

Long Paper

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Inter-Continental Masters Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change**

**How do FET College educators explain the role and function of college occupational
training units? A case study**

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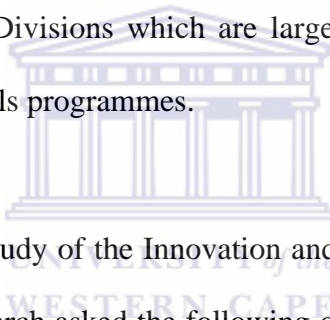
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Glossary of terms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance Body
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
ID	Identification Document
NATED	National Certificate (N1-N6)
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NVC	New Venture Creation learnership
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sectoral Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
White Paper 4	White Paper of Further Education and Training (1998)

Abstract

Further Education and Training ((FET) Colleges in South Africa are required to focus their delivery on the new National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes rolled out in 2007 at NQF Level 2. These programmes integrate theory and practical training, the latter taking place within a simulated or workplace environment. However, public colleges have always engaged in more direct workplace training such as apprenticeships in the old NATED (National Certificates N1-N6) system, and since 1998 learnerships and skills programmes under the Department of Labour. With Department of Education (DoE) funding directed at NCV programmes since 2007, FET Colleges have established Innovation and Development Divisions which are largely responsible for occupational training in learnerships and skills programmes.



This paper documents a case study of the Innovation and Development Divisions of two public FET Colleges. The research asked the following question: ‘How do FET College educators explain the role and function of college occupational training units?’ FET College educators involved in workplace training were interviewed about their understandings, role and functions against a contextual background that situates current College involvement in workplace training within South Africa’s evolving education and training policies. The traditional separation of education and training through two separate Ministries (Education and Labour) is exacerbated by the allocation of DoE funding to College NCV programmes while Innovation and Development Divisions secure contract funding for all other training programmes.

Recent scholarship addresses two broad discourses which emphasise either institutions or workplaces as the primary site of learning. While one school of thought posits codified, disciplinary knowledge as essential for learners' engagement in a new knowledge economy, the other places more importance on peer-based and experiential learning within the workplace. The approach of this paper has been to analyse two seemingly oppositional theoretical approaches. Bernstein (1999) outlines a 'vertical' approach to learning, based on accumulation of institutionally acquired disciplinary knowledge of specific disciplines, but he also details a 'horizontal' discourse that relates to learning in the 'common sense' (contextual) world: two forms of knowledge (horizontal and vertical) that are not easily 'translatable'. Lave and Wenger (1991) from the paradigm of situated learning (which may result in vertical or horizontally acquired knowledge) argue that workplace learning involves all knowledge acquisition. This paper, through an analysis of Bernstein's horizontal discourse and Lave and Wenger's situated learning asserts that despite their apparent oppositional stances, the theoretical approaches are remarkably congruent.

My case study of educators from two FET College Innovation and Development Divisions revealed diverse understandings of what constitutes workplace training and the multiple roles that College educators undertake within their divisions. Their key role is to mediate theoretical instruction and practical placements for the structured workplace learning component of occupational programmes rather than the direct provision of practical training in the workplace. A significant finding was that the FET College's involvement in workplace learning, while situated primarily within a horizontal discourse

which focuses on specific contextualized learning relevant to the workplace, has the potential to offer learners progression to a vertical discourse through application of codified, disciplinary knowledge that provides the basis for success within higher education.



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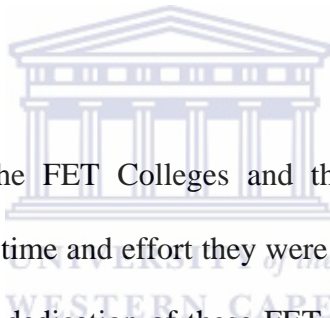


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SECTION 1: Introduction to the Research

1.1 Introduction

The central focus of this research paper is to elucidate South African Further Education and Training (FET) College involvement in workplace learning¹ from an educator perspective through an investigation of the question ‘How do FET College educators explain the role and function of college occupational training units?’ Section 1 of this paper provides a contextual background of South African education and training policy in so far as this affects FET Colleges. Section 2 details a literature review that draws on international and national literature on vocational education and training and notes a dichotomy between literature on the workplace as a key site of learning and on institutions as the primary site of learning. Section 2 also details a theoretical framework that draws on two oppositional theories but have a congruent theoretical perspective on workplace learning as a horizontal knowledge discourse.

Section 3 focuses on the research approach adopted, including data collection and analysis procedures, as well as ethical considerations and boundaries of this study. Eight educators responsible for workplace learning from two FET College Innovation and Development Divisions were interviewed. Section 4 presents the data analysis, which is presented in the following themes derived from the research questions and sub-research

¹ This paper uses the term *workplace learning* to denote education and training that predominantly takes place in the workplace. Another term frequently used in the literature to describe workplace learning is *occupational training*. *Work-based training* is a term used for education and training that prepares learners for access to employment and/or self-employment, but the learning that takes place is primarily institution-based. The term *vocational* is also used for work-based training. However, within the broader literature, vocational education and training is used to capture all education and training aimed at preparing for employment. Fenwick (2006) queries the validity of the term workplace learning and argues for greater conceptual focus on the interchangeable definitions accorded to learning in the workplace. Given the flexible use of these terms, these terms are used interchangeably within this paper.

questions: Defining workplace learning; FET College involvement in workplace learning; FET College educator involvement in workplace learning; Preparing learners for the workplace, and Methodologies and Approaches used in workplace learning. This section also includes the research findings, which stem from an iterative analysis of the research data with the literature review, policy context and the conceptual framework. Section 5 provides concluding remarks and looks at implications for further research arising from this study. The following section provides the contextual policy background affecting FET Colleges.

1.2 Background

This section provides a policy context for FET College involvement in workplace learning, in order to show shifting policy understandings of the role of FET Colleges in workplace learning.



In South Africa, before the new democratic dispensation in 1994, vocational education and training was characterised by sharp racial and class divisions, as well as a focus on low skills output and an increasing separation of vocational education and training from industry needs (Badroodien 2004, Kraak 2004, McGrath 2004). Post 1994, the vocational college sector has been subjected to a range of education and training reforms which continue to be implemented to date. This has been accompanied by the transformation of South Africa's education and training system since 1995, with the introduction of an outcomes-based National Qualifications Framework and the separation of education and training located under two government ministries, the Ministers of Education and Labour

respectively (SAQA Act, 1995, White Paper 4 (White Paper on Further Education and Training) 1998, Skills Development Act 1998, FET Colleges Act 2006, NQF Amendment Act 2008).

The promulgation of White Paper 4 (1998) ushered in a radically new vision for FET Colleges, as the FET sector was seen as “the heart of the integration of our education and training system... [which would be] planned and co-ordinated as a comprehensive, interlocking sector” (p.3). White Paper 4 noted the separation of education and training responsibilities respectively between the Ministries of Education and Labour, but also acknowledged their collaboration in terms of establishing the South African Qualifications Authority to oversee South Africa’s National Qualifications Framework (NQF), as well as their joint responsibility for “effective linkages between training and work” (p.4-5). A key role identified for FET Colleges was to establish direct linkages with industry and employers, and respond to the vocational needs of the wider community (1998, p.5). White Paper 4 also specifically noted the introduction of learnerships² in FET institutions, which would be funded through the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities and National Skills Fund under the Department of Labour (p.6) and envisaged a FET sector providing multiple pathways into the workplace and higher education in ways that complemented the integration of education and training vision in line with the NQF.

² A learnership was defined in White Paper 4 as “a mechanism aiming at promoting the level of skills of South Africans, through facilitating the linkage between structured learning and work experience in order to obtain a registered qualification that signifies work readiness. It could also be noted as a more flexible and modern form of an apprenticeship” (p.25)

The Skills Development Act (1998) passed by the Department of Labour was seen as complementary to White Paper 3 on Higher Education and White Paper 4 on FET and all three pieces of legislation were cited as central features of South Africa's National Human Resource Development Strategy (White Paper 4, 1998, p.3). The Skills Development Act (1998) promulgated the establishment of 25 Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) in a range of economic sectors under the National Skills Authority of the Department of Labour. Each SETA had an Education, Training and Quality Assurance (ETQA) unit, whose responsibility was to accredit and quality assure workplace training providers and their learning programmes. The primary learning programmes offered by accredited training providers were learnerships and shorter skills programmes, both involving theoretical instruction and structured learning in the workplace. The subsequent Skills Development Levies Act (1999) introduced a 1 % training tax based on company payrolls, which could be partially reclaimed by companies if they sent their employees on training.

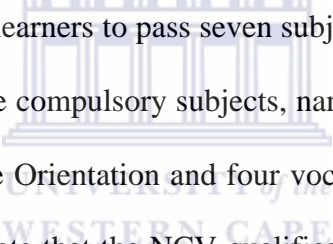
Despite this synergy of policy objectives, FET Colleges initially struggled to align themselves as accredited providers with SETAs under the Department of Labour. This in part stemmed from the fact that the FET sector was defined as a concurrent national and provincial competence, which meant that the provincial education department was the 'education and training provider' and FET Colleges were sites of delivery. Provincial education departments therefore required memoranda of understanding with SETAs before FET Colleges could take on the delivery of learnerships. In contrast, private training providers could be directly accredited by SETAs.

In 2001 the Department of Education published 'The New Institutional Landscape for Public FET Colleges', which outlined a merger process of about 152 technical colleges into 50 large FET Colleges. This document called for better articulation and collaboration between colleges and higher education and for curricula reform. This was tied to the Department of Education's recapitalization process in 2003, which provided for over 1, 5 billion rand to address FET College infrastructure, specifically in areas linked to the new National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes.

FET Colleges established workforce development units from 1998, which primarily dealt with learnerships and skills programmes. Following the FET Colleges Act of 2006, these units became Innovation and Development Divisions. The Innovation and Development Division was accorded more prominence through the allocation of a Deputy CEO post, together with a Deputy CEO post for the Education and Training Division, responsible to the CEO of the College and directly employed by the provincial education department. Under the FET College Act (2006) all other staff transferred their employment to the College Council.

By 2006, the concurrent focus on workplace learning and vocational programmes within FET Colleges was weighted towards theoretical learning with the introduction of new vocational work-based preparation programmes. Whereas many colleges had increased their delivery of NQF-registered SETA certificates alongside their delivery of official NATED (National Certificate) programmes, in 2007 the National Certificate Vocational

(NCV) programmes were introduced as modernised official curricula at NQF Level 2. The curricula for the NCV programmes were developed by the National Department of Education, in consultation with subject matter experts from education and training and industry. While there have been high level national discussions between industry and the DoE in the formulation of NCV qualifications, linkages between these programmes with the workplace and/or articulation into higher education remains unclear. These outputs will only be seen in 2010, when the first cohorts of NCV Level 4 graduate. The results of the first cohort of NCV Level 2 learners were poor, with only 2 300 of the over 25 000 learners passing all their subjects at NCV Level 2 (Parker: 2008).



The NCV programmes require learners to pass seven subjects at each of NQF Levels 2-4. Each level is comprised of three compulsory subjects, namely Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation and four vocational subjects. Department of Education documents (2008) state that the NCV qualification provides an opportunity to enter higher education studies subject to students taking the appropriate subject combinations (p.2). Structured or practical learning in the workplace is a requirement of the NCV programmes, but may be offered in a real or a simulated workplace environment (ibid). The Department of Education's guide further notes that learners have the opportunity to experience work situations during the period of study and notes that "workplace assessment is not a requirement for certification" (p. 6). In an explanation of how the NCV programmes differ from previous national programmes, the Department of Education (2008) states:

Research has demonstrated that the mere acquisition of practical skills is insufficient to meet the broad economic and specific workplace challenges of the

21st century. Cognitive demands are increasingly being placed on workers previously regarded as semi-skilled (p. 5).

This marks a significant shift from the provision of workplace training programmes that require continuous assessment **within** the workplace, as the NCV programmes are primarily discipline and institutional-based, with exit level examinations at each of the NQF levels.

Further educational reforms in this sector include the FET Colleges Act of 2006, which marked the transition of FET Colleges to semi-autonomous institutions whereby FET personnel in the employ of the state, transferred employment to their College Councils. All funding to colleges provided by the Department of Education is reserved for delivery of the NCV programmes: workplace learning programmes are thus not funded by the Department of Education. The NCV programmes are also highly subsidized with learner fees capped in order to make them affordable.

This section has analysed South Africa's education and training policies since 1994 in relation to FET Colleges' involvement in workplace training. Policies in 1998 identified FET Colleges as critical institutional structures for the advancement of South Africa's human resource development strategy through the provision of workplace skills. By 2006, this emphasis was somewhat muted through the Department of Education's introduction of national vocational programmes as the primary focus of FET College provision. The literature review and theoretical framework which follows illustrates a similar dichotomy between workplace learning and institutional discipline-based learning

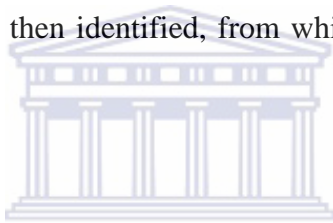
in vocational education and training, and sets the basis for a conceptual framework which posits the theoretical underpinnings for such a dichotomy.



SECTION 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

This literature review focuses first on an overview of key literature relevant to vocational education and training (encompassing both workplace learning and institutional, discipline-based learning). It subsequently explores the apparent dichotomy evident in selected literature that argues for either the workplace as an essential site of learning or for institutional learning as a critical site. However, the literature also reveals authors who contest the privileging of one learning site over the other. Theoretical approaches underpinning these debates are then identified, from which a theoretical perspective for this paper is developed.



2.2 Overview of vocational literature

The purposes of vocational education have been debated in terms of a range of perceived outcomes, namely: vocational education as skills development for quality citizenship (Winch 2000, Garrat 1999), to address (youth) unemployment (Leney and Green 2005), to boost economic growth, competitiveness, and social inclusion. However, a number of research outputs have been pessimistic about these outcomes on the grounds that the global economy increasingly supports a low skills equilibrium for the secondary labour market, in a segmented labour market (De Freitas 1995). These studies have pointed to the disjuncture between policy rhetoric and reality, and between educational purposes and the political economy.

