience on vocational training. I am not looking down upon them or suggesting that what worked in the past can always work now but I think it could help if most of them respect our experience and learn from our wisdom. I am saying this because in meetings they are reluctant to take our ideas and prefer their ‘fresh ideas’. It’s even worse when we have to work as teams. They think we want things to happen our way

and sometimes they do not cooperate. They are also quick to say 'ishayile'. For some of them working an extra 30 minutes or an hour is a big issue.

Researcher: Do some of these things cause tension?

Corne: Ja they do. Because if you complain or give suggestions they say you think you are clever or you give them what used to work in the past. They think you are imposing and you do not want to change and go with the times. You know when they tease me and call me a 'timer'? Most of the time the tone is good but it does make me feel older than I really am. When the tone is bad you end up minding your own business and sometimes to a point where you do not even want to collaborate with others for the common good. And ja I think the not so nice relations affect the way we work at our campus.

Researcher: Anything positive?

Corne: Ja. Not all is doom and gloom. They catch up easily with new technology like new workshop machinery and new computer programs and they teach us.

Comments from the lecturer in the above interview extract suggest that staff members of different generations at work come with diverse needs and are influenced by different perspectives. Due to generational diversity, differences of opinion, values, ideas and choices surface and may affect work dynamics and lead to intergenerational misunderstandings and conflict.

Participants said that some of the younger staff members come with modern ideas and see older colleagues as having obsolete ideas and not being open to change and new ideas. This confirms the notion of conservatism as described by Huberman (1993), that older staff members become 'ardent complainers' (Huberman, 1993, p10). Levin (2001) argues that most of these staff members are often more discreet, shrewd and very skeptical of reform and are less tolerant of younger staff members. Older lecturers feel that they are wiser because of the experience that they have accumulated over the years. Their comments suggest that generational differences sometimes have a negative impact on work relationships and affect communication and productivity.

Corne also thought that some of the younger lecturers mingle too casually with students and, as a result, find it difficult to perform a cross-role of disciplining students who are out of line, as lecturers are also expected to fulfil the *in loco parentis* role. Implied in the

interview conversation is also that there is lack of measures that enforce accountability and professional conduct in younger staff members.

Corne further suggested that older staff members' ideas are sometimes side-lined in meetings and this becomes worse when working in teams. He felt that this should not be happening, as he sees their experience as an asset to the college community.

Sandile asserted that intergenerational misunderstandings can be aggravated by differences due to different cultures, genders and the unique South African historical background of racial segregation. He thought that people have to be conscientised about these differences, because they influence people's attitudes and may make or break collegial relations:

Sandile: Take our campus management, for example, they are older white Afrikaans speaking females. They may be influenced by culture, historical background, age and gender. This doesn't necessarily have to cause problems when handled well by both management and staff. But it isn't as the dividing line becomes too thick and most people see them as very alienating and this is bad because they are in management and should be getting along well with staff. Unless people are made aware of these factors, misunderstandings are bound to occur. This definitely does impact negatively on the working environment. Management should lead by example in sorting these things out.

Sandile further asserted that colleagues who are in management positions need to be proactive and be exemplary to sort out disparities that result due to differences in culture, gender, history and race. A negative impact on the working environment that the respondent is referring to may lead to constrained collegial relations.

Another interviewee brought in the element of intragenerational diversity, influenced by racial inequities and injustices of the past. He said that friction amongst members of staff of the same generation influenced by this difference occurs and may lead to misunderstandings that tamper with serving the campus or college effectively.

He added that on their campus there are colleagues who are foreign nationals. Khuba said:

In our campus it is not bad but in others like campus XX which is close to Swaziland and Mozambican borders xenophobic misunderstandings and conflicts amongst staff occur quite often...

Eleven out of 12 lecturers in this study asserted that they have had experiences of intergenerational and intragenerational misunderstandings with colleagues in the past. They all agreed that working together at a horizontal, peer and collegial level is important, especially for cross-pollination of ideas in meetings and in working as teams. Responses of participants point to the need for better generational understanding, for enhancement of good working environments to improve collegial relations for the benefit of the college as a community.

7.3.2 Race relations

As was explained in the first chapter, technical colleges were racially segregated, as all South African education used to be. From 1990, discourse and preparations for the development of policies to destroy segregated education started. From 2001, the amalgamation of 150 colleges to form 50 multi-campus, non-racial vocational institutions took place. Each newly formed college had to specialize according to the strengths of each campus in order to create campuses that are centres of excellence, with their own distinctive identities. This meant that lecturers who had been racially arranged had to be redeployed according to specializations, leading to the formation of racially mixed staff. This section presents data on race-related collegial relations due to placements in new workplace environments and resultant changing demographics, roles, values and culture.

The majority of the lecturers interviewed claimed that they had in one way or another been affected by social divisions, orchestrated by apartheid many years ago. This was confirmed through comments such as the following:

Zime: I started teaching at campus XX. I was the second black lecturer on campus. I can show you a picture. Here, this was us. This was in 1997. Being a black staff member at a predominantly white campus was hard. Uyazi ke isitulo siyashisa uma umnyama phakathi kwezinye izinhlanga [You know that the seat is hot when you are black amongst people of other races ...]

That the 'seat is hot' is a direct translation from informal, conversational isiZulu, and means things are not easy or are made to be uncomfortable for a person. The inference and assumption she makes, that I also know that 'the seat is hot when you are black' seems to suggest that exclusion, discrimination and alienation of people based on race is common in work environments in our country. She is assuming that I might have gone through a similar experience at some stage in my career. This mirrors societal divisions that still exist in reality and in peoples' minds, even in the post-apartheid era. Such mindsets cannot lead to positive collegial relations unless they are attended to by the people concerned and by management.

This was confirmed by Bonggi, who thinks that apartheid may have been destroyed constitutionally but it still exists in lecturers' minds and this sometimes manifests itself in the way people behave:

If you get into our staff room you will find the majority of lecturers seated according to race. I mean people of the same race usually sit together. I don't think people do it consciously, it just happens like a habit. There could be many reasons why it occurs. One of them may be is that our historical backgrounds still affect us a lot; separate development still lives in our minds I think. So far it's not easy to get rid of it in our generation. May be our children and grandchildren will be able to but it's difficult for us. Sometimes it's more about being comfortable because you will speak your own language. But sometimes it's because there are people you don't trust who will use anything they know against you.

Bonggi is of the opinion that colleagues of the same race have a lot of things of mutual interest which make them comfortable around one another. In this instance, race is mentioned as a factor that triggered in-group advantage due to differentiation caused by historical backgrounds, language and culture.

Besides being affected by apartheid's separate development ideology, Bongi's responses indicate group building push-and-pull factors, in relation to distrust, tension and fear of backstabbing.

Over and above race, another lecturer stated that being black but also female aggravated the already strained collegial relations between them and other colleagues in the college where she started working.

Zime: My first job was at XX Technical College in 1997. I had not planned to be a teacher but that was the only job I could find at the time. This was a white technical college and I was the second black female to be hired in that institution. We were the only blacks there. Challenges of being a black female member of staff in a white institution were enormous. Although a few colleagues were very accepting, the majority were very cold towards us. In meetings we, black females, were close to being invisible. I am not a shy person and am very assertive but I ended up feeling that my opinion did not matter. You would always find the two of us sitting together and there was always that feeling of being treated like a stepchild.

Responses from Zime confirmed the presence of the cross-race effect that lecturer A alluded to earlier on. Furthermore, they affirmed the existence of in-group advantage and out-group disadvantage. In-group advantage refers to a situation in which members of a group perceive themselves as better and superior than members of other groups. The other group then becomes the out-group and is at a disadvantage, especially if they are in the minority as the case is in the interview response above. In this case, the participant perceived the white colleagues in the institution as a group that consciously or unconsciously alienated them as black female colleagues. They themselves are drawn to each other due to being new, their skin colour, language, culture and gender.

Zime expressed feelings of 'not being seen', or not being acknowledged by her colleagues in meetings. The tone in her response suggested that she believes her contributions in the form of opinions are not valued by colleagues, but she perceives her abilities differently. The tone suggested that she does not accept being belittled by colleagues at work. Feelings of alienation are picked up from the response and as a result

they choose not to contribute and even sit alone in staff rooms. The disassociation alluded to suggests less social life at work and unhealthy collegial relations.

For some of the lecturers there were also feelings of distrust and suspicion that they were being set up for failure and this was attributed to racial differences. Some of the lecturers asserted that they work under a lot of pressure proving to their colleagues that they can do the job in terms of possessing pedagogical and content knowledge. They resented implied insinuations that they may not be knowledgeable enough or may be inadequately equipped to execute their teaching roles as lecturers:

Bongi: The subject I had come to teach had a high failure rate. This is the main subject that was allocated to me to teach. There was no induction and mentoring. Things were very hard at first. I felt like I was thrown at the deep end to either swim or sink. I felt like management and senior colleagues in the college wanted me to either fail or prove that I could do it. I did everything I could, including extra classes, to see to it that I did not fail. I think a combination of hard work, luck and God being on my side helped me to pull through. Results for the subject slightly improved that semester. But I can tell you that it is very hard to work in an environment where one has to prove herself all the time.

What I think was not said is the fact that such behaviour may happen even in work environments with people of the same race. But the tone of the response suggests that it becomes a sore point when a colleague of a different race is the source. This happens regardless of the fact that even some of the lecturers have themselves said that they do lack confidence in teaching the NCV, because some of them are more artisans than lecturers, while others have never taught at all before:

Shenge: When the NCV was introduced it needed that lecturers be highly qualified. I was not confident at first and I don't think the majority of the other lecturers were up to the challenge...

Thulani touches on the issue of lack of teaching competence and insufficient pedagogic knowledge, due to being under-qualified, but did not align these with any particular race.

Thulani: Some of my colleagues from the old era that I also come from are not qualified to help students do practical work in workshops. They have never undergone that kind of training themselves. They are not taking the college

forward if they are lacking in this regard. They end up shortchanging students by teaching theoretical knowledge only.

There is no reference to race in the above response, but depending on the source of the comment in circumstances where racial relations are bad, such comments are, have been or may be labelled as racist. As the comments stand in the responses above, they could be directed at anybody who is perceived as not being capable enough, due to being under-qualified and short of training and skilling for the new curriculum. Bearing in mind the mandate of TVET colleges in South Africa, this may be arising out of concern for lack of striking a balance between providing tacit workplace knowledge and theoretical disciplinary knowledge for holistic development of TVET college students.

Although most of the responses from different lecturers in this category were negative, some of the lecturers felt that things got better over time as they got to know one another. This added a unique issue of familiarity. He explained that in the first few years of the merger, feelings of constrained collegial relations were severe, but these were gradually minimized due to continual peer interaction. He sees diversity as presenting opportunities to learn more about other people, even from bad experiences. The participant emphasized turning bad experiences into learning experiences from which people can grow. He saw spending time on negative reflection as a futile exercise that affects healthy collegial relations. He criticized chronic negativity:

Thulani: Diversity is quite interesting because you learn a lot from it even if negative things come up. Challenges with regards to relations as colleagues have always been there and some have been very bad incidents. I have taught myself to learn something even if it's a bad incident at work. Like harsh criticism, why not look at it closely and see if there isn't a lesson or two from it? I am not saying it never hurts but negativity is stressful and I always want to come out of it a better person.

He added that people may be quoted out of context and some of the incidents may be blown out of proportion and wrongfully labelled as racist. This, he said, has not contributed towards building healthy collegial relations:

Thulani: But I think there are times when I might have misread or misinterpreted what was happening or what was said. For example, this group of older female colleagues who are senior lecturers and are perceived to be claiming being better than and looking down upon others. I used to believe this although I had never witnessed or had a direct negative encounter with them as alleged. But I have worked with them for many years now and I am beginning to think that there are other issues other than race. Surely what brings them together is a combination of things like age, gender, seniority and also race. I am neither condoning their acts nor perceiving them as saints but I am saying there might be other factors at play.

Researcher: What do you think those factors could be?

Thulani: I can't say for sure but this used to be a white college. It may be psychological like them thinking their space has been invaded? Also fears of uncertainty about the future.

Researcher: Do you think these have killed good chances for collegiality?

Thulani: Eish ja in a big way. Because where there are feelings of fear any human being will look for a support base. In this case, race has been used as basis and this is too divisive and is bad for the campus.

Data presented by the respondent above reflects a possibility of the existence of paranoia in the interpretation of some of the behaviours, articulations and incidents. Believing hearsay and acting on it without getting another side of the story is criticized by the respondent. He said that some of the insinuations might be true, but people need to look for other factors over and above race and work towards enhancing relationships, rather than focusing on intensifying hatred that was created by systems of the past.

Surprisingly, other responses suggested that colleagues of a campus stick together on matters that involve other campuses and, in these instances, racism and racialism seemed to fade. The shift from singular to plural words like 'we', 'us' indicates a sense of belonging and loyalty to their campus:

Khuba: We at campus XX and XX are not fairly treated. You would swear we are satellite centres or stepchildren ...

Bongi: Lecturers from other campuses are more privileged than us. They get everything they ask for in terms of resources. I think we are not treated equally.

This draws attention to Elias's (1978) use of pronouns as a figurational model. From lecturers' life histories the use of personal pronouns like 'you', 'he', or 'she' and collectively as 'we' in a group was prevalent. Other outside groups such as teachers, other campuses or other colleges were 'they', but from their perspective 'they' became 'we' and 'we' became 'they'. Elias (1970a) argues that one's sense of personal identity is closely connected with the 'we' and the 'they' relationships of one's group, and with one's position within those units, of which one speaks as 'we' and 'they' (p 128). The significance of the analogy is that no lecturer escapes being interwoven into the network of other people and it also denotes the multi-perspectival character of social relationships. Within these perspectives that intermesh are activities that also interweave within figurations. Therefore, the 'I' identity of the lecturer had to be understood in the context of other 'Is', because we are all interwoven into a network of people. Also considering that this study foregrounded *Verstehen* or interpretive understanding, TVET college lecturers' 'subjectively intended meanings' (Mennell, 1989, p 129) had to be analyzed against third-person perspectives to fully understand their lived experiences.

Regardless of all the positive and negative responses articulated in this regard, being accepted, recognized and liked by your colleagues will always matter. Bongi commented:

One incident I will never forget was when I got married in August. More than half the colleagues, of all races mind you, even management, came to my wedding. I thought I was dreaming when I saw them in my wedding! It was such a good feeling. It made me realize that I am one of them!

This is the same lecturer who described how she 'earned respect of and acceptance by colleagues' when results for her subject which had had a very high failure rate improved. The lecturer was gradually establishing more reference groups (Nias, 1989) to identify with, a crucial aspect for one's survival and for creation of a better work environment within social figurations (Elias, 1978).

The lecturer added that these were critical incidents in her work life that made her rearrange her way of thinking and ended up changing her attitude towards others and establishing a new sense of self (Huberman, 1992; Sparks, 1994; Schempp *et al.*, 1999).

7.3.3 Specializations

As discussed in Chapter 2, TVET colleges offer approximately 14 NCV programmes and a variety of NATED courses. Different sub-field programmes make provision for a high degree of specialization, with the major ones being classified under Engineering, Business Studies, Information Technology and Primary Agriculture. Bigger and isolated campuses can have all of these under one roof, depending on the demands of the communities to which they are responsive. In some of the colleges that have campuses in close proximity, a campus can be responsible for only one or two major specializations. This study chose participants from Engineering, Information Technology and Agricultural Studies. This section will therefore focus on issues of collegiality and collegial relations within these specialization units.

What is emerging from data is that collegial relations amongst people of the same specialization are better when compared to that of colleagues, in general, per campus. Sharing a specialization brings people closer together. Colleagues become small beneficial communities within their specialization:

Bongi: But I relate better to people who also teach computer related courses like me. I am talking about people of all races. We are able to rely on one another for support because of what we teach. We discuss things, share ideas and get information from experienced colleagues. Most of them are not selfish at all ...

As alluded to in the response above, colleagues in a specialization were found to be good environments for learning through collaborative efforts. Sharing of ideas and gleaning information from those who are more knowledgeable is indicative of readiness for personal and professional development on the part of the one who acquires the new knowledge and a willingness to give from those who possess the invaluable asset, experience. In his interrogation of the concept of ‘figurations’ and ‘*habitus*’, Elias (1978) argues that it is possible that people bond to each other due to the division of labour or occupational specialization, but also due to a common sense of identity and shared antagonism towards others (p 175).

Some of the respondents indicated that most of the learning and collegial sharing of ideas happens in meetings:

Shenge: We have meetings every Thursday afternoon. We are usually tired at this time of the day but these are important as we share what has happened during the week and plan for the following week. No one wants to be out of the loop, so most of the time everybody attends. The HoD chairs the meetings but sometimes chairing of meetings rotates so that we all get a chance to learn. I gain a lot from these meetings because our HoD allows us to discuss issues and make decisions.

From the above response, one deduces that meetings held at a specialization level are regarded as important and most people do not want to miss them. Participants regard meetings as a forum in which individual lecturers play significant roles as members of a team through discussions. Members of a specialization are also able to grow and learn from each other through chairing meetings and contributing in decision-making processes. Meetings give lecturers an opportunity to reflect on action and plan for the future. The respondent described their Head of Department (HoD) as someone who gives subordinates a chance to discuss things. I think this is indicative of a leadership characterized by less dictatorship and being less prescriptive towards subordinates.

Many lecturers said that commendations, praising achievements and gestures of affirming actions from senior management are very motivating:

Bongi: At one stage, colleagues referred a new member of staff to me as a mentor in computer teaching. This says a lot in terms of being regarded as good at what you do. I felt good and this made me more confident ...

But not all that glitters is gold under the specialization category. From some of the responses the issue of dominance of Mathematics, Engineering and pure Science subjects over 'other' subjects was communicated by lecturers who teach the 'other' like Primary Agriculture. The subjects mentioned above are given a higher status, as they are regarded as academic disciplines because of their perceived value in intellectual fields, and their link to economic growth and profit, while others are regarded by many as 'soft

disciplines’ and are looked down upon. When interrogated further, lecturers mentioned ‘others’ as also including Marketing, Management, Hospitality, Cosmetology and Tourism. The word ‘soft’ has connotations of being perceived as weak and inadequate. Being labelled and identifying oneself as belonging to this category cannot lead to positive collegial relations, as the lecturers from the ‘stronger’ disciplines may be resented by those perceived as weak:

Rajesh: I teach Soil Science and I love it. To me this subject falls under one of the most important learning areas and it is not an easy science. We work so hard in this campus but as an agricultural campus it doesn’t have high status. And my subject is offered in this campus and the stigma falls on the subjects too. Eish, sometimes it makes me feel bad, feel inferior ...

From the above response it is clear that people we work with are significant to us and what they think and say about us matters. Feeling bad and inferior must be making Rajesh feel uncomfortable when amongst others at a college level. It is a positive sign that Rajesh said ‘sometimes’, because this suggests that he does not feel this way all the time, implying that it has not led to a terminal inferiority complex. But for other lecturers it has made them feel less worthy than others, causing low self-esteem, which may affect relations and performance at work.

7.4 Relations with college management

7.4.1 Introduction

This section presents data on collegial relations between lecturers and campus leadership and top college management based in central offices. As explained in earlier chapters, a campus manager serves as a leader of a campus and he or she reports to top college management based at a central office, which is the headquarters of a college. The TVET colleges have up to five or more campuses under the leadership of the college rector. Central offices for the two colleges which were research sites for this study are situated very far away from most campuses. The central office for College A shares premises with one very well resourced township campus which used to be a teacher training college, while the one for college B is a stand-alone structure in a town separate from most campuses, except for only one situated in town.

Data elicited for this study reveals resentment from lecturers directed at central office as a headquarters, and also the situation of management and Council there. Government is also seen as the original source of dissatisfaction, as this is where policies affecting lecturers originate. Most of the lecturers' comments point to systemic and institutional challenges. The thorny issues that have led to bad relations between lecturers, management and the government revolved around ineffective facility and resource management, management capacity, centralization of power, and lecturer employment status.

Before these issues are discussed, I briefly highlight the significance of networks of interdependent lecturers and officials mentioned above and their shifting asymmetrical power balances (Elias, 1970a). In his game models, Elias (1978) elaborates on how the order of complexity increases as the number of players increases in a social change phenomenon. As can be noted in the above explanation, the number of interconnected players in different tiers made the situation complex, thus making the phenomenon 'increasingly unpredictable and increasingly beyond the ability of any single individual or group of players to control' (Dopson, 2005, p 11).

In explaining how multi-level games work, Elias (1978) portrays how moves can be performed by different people from lower to top-tier players who, in the context of this study, are characterized by lecturers, management, government officials, politicians and the business world as potential employers of the TVET product. The balance of power within and between the tiers is relatively unequal, leading to tilted oligarchic game structures which are quite problematic, particularly to people in figurations of the lower tiers like lecturers.

7.4.2 Relations with management

The majority of lecturers interviewed in this study perceived their management as poor and ineffective. They believe that the government hires weak people whose competencies are questionable. The majority of respondents think that interview panels hire their friends or relatives, pointing to the existence of reservation of jobs for 'buddies', which is

nepotism. Lecturers seemed to be convinced that most people who are the cream of the crop may not get the job if they are not acquainted with management in one way or another. The majority of lecturers believed that limiting the choice to unsuitable acquaintances crippled progress and that this is a grave error for which the government will severely pay for a long time. Susan said that:

Most people in senior positions in our campuses and central office are not fit to be in those positions. Some of them know nothing about technical vocational education. How does a school principal who has never worked in technical colleges become a rector in an FET college? Most of management do not have a clue about what we do here. We always wonder how most of them get the top jobs. Is it through bribery or nepotism? We have capable people within the sector that we believe can do the job but those are rarely selected ... this needs to be addressed otherwise it will take a long time before colleges work effectively.

Although Rajesh concurred with the perceived dearth of competent managers in TVET colleges, he thought that senior managers (Heads of Departments, campus managers, the rector and his deputies) are victims too. Rajesh said:

I don't think our senior managers have the capacity and ability to handle the changes themselves. They are also under pressure to facilitate change and demonstrate to us that they understand what is happening. I think deep down they are also struggling, especially because they too never had adequate training to be able to manage the changes ...

The response above indicates that management is perceived by some of the lecturers to be facing dilemmas regarding implementing change. But some of the lecturers think it is unfair for management to demand high quality-work, considering what they struggle with if they themselves have grasped the change superficially. Shenge said that at one stage a deputy manager responded aloofly when they went to alert him about one of the problems they were experiencing in their workshop. He said: 'I don't want people who come to me with problems but I prefer those who also provide potential solutions to those problems. Right now I am busy and you are wasting my time'. Shenge said that for him the response was disappointing:

I was disappointed. I believed that he should have given us a chance for further discussions because we did have suggestions about what could be done about the problem. Dismissing us like that made me feel like a school child in the principal's office. I felt put off and I vowed to never go there again ...

The deputy manager's immediate reaction, without giving them a chance for further discussion, pointed to issues of unavailability and inaccessibility. The lecturers expected to be listened to, and also to be heard, but the response made them feel unwelcome and their value discredited. The lecturer vowed never to approach the deputy manager again. Such comments have implications for relations between staff and management. According to Elias (1970a), these incidents prove unevenness of power and function, signifying interdependencies which constrain people to a greater or lesser extent. Such imbalances of power cannot be submitted to unquestioningly, as they 'may trigger trials of strength in the form of acute and violent conflicts, or in the form of smouldering conflicts inherent in the structure of a society at a certain stage of development' (Mennell, 1989, p 264).

Not only management is resented for not doing its job properly and timeously, but also managers in the human resource units of campuses, central offices and government offices. Zime commented:

You have no idea what happened to me today XX. When you go to these government offices you are never sure how quickly you will be attended to. I arrived there at 10am and I have been moving from one office to another. I got help eventually but did it really have to take this long?"

Researcher: Why did you go there?

Zime: I got a letter from them that told me my employment will be terminated at the end of the month. I was panicking and needed to find out why quickly.

Researcher: Shouldn't you have reported this to HR at this campus or central office of your college? Did you really have to travel to government offices in town?

Zime: HR at our campus is of no help. We only go there to pick up our pay slips and you are lucky if you found an administrator who will be willing to give you help. The central office is worse, you won't find help there. I know for sure they wouldn't have helped me especially because I am still under government payroll. If your employment has not been transferred to Council yet, it's better to bypass them and deal with government directly ...

A human resource (HR) wing in any organization deals with staff matters such as hiring, salaries, administration, training, and communication and performance management. Generally the unit is constituted by line managers and administrators, who give clerical and administrative support to professional staff like lecturers in a TVET college. Zime alleged that as lecturers they do not get adequate support from staff in the HR offices. Although this may be true, unsaid is the fact that she also left the classes unattended and is blaming everything on management, choosing not to see her side of the wrong doing. The use of negative phrases such as ‘these government offices’, ‘HR is of no help’, ‘the central office is worse’, ‘you won’t find help there’, and ‘bypass them’ is indicative of lack of trust, teamwork, support and collaborative effort at work. In any educational institution, administrators, managers and professional staff should work collaboratively for proper execution and co-ordination of day-to-day activities and long-term plans for the effective and smooth running of an institution. Constrained relations between staff members at different levels affect relations and positive work environments.

Overall, managing the mega colleges with multiple campuses is a skill that even the experienced, appropriately qualified, vocationally-oriented managers in colleges are struggling with (Moyo, 2007; Nzimande, 2010; DHET, 2012). Perceptions through comments of resentful lecturers indicate that transformation of colleges and driving the mandate of skills development through proper implementation suffers due to lack of effective and capable managers. Although management is responsible for the creation of a conducive, enabling work environment for lecturers to work as professionals (Fullan, 1999; Riley & Louis, 2000a; Sergiovanni, 2001), unsaid is the massiveness of players from different tiers in the game (Elias, 1978), who were blind to the social interconnections and also led to impracticality, as the object of interest was a wider society of thousands of people (Mennell, 1989).

7.4.3 Centralization and decentralization of power

As discussed in Chapter 2, general control of the TVET college sub-sector is now vested in, and centralized under the national Department of Higher Education and Training. This is where policies for the colleges are developed and their mandate of skills development

is clearly defined. For purposes of allowing responsiveness and flexibility, some of the governance authority was decentralized to College Councils.

In the context of this study centralization refers to the concentration of power and authority at government and central office levels of TVET colleges, for purposes of taking decisions, while decentralization means dispersing some of the authority to lower levels of a college such as a campus.

Although TVET college lecturers understand the advantages of centralizing authority, like ensuring accountability, they feel that this is being overdone, as it applies to even trivial issues that could be handled at a campus level:

Sipho: Even if you want seeds for our gardens, you have to send paperwork for a request to the central office that is 200km away from campus. Things take a very long time to be processed. Bear in mind that planting is seasonal, by the time the money to buy seeds comes the season for that vegetable is already over. Imagine! Out of season! When you question things you are reminded of the famous motto: 'We have to follow protocol'!

Sipho's statements suggest that there is too much bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape, even for small decisions that should be devolved to campuses. On other occasions, decisions are major but there are times when they come from above and do not match with the identified context in terms of the community being served:

Bheki: At one stage a top-down decision for production of grass at our agricultural campus failed. Management had to ask for our comments. The project wouldn't have survived in that climate. We know the area and its demands better. I think no viability study was done before directing this project to our campus. We lecturers have better ideas about what could work this side of the country. When things fail it is bad for us in the eyes of community. We have to explain and it hard. It is funny how we are never asked about what we think and be given a chance of being listened to. It makes me feel insignificant ...

Bheki felt insignificant and disheartened by top-down decisions from their central office. He felt that lecturers must have input as they are the ones who 'are close to the customer' (Moyo, 2007). In this context, customers are students and local communities that the campuses are being responsive to. Not being given discretion as campuses and being dictated to by central office leads to resentment towards management. The tone identified in Bheki's comments signified dented relations between their campus and central office and also loss of trust by the community that they serve. His colleague, Siphon, added that:

It is a campus that is the face of the college in the community

All the lecturers' comments above sound like a call for more flexibility and collaborative decision-making, especially for matters responding to community needs. Mismatch between community needs and what the college campus provides puts campus management and lecturers in a tight spot, as they have to account to communities they work with. Figural dynamics (Elias, 1978) are crucial. Colleges, campuses and lecturers always need to consider broader figurations, such as parents and immediate communities served.

7.5 Issues in relation to others in the teaching profession

Data collected in this study revealed that lecturers working in TVET colleges are affected by matters that relate to teachers in general. Although the FET College Act of 2006 gave college lecturers a badge of identity, there are professional issues that cause boundaries between them and teachers in the general schooling system to be blurred. College lecturers are part of a broader professional figuration. What affects other teachers affects them too. Thulani explained more about some of these issues:

Thulani: Akujabulisi ngoba akusebenzeki kahle uma sihlukene phakathi ngenxa yezinto ezithinta nabanye othisha ... it doesn't make us happy if we are divided because of things that relate to other teachers and the teaching as a profession. Sometimes you find that collective agreements that affect teachers in general we do not benefit from them. Take for example the one that happened in 2010. Lecturers employed by the college Council did not get that salary increase. Only those based in colleges but paid by the government benefited. That caused a lot of divisions amongst us as lecturers and a lot of those who benefited started to apply for jobs in ordinary schools because of those benefits.

Researcher: Was it the first time this happened?

Thulani: No. It also happened in 2008. Remember the time when the OSD was implemented? All of us paid by Council did not get a cent because we were said to be under College Council which was then autonomous. The government was not the employer anymore except for a few who had not been removed from state payroll. The day the state paid, only the chosen few were laughing all the way to the bank.

Researcher: Oh, what was the reaction of those who did not get the OSD benefit? Did this spoil relationships for you as colleagues?

Thulani: It was a sad day for those who did not get this benefit. They felt left out and not part of the teaching profession. They were demoralized. It was not nice. They saw themselves as insignificant ... So nje lokho nakho caused staff divisions...

Researcher: How does this make you feel?

Thulani: It is not nice to work with a colleague who feels demoralized. It also affects you. If affects their performance. Yes it does, it does ngoba uthole ukuthi mhlampe bane contract yonyaka [especially because they are on contracts]. So, they spend a lot of time looking for jobs somewhere else, rather than focusing on the job they have now. I think they are justified because they are not sure if they will have a job the following month. They resent those who are in permanent jobs. This affects relationships at work badly.