Various critiques have emerged, focusing on educational practices and institutions as obstacles, and the global economy as an opportunity for reform (Young 2005), as well as querying the empirical and conceptual validity of human capital theory (Flores-Crespo 2007, Lloyd and Payne 2002, Rikowski 2001, Winch 2000 Brown 1999, Fevre 1999), the skills mismatch thesis (Handel 2003, Powell 2004) and skills shortages and the knowledge economy (Miller 2006, Warhurst 2006, Brown 2003, Low 2002, Guile 2002, Wheelahan 2007, Brown 2001).

Other research results have pointed to the growing acceptance of an occupational identity: the streaming of lower socio-economic groups (Tilak 2002); the exploitation of workers' knowledge capital (Avis 2004); the credentialing and diploma inflation of existing work (Warhurst 2006, Brown 2003); the politics of employability (Brown 2003); symbolic policy gestures (Jansen 2002); the legitimization of inequality and the rise of a 'new vocationalism' (Ball 1994, Grubb 1996, Avis 2004); the individualization of education as a private good ; the increased privatization of education; the intensification of work (Smaller 2007), and ultimately the increasingly direct dominance of business over educational processes (Cornford 2006, Avis 2004) as the underlying defining features of vocational education.

These diverse standpoints have various implications for educators in workplace settings. Clearly the education-work relationship is contested and not neutral or value free. Stone (2002) on the one hand suggests that vocational education should be *for* work, *through* work and *about* work, while on the other hand the realm of vocational education is

expanded to include general education (using work as a context) and education for democratic participation or citizenship education.

There is a growing body of literature such as Engestrom (1987), Raizen (1995), Hodkinson (2005), Guile and Griffiths (2001) and Schuetze and Sweet (2003) who advocate close intra- and inter-relationships between institutional and workplace learning. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between institutional learning and workplace learning is acknowledged.

Some academic writing on workplace learning identified within this literature review either sees the workplace as the primary learning site (e.g. Billett 2001, Boud and Middleton 2003, Lave and Wenger, 1991) or the institution as the primary learning site (e.g. Allais, 2007, Young, 2005, Gamble, 2006, Bathmaker, 2005). The following section details some of these debates and divergent views.

2.3 The workplace as a site of learning

Billett (2001) critiques the understanding of workplaces as ‘informal’ learning sites as follows: “Describing workplaces as ‘informal’ learning environments is negative, inaccurate and ill-focused” (unpaginated). He argues that the discourse on learning uncritically privileges formal academic education. For Billett, learning needs to be understood as a participatory practice, whereby learning is an engagement with the social world and an ‘inter-psychological process’ (between individuals and social practices of knowledge). He notes cognitive (e.g. Anderson 1993) and socio-cultural constructivist

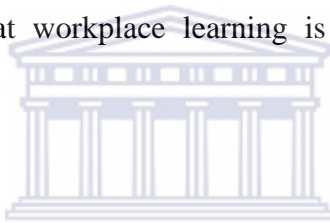
psychological perspectives (e.g. Rogoff 1995) that link engagement in goal-directed activities to learning, with the latter “emphasising the intra-psychological processes that occur through engagement”. Social practices, whether in formal education or the workplace are constituted “historically, culturally and situationally” (Billett 2001 unpaginated).

He states further that

“If, however, the discourse on workplace learning holds learning as an outcome of participant thinking-acting occurring, through engagement in goal-directed activities that are structured by workplace experiences then this may provide richer bases to discuss and conceptualise workplace learning experiences” (2001, unpaginated).

He holds that learning pathways in the workplace are intentionally pedagogical, as they focus on the continuity of practice for learning and cites a number of studies in this regard: “learning to navigate (Hutchinson 1983), weaving (Childs & Greenfield 1980), coal mining (Billett 1993), dairy workers (Scribner 1984), midwifery (Jordan 1989) and tailoring (Lave 1990)”. He reiterates Lave’s (1990) argument that work practices are often intentionally organised to facilitate knowledge acquisition for sustaining such work practice, which Lave refers to as the “learning curriculum”. He notes her assertion that “the bases for participation and learning in workplaces are constituted by the goals, activities and culture of the work practice (Brown et al. 1989), or what Suchman (1996) refers to as local negotiations and Engestrom and Middleton (1996) as local orderings” (2001, unpaginated).

Billett (2001) states that individual learning in the workplace is often a unique, contested process and draws on Valsiner (1994) and Valsiner & van de Veer (2000) who propose that knowledge is “co-constructed: reciprocally constructed between the individual and the social experience” (unpaginated). He asserts that workplace pedagogic practices can be understood through “a consideration of reciprocal participatory practice at work, which includes the tensions between the continuity of individuals and the continuity of social practices [that] are played out in workplace settings and through work” (unpaginated). He concludes his argument with a call for a workplace pedagogy that would make for effective workplace learning. Billett therefore argues that learning is a social practice and argues that workplace learning is as valid a practice as formal academic learning.



Hodkinson (2005) agrees with Billett’s (2002) critique of formal and informal learning distinctions that are applied to academic and workplace learning respectively. He argues that in both college and workplace learning, attributes of formality and informality in learning exist. Hodkinson uses Lave and Wenger’s (1991) theories of cognitive situated learning as well as Bourdieu’s (1992) concept of ‘habitus’ to argue that all learning is an “ongoing relational and reconstructive process”(p.527).

Hodkinson also argues against the idea of transfer as being the acquisition of knowledge in one context, which is then carried by the learner into a new situation. He states that what moves from college to the workplace is not the learning, but the learner, who constitutes more than the learning. He states further that this holistic learner then learns

how to participate in a workplace and agrees with Lave and Wenger's (1991) explanation of 'legitimate peripheral participation' as opposed to acquisition models of application of theory or learning to use prior skills. He draws on Engestrom's (2001) argument that learning involves horizontal development and that people learn as a result of their existing practices being challenged through a new situation or activity system, which provides a stimulus for learning. He asserts that this perspective enables learning to be seen as an emergent process rather than seeing the transfer between college and workplace as a barrier to learning.

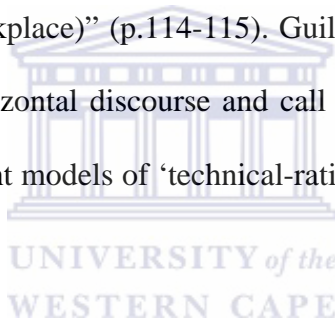
Hodkinson examines structural relationships between the college and workplace learning through a series of case studies and concludes that economic, social and cultural capital as part of a larger learning field are important for participatory practice. Hodkinson therefore views the learner as the 'site' of learning rather than the workplace or formal institutions, which enables learning to be seen as an emergent practice.

Grosjean (in Gaskell and Rubenson eds 2004) raises the paradoxical nature of co-operative learning in Canada, whereby co-operative learning is changing its status from access to workplace experience to an elite programme for students who are successful academically and who have significant access to resources. He notes that the majority of students who engage in co-operative learning continue studies in higher education, as opposed to locating employment opportunities. He also notes that exposure to co-operative learning in the workplace reinforces academic discipline-based learning in the institution, rather than disciplinary knowledge facilitating learning in the workplace.

Guile and Griffiths (2001) discuss a concept central to this long paper, namely the difference between ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ forms of learning. They note that ‘vertical’ discourses of learning emphasize intellectual development as:

individual progress through a hierarchy of knowledge and skills and away from the specifics of human practice (Beach & Vyas, 1998); that this movement towards greater levels of abstraction and decontextualisation constitutes the hallmark of developmental progress, distinguishing true ‘development’ from ‘mere’ learning (Gick, 1995) (p. 114).

By contrast they depict ‘horizontal’ discourses of learning as the “process of change and development which occurs within an individual as s/he moves from one context (e.g., school) to another (e.g., a workplace)” (p.114-115). Guile and Griffiths note Bernstein’s definitions of vertical and horizontal discourse and call for a pedagogy that links these discourses as opposed to current models of ‘technical-rational’ education that keeps these discourses separate.



Guile and Griffiths (2001) illustrate a typology of five models of workplace experience namely, “the traditional model, the experiential model, the generic model, the work process model and the connective model.”(p. 127). Central to these typologies is a critique of the notion of workplaces as static and unchanging environments where theoretical knowledge can be applied. They argue for the “‘connective model’ of work experience... [as a]... basis for a more productive and useful relationship between formal and informal learning since it addresses how work experience can enable students to take explicit account of “*the learning which occurs within and between the different contexts of education and work [their emphasis]*” (p. 128). Their argument therefore posits learning

as contextually bound and calls for strategies to make learning about these different contexts of work and education explicit.

Workplace learning theorists therefore argue for the validity of the workplace as a site of learning, a focus on the learner as being more than the input of learning, learning as a social practice whether in an institution or at work, and the importance of understanding these different contexts as a basis of learning progression. The following section looks at some of the key debates raised by proponents of institutional discipline-based knowledge as a key site of learning.

2.4 The institution as a site of learning

Allais (2007) queries the extent to which workplaces are a site of vertical knowledge and draws on Bernstein to argue for institutions as the only viable route to acquire specialized knowledge. Allais also motivates for educational institutions as sites of learning where learning can be properly sequenced and effectively evaluated. Allais argues that educational institutions are critical for sequenced study to achieve specialized knowledge. She concludes that outcomes-based qualifications reforms are not an adequate base for educational reform in South Africa, and that more focus needs to be on building public educational institutional capacity to deliver codified, discipline-based knowledge.

Young (2006) identifies a critical gap between outcomes-based frameworks and their relation to institutional provision of a curriculum, teaching and learning. He argues that outcomes-based frameworks undervalue the extent to which institution-based learning

guarantees the quality of a qualification. He also notes the difference between modularization and unitization, whereby modularization starts with the institutional curricula, but unitization refers to the breakup of the qualification and not the curriculum. His concern with unitization is that the learner chooses different unit standards to make up a qualification, but the sequencing of these units may undermine the formal structural process needed to acquire knowledge and skills. He notes that “Many kinds of knowledge in general education (such as physics), and many skills (such as cabinet making) that are important in vocational qualifications, depend on a particular sequencing of learning defined by subject specialists and are not amenable to unitization” (p.25). Young maintains that for developing countries, emphasis should be placed on an institution-building process rather than on outcomes-based qualification frameworks.

Gamble (2006) agrees that theory and practice in vocational education represent fundamentally different forms of knowledge and argues against positioning one over the other. In particular she cautions against too much practical knowledge used within South Africa’s outcomes-based qualification routes, as she feels this leads to “downward rather than upward vocationalisation and blocks possible progression to higher education” (p.12). She argues that “knowledge has to feature as prominently in the vocational route as it does in the general academic route” (p.12). These observations were made with specific reference to South Africa’s education and training framework.

Bathmaker (2005) on the other hand notes that in the UK context:

vocationally related qualifications form a distinct pathway, lying between academic and occupational qualifications...over the past decade there has been

considerable academic drift, so that these qualifications now have more in common with their academic counterparts than with occupational qualifications (p.85).

In these accounts, institution-based learning is seen as primarily promoting sequenced and codified learning that enables progression to academic knowledge and further learning rather than proficiency within the workplace.

Summary

This literature review has attempted to show the range of opinion on the one hand between academics who argue for the workplace and the learner as primary 'sites' of learning and those who argue for institutions and discipline-based knowledge as the primary site of learning for vocational education. Those debating the workplace as a site of learning have argued for contextual specificity, experiential and participatory learning as key hallmarks of workplace learning while advocates of institutional learning have stressed the need for a generalist education for cognitive development as well as codified and sequenced discipline-based knowledge in order to prepare for effective engagement in the workplace. However, a significant number of authors have blurred the dichotomy between workplace learning and discipline-based learning and have called for a convergence of both of these forms of learning. Dominant theoretical perspectives in this regard, namely 'situated learning' (Lave and Wenger, 1990) and horizontal and vertical discourses (Bernstein, 1999), underpin and bolster the two schools of thought outlined above. The following section on the theoretical framework of this paper draws on these theoretical perspectives.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in this study stems from the literature review and the discourses evident in the debates on vocational education and training concerning how and where knowledge and learning is best transmitted and acquired. Vertical and horizontal discourses (Bernstein, 1999), primarily emphasises institutional discipline-based learning, while situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) emphasises the workplace as a site of learning. FET College educators' understanding of their involvement in workplace learning draws on both of these debates. Bernstein's (1999) writing on horizontal discourses applicable to workplace learning and Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation reveal many commonalities despite being seemingly oppositional theories. The oppositional nature of these theories arises through Bernstein's (1999) assertion that vertical discourse can only occur within a codified, discipline-based approach used in institutions of higher learning, whereas Lave and Wenger argue that situated learning within the workplace can encompass all forms of learning.

Bernstein (1999) defines a vertical discourse as a

coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised, as in the sciences, or it takes the form of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as in social sciences and the humanities (p.159).

He notes that for both forms of vertical discourse, the integration of meaning is not achieved through relating meaning to context but rather through the integration at the *levels* of meanings. (p.161). He states that:

The procedures of vertical discourse are then linked, not by contexts, horizontally, but the procedures are linked to other procedures hierarchically. The institutional or official pedagogy of vertical discourse is not consumed at the point of its contextual delivery, but is an on going process in extended time. (p.161).

Bernstein further asserts that learning is achieved through recontextualisation of “symbolic structures of explicit knowledge” in vertical discourse, as opposed to relating learning to ‘segmentation’ or contexts in horizontal discourse (p.161). Bernstein holds that vertical knowledge is characterised by general propositions and theories “which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena” (p.162). A further characterisation of vertical knowledge is one of “greater and greater integrating propositions, operating at more and more abstract levels”, whereby vertical knowledge structures are produced by an “integrating code” (p.162). He notes that vertical knowledge structures are hierarchical and that for these structures “it is the theory that counts and it counts both for its imaginative conceptual projection and the empirical power of the projection.” (p. 165).