Thulani said that government's collective agreements, especially compensation and salary revisions for professional teachers also affected them. This suggests identifying themselves as belonging to a guild of professionals in the teaching career. He feels bad about the fact that colleagues under council payroll are excluded when benefits stipulated above were introduced.

Thulani claimed that colleagues paid by the Council felt alienated when the OSD was implemented and this resulted in low morale and job dissatisfaction. As a result, these colleagues started directing most of their energies to job hunting due to fears, lack of job security, uncertainty about the future and anxiety. Thulani emphasized that working with a demoralized colleague spoils relations at work. He believes that such colleagues do not perform to the best of their abilities in carrying out their teaching responsibilities at the college.

In addition to the comments from Thulani, the majority of council-paid colleagues said that they envied their counterparts on the state payroll, teachers working in the mainstream schooling system and university lecturers. Zime felt that TVET college appointments are associated with nice titles, but come with worse pay and poorer conditions of service. Her response indicates that she would move to an ordinary school if an opportunity presented itself. As a result of this resentment, lower self-esteem and feelings of negative self-value, if compared with others in the teaching profession, are detected in her response.

Zime: If I get a chance I will leave this place and go to teach in a school. Maybe conditions of service and salaries are better there. This place has too many frustrations. We are called lecturers. Nice title but conditions of service are bad. What do we have to show for being lecturers? We earn less than ordinary teachers. You real lecturers are better. But why are we the only ones at the crossroads? It is us who are at the forefront of skills development for the country but we don't even get a scarce skills allowance ...

Zime believed that as TVET college lecturers they deserve to be paid a scarce skills allowance. This is a government scheme that pays compensation to people involved in addressing scarce and critical skills shortages. In the context of this study, these are lecturers who teach in fields like Engineering and Mathematics, as these are linked to artisan shortages.

Zime's comments show lack of commitment and loyalty to the college and the TVET College subsector, but reveal preference for the ordinary school subsystem. Resentment due to dissatisfaction appears to be an aggravating factor that lecturers said is causing a high staff turnover. Reactions such as resignations highlight the significance of human emotions in processes of change (Elias, 1978a; 1956). In his concepts of involvement and detachment, Elias (1978) believes that human beings are cognitive, emotional beings. Educational change does not occur in a vacuum, or to people who are *tabulae rasae* but to thinking emotional beings who are able to analyze, interrogate, reflect, 'feel' and take decisions whether or not to 'entertain the prospect of continuing in the same path' (Huberman, 1993, p 9), or attempt to diversify and try other careers or explore other employment opportunities.

All lecturers interviewed in this study are pinning their hopes on the new Department of Higher Education and Training and its leadership. This new department had just been formed when Corne commented:

There is a rumour that employment status for all FET college lecturers will be reversed from Council back to the government. We have heard that everything will be attended to since there is restructuring in government. Maybe things will improve, we don't know ... But this is just hearsay ...

The Green Paper for Post School Education and Training was released a few months later and was released as a White Paper in 2012. Besides the issue of looking into capacitating lecturers, particularly their subject matter expertise, other concerns about the TVET college sector include restructuring of the NCV and the NATED courses, learner support strategies, improving relationships with employers, improving information management and widening access through increasing enrolments and funding of the TVET colleges. Lecturers have said that they are waiting in anticipation for the success of these interventions, as this would mean a better working environment for all of them.

Issues of collegial relations and collegiality are wide ranging and cannot be treated in totality in the confines of this section of the chapter. But data presented revealed the existence of both positive and emotionally challenged social bonds.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed TVET college lecturers' experiences of collegiality and collegial relations. Positive collegial relations were highlighted by colleagues belonging to the same specialization. The participants said that they are drawn towards people who teach in the same learning area as theirs. Elias (1978) explained that it is possible that people bond to each other due to the division of labour or occupational specialization (p 175). Examples cited by lecturers to support this include formal and informal meetings in which they share responsibilities, pool ideas, are subjected to constructive criticism but are also exposed to positive comments working towards appreciation of effort, motivation through commendation and the praising of accomplishments.

Collegiality was evident when colleagues of one campus stuck together and worked as a collective on issues of common interest. Lecturers used pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’ against ‘them’, ‘they’ and ‘their’. This was perceived by lecturers as promoting good relations amongst colleagues at different levels, understood as a pivotal dimension in their experiences in the midst of educational change. Lecturers also understood and interpreted these experiences as having a great deal of influence on whether a lecturer ‘stays within the profession, whether they grow and develop as a professional, and whether their formal career path progresses horizontally and vertically’ (Wedekind, 2001, p 158).

Some of the comments revealed strong feelings of dissatisfaction and high levels of discontentment. Amongst other issues, lecturers describe traces of hostility that sometimes exist between them as colleagues due to racial tensions of the past. They find themselves bonding better with colleagues of their own racial group. Lecturers perceived their work context as still plagued by racial divisions of the past, attributable to the legacy of apartheid. Existence of antagonistic behaviour due to diversity relating to the generational gap, ethnic group, nationality and gender was noted. Nias (1996) argues that a teacher cannot be disengaged from his or her cultural, social and historical context.

There was also a great deal of anger directed at campus leadership, college management and the government as a policymaker, due to inefficiencies that came with institutional and structural reforms. Lecturers interpreted the antagonism as working against promoting comfortable collegial relations for the common good in TVET colleges.

Data presented in Chapter 7 worked towards developing an argument for the interwoven nature of human relationships and showing how relationships with colleagues, management, gratification and dissatisfaction with their work due to educational reform exhibit characteristics of ‘webs of interdependence or figurations of many kinds’ (Elias, 1978, p15) and other concepts such as *habitus*, power and function.

Chapter 8 will discuss and analyze lecturers' experiences by juxtaposing the findings against the theoretical framework and literature reviewed, drawing some conclusions and synthesizing the study.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Drawing upon aspects of Norbert Elias's figurational sociology, this study sought to investigate how lecturers who teach at TVET colleges in the province of KwaZulu-Natal experienced the post-apartheid educational reforms in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface. Chapter 6 presented and analyzed research findings on lecturers as employees and as teachers. Chapter 7 focused solely on collegial relations and experiences of collegiality as lived by TVET college lecturers who participated in this study.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, transformation of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, particularly the college sector, has been at the forefront of government policy for more than a decade. The government intended the sector to be turned into a high-quality and responsive tool for spearheading human resource development to alleviate the skills shortage in South Africa. A repertoire of reforms aimed at meeting these intentions were put in place through policy development. It is in this context that the lecturers who teach in TVET colleges were viewed as teachers who are implementers of new curricula, as government or college council employees and as colleagues within and amongst colleges.

Also pointed out in Chapter 1 is that motivation to conduct the study stemmed from exposure to the sector through teaching and programme co-ordination in the TVET college sector which led to the realization, through a literature search, that the vocational education and training lecturers' voices in the South African context were *terra incognita*, as they have been missing and neglected for decades (Baatjes, 2003; Wedekind, 2008; Papier, 2009). This study is a contribution towards taking the TVET college lecturers' voice out of the shadows, with the hope that their voices will in future be 'heard, heard loudly, [and] heard articulately' (Goodson, 1991, p 36). The notion of a lecturer's voice is important in times of change, because it carries 'the tone, the language,

the quality and the feelings' (Butt *et al.*, 1992) of lived experiences conveyed through life stories narrated. Beyond the lecturers' voice, rationale is a contribution towards a range of insights for new policy innovations, further restructuring of the TVET College sector and professional development directives for lecturers.

The study sought to answer one key research question:

How have Technical Vocational Education and Training college lecturers experienced the post-apartheid reforms in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface?

In order to unpack the key research question, the three subsidiary questions were:

- (i) How do college lecturers understand and interpret their TVET college context in relation to educational reforms that have taken place?
- (ii) How do college lecturers perceive their relationships with students, colleagues, management and other stakeholders in the midst of educational change?
- (iii) What do the lecturers' experiences illuminate about issues such as educational reform and teacher development in the TVET college context?

The study used a qualitative research approach, described as some pattern or plan adopted by the researcher to obtain evidence that answers research questions (Mukeredzi, 2009). The inquiry draws on the interpretive paradigm, which assumes an inter-subjective, epistemological, ontological and methodological stance. As the study was interpretive, the researcher tried to understand lecturers' lived experiences by analyzing the meanings they attach to their experiences. To understand the participants' interpretation of their social worlds and to ensure that dimensions used did not take away the richness of lecturers' lived experiences, I quoted different participants verbatim in Chapters 6 and 7.

The study adopted a life history methodology, using open-ended interviews for collecting data from 12 participants who were lecturers in two TVET colleges used as sites for this research study. The choice of life-history methodology lies in its ability to capture unique

details and its focus on ‘the meanings that people attach to their experiences’ (McAdams, 1993, p 11). Life histories provide knowledge about how people being studied experience and make sense of themselves and their environments (Cassel and Symon, 1994).

The study draws on a social theory by Norbert Elias as a theoretical lens for understanding, analyzing and interpreting the lived personal and professional experiences of TVET college lecturers in times of post-apartheid educational change. In his most important work, *The Civilizing Process*, Norbert Elias argues for interconnectedness of relations amongst people and that a closed self-image, which he calls a ‘*homo clausus*’ is a myth. Human beings are actually ‘*homines aperti*’, because they are open to the influence of others and they also influence them in turn (Elias, 1978). Studying lecturers’ lives using Norbert Elias’s theory was adopting a stance that lecturers are individuals, but are part of intertwined figurations, are firmly rooted in relations with other people and cannot, therefore, be studied and understood outside these figurations.

Elias’s social theory is very wide and comprehensive. In the present study, it would not have been possible to deal with all its aspects exhaustively. As discussed in previous chapters, the key concept from his theory that befitted this study was ‘figuration’. Through this term, Elias’s figurational sociology reasoned that life needs to be viewed as a process and that any study of lives needs to consider that people exist within interdependent and intertwined relationships, in a complex social context. The underlying ideas within this concept are that the individual and society cannot be viewed as ‘two independently existing objects’ (Elias, 1978, p 19); the rejection of ‘*homo clausus*’ as man cannot exist in isolation; and embracing ‘*homines aperti*’, meaning that people are bonded in a web of relationships. Central features include interdependency and interconnectedness. The use of figurational sociology as a theoretical lens in this study took into consideration that each lecturer is a thread in other peoples’ lives, in the context of the TVET College in which he or she works. No lecturer exists as an island. We all are ‘mutually oriented and dependent people’ (Elias, 1978, p 261). A lecturers’ life is therefore interwoven with the lives of other lecturers, students, college management, the community and the Department of Education, provincially and nationally.

Other related terms from Elias' theory used in this study were:

- **Power:** Elias (1978b) conceptualizes power as a characteristic of all human relationships stating that it is never static, but dynamic. He points out interdependence may be reciprocal, but uneven balance of power is unavoidable in society.
- **Habitus:** This is a dimension of figurations which focuses on values, peoples' personality make-ups and other related predispositions. It is ones 'second nature' (Elias, 1978), which works as a tool for controlling oneself.
- **Personal Pronouns:** Language that people use in everyday lives, including personal pronouns as a figurational model (Elias, 1978), was used. Personal pronouns in this study were used to emphasize the importance of the perspectival nature of experiences and relations between power, human behaviour, knowledge, identity and emotions.

The section that follows analyzes, discusses and interprets the findings of this study in the context of the theoretical framework elaborated on in Chapter 3 and the literature continually reviewed in this thesis, with a view to providing answers to the critical questions that this study aimed to answer.

8.2 Discussion

8.2.1 Introduction

Lived personal and professional experiences of lecturers emphasized that change is a complex process which demands involvement of 'the head and the heart, the personal and the professional' (Day *et al.*, 2000, p 126). Policies that come with educational change are influenced by politically and ideologically driven economic imperatives, which aggravate complexity, and are characterized by tensions, ambiguity and contradictions. Since the beginning of time, the phenomenon of change has always been a difficult one for man, as described by Bagehot (1873) centuries ago:

One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It ... makes you think that after all, your favorite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded ... Naturally; therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to ill-treat the original man who brings it (p 169).

Being skeptical of change is human nature. It could not have been easy for college lecturers to welcome change unquestioningly and without skepticism. This study finds that the majority of the lecturers were overwhelmed by the changes that occurred. The reform was radical and evoked more feelings of dissatisfaction than gratification.

8.2.2 How college lecturers understood and interpreted their college context in relation to educational reforms that had taken place

8.2.2.1 Rapidity and state of readiness

One of the findings of this study was that lecturers were affected by the rapid pace, scope and poor planning of the post-apartheid educational reform in TVET colleges. Experiences related to mergers of colleges, radical curriculum change and change of employment status were constraining factors in the personal and professional lives of lecturers. Responses from lecturers suggested that consultation from the government and management was minimal and pointed to poor planning. Their understanding and interpretation of this was that the reforms were imposed by those in power. The whole process was seen as a top-down, centrally developed innovation disseminated and dictated to lecturers for them to implement. This was problematic for lecturers and research does suggest that this is a common trend in educational reforms, internationally, in which policymakers believe that the toughest job is to conceptualize the innovation and pass policy quickly, without thinking about implications for implementation (Fullan, 1991; Towani, 2011).

Imposed radical reforms in the TVET sector could therefore not be adopted unequivocally. They resulted in tensions due to the complexity of the nature of the processes involved and the complexity of figurations in the TVET college context. This study finds that there was no coherence amongst the players involved and as the number

of interdependent players grew bigger, ‘the figuration, development and direction of the game became more and more opaque’ (Elias, 1970a, p 85) to lecturers who are at the bottom tier figuration. Elias (1970a) argues that in multi-tier relationships, as evidenced in a relationship between college lecturers and their top-tier players in the form of campus leadership, college management and Council, as well as government, the relationship was expressed as badly oligarchic (Elias, 1978) due to unevenness of power balances.

Timing becomes a crucial factor in planning and co-ordinating social functions. Elias (1970a) states that people, as *homo sapiens* are able to interpret and use symbols such as time. Elias (1939) stated that the divisions of social functions that people have to perform in their various complex figurations make them more conscious of time. Central to Elias’s (1970a) argument is the notion of self-regulation and a civilized *habitus* that is calculating and controlled. He explains that correct time and timing help people in figurations to eliminate irregularities from behaviour and achieve more permanent self-control. Lecturers needed time to digest, internalize, plan and form an attitude towards the proposed changes in their personal and professional lives. To decrease uncertainty about the appropriateness of the new reforms, conceptualization processes had to take lecturers into consideration by allowing space for knowledge, persuasion and a decision to contribute before implementation. Failure in this regard led to lecturers being robbed of an opportunity to think, analyze and make sense of educational changes before they were introduced. Kelchtermans (2005) argues that teachers have to be given a chance to interpret demands for change and make sense of them through social processes because ‘the sense-making determines teachers’ eventual reactions to the reforms’ (p 2).

Rapidity was coupled with more use of mass media than interpersonal communication channels. Although mass media channels are important at the knowledge stage lecturers expected more energy to be channeled to the persuasion stage through effective training and workshops as an interpersonal communication strategy. This attempt is perceived by lecturers to have been minimal and characterized by cascading strategies which research has proved to be very ineffective. Exemplars and modeling of new approaches and

methods, human professional capacitation and guidance were required in order for lecturers to help realize the government's skills mandate.

In addition to the fast pace and poor planning, lack of readiness amongst staff and college infrastructure was raised several times as a serious issue. Shortage of resources which included scarcity of classrooms, furniture, textbooks, libraries, computers, printers, photocopiers and other resources, were cited as still prevailing in most college campuses. It was shown in the literature review (Towani, 2010) that shortage of resources became a prognosis in-so-far as curriculum innovation was concerned. This recurring phenomenon of constraints in resources was confirmed by studies done by researchers such as Govender (1999), Hiralaal (2000), Oaks (2001), Dukada-Magaqa (2003) and Nxumalo (2008). The present study recommends that this issue be taken seriously in future educational reform by policymakers and other stakeholders. Tubin (2009) argues that the establishment of new curricula needs serious planning effort, human capital and good infrastructure and should not be taken lightly.

Rapidity also tampered with existing figurations of lecturers' personal and professional work lives. For example, they had to rapidly move to new campuses, relocate and teach new subjects. They longed to be reskilled to suit new job descriptions within constrained timeframes. In addition, the sudden shifting of status from artisans and craftsmen to vocational lecturers had to happen over time, as it had implications for roles and competencies that needed to be adapted. The new roles meant that artisans had to be familiar with workplace contexts, be up-to-date with labour market demands and be responsive to new curricular innovations. Such rapidity is criticized by Elias (1989b), who considers developmental change to be a long-term process, cautioning that it should be incremental in order to ensure coherence, continuity and effectiveness.

8.2.2.2 Tensions, contradictions and unintended consequences

Tension arose due to lecturers being changed from craftsmen to educators. In the new dispensation, they became known as lecturers. This term usually refers to university teaching staff. It is a label that participants perceived as prestigious and was supposed to

make them feel elevated in status. Due to the deterioration in working conditions however, changes to employment status and low salaries, which became endemic in TVET colleges, participants felt that they were less equal to their counterparts, a feeling of 'proletarianization' (Schweisfurth, 2000). Elias (1939) categorizes such feelings as part of shame and embarrassment because they bring displeasure, anxiety, fear of degradation and perceived lack of superiority in which a person inwardly acknowledges his or her own inferiority.

The redefinition of the work of lecturers through the introduction of the new curriculum, with many new subjects added to the already existing research into the prevalence of the twin tendencies of reprofessionalisation and deprofessionalisation (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996) of teachers' work, in times of educational change. These theorists argue about the emergence of educational reform baggage that has been evidenced in this study, such as the reprofessionalization of teachers' works through broader tasks, too much administration, complexity of roles, new subjects with complex content, above the level of students, and collective decision-making among colleagues. Deprofessionalization has also manifested itself in the form of emphasis on pragmatic training, reduced discretion over goals to be achieved and increased dependence on learning outcomes prescribed by the government. These redefined the 'progressive division of labour or, more broadly, the division of social functions' (Elias, 1939, p 232), expanding and intensifying lecturers' work indefinitely through increased work complexity, perceived by lecturers as exploitative. These developments resulted in resentment, dissatisfaction, uncertainty and low morale which Elias (1994a) sees as triggering either subservience to authority by following prescribed etiquette or aggression whilst within the system, or fleeing from oppressing to more enabling environments. Although compliance, coupled with disgruntlement occurred, resignation of staff to industry and mainstream schooling increased at an alarming rate, leading to the malfunctioning of the sector that was expected to be a vehicle for economic growth.

Further tensions existed among government educational policies, the vision, needs and experiences of lecturers, the needs of students and the demands of the labour market. This

is evidenced by existence of re-invention and discontinuance, as described by Rogers (1962; 1995; 2003). Unintended or unanticipated outcomes were observed as prescribed curricular and frameworks were modified and re-interpreted by lecturers and their colleges. This depicts the whole secret of social figurations, whereby ‘something comes into being that was planned and intended by none of these individuals, yet has emerged nevertheless from their intentions and actions’ (Elias, 1939, p 160). Social life, Elias (1970a) explains, is full of unintended or unanticipated outcomes of social processes; consequences of social change cannot therefore be predicted. For example, many colleges did not wholly respond to the government’s call to completely phase out the old NATED curriculum. Instead they opted for co-existence of the old and the new through offering the new NCV full-time and shifting the NATED to part-time classes in the afternoons or weekends. This modification at the implementation stage is equivalent to defying authority, but yielded enabling results for lecturers and colleges. Lecturers who worked in part-time classes earned extra money, as this was an activity outside formal office hours. This gave rise to envy and tension between lecturers who worked in colleges and campuses that were responsive to labour markets by offering part-time and flexible courses, compared with those who shut their doors to this opportunity and focused solely on government’s NCV. Colleges secured considerable private sector funding from such ventures and were envied by others for the financial stability achieved.

Discontinuance in the form of replacement discontinuance and disenchantment discontinuance have been identified and experienced by TVET college lecturers. These have led to desirable and undesirable consequences. For example, the shifting of the function of college system management from provincial to national government was discontinuance that had implications for employment status and the salary structure of lecturers. The probability of permanent employment by government, as opposed to the college council, and equating lecturers’ salaries with those of teachers in the basic education sector gave them a glimpse of hope.

The NCV curriculum, which was supposed to completely replace the old NATED courses, is a good example of disenchantment discontinuance. Due to challenges,

including non-acceptance of the NCV by industries, the potential employers of the TVET college product, the original idea was rejected. Although not a complete rejection, the change was unpopular, due to insufficient communicability with industries (Rogers, 2003), lack of familiarity with the programme and skepticism to the type of human capital that it would yield, leading to loss of confidence in skills training provided by the public sector. As a result, both curricula are now officially run concurrently in the TVET colleges. Substantial interminable restructuring and amendments impacted negatively on lecturers, who lacked a feeling of permanency. They also caused uncertainty about what else the policymakers had up their sleeves which may disorganize lecturers' personal and professional lives in future.

Further tensions and contradictions were evidenced in the constrained ability of the new NCV to produce artisans at an anticipated pace. The NCV course takes three years to finish, at the end of which a student might get into a programme to be trained as an artisan. This duration is much longer than that of the trimester system of the old NATED courses, which took 18 months to complete. The urgency with which the government wanted the production of the artisans is not compatible with the programme they designed to meet this demand. The present study emphasizes the importance of compatibility arguing that revamping vocational education needs to be consistent with the existing values, past experiences and needs of potential receivers of the product and with society. In order to ensure continuity, the new and the existing need to complement each other because 'present events illuminate the understanding of the past, and immersion in the past illuminates the present (Elias, 1939, p 436). Therefore educational change that is incompatible with the aforementioned will always cause problems and delay social reform processes. This fact, coupled with the pitched standard of content that a targeted Grade 10 Level student finds difficult to master, wrong student type, heavy workloads and high failure rates made a lecturer's professional job very hard, making the overarching goals of educational policies difficult to achieve.

This study also highlighted tensions and contradictions resulting from centralization and decentralization of authority in the educational reform processes. Rogers (2003)

elucidates that in centralized approaches the overall decisions of reform are controlled by the state as opposed to decentralized approaches that are client-controlled with wide sharing of power and control among stakeholders. In the present study, centralization of authority to make key decisions rested with national and provincial governments. This move was cited by participants as encouraging too much dictatorship and bureaucracy, resulting in stagnation of processes and development of reforms that alienated lecturers as professionals and critical members in the diffusion of innovations chain. Reforms were perceived by participants as a closed box, thus silencing professional input of the majority of lecturers and ‘imposing in its place a preferred view of teaching that is allegedly value neutral but which, in reality, is constrained, contrived, easily quantified and compliant’ (Smyth, 1995, p 4).

Decentralization of accountability to college central offices did not increase democracy either, because they are isolated structures, detached from, and not easily accessible to, campuses and staff. Lecturers believed that management in central offices lacked skills to cope with the big responsibilities devolved to them by the government, for example to hire and pay market-related salaries to lecturers appropriately, equitably and timeously. At a practice level, NCV learning programmes and materials had to be mediated by lecturers, a responsibility requiring capacity, experience and skills, which lecturers did not have. Rogers (2003) pinpointed weaknesses in both centralization and decentralization, believing that a way to allow the two to work hand-in-hand had to be found.

In centralized systems, the voice of the implementer is muted at the conceptualization stages. As the approach of the policymakers, compared with that of the recipients, will always differ, obstacles that impede implementation crop up. According to Galvin and Fauske (2000), there is a difference in approach to policy development and implementation. College lecturers’ interpretation of policymakers was that they are deductive thinkers, because they derive policy or adopt policies derived from theories that describe how the policy process works and rarely go as far as considering the practicality of the implementation of these policies. Lecturers believed that as

implementers they are inductive thinkers, because they build on operative theory of collaboration from the synthesis of their experience (p 43). Collective decision-making strategies are more rewarding than authority innovation decisions. In analyzing the dynamics of feudalism and court absolutism, Elias (1994a) criticized increased centralization, arguing that more centralized external controls produced greater self-control, accompanied by feelings of isolation within the subordinate people. Also in his book, 'The Loneliness of the Dying', Elias (1985a) expressed his sensitivity to the depersonalizing and isolating tendencies of modernity. I therefore feel that harmonization of centralized and decentralized approaches are a necessity to avoid disjuncture between policy and practice. Should there be a wide gap between perspectives of policymakers and those of lecturers, a picture that depicts 'limitations of highly centralized strategies of curriculum change' (Morris *et al.*, 2000, p 48) results. Therefore, working together and the support of all the stakeholders in the social figuration, where the majority is given a voice and approaches are intermeshed, is critical for the success of change.

Many politicians and policymakers believe that educating, training and equipping people, particularly the youth, with skills is the best strategy for developing countries to combat unemployment and 'push back the frontiers of poverty' (Moyo, 2007, p 72). The argument is confirmed by Gill, Fliutman and Dar (2000, p 1), who consider that governments often called upon TVET systems to help unemployed young people and older workers to get jobs, to reduce the burden on higher education and to reduce the inequality of earnings between the rich and poor. Nevertheless, lecturers are disheartened by the fact that students produced by TVET colleges do not easily find employment and very few are entrepreneurial. The masses that have already gone through the NCV programme have unintentionally been used by the system as subjects for experimentation. Their non-employability stigma is in contradiction with what the reform was designed to achieve and is indicative of dysfunctional effects of a reform. In his *a posteriori* perspective, Elias (1989b) predicts that from the 'interweaving of countless individual interests and intentions something may come into being that was planned and intended by none of these individuals, yet has emerged nevertheless from their intentions and actions' (p 160). The present study reveals that policymakers and all stakeholders not only need a

well-thought out grand plan, but also awareness that ‘accidents’ (Mennell, 1989) will happen and that pilot projects and contingency plans are required before these have a deleterious blanket effect on the anticipated overarching final outcome.

Although no educational change can ever have only desirable and intended consequences, as ‘unanticipated results are not an unusual feature in social and organizational life but a norm’ (Elias, 1978a, p 261), not achieving key intended goals in big educational reforms has serious implications. It points to the notion of a stable equilibrium (Rogers, 2003), which means no change in the structure or functioning of a social system after the change has been effected. Unemployment, poverty and retrenchments sadly persist, widening the socio-economic gap further and perpetuating existing patterns of class and inequality in society. A system’s social structure partly determines the equality versus the inequality of reforms’ consequences. Rogers states that when the structure of a system is already very unequal at the conception and inception stages, the possibility of it leading to even greater inequality in the form of wider socioeconomic gaps is highly likely. Unless policymakers, politicians and management are aware of this fact and plan accordingly, the socioeconomic gap will be hard to narrow thus sabotaging some of the overarching goals of the TVET educational reform, such as employment and employability.

Part of the government’s plan in forming TVET colleges was to reduce the burden on tertiary institutions. Therefore the NCV programmes had to be designed in such a way that they make provision for articulation and progression to universities for a few students who saw the need, were capable and could afford to do so. This part has been difficult to achieve, because the TVET college subject combination does not meet university entrance requirements. For example, lecturers in this study stated that the NCV programme package consists of only one language instead of two and universities find this unacceptable, compared to the common academic matriculation. The implication is that chances of producing more theoretically grounded TVET university graduates and future researchers in this very critical sector are challenged.

Although the tensions, ambiguities and contradictions discussed above are perceived by lecturers as a deficiency and are unpleasant, they open a window of opportunity for redefining and restructuring the innovation, thus serving as a springboard for adaptation and further development of educational change.

8.2.2.3 The teacher factor and issues of identity

This research study showed that the TVET lecturer-reform relationship is a complex one, as it is influenced by a myriad of personal, social, cultural, situational, organizational, professional and ideological factors. Variances of interpretation, reactions, enactment and implementation of policy by lecturers were highly dependent on these factors.

Like other people in different social figurations, lecturers are not the same and could therefore not have responded to educational reforms the same way hence differing degrees of ‘compliance, resistance, incorporation, mediation and retreatism’ (Pollard *et al.*, 1994). Determinants that had a vital influence included diverse historical backgrounds, norms and cultural values, personal beliefs and lecturers’ sense of self. Nias (1989) explains that these factors had an impact, because lecturers ‘exist as people before they become teachers and their work calls for a massive investment of their selves’ (p 3).

Some of the lecturers exhibited characteristics of being radical and disgruntled by imposed reform, and others radical but with ‘better temperaments’ (Elias, 1939, p 303) to strategically welcome change with ambivalence, while others become selective by adding a few new ideas to their traditional ways of practice (Nias, 1989; Fullan, 1993; Floden, 1997; Schweisfurth, 2000). These theorists suggest that selectivity is used by teachers as a survival strategy to protect themselves ‘from radical change and allows them to sustain beliefs and practices which they do not want to give up’ (Schweisfurth, 2000, p 23). In the present study this was shown by lecturers in their colleges and campuses introducing the NCV partially, but continuing with the NATED courses on a full-time basis or as part-time classes in the evenings or on weekends. Their prior beliefs and experience developed over the years triumphed, influencing them to only adopt parts of the new

curriculum ‘which were resonant with their existing practices and largely ignoring those which were not’ (Webb & Vulliamy, 1996, p 162).

The above finding attests to the inseparable, intertwined nature of personal and professional identities in lecturers’ lives. These inseparable twin identities are critical because the way in which lecturers see themselves affects the way in which they teach, the way they develop as teachers and the way they react to changes that take place within their sector (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004). Identity affects and is affected by the way a person relates within a collective (Bernstein, 1996).

Findings in this study confirm those of a study done in Israel by Moore and Hofman (1988), who revealed that lecturers with stronger professional identities were far less inclined to leave institutions of higher education. This claim is supported by Kremer and Hofman (1985), that professional identity predicts job-leaving, emphasizing that identity which they hold onto is likely to be the one that prevails, should a career tug-of-war ensue. The present study confirmed that one’s practices, beliefs and the way one engages with people in his or her profession depends on the professional identity a person holds (Sachs, 2001).

This is a very pertinent issue in the TVET sector in South Africa. The strength of the sector is dependent on its ability to attract and retain qualified personnel to train and teach. For instance, an artisan may view the profession of engineering in one way when they are working in an engineering firm and have a very different view of the industry when they work as lecturers in TVET colleges. Elias (1970a) argues that even a simple dyadic relationship between two people has two ‘distinguishable relationships’. The relationship AB, as seen from A’s perspective, cannot be the same as the relationship BA, as seen from B’s perspective (p 128). It was therefore important to look at these identities and perspectives, because the identities lecturers possess determine their effectiveness in practice in times of educational reform. Although all three identities in one person (artisan, engineer and lecturer) is unequivocally preferable, the present study revealed

that those lecturers who had stronger identities as lecturers responded with less negativity to educational reforms than their counterparts.