In contrast to vertical discourse, Bernstein defines a horizontal or ‘common sense’ discourse as containing the following features:

oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts... the crucial feature is that it is segmentally organised. (p. 159).

It should be noted however that Bernstein does acknowledge that parts of horizontal discourse can be used as resources for accessing vertical discourses and notes how

horizontal discourses have been used as a crucial resource for 'pedagogic populism' to empower voices that perceive vertical discourses to be elite and authoritarian (p. 168).

In line with Bernstein's definition of a horizontal discourse, Lave and Wenger (1991) describe legitimate peripheral participation as the following:

learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community. This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills (p.29).

Both theories elaborate their connection to a common-sense or everyday world. Bernstein's theory of horizontal discourse specifically relates to Lave and Wenger's description of learning within a social community of practice.



While Bernstein's (1999) work on horizontal discourse is mostly contextualized within higher education, he does refer to craft as a close approximation of a horizontal discourse (p.168). He notes that language is not transferable between horizontal discourses as each horizontal knowledge structure makes its own assumptions about what counts as a legitimate text but the transmission of knowledge in 'every-day' life is essentially oral in character (p.168).

Lave and Wenger (1991) too emphasise the importance of language for learning and note that talking is a vital part of learning to participate:

For newcomers then the purpose is not to learn *from* talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation: it is to learn to talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation (p. 109).

Both theories therefore emphasise the importance of learning through oral interaction, an important component of situated workplace learning. However, it is important to note that despite this apparent similarity, Bernstein and Lave and Wenger are using 'language' in very different ways in their respective theories.

A key feature of workplace learning is the way in which learning is transmitted within the workplace context, and this transmission is often tacit. Bernstein defines tacit forms of knowledge as follows:

A 'tacit' transmission is one where showing or modelling precedes 'doing'. This is likely to occur with the transmission of crafts...This knowledge structure is the nearest to horizontal discourse emerging as a specialised practice to satisfy the material requirements of its segments." (p. 168).

Lave and Wenger are highly critical of external educators providing instruction within the workplace and argue that learning needs to happen within a community of practice as opposed to external intervention. Despite this approach, their work reveals multiple instances of tacit forms of knowledge, an example of which is taken from tailor apprenticeships and is shown below.

"Way-in" refers to the period of observation and attempts to construct a first approximation of the garment...The practice phase is carried out in a particular way: apprentices reproduce a production segment from beginning to end (p.72).

Bernstein (1999) notes that within a horizontal structure, knowledge is achieved through "the functional relations of segments or contexts to the everyday life (p.160)" and notes that knowledges, competencies and literacies are:

contextually specific and 'context dependent', embedded in on-going practices, usually with strong affective loading, and directed towards specific, immediate goals, highly relevant to the acquirer in the context of his/her life (p. 161).

Lave and Wenger (1991) on the other hand identify a 'learning curriculum' defined as "a field of learning resources in everyday practice viewed from the perspectives of learners." (p. 97). They argue that a learning curriculum is essentially situated and cannot be analysed apart from the social relations of a community of practice. A community of practice is defined as "participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities" (p.98).

Bernstein's understanding of knowledge acquisition in a horizontal discourse and Lave and Wenger's definition of a learning curriculum are both defined by common characteristics of local, context dependent and contextually specific factors.

Bernstein notes that even though knowledge, competence and literacies are localized in horizontal discourse, this does not necessarily result in inflexible practices. He argues that "one individual may build up an extensive repertoire of strategies which can be varied according to the contingencies of the context or segment" (p. 161).

Lave and Wenger note that a "learning curriculum unfolds in opportunities for engagement in practice" (p. 93). These opportunities for learning are shaped by work practices, as well as through peer engagement and learning occurs through "centripetal participation in the learning curriculum of the ambient community" (p.100). Both

theorists point to the extensive forms of knowledge generated through exposure to different learning contexts and personnel within the workplace.

Bernstein (1999) argues that knowledge within a horizontal discourse cannot be effectively integrated because knowledge within this discourse is serially acquired and the language used to define each segment or context is not translatable across contexts (p.163). Bernstein draws on a fictional example of learning whereby learning to do up one's shoelaces cannot be related to using the toilet correctly to illustrate his point (p.160). For Lave and Wenger, all learning happens through engagement in the specific context of a community of practice, which concurs with Bernstein's argument that should that context change, the learning cannot be easily transferred or integrated.

Bernstein states that horizontal knowledge is not related through the level of meanings, but through the relation of segments or contexts to the everyday life (p.160). He notes that this affects pedagogic practice and that teaching practices may vary within different contexts. For Bernstein, horizontal discourse is a "segmental pedagogic control" whereas vertical discourse is an "institutional or official pedagogic control" (p.160). He asserts that segmental pedagogy is generally "directed towards acquiring a common competence rather than a graded competence" (p. 161). This facilitates the development of specific contextual knowledge and practices. Lave and Wenger (1991) concur with this description of teaching and learning through their description of a range of apprenticeship models that cover informal to formal learning within communities of practice. Their critical observation is that these apprenticeships involve "partial participation, in

segments of work that increase in complexity and scope” (p.80). They note further that the ordering of learning and of everyday practice do not coincide and state: “Production activity-segments must be learned in different sequences than those in which a production process commonly unfolds” (ibid).

Bernstein (1999) and Lave and Wenger (1991) concur that horizontal learning in the workplace is segmented and sequenced in nature and the learning is aimed at achieving competence or full participation as members of a community, rather than the identification of individual excellence.

Bernstein (1999) and Lave and Wenger (1991) have identified critical characteristics of workplace learning through their notions of horizontal discourse and legitimate peripheral participation respectively. These theoretical positions differ radically. Bernstein views learning as two separate discourses, namely vertical discipline-based knowledge and horizontal ‘every-day’ knowledge, which are not easily translatable. Lave and Wenger view learning within communities of practice, and are critical of discipline-based learning removed from communities of practice. However, both of their viewpoints on what characterises horizontal ‘every-day’ knowledge or the learning of ‘knowledgeable skills’ though legitimate peripheral participation have demonstrated a high level of congruence. This is most effectively demonstrated through their convergence on workplace learning as ‘segmentally’ or contextually organised according to specific teaching and learning practices.

2.6 Conclusion

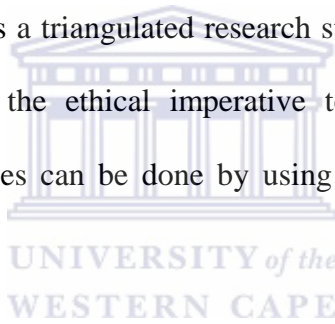
These literature reviews has revealed some of the debates between institution-based learning and workplace-based learning, but have also pointed to the complexity of understanding the vocational sector. A significant number of authors have called for the convergence of epistemologies and sociologies underpinning vocational pedagogy and workplace learning. Two theoretical positions that relate to institutional and workplace learning respectively have been outlined and synergies identified, resulting in the tentative theoretical framework for this paper.

Bernstein's definition of a horizontal discourse as "oral, local, context-dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts...[and] segmentally organised" (p. 159), thus complements Lave and Wenger's understanding of situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation within a community of practice. Whereas there is a level of congruence in their descriptions of workplace learning as a horizontal discourse, the research process employed in this paper explores further the extent to which educators' understanding of their role and function in workplace learning conforms to this theoretical understanding. The application of this theoretical framework has been used to identify ways in which college educators frame, sequence and contextualize the workplace learning that occurs within their Innovation and Development Divisions. It is also acknowledged that the discourses analysis of educators and managers involved in workplace learning cannot be simply reduced to a horizontal discourse, as this obviates these educators' own knowledge and experience in both horizontal and vertical discourses.

SECTION 3: Research and Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The primary units of analysis for this research are FET College educators involved in workplace training. The study adopts a case study approach applied to two FET Colleges, where key personnel from each of the College's Innovation and Development Divisions responsible for workplace training were interviewed. The case study method can be described as 'empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...' (Myers, 1997; Yin, 1994). Case studies are multi-perspectival analyses and are also known as a triangulated research strategy (Tellis, 1997). The need for triangulation arises from the ethical imperative to confirm the validity of the processes, which in case studies can be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1984).



The central research question derived for this research is:

How do FET College educators explain the role and function of college occupational training units?

The following sub-research questions were identified in order to construct a valid research approach for this question. Sub-questions asked are:

1. What is the role and scope of occupational training units within FET Colleges from an educator perspective?

2. What are the characteristics of workplace education and training from an educator perspective?
3. To what extent are FET College educators involved in the structured workplace learning component of workplace training?

A conceptual framework based on two oppositional theoretical approaches, but with some convergences in theorizing workplace learning has been explored. A research questionnaire drawing on the research questions and conceptual framework was administered to FET College educators working in Innovation and Development Units of two FET Colleges. Data emanating from these interviews was grouped into five themes detailed below. The research data was iteratively analysed against policy documentation outlined in Section 1, the literature review and the conceptual framework in Section 2 as well as quantitative data received from the FET Colleges, which resulted in key research findings in Section 5.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

A qualitative approach was developed using two FET Colleges as a case study, where four educators from each FET College's Innovation and Development Divisions, responsible for workplace learning, were interviewed. The interview questionnaire was based on the main and sub-research questions as well as the conceptual framework employed for this paper.

A primary emphasis of the interview questionnaire was on how FET College educators interacted with the workplace in order to identify key roles and functions of FET College educators in workplace education and training, with a particular focus on learning discourses necessary to achieve this.

Drawing on the overall research question and sub-questions, a questionnaire was devised and piloted with a senior manager at one of the FET Colleges. Following minor changes, the research questionnaire was administered to a total of eight key personnel from Innovation and Development Divisions of both FET Colleges. The research questionnaire included biographical details in order to assess respondents' experience within industry and the FET College sector. The main body of the questionnaire included questions on defining workplace learning including its relation to vocational or work-based learning; key roles and functions of educators including their role within structured learning in the workplace; contextualization and integration of learning approaches; educational and workplace demands within the workplace; vertical and horizontal approaches to workplace learning, and preparation of learners for employment within the workplace. Questions on benefits and challenges facing FET College workplace educators and key skills needed to teach workplace learning were also included. The research questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

The first FET College is situated within the urban environment of Cape Town and has four campuses within urban suburbs and townships. Of a staff of nine people within their Innovation and Development Division, four staff were interviewed ranging from

executive management to a project officer, representative of all key functions within this division. The operational structure of this FET College's Innovation and Development Division allows the division to try and place all college students in workplaces, regardless of whether the learners are in registered learnerships or in vocational programmes that prepare learners for the workplace, such as the National Curriculum Vocational (NCV) programmes. This college is one of the only FET Colleges where student placement officers are employed at the college. A student placement officer was interviewed.

The second FET College is in a peri-urban part of the Western Cape and has five campuses, some of which are separated by distances of over 100 kilometers. Of a staff of 15, four members were interviewed, including executive management and a project officer. The operational structure of this FET College's Innovation and Development Division is that of a project management unit, which focuses solely on workplace training, namely learnerships and skills programmes. This division has no linkages with any other part of the College's formal NCV provision other than to subsidise some of the FET College's expenses through income generated. Interviews were held with executive management, project management, area management and a campus specific project officer.

All interviews were held on site at a range of campuses across the Western Cape Peninsula. The interviewees had previously received a letter asking them for consent to be interviewed and the research questionnaire by email. Whereas two of them completed the questionnaire electronically, most wrote down their thoughts on the questionnaire and

brought this to the interview. All participants agreed to their interviews being audio recorded. This allowed me to probe and ask for further details or clarification within the interview process without trying to simultaneously create a written record.

In addition to this, quantitative data was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department, detailing all Western Cape FET Colleges' current involvement in workplace learning, as well as economic areas of engagement and the educational levels of these learnerships and skills programmes. Further quantitative data was obtained from the South African Qualifications Authority on the first intake of NCV students at NQF level 2 and the throughput rate for this cohort. This provided a numerical frame within which to analyse the qualitative data. The following section details the data analysis process.

3.3 Data Analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, with the permission of participants, by a professional transcriber. The data was coded and themes identified. Once codes had been derived from the research data, a qualitative software package, Atlas Ti, was used to codify the research data emanating from the interviews. A codes frequency table is included as Appendix B. The coding process resulted in the generation of key research themes from the research data, which were subjected to further analysis. Central themes identified were:

- Defining workplace learning;
- FET College involvement in workplace learning;
- FET College educator involvement in workplace learning;

- Preparing learners for the workplace, and
- Methodologies and approaches used in workplace learning.

These themes directly relate to the research questions and sub-questions and the conceptual framing of workplace learning as a comprehensive mediation of horizontal and vertical discourses emerged in this paper.

The key findings of this research arose from an iterative process of analysing the research data against the theoretical frame of ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ discourse (Bernstein 1999) and ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (Lave and Wenger 1990), as well as the literature on workplace learning.



3.4 Ethical Considerations

Seale (2004) raises the importance of ethical considerations in research and to a large extent these have been followed in this research process. In addition to this, a formal ethics statement was a mandatory part of the research proposal process. My research ethics statement is included as Appendix C.

A letter asking for consent that guaranteed anonymity and the use of codes/pseudonyms was sent to all participants and is included as Appendix D. All respondents were informed that their participation in this research process was voluntary. Of the eight educators interviewed, one educator signed the letter asking for consent and the rest were happy with the interviewer’s verbal confirmation that this research would guarantee their

anonymity. Anonymity has been observed within this paper with the FET Colleges being referred to as College A and College B respectively. All FET College educators are referred to by the use of pseudonyms, such as P1, P2 etc. A further ethical consideration for this research paper is that I have a professional relationship with the six Western Cape FET Colleges through work in this sector over a period of time. Being conscious of this, I actively sought to avoid bias and employed the use of multiple data sources to supplement evidence obtained in interviews as far as possible.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

As FET College educators were the primary unit of analysis, this effectively excluded other role players and stakeholders within workplace learning namely, students, employers, Sectoral Education and Training Authorities and private training consultants. Within the time, space and scope afforded by the requirements of a long paper, it was not possible to research all of these stakeholders.