As employees and professionals, lecturers had a very well-articulated view that they want space to be seen as a solid TVET professional group. Bitterness about not knowing where they belong when industrial actions took place was expressed. Lack of identity as professionals that other teachers in ordinary mainstream basic education enjoy frustrated them. Vocational education teachers in some of the developed countries are better established compared to those in Third World countries like South Africa. Teachers in developed countries work under professional vocational environments, as they have their specific vocational teacher training and development, clear career paths and recruitment procedures and union affiliations. For example, Finnish vocational educators have their own identity as teachers working in the TVET sector. This identity excludes teachers who work in the school-based vocational education, as these 'teachers have identified themselves more as general teachers (and thus, often civil servants) than vocational educators' (Heikkinen, 1997, p 2). TVET college lecturers, therefore, need to be organized and be unified as an occupational group, so that they have solid weight like other colleagues in the educational sphere.

There were internal and external factors that influenced how TVET college lecturers experienced and reacted to post-apartheid reforms. There were external factors beyond their control, such as scale, coherent planning, pace, provision of resources and finance. With regards to internal factors within their limits, personal identity, values and beliefs had an important impact on how they responded to and mediated reform innovations.

8.2.2.4 The social system matters

There is a critical relationship and an emotional bond between lecturers, people they work with and their place of work. Elias (1974a) believed that people exist within dense intertwined relationships. He argued that all of us are interdependent people in intertwined figurations, in systems within systems. From our relationships he saw the existence of functional interdependence of component parts that form a social structure

which makes up the whole (p 26). As figurations are shaped by social processes, the social structure within which we exist is a crucial element. The social structure as milieu matters in educational reform as it involves social processes which involve people and their environments as part of social development.

The first layer of the social system in which lecturers in this study exist is constituted by the government, as a policy-making entity, a bureaucratic organization, its hierarchy with higher-ranked individuals who issue educational reform orders. The second unit is that of the colleges themselves, with their central office management at the apex and communities in which they are situated. These two constitute a formal structure in the context of educational reform. The third layer, which is the informal structure, is formed by the ‘interpersonal networks linking a system’s members, tracing who interacts with whom and under what circumstances’ (Rogers, 2003, p 24).

The most immediate social structure, the TVET College in which a lecturer works, does not exist in isolation, but is a crucial unit within patterned social relationships. Each is a social structure existing within broader social, economic and political contexts. A lecturer is a social being within this milieu, a ‘human being among other human beings’ (Elias, 1978, p 13), in different configurations that are part of the social structures within which they work. Within this setting a lecturer plays a variety of roles and is affected by social interactions with different people at all levels.

At a micro-level, the lecturer interacts with colleagues, students and management on the campus, the Council as a college governance structure, the college central office as a seat of college management and communities served by the campus in which he or she is based. At a macro-level a lecturer is an employee of the Ministry of Education, directly through DHET or College Council, and is linked and affected by changes that have occurred in education through national policies. All these units need to co-operate and work as a coherent whole. Interdependence is so complex that lecturers are affected by activities of people they have never interacted with directly and those of people they have never even met. Existence of this interdependency of all the elements was inadequately

understood by all stakeholders in the educational reform of the post-apartheid era. Elias (1976) states that it is critical for longer chains of interdependence to eventually have reciprocal dependency and more healthy multi-polar relationships within and amongst groups. This notion is supported by Rogers (2003), who used the analogy that a social system is like a bowl of marbles; if you move any of the marbles in the bowl, the position of all the others is inevitably changed. If any unit in a social figuration is weak or dysfunctional, incompatibility and disjuncture, which cripples the sailing of the educational reform, result.

Lack of understanding of interdependence led to unanticipated consequences. For example, failure to think about the student factor by policymakers and management alike led to overlooking the importance of enrolment criteria, thus opening doors for poorly motivated, weak students who were secondary school dropouts. The standard of subjects in the NCV qualification was perceived by lecturers as higher than the targeted student and needed to be revised due to its complexity. The programme fails in its purpose if it is pitched too high for its primary target audience. Therefore, as the educational transformation included curriculum reform, a student had to become one of the key considerations for implementation to take place effectively. This study reveals that one of the biggest challenges that brought lecturers a range of reactions ‘from fear and anguish to boredom and frustration’ (Smith, 2001, p 26) was failure to take seriously the student as a key factor in effective planning and implementation, thus crippling what the South African government aspired for when creating the colleges in vocational education.

Challenges related to this fact led to the resignation of staff, which complicated the situation further. For example, resignations of staff affected deserving students, as they were left without a lecturer for a long time, since hiring a replacement is a lengthy process. Furthermore, when a lecturer leaves, the lecturer-students relationship suffers, as the bond between them breaks and students have to adapt to another relationship with a new lecturer. A lecturer who leaves takes with him capital in terms of inherent knowledge, competencies, attitudes and other personal attributes that could have contributed to the growth of the TVET College. Dissociation of an individual lecturer

from a campus throws the institution off the rails, because he or she existed as part of the college, not as a kind of a closed box, or a '*homo clausus*'. Elias (1978) stressed that human beings are embedded in their social worlds because they are '*homines aperti*', who are able to influence others and are open to influence by others (Elias, 1978, p 119).

Participants felt that when their colleagues left, more pressure was exerted on them as heavy workloads were put on the remaining lecturers. In the context of a college, a disgruntled lecturer focuses on his own problems and dissatisfaction, which lead him to take action such as resignation. To the outgoing lecturer it does not matter what happens to the college when he or she leaves, indicative of self-perception as an individual, but affecting other people due to interconnectedness that exists in social systems. In any organization, be it an educational institution or a company in the corporate world, the resignation of a staff member has negative effects.

8.3 How lecturers perceived their relationship with students, colleagues, management and other stakeholders in the midst of educational change

8.3.1 Lecturers' perception of their relationship with students

Lecturers' main activities revolve around imparting knowledge to students in the TVET college context. But, as explained above, a college is a microcosm of society. This role links the lecturer to students, campus management, colleagues and communities, which lecturers serve through their teaching. In relation to the students as clients, expectations are that the lecturer is an expert in his or her own field. Findings revealed that educational reforms that occurred made lecturers feel inadequate. They felt that they were shortchanging their students, because they did not have adequate content and pedagogical knowledge to deal with the new NCV curriculum. Tensions between their old selves, before changes occurred, and who they are expected to become, in dealing with the new curriculum surfaced. Feeling inadequate in this context means one does not feel good about what he or she can offer as a professional and this includes doubting one's teaching and training abilities. The present study suggests that this is a ruthless feeling that bullies a person from the inside and has great potential to erode a person's self-confidence.

Lecturers therefore need guidance, support and motivation to be able to overcome these negative feelings, as they may lead to poor health and low morale, which affects both personal and professional lives.

One of the crucial roles that lecturers play in their professional life is that of '*in loco parentis*' as dictated by policy in the Norms and Standards of Educators. Policy requires that lecturers provide support by performing a citizenship, community and pastoral role, in order to develop emotional, social and ethical aspects of students' well-being. Although the majority of participants in this study confirmed to be performing this responsibility, they made it clear that the challenge is overwhelming. The type of student that the modern TVET College attracts makes the environment not conducive to teaching and learning. Garisch (2007) stated that the type of student enrolled since 2007 through the NCV stream is immature, irresponsible, unmotivated, difficult, demanding, and disruptive in the classroom and, in most cases, lacking in powers of concentration. Garisch added that present-day TVET college students are very young and lack discipline, resulting in very high levels of absenteeism and late arrival for classes and these have put an emotional burden on lecturers.

A college environment operates differently in terms of supervising and instilling discipline in students. Colleges are not as strict as schools, where students are under the watchful eye of a teacher. In schools, learners are under strict supervision and are reprimanded for late coming, absenteeism, not doing homework and not wearing uniforms properly. Lecturers perceive students to be ill-disciplined. The student is in a dilemma, too, as many of them have not adjusted properly to the less strict environment. Adaptability to the new college environment by younger students and adaptability to a younger student by lecturers seem to be problematic. The situation was impacting badly on lecturers; they found themselves frustrated and resentful of the type of student they have.

The interpretation of the above finding is that there is tension between what the lecturers believe who the student should be and who the student is. It can be suggested that

students have not adapted to the new college environment and are not compatible with the NCV, but lecturers may also have failed to adapt to the new setup and the new student type. As a result, older lecturers believe the student of the old era was comparatively better than the new wine – the new student. In the same breath, others may argue that there is nothing wrong with the new wine but it is the old wineskin that is conservative, skeptical, exuding negativism towards educational reforms and being ‘dogmatic and rigid in their thoughts and actions’ (Levin, 2001, p3).

Whilst lecturers were explicit about not being able to adapt to a younger student, they were worried about a large presence of older ones whom they believed to be dropouts from secondary schools in the areas in which colleges were located. These students were said to be disturbing others and perceived to be damaging the image of colleges, because the majority of them were involved in substance abuse and some of them were labelled as bullies by younger students. These students do not do their work and are perceived to be contributing to high failure rates. This state of affairs was seen as detrimental to the sector and was viewed as perpetuating the perceptions by parents, schools and other people in communities that colleges are there for the ‘academically less able students who are not able to advance through the school system’ (Oketch, 2006, p 4).

In the midst of all the student-related challenges, things have to move forward. Woods (1993) believes that a teacher needs to be a strategist. The present study reveals that lecturers’ lived experiences have taught them to devise survival strategies to deal with the uneasy circumstances. For example, older experienced lecturers have used ascendancy as one of the strategies to instill discipline. This means presenting oneself as a figure of authority, through being strict and reprimanding those students who miss classes, do not do homework, perform poorly in assessments and those who abuse alcohol and other substances. Some of the lecturers emphasized the power of looking decent and presentable, thus portraying an ‘appearance that presents a particular image’ (Harley *et al.*, 1999, p 124). In educational reform, Huberman (1993) interprets this strategy as a sign of gradual internalization of change, which may be an indication of stabilization and

commitment to the new responsibilities and the new professional identity. It is thus a 'positive approach to affirmation of the self' (p 5, p 11).

8.3.2 Lecturers and their colleagues

Chapter 7 discussed figural dimensions, concentrating on collegial relations, collegiality and attitudes. Although lecturers work in isolation when they are in classrooms and workshops, the work context of TVET colleges has evidence of collaboration among lecturers as peers and senior staff members. Some of the collaboration was by colleagues who were drawn to each other by commonalities, such as teaching the same specialization. In his interrogation of the concept of 'figurations' and '*habitus*', Elias (1978) believes that it is possible that people bond to each other due to the division of labour or occupational specialization, but also due to a common sense of identity and shared antagonism for others (1978, p 175).

Working together in teams for the realization of departmental and campus goals led to gains in the form of professional development and empowerment. Interactivity and reciprocal interdependence, solidified by the ability of people working together as good team players, cannot be underestimated. Rogers (2003) states that for transformation to be a success within a social system each member in a team is important and that heterophily, as compared to homophily, is more beneficial. Homophily serves as a barrier to progress because members bring the same attributes to the team. In this study, heterophilous collaboration was beneficial, as interaction was usually among lecturers with different attributes. For example, the long-serving members who are more experienced bring loads of experience to the new dispensation. A lecturer who already has an abundance of experience is presumed to possess a valuable competence base (Livingstone, 1997, p 2). Competence is expandable and can be used as a foundation, where less experienced lecturers can learn new ideas. Elias (1987c) declares that 'humans filled the earth by learning from experience and by handing on knowledge from one generation to another' (p 343). In the present research study it was data revealed that knowledge accumulated through experience can be shared with new and inexperienced colleagues, as it happens in transformation in the form of social development. Just as a

candle does not lose its flame by lighting another, sharing knowledge does not affect the original acquirer, but allows both to share thoughts and strategies (ibid). Although one out of 12 participants felt his experience was not valued by younger members of staff, for the majority of lecturers experience came out as an invaluable human capital, a credential which could be used as a basis for learning new things demanded by curricular reforms.

Some of the collegial experiences were negative, for example, lecturers who were not given a chance to choose and teach their major subjects, but ended up teaching any of the subjects that were without a teacher at that time. This example underscored the functional interdependencies that exist between people and is a good example of what Elias referred to as uneven balances of power. Elias (1970a) further draws our attention to the relationship concepts of 'function' and 'power'. He states that 'when a person lacks something which another person has the power to withhold, the latter has a function for the former'. He adds that people who are interdependent are not necessarily equally interdependent (p 78). The scenario above depicts a lecturer-management relationship which is uneven, conflict-bearing and cannot be entertained unquestioningly. Under such coerced circumstances, relationships are dented, to the detriment of professional work that has to be done and the emotional well-being of the people concerned, which was revealed as crippling the implementation of the reform.

Other participants described traces of hostility that sometimes exist between them as colleagues, due to racial tensions of the past. One participant found herself bonding better with colleagues of her own racial group. This mirrors wider racial divisions which still exist in our society, attributable to the legacy of apartheid. Amalgamations of colleges rearranged and reshuffled lecturing staff, bringing together people with 'diverse socio-genetic differences' (Wedekind, 2001, p 268) on different campuses. The intermeshing of multiracial staff has not been easy on management and lecturers themselves, because when people work together emotions are involved. Kelchtermans (2005, p 2) believes that 'emotions are understood as experiences that result from teachers' embeddedness in and interactions with their professional environment'. Nias adds that a teacher cannot be 'disengaged from his or her cultural, social and historical contexts' (1996). These

differences need to be confronted in order to attain sustainability and critical mass status, where more interdependent people in a social system accept and run with the new educational changes.

Educational change remains a complex business, which demands collaborative approaches involving all stakeholders, including lecturers ‘who are close to the action and who best understand the context’ (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996, p 201). Collaborations, team-work, peer coaching, partnerships, mentoring and professional development have, in this study, been identified as hallmarks of the new professionalism for TVET college lecturers.

8.3.3 Lecturers and their relationship with college management

Another finding of this study is that the majority of lecturers perceived their top management, particularly those based in central offices, as poor and ineffective managers. They resent the government for hiring people whose competences are questionable. Some management personnel are perceived to be lacking leadership skills and knowledge of the TVET sector. The majority of participants were of the view that the government hires friends or people they are acquainted with, in one way or another. This they labelled as nepotism. Lecturers seemed to be convinced that most people who are the cream of the crop do not stand a chance of getting employed if they are not known to those in power.

If this is true, the implication is that limiting the choice of employment to friends and acquaintances has the potential to destroy colleges, because incompetence cripples progress. Lecturers felt that the incompetent managers have not been able to put in place appropriate staff development strategies to support teaching staff and to distribute resources to campuses equitably. There was also a great deal of resentment directed at college management from lecturers who are on the council payroll. Salaries were said not to be market-related and payment dates and amounts fluctuated all the time. Management was constantly referred to as ‘them’, as though they were not part of the in-group. The central offices which are isolated from campuses aggravated this resentment. The

distance created caused emotional detachment and disaffection, a situation which does not yield positive relationships between lecturers and management.