A second limitation was that I had initially expected to cover all six public FET Colleges within the Western Cape Province, as well as the Western Cape Education Department in order to analyse workplace learning as a provincial competence. This too was beyond the scope of this paper.

Tellis (1997) challenges the assertion that case study approaches have often been critiqued on the grounds that their results are too generalized and thus not widely applicable in real life. He quotes Yin's (1984) refutation of this critique: "In analytic

generalization, previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (unpaginated). This study has drawn on previously developed theory to compare empirical results arising from the case study of two FET Colleges. Within the case study of the Innovation and Development Divisions of two FET Colleges, this paper has avoided making any generalizations applicable to a broader set of FET Colleges.

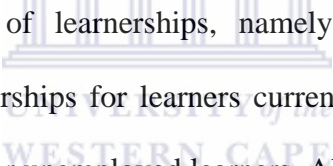
This chapter has elucidated my research approach, my data analysis approach, as well as ethical considerations and limitations of this research process. The following section details the analysis of the research data and key research findings.



SECTION 4: Data analysis and key research findings

4.1 Introduction

The data obtained from FET College educators primarily focused on their involvement in workplace learning. The dominant form of workplace learning within FET Colleges involves learnerships and skills programmes. Both have a theoretical component at the FET College and a structured learning component within the workplace³ as a training route leading to a registered qualification on the NQF. Skills programmes lead to part qualifications, but a number of skills programmes can be grouped together to create a full qualification.



There are two legal forms of learnerships, namely Section 18.1 (of the Skills Development Act 1998) learnerships for learners currently employed in the workplace and Section 18.2 learnerships for unemployed learners. All learnerships entail a tri-partite agreement between the learner, a training provider and an employer. In terms of Section 18.2 learnerships for unemployed learners, the employer agrees to be a host employer for the duration of the learnership, but is under no obligation to provide employment after the training ends. Unemployed learners are paid a stipend for the duration of the training, to assist with transport and living expenses.

In addition to involvement in this form of workplace learning, some FET College educators are also involved in the formal institution-based NCV programmes, which were

³ The terms ‘structured learning within the workplace’ and ‘structured workplace learning’ specifically refer to learning that occurs within a workplace for purposes of obtaining a qualification.

introduced at NQF Level 2 in 2007. The NCV programmes primarily involve theoretical and simulated instruction at the FET College and a work placement component, which is most frequently described as job-shadowing. Simulation forms an area of overlap between workplace learning programmes (learnerships and skills programmes) and the institutional-based NCV programmes.

Within both FET Colleges interviewed, there were sharp differences in their approach and definitions of workplace learning. FET College B attempts to draw on NCV formal institution-based instruction as well as the theoretical components of learnerships to provide access routes to employment and trade tests. Key to their model is that their Innovation and Development Division is responsible for student support, whose primary focus is to place over 60% of all learners (regardless of whether the learners are engaged in learnerships or NCV programmes) into employment. FET College A sets up a formal separation between the functions of the Innovation and Development Division and those of the Education and Training Division. In this college, the Education and Training Division takes full responsibility for the delivery of the NCV programmes, whilst the Innovation and Development Division takes sole responsibility for the provision of learnerships and skills programmes.

Of the eight educators interviewed, six held educational qualifications and two held industry-based artisan qualifications. A senior manager held a Masters Degree and had broad business and educational experience. Key qualifications and experience required

for effective workplace learning was identified in most of the interviews with these educators. A senior manager stated:

A lot of the times when we've looked at learnerships, the lecturers themselves are not participating in the workplace training. They [sic] are taken care by a component inside of the learnership, which I think is a big pity because I think in most colleges today, a lot of the lecturers are disconnected from workplace training (P9: p. 16).

Three educators noted two distinct polarities of workplace educators: those who had industry experience, some of whom had outdated industry experience with no teaching qualifications, and those who had educational qualifications with no industry experience. For the former group, effective teaching methodology was the major challenge, whereas for the latter a lack of relevant subject knowledge is a key challenge (P9: P10: P7). Over and above 'hard' skills gained through industry experience, workplace qualifications and knowledge of subject, the primary skills identified for FET educators involved in workplace learning were 'soft' skills namely: interpersonal skills (P1: p.13); communication skills (P6: p.2); patience and understanding of adult learners (P2: p.9); empathy, understanding diversity, sensitivity (P7: p.25). A number of these skills identified reflect the project management role that FET College educators play within workplace learning, including brokering⁴ learners into the workplace.

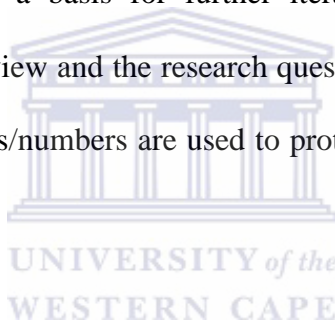
FET College educators involved in workplace learning have multiple roles, as outlined in the data analysis below, but it is important to note that their role within structured learning in the workplace is very limited. The data analysis below is separated into key

⁴ The term 'brokering' is used to describe the negotiation process that FET College educators engage in with business and industry to place learners in the workplace for exposure necessary for qualification purposes. As shown later, this negotiation process is not a simple one and can at times be hostile.

themes namely: Defining workplace learning; FET College involvement in workplace learning; FET College educator involvement in workplace learning; Preparing learners for the workplace and Methodologies and approaches used within workplace learning. These themes provide a comprehensive picture of FET College educators' involvement in workplace learning.

4.2 Thematic analysis of research data

This section of the data analysis identifies key themes arising from the research interviews, which then forms a basis for further iterative analysis in terms of the conceptual frame, literature review and the research questions of this paper. Each theme is sub-titled below and symbols/numbers are used to protect the identity of FET College personnel.



4.2.1 Defining workplace learning

Of the eight FET College educators interviewed, a range of workplace learning definitions were provided. Most educators identified workplace learning as learning that occurs within the workplace, with learnerships and/or skills programmes accredited through SETAs under the Department of Labour seen as the primary form of workplace learning within FET Colleges. A senior manager commented on the difference between workplace learning and work-based or vocational learning as:

The difference between the two is a South African difference. It's not an international difference because TVET, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges in England are doing occupational, but they call it vocational (P7: p. 26).

The manager went on to categorise the National Certificate (Vocational) NCV programmes of the Department of Education as ‘vocational’ and learnerships/skills programmes of the Department of Labour as ‘occupational’ (ibid).

Differences in defining workplace learning were evident in descriptions of the range of programmes that FET Colleges offer. An educator identified exit placements at the end of the training period for N1-N6 (old NATED) programmes, which are being replaced by the NCV programmes, as workplace learning as well as in-service training required for the NCV programmes. For the NCV programmes workplace learning was described as work shadowing or exposure to work practice (P8: p. 1-2). It was further noted that NCV programme requirements regarding workplace exposure, for example duration and scope, have not yet been outlined by the Department of Education (P8: p. 3). A number of FET educators referred to simulated training as being part of workplace training as shown by a manager’s comments:

The way I see it, workplace learning constitutes to expose your student to the reality of being in a workplace. It sometimes is very difficult because you cannot take the student to an actual workplace, so you’ve got to simulate it as part of the training process. For example, when we do construction training...we create a training site [at the FET College] where they are actually trained in doing the practical work in order to provide evidence of competence in the application of what they learn in theory. (P2: p.1).

Another manager described two structures for workplace learning as:

The first one is doing an institutionalised phase at the FET College and then taking that into the workplace and applying both the theory and simulated practical training in the work environment – that’s the one. The other part is actually using the workplace as a training area and doing on-site assessment, re-skilling, up-skilling. (P10: p.1).

The same manager felt that there was not a significant difference between vocational and occupational programmes and stated:

I actually don't see any difference between vocation and occupation at this stage of the game because at the end of the day we still end up in the same place...I look at vocational as the long term investment and the occupation as a short-term investment for skills acquisition (P10: p.13).

Another educator explained the difference between vocational and occupational training as:

I can always say vocational is more on how you will eventually do a thing in the workplace. But the moment you go into a workplace, the workplace isn't perfect and what we teach you, we teach you in vocational for a perfect workplace. But the moment you get exposed to the workplace with this imperfection you are immediately thrown off your feet because it looks like all the learning that you did previously, it doesn't apply to the workplace. But the workplace learning itself, the guy who has been exposed to workplace learning, he has been exposed to the imperfection to make it perfect. He's got an advantage over the person that's doing the vocational training which must still be put into practice. (P1: p.14).

Workplace learning therefore has elicited varying interpretations, with structured learning in the workplace, simulated training, work exposure and shadowing all being defined as workplace learning. Whereas all eight educators agreed that workplace learning takes place in the workplace, their experience of workplace learning included both institutional learning as well as learning in the actual workplace. This is largely due to the nature of FET College involvement in the provision of workplace learning, which is discussed in the theme below.

4.2.2 FET College involvement in workplace learning

Educators from two FET Colleges who were interviewed revealed significantly different models of workplace learning at their colleges. For the purposes of the discussion below, the FET Colleges are referred to as College A and College B respectively.

In College A, the Innovation and Development Division is responsible for marketing and workplace training, the latter being run as a project management unit. The head of this division is responsible for the overall accreditation status of the college as a workplace training provider with SETAs under the Department of Labour. This involves institutional accreditation as well as accreditation of specific learning programmes with each SETA. College A has been accredited by 14 SETAs and as of May 2008 is implementing 13 learnership and/or skills programmes involving 1 359 learners out of total of 4 800 learners registered in learnerships at FET Colleges in the Western Cape Province (WCED, 2008).

The Deputy CEO of this division is also responsible for the identification of workplace training contracts, the submission of tenders and the overall design of the intervention from concept to implementation, including the submission of a budget (P7: p.6-8). Once this overall plan has been accepted by an employer, the implementation plan is passed to a senior manager, who designs the rollout of the implementation plan. This rollout includes locating the project under one of five area managers; hiring external staff, including subject matter experts, assessors and moderators for quality assurance of the programme, and overall coordination of the programme through a project matrix design.

It also includes logistics and communication as well as overseeing and paying for the development of the learning material. (P12: p.2-3). Area managers play a specific function in College A, whose campuses are spread over a geographic area of over 180 kilometers. College A has divided this overall area into five smaller geographic areas and has appointed an area manager for each of these. An area manager can also act as the overall project manager for specific workplace learning projects that cover a number of these areas.

An area manager summarised multiple roles within workplace learning as follows:

My key function would be to identify the key learners, invite them to become part of the learnership; then cooperate with the head of implementation for skills development, and also with the experts to identify which unit standards we need to address. Then research and obtain the learning material for that. Identify the facilitator and then get the classes going, keeping an eye on the classes, the progress of the learner. You see, there is a financial aspect to this as well because mostly in learnerships the learners get a stipend from government - managing that as well. And then at the end of it to have them uploaded on the SETA database, issue them with their qualifications from the applicable SETA; and to assist them in workplace job placements and so forth (P2: p.2).

An interview with a workplace educator at the same FET College corroborated these roles but noted additional coordination roles for the implementation phase, such as integration of different parts of the curriculum, induction of learners and liaison with employers where workplace learners are placed (P1: p.3).

Critical differences between College A and other Western Cape FET Colleges include College A's formation of a public-private partnership with a private training provider for workplace learning in particular industry and business sectors. College A sources

educators who teach the fundamental (numeracy, communication and lifeskills) part of the qualification, whereas a private training provider provides the core (theoretical instruction underpinning the qualification) and the electives (areas of specialization within an occupational career path) (P1: p.6). The private training provider runs a simulated training site on one of College A's campuses. In economic sectors where there are no partnerships with private training providers, College A contracts external subject matter experts for core and elective training. College A staff who are involved in the provision of work-based NCV programmes are not utilised. A manager explained that he does not make use of College A NCV staff because:

I would in person prefer to use the experts from the field in itself. It's easy to share theory: it's more difficult to share the practice and I want to empower the learnership learner with the practical application of what we teach...If you have to specialise in a core or elective unit standard for construction work, obviously we don't have people with the knowledge for that" (P2: p.4,10).

College A educators involved in workplace learning constitute an autonomous unit within the college. There is effectively no interface between vocational and occupational provision within College A, other than the cross-subsidisation of facilities used for workplace learning, such as classrooms and hostels. Many of College A's workplace learning programmes necessitate learners staying in residential hostels as the FET College is in a peri-urban area and learners would be unable to afford commuting fees to the college. The Deputy CEO noted that the inclusion of adult learners in residential hostels at times caused tensions within College A, as educators involved in NCV programmes felt that the adult learners could be a bad influence on younger NCV learners, on issues such as drinking alcohol (P7. p.8). Income generated from workplace learning contracts pay for the Innovation and Development Division staff and provides

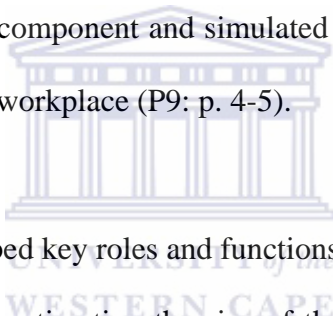
extra income for College A (P7: p.10). Central reasons cited for not using staff employed on NCV programmes is that they are employed full time, making it difficult to remove them from the classroom, and that they lack expertise in workplace learning (P7: 24).

College B's Innovation and Development Division incorporates a range of functions, including workplace learning. The Deputy CEO of this division outlined these roles, which include 'student support', 'marketing', 'new business development' (where workplace learning is situated) and 'E-learning' (P9: p. 1). Broadly the role of this Innovation and Development Division is to initiate all new projects, including workplace learning projects, to work in partnership with academic staff and to finalise the projects. College B has been accredited by 10 SETAs and as of May 2008, implemented 11 learnership and/or skills programmes involving 350 learners out of total of 4 800 workplace learners at FET Colleges in the Western Cape Province (WCED, 2008).