College lecturers understand the advantages of centralizing authority, such as ensuring accountability, but they felt that there are issues that should be dealt with at a campus level. Lecturers believed that campuses are closer to the activity and can attend to most issues better than the central office. Central office management is perceived to be too bureaucratic, with unnecessary red tape for trivial issues that could be devolved to campuses.

Present college management was given far greater autonomy than their predecessors (McGrath *et al.*, 2004) and should therefore be cognitively competent people. It would be a grave error to employ weak people, because that would be a stumbling block to quality of governance, responsiveness of the college to a very dysfunctional labour market and effectiveness of colleges to achieve the government's skills mandate. As there are 'webs of interdependence or figurations of many kinds' (Elias, 1978, p 15) among management, lecturers, the labour market and communities, one wrong move impacts negatively on all stakeholders.

8.4 Other issues illuminated by the study

This section highlights issues that the study illuminated with regards to educational reform in the TVET college context, as suggested in question three of this research study.

8.4.1 Silences, lessons and implications

Participants in this study focused more on the negatives and were silent with regards to acknowledgement of gains from the educational reform. Educational reform is not doomed to failure, as there are positives even in challenges like scarce resources evidenced in rural and previously disadvantaged campuses. For example, although at different degrees, under such emotional conditions lecturers learnt improvisation, innovativeness, resourcefulness, origination and creativity. Being able to keep the boat afloat with limited resources is a big achievement. Even though there were also

experiences of ill-feeling caused by uneven, tensile balances of power (Elias, 1976) due to inequalities relating to resources, human capital, social class, race, ethnicity, gender and intellectual capital, every cloud has a silver lining. This is not to say that these experiences depicted harmonious figurations (Elias, 1965), because in actual fact they were full of tensions and conflicts. For example, experiences in which one group of lecturers pinned 'the badge of human inferiority on another group' (Elias, 1976, p 73) brought feelings of being dominated and 'stigmatization to the outsider group' (Elias, 1965, p 17). These were symptomatic of ideological avoidance action (Elias, 1976), in which light is shone on peripheral issues of the figuration. But, on analyzing lecturers' responses to their experiences, I concluded that some of the lecturers did learn more about collegiality and inclusivity to overcome diversity in the TVET college social context.

Secondly, the majority of participants did not realize and acknowledge that college management had shortcomings in managing the transformation, because the educational reforms were also new to them. In most responses there was harsh criticism directed at college management and a portrayal of a state of powerlessness. Their narratives fell short of recognizing that some of the failures in management were due to flaws in policy development, which included rapidity, overambitious scope and unrealistic timeframes. Managers were, in the same way, robbed of a chance of familiarization with, and interpretation of policy so that they were able to manage transformation and spearhead college development plans. Inadequacy in this regard not only affects interconnectedness, which is a crucial link in the interpersonal networks of a social system, but also quality and innovativeness in the education reform processes.

Linked to the above discussion is lecturers' denial and avoidance of ownership of flaws. Participants criticized their educational system for favouritism, whereby people in power were responsible for the hiring of incompetent TVET managers, some of whom were not vocationally-oriented, to key positions. The majority of the lecturers looked up to campus management, the central office and the government to 'deliver and solve all their problems' (Kraak and Hall, 1999, p 155), displaying symptoms of dependence and victim

syndrome, instead of developing a self-help philosophy by being proactive and innovative at times. Adopting a complete systems-blame stance by lecturers is problematic because the educational system in place is linked to political transformation. The government which is said to be nepotistic was voted for by the majority of the citizens of the country. This majority included lecturers in TVET colleges. Critical thinking, thinking outside the box and redefining the problem as one of system-blame and at another level, also of interwoven people, including lecturers as South Africans, need to prevail. This is because broader issues such as who owns and controls the overall ideology matter and the challenges faced actually go deeper than the change itself, its execution and implementation.

Another lesson illuminated by what the college lecturers were saying in their life stories was that there is a link and interrelationship between social change, educational reform, state economic agenda and the influences of globalization which impacted badly on TVET college lecturers. The impact of globalization, on economic systems and on education policy is enormous and leads to unintended, indirect, unanticipated and undesirable consequences (Elias, 1939, 1965, 1976). Educational reforms, that promote drives towards privatization and decentralization of public education, a movement towards educational standards, a strong emphasis on testing, and a focus on efficiency and accountability, accreditation and universalization, impacted negatively on lecturers' personal and professional lives. For example, the creation of measurable performance standards through extensive standardized testing comes with heavy workloads and a lot of paperwork. The introduction of new teaching and learning methods, leading to the expectation of better performance without proper infrastructure and resources, frustrated the TVET college lecturers.

The present study confirmed that the assumption by policymakers that there is a causal relationship between vocationally-oriented education and training and solving economic problems of a country are straightforward and automatic is problematic. The inextricable link of vocational education and training to economic gains cannot be treated as a common good, as it has led to commodification of the TVET college sector at the

expense of the lecturers. Policies legislating educational reforms that led to new governance structures and change of employment status resulted in job insecurity, deterioration of work conditions and low morale among lecturers. Lecturers as employees and as teachers were plagued by fears of the unknown and doubted the effectiveness and appropriateness of the new reforms and what it all held for the future. Resultant negative attitudes, 'indefinite rationally undefined fears and anxieties' (Elias, 1939, p 116) destroy attributes such as enthusiasm, commitment or loyalty to the college, willingness to work and dedication to common goals (Johnsrud, 1996). Low morale in employees affects productivity, as it is associated with feelings of powerlessness, loss of hope and not wanting to go the extra mile in the execution of duties which is expected from the majority of employees with high morale in some organizations.

There are tangible signs worldwide, that 'a better, even a far better, TVET system may not have dramatic positive effects on employment, growth and competitiveness or poverty as these indicators are shaped by a far more complex set of factors and interactions' (McGrath *et al.*, 2006, p 89). All over the world there is evidence of an increase in retrenchments, stagnation of earnings, underemployment, contract and short-term employment and worsening unemployment rates, even for qualified, skilled young people. Findings in the present study indicate that lecturers in TVET colleges have lived these unpleasant experiences, which are prevalent in all sectors and communities in South African society. Transformation in the TVET sector could not have been plain sailing and could not have yielded intended economic gains when the TVET institutions were faced with so many challenges, such as 'changing culture, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, financial pressures, competing values' (Kezar, 2002, p 266) which have, in turn, affected the key role-players, the lecturers.

Aggravating the situation are perceived poor planning and incorrect implementation strategies. The present research highlights that change in education cannot be planned and implemented by instantly pressing an electric button and all systems 'go'. Change in education needs meticulous preparatory planning, vigilant management, monitoring and evaluation which ties in well with the concept of time and timing by Elias (1939), who

states that time and timing have become critical tools for co-ordination of social functions. Many policies fail not because they are bad, but due to poor planning and incorrect execution at different levels. There are a myriad of factors that need to be considered before educational policies are implemented. In the case where changes include curricular transformation, lecturers working in the sector need to be taken into consideration too. This study shows that educational changes characterized by poor implementation strategies are likely to affect lecturers negatively.

Further lessons learnt include interpretation, mediation and modification of policy by lecturers. Rogers (2003) believes that modification of reforms and a fair degree of creativity to suit an institution, an organization or a unit is a necessity, because no new idea fits perfectly into the context in which it will be embedded (p 425). Some of the reforms may be ultimately restructured by recipients to suit their contexts, sometimes modified by the teacher beyond recognition (Schweisfurth, 2000). The importance of context of an educational reform and its implementation cannot be underestimated. Modification of new change signifies the fact that policy has been configured. In this sense, mutual adaptation occurs, because it is not only implementers and other stakeholders who adapt to the context, but the reform also changes along the way to suit diverse contexts. Another example is that proposed by MacLaughlin (1997), who explains that 'mutual adaptation' has been identified in situations in which teachers adapt classroom practices to the proposed curricular changes. The significant part of his proposal, that teachers are in turn given space to provide feedback and that their needs and concerns are taken seriously by all stakeholders has not been evidenced in TVET colleges.

Modification is preceded by interpretation of policy before it is implemented. As policy is represented by, and presented to, implementers like lecturers as text, it opens up possibilities of misinterpretation and contestation. Bowe and Gold (1992, p 21) warn that policy is loaded with text which can sometimes be contradictory and ambiguous to the recipients, to the detriment of effective implementation. The present study has highlighted that government officials, management of colleges and lecturers have, at

some point, misinterpreted public policy aimed at reforming the TVET college sector. This also emphasizes the importance of time and timing in social processes (Elias, 1939) compared with too much rapidity that denies people, particularly lecturers, opportunity to reduce uncertainty by obtaining more information, analyzing what the policy proposes and coming to grips with relative advantage, compatibility, complexity and alternatives, before implementation. Proper interpretation of public policy and curbing rapidity are therefore critical for effective implementation and minimization of system-blame bias (Rogers, 2003), or system 'blame gossip' (Elias, 1994, 104).

It is important to highlight the impact of the failure of the South African educational system to see all the education sectors as a whole, that is, as a coherent unit. Compartmentalization of sectors into Basic, Further Education and Training, and Higher Education, led to each working in a secluded silo instead of all operating as a synchronized unit. If this was not the case, lessons learnt from the preceding RNCS educational reform policy for schools should have been used as a basis for betterment of policy development and implementation in the TVET college sector. Elias (1976) stressed that radical division of social functions and differentiation causes problems of co-ordination and should be accompanied by processes of integration. The present research revealed that most challenges faced by TVET college lecturers are similar to those that school teachers faced during the RNCS era (Harley & Parker, 1999; Harley & Wedekind, 1999; Jansen, 1999, 2001; Mokgatle, 2003; Hlophe, 2003; Koosimile, 2005; Siqubashe, 2005; Akoojee, 2008). Examples include the rapid pace of reform and its implementation, overambitious scope, inequitable distribution of resources, infrastructure incapacity and lack of training and capacitation of staff, complexity and ambiguity of text and content, limited ability to consider uniqueness of diverse contexts and inadequate funding to support large-scale policy roll-out and implementation. The history of educational reforms in the country should have been considered, to minimize implementation hiccups and challenges. The importance of conducting research and reviewing educational reform case studies, as part of planning policy development, cannot be underestimated.

Educational changes that include curricula reforms have implications for teacher development. Lecturers needed to be reformed on new methodologies: responsiveness to employers' needs and on embracing the values of life-long learning before the policy that transformed the TVET college sector was diffused. At the core of any successful educational change are competent employees who form a well-informed, knowledgeable and skilled workforce. Prior to any educational reform implementation should be in-service capacitation of existing staff, initial training programmes for new recruits and articulation of all programmes with workplace-based training. In-service training is particularly true in the South African context, because of inequalities and injustices in education provisions of the past. We cannot shy away from historical background, as this turns history, which could have a good impact, into a 'graveyard of human dreams' (Elias, 1978, p 28). Elias (1929) states that 'if one wishes to understand man, if one wishes to understand oneself – every period of history is equally relevant to us' (p 75). For example, the emergence of multiracial classrooms posed a challenge for lecturers, as the majority were brought up and schooled under apartheid's separate development ideology, characterized by unequal training opportunities. The present research revealed experiences of emotional distress, as it was too much to ask of the lecturers from poor backgrounds to fit like a glove into such newly created social figurations.

8.4.2 Constrained democratic processes

The post-apartheid political dispensation cherishes democracy and egalitarian processes, but lecturers experienced inadequacy in this regard in the post-apartheid educational reforms. Constrained democratic processes led to contradiction between the overarching ideology that influences all reforms and the approach to the educational reform, its execution and practicality. Lecturers perceived TVET educational reforms to be prescriptive and antithetical to democratic practice (Fullan, 1993; Smyth, 1995), as manifested in their responses in which they expressed feelings of being left out of the equation in policy formulation. According to Dunn (1994), policy needs to be accommodative, be properly discussed and communicated to stakeholders, such as implementers, for them to be able to translate it into practice. Shaky, policy-rich knowledge, poor planning and inadequate communication led to poor interpretation and

this directly affected the quality of provision. Hence lecturers' perception of the NCV as a top-down, centrally developed curricular change disseminated to lecturers at the periphery. Had they been fully involved, lecturers believe that things could have been ameliorated. For example, lecturers claim that if the old NATED programmes were gradually revamped and restructured, instead of government introducing a new curriculum altogether, implementation obstacles could have been minimized. Introduction of a completely new curriculum posed tough challenges for lecturers who teach in the TVET college sector, as it had serious implications for practice. The reform was very prescriptive, short on description (Lortie, 1975), a typical one-way centre to periphery approach (Kelly, 1989, p 127), an unharmonious interdependence in a social figuration that brought displeasure, tension and anxiety (Elias, 1939) to the college lecturers, as they are the ones who had to interpret and implement the new curriculum.

Nevertheless, democratization of reform processes should not be too romanticized because the little that occurred through college cascading strategies led to those chosen to attend sporadic workshops to spend too much time away from their places of work. Tension resulted, because this happened without significant reduction of classroom, workshop and workplace contact hours and increase in staff support. Ultimately, constraints and pressure to finish the syllabus put severe stress on lecturers and this interfered with the division of labour time as crystallized in the timetables (Connell, 1985), and also disrupted campus and college teaching and assessment timeframes.

8.4.3 TVET lecturership as a career of choice

The present study showed that not many TVET lecturers planned to join the teaching profession. Besides what lecturers asserted in their life stories, this is also revealed when one analyses lecturers' life stories and profiles, as presented in Chapter 5. The majority of participants became lecturers due to extrinsic pulling factors such as unemployment, scarcity of jobs in the fields that they were qualified to work in and the non-affordability of tertiary education because parents were poor. Teaching was not a career of choice, but

was seen as an opportunity to access employment quickly. This was possible as a solution, because there were staff shortages in colleges.

Although some of the lecturers eventually warmly accepted the TVET sector, others do not have long-term plans to stay in the teaching profession. This was one of the reasons why many lecturers jump ship if greener pastures appear elsewhere. Teaching is used by some as a stepping-stone, or a waiting station, while they hunt for what they are passionate about behind the scenes. The sector suffers because of this, especially if the cream of the crop exits the system and is replaced by inadequately qualified and inexperienced individuals. This consequence is unintentional and disastrous for the sector. The TVET sector needs better qualified and highly skilled manpower in order to achieve its skills development mandate.

The implication for the unplanned and unintentional consequences is that the sector which is already compromised will become weaker and weaker if interventions are not put in place in time. The recommendation is that the idea of becoming a lecturer in TVET colleges be vigorously marketed, so that colleges become institutions of choice when young people are considering careers. For the sustainability of the sector and provision of quality technical vocational education and training, there is need for young people to be persuaded, so that they yearn to join the teaching profession.

8.4.4 TVET college lecturer development

The third question of this research aimed at also interrogating issues illuminated by the study with regards to education reform and teacher development. Part of what this study has highlighted relates to lecturers' feelings of inadequacy and aspirations to upgrade themselves professionally. Introduction of the NCV made lecturers without a teaching qualification feel inadequate even though they possessed specialized technical and vocational subject knowledge as well as industrial experience. This is why Kraak and Hall (1999) emphasized that there had always been a debate regarding what a 'qualified technical College lecturer is' (p 120), because not many have a combination of industrial experience and suitable professional qualifications. Experiences of insufficiency call for

lecturer development intervention by the government and college sector management, as a contribution to ‘human knowledge advancement and long-term social development’ (Elias 1970, p 156).

The ideal approach to professional lecturer development recommended by the present study is interpretive in nature. This approach is research-based and uses identification and analysis of concerns and challenges common to the majority of the lecturers, as a springboard for the development of knowledge and the provision of professional training beneficial to the TVET college sector. It is critical to highlight the importance of careful focus on increasing the number of lecturers who are ‘not continually frustrated by the system’ (Hopkins and Wideen, 1984), for example, a vigorous drive on a variety of initial TVET practitioner development programmes. This study revealed that the TVET college sector is complex and that challenges involved demand professional lecturer development that is holistic, yielding lecturers who possess appropriate knowledge, attributes and competences. It is recommended that future TVET college lecturer development provides opportunities for development of a curricula package that will include practical knowledge, disciplinary knowledge, workplace knowledge, tacit knowledge, knowledge of the heart in the form of values, attitudes, intuition and situated learning, and competencies that will include reflection, collegiality, teamwork, critical thinking, research, lifelong learning, ability to marry theory and practice, cross-disciplinary thinking, self-evaluation and self-guidance.

Elias (1971a) advocates ‘more reality-congruent knowledge’ (p 365), as knowledge is always for practical purposes and can be advanced and adapted when new situations arise. The present study argues that the types of knowledge mentioned above are required by present circumstances and need to inform the work of lecturers, thereby providing the basis for an agenda towards lecturer professionalism, lecturer development and educational reform in the TVET college sector. Of all the competences mentioned above, this study considers reflection to be at the heart of being a professional. It recommends that lecturer development promotes reflective practice that goes beyond thoughtful judgment in the classroom, the workplace and the workshop. Over and above reflection-

in-action and reflection-on-action is a demand for critical reflection about action and about the social conditions and consequences of one's actions (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996) as a lecturer.

The recommendation above is in line with the national policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, published in the Government Gazette in 2011. This policy proposed the type of training that includes:

- Disciplinary learning: subject matter knowledge
- Pedagogical learning: knowledge of learners, learning, curriculum and general instructional and assessment strategies
- Practical learning: learning from practice; work-integrated learning; authentic and simulated classroom environments
- Fundamental learning: ability to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs); acquisition of academic literacies
- Situational learning: knowledge of varied learning situations, contexts and environments; also policy, political and organizational contexts

Lecturer development clearly needs to be given full attention, as it is a cornerstone for any move towards the revitalization of the TVET college sector (Technical and Vocational School Guide; 2010). Anything less jeopardizes government's attempts to build an effervescent vocational education sector that has the potential to achieve social cohesion and continuing economic development.

8.5 Recommendations

8.5.1 Rapidity

The pace at which reforms were brought about was rapid and did not give lecturers an opportunity to think, assimilate and prepare themselves for change. Change is not easy for human beings to embrace. Persuasion during conceptualization is crucial for educational innovation to succeed. Policy documents themselves are not easy to interpret and are characterized by contradictions and sections that are difficult to implement in practice. Therefore it is recommended, that in future interventions and innovations, lecturers be engaged in the conceptualization stages. They have to be given a chance to familiarize themselves with demands for change and make sense of them through social processes, because ‘the sense-making determines teachers’ eventual reactions to the reforms’ (Kelchtermans, 2005, p 2).

8.5.2 Capacitation of lecturers

The second issue is that of capacitation of teaching staff. Staff development is an integral component of any educational programme aimed at supporting teaching and learning. This study revealed that college lecturers are in need of further skilling, due to rapid changes in technology and curricula reforms that demand strengthening theoretical and pedagogical knowledge. Research is required to discover what internal training programmes of seminars and workshops, or any capacity-building initiatives, exist and how these can be maximized. There are also old staff development strategies that were annulled when the new dispensation was ushered in. These need to be evaluated and research on how they can be improved and be used again is required. For example, how have ideas of staff secondments to industry to brush up skills and new technological knowledge worked? Can these be advanced and help to formulate new models of staff development?

8.5.3 Increased workloads and administrative duties for lecturers

Lecturers were unanimous in complaining about increased workloads and onerous administration, due to the introduction of the NCV. This complicated lecturers' work unnecessarily, decreased contact time drastically and negatively affected teaching and learning in colleges. It is recommended that lecturers' workloads, particularly administrative duties for lecturers, be reduced or strategies to do so be devised, for example, employment of lecturer assistants.

8.5.4 Pedagogical barriers

Lecturers expressed concerns about pedagogical barriers such as mixed ability classrooms, compounded student workloads, complex courses and lack of technical background. Lecturers stated that these were frustrating for them, as they impacted negatively on teaching and learning and were cited as some of the contributory factors to the high failure rates in colleges. This study recommends that effective models of placement and baseline assessments be devised, to avoid enrolment of the 'wrong student type' and to appropriately match knowledge level with targeted students. Where students are found to be weak or lacking in technical background, access programmes, ranging from three to six months, are recommended. Materials need to be revised and be brought to the level of the recipients instead of being pitched at too high a level.

8.5.5 Compounded subject loads for students

Policy allows students to move on to the next level, even when two or more modules have been failed. Getting into a new level, which has seven subjects and repeat subjects from the previous level as well, is problematic for students. It impacts negatively on teaching and learning. This study recommends that policy be re-examined to stipulate a maximum number of failed subjects which may be carried over.

8.5.6 Lack of resources and infrastructure

Lack of resources and inadequate infrastructure were cited as one of the issues that demoralized lecturers. Lack of resources 'is a multidimensional problem' (Harley & Wedekind, 2004, p 206). In a college context, it is not only classrooms that are required

but also workshops and simulated environments for practical work to be carried out. Learner-centredness that is championed in South African education requires a lecturer to have enough space for group work and other interactive learning strategies to be effective. It is difficult to enable appropriate curriculum development and achieve effective teaching and learning if the environment is not conducive for learning to take place. It is recommended that the issue of lack of resources and infrastructure be looked into, before further educational reforms that involve curriculum restructuring are implemented in colleges.

8.6 Possible areas for further research

The present study does not claim to have all the answers to the problems that TVET lecturers face in their colleges. It focused on their lived experiences of the post-apartheid educational reforms and how these have impacted on their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface. This section discusses issues that emerged from this investigation which warrant further research.

One of these issues is the role that lecturers can play to make colleges more responsive to their neighbouring environments, particularly industry and local communities. It was revealed in this study that youth, that is the product of colleges, does not get employed. There seems to be a disjuncture between what the colleges supply and what the world of work needs. This is indicative of a ‘dysfunctional labour market’ (McGrath *et al.*, 2004, p 220) characterized by a mismatch between supply and demand. More research on this issue is required, to shed light on how lecturers can contribute to minimize the problem, help to monitor changing employment patterns, technological advances and crucial skill needs for strategic planning purposes, and to help in the establishment and operationalization of the mission and the vision of the colleges.

Fullan (1991) asserts that, if we want to know the actions and reactions to change of any educational reform, and thereby comprehend the bigger frame of things, we must understand not only the views of the lecturers but also those of the student, parent and administrator involved in that change process. This study has

investigated experiences of only 12 college lecturers. The views of the students, parents, administrators, management and other lecturers present opportunities and potential for further research in the TVET colleges.

8.7 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that radical reforms in South African TVET education affected the personal and professional lives of teaching staff in many ways. One of the conclusions is that policymakers need to put the lecturer at the apex, when the education system is being renovated:

... the success of educational reforms, no matter how well they are conceived in principle, will only be fortuitous if teachers who are actually responsible ... are a pivotal plank of those reforms. An uncommitted and poorly motivated teaching body will have disastrous effects for even the best of intentions for change (OECD, 1989, p 96).

Given that educational reforms are for the betterment of the quality of education, it is important 'to chart their effect on the teacher as a person as well as a professional' (Goodson, 1995), in order to minimize challenges in the process. Many reforms in education are miscarried, because key stakeholders have so often underestimated the importance and emotional wellbeing of those who implement them. To think that the most important part of any change in education lies only in the design and dissemination thereof is disastrous. Success is, rather, evaluated by the degree to which that change is understood and fully adopted by recipients and is effectively workable in practice. Reforming education is a phenomenon that cannot be avoided, as education is an important aspect of development, but I believe that lecturer interests, experiences and feelings need to be taken into consideration, as educational interventions are bound to affect them.

The time for the public TVET college system to work like 'plumbers in a crumbling house, dashing round to plug a leak here, open a tap there, put in a new pipe somewhere else' (Connell, 1985, p 205) should be over. Achievement of educational reform requires

a strong political will, commitment from all stakeholders who interact in socially vertical and horizontal patterns, and the mobilization of all the resources for the achievement of critical mass status, whilst ensuring the survival of lecturers as teachers, and as employees, in the intertwined figuration of the education system.

To emphasize the importance of a lecturer as a teacher and as an employee I quote from Hartnett and Carr (1995):

Society is dependent upon the quality of their judgments, values, knowledge and sensitivities, in particular in social contexts, to negotiate acceptable solutions to issues of authority in education; to sustain the development of democratic values in the wider society; and to create a social environment in which children can deliberate about, and reflect critically upon, the nature of the good life and the good society. It is teachers who should be a centre of resistance to totalitarian, centralist and utopian thinking and control within society. They are a critical pivot between the state, parental power, institutional power and the development of democratic values and attitudes in each new generation (p 43).

In spite of their multi-layered identity as employees, teachers, artisans, engineers and pastoralists, lecturers cannot succeed by going it alone, as they are part of interdependent figurations in a wider social system. In his essay, 'The society of individuals', Elias (1991b) explains that 'we all keep society going by our thoughts and actions, like partners in a dance or players in an orchestra, but we do not invent the dance or the melody. Society is not a separate substance weighing down upon individuals from outside. It consists of the relationships among those very individuals. We depend upon each other. We belong to networks and chains of interdependent relationships. A human being cannot exist outside of these relationships' (p 13).

This is the crux of Elias's (1978) notion of interconnectedness and interdependence of people, which emphasizes that we cannot accomplish anything in this world when we do things alone, because whatever happens in our personal and professional lives is the result of the whole tapestry of our lives and all the weavings of threads with other people's lives and the environment in which we live.

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Appendix A



*University of KwaZulu-Natal
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10 November 2010

Mrs Z G Buthelezi
School of Education & Development

Dear Mrs Buthelezi

ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0273/010D

PROTOCOL: An exploration of how KZN FET College lecturers have experienced the post apartheid era in their lives and work

In response to your application dated 24 May 2010, Student Number: **203516274** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

**Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE**

SC/sn

cc. Supervisor - Prof. V Wedekind
cc. Dr. C C N Mthiyane
cc. Mr. Nqobizwe

Postal Address:

Telephone:

Facsimile:

Email:

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses:

■ Edgewood

■ Howard College

■ Medical School

■ Pietermaritzburg

■ Westville

Appendix B



Centre for Adult Education

School of Education and Development

Faculty of Education

Private Bag X01

Scottsville, 3209,

Telephone +27(33) 2606274

Facsimile +27(33) 260 5756

11 November 2010

Dear Campus manager

RE: RESEARCH STUDY ON HOW KZN FET COLLEGE LECTURERS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE POST APARTHEID ERA IN THEIR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES AT THE POLICY-PRACTICE INTERFACE

I am a Doctoral student from the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I am a researcher who is undertaking a study under the title: **An exploration of how KZN FET College lecturers have experienced the post-apartheid era in their personal and professional lives at the policy-practice interface.**

I have identified your campus as one of the sites that can assist me in obtaining data for my thesis. I have identified two lecturers who work at your campus and I am thus seeking permission to interview them should this request be accepted. A meeting will be held in due course where you will be addressed in detail about this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate how lecturers have experienced the post-apartheid era in their lives

and work. I would obtain this information by interviewing lecturers from three Mthashana campuses which includes your one.

During the interviews I will be using a tape recorder to ensure that no important information is lost and the tape will remain in a safe place and be made accessible only to the university officials. At least two interviews per lecturer will be held. Each interview will last one and a half hour with two short intervals in between. Participation is voluntary and if they do not wish to participate in this research they may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences to themselves or the campus. The information and identity will remain totally confidential and anonymous.

You can contact me on 0824005714 or on buthelziz@ukzn.ac.za or you may contact my Research Supervisors Prof V. Wedekind (033 260 5076) or Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane (033 260 6131) at UKZN in Pietermaritzburg for further information.

Yours sincerely

Zanele Buthelezi

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (full names of official) grant Zanele

Buthelezi permission to use _____ campus to carry out her research studies.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Appendix C



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

School of Education and Development

Faculty of Education

Private Bag X01

Scottsville, 3209,

South Africa

Telephone +27(33) 2606274

Facsimile +27(33) 260 5756

27 November 2010

Dear Research Participant

I am a student studying towards a Doctoral degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of fulfilling the requirements for this degree, I will have to submit a dissertation. The title for my study is: An exploration of how KZN FET College lecturers have experienced the post-apartheid era in their lives and work.

Part of this study will include collecting data from FET College lecturers who have worked in the South African Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector for at least a minimum of ten years. You were selected based on the information that you have worked in the sector for the period specified above and might be able to reflect on both the old era and the new FET college landscape.

Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and an audiotape recorder will be used to assist in capturing data during the interview. At least two interview sessions will be held, each lasting an hour and a half with two breaks in between.

It is also important that you as a participant in this study, understand that;

1. Your identity will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used when reporting on the results.

2. If, at any time during the period of the research, you want to withdraw you are free to do so.
3. You are not obliged to answer any questions you do not wish to.

I am contactable on 0824005714 or on buthelziz@ukzn.ac.za or you may contact my Research Supervisors at the University of KwaZulu-Natal as follows:

1. Prof Volker Wedekind on 033-260 5076
2. Dr Nonhlanhla Mthiyane on 033 260 6131

If you fully understand the above and wish to continue to participate in this research study, please complete the consent form below.

Yours sincerely

Zanele Buthelezi
(Student No. 203516274)

I _____ (name & surname in full)

hereby, confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PARTICIPANT CODE: _____

INSTITUTION CODE: _____

The 54 questions listed in this interview schedule serve as a guide (prompts for myself) and provide topics/themes that need to be tackled to ensure that all basic areas are covered.

A. FAMILY/CULTURAL SETTINGS/SOCIAL FACTORS

Tell me about the first fifteen (15) years of your life (this will include basic areas listed below).

1. Where were you born?
2. Where did you grow up? How do you feel about the where/the way you grew up?; Tell me about how this has had impact in your life?
3. What was your family like? How would you describe your family/parents?
4. Do you have any siblings? What do they do for a living? Tell me about your relationship with your family including your siblings.
5. What language(s) did you and your family speak?
6. What values were passed on to you as a child? By who were they passed?
7. Which of these values still have an influence in your life?
8. Is your cultural background much of a factor in your life? How much of a factor is it?
9. What special people have shaped and influenced your life the most?
10. What do you think are the highlights/critical incidents in the first fifteen years of your life? What impact have these had in your life?
11. Which important days, events or periods in our history can you remember? How have these influenced your life or the person that you are now?

B. EDUCATION

Tell me about your schooling years? (This needs to cover primary, secondary, post-secondary school years/further education and training and continuing education).