In terms of workplace learning, the head of the division noted that workplace learning is aimed at all students within College B, regardless of whether they are involved in NCV programmes through the Department of Education or learnerships and skills programmes through the SETAs under the Department of Labour. College B aims to provide workplace learning placements for 60-65% of all College B graduate learners (P9: p. 4).

College B's Innovation and Development Division works closely with the Education and Training Division within the college and shares joint responsibility for workplace learning. Whereas learners are placed in the workplace by the Innovation and

Development Division through a job placement officer within this division, the job placement officer is always accompanied by an academic subject matter expert who undertakes the workplace assessment of the learner (P9: p. 4-5). A key role for college personnel is to undertake the assessment of the learner in the workplace, which entails checking that the learners have been exposed to practical experience and workplace application of the theoretical provision received within the college. However, this role is mainly performed on behalf of employers who do not have accredited assessors amongst their staff. The workplace/employer takes full responsibility for learning in the workplace and would identify a mentor for the workplace learner. The College supplies the workplace with the theoretical component and simulated practice that the learner obtains prior to his/her exposure to the workplace (P9: p. 4-5).



A manager at College B described key roles and functions as:

My primary function is estimating the size of the project, designing the roll out plan, sourcing funding, liaising with the client. Then from the operational side it's ensuring the roll out plan, monitoring all audits, training assessors and liaising with SETAs (p10: p. 2).

The manager further clarified that staff employed on the NCV programmes are used to teach the theoretical component of workplace programmes, which includes simulated learning, but that they are not involved in training in the actual workplace (P10: p. 2).

Key differences between College A and B educators' involvement in workplace learning provision include the fact that College B makes use of permanent staff employed on NCV provision in the institution-based theoretical component of learnerships. In addition to this, College B is the only FET College (to their knowledge) that employs job placement

officers for placing of learners in the workplace (P9:P10). However, a senior manager from College A intends to appoint placement officers for NCV learners to undertake job shadowing in the workplace (P7: p. 12). The job placement officers visit learners unannounced in the workplace once every three months, providing a support function for them and liaising with employers for ongoing work placement opportunities (P8: p10). They are not involved in the learning process within the workplace however.

Another significant difference is College B's attempts to integrate curriculum for workplace learning that draws on a range of sources. A manager at College B noted that learning material would be drawn from year long vocational NCV programmes, as well as from learning materials customised for unit standards of the occupational learnerships. This often results in a longer time for the workplace learning qualification to be obtained by the learner, but the advantage for College B is that the learner is able to obtain a workplace qualification (learnership) and qualify to write a trade test on completion of enough NCV learning credits to qualify for the trade test. Learnerships do not provide a direct route to trade tests. A disadvantage of this approach however, is that the NCV programmes require learners to write a national exam, which the workplace learners do not ordinarily undertake, as their learning does not encompass the seven NCV subjects, all of which have a national examination that must be collectively passed before progression onto the next NCV level can happen (P10: p.3). College B's approach therefore opens up a broader range of workplace opportunities through workplace qualifications and trade tests, but does not necessarily assist learners progressing to higher levels of education. The next theme identified is that of FET College educators'

involvement in workplace learning in order to show how this learning is structured and implemented within FET Colleges.

4.2.3 FET College educator involvement in workplace learning

As noted in the theme above, FET College educators are primarily involved in the institutional or theoretical component of workplace learning. This theme first describes the role of FET College educators in the theoretical instruction component of workplace learning and then outlines their roles within structured learning in the workplace.

Educators interviewed from both FET Colleges stressed that qualifications obtained through workplace learning are essentially unit standards-based⁵ and are categorised in three sections, namely fundamentals (communication, mathematics and mathematical literacy and lifeskills), core (contextual theoretical component of the qualification) and electives (areas of career specialisation) (P2: p.2). The primary area of engagement for FET College educators is in the fundamental component of the workplace qualification. Subject educators teach the mathematical component or the communication component, and in College A, lifeskills is often integrated into the mathematical and communication components (P1: p.4). An educator stressed the need for different staff to teach each of these fundamental components because the academic level of these learnerships requires specialised fundamentals knowledge (P1: p.4).

⁵ Unit standards are defined as small units of learning, which when combined make up a part or whole qualification. Each qualification registered on South Africa's National Qualifications Framework requires a minimum of 120 credits. Credits are worked out on basis of 1 credit per 10 notional learning hours. Unit standards are allocated credits on the basis of the complexity and time needed to achieve the specific outcomes of each unit standard.

A key emphasis is laid on contextual specificity of the learning material and learning approach for workplace learning qualifications. A senior manager provided the following example for contextualization of mathematics:

In bricklaying, it would be measuring bricks, and the weight of sand and quantities would be your water, your daga (clay and water) mix, so it's all contextualized. (P7: p.4).

A further example of contextualization is provided in the communication part of the fundamental component of a qualification:

If you're writing a letter and you're training people in an ECD [Early Childhood Development] learnership, then you would give them a case study where a parent has written to you complaining that the child has injured herself....Obviously you're not going to use that same letter if its somebody in industry [name of company omitted]...let's take health and safety...there would be a letter of complaint...So you would just take the activity and adapt it according to whatever the field is (P7: p. 16).

The contextualization of learning materials for learnerships in different industry and business areas is seen as a highly skilled activity requiring in-depth subject knowledge. (P2: p.3). Contextualization of learning materials is largely outsourced and the cost of producing learning materials is often shared with other FET Colleges offering the same learnership (P2: p.3). Another manager noted that learning programme approval by SETAs is usually given for a period of three years and that the learning materials are not changed during this time period, as it is too expensive to continuously update the learning materials (P12: p.5).

However, contextualisation of the entire qualification was seen as problematic as shown by a senior manager's statements below:

Yes, we do contextualize, but it's a serious challenge to get the whole qualification contextualized because you're sitting with a lot of the operators doing some of the training in the workplace who are not speaking to each other. You know, the one guy does heating and cooling, the other guy starting the machine and stopping the machine, but they kind of can't integrate them (P7: p.16).

Simulated learning is often part of FET College educators' provision within workplace learning and is at times used to replace workplace learning exposure. Simulation is most often used at a practice work site (e.g. a construction site or a simulated office on the campus) where learners can practically apply their theoretical skills within a protected environment. In College A, learners use a simulated construction site to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice, through building part of a roof, wall, plumbing system etc. These part constructions are then undone and re-used for the next cohort of learners. Most of the FET College educators interviewed referred to the use of simulated training as a means to prepare learners for learning in an actual workplace, as noted by a college educator:

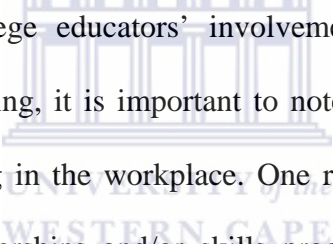
We have a simulated site at the campus where we do the simulation of the core [theoretical] competency of the learnership, but the learner will have to go to the workplace where he can go and implement what he's learned here (P1:p.3).

A manager provided a different rationale for simulation using financial accounting as an example:

We have a simulated office, I put them [learners] in there, it's like work experience. So when the learner completes that component they don't have to spend that time on site, they've done it already. So we can bring industry into our training environment rather than take the learner out of the training environment. Not all the SETAs are happy with that but the majority of them I'd say we deal with (P10: p.4).

Here, the simulated work office is used as the actual ‘workplace’ and replaces structured learning in the workplace.

Theoretical instruction is a central role undertaken by workplace educators, and the approach taken is to adapt learning materials and teaching approaches for specific workplace contexts. Simulated training environments also appear to be a key element of theoretical provision, but are at times used to replace workplace exposure. The next section looks at FET College educator involvement in the structured component of learning within the workplace.



In order to frame FET College educators’ involvement in the structured learning component of workplace learning, it is important to note that college educators have a limited involvement in training in the workplace. One reason for this is the legislative framework underpinning learnerships and/or skills programmes accredited by SETAs under the Department of Labour, which are the central workplace routes to a qualification. Within this legislative framework, the tripartite agreement between learners, the FET College (as a training provider) and the employer separates key training roles. As all learners are legally employed by the employer for the duration of the training, it is often the human resource departments of companies which take responsibility for learning done in the workplace and appoint mentors from the companies’ staff or external consultants. A senior manager corroborates the abovementioned role of the company in her statement:

The actual work placement learning and training is managed, handled and monitored, everything by the company that agrees to be the host company, the host partner (P9: p.10).

A key feature employed by both FET College's educators is the use of a log book, which is used to monitor progress both within a simulated training environment as well as in the actual workplace. The log book records the theoretical learning that the learner has been exposed to and areas of workplace learning exposure and practice required for completion of the qualification requirements. A FET College manager describes the use of this logbook:

We issue a student with a logbook and while doing his work, his overseer must tick off in the log book that he is competent in this requirement or that requirement...In construction again, learners would come for training to the College and then they would be sent out to go and do work...where they have to do actual work, and the employer would then tick this off in a log book (P2: p.5).

A significant number of college educators have obtained workplace assessment qualifications accredited by SETAs, known as assessors (assessing workplace learning), moderators (external assessment of other internal assessors) and verifiers (assessing prior experiential learning for recognition of competencies leading to a qualification). In addition to this, many college educators have also undertaken skills development facilitator qualifications, which enable educators to advise companies on their workplace skills plans to be submitted to the Department of Labour. Six of the educators interviewed all held a range of assessment qualifications, and two educators held the skills development facilitator qualification (P1: P2: P7: P9: P10: P12).

FET College educators are often involved as assessors in the workplace, not to provide teaching in the workplace, but to assess whether learning has happened in the workplace

through checking or auditing the log book of the learner, which is also signed off by the employer. This is seen as an academic task, and is primarily used to assess whether learners' theoretical instruction is being complemented by structured learning in the workplace. Some workplaces do have their own accredited assessors and these are often contracted in by the college. In cases where there are no workplace assessors, college educators with accredited assessor qualifications act as the workplace assessor. An example of this involvement in workplace learning is provided by a manager:

So he [the assessor] will have to go to that workplace and explain to them [the employer] the log book: where must the learner work, what must the learner do... to cover the specific objectives of the qualification. And then the assessor knows by this time you must have completed this. And then the assessor will say - okay, now show me, do it. Everything is in there [the log book], proof of that. Okay, do the cash book and things like that. If it's construction, dig up the road, or lay the 700 bricks or whatever (P12: p.6).

In order to host learners, companies or workplaces have to be registered with the relevant SETA under the Department of Labour. A FET College manager notes that the log book also acts as a form of protection for the learner:

The SETAs say that you're not allowed in an occupational field, again trade specific, you're not allowed more than two learners per supervisor. The supervisor has got to be a qualified person, and then obviously that workplace has got to be workplace approved, so the SETA has to check. When they're [learners] getting nailed by a trainer they put it in the log book. What we do is send an assessor in on regular intervals to audit it (P10: p.5).

However, as college educators are not in control of the actual learning in the workplace, assessors are not always able to assess the structured learning component in the workplace. An example provided by an educator illustrates this point:

Say for instance he [the learner] goes to a plumbing workplace, but this plumber, his main focus is on repairing taps and pipes – but the learner needs to go and practice his geyser [hot water cylinder], but this man doesn't do geysers. So this learner will actually lack that competency; so when the learner is assessed on the

geyser he won't be found competent, because he lacked the practical exposure in the workplace itself (P1: p.5).

The same educator noted that the size of the host company was critical, as smaller companies often struggled to provide the full range of structured workplace exposure that learners needed to obtain their learnership qualification (P1: p. 5).

College educators have limited control over the structured learning process within the workplace, which is demonstrated through unemployed learners (defined as Section 18.2 learners under the Department of Labour's labour legislation) being trained together with employed learners (legally defined as Section 18.1 learners) in a particular industry.

When we did the [industry name removed] training, the employees, the 18.1s went on strike and now unemployed learners had to go on strike as well – well, there was just no work for them to do. So what happened was because the 18.1s (employed learners) were on strike the HR [human resource] people negotiated with the 18.2 [unemployed] learners to step in and do the work, taking them out of the classroom. And we couldn't carry on with the training. And the project was twelve months, and we had to finish in that time otherwise we would not get the money, the payment. And the SETA just refused to understand on this occasion (P7: p.21).

Educators from both Colleges pointed to the subservient role that Colleges play within workplace learning in relation to a company or industry. A senior manager felt that workplaces were the dominant partner within a learnership agreement:

The college has to always play the subservient role because after all they're doing us the favour...Really, they don't see the altruistic, nice, airy-fairy thing of we are lifelong learning, and all that sort of stuff. They say, please, now just go away with your learning, let us do what we do best and if you insist that we've got to take these unemployed learners then they will come on our terms. That is what we are working with. (P7: p.23).

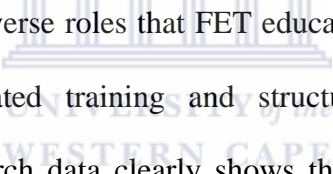
This was corroborated by the second College, as an educator noted:

The employers are there to make money in their institutions...They don't have time to listen to your nonsense the whole day. They don't have time. Even

sometimes the institutions, to be honest with you, the reason why they are so reluctant to take students on in-service training or lower entry level posts, it's because they don't have time to train; they don't want to train. Their time is money (P6: p.3).

A senior manager asserted that employers are frustrated with the bureaucratic requirements of accredited workplace training through the SETAs, even though this is a means of recouping the Skills Levy tax:

And the other thing is too is the workplace is not interested in bureaucracy or other administrative requirements. 'So don't come and tell me that this guy has got to be assessed for the third time, I'm not interested, he's not getting any more time off work'...And that is why more and more employers are saying please don't come here with your accredited training, we want unaccredited training...We're getting that more and more and more. (P7: p.22).



This section emphasises the diverse roles that FET educators are engaged in through the theoretical instruction, simulated training and structured learning components of workplace learning. The research data clearly shows that while College educators are involved in all components of workplace learning, structured learning in the workplace is not a key college educator competence. The primary role of educators in the workplace is that of assessment of learning and in some cases as support for the learner through work placement officers. Whilst there are legislative reasons for this stemming from the Skills Development Act (1998) promulgated by the Department of Labour, college educators are only partly involved in the entire workplace learning process. The next section looks more closely at how College educators prepare unemployed learners for entrance into the workplace, in order to assess whether these strategies enable learners to advance their learning and employment opportunities within the workplace.

4.2.4 Preparing learners for the workplace

This section analyses the ways in which College educators prepare unemployed learners for entry into the workplace. All eight educators interviewed were asked how they prepare unemployed learners to enter the workplace. Many of the mechanisms employed extend beyond pedagogic instruction and include an overlap of roles and responsibilities with that of the formal host employer. These preparation strategies are detailed below.

A senior manager described key elements of a work ‘readiness’ or work ‘preparedness’ programme as:

We make the student understand professional conduct in the workplace. We’re dealing with conflict...how to channel your concerns, your grievances. We deal with some labor law issues. Dress code, effective communication in the workplace – very important. And a bit of time management (P9: p.7).

The manager also noted that once learners were placed within the workplace, they were informed of people they could contact within the college, such as a job placement officer, should any problems occur (ibid). These elements of work readiness were confirmed by a senior manager of the other College interviewed, which was defined as an induction process before training began and included elements such as a code of conduct, attendance, punctuality as well as inter-personal relationships (P7: p.20).

Work preparedness is also located within the fundamental component of the qualification.

A manager noted:

We don't just train them [learners] and let them go with a lot of theoretical knowledge. In communications for example I would often in class simulate a situation of interviewing for a job application and then assess the learners on their abilities to deal with difficult questions, to make use of communication skills such as proper eye contact and body language (P2: p.6).

Educators from College A noted a clear separation between workplace preparation and the employer's role once learners were placed within the workplace, as one FET educator noted:

But the moment he [the learner] is in the workplace he is the responsibility of the employer, and we can't go and change the employer's rules; he's got certain rules and regulations that the learner has to adapt to (P1: p.7).

The same educator noted that the employer's contract to hire the unemployed learner for the duration of the learnership involves a code of conduct that applies to the learner, which includes the learner's conduct during the theoretical instruction at the college:

A company like [name omitted] they also have a code of conduct, and if a learner misbehaves at the college for instance, they will immediately have a hearing at the college to address that issue. So they're very strict on the learners. They are like real workers, so they have to adapt to all the rules and regulations (ibid).

A manager from the same college asserted that learnerships often provided real opportunities for employment however:

It works very well because at the end of the training a lot of these employers now already know the student and is familiar with his or her skills, so quite a number of them would find actual employment with the company where they did their training as well (P2: p.5).

College A also plays a role in encouraging learners to become entrepreneurs through placement of learners on a New Venture Creation (entrepreneurship) skills programme after completion of a learnership in a trade, such as painter or bricklayers. On completion

of the entrepreneurship skills programme, College A obtained funds for an office and employed these learners to do work at the college in order to boost their business (P7: p.12).

Educators from both colleges noted a minority of learners who were not interested in finding employment through workplace learning, as the funds gained through stipends as part of the learnership training provided an income. This minority of students attempt to obtain successive learnerships as a form of income generation. An educator stated:

They don't care if they don't find employment because it's easy to get learnerships these days...You bring your matric [school leaving] certificate and your copy of your ID [identification document] and then you qualify. ...That is why [they are] jumping to do these learnerships because it's not easy to find employment (P6: p.1).

In College B, the Student Support section within their Innovation and Development Division plays a strong role in the induction of learners entering workplace learning programmes, including an “interest assessment, a careers assessment, a language assessment and a numeracy assessment” to guide their selection process (P9: p.7). The Student Support department also provides counseling and guidance to learners whilst undergoing theoretical instruction at the college, should learning or attitudinal problems arise (P9: 12). College B also makes use of job placement officers to provide additional support to learners who are placed in the workplace for the structured learning component of the learnership. Key roles of job placement officers are to “see how the student is coping, what are the issues: and then also are there any issues from the company's side, are they happy?” (P9: p.3).

A Deputy CEO at College B also noted the collaboration between the Innovation and Development Division and the academic division of the college in selecting learners for exit placements of the NATED programmes, based on company needs and an assessment of the personality type of the learner (P9, p.13). The same manager stated that conflictual situations do arise in the workplace:

But sometimes you don't always get it right because the company will say yes, and then there will be a mismatch between maybe the mentor and the supervisor. But that's part of workplace training and you say to the students – listen, don't come back to us and say that you don't want to work there because you can't get on with them. That is part of the challenge. So use your knowledge, your conflict management and your conflict resolution to figure this out (P9: p.13).

Another FET educator noted the importance of negotiations with the workplace in order to prepare the ground for unemployed learners to be accepted within workplaces:

If they [employers] don't buy in – and I think there the skills development facilitator or the human resource manager plays a big part...you're going to struggle with the learnership. Because first of all there's a lot of employees that see learners as a threat. The moment they come into the workplace "they're being trained to replace me" – that is the first idea. So when you negotiate for the learners, you can't only negotiate with the management itself: you also have to speak to the people, the employees. Because if they don't buy in to the concept, they're the people that have to show those guys what to do. Then you're going to struggle, you've really got a battle on your hands (P1: p.10).

A senior manager at the same college however cautioned against the college involving itself in workplace disputes, such as unemployed learners being drawn into a strike:

You mustn't be the person that is between the two for management and the workers, because quite often the workers are appealing to you because they're not getting through to management. Now you can't start mediating; that's not your task (P7: p.25).

This section has looked at ways in which College educators support learner access into the workplace as well as support for learners in the workplace component of learnerships.

Although College lecturers are not directly involved in the workplace learning component of these qualifications, they do negotiate directly with the workplace and provide generic support for learners to comply with basic work requirements. The generic support most often occurs within the lifeskills component of the qualifications, where issues such as dress code, punctuality and conflict resolution are taught as part of preparation for entering a workplace. College educators however attempt at all times not to become involved in mediation of work issues even when these pertain directly to their learners. In one college, the role of job placement officers plays an additional support role for learners within the workplace. The next theme identified is that of methodologies and approaches used by workplace educators in order to identify whether workplace learning provides a basis for further learning and/or progression in the workplace.

4.2.5 Methodologies and approaches used within workplace learning

This section of the paper analyses methodologies and approaches used within workplace learning by College educators. Key areas of focus are on integration of learning materials and approaches as well as the sequencing and pacing of workplace learning. This section also looks at horizontal and vertical discourses that affect workplace learning from an FET College educator perspective in order to assess whether workplace learning provides a basis for progression within the workplace and/or to further study.

College educators noted that while different lecturers are used for separate fundamental, core and elective components of the qualification (and even within these components) gained through workplace learning, the integration of the learning approaches occurs through a collaborative approach to workplace learning. A College educator noted that:

We would actually bring your fundamental lecturers together with the core lecturers. And then your fundamental lecturers, when they present their programme they will already touch some of the core aspects to make it easier for your core facilitator (P1: p.5).

The same lecturer argued that integration could be achieved through situating different lecturers in close proximity to each other:

Say the maths we will do in Room 20 and then your core in Room 21. But they know each other and they can always speak to each other – that is the integration (ibid).

A senior manager stated that integration of the curriculum is encouraged through relating mathematical literacy and communication to the core and elective learning of the qualifications:

And that is what our lecturers are told to do. Get yourself into the workplace, find out what maths literacy they require or what communication they require and that is what you do in the classroom (P7: p.14).

The same manager added that integration was achieved through relating activities, such as learning Pythagoras theorem in relation to a workplace activity (ibid).

A senior manager at College B felt that the integration of workplace learning was not being done by all departments within the college:

We get ECD [early childhood development] that lends itself to integrated learning. Your hospitality you cannot train without [integrated learning]. But in faculties like engineering you don't have students going out into the workplace because a lot of the training is in the workshops on the campus. So that workplace training is not really work experience, but we should actually be moving towards that. (P9: p.9).

Integration of learning approaches is closely related to the ways in which workplace learning is sequenced and paced. A manager noted that learner educational levels affect the sequencing of qualifications:

For Level 5 in ECD, you need a matric level knowledge of language and mathematics. Now if you have that there's no sense in reinventing the wheel, so we just don't do the fundamentals, we proceed directly to core and elective. That saves a lot and time and a lot of effort. It also means that your core and elective subjects or unit standards often have a lot more credits than your fundamentals – so you spend a lot more time on them as well (P2: p.3).

Educators from both colleges noted the use of an assessment matrix, which allows educators to assess a number of different education outcomes under a single assessment activity, and allows for competencies to be demonstrated in one part of the qualification without having to be repeated in other parts of the qualification (P2: P7: P9).

A manager at College B stated that the cost of training unemployed learners was over 30% more expensive than training employed learners, as unemployed learners are provided with an additional six months of fundamental (mathematical literacy, communication and life-skills) training (P10: p.7). This affects the sequencing of the qualification, as all fundamental training is provided at the beginning of the qualification, together with additional student support. A critical reason for sequencing the learning programme in this manner is that should the unemployed learners fall out of the learning process at this stage the financial loss to the college is much lower (P10: p.7-8).

The same manager noted that workplace qualifications for unemployed learners in specific industries were often negotiated for a three year period, where additional time is

created for learners to pass their fundamentals through self-learning at the college in addition to formal instruction (P10: p.8). Other sequencing strategies included breaking down the structure of particular qualifications into a number of discrete unit standards, delivered through skills programmes, which allows smaller workplaces to participate in the structured workplace learning component of learnerships as depicted below:

So what we did there was we said, fine, I'm going to register 98 skills programmes, which allows me flexibility in everything...With us doing that we've now given companies the ability to be able to take one or two unit standards and train their people because that's their area of speciality (P10: p.9).

Another teaching methodology frequently employed by workplace educators was that of 'modelling' or tacit transmission, defined by Bernstein (1999) as a process where 'showing' or 'modelling' precedes 'doing' (p.168). An educator described the process of making a table to illustrate this form of knowledge transmission:

What you first have to teach them is that we think in images...And I also teach them that simple sketches or drawings, that is a language on its own...So even if you are illiterate and you can draw me a table, only line sketches, I will know that is a table...So you have to speak about the images you are working with and the words is just to explain the thing but the image itself is what reality is all about. So you have to go back to that path before you make the table (P1: p.11).

Other forms of 'modelling' were identified by a manager as:

If that part of the component or that part of the training says that it needs a practical part of it, we're physically going to do something; then you will do it first for all [learners], then you will do it with [learners] and they will do it themselves. So it's the three tiers that we use. And then they will practice by themselves and they will do a reflex or diagnostic tool against it. (P10: p.11).

A senior manager corroborated the above view of modelling and noted that this pedagogical form was effectively used in practical work such as welding and cabinet making, but that tacit transmission was not effective in financial and business training (P7: p.13).

FET College educators interviewed were asked whether workplace learning was aimed primarily at ensuring work opportunities or as a basis for further learning, both within the workplace and in further and higher education. An educator noted that while some learners saw learnerships as a route to further learning, some people entered the learnerships for the stipend, which allowed them to earn a basic income and the possibility of obtaining employment (P1: p.12).

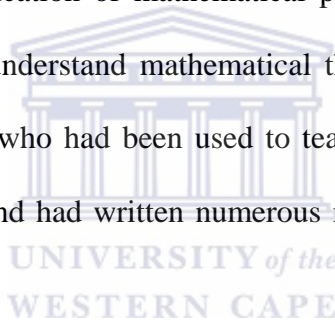
A manager cited three distinct groups of learners in workplace learning: the first group would maximize the opportunity to obtain employment and once this was obtained would not engage in further learning; the second group would use learnerships as a basis for progression, often into self-employment, and the third group, who formed an absolute minority, would be primarily interested in the stipends given for engagement in workplace learning, rather than the learning itself (P2: p.7-8).

Another manager noted that within specific areas, professional qualification routes exist through workplace learning, such as in Early Childhood Development (ECD). Within this field, qualifications exist at NQF Levels 1, 4 and 5. The manager noted that once learners had completed a learnership within ECD, they were enthusiastic about undertaking further qualifications, as they felt confident and that higher levels of qualification enabled them to earn more by being qualified for more senior roles within ECD (P12: p.10).

A senior manager identified how exposure to workplace learning enabled workplace learners to progress to tertiary education. Whereas these learners had achieved Grade 12 Mathematics and English, the manager noted:

They [learners] came to do road building at NQF Level 4 [Grade 12]...And they finished [NQF] Level 4 and they did their mathematical literacy with us when they did the learnership. They went to the Technikon and they started their civil engineering diploma. And there's a very high failure rate in the maths class. We had fifteen learners and of the say 30 in the class, 20 passed. All 15 from us passed and they were in the top 15. And not only that but three or four got A's (P7: p.14).

The manager directly attributed this mathematics pass rate to the fact that these learners had been exposed to the application of mathematical principles within the workplace, which enable them to better understand mathematical theory (P7: p.15). The manager also noted that the consultant who had been used to teach mathematical literacy at the college was highly qualified and had written numerous mathematical literacy textbooks (P7: p.16).



This section has focused on teaching methodologies and approaches used by FET College educators involved in workplace learning. Integration of learning materials and the curriculum as well as sequencing and pacing methods were detailed as well as ways in which workplace educators engaged in horizontal and vertical discourses. The following section analyses key findings derived through an iterative process between the research data, the literature and the theoretical framework of this paper.

SECTION 5: Key research findings and concluding remarks

5.1 Discussion of key research findings

The research data in the previous section outlined educators' responses to the overall research question on their understanding of the role and function of college occupational training units. This section draws on this thematic data and discusses key research findings arising from an iterative analysis of the data within the literature and theoretical framework.