12. Where did you do your primary, high school and post-secondary education?
13. What are the best/happiest memories of your schooling years?
14. What are the worst/unhappiest memories of your schooling years?
15. What has been the role of education in your life?
16. What do you think are the highlights/critical incidents in your years of schooling?
17. In what ways have primary, high and post-secondary school education influenced the way you teach?
18. Tell me about your educational qualifications/What educational qualifications do you have?
19. Does your post-secondary school qualification include technical/vocational specializations?
20. Do you think your qualifications are adequate for teaching at a FET College? Explain.
21. Do you feel any need for you to be retrained or reskilled in some or all of the aspects in relation to what you teach?
22. Do you have any plans to further your studies in future? Tell me more about those future plans.

C. WORK RELATED THEMES

Tell me about your years of teaching at a FET College (to include experiences of teaching before and after the mergers; before and after the introduction of the new curriculum: NCV)

23. When did you start to work at this college?

24. What made you choose to work at a FET College?
25. What previous work experience did you have when you started?
26. Is work that you did when you started the same as what you do now?
27. What did you teach before vocational institutions merge? Are you still teaching it now?
28. What has it been like to teach in the new merged FET colleges?
29. What has it been like to teach in the NCV programme? Do you still teach in the NATED programmes?
30. Has your work been satisfying to you? Explain.
31. What do you like/hate about teaching at a FET college?
32. From what do you derive greatest satisfaction?
33. What have been your greatest accomplishments?
34. What is your biggest frustration now?
35. In what ways are you trying to attend to it?
36. What has been the most important learning experience in your life at the college? What did it teach you?
37. Why do you do this work?
38. Who do you look to for support when it comes to decisions about work?
39. Tell me a bit about the people you relate to at work? Did you have a chance of choosing who you want to relate to? Explain.
40. How influential are they in terms of your happiness at work? How influential are they in terms of your work practices?
41. Tell me about the people you don't relate to at work? Why don't you relate to them?
42. What changes have been most significant in shaping your work experience?
43. What do you regard as the reasons for these changes? Do you think there was a need for these changes?
44. How did you respond (have you responded) to these changes?
45. How have these changes impacted on your work and life?
46. How do you feel about these changes?

47. What challenges do you face as a lecturer in this college? Is there any relationship between these challenges and changes that have occurred?
48. What hierarchies exist at this place of work, and how do you fit in?
49. How do you feel about these hierarchies?

D. CONCLUSION

50. When you think about your teaching at this college and the future, what makes you feel most uneasy?
51. What gives you the most hope?
52. Where do you see yourself in the next 5, 10, 15 years?
53. Is there anything that you think we have left out?
54. What are your feelings about this interview and all that we have covered?

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

COLLEGE CODE		CAMPUS CODE	
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Lecturer's Code					
Year in which born					
Population Group	A	C	I	W	Other
Gender					
Home Language					
Other Languages					

2. EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

What type of contract do you currently have? Please answer the questions below

Type of employment?	Full Time	Part-time	Other (specify)
Who pays your salary?	College council post	Other (specify)	
Indicate the type of Contract?	Full time College Council contract	Part time College contract	Intermittent/Temporary/ Other contract (Please specify)
In what year did you start working at the college			
For how long is your current contract?			
In what year does your contract expire			
At which post level are you currently?	Post level _____		

3. SUBJECT TEACHING DETAILS

This section is about the subjects that you teach, and the courses that you teach on.

❖ **Please complete the following table. Complete a new row for each different subject that you teach. The first row provides some guidance.**

COURSE <i>(what group do you teach the subject to e.g. Engineering and Related Design Students)</i>	SUBJECTS <i>(what subjects do you teach on this course e.g. Engineering Fundamentals)</i>	TYPE <i>What kind of course is it? (e.g. NCV, Trade diploma)</i>	LEVEL <i>At what level do you teach this course</i>	Year Started	COMPONENT <i>For practical subjects</i>			
					Theory	Practical	Workplace	Other
<i>Example: Boilermaking</i>	<i>Example: Life Orientation</i>	<i>Example: NCV</i>	<i>Example: Level 2</i>					

4. TEACHING EXPERIENCE

In what year did you start teaching at a <u>college</u>			
Did you do any teaching before teaching at a college?	Yes	No	
If yes, since what year have you been teaching?			
Do you have any experience of doing teaching/training <u>in the workplace</u>	Yes	No	
If yes, in which years did you do so?	Start year	End Year	

5. BRIEF HISTORY OF ALL TEACHING POSTS

INSTITUTION (e.g. College; School, or University)	POSITION & LEVEL	SUBJECT/S TAUGHT	YEAR/S

6 INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Do you have any industry experience?	Yes	No
If "yes", please complete the next table		

7. BRIEF HISTORY OF INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

EMPLOYER	POSITION HELD	FIELD	YEAR/S

Did you complete matric?	Yes	No	
Do you have a teaching qualification?	Yes	No	
If yes, what is your highest teaching qualification?			
Did you do an industry or college qualification?	Yes	No	
If yes, what is your highest industry or college qualification/s?			
Did you study further at a university or technikon?	Yes	No	Incomplete
If yes (or incomplete), what is your highest academic qualification?			
Did you study further at another institution besides those above ?	Yes (please specify)		No
If yes, what is your highest qualification from this institution/s?			

8. SKILLS NEEDS

What additional skills/qualifications do you feel you need for your work at the college?	

9. QUALIFICATIONS

CURRENT STUDIES

Are you currently doing a teaching qualification?	No	Yes	<i>Please Specify</i>
Are you currently doing an industry or college qualification?	No	Yes	<i>Please Specify</i>
Are you currently studying something else?	No	Yes	<i>Please Specify</i>

ALL QUALIFICATIONS

Please list all your qualifications. Do not skip over this table, even if it repeats information. Please Include qualifications you are currently studying towards; if they are not complete, please write “current” under “year completed”.

Qualification	Institution	Area of specialization (e.g. welding, Science)	Year Completed

10. SHORT COURSES

❖ ***What short courses did you do? Please complete the table below***

	Yes/no	YE A R	DURATI O N	Did the College pay
Assessor training				
Moderator Training				
Verifier Training				
Facilitating Learning				
Other (please specify below)				
Other (please specify)				

❖ What other professional development activities have you been involved in?

	Yes/no	YEA R	DURATI ON	Did the College pay
Workplace experience				
Subject refresher courses				
DoE training/workshops				
Teaching refresher courses				
Other (please specify below)				
Other (please specify)				

11. ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Do you think you need additional training in: *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

THEORY/SUBJECT CONTENT KNOWLEDGE?		PRACTICAL SKILLS/NEW TECHNIQUES		TEACHING SKILLS		Other	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO

Do you think you need more cutting-edge workplace experience? *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

YES	NO
-----	----

12. COMMENTS

Is there any other information that you think we need to be aware of?

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE: THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!
YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS APPRECIATED**

APPENDIX F

ABRIDGED INTERVIEW WITH LECTURER B

Date: 13 December 2010

College/campus code: COASV

The interview with Zime (not her real name) had been scheduled for 2oclock in the afternoon on this particular day. Driving from Pietermaritzburg to the venue is approximately one hour but I decided to leave 30 minutes earlier to ensure that I was there on time. Little did I know that I would wait for more than an hour before the participant joined me in the boardroom that we were to use for the scheduled interview.

After I had parked my car outside the administration block I sent the participant a text message to alert her that I was already on campus. Actually, I kind of expected her to come and walk with me to the venue. She texted me back saying that she was running late. When an admin staff member ushered me to a very well furnished boardroom I began to suspect that she is either in class, meeting or out of campus. I was beginning to become impatient when I had a shy knock on the door. There she was, out of breath as she had been running up the stairs.

“I am so sorry XXX. You have no idea what happened to me today. When you go to these government offices you are never sure how quickly you will be attended to. I had to go there this morning to sort my employment issues out. I arrived there at 10am and I have been moving from one office to another as none of the personnel had all the answer about what I came to enquire about. I got help eventually but did it really have to take this long?” She talked non-stop, not giving me a chance to reply or respond.

I eventually got a chance to hear the details about the government offices she had been to and the nature of her enquiry. Zime works at a FET college campus in one of the big townships in the province. Apparently she had gone to XXX House, a regional DoE office in Durban, because earlier that week she had received a letter telling her that her employment contract had been terminated. (Contract terminated? I was curious about her employment status). That gave me an opportunity to probe further about this phenomenon. I needed to find out if she is employed by the College Council or government and why she opted for enquiring at a

government regional office instead of HR at her campus or at the college central office. Her response:

“HR at our campus is useless. We only go there to pick up our pay slips and you are lucky if you found an administrator who will be willing to give you help. The central office is worse in terms of service they provide. I am still under government payroll. If your employment has not been transferred to Council yet, it’s better to bypass them and deal with government directly.” I needed details on why her contract had been terminated when her services were still needed by the college.

“XXX, you have no idea how frustrated we all are. I started working at this college in 2004 and all along I have been of the idea that I am permanently employed by the government. Most of our colleagues have been transferred to Council already but I am one of the few who haven’t been yet. There were signs that something was wrong with my employment but I ignored them. For example, paydays and dates of appointment change all the time. Moreover, the salary is never the same each month; I can’t tell you for sure how much I earn. Although the government has reinstated me, there is no explanation about why my employment was terminated. Officials at XXX House do not have a full story about anyone’s employment issues due to rumours that employment status for all FET college lecturers will be reversed from Council back to the government. It’s like we are working at a Spaza Shop. You know spaza shops operate but work in an informal unstructured sometimes chaotic kind of way. We don’t know what is going on. Everything is hearsay. We don’t have easy access to management. We don’t even know who constitute Council that governs the college. We neither know names nor faces.”

Zime went on to talk about other frustrations they have like the fact that very few lecturers are afforded an opportunity to teach what they are specialists in:

“Before the NCV was introduced we were specialists, teaching core subjects in the NATED programmes. Now we have been turned into language teachers. You find yourself teaching English or Life Orientation. I am a Science and Maths person and we people are very non-linguistic. But you find yourself being instructed to teach a language. You can’t refuse because you may lose your job. The worse thing is that there is no training or orientation given before you start teaching that subject. What makes matters worse is that there are no

materials for these subjects. Most of the time materials will be received in April when teaching started in January. It is trial and error all the way and it is very frustrating when you have no confidence in what you teach as a lecturer.”

Zime further explained that shortage of resources is such a huge problem. “At our campus, we have a big enrollment and one workshop per discipline is shared many students. We don’t have effective workshop schedules; it ends up being a survival of the fittest. I think the government was supposed to fix the infrastructure first before implementing the NCV.”

Zime maintains that lecturer morale is low because of problems in the NCV. At their campus quite a number of lecturers quitted as for some of us better opportunities present themselves all the time, for example, those in the Engineering unit. Vacancies that are created and the sad thing is that it is very hard to fill them with adequately competent people. This contributes to a bleak future for FET colleges as it affects the quality of the kind of worker they produce for the industry and the community. Besides the problems mentioned above, she further shared her experiences regards student composition in each class:

“In one N2 class you will find a child who has passed grade 9 at your ordinary secondary school, a drop out who failed grade 10, 11 or 12 at secondary school, the one who already has a matriculation certificate and another one who has passed N6 but needs to specialize in a new field. I do not have an answer as to why this is the case but I suspect part of it is unclear recruitment guidelines and lack of guidance for students. It is frustrating for us lecturers because it is hard to plan lessons for students who are at different levels but combined in one class. Moreover, we as lecturers think it is morally wrong because the NCV leads to a vocational matric; a learner who has Grade 12 already has a matric. It’s not exactly repetition as specialization subjects are different but it is more years leading to exactly the same qualification level. As for N6, that level is already above matric! Why does a student have to go back to a lower level? There should be bridging courses or something like that”.

Zime believes that combining students who are not at the same level contributes towards absenteeism because if activities are simple the advanced student becomes bored and bunks the class the next day. Harder activities also tend to frustrate a student at a lower level.

There is also an issue of discipline where students are loitering outside instead of being inside classrooms and workshops. There are structured timetables and specific break times which

are not religiously followed. “Students attend shifts like workers at a factory. We talk about this amongst ourselves as lecturers and we always wonder if management is aware of these problems. We no longer talk to our seniors about these things because no matter how constructive your opinions are, management will never listen to you. You do your work the way you feel works for you. Not much monitoring for staff and students occurs here. Kusehlathini lana (this is a bush; meaning there is no orderliness)!”

“You know what XXX, I am looking forward to finishing my NPDE diploma. The day I finish I will leave this place and go to teach in an ordinary school. May be things are better there. This place has too many frustrations. We are called lecturers but conditions of service are bad. Furthermore, we earn less than ordinary teachers. We are at the forefront of skills development but why aren’t we given a scarce skills allowance?”

“XXX, another sad thing is that we were part of the marketing drive for the NCV. We told people that there will be bursaries and for many poor people that meant free education. People responded very well as the majority did send their children to our college. But that was like an empty promise because bursaries were available only in 2007 when NCV was introduced, thereafter no bursaries. From 2008 parents were told to pay before registration and tuition per annum is close to R2000. 00. For people who are unemployed and poor this is a lot of money, hence the strike that has been going on for weeks in this college.”

Most of the students that Zime had recruited were from her church. When bursaries stopped Zime felt like a liar in the eyes of those people. Being among church members has become uncomfortable for her as people ask her about this each time they see her. She will always try to explain but she has a feeling that people will never trust her again. “Cabanga nje ukuthi sengingaze ngishintshe isonto ngenxa yalento (I may end up changing the church because of embarrassment)”.

She was born at KwaNdengezi Township near Pinetown. She says that her mother contributed to the resilient kind of person that she is today. Her mother did sewing and sold clothing to support her and her elder sister. Their dad died many years ago but ‘was very useless and conservative, saw no reason why girls should go to school’. “Can you believe that my sister had to quit school because their teacher had asked them to bring a 30c donation the next day? Dad decided that she quits school because he didn’t have this donation. To this day

my sister is unemployed as mom couldn't afford schooling both of us due to financial constraints". She says that if it were not for her mother's support, she also would never have finished schooling and be where she is today.

Zime is a Maths and Science lecturer. "XXX, you have no idea how long it took me to be where I am today. I completed my matric at an ordinary high school at KwaNdengezi in Pinetown. I did 'general subjects' i.e. History, Biology, Geography, Business Economics, English and IsiZulu. After finishing my matric, I came here to do N1 – N3 when this institution was still a technical college. I had always loved Maths and Science but those were not offered at our high school. After acquiring the Maths/Science foundation, I then moved on to a local Technikon (Polytechnic) to do a National Diploma because I was passionate about working in a laboratory".

"I am not going to dwell on my resentment that I never got the job that I went to a Technikon for. But what I want to emphasize is the fact that I benefited a lot from the way the technical colleges were structured a long time ago, that is, before they became FET colleges. The NATED structure then provided a lot of options over a short period of time. Can you believe that N1 – N3 that I did took only one year? To achieve what I got within that period, a NCV child takes three years. This is one of the reasons why I think the NCV needs to be restructured. The NATED system worked very well for us who came from very poor families".

Zime thinks that the NCV as it stands is flawed and needs to be revisited. She believes that the government needed to restructure the NATED, add what is missing (e.g. a vigorous practical component) instead of coming up with a new curriculum altogether. There is a lot of good in the NATED courses that one doesn't find in the NCV and vice versa. Zime says that the best the government could have done is to pilot the project first before full scale implementation. She believes that as things stand right now, the FET colleges may not succeed much in fulfilling one of their crucial mandates: skills development.