A defining feature of educators involved in occupational or workplace training is that workplace educators largely position themselves in opposition to other college educators who provide institutionally based NCV programmes that prepare learners for the workplace. This approximates Stone's (2002) view of the oppositional character of vocational education as "*for work, through work and about work*" on the one hand, and on the other vocational education that is largely general education, using work as a context. Bathmaker's (2005) assertion of vocational qualifications in the UK undergoing academic drift towards becoming more academic than occupational also applies to South African vocational NCV qualifications funded through the Department of Education.

Workplace learning was most frequently understood by educators to mean learnerships and/or skills programmes funded through SETAs under the Department of Labour. College educators' definitions of their roles and functions within the workplace proved to be more problematic, as structured learning within the workplace is largely done by the

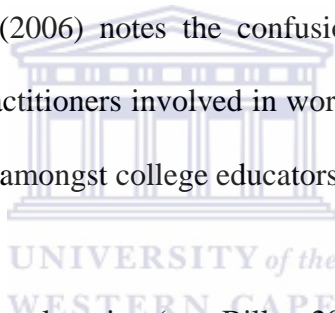
host company. Cornford (2006) argues that in Australia that there is a critical need for employers and managers to work closely with training institutions in order to realise effective transfer of learning, as opposed to the separation of institutional learning and structured workplace learning. A finding of this study is that a clear separation of responsibility exists between educators involved in institutional workplace learning and structured learning in the workplace conducted by company personnel and/or consultants.

Educators from both Colleges worked within Innovation and Development Divisions, whose key function was to offer workplace learning. Significant differences in the role and function of these two College divisions were uncovered in this research. College A functions as an autonomous division, uses public-private training partnerships based within the college and external training consultants, and is an income-generating stream for the college. No use is made of full-time educators employed on the NCV work preparation programmes. College B sees work placement of all college students as a critical role and adopts an integrated approach, which makes use of full-time NCV educators for assessment within the workplace, and work placement officers as an additional support for employers and learners.

Despite these differences, the Innovation and Development Divisions at both colleges operate workplace learning on a project management basis, from inception to conclusion. As such, these divisions are the primary interface between the college and workplaces. Both divisions employ personnel who are funded through income generation realised from learnerships and/or skills programmes. In line with Smaller's (2007) observation of

the increased privatization of education, the Innovation and Development Divisions function as a 'private provider' within both public FET Colleges, as they are concerned with making a profit for the colleges that can cross-subsidise their use of college facilities and personnel.

At an educator level, educators defined workplace learning as theoretical learning at the college, with a focus on preparing learners for work placement, and offering simulated learning at the college and structured learning and assessment within the workplace. To a large extent these educator definitions reflect their differing roles and functions within workplace learning. Fenwick (2006) notes the confusion of terms and definitions of workplace learning used by practitioners involved in workplace training and the research data reflects this lack of clarity amongst college educators.



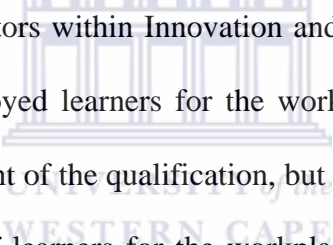
Academics arguing for workplace learning (e.g. Billett 2001, Hodkinson 2005, Guile and Griffiths 2001) have placed their emphasis on contextual specificity, experiential and participatory learning as critical features of workplace learning. A research finding from interviews with college educators shows that contextualisation of learning materials and learning approaches for qualifications obtained through a workplace learning route is seen as critically important. Although the development of learning materials is generally outsourced, a central reason for outsourcing the materials is to involve experts with specific workplace experience and knowledge in the development of these materials.

Contextualisation also takes the form of workplace educators (both FET College staff and external consultants) meeting to discuss ways in which the various parts of the workplace route to a qualification can be related to each other, including forms of integrated assessment which assess competence across a number of specific outcomes. Despite this approach to contextualising learning materials, approaches and assessment, contextualisation of the entire qualification is difficult as college educators have little control over structured learning in the workplace.

Experiential and participatory learning within both FET Colleges is best demonstrated through their simulated training initiatives. In College A, their public-private partnership with a training provider led to the development of a simulated training site on a college campus, which enables learners to apply their theoretical knowledge within a training environment that is closely supervised. In College B, simulated training on the college campus at times replaces structured learning in the workplace as the learner is deemed competent for the purposes of the qualification through achieving proficiency within this simulated environment. This learning does not extend to the actual workplace however.

In terms of structured learning within the workplace, FET College educators most often act as assessors within the workplace and advise companies of the type of workplace learning exposure that specific learners need to obtain the qualification. This is done by means of a log book, which both the employer and learner need to sign off as proof of achieving competency in particular workplace tasks. College educators and managers noted the dominance of employers within the workplace learning partnership agreement

between learners, training providers and the host company. They were therefore unable to effectively control what was learned in the workplace or the sequence in which workplace learning was conducted by the employer. Whereas the log book is a key evidential indicator of what was learned in the workplace for certification purposes, college educators could at best assess learners' competence in the workplace, but were not able to coordinate structured learning there. This separation of educator roles between institutional and workplace training reflects the literature on vocational education and training, which similarly shows the separation between these two sites of learning.

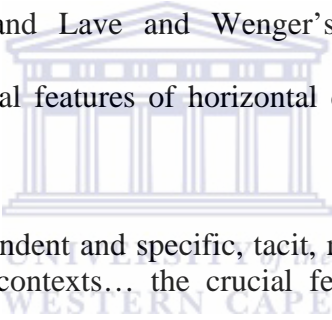


Another key function of educators within Innovation and Development Divisions of the colleges is to prepare unemployed learners for the workplace. This is primarily done through the life skills component of the qualification, but also within the communications component. The preparation of learners for the workplace involves interviewing skills, dress codes, appropriate behaviour in the workplace, conflict resolution skills and relevant sections of labour law. As such, the workplace preparation for unemployed learners is primarily aimed at transferring generic skills that will enable learners to obtain employment rather than a focus on specific skills.

Within College B, work placement officers are employed to place unemployed learners in the workplace, whereas in College A, college educators primarily perform this function. The negotiation process for placing unemployed learners within the workplace for the structured workplace learning component of the qualification is often difficult, as

employers are not necessarily concerned with training unemployed learners, other than as a recruitment pool from which to choose individual learners for employment. College educators are careful not to mediate work issues even if they involve unemployed learners, as this is seen as the sole prerogative of the host employer.

The research data explores the extent to which the roles and functions of FET College educators within the Innovation and Development Divisions of the two Colleges are manifestations of vertical and horizontal discourses. The conceptual framework outlined in Section 2 of this paper noted a congruence of theoretical positions between Bernstein's (1999) horizontal discourse and Lave and Wenger's (1991) legitimate peripheral participation. Bernstein's critical features of horizontal discourse are repeated here for ease of reference:



oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts... the crucial feature is that it is segmentally organised (p. 159).

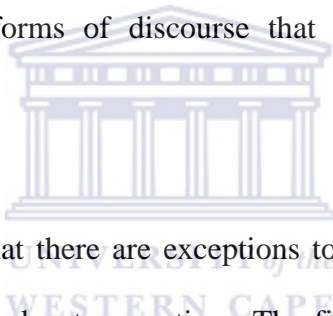
The findings in this paper note that FET College involvement in workplace learning is strongly contextualized for specific learnerships. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Bernstein (1990) both point to workplace learning as 'segmentally organised', whereby horizontal knowledge is gained through the relation of segments or contexts to the everyday life. The data has demonstrated that learnerships and/or skills programmes are taught by College educators in discrete or separate contexts within the College and externally within the workplace, and that this form of workplace learning is geared towards learners participating in employment. Learners are taught by college educators to acquire common competencies for entrance into the world of work as opposed to striving for individual

excellence in particular occupations. A key role of College educators is to relate their formal teaching to real-life working situations and ways in which learners can relate to a workplace environment.

Lave and Wenger (1991) note that learning to become legitimate peripheral participants involves “partial participation, in segments of work that increase in complexity and scope” (p.80). This is shown within the research data whereby learners are generally inducted into workplace readiness by college educators through the fundamental (numeracy, communication and lifeskills) part of the qualification, are then introduced to theoretical and simulated learning part of the qualification and thereafter into structured learning in the workplace, which is itself incrementally structured.

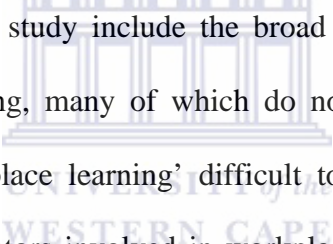
Lave and Wenger (1991) and Bernstein (1999) stress tacit transmission of knowledge as a key feature of legitimate peripheral participation and horizontal discourse respectively, defined by Bernstein as learning where ‘showing’ or ‘modelling’ precedes ‘doing’ (p. 168). Tacit forms of transmission are particularly evident within the research data, where College educators noted the use of images and demonstration, participation of learners and educators in the task and finally learners being allowed to perform the task independently. However, it was noted that while tacit transmission of knowledge was effectively used in areas such as welding and cabinet making, it was less useful for the teaching of finance and business studies.

The data has demonstrated that College educator involvement in workplace learning draws strongly on a horizontal discourse that is serially acquired through specific contexts, is localized, involves tacit transmission of knowledge and is sequenced according to specific workplace practices, but also contains elements of a vertical discourse shown below. In his description of horizontal and vertical knowledge structures, Bernstein (1999) argued that the learning acquired from a horizontal knowledge structure cannot be integrated into a vertical knowledge structures, as the languages and contexts are not translatable. Bernstein does acknowledge that elements of horizontal discourses are at times used as ‘pedagogic populism’ to empower disadvantaged learners with forms of discourse that allow them to access vertical knowledge structures.



A key finding however was that there are exceptions to a solely horizontal knowledge discourse within FET College educator practices. The first exception was demonstrated by College B who adopts a more integrated approach to workplace learning that draws on unit standards (evident of a segmented horizontal discourse) as well as institutional discipline-based NCV learning materials and staff for theoretical instruction and assessment within the college as a basis for progression to further study. It was not clear from the research evidence whether this approach encouraged learners to progress to higher education, as the NCV curriculum is still being implemented at levels below NQF Level 4 (entry to higher education). The central reason offered for this college using NCV materials and personnel was to open up possibilities for learners to write trade tests, as well as learner access to workplaces, rather than progression to further study.

The second exception to a horizontal discourse was provided by College A, which showed that learners who had been exposed to the practical application of mathematical literacy within the workplace progressed to higher education and successfully passed theoretical mathematics exams at a higher education level. Whilst reasons provided for this were that the consultant employed by the college was highly qualified and that the learners had already done Grade 12 Mathematics, it does provide an example of learners engaged in a horizontal knowledge structure progressing into a vertical knowledge structure.



Key findings arising from the study include the broad scope of functions defined by educators as workplace learning, many of which do not occur within the workplace, which makes the term 'workplace learning' difficult to define. From an institutional perspective FET College educators involved in workplace training across the two FET Colleges studies have different approaches with regards to workplace learning. College A's Innovation and Development Division functions as an autonomous division that out-sources key functions, and College B attempts a more integrated approach that draws on mainstream NCV programmes that prepare learners for the workplace as well as occupational learnerships and skills programmes that include learning in the workplace. For College educators involved in workplace learning, a range of roles were identified as well as the separation between institutional theoretical and simulated instruction with structured learning in the workplace. Additionally, FET College educators involved in

workplace learning are not in control of the structured learning in the workplace, which makes coordination of the learning programmes difficult.

Within the theoretical framework of this paper workplace learning within FET Colleges is explored as a hybrid of vertical and horizontal discourse. Ways of integrating horizontal knowledge structures with vertical knowledge structures were identified. The following section provides concluding remarks on this research process and identifies some recommendations for further research.

5.2 Concluding remarks

This research has focused on how college educators understand their involvement in workplace learning. In large part, College educators defined their role within workplace learning as separate from the mainstream discipline-based NCV programmes. However their key roles, scope and functions did not extend to structured learning within the workplace as employers take responsibility for this in the provision of learnerships and skills programmes. A critical role for College educators is mediating between the disciplinary theoretical institutional component in the College and the experiential learning that happens in the workplace, where learners are assessed to complete their credits for completion of a qualification. Key insights were gained into ways in which educators construct knowledge through the implementation of workplace learning programmes. College educators were very aware of the unequal power relations between employers and the college in terms of control over learners' structured workplace learning, but it was beyond the scope of this research to explore this further.

The way educators see their different roles accords with the dichotomies suggested by the literature and the horizontal discourse set up by Bernstein (1999) and Lave and Wenger (1991). Insights were gained into modes of knowledge transmission, as well as sequencing, framing and contextualisation of workplace learning. However, the data shows the possibility for movement between the vertical-horizontal theoretical positions. The final section of this paper suggests further areas of research.

5.2 Implications for further research

Although workplace learning is primarily a horizontal knowledge discourse, FET Colleges are engaged in vertical knowledge discourses (typified by the NCV programmes and their emphasis on codified, disciplinary knowledge) and horizontal knowledge discourses, and in one instance an example was found where there was movement between these discourses. Further research might fruitfully analyse the extent to which College engagement in workplace learning as a horizontal discourse enables learners to progress to higher education. Currently there is minimal research on the progression of learners engaged in learnerships and/or skills programmes into higher education.

A further implication arising from this research would be to analyse the feasibility of College educators providing more of the structured learning within workplaces. As this research has noted, College educators currently play a minimal role within structured learning in the workplace, primarily as a result of current legislation under the Department of Labour. This has resulted in FET College educators losing touch with

current developments in workplaces and being unable to effectively coordinate workplace learning routes to a qualification. Further research could form the basis for a policy submission that informs government stakeholders of potential FET College involvement in structured learning in the workplace within the context of an evolving education and training policy framework that sees FET Colleges as a key resource.



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APPENDICES

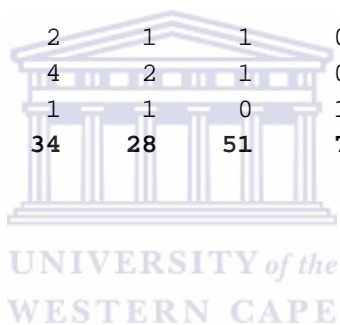
Appendix A - Research Questionnaire

Biographical Section	
1. Name of FET Educator	
2. Name of FET College	
3. Highest qualification level achieved	
4. Years worked in the FET College sector	
5. Years of industry experience	
6. Position within the FET College	
Questionnaire Section	
1. How would you define workplace learning?	
2. What workplace learning projects are you currently involved with?	
3. What are your key roles and functions within these projects?	
4. Is the theoretical training of learnerships at the FET Colleges done by one person?	
5. Do you contextualize the learning materials for each of the learnerships you're involved in?	
6. How do you ensure integration of learning across fundamental core and electives of a learnership?	
7. Is all the workplace training done by your unit or do you contract other trainers as well?	
8. Are you involved in	

the structured learning component of workplace learning and if so, what role do you play?	
9. How do you assist unemployed learners adjust to the workplace?	
10. Is the structured learning component of learnerships led by processes in the workplace or is it led by theoretical curriculum demands?	
11. Does your workplace training involve 'modelling' (showing by doing)?	
12. To what extent does your workplace training provide learners with tools for consequent independent study?	 <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p>
13. What are the benefits and challenges for lecturers who teach on workplace training programmes?	
14. What skills do you think lecturers who teach on workplace programmes should have?	
15. What do you think the differences between workplace learning and vocational learning are?	

Appendix B – Atlas Ti Code Frequency Table

	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 6	P 7	P 8	P 9	P10	P12	TOTALS
Contextual specificity	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	
Definition of workplace										
Learning	2	2	1	0	3	3	3	1	1	
Demand-driven provision	3	1	3	0	3	0	2	3	0	
Horizontal	2	3	3	0	0	0	1	2	0	
Integration of learning	4	2	4	0	6	1	2	4	2	
Involvement in structured										
Learning	2	1	9	0	8	1	10	2	2	
Nature of educators' role										
in workplace learning	8	6	14	4	9	8	5	4	13	
Other	1	2	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Preparing learners for the										
Workplace	1	3	8	2	4	3	8	5	3	
Supply-side provision	2	2	2	0	3	0	5	1	2	
Theoretical institutional										
Instruction	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Transmission modes	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	
Vertical	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	3	
TOTALS	34	28	51	7	42	16	37	26	31	272



Appendix C – Ethics Statement



UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

SR1

**UWC RESEARCH PROJECT REGISTRATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
 APPLICATION FORM**

This application will be considered by UWC Faculty Board Research and Ethics Committees, then by the UWC Senate Research Committee, which may also consult outsiders on ethics questions, or consult the UWC ethics subcommittees, before registration of the project and clearance of the ethics. No project should proceed before project registration and ethical clearance has been granted.

A. PARTICULARS OF INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT		
NAME:	Seamus Needham	TITLE: Mr
DEPARTMENT:	UWC FET Institute	FACULTY: Education
FIELD OF STUDY: Education - ICM ALGC – Local Option – Long paper		
ARE YOU:	Yes	No
A member of UWC academic staff?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of UWC support staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A registered UWC student?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From outside UWC, wishing to research at or with UWC?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. PARTICULARS OF PROJECT

PROJECT NUMBER: TO BE ALLOCATED BY SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE: **May 2008**

PROJECT TITLE:

**How do FET College educators explain the role and function of
College workplace training units? A case study of Western Cape FET Colleges**

THREE KEY WORDS DESCRIBING PROJECT:

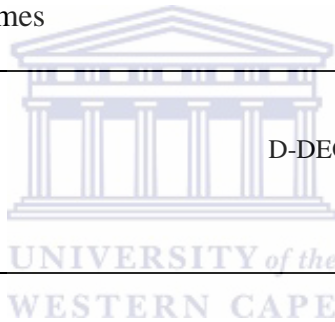
1. FET educators
2. Workplace training
3. Occupational programmes

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT:

M-DEGREE: X

D-DEGREE:

POST GRADUATE RESEARCH:



C. PARTICULARS REGARDING PARTICULAR RESEARCHERS

	FAMILY NAME:	INITIALS:	TITLE:
PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER	Needham	S.M.	Mr

OTHER RESEARCH PROJECT LEADERS:

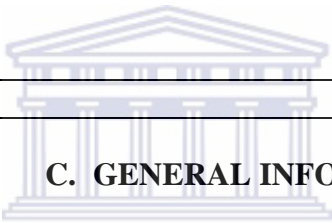
OTHER CO-RESEARCHERS:

THESIS: STUDENT RESEARCHER: X

THESIS: SUPERVISOR: Rahmat Omar & Dr. Joy Papier (co-supervisor)



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C. GENERAL INFORMATION

STUDY LEAVE TO BE TAKEN DURING PROJECT (days): N/A

IS IT INTENDED THAT THE OUTCOME WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATION?
YES NO

COMMENTS: DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRPERSON:

SIGNATURE OF THESIS STUDENT RESEARCHER – WHERE APPROPRIATE:
DATE

SIGNATURE OF THESIS SUPERVISOR – WHERE APPROPRIATE:
DATE

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER – WHERE APPROPRIATE:
DATE:

SIGNATURE OF DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRPERSON:

DATE:

NOTE: THESE SIGNATURES IMPLY AN UNDERTAKING *BY THE RESEARCHERS*, TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH ETHICALLY, AND AN UNDERTAKING BY THE THESIS SUPERVISOR (WHERE APPROPRIATE), AND THE DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRPERSON, TO MAINTAIN A RESPONSIBLE OVERSIGHT OVER THE ETHICAL CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH.

E. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND RESEARCH ETHICS STATEMENT



Please type below, or attach a typed document, usually between 500 and 5000 words, setting out the purpose and process of the research. Please include a clear research ethics statement. The onus is on the applicant to persuade UWC that the research will be conducted ethically. This will normally require evidence of an up to date research ethics literature search in the particular discipline; evidence of what the world standard ethical practice is, in the particular discipline; an explanation of how the proposed research is to be conducted ethically; a detailed justification of any proposed departure from world standard ethical practice; and a clear undertaking to conduct the research ethically. It may be useful also to agree to conduct the research in line with the published ethical rules of a national or international disciplinary association. UWC reserves the right to stop or suspend any research undertaken by its staff or students, or by outsiders on its property or in association with it, if the research appears to be unethical.

Purpose of this Research

The official purpose of this research is partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Inter-Continental Masters Programme – Adult Learning and Global Change long paper (Local Option).

My central research question is:

How do FET College educators explain the role and function of College occupational training units? A case study of Western Cape FET Colleges.

Both Departments of Education and Labour see the FET College sector as critical to achieving skills formation and human resource development strategies of South Africa. However, each Department has a very different understanding of the role and functions that FET Colleges and College educators should perform in order to achieve these strategies.

The purpose of the research process is to investigate public Further Education and Training (FET) College educator involvement in workplace education and training and to understand how FET College educators perceive their role and function in workplace education and training. FET Colleges are situated at the nexus between FET and Higher Education sectors and offer both vocational (preparation for work) and occupational (workplace training) programmes. In 2006 the FET College Act was passed, which saw the introduction of a new National Curriculum Vocational (NCV) syllabus, designed to prepare young adult learners for access to work and to higher education as a replacement for the old NATED (N1-N6) programmes. The NCV curricula are centrally designed and funded by the National Department of Education and are being progressively introduced at NQF Levels 2 to 4 from 2007. Central to the development of this curriculum is the notion that learners need to be provided with generic skills that can be adapted for multiple and flexible uses in workplaces.

The Department of Labour and Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) also make extensive use of public FET Colleges as a service provider for occupational programmes such as learnerships and skills programmes, which provide additional income generation for the FET Colleges. Central to the development of these occupational programmes is the upskilling of the existing labour force and to provide economic opportunities for unemployed learners in addition to the qualification.

As can be seen from these diverse education and training approaches, workplace education and training is a site of contestation and open to a range of understandings even from within public FET Colleges. There are currently 50 FET Colleges in South Africa (merged from over 200 technical colleges in 2000) and the FET Colleges sector is still deemed to be a provincial education competence. The Western Cape Province has six FET Colleges, all of which have occupational education and training units that account to a Deputy CEO of Innovation and Development. The section below outlines the research process.

Research Process

The research process to be adopted is a qualitative case study approach. The case study method can be described as ‘empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...’ (Myers, 1997; Yin, 1994). Bachor (2000) notes that:

‘The acceptance of case studies as a viable research tool has reemerged, in part, because people want a convenient and meaningful technique to capture a time-framed picture of an individual’s - or some other aggregate that can be construed as a unit or collective – characteristics and performance”

Case studies are multi-perspectival analyses and are also known as a triangulated research strategy (Tellis, 1997). The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes. In case studies this can be done by using multiple sources of data (Yin, 1984).

This research study will be undertaken with public FET Colleges within the Western Cape in order to determine a provincial FET College sector understanding of college educator roles and function in workplace education and training. In attempting to answer this research question stated above, I ask a number of sub-questions in this regard. Is FET College occupational education and training conducted primarily for income generation purposes? Do college educators feel their work assists the FET Colleges to be part of a critical sector for skills formation in South Africa? Do FET College educators feel that their involvement in workplace education and training is recognised and valued by their institutions? Are there tensions between educators involved in workplace education and those involved in vocational workplace preparation programmes? These questions derive from my main research question stated above.

The unit of analysis for this research case study is FET educators involved in workplace education and training. The sample to be used in this case study will target educators involved in occupational training units at each of the six FET Colleges in the Western Cape. Within each FET College, the researcher will attempt to interview the occupational training unit manager and three College educators who work within these units. It is envisaged that the sample for this study will be 24 FET College personnel. In order to ensure their participation within this study, all target respondents will be emailed a letter of consent that states the purpose of my research and a guarantee of personal anonymity as well as institutional anonymity within the research paper. All respondents will be informed that their participation in this research process is voluntary. An ethical consideration is that I have a professional relationship with the six Western Cape FET Colleges and this could lead to some educators providing answers they think I might like to hear. I will at all times strive to be conscious of this potential bias and actively seek to overcome this through using multiple data sources to triangulate my oral interviews.

A literature review will be used to validate the two central constructs of the research focus, namely vocational and occupational training. Whereas there is substantial literature on vocational and occupational training, there is much less literature available on the perceptions and views of FET College educators' understanding of occupational training. UWC research databases will be drawn on and RefWorks used to collate the literature review. The literature review will also focus on South Africa's macro-economic outlook in order to identify debates on post-Fordism, multi-skilling and human capital theories that inform the workplace education and training context. Government policy on workplace education and training will also be reviewed.

In terms of data collection, a research instrument will be designed and piloted with educators from one FET College occupational training unit. The research instrument will then be revised before interviews are conducted with the remainder of the 24 FET College educators. All interviews will be audio recorded with the respondents' permission and transcribed. The interview will consist of semi-structured qualitative interview questions based on my research question and sub-questions detailed above. Copies of transcribed interviews and the research paper will be made available to respondents upon request.

A range of theoretical lenses will be applied to the research data. These include situated theoretical perspectives such as Lave and Wenger's work on communities of practice in order to highlight issues of parity of esteem between vocational and occupational educator work. Human resource development theorists (Van Holt, C ; Webster, E ; Kraak, A; Altmann, M: Brown, P: Green, A: Lauder, H) will be drawn on to determine international and local theories on workplace education and training as well as educational theorists such as Fenwick, T., McGrath, S. and Young, M. to identify educational approaches to education and training. These theoretical perspectives will also be drawn on to inform the research instruments described in the section above.

The data analysis process will make use of use of a qualitative software programme, Atlas Ti, for qualitative analysis. All Atlas Ti codes are published as appendices for the sake of transparency. Copies of research instruments will be posted as appendices. Using Atlas Ti, all interviews will be compared using a set of key codes, based on my research questions, in order to identify areas of commonality and difference. Themes will then be developed from the interview data that intersect with my literature review and theoretical perspectives in order to triangulate research data for the paper. This data will then be further analysed and written up into a comprehensive research paper and subjected to peer review before final formulation.

I believe that the research process outlined above conforms to standard ethical requirements of qualitative research.



Form issued by: Professor Renfrew Christie, UWC Dean of Research, February 2002.
(959 2949; 959 2948 secretary, 959 3170 fax, email: rchristie@uwc.ac.za)

Appendix D – Letter asking for consent to be interviewed

20 June 2008

Dear

Letter of Consent to be interviewed by Seamus Needham for his Long Paper of the Inter-continental Master's Programme in Adult Learning and Global Change

I am currently doing a Long Paper in partial fulfillment of the abovementioned Master's Degree and would like to interview Western Cape FET College educators who are in workplace education and training. My research question for the Long paper is:

How do FET College educators explain the role and function of College occupational training units?

This letter serves to confirm that you voluntarily agree to be interviewed by Seamus Needham for the purposes of this research. Your signature at the bottom of this agreement signifies that you agree to the terms outlined below and give your consent to be interviewed.

In turn, I confirm that your interview will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will not be used for any other purpose other than for the research paper. Your name will not be used in the research paper and a pseudonym or code will be used to attribute extracts from the interview. I also confirm that the name of your FET College will not be used in the research paper in order not to compromise your or the FET College's integrity and identity through participation in this research process. Copies of the transcribed interviews and my paper will be made available on request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Seamus Needham
ICM ALGC Student
Ph: (021) 761 0603
Fax: (021) 761 0618
Cell: 082 555 9175
Email: sneedham@uwc.ac.za

I hereby voluntarily consent to be interviewed by Seamus Needham for this research paper in the ICM ALGC Master's Degree.

Name:

Date: