THE ROLE OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE AS PERCEIVED BY THE LOCAL INDUSTRIES

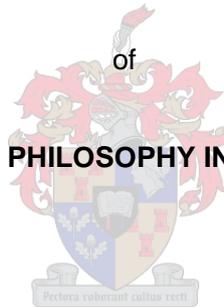**AARON ELLY NKOSI**

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

In the Mpumalanga Province, the high rate of black African people aged 20 years or older who had no schooling, namely, 32% in 1996 and 30.1% in 2001, was a cause for concern. The unemployment rate in the province increased from 18.6% in 1996 to 26.3% in 2007. The unemployment rate for black Africans in particular increased from 20.3% in 1996 to 24.6% in 2001. The rural areas in the province are mainly populated by black Africans and since Mpumalanga is a rural province, the conclusion could be drawn that most of the people affected by these figures were found in the rural areas of the province.

The Further Education and Training colleges (FET colleges) are the delivery arm of government in skills training programmes, which are primarily suited to the development of human resources in South Africa and especially in rural areas.

A research project was carried out to investigate the role of the Further Education and Training colleges in the development of human resources in the rural areas of Mpumalanga Province. A questionnaire was administered to managers of industries, and another one to the managers of Further Education and Training colleges in the province.

The results of the research project showed that Further Education and Training colleges did not make a significant contribution towards skills development of human resources in the targeted areas and that the existing offering of programmes were not addressing the critical needs of the people in these areas. Lack of funding contributed towards the limited involvement of the Further Education and Training colleges. It was shown that both Further Education and Training colleges and industries believed that through collaboration in a number of fields such as learnerships, sharing of resources, and planning together can improve their prospects for development.

In interpreting the findings within the context of the literature review it was concluded that the role and involvement of Further Education and Training colleges in the rural areas should be directed by the genuine development needs of people in these areas. The identification of training and development needs is critical towards a successful intervention for the development of human resources in rural areas. Furthermore, the training providers targeting rural areas

should be informed by both theoretical and practical considerations towards the provision of training intervention programmes.

The research presented a number of recommendations, some of the most important being that Further Education and Training colleges be transformed, that there should be collaboration between Further Education and Training colleges and the private sector, that advocacy of the Further Education and Training colleges should take place, that the approaches to planning and development of skills training programmes should be meaningful, that training needs be identified and that funding should be made available for rural development projects.

OPSOMMING

Die hoë voorkoms van ongeskooldheid by swart Afrikane bo die ouderdom van 20 jaar in die Mpumalanga-provinsie in Suid-Afrika is 'n groot bron van kommer. In 1996 was die persentasie ongeletterdes ouer as 20 jaar 32% en in 2001 was dit 30.1%. Daarbenewens het die werkloosheidsyfer in hierdie provinsie in 2007 vanaf 18.6% in 1996 tot 26.3% toegeneem. Die werkloosheidsyfer vir swart Afrikane het vanaf 20.3% in 1996 tot 24.35% in 2001 toegeneem. Die landelike gebiede van die provinsies in Suid-Afrika en dus ook in Mpumalanga word hoofsaaklik bewoon deur swart Afrikane wat tot die gevolgtrekking lei dat die meeste mense wat deur hierdie statistiek beïnvloed word in die landelike gebiede van Mpumalanga woon.

Die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in die landelike gebiede word hoofsaaklik behartig deur die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding. Hierdie instellings is verantwoordelik vir die nasionale Departement van Onderwys se vaardigheidsopleidingsprogramme.

Hierdie navorsing is gedoen om ondersoek in te stel na die rol van kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding in die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in die landelike gebiede van Mpumalanga.

Die bevindinge van die navorsing dui daarop dat die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding nie 'n betekenisvolle bydrae tot die vaardigheidsontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne lewer in die landelike gebiede van Mpumalanga nie. Daar is ook bevind dat die programme wat deur die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding aangebied word, nie aan die kritieke behoeftes van die bevolking van hierdie gebiede voldoen nie. Onvoldoende befondsing het onder meer bygedra tot die beperkte betrokkenheid van die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding by die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in die provinsie. Beide teikengroepe wat by die navorsing betrokke was, naamlik die bestuurders van die nywerhede en die bestuurders (prinsipale) van die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding, het aangedui dat groter samewerking op verskeie terreine, soos met leerderskappe, die deel van bronne en gesamentlike beplanning, die vooruitsigte op ontwikkeling kan verbeter.

By die vertolking van die bevindinge in samehang met die literatuurstudie is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat die betrokkenheid van kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding by die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne op hoofsaaklik twee vlakke gefokus behoort te word. Eerstens behoort alle programme wat die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding aanbied op die werklike ontwikkelingsbehoeftes van die inwoners van die provinsie gerig te wees. Die identifisering van opleidings- en ontwikkelingsbehoeftes is van kardinale belang ten einde op sinvolle en suksesvolle wyse 'n bydrae tot die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronne in die landelike gebiede van die provinsie te maak. Tweedens behoort die rol en betrokkenheid van die kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding gegrond te wees op teoretiese en praktiese oorwegings met betrekking tot die voorsiening van opleidingsprogramme.

Op grond van die bevindinge van die navorsing is verskeie aanbevelings gemaak. Daar is aanbeveel dat kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding getransformeer behoort te word tot moderne, doelgerigte, behoeftegedrewe en behoorlik gefinansierde instellings. Nouer samewerking tussen kolleges vir Verdere Onderwys en Opleiding en die privaatsektor (nywerhede) word aanbeveel. Die kolleges behoort baie beter voorspraak vir en bemarking van hulle produkte te doen. Aanbevelings is ook gemaak met betrekking tot die identifisering van opleidings- en ontwikkelingsbehoeftes, die beplanning en ontwikkeling van vaardigheidsprogramme en die befondsing van landelike ontwikkelingsprojekte.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIMS OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH METHOD

1.1. **INTRODUCTION**

This research focused on the role of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in skills development of people in communities of the Mpumalanga Province as perceived by industries located in those regions. The research aimed to determine the potential of the Further Education and Training colleges in skills development and the role these colleges could play in the human resources development strategy of government. The experience of industries is pivotal in this regard, since they are expected to be the main employers of graduates from FET colleges.

Some of these industries are located within rural communities, which are very remote and generally poverty-stricken. Kotzé (1994) describes rural poverty as a feature of South Africa. He regards it as a problem that is increasing in magnitude and one that should be addressed as a matter of urgency. The masses in rural communities, being poor as well as politically and economically powerless, are marginalised. The extensive rate of unemployment, high illiteracy and low health standards in rural areas are a cause for major concern (Tosterud, 1996).

Hartshorne (in Kotzé, 1994: 21) has argued that the problems and needs of the rural communities used to be pushed into the background in favour of white economic and political development and domination. Programmes introduced since 1994, including the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a), have attempted to address the plight of skills shortages in South Africa.

1.2. GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The SA government views FET colleges as a sector that could be used as a means of reaching masses of illiterate, semi-literate and unskilled people in diverse communities. These institutions could decentralise learning programmes that are important to the industries and for self-employment. According to the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998b), such learning programmes should be aligned to relevant unit standards and should offer learning materials and methodologies by which learners can achieve agreed-upon learning outcomes. Tsolo (2001) supports the statement by stating that programmes that are occupationally based when completed will constitute a credit towards a qualification registered in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). People who do not have money to be enrolled at institutions of higher learning such as universities of technology and universities are offered the opportunity to acquire skills training through these colleges. According to Hoppers (2001), most post-compulsory education learners who have failed to complete formal school education and need skills development enter into the FET college programmes.

Scott (1987: 12) holds the view that a lack of education in the rural areas works against people's easy adjustment into an advancing technological age. Surveys undertaken in Mpumalanga by the Mpumalanga Department of Education (1997: 63-67) have shown that there is a shortage of vocational training centres, a minimal improvement of the existing physical resources and a lack of career guidance and replacement centres for all out-of-school people. All these elements impede the chances of developing skilled or well-trained people and prevent improvement in the quality of work life and general life, which they desire. The majority (61%) of the population of 3 643 435 people of Mpumalanga Province live in rural areas (Statistics SA, 2007). The high level of unemployment is mainly found among people in rural areas (Robertson, 1985: 151). Since human resources development is one of the issues on the SA government's priority list for institutions of vocational education, both non-government

organisations (NGOs) and the public and private sector have a role to play towards this national goal (Marais, 2001).

This research aimed firstly at establishing whether FET colleges do have the potential to provide the industries with well-trained students and secondly at determining the role these colleges could play in the skills development strategy of government in Mpumalanga.

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research was to determine the role of FET colleges in skills development in Mpumalanga as perceived by local industries. More specifically, such an investigation would reveal the effectiveness of these colleges in skills development and determine whether these institutions are aligned to various skills development policies, such as skills development strategies and the FET Acts (RSA, 1998c & 2006). The research further aimed at determining ways in which FET colleges contribute in meeting the industries' expectations.

1.4. AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

The argument of this problem statement was based on the need to determine what role FET colleges play in developing the skills of people so that industries in Mpumalanga could be supplied with skilled people. The following statistics on enrolment figures in FET colleges, unemployment rate, human development index, economically active population, educational level and the income category show a clear picture of the state of affairs in the province. As mentioned in the introductory statement, rural areas are characterised by high illiteracy, semi-literacy, a high birth rate, a lack of infrastructure and business, and economically inactive people. FET colleges are expected to meet these communities' as well as the industries' needs. All these characteristics are clearly projected in the following statistics (see Figures 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, and Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) as supplied by the National Business Initiative (2000b) and Statistics SA (2003).

1.4.1 Distribution of Further Education and Training colleges in Mpumalanga Province

Mpumalanga Province has three FET colleges, which comprise of 10 campuses. These institutions are demarcated according to the original establishment of the three regions of the province as shown in Appendix 1. The research was aimed at these three regions, namely Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibandze. The FET colleges are found in these regions, and they are known as Ehlanzeni FET Colleges, which comprise of the Nelspruit, Mlumati, Kanyamazane, Waterval Boven and Mthimba campuses, the Gert Sibandze FET College, which comprises the Ermelo, Evander and Standerton campuses, and the Nkangala FET College, which comprises the Mpodozankomo, CN Mahlangu, Middelburg and Witbank campuses. The institutions were also formed based on the labour market realities that were drawn by the National Business Initiatives in 2000.

1.4.2 Enrolment in the Further Education and Training colleges

The creation of the merged Further Education and Training colleges with 10 campuses was originally envisaged as a strategy that should ensure that these colleges are optimally utilised. According to the declaration of FET colleges (based on the FET Acts of 1998 and 2006), mergers and closures of public FET colleges were perceived as the first phase of the overall strategy adopted by the National Department of Education to re-organise and create a vibrant coordinated FET system in South Africa (RSA, 1998c & 2006). The long-term vision of the National Department of Education was to develop a co-coordinated FET system that will provide high-quality, flexible and responsive programmes and opportunities for citizens to respond to be a learning society. According to the National Business Initiative (2000a), the minimum size for these institutions should ideally be 2 000 or more full-time students. This size should create a possible maximum utilisation of the FET colleges in the province. Figures provided by Statistics South Africa (2007) show that Mpumalanga currently

occupies position six regarding growth as compared with other provinces, with a population of 3 643 435, which is 7.5% of the total population of the country. It also accounts for 4.4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the country. Of particular concern is that the province only has 5% of full-time students registered at the FET colleges (see Figure 1.1). In terms of the skills required for its major areas of economic activities, namely agriculture, papermaking, and coal and gold mining, the FET colleges are not registering sufficient students to supply in the needs of skills development of the province. The figures as provided in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the position of Mpumalanga regarding the number of students registered in the FET colleges when compared to other provinces in South Africa.
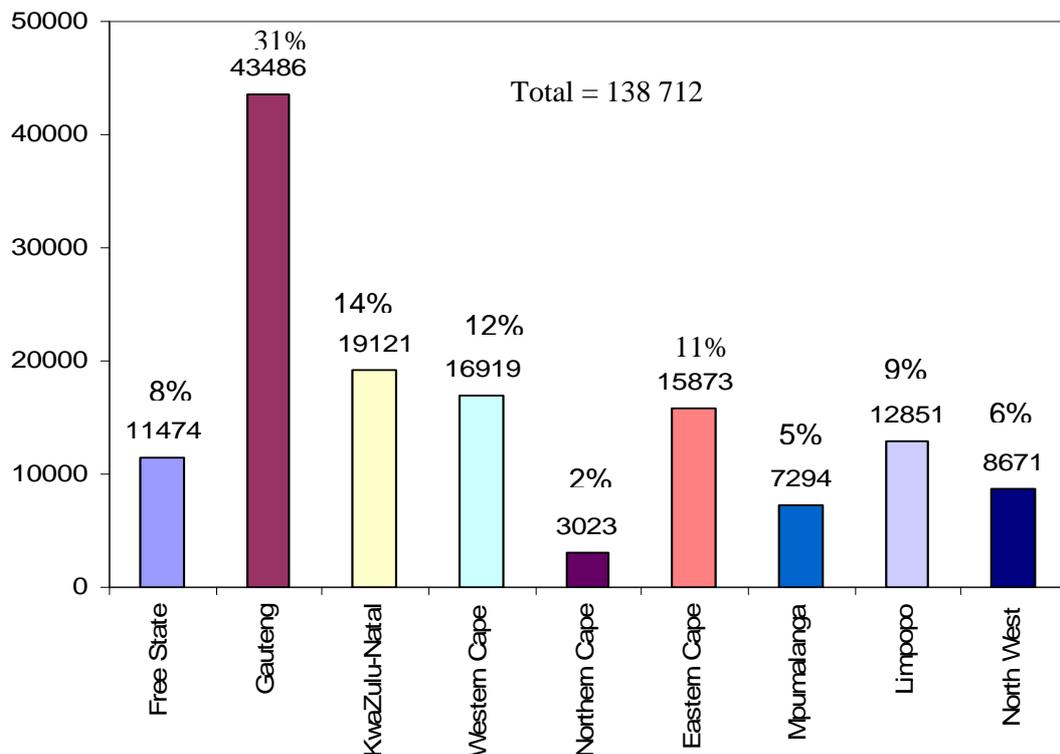
Figure 1.1: Total full-time students enrolled in Further Education and Training colleges in 2000 by province (NBI: 2000a)

At the time of the research (2007), 7 294 full-time students were enrolled in the three FET colleges. The majority of the learners (62.8%) were from the Nkangala FET College. Ehlanzeni FET College had 9.9% and 27.3% students were

enrolled in the Gert Sibandze FET College. In the whole population of 50 national FET colleges, Mpumalanga Province had only 5% enrolment (see Figure 1.1). In view of the low number of students enrolled in the FET colleges in the province, the question arises whether the province has embarked on the national call to provide for skills development needs.
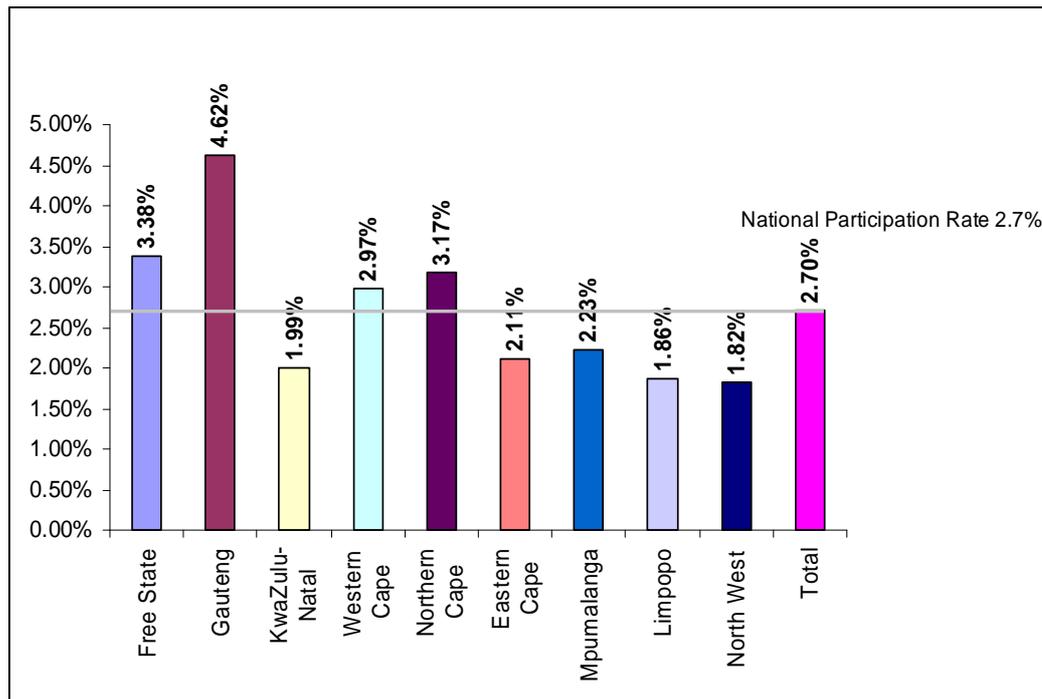
Figure 1.2: Participation rates of students per province (National Business Initiative, 2000a)

Figure 1.2 shows that learner participation in FET colleges in Mpumalanga is only 2.23%, which would indicate that something should be done to make students aware of these colleges. The percentage of learner participation in Mpumalanga also suggests that the local communities under-utilise these institutions.

1.4.3 **Unemployment rate in the Mpumalanga Province**

Mpumalanga Province has a 26.3% unemployment rate, which is close to the national unemployment rate of 25.5% (Statistics SA, 2007). Figure 1.3 shows the comparison of the present condition in the unemployment rate.
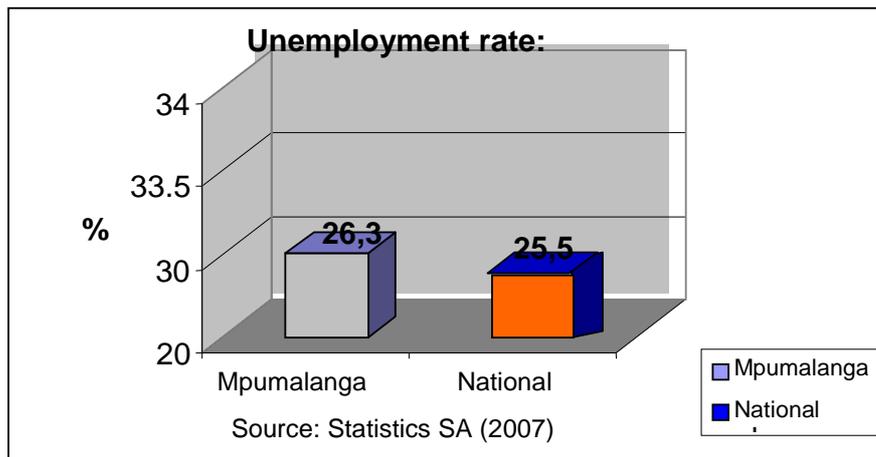
Figure 1.3: Unemployment rate in Mpumalanga Province

The unemployment figure of 26.3% of the population in Mpumalanga, which is slightly higher than the national unemployment rate of 25.5% (Statistics SA, 2007), shows that there is a great need for transformation in skills training in South Africa. In order to overcome this problem, people should be exposed to skills training programmes.

1.4.4 **The Human Development Index in South Africa**

Table 1.1 shows the Human Development Index in South Africa. It shows the ranking of the nine provinces in human development.

Table 1.1 Comparison of provinces on selected Human Development Index (HDI) indicators

Indicator	Provinces and their ranking								
	EC	FS	GP	KZN	MP	NC	LP	NW	WC
Population	3	7	2	1	8	9	4	6	5
Household income**	9	8	1	3	7	4	5	6	2
Unemployment	3	7	1	2	8	9	5	6	4
Literacy	8	3	1	4	7	5	9	6	2
Human development index	8	5	2	6	4	3	9	7	1
Non-urban population	3	6	9	5	3	7	1	2	8
Access to electricity	9	4	2	6	5	3	8	7	1
Access to piped water	9	4	2	7	5	3	8	6	1

NB: 1: top ◄——► 9: bottom (Average annual income of the head of household)

Adapted from Statistics SA, 2004

Table 1.1 shows that Mpumalanga (shaded) falls in the lower half of the distribution in all of the selected indicators except the Human Development Index (HDI) where it is in position 4. It must, however, be mentioned that this HDI level is mostly linked to the urban sector of the population. Another important observation is the rural nature of the province, being rated number 3 with most of its population living in rural areas. Of the population of 3 643 435 people residing in the province, approximately 61% live in rural areas (Statistics SA, 1996). The high level of unemployment, rated 4 (Table 1.1), is mainly related to people in rural areas (Robertson, 1985: 151).

The focus of development in South Africa after 1994 has been on issues relating to rural upliftment (Nel, Hill & Binns, 1997). Since human resources development is one of the national imperatives (formerly 'presidential imperatives') (Marais,

2001), institutions of further education and training, higher education organisations, NGOs, and the public and private sector have a role to play towards this national goal.

1.4.5 **Economically active population**

Mpumalanga Province is in position six out of nine provinces in terms of its total population when compared to other provinces in South Africa. It has 7.5% of the total population of the country. It is mostly rural in character, with almost 61% of the population living in rural areas (National Business Initiative, 2000a). Table 1.2 gives an overview of the status in the province (Statistics SA, 2007):

Table 1.2: Economically active population in the Mpumalanga Province

Total	Not economically active	Economically Active			
		Total	Workers	Unemployed	Rate
2 015 000	870 000	1145 000	844000	302 000	26,3%

Source: Statistics SA, 2007

The figures in Table 1.2 cover the whole province. Out of the economically active population of 1 145 000, only 844 000 have full-time employment and 302 000 are unemployed. The table further reveals that the province has an estimated population of 2 015 000 of the employable age between 15 and 65 years, but only 1 145 000 people are economically active. This shows that 26.3% of the province's total economically active population are unemployed as compared to the 25.5% unemployed of the national economically active population.

1.4.6 **Educational level**

According to the research of the National Business Initiative (2000a), in a province where almost half of its youth are considered functionally illiterate and unemployed, the challenges faced by Further Education and Training colleges are immense. In one of the three regions in the province, namely the Ehlanzeni region, 73% of the population have passed Grade 12, but they have not acquired any formal skills training (Mpumalanga DoE, 1997: 67-68). This situation does not augur well for the new dispensation of this country that promotes more skills development. It impacts very negatively on the progress and economic development in the country.

1.4.7 **Income category for persons between the ages of 15 and 65 years old in the Mpumalanga Province**

Unemployment figures alone are not the only indicators of poverty levels in a particular area. Therefore, income levels also need to be considered for a clearer indication of the overall poverty in the province. Table 1.4 below shows the monthly income category for persons between 15 and 65 years of age in Mpumalanga.

Table 1.3: Income category for persons between 15 and 65 years of age in the Mpumalanga Province

Income	Population
No income	1 156 309
R1 – R400	176 006
R401 – R800	213 153
R801 – R1 600	139 681
R1 601 – R3 200	106 111
R3 201 – R6 400	67 171
R6 401 – R12 800	33 596
R12 801 – R25 600	10 265
R25 601 – R51 200	2 885
R51 201 – R102 400	1 480
R102 401 – R204 800	973
R204 801 or more	390

Statistics SA, 2003

The population found in the bracket of 'No income' represents mostly the 69% of the population who live in the rural areas of Mpumalanga. It is clear that almost half of the population live in poverty (1.2 million of 3 643 435 have no income) (Statistics SA, 2003).

1.5   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research was to determine the role of FET colleges towards skills development in Mpumalanga as perceived by the local industries. The experience of industries was pivotal in this regard, since they are expected to be the main employers of graduates from FET colleges.

The research would determine whether the FET colleges in Mpumalanga do indeed supply industries with graduates that have the appropriate skills and knowledge to meet their needs. The research would particularly examine the impact these institutions have in local industries of Mpumalanga. Within the

context of the specific socio-economic development of the people in this province, the following research objectives were the focal point of the research:

- To determine the views and perceptions of the local industries and local FET colleges about the role of the FET colleges in skills development in Mpumalanga

- To analyse whether the skills development legislative mandate is being followed by both local FET colleges and the local industries

- To investigate the role and/or involvement of these colleges in human resources development in Mpumalanga and to determine whether industries appreciate their role

- To evaluate the contributory role that FET colleges have to play or can play towards human development in Mpumalanga

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aimed to determine the potential of the Further Education and Training colleges in providing the local industries with well-trained students and to determine the role these colleges could play in the human resources development strategy of government. In order to guide this research, a number of questions had to be asked. The research focused on the following research questions:

- How well are the services provided by the FET colleges received by the intended sector? Are the beneficiaries or targeted industries satisfied with the services provided by the FET colleges?

- How are these colleges involved in skills development in the selected industries?

- What are the roles and/or involvement of FET colleges in skills development of human resources in selected local industries?

- Do all the stakeholders follow the relevant skills development legislation mandate?

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a researcher's plan about how to proceed in executing a project, a plotting of the travel route the research proposes to follow. Smit (1995: 15) argues that the concept of research design includes the plan, structure and strategy of the research. He further argues that the research design enables the researcher to obtain scientifically valid answers that have not been affected by interference variables. The nature of the research in this instance called for a descriptive design in a qualitative approach.

The nature of this research required a method that should seek to determine the thinking and perception of the targeted sample. It would be required to present data of the present situation and to describe as objectively as possible what people are doing, anticipating and planning at the time. According to Treece and Treece (1986: 176) the advantage of the survey method is that it is objective, specific, practical, accurate, enlightening and factual. With this in mind, the descriptive survey was judged to be a suitable method for the proposed research, as compared to the other available methods, such as a case research, or experimental or quantitative approaches.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the process that was followed to collect the main data. According to Turabian (1996: 80), this is the most important part of the research. It clearly describes the procedures or methods to be used. The investigation necessitated the inclusion of data gathering through questionnaires (Van den Aardweg, 1988: 59). A descriptive survey method was adopted through the use of the questionnaires. The details of these components are provided in Chapter 4. The research intended to determine the role of FET colleges towards skills development in Mpumalanga as perceived by the local industries; hence the descriptive survey was a suitable method for the proposed research, as compared to the other available methods.

1.9   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Mouton (1996: 114) defines conceptualisation as a definition of concepts used in problem statements. The following concepts were defined as they played a major role in this research: development: training, rural and deep-rural area, semi-skilled, skills, competence, Further Education and Training. The purpose of this section is to clarify the meaning of relevant terms or concepts that are used in the research.

1.9.1   Development

Pont (1995: 7) defines development as a process of working with individuals or organisations to enable them to cross a threshold, which has qualitative importance to them and their lives. Development is about empowering people to perform a set of tasks at a high standard, where standards are measured by their appropriateness for a specified and yet dynamic social or economic purpose. According to Gray, Mazibuko and O'Brien (1995: 2), development is a process of change, starting from individual development of confidence, cooperativeness, awareness and skills. Burkey (1993) puts forth similar arguments to those of Gray, Mazibuko and O'Brien (1995: 2) by stating that with this base, economic and political development could proceed and allow for social development whereby culturally appropriate social services and institutions could be initiated and maintained.

According to Scott (1987: 25), development should be seen as a multi-dimensional process that includes the reorganisation and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. Development, besides improving income and expenditure, also involves radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures. It also influences popular attitudes, even customs and beliefs. Development thus involves not only skills training but also the more difficult task of attitude change.

Researchers view development as a step towards change and the upliftment of the standard of life and knowledge. In this research the term was used to determine whether the FET colleges do indeed change or uplift the standard of people's life where they are located. The preceding literature overview brought the following different elements of development to the fore:

- empowering
- process of change
- cooperativeness
- reorganisation

These elements were incorporated in the research to determine how FET colleges facilitated upliftment by catering for the needs of both private organisations and the learners.

1.9.2 Training

According to Hornsby (1989: 361), training is a process of preparing or being prepared for a sport or a job. Pont (1995: 7) defines training as the relatively systematic attempt to transfer knowledge or skills from one who knows or can do to one who does not know or cannot do. Modisha (1995: 31) views training as a means of equipping an individual or a person to perform or execute competently in her/his present and future job, so as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 1991: 5) defines training as the transfer or gaining of technical knowledge, related skills, values and attitudes in order to develop proficiency and a person's natural aptitudes or other abilities to improve capabilities as a worker. Various authors (see Van Dyk, Nel & Van Zloedol, 1992; Laird, 1985) regard training as a change in behaviour and attitude in a desired direction.

Kroon (1990: 272-273) claims that training embraces empowerment, which aims at developing people to their benefit, while De Coning (1991) argues that all activities that improve the way of job execution are regarded as training.

Martorana (1996) and James (1995) state that training should be the first step in opening the abilities and potential of people and they regard it as a means to make any organisation prosper.

According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 1989:10), skill training is any training that improves the effectiveness of the trainee in performing work. This involves the formulation and application of a set of skills in order to achieve the required standards.

In the context of this research, training was seen as a measuring instrument towards change or development. Since FET colleges have to do with training for change, the training concept was very important in this research as a guide to verify whether these colleges were on the right track. Therefore, training in the context of this research refers to an activity where skills and knowledge applicable to a particular job or occupation are developed in the community. The four elements highlighted in the literature review highlighted for further research and analysis are (1) preparing, (2) transfer of knowledge (3) change in behaviour and attitude and (4) empowerment.

All the elements were used in the project to emphasise the role of FET colleges in skills training.

1.9.3 **Skills**

Van den Aardweg (1988: 213) describes skills as a level of proficiency attained in carrying out sequences of action in a consistent way, and indicates that practical knowledge is combined with the ability to show a degree of expertise, competence and even cleverness. He states that skills have the following characteristics:

- little attention to specific movements
- better differentiation of cues
- rapid feedback and correction of movement

- greater speed and coordination

- greater stability under a variety of environmental conditions

Barnett (1995) places more emphasis on the perfect standard of a performance. He argues that skills should meet the following criteria for application as a standard of performance:

- Assessment should be done to determine whether the performance has met the required demands.

- Chances should not be taken, which means that all performances have to be deliberate and address the situation.

- Skills should be applied even if the situation is complex.

According to the Green Paper on the Skills Development Strategy (RSA, 1997), a learning nation, just as any learning organisation, has to be made up of people with practical competence, foundational competence and reflexive competence, so that they can be capable of reflecting on their current performance in order to improve continually. The Green Paper (RSA, 1997) explains that practical competence refers to a means of execution of a set of given tasks. Foundational competence becomes evident when a sign of understanding of what is done is shown, while being reflexive shows the ability to connect performances with understanding and put all together in adaptable action.

Skills development is seen as the development of the necessary competencies that can be expertly applied in a particular context for a defined purpose (RSA, 1997). It means that skills development should result in skills performance such as is traditionally associated with the work of skilled craft workers, skilled managers and skilled professionals. It is further suggested that the demarcation of skills should be such that a unit standard signifies a small set of competencies that are complete on their own but which are unlikely to be sufficient for employment. This means that skills should have enough unit standards for the outcome to render the learner employable.

In the context of this research, the concept 'skill' is used as a focal point of the FET colleges in human resources development. Since FET colleges have to do with skills training for change, the concept 'skills' was very important in this research as a core to verify whether these colleges understand the demand of the country and whether they are in line with the skills development strategy. The issues that emerged from the preceding literature review as pertinent to the research are proficiency, understanding and competencies.

These elements were all used in the research to ascertain whether FET colleges were able to facilitate skills programmes that are relevant to industries and learners.

1.9.4 Semi-skilled persons

A person who is semi-skilled has gained knowledge of certain skills without gaining the complete range of the skill and therefore has a fragmented knowledge or skill. For instance, a semi-skilled person would know how to tighten a manifold nut but not realise that it has to be tightened to a certain torque otherwise the bolt could be under-tightened or over-tightened, both of which would cause problems.

Semi-skilled people were included in this research because FET colleges register such people in order to train them so that they can be fully qualified or skilled. The preceding literature review brought the elements of fragmented knowledge and uncertainty to the fore.

These dimensions were used in the research to unfold the role of FET colleges in supplementing the knowledge of semi-skilled people in the local industries and communities.

1.9.5 **Competency**

According to Friedlander (1996), competency is a combination of skills, knowledge and attributes required to execute or perform a given role effectively. These three elements must be balanced within a given task (Bloom, 1956). Field and Drysdale (1991: 92) define competence as an ability to perform activities safely and to the minimum acceptable standard without supervision. In other words, competency is regarded as the ability to carry out a task, process or strategy that is part of what individual workers do in their jobs. Competency reflects the knowledge of the task, the know-how, or the physical motor skill to do the activity and the reflective skill to evaluate the success or failure of the task. For example, a having a skill may be to know how to spell, but to put the words into meaningful sentences and to know that you have communicated successfully reflects competence. The research included the concept because the end result of training is competency. The elements that were highlighted as being relevant to the research are: execute or perform; acceptable standard; and knowledge.

The elements were incorporated in the research to determine whether FET colleges do indeed manage to prepare learners to undertake employment in the areas in which they studied.

1.9.6 **Further Education and Training college**

According to the FET Act (RSA, 2006), any institution providing training in the further education and training sector (above Grade 9) on a full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is established or regarded as having been established as a public further education and training institution under this Act can be declared a public further education and training institution under this Act or registered or conditionally registered as a private education and training institution under this Act. This concept was used as a core variable since the

research aimed at determining the role of FET colleges in skills development in communities and local industries of Mpumalanga. In the preceding literature review, the element of further education and training emerged as being relevant to the discussions.

This element was important in the research because many countries use FET colleges as an important mechanism for vocational training and the lesson was that South Africa should optimise these institutions in order to bring the workplace and education together. The data on FET colleges was used in the form of accounting for the arguments brought forward by the literature review and the questions raised in the questionnaires.

1.9.7 **Learnerships**

Learnerships are primarily workplace learning programmes that are supported by structured institutional learning and result in a qualification. Learnerships are a mechanism aiming at promoting the levels 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. Learnerships could also be described as a more flexible and modern form of an apprenticeship (RSA, 1998a: 42). The concept of learnerships was used in the research as one of the major aspects that FET colleges should address in developing the society in skills programmes. The preceding literature review brought workplace learning programmes to the fore as an element of learnerships.

This element was used in the project to determine how FET colleges facilitate the strengthening of the collaboration between colleges and industries.

1.9.8 **Skills programmes**

The Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a) describes skills programmes as "programmes that are occupationally based and, when completed, will constitute a credit towards a qualification registered in terms of the NQF". It further states that skills programmes are clusters of unit standards in skills-based learning modules that can assist in generating income. While they do not result in a qualification themselves, they should always be understood as leading to a learnership or a qualification.

Although skills programmes provide immediate access to income-generating skills, they should not be seen as a way of avoiding the more substantial skills intervention contained in the learnership system, which is ultimately more comprehensive. These programmes are also often referred to as skills development programmes. Researchers view skills programmes as a means of uplifting the society. In this research the term was used to determine whether the FET colleges' skills programmes do indeed address the needs of the community around them. The elements of skills programmes that ensued from the preceding literature review are that training must be occupationally based.

These elements were incorporated in the research to determine whether FET colleges were providing relevant skills programmes.

1.10 **SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

The scope of this research was limited to 20 local industries and 10 campuses of the three local Further Education and Training colleges in Mpumalanga. The research demanded that principals of FET colleges as well as managers/CEOs of industries operating in Mpumalanga be interviewed. The geographical scope of the research was restricted to Mpumalanga. The reasons for selecting 20 industries were that most of them had relatively large numbers of employees,

they had been conducting apprenticeships and at the time they were offering learnerships, and they had experience in skills development programmes.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following limitations emerged from the data-gathering activities:

- The FET colleges were scattered throughout a very large geographic area and were far from one another. It was difficult to make contact with each one.
- Some managers from industries were reluctant to provide information or opinions.
- The FET colleges could only provide generalised information.
- It was difficult to identify the perceived skills development needs, because of the limited understanding of skills development of the stakeholder groups.
- Programmes that were responsive to the social and economic needs of the province had not yet been developed.
- The research also focused on general responses to the role of the FET colleges in skills development.
- The research did not focus on details, such as the financial implications of providing skills programmes that address the needs of industries and how infrastructure impacts on such programmes.

1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. The logic of the research process led to the following structure:

- Chapter 1 offers the introduction and the statement of the research problem, as well as the theory that formed part of the research.
- Chapter 2 gives the reader an overall view of the characteristics of a responsive FET college. A number of selected issues are

discussed, and an indication is given of how a good FET college should deal with these issues.

- Chapter 3 provides the views of literature on current socio-economic trends that influence the functioning of FET colleges. These trends include legislation, developments in technology, new approaches in teaching and learning and an emerging Afrocentric approach to management. Consideration is given to the purpose of FET colleges, partnerships, learnerships, impact of delivery and implementing FET strategies at institutional level.

- Chapter 4 specifies the methodological strategy and design, the sample, the method used to collect data, the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings.

- Chapter 5 covers the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings.

- Chapter 6 deals with the synthesis of the findings that emerged from the analysis of the collected data within the context of the theoretical framework and literature overview. Conclusions and recommendations are included.

1.13 **SUMMARY**

Development of people in Mpumalanga can be matched with research in a productive and effective way, as this research has shown. Given the extent of the development needs of this country, it is hoped that research will increasingly become a partner in development initiatives. This research investigated the role and contribution of FET colleges in the industrial development of Mpumalanga. It is hoped that this kind of research will impact positively on the lives of people in Mpumalanga.

The following chapter (Chapter 2) aims at giving the reader a theoretical framework of a responsive FET college. A number of selected elements that influence the FET colleges are dealt with in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ROLE OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGE IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to develop a theoretical framework of the role of the Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in South Africa in skills development. During the post-1994 dispensation, the FET colleges were differentiated to promote the apartheid policies. The white colleges were more affluent and the black colleges in the rural areas were under-resourced. As from 2007, FET colleges have a new role to support the Skills Development policies of government in the new democratic society. The details of the new role of the FET colleges are still obscure. This chapter attempts to clarify what the role of the FET colleges should be in skills development in South Africa.

According to Mouton (1996: 173), it is generally accepted that scientific research does not take place in a vacuum. He argues that although studies or projects are written and published individually, they always form part of a theoretical framework and knowledge in a given field of research, and should logically form part of a series of interdependent preceding studies. Some of the theories or models could exceed the boundaries of those used in a particular framework.

Mouton (1996: 173) asserts that a theoretical framework is a statement that makes a provisional or conjectural knowledge claim about the specific research topic. He contends that a good theoretical framework is empirically testable, which means that the researcher should be able to specify clearly what data would support or reject it. Treece and Treece (1986: 84) state that theoretical frameworks organise current knowledge around a scheme of concepts or proposed theory and hypotheses that are to be tested. They contend that this

framework consists of theories that seem to be interrelated, and that if the planned research project is exploratory in nature, questions rather than hypotheses are appropriate. Such questions may be specific and directed toward possible options. In the context of the research, this chapter gives a provisional or conjectural knowledge claim about what should be the role of Further Education and Training colleges in skills development.

2.2 AN ECOLOGICAL MODEL FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

This project focused on some of the ways strategic and operational factors influence the internal and external environments of FET colleges as a basis for describing their role in skills development. It follows that the study had to be embedded in a conceptual framework that would show the relevant concepts and their interrelationships and after considering different options an ecological model seemed to satisfy this requirement. In the present context, an ecological model could be defined as the study of the organisation and functioning of the aspects that are assemblages of interacting factors within a particular area (Safra & Aguitar-Cauz, 2007). The following paragraphs identify the assemblages of interacting factors in the case of FET colleges.

In order for FET colleges to address the vocational needs of society, consideration has to be given to strategic and operational factors that influence the functioning of these colleges, and how they impact on the internal and external environments within which they must function. A careful review of the literature (see Chapter 3) has produced a list of internal and external strategic and operational dimensions or variables that form the core of the ecological model of FET colleges. Since the main dimensions of the model centre on the educational environment – internal as well as external – an ecological metaphor seems appropriate. These factors, together with the constituent elements, are illustrated in the following model (see Table 2.1):

Table 2.1:   An ecological model for the functioning of the Further Education and Training colleges

Factors	Internal environment I	External environment
Strategic factors	a) Strategic aims and objectives b) Teaching, learning and assessment c) Policy and legislation d) Qualifications and curriculum development e) Infrastructure and resources f) Management and leadership g) Recognition of prior learning (See p.61) h) Personnel development i) Lifelong learning (See p.60)	a) Partnerships with industries and other stakeholders (See pp. 67-68) b) Skills development legislation c) Responsiveness of the FET colleges to ASGISA d) Community representation (See p.40) e) Advocacy of FET college programmes f) Widening access g) Collaborative relationships (See p.42)
Operational factors	a) Integration of education and training (See p70) b) Learner support c) Designing of learning programmes d) Quality assurance (See p64)	a) Learnerships and skills programmes (See p.74) b) Credibility of the FET college programmes

Page numbers have been provided in Table 2.1 for cross-referencing purposes. More description and explanation of the factors are found in the pages referred to.

2.2.1 Overview of an ecological model for the functioning of the Further Education and Training colleges

The elements identified in the model are the constituents' elements that have an impact on an FET college and, in turn to which the FET college must respond. The FET college cannot operate without a purpose; it must respond to social, economic and political developments. The effective functioning of the FET college should allow these institutions to develop work and skills capabilities which will provide social, economic and political stability. The following paragraphs explain how the strategic and operational levels affect the FET colleges.

2.2.1.1 Strategic factors

According to Mda and Mothata (2000: 165), strategic factors are defined as long-term planning factors. He states that these factors should be considered when developing an overall master plan of an organisation like a school or an FET college. In this research project, a number of strategic factors were considered. These factors are discussed in the following paragraphs.

(a) Strategic factors: Internal environment

i) Strategic aims and objectives

To promote organisational effectiveness and efficiency, it is necessary to clarify the aims and objectives of the services an FET college wishes to provide. Van der Waldt and Knipe (1998: 13) have suggested two processes to achieve this clarity. The first is undertaking an internal and external environmental scan, whilst the second is doing an analysis of the organisation. The analysis is a strategic management exercise that aims at focusing the activities of the institution and providing criteria to measure the performance of the institution (Mpumalanga DoE, 2000). An FET

College with strategic aims and objectives can perform management exercises and at regular intervals continue with a sharpened focus.

Two processes, namely internal and external environmental scanning processes, are used to identify strategic issues that FET colleges will have to contend with. Internal environmental scanning involves identifying the strengths and weaknesses of internal practices, which relate to organisational structure, management style and how resources are managed within an institution. External environmental scans involve understanding the nature of significant factors in the external environment that relate to the functioning of FET colleges. These factors generally include identifying the social services and the social and economic development required within the immediate community. These issues are considered in terms of the unique threats and opportunities they hold for particular FET colleges.

In conducting an external environmental scanning process, the essential factors to determine are those that have strategic implications for the activities of the particular FET college. These factors are to be prioritised within categories of high impact, high certainty, low impact and low certainty.

The success of an FET college in achieving its aims and objectives and maintaining high levels of efficiency and effectiveness will depend on a number of factors. They are that the FET college has clarity of purpose, a well-defined organisational structure, clear articulation of envisaged services, rigorous management of service delivery, a comprehensive administrative system and thorough management processes (DoE, 1996a).

ii)   **Teaching**, **learning and assessment**

When planning teaching, learning and assessment strategies for learning programmes, curriculum practitioners will need to meet the principles of integration and equity and redress. All programmes must support the targets set for access by means of specified recognition of prior learning (RPL) procedures. Nationally developed critical systems, such as internal and external assessment, accreditation and certification, will support colleges' assessment practices. Learners and curriculum practitioners must have access to appropriate levels of support to assist learners to overcome any barriers to learning. Learning programmes will be based on learning outcomes to support learners in achieving their agreed learning goals and successfully progress to employment, self-employment or further or higher education and training. Realistic career guidance and advice will be an integral part of learning programmes to support learners when they leave a programme (Harvey, Rose & Wellings, 1992; Gammie, Gammie & Duncan, 2002).

iii)   **Policy and legislation**

The FET College Acts of 1998 and 2006 set out the government's vision clearly. These Acts aim to establish a nationally coordinated further education and training system that provides for programme-based further education and training. Tsolo (2001) argues that these policies and legislation directly address the needs of both individuals and other broader communities. In other words, the programmes offered at the colleges should be designed to train students for satisfying and fulfilling jobs, advance the strategic priorities determined by national policy objectives and complement the National Skills Development Strategy in cooperation with the Department of Labour.

In her address at the Tshwane North College "Partners in Business" gala dinner of 2007, the Minister of Education emphasised that the programmes offered are central to the transformation of the college sector and human resources. She further argued that considerable funds have been voted for the re-capitalisation of the colleges. These funds have been used to ensure that the Department of Education design and offer programmes that meet the needs of the economy and are relevant and of high quality. It is therefore the intention of government to ensure that young people see colleges as first-choice skills development opportunities (Pandor, 2007). Furthermore, the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998b) set out a broad long-term framework for the transformation of curricula, learning and teaching, qualifications, funding, quality assurance and new institutional arrangements in the sector. The FET Act already allows further education and training institutions to provide learning programmes at ABET levels 1 - 4.

iv)   **Qualifications and curriculum development**

The establishment of the new Further Education and Training college programmes necessitated the need for new qualifications for the FET colleges by the Department of Education. In 2006 the Department of Education completed the design of the new qualifications for FET colleges. In her address at the Tshwane North College "Partners in Business" gala dinner of 2007 the Minister of Education stressed that the qualification design was influenced by South Africa's need for high-level intermediary skills by labour market surveys and by the level of youth unemployment. The design of the qualifications suggested that the qualification should consist of three components: (1) fundamental subjects for learning; (2) theory and (3) practical experience (Pandor, 2007).
This translated into a seven-subject qualification at each of three levels, namely levels 2, 3 and 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Three subjects are compulsory and aim to provide the skills in the usage

of language, calculation and mathematical literacy and life skills, which have a strong emphasis on Information Technology. The students should choose four vocational subjects, which have a theoretical and practical component.

The SAQA sub-fields were useful for the organisation of the new FET college fields or sub-fields. Labour market surveys and the skills needs identified by the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (Ministry of the Office of the President, 2006) informed the decisions made in choosing the fields. These fields are the five engineering programmes including Civil Engineering, Construction, Finance, Economic and Accounting, Marketing and Management (Ministry of the office of the President, 2006).

Also significant to this discussion in terms of the role of FET colleges offering tuition and being a skills development provider, is the manner in which qualification components are comprised. This is elucidated in the Framework for Establishing Learnerships and the Quality Assurance Functions of Sector Education and the Training Authorities (RSA, 1999a: 37-40), which states that all national qualifications require at least three components, namely fundamental, core and elective components. All three components should contribute toward achieving the overall purpose of the qualification, though each plays a different role in achieving this. A fourth component, referred to as "critical cross-field outcomes", ensures the presence of critical skills at all levels of the learning programme.

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2007), the National Certificate (Vocational) is a new qualification at each of levels 2, 3 and 4 of the NQF. This qualification is designed to provide both the theory and practical experience in a particular vocational field. The practical component of the programmes may be offered in a real workplace environment or in a simulated workplace environment. An effective FET college should offer these programmes. Such an institution should afford students an opportunity to experience work situations during the period of

training. The qualification should also provide students with an opportunity to enter higher education studies subject to students taking the appropriate subject combinations (DoE, 2007).

According to Bester (in Moran & Rumble, 2004), it is expected that through comprehensive curriculum change in the FET colleges, the social and economic transformation programmes of government can be accomplished. He argues that curricula should focus on development for employment, self-employment and general employability, and that students should be provided with what are termed critical and development skills which are sought by both employers and higher education institutions. In other words, strong features of a curriculum are a requirement for Further Education and Training colleges to cater for the needs that will enable students to function effectively within their communities in support of economic, social and cultural development. Lolwana (2001: 163) supports the preceding statements by emphasising that qualifications have become an important exchange commodity in acquiring expertise and competencies for employers, whilst creating life opportunities for individuals and mobility for communities and societies. Akojee, Gewer and McGrath (2005) agree that the curricula should be more responsive to the needs of industry and more focused on promoting the employability of graduates.

v)   **Infrastructure and resources**

Infrastructure and resources should comply with the regulatory framework laid by the FET Training Act of 2006. Both public and private institutions should have the necessary infrastructure and resources to offer and sustain quality FET programmes (RSA, 2006a). The programmes offered need to be accredited in accordance with the regulations (SAQA, 1995). Learners are entitled to a safe and healthy learning environment. Programme designs should include how the learning environments will be

selected and monitored. This applies to teaching and learning facilities at all sites, including on-work experience and working in community venues.

vi)   Management and leadership

It is assumed that the prospective FET colleges have to cater for increased numbers of students. It is therefore envisaged that a high level of adaptability and performance is required from the institutional framework and the managers responsible for the successful functioning of the institution. According to Gewer (2004: 3), management and governance need more sophisticated strategic planning and greater support of the vision/mission of the new FET colleges. He voices his concern that the governing councils of these institutions are not yet playing an optimal role in college affairs. Proper management is necessary in order to cater for a diversified curriculum to meet academic and personal needs. Structural changes need to be well planned and managed effectively for high-quality, cost-effective and adaptable education and training provisioning and the day-to-day operations. This will be particularly evident in terms of the institution's overall management, leadership, administration and financial management:

vii)   Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning means 'the comparison of the previous learning and experience of a learner howsoever obtained against the learning outcomes required for a specified qualification, and the acceptance for purposes of qualification of that which meets the requirements' (Bellis, 1998). Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is essential to the development of an equitable education and training system because it provides equal opportunities to all who want to be developed. It is particularly relevant to the principles of access and redress. The form of RPL in public FET institutions is determined by two

policy documents, produced by the South African Qualifications Authority and the government (SAQA, 2001; DoE, 1996a).

The SAQA policy document states that an RPL policy should meet the needs of all the role players, including the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs), providers of education and training, constituents of SETAs, and most importantly, learners themselves. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) document outlines clear principles in the development and execution of RPL. They have been derived from the definition provided by Bellis (1998).

The principles are the following:

- Learning occurs in all kinds of situations – formally, informally and non-formally.
- Measurement of the learning takes place against specific learning outcomes required for a specific qualification.
- Credits are awarded for such learning if the learning outcomes meet the requirements of the qualification.

Two essential interpretations of the SAQA policy in the Department of Education document are that the focus of RPL in South Africa will be institutionally driven and that the registration of a qualification on the NQF requires the specification of RPL requirements.

The approval of a public FET college's curriculum will require that all learning programmes include well-defined and practical RPL procedures. According to Angelis and Marock (2001), RPL would broaden access to education and training. Bellis (2000) specifies this point more clearly by stating that education and training should through assessment give credit to prior learning and/or experience.

viii)   **Personnel development**

Due to the introduction of the new curriculum in the FET colleges and the challenges posed by the rapid change of technology, personnel need to be developed. This would allow personnel to cope with the social, economical and political challenges in the country.

The management of the FET colleges should identify the staff development needs, and specify the programmes that will be required to address those needs. The FET colleges should introduce a strategy to ensure that personnel are represented at all levels of the institution, and that a personnel development and management plan is outlined, catering for management and professional educator development. The demands posed by the changing technologies and skills needed by rural people and industries, call for the upgrading of knowledge of personnel (Mpumalanga DoE, 2000). Research should be done in order to keep up with the emerging trends, both in industry and in rural communities. Personnel development has a key role to play in addressing the challenges that are threatening the competitiveness of any society. According to Matlhaela (2001: 254-258), the development of FET college personnel is significant, because this would ensure that they act as agents of change.

Teaching personnel should show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise at a level consistent with effective teaching, training and assessment of the programme. Institutions should demonstrate that there are enough qualified and experienced teaching, training and support personnel to match the demands of the programme and the range of learners.

ix)   **Lifelong learning**

The Department of Education (DoE, 2007) affirms the view that in the 21st Century, education and training are rapidly becoming inseparable, especially as the notion of a job for life is being replaced with lifelong learning. The promotion of lifelong learning constitutes another pillar in the transformation of education and training. The Education and Training White Paper (RSA, 1995), maintains that "successful modern economies require citizens with a strong foundation of general education, who have the desire and ability to continue to learn, to adapt to and develop new knowledge, skills and technologies, to move flexibly between occupations, to take responsibility for personal performance, to set and achieve high standards and to work co-operatively". These ideals could be realised through the development of a learning culture, and in providing facilities that promote lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning could be described as the development of human potential through continued support. This support will stimulate and empower individuals to acquire the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lives and to apply them in all roles, circumstances and environments with confidence, creativity and enjoyment (Longworth & Davies, 1996: 11 - 22).

Lifelong learning is recognised as the key organising principle for developing human resources in South Africa. The education and training system must increasingly open access to learning to provide learners with the means to acquire new skills and knowledge rapidly, so that they may move from one learning context to another.

(b) **Strategic factors: External environment**

i) **Partnerships with industry and other stakeholders**

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2004), training partnerships with industry are important as industries realise that the quality of technical education is a major factor that can boost the competitiveness in the world of business. It further argues that FET colleges, on the other hand, realise that learners cannot be prepared for employment in industry without the active involvement of industry itself. Panday (2004) notes that partnerships assist educational institutions in improving the learning and training that are offered. Dole (1989: 10-13) states that since employers face the principal challenge of improving job-related basic entrepreneurial and technical skills training, they should welcome the partnerships so that they can recruit a workforce that is ready to enter their system.

The FET colleges should not form partnerships with industry only, but with other stakeholders. According to Cosser, McGrath, Badroodien and Maja (2003: 66), partnerships should be understood as mechanisms whereby FET colleges engage with particular stakeholders in mapping out their institutional agenda, thus partnerships for some institutions would entail close relationships with industrial partners, and some ties with communities and developmental initiatives.

The FET colleges would be better able to fulfil their role if well established relationships with local industries are in existence. Such collaboration would enable workers to be multi-skilled. According to Raggatt and Unwin (1991: 112), multi-skilled, flexible workers are seen as the key to a high level of production as demands change. This implies that institutions should be able to stay on par with the demands made by changes in

industry. Continuous consultation with other training providers is essential to ensure support for and development of institutions so that lifelong learners may be developed and training centres and workplaces maybe actively constructed as learning organisations. Workplace education has a significant role to play in solving basic skills problems and in other training requirements (Lander, 1990).

The FET colleges should understand the operation of the Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs) and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Partnerships should give employers a greater stake in matters of skills training. The employers exert an influence that is extended into the formal education sphere through the role played by SGBs in specifying the competence against which individuals should be assessed.

Raggatt and Unwin (1991) support the notion that allowing companies to be part of institutions will give increased power to employers in shaping the kinds of job opportunities that are available to both adults and the youth. Acts of Parliament should give employers' interest a dominant role in the governance of FET colleges.

Formation of relationships is the most crucial aspect in the responsiveness of FET colleges. This aspect would enable FET colleges to fulfil their role effectively. Graduates from these institutions would be introduced into the workplace and greater interaction could be developed. The FET colleges would be able to assess whether they are able to meet the obligations expected from them by their students, local industries and the global market.

Links to industry play an important role in the functioning of FET colleges, especially in the support that industry can provide in economic and skills development. Links with human resources managers of large organisations are therefore very necessary. In turn, FET colleges could provide valuable services to industry in terms of education and training as

outlined in the sections dealing with skills development and learnerships (Bester, 1999).

ii)   **Skills development legislation**

To be effective with regard to the specific human resources development needs as identified for South Africa by the government's human resources development strategy, a responsive curriculum is a necessity (RSA, 2001: 15-18). Government views the further education and training colleges as the ideal platform through which to achieve the national priorities. Thus a transformed FET college is considered to be an important investment for the future and pivotal to future human development in the country (Moran & Rumble, 2004: 113). The FET colleges have undergone a radical transformation. The Department of Education attempted to transform the vocational education and training components in 2005/6. Since January 2007, public FET colleges should offer modern and relevant programmes in a variety of vocational fields. The new programmes are intended to respond directly to the priority skills demands of the South African economy.

The Skills Development Act, FET Acts, Skills Levy Act and the National Strategy for Human Resource Development have been developed to promote skills development in South Africa. If FET colleges aim at contributing to the skills development agenda of government, they should align themselves with this legislation (Ministry of the Office of the President, 2006). These institutions should align themselves to various skills development policies.

iii)   **Responsiveness of the Further Education and Training colleges to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative** of **South Africa (ASGISA)**

The Department of Education has established 50 colleges out of the merger of 152 technical colleges. These institutions are expected to play an important role in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA).

In his state of the nation addresses of 2006 and 2007 the President of South Africa referred to the FET colleges as central to skills development. The Deputy President has indicated that FET colleges are crucial to achieving the human resources development skills priorities that are part of the ASGISA initiatives. There is general agreement that the skills revolution has begun in FET colleges (Ministry of the Office of the Presidency, 2006).

The Department of Education has been leading a collaborative process of institutional modernisation, programme development, and expansion of key skills in the FET colleges. The modern programmes that the Department of Education has developed to replace the N programmes are presented as National Certificate (Vocational) qualifications. These programmes are offered in 11 economic sectors, that is, three engineering programmes, five business-related programmes, Information and Communication Technology, Agriculture, Tourism and Hospitality Studies.

According to the Gauteng Provincial Government (2006), there are a myriad of challenges associated with achieving the intentions of this curriculum: there are insufficient workplaces, employers are reluctant to open workplaces for experiential training purposes without financial incentives, the administrative burden associated with regulated

experiential training needs to be minimised, and assurances needs to be given that employers will not have to take on learners/trainees as full employees at the end of the workplace training. Furthermore, the new FET curriculum requires three years of full-time study to achieve the exit level qualification associated with artisans and which has limited workplace experiential opportunity during the programme. A further challenge experienced by the FET colleges is that the Department of Education prohibits them from using departmental funds to support non-departmental registered curricula and offerings. This situation does not allow FET colleges to take care of the demands of industries (Gauteng Provincial Government, 2006).

iv) **Community representation**

A core aspect in the functioning of FET colleges is to provide a range of services to the community (Mokgatle, 1995). In order to adequately provide these services, strong links with the community are required. To fulfil their functions, FET colleges should be empathetic and ought to understand the needs of the community. The FET colleges should therefore associate with persons or organisations that are able to identify and articulate community needs that have credibility and are able to liaise with the community. These associations should be formed through college councils and be approved by the Members of the Executive Councils (MECs).

Links with organised labour are important because the labour movements have influence and this influence can be used to gain commitment from various stakeholders. However, efforts should be made to contain the influence of organised labour should it encroach on the rights of other stakeholders. The involved parties should draw terms of reference for such initiatives. This would allow for a harmonious relationship between the role players. When communities are involved, FET colleges could

enjoy support from members of the society where they are situated (Mokgatle, 1995).

v)   **Advocacy of Further Education and Training colleges' programmes**

An important component in the sustainability of an FET college is that there should be adequate and sustained advocacy of the important role the FET college plays within community development. This could include providing continuous information about the activities of the FET college to stakeholders and engaging in on-going marketing to existing and potential clients (Williamson, 1990: 52). An additional approach could be to establish mutually benefiting partnerships with other education and training providers (DoE, 1996a). The Department of Education has accentuated that the needs of the learners and other clients need to be accurately addressed and that the education and training services of the educational provider should be effectively promoted. According to McGivney (1990: 27), many FET colleges are struggling to make the general public understand the range of their services and the scope of their operations.

vi)   **Widening access to Further Education and Training colleges**

Further Education and Training colleges are required to consider a vast range of learning needs when designing their curriculum offer. Learners' ages, socio-economic circumstances, previous learning experience and career aspirations are a few of the key factors that should influence the learning programmes colleges choose to offer. Learners' individual learning needs should also influence the modes of delivery of each learning programme. FET colleges also need to consider the other aspects of a learning programme, such as the aims, intended learning outcomes and assessment practices, including adaptive methods of

assessment, learning support and career guidance. Colleges must show how they have planned to cater for the range of learners' needs when designing learning programmes.

The Education and Training White Paper (RSA, 1995) makes provision for learners with different needs, giving guidance to FET colleges on how to widen access to their learning programmes and make their provision more inclusive. The FET Act (RSA, 1998c) has stressed that FET college councils should address the past imbalances related to gender and disability. Young adults with intellectual disability need effective programmes linked to work. This will promote opportunities for inclusive and supported employment and provide a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development in inclusive settings. To develop a more accessible FET college sector, a wider range of learning and teaching approaches is needed to support the values and principles of national education and training policy (Bellis, 1998). Bellis (1998: 169) argues that access to appropriate levels of education and training should be provided for prospective learners in a manner that facilitates progression.

g)   **Collaborative relationships**

For the effective operation of the FET colleges, collaborative relationships should be formed and collaborative projects should be undertaken wherever possible (DoE, 1996a). These collaborations could involve public and private institutions, governmental and non-governmental educational providers, stakeholders and/or community structures. This process could allow FET colleges to share and develop new courses, share facilities such as training centres, and collaborate in the delivery of programmes. The Department of Education (DoE, 2004) has moved that FET colleges with partnerships work effectively and efficiently. These collaborative relationships could be extended to research and the formation of collaborative membership to relevant associations and forums

(Bester, 1999). All stakeholders should encourage healthy lines of communication.

2.2.1.2 Operational factors

Mda and Mothata (2000: 119) define operational planning as the day-to-day planning of activities. He refers to an institution that sets operational planning which is done by the leader or manager. According to his argument, operational planning enables strategic planning to be carried out. In the context of this research, the term 'operational factors' refers to elements that impact on the roles of the FET colleges. These operational factors, which would enable the strategic aims to be accomplished, are quality assurance, skills development programmes and learnerships, learner support, and quality of programmes offered by the FET colleges. All these operational factors are discussed in the following paragraphs: a(i), a(ii), a(iii), a(iv), b(i) and b(ii).

(a) Operational factors: Internal environment

i) Integration between education and training

An integrated approach to education and training breaks down the formerly rigid divisions between theory and practice, and academic knowledge and applied knowledge and skills. Four types of integration are relevant:
- skills, knowledge, values and attitudes
- theory and practice – explicit and tacit knowledge
- teaching method, learning style and assessment practice
- integration within and across learning fields

According to Bellis (1998: 169), education and training should form part of a system of human resources development that provides for the

establishment of an integrated approach to education and training, which is expressed in terms of nationally acceptable qualifications. These components must be incorporated into all learning programmes. Teaching staff and managers need to check that these aspects are successfully integrated when they design and monitor programmes.

ii)   **Learner support**

The process of opening educational opportunities cannot be effective unless educational providers ensure that it is accompanied by adequate support to learners. Furthermore, learners need to be aware of career and progression opportunities. This process involves the provision of counselling, advice, and relevant information before enrolment so that learners know clearly what they are being offered and understand the implications of their learning choices. It also entails providing continuing support, advice, and counselling throughout the learning process.

Several types of support should be made available to learners:

- Support of all kinds on a regular basis offered by educators both through face-to-face contact and other forms of communication (including telephones, the post, and computer links)

- Interaction between learners on both a group and a one-to-one basis

- Provision of any student support materials (although this should not be mistaken for 'support' which does nothing other than encourage learners to move through courses in a particular way prescribed by the providing institutions)

- Provision of access to the necessary facilities, including a space in which learning activities and interaction between learners can take place, as well as access to computers, laboratories, and other resources that might be a necessary requirement within the learning process

Learner support can be offered in a variety of forms, which would include academic, material, financial and social support. Although all forms of support are necessary for successful teaching and learning, academic support is the most critical for creating students' trust in the FET college. Academic support would include providing students with a range of opportunities for real two-way communication through the use of various forms of technology to enable tutoring at a distance, contact tutoring, assignment tutoring, mentoring, counselling (both remote and face-to-face) and to utilise peer support structures. The FET college should provide such support to the learners.

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 1996b), learners need to be supported to a considerable extent to become independent learners. A number of approaches should be planned by the FET colleges to accomplish this objective. The needs of learners for physical facilities and study resources and participation in decision-making should also be taken into account.

iii)   **Designing of learning programmes**

The FET colleges need to convert the programmes in their broad curriculum offer into specific programmes of learning and teaching, to meet the needs of their different target groups of learners. Angelis and Marock (2001: 193) emphasise that when designing learning programmes for FET colleges, care should be taken to ensure that these colleges benefit from close and direct linkages with industry and employers. Furthermore, the wider community's vocational and other education and training needs in general should be taken into account. The learning design should include not only issues of pedagogy, including learning materials, classroom management, use and support of distance learning, and formative assessment techniques, but also learner support requirements. In the process of designing learning programmes,

procedures for recruiting and supporting learners throughout their programme, including offering impartial and well-informed advice to help learners choose which programme is right for them, are vitally important. The design must also include robust processes for offering RPL, as well as other support strategies to widen access to each learning programme and to ensure that all learners who have been accepted into the programme have a good chance of completing it successfully, provided they attend classes regularly and work diligently. In their submissions FET colleges must clearly state the staff development requirements of each programme.

iv)   **Quality assurance mechanisms**

Quality assurance and quality improvement are seen as being fundamental to ensuring that further education and training programmes meet the needs of learners, communities, employers and society alike. Quality assurance requires that the provision of education and training must be consistently evaluated in order to achieve quality (Lolwana, 2001; SAQA 1995). FET colleges need to have quality assurance instruments if they aim at striving for levels of excellence. Institutions should be conscious of what learners and industries expect from them. Quality assurance in public FET colleges is stated as including both evaluating the institution and determining the effectiveness of the programmes being offered. Institutional evaluation would include an audit to evaluate the organisational effectiveness and resources of the institution. Self-evaluation mechanisms would also need to be set up even before the declaration of the institution as an FET college to determine the shortcomings in the functioning of the institution (DoE, 1996a).

Further Education and Training colleges should evaluate the effectiveness of their programmes. A critical self-evaluation of the extent to which each college has met its strategic aims, combined with rigorous external

evaluation, could help colleges and provincial and national departments to develop action plans to improve the quality, relevance and fitness for purpose of provision in FET colleges. FET colleges need to review the effectiveness of their strategies in encouraging new learners into their programmes. This includes monitoring how well these learners progress. The monitoring approach should include national and provincial moderation, among other mechanisms, as part of an overall assessment strategy, and both internal and external audit. FET colleges can only achieve credibility if they manage these areas to ensure that their programmes are achieving both effectiveness (including relevance and responsiveness) and efficiency.

(b) **Operational factors: External environment**

i) **Skills development programmes and learnerships offered by FET colleges**

The types of learning programmes that are to be offered and emphasised within the FET colleges are the skills programmes described in the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a). These have been termed and categorised as "learnerships" and "skills programmes". Learnerships are described as essentially a mechanism aimed at achieving certain transformations that include addressing problematic features of the South African labour market by aligning education and training initiatives more closely with labour market needs, and building a relationship between structured learning and structured work experiences that equip learners with new kinds of competencies in response to labour market requirements (RSA, 1999a). The mechanisms to implement learnership programmes include the following:

- an institutional framework for establishing, designing, providing, monitoring and regulating learnership learning programmes which meet labour market needs

- a learnership agreement between the employer, the education and training provider and the learner, which specifies the rights and obligations of each party
- a qualifications framework for designing and providing learnership learning programmes
- a framework for funding learnership learning programmes

Essentially, according to the Education White Paper 4 (RSA, 1998), learnerships should consist of a learning component, practical work experience of a specified nature and duration, and should lead to a qualification registered by SAQA. Learnerships are also related to specific occupations.

ii) **Credibility of the Further Education and Training college programmes**

Education and training has to be relevant and responsive to local and national development needs. Programmes must be flexible enough to be responsive to the changing needs and demands of the learner, community, business, industry, society and the economy. This includes ensuring that learners wishing to embark on self-employment are given appropriate training to support the development of a credible and viable business. Education and training must also have national and international acceptance, including acceptance by relevant industries (Ministry of the Office of the President, 2006). According to Bellis (1998: 168), education and training provided by FET colleges should have international credibility and credibility for industry, service sectors and learners in its ability to achieve the nationally agreed aims for education and training. He further proposes that these aims should be consistent with economic and social development.

The research was located at the intersection between the internal and external environment; that is, the FET college and industry.

2.3 **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has attempted to extract some of the most pertinent issues pertaining to FET policy and the implementation of skills development programmes in South Africa. It has also attempted to provide a comprehensive overview of these two important and recent education and training innovations so that the designing of managerial and structural guidelines for FET colleges can be more focused.

In conclusion, this section has indicated that FET colleges are expected to deliver a diverse range of programmes and curricula, whilst developing niche areas of specialisation. They are expected to put into place adequate quality assurance mechanisms, adopt a variety of delivery modes, provide opportunities to students with special needs, facilitate access and articulation with higher education, and provide increased learner support and guidance. The FET colleges should be responsive by developing partnerships with communities and business. This section has alluded to the fact that FET colleges need to provide qualifications with greater interface between the world of work and the world of learning. This situation demands programmes that are flexible, with multiple entry and exit points that support different learning pathways, and that have clear, built-in articulation. In this manner, FET colleges should take responsibility for getting programmes accredited, provide tuition, and carry out the assessment, quality assurance and accreditation according to NQF requirements

The interrelationship amongst the factors discussed in Chapter 2 is represented graphically in Figure 2.1. The figure shows the relationship between the strategic and operation factors on the one hand, and the community and industry, one the other. The figure in a certain sense tries to map the FET colleges in their

environment, i.e. within community and serving the needs of industry. It further shows that there are two sets of factors (strategic and operational). In the case of each of these factors it clearly identifies an internal environment (i.e. structures and processes internal to the educational system), and external environment (i.e. structures and processes external to the FETs) that separately and in interaction influence the performance of the colleges. What should further be accepted - and not shown in the figure to avoid cluttering it - is the important fact that the internal and external environments in complex ways can interact (e.g. under "strategic factors" community representation could be experienced as a threat to the management of a college which lacks real leadership skills).In summary, Figure 2.1 maps the ecology within which the FET colleges have to function.
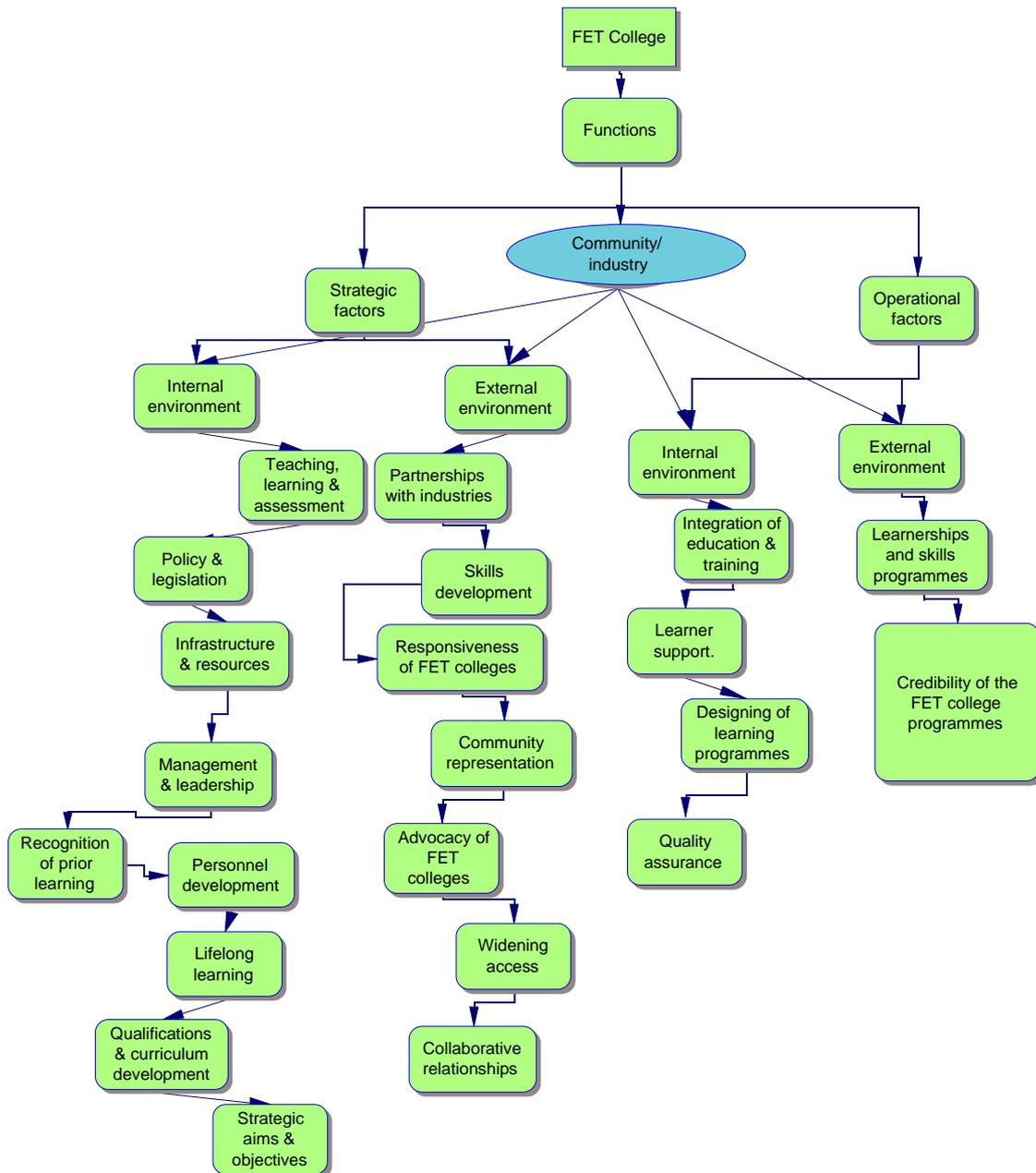
Figure 2.1: Diagrammatic presentation of the theoretical framework

The next chapter (Chapter 3) provides a literature review on issues that impact on the functioning of the FET colleges.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FUNCTIONING OF FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at identifying and elaborating on issues that directly influence the structure, nature and functioning of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in order to develop a new profile for FET colleges. Some issues that have been mentioned in the ecological model for the functioning of the Further Education and Training colleges (Table 2.1) were discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework provided a hypothetical view of what the role of FET colleges should be. The purpose of the literature review is to provide a critical overview of policy and empirical findings on the role of FET colleges in skills development in society. The areas that are examined are current South African education and training legislation, social and economic trends, and the phenomenon of globalisation and emerging management trends in South Africa. Current socio-economic trends that influence the functioning of FET colleges are reviewed. These trends include legislation, developments in technology, new approaches in teaching and learning and an emerging Afrocentric approach to management.

In addition, the strategies of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges are scrutinised; and consideration is given to the purpose of these institutions, as well as to partnerships and envisaged methods of delivery. Aspects that influence the structural and management guidelines, and define the role and functions of FET colleges through strategic management processes, are included. Consideration is also given to the potential role that FET colleges can play in human resources development in the South African context.

It should be mentioned that South Africa has, in the past two decades, experienced rapid and widespread change. In terms of transformation and human resources development, this change has had a significant impact on Further Education and Training colleges. Amongst other things, the following issues have emerged: developments in technology, as well as new approaches in policy, teaching and learning, and management. These trends are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2. POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Department of Education and Training as well as the Department of Labour have played a significant role in changing the nature and direction of education and training in South Africa and require attention right at the outset. This section looks at the White Paper on Education and Training (RSA, 1995), the two Further Education and Training Acts (RSA, 1998c and 2006), and the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a), which together form the significant legislation that shapes the character of future education and training provision in South Africa. Tsolo (2001: 83) agrees that FET colleges immediately feel the impact of legislation in areas of organisation, management and governance.

3.2.1 White Paper on Education and Training (RSA, 1995)

The White Paper on Education and Training, published in March 1995, is a policy document that has promoted the agenda of government and the strategy of implementation for a redefined education and training situation in South Africa. It forms the basis of education and training transformation in the country. The transformation of education and training in the country originates from the Education and Training White Paper (RSA, 1995).

3.2.2 **Further Education and Training Acts (RSA, 1998 and 2006)**

The central aim of the Further Education and Training Acts of 1998 and 2006 were to create a single, coordinated system of education and training. An important component of these Acts that was relevant to this research is the distinction they make between the professional management of colleges and the governance of colleges. The information provided is useful in that a sound framework is offered for the functioning of colleges. The establishment of the FET Act 98 of 1998 saw the clustering of 152 technical colleges to 50 mega FET colleges.

The guidelines provided for the professional management of an education and training institution can be applicable to functions that the head of a college is required to perform. Workplace education and training was also affected by this Act. This law led to the transformation of public and private education and training providers working in the second band of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), levels 2 to 4 (DoE, 2007). The Acts stipulate that certain governance functions be performed by a FET college council.

3.2.3 **Skills Development Act No 97 of 1998 (RSA, 1998)**

The Skills Development Act of 1998 was put in place as a strategy to focus resources on priority skills and knowledge needed to grow industries and their employees. Furthermore, the Act aimed at developing new routes to self-employment for the many unemployed South Africans, especially women, people with disabilities and rural people (RSA, 1998a).

3.3   **STRATEGY FRAMEWORKS**

The Department of Education (RSA, 1998d: 6) provides initial clarification regarding FET in its Green Paper on Further Education and Training. It describes FET as a specific band, located between General Education and Training (GET) and Higher Education (HE), both of which draw a wide diversity of groups of learners and stakeholders into one conceptual framework. These groups include pre-employed, employed and unemployed youth and adults. FET is not compulsory education and, by definition, it has no age limit. Its goal is to promote lifelong learning and on-the-job education.

It is noted in the document that the FET system constitutes a large, diverse and critically important part of the education and training system, costing the country over ten billion Rands annually. The Department of Education (RSA, 1998d: 6) highlights the fact that the purpose and mission of the FET strategies are to respond to the human resources needs of South Africa for personal, social, civic and economic development. A transformed, high-quality, responsive FET system is seen as being a vitally important investment in the future of South Africa and its people.

In essence, the purpose of FET policy is to take a strategic view as to how education and training can be transformed and developed to meet the needs of industry and communities in a rapidly changing technological, social and economic environment. These policies are a response to the human resources needs of the South African economy and to the developmental needs of communities. The policies are based on the assumption that the needs of communities should be met through the provision of appropriate skills and knowledge in a range of activities.

The re-entry of South Africa into the competitive international market has created an imperative for FET to develop a skilled, innovative and technologically competent labour force, taking cognisance of the collapse of the youth labour

market in South Africa (RSA, 1999a: 5). The Department of Education (RSA, 1998d: 14) further notes that globalisation may have negative consequences for vulnerable and marginalised groups and communities. The Green Paper argues that the challenge for the FET strategies is to respond to the demands of global economic competition as well as to the local challenge of meeting basic needs. It sees local needs and priorities shaping interaction with the global economy through the implementation of equitable, relevant and effective policies related to the development of resources.

A significant factor within this context is the highly differentiated character of the South African economy, which imposes a range of additional responsibilities on various role players to meet the needs of vulnerable and marginalised communities. FET is seen as being a crucial resource, not only for meeting these needs but also for being a catalyst for change.

The position at present is that most learners enter FET from the GET band on their way to higher education or work. In future, increasing numbers will retrace their steps, turning from employment or unemployment to the FET system to provide either retraining, 'second chance' learning opportunities, personal development or leisure courses. Furthermore, higher education graduates will turn to FET as a means of changing career direction, acquiring career-orientated training or meeting a range of community and personal needs (RSA, 1998d: 24).

3.4 EMPIRICAL REALITIES IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

According to Gewer (2002) and Moran and Rumble (2004: 113), FET has emerged as an important sector for raising the skills base of the country, specifically through the enabling conditions created by the National Skills Development Strategy (RSA, 2000), which is located more broadly within the National Human Resource Development Strategy (RSA, 2001), via FET colleges. These strategies potentially offer opportunities for both initial and returning

learners to gain marketable intermediate to higher-level skills that will enhance their mobility within the labour market.

Gewer (2002) argues that at present, however, the FET colleges sector is characterised by a narrow range of programmes, varying between level of provision of resources, quality of offerings and the limited opportunities of collaboration with the labour market.

Many colleges that could fall into the FET bracket lack public recognition and acceptance, not only because of problems of poor quality and inefficiency, but also because the public attitude tends to favour "academic" rather than "vocational" education (RSA, 1998d: 14). Thus, the Education Ministry's commitment is given to the development and expansion of high quality, innovative, flexible FET colleges, based on the principles of open learning and responsiveness to the needs and demands of all post-15-year-old learners (RSA, 1998d: 7).

The drastic decline in numbers of artisans that are produced is an indication that the effectiveness of FET colleges is undoubtedly low (Gamble, 2003). Figure 3.1 depicts the status quo in the apprenticeship training in the country between 1986 and 1998.
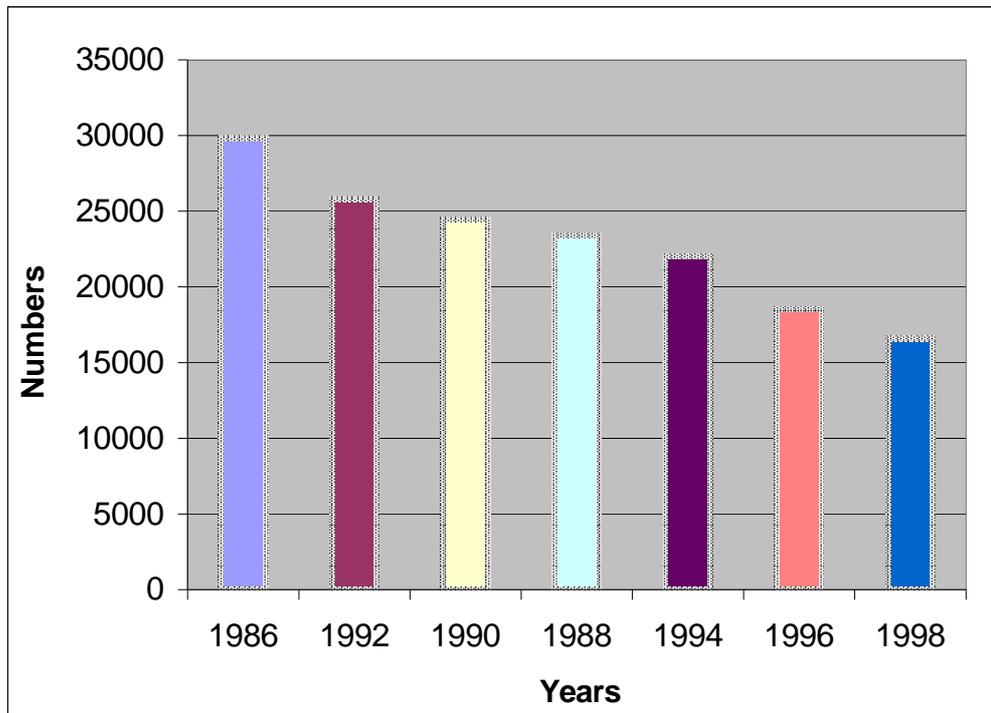
Figure 3.1: The declining rate of apprenticeship in South Africa (Kraak, 2000)

The graph in figure 3.1 shows that neither FET colleges nor industry is doing enough to address the skills shortages in this country. This decline in the rate of apprenticeship continued to show a drop up to 2004. Although a total 19951 apprenticeships were registered by March 2004 (DoL, 2005), the figures still remain low. The former technical colleges were largely responsible for providing youth with technical and vocational training. These colleges, however, proved to be inadequate and outdated in their approach and curriculum offerings to meet current political, social and economic needs, as well as in responding to the challenges of a global economy.

The types of learning that are to take place within the FET colleges are described in the Education White Paper 4 of the Department of Education (RSA, 1998b: 21) as, "knowledge, skills and values that are transferable to different work and learning contexts". This White Paper also states that the Ministries of Education

and Labour have taken it upon themselves to provide education and training pathways for young people and adult workers, and to develop more effective linkages between training and work. The introduction of learnership programmes into FET colleges is an important development in this regard. Programme funding will be made available to these institutions through the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Fund (NSF).

According to Moran and Rumble (2004: 113), government views the FET colleges as ideal platforms through which the national skills development priorities can be achieved. These authors argue that a 'transformed' Further Education and Training college could be considered an important investment for the future, and pivotal to future human development in the country. Therefore, a transformed FET college needs to become more responsive to both global and local economic, social and political needs, and should overcome the debilitating effects that the fragmented, apartheid-based provision of education and training had on FET colleges. A number of policy reforms have been introduced in order to streamline this sector. Both the Department of Education and the Department of Labour have managed to put policies such as the Further Education and Training Acts (RSA, 1998c and 2006) and the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a) in place. The National Business Initiative (2000a) and Gamble (2003: 1) support these policies where issues of specific reforms are spelled out. The following paragraphs elaborate on what should be the role of the FET college in skills development.

3.5 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND MILESTONES IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

Further Education and Training colleges are faced with a number of challenges. Some of these challenges are discussed in the following sections.

3.5.1 Challenges of skills training in Further Education and Training colleges

One of the strengths of the FET colleges is the diversity of the offerings, which results in flexibility and choice for learners. However this diversity can also present challenges in terms of achieving coherence (Aylward, 2002: 30).

Plested and Dale (2001: 19) support Aylward in arguing that for the past years, vocational training providers have tried their best to live up to expectations. They further declare that these institutions were committed to establishing liberal education, thereby extending the liberation of learning to the wider community so that self-fulfilment and self-realisation could be within every citizen's reach. Some of the major challenges that have been encountered in their endeavours are the following:

- Insufficient resources, with funding policy sidelining vocational centres in deep-rural communities in favour of vocational training centres in urban areas;

- No supportive social policy framework (and often antagonism from central government); and

- Widespread apathy and the mistrust from community.

Plested and Dale (2001: 21) argue that community learning is community development. All aspects of community life can be seen to have a learning element, and all learning is development. They feel the term 'outreach' is dated and that it implies institution-based provision.

If FET colleges are to be involved in skills development they should start from the premise that they are there to learn from the communities and vice versa. They should not impose their own values; hence they should know their purpose. FET colleges should bring learning to the community and accommodate shift workers and other 'non–traditional' learners at times convenient to these learners. Planning, preparation, effective partnership and teams are essential prerequisites for success in community work. Targets need to be set and outcomes sought. However, target setting must not be approached too mechanistically. Those who fund projects have to be satisfied. Different models of evaluation should be used in order to exemplify individual and community growth.

3.5.2 Lifelong learning

Although the concept of lifelong learning and how it impacts on the internal environment has been discussed in the section on strategic factors (see paragraph ix), the exposition of lifelong learning in this chapter is included because of its slightly different viewpoint that deepens understanding of the concept. Lifelong learning is seen as a central component in open learning (Angelis & Marock, 2001). Learning is seen as something that needs to be continued throughout life, rather than being limited only to childhood, and should be of direct relevance to the needs and life experience of learners. The concept of lifelong learning also implies an acknowledgement of the reality that learning is a process in which all people are inevitably involved from birth until death. It is also an attempt to make structured educational opportunities available to people throughout their lives (Kraak, 1998).

Angelis and Marock (2001) state that lifelong learning is not restricted to the kinds of learning that takes place in schools, nor does it lead only to the acquisition of school-like information. It is a comprehensive phenomenon including traditional schooling and vocational learning, but going beyond learning as it is traditionally understood in formal education systems. It also involves learning that leads to self-development or self-actualisation. Such learning is

affected by a whole spectrum of influences and not just by what happens in schools and related institutions. These influences range from the highly systematic and organised (such as in conventional schools) to the unsystematic and unorganised (such as a parent playing with a child). Learning is thus something that lasts a lifetime (it is lifelong), and is related to the whole range of influences people encounter in the course of living their lives (Angelis & Marock, 2001).

3.5.3 Recognition of prior learning experiences and current competencies

As stated previously in the theoretical framework (see paragraph vi), a key barrier to access to education and training in many educational institutions is the lack of the recognition of prior qualifications. Hence, related to the principle of opening access to learning opportunities is the need for recognition of relevant prior learning experiences of learners and of the current competencies that they possess (Bellis, 1998). The same author further argues that such experiences and competencies should also be accredited appropriately where applicable. Recognition should be given to short courses that did not lead to formal qualifications, parts of courses completed (even if the full course was not finished), and relevant experiences in the workplace.

Angelis and Marock (2001) support the above sentiments by arguing that as part of increasing openness in education and training, learners should be able to accumulate credits, earned in the same or different learning contexts, which can lead to the achievement of national qualifications. This would require, inter alia, that educational institutions should recognise credits earned at institutions other than their own and that a national framework for credit accumulation should be set up which could facilitate the creation of alternative pathways to achieving national qualifications. This principle receives its most obvious practical expression in South Africa in the establishment of the NQF and its implementing agency, SAQA.

3.6   **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OF FET COLLEGES**

Societal performance indicators that have given direction to the way forward for FET colleges are many and varied. Some of these are explored in the sections that follow.

3.6.1 **Skills training**

Since the inception of the democratic government, the idea of learning for work has suddenly become the topic of public policy (Jordan & Jackson, 2001). These authors draw attention to the fact that in the past decade, governments across the industrialised world have made sweeping promises about the contribution of vocational education and skills training to prosperity in the global economy of the 21st century. For the most part, meaningful public debate about these promises and assumptions has been successfully stifled by a steady flow of compelling rhetoric about competitiveness, productivity and economic survival (Jordan & Jackson, 2001). They further declare that in both policy and practice, skills training programmes have consistently worked to prioritise the interest of business over unions, community groups and other stakeholders in the 'new workplace'.

Snively (in Jordan & Jackson, 2001: 15-16) suggests how workers could contribute to the competency needs of a workplace: "Workers will require the right attitude, honesty, a tidy appearance, good social skills, enthusiasm, reliability, good communication skills, being computer literate and being able to work as part of a collaborating/learning network. People who are able to do this, and also take a disciplined approach to their work will be employable."
Soft skills are the integral component of training for employees across job classifications and for young job seekers. Associated with notions of teamwork and lean production, soft skills have been introduced by management under the rubric of 'job enhancement' or 'multi-skilling' to make enterprises more competitive in the global marketplace (Rinehart, Huxley & Robertson, 1997).

This introduces a pivotal observation concerning contemporary forms of skills training and one that has far-reaching implications for trainers. In its centrality to new regimes of training (apprenticeships) and work (soft skills/teamwork) the concept of skills has become profoundly elastic. Contrary to the official view that skills training is of mutual benefit to employers and employees and that it leads to worker empowerment, control and autonomy, observations suggest that the concept of skill is being used to stand for any element of work practice that the employer wants to change unilaterally. Skills need to be refreshed and renewed constantly and those who fall behind will be left behind. Wills (1999: 10-11) argues that FET colleges need to take a step back and ask themselves fundamental questions of contemporary government efforts to skill their communities. The question is: who benefits from skills training? By asking this question, training providers can contribute to opening up a much-needed debate on the politics of skills training in the contemporary period. Many researchers believe that to remain silent on this question will surely hamper the progress of any society and they emphasise the fact that training will become the work of tomorrow (Jordan & Jackson, 2001; Wills, 1999). According to Louw and Butcher (2005), the inflexible nature of the past system of technical colleges meant that resources were being wasted or overlooked. There is much more scope for the wider use of the physical resources of FET colleges, therefore the utility rate of the physical resources that are being invested in could be substantially increased.

3.6.2 Quality assurance in training

Rabey (1986) suggests that there is a need to redesign training and measurement systems in order to meet the requirements of a quality system. All organisations attempt to facilitate the delivery of quality products and services based on customer needs. These sentiments prove that the most important criterion in performance assessment systems should therefore be a measurement of an individual's contribution towards customer satisfaction. It should be integrated with the notion of joint responsibility for quality. Evaluating

performance of the individuals and groups according to the measurement of their quality outputs would assist in assessing performance. Their contribution towards the quality objectives of the work is therefore of paramount importance. Since the individual contribution towards meeting and exceeding customer expectations should be the guiding factor it is important that a delayed evaluation approach should be intensified (Rae, 1986). Measurement should be done to ascertain that no partial transfer of skills is done. According to Garavaglia (1996: 7), when only a small percent of skills learned during training is applied to the job, for reasons such as lack of opportunity, confidence, low motivation and failure to master the skills, this is said to be partial transfer of skills. Foxon (in Garavaglia, 1996: 7) indicates that skills should be optimally utilised. He further argues that this type of optimal skills application and unconscious maintenance occurs when skills learned in training are applied to the job unconsciously or become the norm.

A continuous review of the quality system will ensure that the needs of learners, staff and other clients are met (DoE, 1996a). This would entail that:

- management ensures that, in its day-to-day work, the FET colleges' activities meet the criteria for quality education and training set nationally and provincially as well as the FET colleges' own policy;

- there is an organisational culture that encourages efforts to improve the quality of the education;

- there is a clear cycle of planning, development, documentation, reporting, action, and review of policy and procedures within FET colleges;

- staff development is seen as fundamental to quality service provision;

- there are clear routines and systems for quality assurance and that staff members are familiar with those that relate to their work;

- staff, learners, and other clients are involved in the process of quality assurance and quality review; and

- internal quality assurance processes are to be articulated with external processes such as those introduced by SAQA.

3.6.3 **Strategies for contributing to development**

According to UNESCO (1996: 3), expanding access should go hand in hand with improving the quality and relevance of basic training. Youth and adults will stay away from educational programmes or drop out (or be pushed out) of them as long as these programmes are perceived to be little used in daily life. Conversely, quality programmes with proven relevance encourage greater access. Educational programmes have to be responsive both to the challenges of social transformation and to the ongoing reconfiguration of scientific and technological knowledge. In the UNESCO (1996) document it is further argued that many developing societies are also burdened by education systems that are unresponsive to current requirements. Efforts will focus on promoting the acquisition of life skills, scientific literacy and human and civic values adapted to the culture and the socio-economic requirements of society.

It is therefore encouraged that pedagogical processes by which learning takes place should be re-examined. In many cases, renovation of education must begin with special programmes to train, upgrade and motivate trainers/instructors and other training agents, using innovative approaches including cluster workshops. The training should give prominence to learners that are geared to related abilities and the life patterns of diverse groups of learners.

A serious effort should also be made to monitor and measure the success of training endeavours to see how much has been learned, to examine how training is best achieved and to evaluate the extent to which learning indeed meets the development needs of both the individual and society. According to UNESCO (1996: 3), support will be given to efforts aimed at improving training achievement and monitoring the internal efficiency of various education systems so as to reduce educational wastage.

3.6.4 **Skills and the workplace**

Technological applications are constantly changing the South African workplace. As a result, employers want a new kind of worker – one with a broad set of basic workplace skills that include creative thinking and problem-solving abilities, as well as reading, communication and computation (Higher Education South Africa, 2005). Employers place a premium on workers with a solid foundation of basic skills that can help them learn on the job (Gamble, 2003).

Gamble (2003) points out that because the South African economy grows faster than the workforce, employers are forced to scramble for skilled workers. He argues that most new jobs, however, would demand a high level of skills and some post-secondary training. Access to further training for these jobs and towards career ladders thus becomes quite limited for those with inadequate skills. Too many members of the workforce lack the basic skills they need to function in the jobs available now and much more so with respect to the jobs of the future (Buschor, Forrer & Merki, 2002).

While the costs of human resources development are high, the costs of not educating and not training would be even higher. Kraak (2003) confirms that many employers may not see the justification for investment in skills development in excess of current demand, especially in the context of high-skills shortages and employment – equity pressures, as is the case in South Africa. Gamble's (2003) view is that workplace training offers more opportunities to learners because a learner is developed in work-related knowledge and skill, including the type of knowledge in and about the workplace that is usually not written down or spoken about. Gamble (2003) contends that learners should be provided with positive opportunities that would expose them to the contemporary problems in a hands-on way, as they would be working with new machines and equipment. This would enable them to participate in the social side of the workplace.

3.6.5 **Development and training in Further Education and Training colleges and industries**

Burton-Jones (1999: 225) affirms that the increasing economic importance of knowledge is redefining company market boundaries, work arrangement and links between education, work and learning. Individuals, companies and learning institutions should understand the dynamics of change and emerging patterns of knowledge demand and supply in different sectors of the economy. Learning institutions should tailor their products and services to the needs of knowledge consumers. As working and learning become synonymous, companies, educators and intermediaries will have to adopt new roles and develop new strategies. Understanding the dynamics, knowledge demand and supply should assist all actors in navigating the knowledge markets of the new economy.

Drucker (in Burton-Jones, 1999: 225-232) acknowledges that knowledge has become the only factor of production that matters. He further propounds that in the new knowledge-based economy, individuals and companies must focus on maintaining and enhancing their biggest asset; their knowledge capital. While it is clear that the demand for education and training will increase, it is not clear how the new economy will change individuals, how companies should best attain their educational objectives and how learning institutions can best satisfy the demand for knowledge. To understand the implications of training of knowledge-driven change on the nature of education and training, people need to have an understanding of the economy from the knowledge perspective.

Drucker (in Burton-Jones, 1999) further indicates that there is model of knowledge on which the private sector bases its argument about skills provision. He argues that the knowledge supply model identifies the following four factors as critical in shaping companies' choice of internal or external sources of knowledge supply, and suppliers fit with particular groups or markets:

- Knowledge characteristics: the inherent characteristics of the knowledge required, such as tacitness/explicitness, complexity, structure and scope;

- Company specific knowledge: the extent to which the required knowledge is specific to functions or processes that are unique or restricted to a few companies;
- Value of knowledge: the importance of the required knowledge to the company's strategy and/or operations; and
- Level of suppliers' knowledge: suppliers' ability to provide the required amount/depth of knowledge.

3.6.6 **Implications for industries**

In the changing economy only the smartest companies will survive. Investments in education and training must match a company's knowledge needs. The progressive shift within companies, from dependency on academically acquired knowledge to knowledge gained on the job is well attested to nowadays. This argument concurs with the views of Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow (1996) with regard to the direction of change predicted by the knowledge supply model, towards company dependency on ever increasing levels of tacit and company-specific knowledge.

Burton-Jones (1999) maintains that a further important implication of knowledge integration is the need for specialists to become more conversant with each other's disciplines in order to be able to transfer knowledge effectively between each other. Cohen and Levinthal (1990), for example, have shown the importance of adequate prior domain knowledge in an individual's ability to absorb new knowledge. This puts a further onus on companies to ensure that their workers receive training, not only in their own functional areas, but also in other disciplines.

These various issues raise the question of how companies should develop an optimal education and training programme. For the provision of generic knowledge, it appears that educational institutions such as universities or

professional training institutions are the most appropriate source. Other methods are for companies to implement their own internal learning programmes designed to foster the transfer and development of specialised tacit knowledge. Such initiatives could include formal mentoring, coaching, storytelling, simulation of on-the-job tasks and encouraging the development of communities of interest and practice (Burton-Jones, 2001).

While learning institutions may not have a direct role in providing specific company training internally, there are great opportunities to assist companies in creating their own programmes. Organisations will increasingly need expert assistance, for example, in learning how to establish, maintain, and monitor coaching schemes, conduct storytelling sessions, abstract and disseminate lessons learned on the job, and create learning and knowledge-sharing communities. In other words, practitioners in FET colleges can assist companies in providing accurate theoretical expertise. It is therefore important for the training institutions to work together with companies (Thomson, 2002). According to Thomson (2002), workforce development consists of activities that increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workplace, thereby improving their productivity and employability.

A more coherent approach to help companies adapt to increasingly competitive markets and individuals in order to update existing skills and learn new ones is through good relationships with training institutions.

3.6.7 **The role of qualifications obtained in industry and Further Education and Training colleges**

According to Hamel and Heene (1998), interest in a firm-specific competence system is rising. In other words, what FET colleges can offer should match what industries specify. This notion is supported by Heene and Sanchez (1997) who emphasise that if skills programmes are provided outside the workplace environment, no impact would be made in the trainees or in the community. They further point out that in the recruitment and selection of employees, the role of

vocational qualifications of all kinds continues to be restricted. Qualifications have a bigger but still circumscribed role in companies. It is usually the case that as jobs move towards the top of the labour market, there is an increasing demand that qualifications will feature in the recruitment process (Campbell & Luchs, 1997). Generally, the qualifications that larger employers specify as essential for recruitment to a given job tend to be mostly academic and not vocational (Keep, 2000). Similarly, employers are not convinced that intermediate vocational qualifications offer genuine value-added worth (Rudd & Steedman, 1997: 44).

Due to a lack of interaction between companies and FET institutions many large firms such as SASOL have been eager to develop company-specific competence frameworks which may be used in the recruitment, selection and training of their employees. The disadvantage of this system is that the worth of externally formulated and validated qualifications could be restricted if such frameworks are used extensively (Employee Development Bulletin, 1999). The result of this change has been a fall in "off-the-shelf and on-the-job training" (Raper, Ashton, Felstead & Storey, 1997). Interestingly, much of the responsibility for this type of training has been devolved to line managers, who often lack the time, knowledge and the qualifications to train. The majority of the training and the great bulk of this kind of training cannot be validated (Eraut, Alderton, Cole & Senker, 1998). It is plausible that the developments in company training systems have revealed that non-validated on the-job training is likely to become more rather than less frequent in the usual practice.

3.7 INVESTMENT IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A large proportion of companies in South Africa seem to see little connection between using national or skills vocational qualifications and the performance of their business, such as growth in revenue, lower staff turnover or higher productivity (Employee Development Bulletin, 1999). The application of market and system failure models provides some insight into the levels of vocational

training provided by both FET institutions and employers. Stevens (1999) provides a model that explains how investment in training operates. This model, which covers a number of aspects of market failure, can be employed to produce a general theory of why employers regard vocational training as low-level training and why there are barriers to an increase in the quality as well as the quantity of vocational training in South Africa.

Gospel (1997: 23) argues that employers' main difficulties relating to the modern apprentice system include the high cost of training and the possibility of "free riding" by non-training competitors. The mechanisms for cost and risk sharing between employers to meet the costs of training for these employees are largely inadequate. Thus, the need for a systemic capacity of skills within the South African economy is further highlighted (Matlay, 2002). Greenhalgh (1999) claims that in view of the lack of adequate subsidies or cost-sharing policies a very low standard of skills training for young workers is practical. Moreover, employers experience high labour mobility amongst workers in this age group.

3.8 BENEFITS OF TRAINING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGE/INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

In her address at the Tshwane North College "Partners in Business" gala dinner, (May 2007), the Minister of Education emphasised the importance of employer involvement in skills training. She confirmed that employers should consider bringing experience and expertise to the teaching of students, the setting or moderation of examinations and practical assessment tasks beyond scrutinising the curricula offered by FET colleges. She further argued that it is extremely important that employers provide students with important components of their development as skilled artisans and professionals, namely work experience, since this would be the component that would give FET college students the edge (Pandor, 2007).

With regard to young people and investment in human capital, Sutherland (1999) and Sweet (1995) maintain that there is neither private nor public benefit to be had if there is a considerable reduction in the youth labour market, and if casual and part-time workers replace it. This casualisation of the youth labour market has had a considerable impact on the ability of young people to make transitions to full-time work or training. Marginson (1997) supports Sweet by saying that this casualisation has a negative impact in the development of human capital. Sutherland (1999) argues that training should be comprehensive, integrated and built on community partnerships. The proposed integration of educational providers and employers into the learning infrastructure not only has the effect of providing employment-relevant learning experiences for young people, but it is also congruent with modern thinking about situated learning.

Many scholars have supported the idea of close cooperation of vocational training centres and private enterprise by suggesting that learning that is situated in the workplace is characterised by the acquisition of knowledge and skills as a function of participation in authentic tasks, with support and guidance either directly or indirectly from others with more skills. Such learning has the capability of ameliorating the difficulties associated with classroom-based decontexualised learning (Billet, 1993; Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Importantly, though, from the perspective of young people seeking a positive transition from school to work, Billet (1993) identifies three different forms of learning in the workplace:

- Learning as prepositional knowledge (knowledge about)
- Procedural knowledge (knowledge how to); and
- Dispositional knowledge (values and attitudes).

Particularly for young trainees with little or no experience of the workplace, it is important not just to acquire the propositional and procedural knowledge associated with skills development, but it is crucial to develop knowledge about how to be effective and valued employees, how to conduct oneself in the

workplace, and how to recognise and cope with interpersonal demands of a workplace. Watkins (1997: 116) points towards a further advantage, namely that "the prospect of gaining a position through work experience or work placement engenders feelings of belongingness and trust".

Velde and Cooper (2002: 90) focus on Further Education and Training students involved in vocational education that includes components of workplace experience. They argued that students see involvement in the programmes as improving their employment chances and providing direct workplace experience. Apart from the development of dispositional knowledge in communication skills and mature workplace attitudes, trainees feel that they are on the right track with their skills training programme: "In order to assist learners to make a successful transition from youth to adulthood and employment, FET colleges need to provide opportunities for young people to learn about work, to learn through work and to learn for work" (Office for Standards in Education, 1998, cited in Murray, 2001: 9).

3.9 LEARNERSHIPS

A learnership may lead to a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)-registered qualification such as the Tourism and Hospitality qualification that is registered with the THETA SETA. The Framework for Establishing Learnerships and Quality Assurance Functions of Sector Education and Training Authorities (RSA, 1999a) revealed the vision of an integrated skills development growth and social development system, which promotes economic, employment growth and social development. The Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a) makes provision for learnerships as a new system of learning in which the Department of Labour sees learnerships as tools to achieve a set of transformations, namely:

- to address problematic features of the South African labour market by aligning education and training initiatives more closely with labour market needs; and

- to build a relationship between structured learning and structured work experience, which equips learners with new kinds of competence as required by the labour market.

The aim of the learnerships is to provide trainees with a broad base of skills and knowledge from which they can launch into a variety of careers. According to Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a), the specific objectives of the learnerships are:

- to provide trainees with a sound understanding of and development of skills associated with the technical as well as entrepreneurial industry skills;
- to provide trainees with the opportunity to make the transition from school to work and, through this experience, to be able to make a more informed career choice; and
- to provide trainees with the opportunity to develop into mature and responsible young adults.

Learnerships offer an exciting opportunity to develop and manage the ways in which individuals achieve occupational competence that includes and is established on a sound theoretical base and incorporates the other developmental competences described in the critical outcomes/objectives. This system will have similar obligations of contracts and will require cooperation between business organisations and educational institutions. It is also very important to bear in mind that learnerships differ from apprenticeships in several important ways. In view of the Department of Labour's wide range of documents on learnerships, Bellis (2000: 219) suggests that this kind of training has the following significant impact on skills development:

- Learnerships are in response to a demonstrable need – more broadly so than the formal economic sector only.
- Learnerships do not only include the traditional trades but any occupations in which it is possible to structure workplace learning paths.

- Learnerships may be wider than that which is offered under the single employer as was the case with apprenticeships.

- Learnerships have a wider and richer content with regard to a development base and, while being specific to an occupation, will develop employability across a wider spectrum of work.

- Learnerships are intended for those who are employed as well as those who are not yet employed.

The learnerships, under the guidance and direction of the relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), will enable learners to move towards qualifications that reflect the requirement discussed earlier, namely fundamental, core and elective components. Further Education and Training colleges and industrial enterprise should be brought together into a structured partnership arrangement to deliver business, entrepreneurial and engineering traineeship. Within this partnership, students of FET colleges will be enabled to begin their accredited industry-oriented training while completing their fundamental subjects and theory.

A closer interest is devoted to the nature of workplace learning, and a link is developed between classroom and workplace learning. Much of the focus has been on structural arrangements for the integration of institutional and workplace training. The notion of integrated training requires a unified collaborative approach by all sponsors which is publicly known by all concerned, particularly in regard to apprenticeship training (Dymock & Gerber, 2002; Boud & Garrick, 1999; Harris, Willis & Simons 1997).

Workplace learning therefore places greater emphasis on action learning than on the development of technical competencies (Pedler, 1997). Kolb (1984) classifies workplace learning as action, reflection, experiential learning, theory and practice. He suggests that people bring a depth to their work experience when they enter particular worksites. Such experiences are very important in the

discussion of workplace learning because the world is changing rapidly and people need these experiences to equip them to deal with a different life-world (Jarvis, 2000). Heller (1984) argues that all learning begins with the experiences that people have in everyday action. He further claims that the extent to which trainees learn depends on the comprehensive nature of the institutional training and how well it relates to real-life jobs. Some form of transfer of learning will be needed if the transition from training to work is to be successful. A successful transition from school or vocational training to the world of work provides an essential underpinning for the identity of young adults. The de-standardisation of employment criteria today is making it difficult for many young people to find their way. Crises in the employment sector hit the youth and young adults particularly hard because there is no employment for them (Buschor, Forrer & Merki, 2002). According to Abbott (2000: 90), it is widely believed that vocational education and training is an essential requirement in the creation of the skilled and adaptable workforce deemed necessary to achieve increased levels of productivity and therefore international competitiveness (Hawke, 1988; Smith, Henry & Munro, 2002; RSA, 1995; RSA, 1997; RSA, 1998b).

3.10 **SUMMARY**

This review of the literature attempted to identify and elaborate on issues that directly influence the structure, nature and functioning of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in order to develop a new profile for FET colleges. Some issues that have been mentioned in the ecological model for the functioning of the Further Education and Training colleges (Table 2.1) were discussed in the literature review. It is clear from the sources cited that training falls under the umbrella of development. The commitment of the South African government in implementing the Skills Development Strategy augurs well for the challenges of the future.

To be successful, much emphasis will have to be placed on relevant community development training. It should be clear that the advantages to the trainee lie

mainly in a better quality of life. This chapter has also tried to show that training is being harnessed to economic performance; how vocationalism is increasing its hold on education and training for rural human development. Emphasis is also placed on the need for a more highly skilled and multi-skilled, flexible workforce by state and other agencies.

To conclude this chapter, it should be noted that due to the huge economic and social challenges in the country, the transformed Further Education and Training (FET) colleges have a vital role to play. The FET colleges in South Africa must address the shortcomings inherited from the past. Any institution, which complies with all the above-mentioned characterising levers, would be able to respond effectively to the needs of society and industry. A good FET college would offer demand-led programmes that are developed by the Department of Education to transform the college sector. The next chapter (Chapter 4) outlines the research design and the methodology used to execute the research project.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

A research design involves the development of strategies to be followed in carrying out a scientific inquiry (Wagenaar & Babbie, 1992). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 29) refer to a research design as the preconceived plan and methods of collecting data to be used. This means that it involves specifying precisely what the researcher wants to find out and which efficient and effective strategies, approaches and methods will be used. The preceding chapter describes what the literature says about a number of factors that affect FET colleges. Chapter 1, on the other hand, poses a question in the problem statement of the research, and presents a set of research questions about the role of FET colleges in the skills development of people in the Mpumalanga Province. Against the background of the first three chapters, this chapter aims to provide the methodological process followed to ascertain the situation in Mpumalanga with regard to the role of FET colleges in skills development.

This chapter reports on the design and methodology used in the research. Figure 4.1 represents the route followed in the design of the investigation.
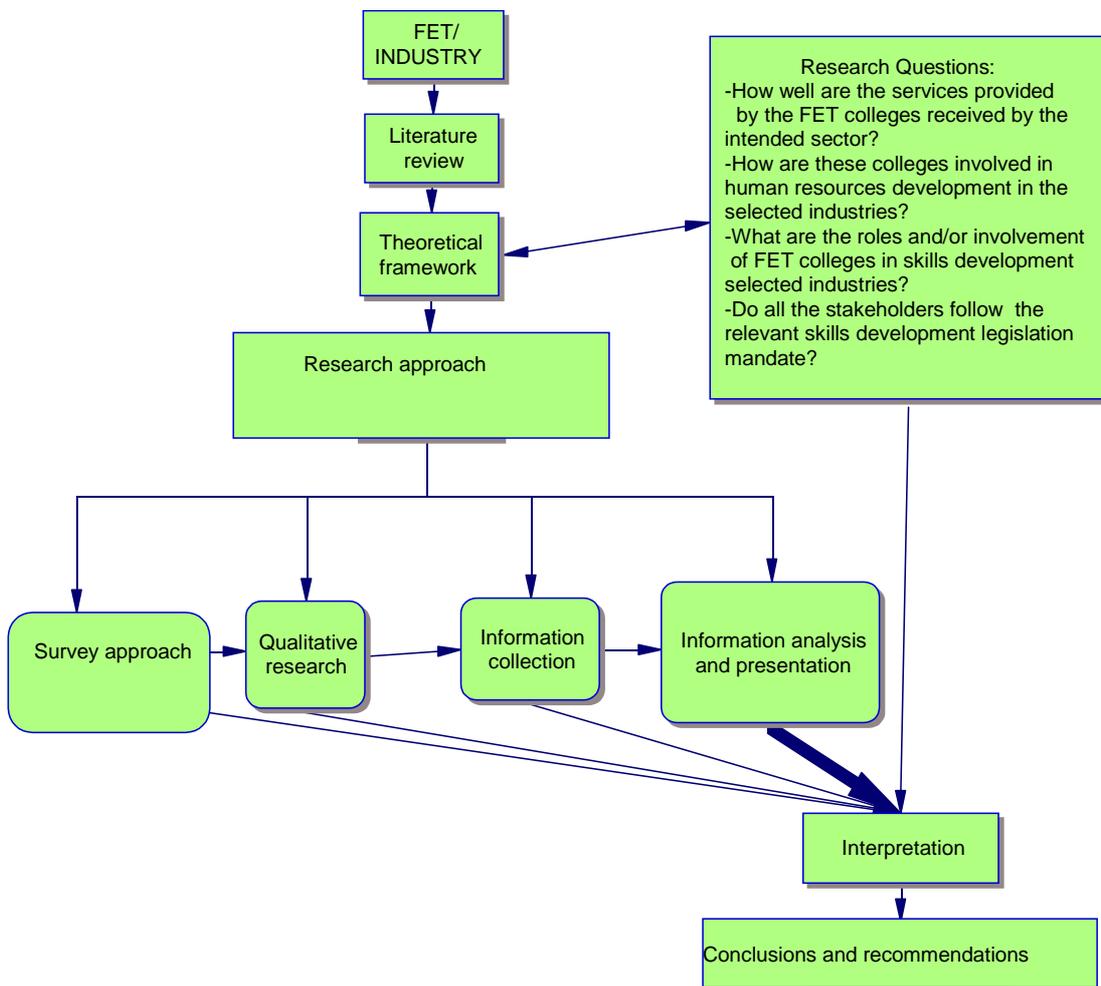
Figure 4.1: Diagrammatic representation of the research design and methodology

4.2   RESEARCH APPROACH

There are a number of different approaches to research, but according to various authors (e.g. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006; Groenewald, 1986; Meyer, Mabaso & Lancaster, 2001; Mouton, 2001; Treece & Treece, 1986) the five basic approaches are the following:

- the historical (mostly a qualitative analysis of events that took place in the past);

- the survey (an empirical descriptive study of the occurrence of a phenomenon or relationship between phenomena in a population);
- the experimental (the empirical identification of a causal relationship between variables);
- the case study (mostly in-depth understanding of one case; it provides a unique example of real people in real situations); and
- participatory/action research (a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken in social situations in order to improve the rationality of social practices and to gain an understanding of these practices and the situations in which they are carried out)

The nature of research questions usually determines the research approach.

This research aimed at determining the career development role of the FET colleges with regard to human resources in Mpumalanga. More specifically, the research questions (see paragraph 1.6) focused on the relationship between the need for career-related skills in a region and on the provision of such skills by the FET colleges. Seen from a methodological point of view, the research was aimed at ascertaining the relationship between the needs of the industries in Mpumalanga and the provision thereof by FET colleges. The nature of this research called for an approach that would be able to accumulate data on what FET colleges and industries were doing in providing skills development programmes in Mpumalanga. The survey approach was a suitable one for this purpose, since it provided for the collection, recording and the analysis of data on the demand and supply of career-related skills in Mpumalanga.

4.2.1 The survey approach

Surveys utilise reliable and valid questionnaires consisting of items covering the topic under investigation, a sample of respondents representing the population who are required to respond to the questionnaire by mail, personal interviews or interviews by internet and statistical or qualitative analyses of the responses. The

research would describe empirically in as reliable and valid a way as possible what the role of FETs was. However, since the size of the samples did not allow statistical analyses (see Section 4.2.4), the current research was approached as a qualitative type of survey involving a sample of managers of FET colleges and industries.

4.2.2 **Unit of analysis**

Uys (1996) defines a unit of analysis as the 'who' and 'what' to be explored, described, studied and defined by the research. He further states that the unit of analysis could refer to individuals, groups, or social artifacts (see also Mouton, 2001, and Brown & Keep, 1999). The sum total of all the units of analysis is called the population or universe. Formal social organisations like corporations can also be a unit of analysis. Since the unit of analysis can be viewed and referred to as a population or the target group of the research (Uys, 1996), the unit of analysis of this research comprises of the FET colleges on the one hand, and the industries of the Mpumalanga Province on the other (see the map where the unit of analysis was drawn in Appendix 1). These FET colleges and industries are summarised in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Table 4.1: Targeted campuses of the three FET colleges in the Mpumalanga Province

FET colleges	FET campuses	Position of respondent	No of years in position
Ehlanzeni FET College	Mlumati FET campus	Manager	<5
	Nelspruit FET campus	Manager	10-15
	Mthimba FET campus	Manager	<5
	Kanyamazane FET campus	Manager	<5
	Machadodorp FET campus	Manager	<5
Nkangala FET College	Mpondozankomo FET campus	Manager	5-10
	CN Mahlangu FET campus	Manager	10-15
	Witbank FET campus	Manager	<5
Gert Sibandze FET College	Ermelo FET campus	Manager	5-10
	Evander FET campus	Manager	5-10

The researcher had to request a clearance to disclose these FET colleges in the study. The Head of the Education Department in Mpumalanga province provided the consent letter (see Appendix 9).

Table 4.2: Targeted industries of the Mpumalanga Province

Names of industries	Region
Ingwe Collieries (Ltd)	Nkangala
SAPPI	Ehlanzeni
Eskom	Gert Sibandze
TSB	Ehlanzeni
Nyati Manufacturing Enterprise	Gert Sibandze
Karino Concrete	Ehlanzeni
Sasol Oil	Gert Sibandze
Highveld Steel and Vanadium	Nkangala
Buscor Ltd	Ehlanzeni
Nampak Products Ltd	Ehlanzeni
Sonae Novoboard (Pty) Ltd	Ehlanzeni
Prestige Home Centre	Ehlanzeni
Southern Sun Hotel	Ehlanzeni
Manganese Metal Company	Ehlanzeni
Chrome Company	Nkangala

The FET colleges and industries are located in all three regions of the Mpumalanga province (see Appendix 1). The researcher obtained a written clearance to disclose the names of these industries in the study (see Appendix 10). Those industries that did not respond by mail or email gave their consent telephonically.

4.2.3 **Data collection**

Descriptive research on social and related phenomena frequently utilise questionnaires (sometimes referred to as report inventories) for measuring the dependent variables of interest (Brown & Keep, 1999). There are two types of

questionnaires, an open-ended questionnaire and a closed-ended questionnaire (McBurney, 1994). An open-ended questionnaire allows the respondents to answer in their own words, while a closed-ended questionnaire limits the respondents to the alternatives determined in advance by the designers of the questionnaire (Tshikwatamba, 2000).

4.2.3.1 **Questionnaires**

Structured questionnaires were developed for this research. These questionnaires were in fact an operationalisation of the concepts in the theoretical framework. In other words, what the theoretical framework posited as the role of FET colleges has been operationalised by means of the questionnaires. Questions were formulated in a way that would verify whether what the theoretical framework argued as the factors that influence the role of FET colleges were real (see Table 2.1). In the literature review, the analysis found that services provided by the relevant FET colleges, as well as the perceptions, evaluation on the involvement, and the policy context were important to aspects to be researched in both FET colleges and industries.

Two different questionnaires were designed (Appendices 2 and 3). One questionnaire was designed for the managers/CEOs of industries, and another one for the managers/CEOs of campuses of the three FET colleges, as identified in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 above. Both questionnaires covered four sections:

- <u>Background information of the sample</u>
  It was important to know the background of the respondents so that the reliability of the responses could be guaranteed. This provided the researcher with a background against which to determine whether the respondents knew the skills development sector well or not.

- <u>Services provided by FET colleges</u>

This section aimed at ascertaining whether FET colleges do indeed provide services to industries and whether industries also provide services to FET colleges. This section would give an indication as to whether the two sample groups were succeeding in meeting each other's needs. This component of the questionnaire addressed the research questions: How well are services that are provided by the FET colleges received by the intended sector? Are the beneficiaries or targeted industries satisfied with services provided by the FET colleges?

- <u>Evaluation of involvement</u>

The section on the evaluation of involvement of the two groups in skills development was important in this research because it aimed at checking whether both FET colleges and industries do indeed value their contribution to skills development. This component of the questionnaire addressed the research questions: How are these colleges involved in skills development in the selected industries? What are the roles and/or involvement of FET colleges in skills development in selected local industries?

- <u>How policy on skills development influences FET colleges and industries</u>

The policy landscape was an important factor in determining whether both groups do indeed value the importance of the policy and use it to their advantage and to further inform the research whether policy is valued as a vehicle to assist them in skills development projects. This component of the questionnaire addressed the research question: Do all the stakeholders follow the relevant skills development legislation mandate?

The researcher interviewed all the respondents by using the questionnaire as an interview schedule, which meant that all the responses were recorded while field notes were kept, especially with regard to the open-ended items of the questionnaire. Each questionnaire took approximately 45 minutes to complete. Tables' 4.3a and 4.3b provide a summary of the composition of the questionnaires on the basis of the model presented in Table 2.1.

Table 4.3a: Questionnaire for industries

Factors that influence the effectiveness of FET colleges	Areas covered	Questions
	Background information of the managers	1.1 – 1.3
Operational factors	Services provided by FET colleges	2.1 – 2.9 2.10 – 2.12 2.15 - 2.20
Strategic factors	Evaluation of involvement of industries in skills development	2.7 2.13 – 2.14 3.1 – 3.7
	Policy landscape	4.1 – 4.6

Table 4.3b: Questionnaire for FET colleges

Factors that influence the effectiveness of FET colleges	Areas covered	Questions
	Background information of the managers	1.1 – 1.3
Operational factors	Services provided by FET colleges	2.1 – 2.6 2.8 – 2.12 2.15
Strategic factors	Evaluation of involvement of FET colleges in skills development	2.7 2.13 – 2.14 3.1 – 3.7
	Policy landscape	4.1 – 4.5

A letter from the research supervisor, introducing the researcher to the respondents, was used to facilitate introducing the researcher and the project to the respondents during the data collection process (Appendix 7).

4.2.4 **Note on the research design**

All 10 campuses of the FET colleges and 15 of the 20 major industries were included in the study – and yet from a statistical point of view the numbers, by all textbook standards, were still small. On the other hand, the scope of the function of FET colleges is relatively wide and required a comprehensive questionnaire, consisting of 27 items, many of which were open-ended ones. Right from the start of the design of the project, it was clear that statistical techniques could not be applied to the data (e.g. to estimate the reliability of differences between responses of the two groups to the individual items of the questionnaire) since small numbers were spread across many cells – i.e. fewer than five per cell. The

approach followed was what Babbie and Mouton call "elementary analysis" of quantitative data (2001, Chapter 15).

4.2.5 **Data analysis and presentation**

Analysis of data involves the 'breaking up' of data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Mouton, 2001). In order to perform quantitative data analysis, data should be converted into numbers (Wagenaar & Babbie, 1992). It is important to choose an appropriate statistical procedure for analysing the data (Meyer, Mabaso & Lancaster, 2001). The information gathered by means of the interviews could in principle be subjected to statistical analysis since most of the responses would comply with either nominal or ordinal level measurement. However, in this research, initial inspection of the tabulated information showed that a majority of the cells in the table would have counts of less than five or even zero. This would render the application of non-parametric statistics inappropriate. It was consequently decided to interpret the information in a non-statistical and qualitative way.

In the tabulation of the responses or information, the items that were similar to both groups were reported in a parallel fashion in the same table for ease of comparison. Items unique to each group were reported separately.

4.2.6 **Reliability and validity of the data**

A questionnaire has to comply with the standard criteria of reliability and validity (Treece & Treece, 1986). Reliability refers to the extent to which the responses obtained on a measuring instrument may be generalised over measuring occasions, or to put it somewhat differently, this criterion is the requirement that the application of a valid measuring instrument to different groups under different sets of circumstances should lead to more or less the same observations, such as the consistency of the results (see Mouton, 1996; Serakan, 1992; Rossouw, 2003).

According to Rossouw (2003: 122), reliability of a measuring instrument demonstrates the consistency of the measurement. In other words, a measuring instrument is consistent if it produces equivalent results for repeated measurements. Brown and Keep (1999) describe the validity of a measuring instrument as the extent to which such an instrument serves the purpose for which it is intended or the extent to which it measures what it was designed to measure.

In the present case, reliability and validity of the questionnaire were ensured in the following ways: Firstly, the researcher formulated the items only after a careful study of the literature, including relevant policies, making sure that the items used the standard terminology and could be interpreted in the intended way by respondents familiar with the subject matter. In this way, content validity of the questionnaires was addressed. Secondly, a pilot study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002) was conducted on a small set of individuals with insight into both the FET colleges and the industries in Mpumalanga (Appendix 6). These questionnaires were piloted on two companies and two managers from science and engineering education in the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Education. Subsequently, it was clear from the responses and the feedback received that all items were correctly understood and interpreted by the respondents. On that scale, this feedback can be interpreted as an indication of validity. The data collected from the industries were included in the data collected from the total sample. Thirdly, a type of qualitative convergent and discriminant validation was done by inspecting the recorded data for, on the one hand, inconsistencies in the responses to items that should have evoked similar responses, and similarities in responses to items that should have elicited divergent responses, on the other hand.

In the case of the research, an additional form of validation was introduced that had not originally been provided for in the planning. This took the form of an interview with a senior official whose views on the conclusions and

recommendations were probed. The interview focused on the importance of FET colleges for economic development in regions such as Mpumalanga and to test the feasibility of the two most important conclusions and recommendations of this study. The interviewee was assured that his responses would not be interpreted as reflecting an official view on the research findings, and that he would remain anonymous. The inclusion of this interview was motivated by two reasons: firstly, the research was aligned to policy and strategy as reflected in official documentation and used as a point of departure in this study; secondly, the interview focused on the empirical interface between reality and policy. The outcomes of this interview are presented in Appendix 8.

4.3   **SUMMARY**

This chapter describes the processes and provides the scientific guidelines that directed the research approach. It was shown in this chapter that the nature of the research undertaken required a survey approach. As reflected earlier on (in Chapters 1 and 2), the research focused on the role of the FET colleges in the development of people in the Mpumalanga Province. This chapter has explained that a qualitative method in data collection was applied: one questionnaire was administered to the Managers/CEOs of industries and another to the Managers/CEOs of campuses of the FET colleges.

In this chapter the unit of analysis for the research was discussed, and a description was given of how data collection and analysis was carried out. The last section of the chapter explained the data reduction method and described how the findings were presented.

The next chapter (Chapter 5) primarily deals with the presentation of the results and findings.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this chapter is to report on the results of the survey conducted in Mpumalanga Province. The research problem is reiterated in this chapter thus linking it directly to the preceding chapters. The chapter covers the research questions, sample, data and presentation of the findings from the interviews with senior people from the industries and Further Education and Training colleges in Mpumalanga. The presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings focus on the main issues covered by the questionnaires, such as services provided by the FET colleges, evaluation of the involvement of the industries to promote skills development, and the policy landscape on skills development in the country. As indicated in paragraph 4.2.3.1, the questionnaires served as an operationalisation of the factors in the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) that were expected to influence the performance and perception of FET colleges. This chapter (Chapter 5) presents the data analyses and interpretations of the findings of the survey. The findings should show whether the role of FET colleges is in line with what the theoretical framework argued as their role.

5.2 **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The high rate of unemployment, high illiteracy and poor health standards in Mpumalanga motivated this investigation. The low level of skills development programmes also reinforced the need to undertake the research.

The old apprenticeship system was a narrow skills development programme with no educational component attached to it. Today the role of the FET college is to provide those skills as well as education to give learners a well-rounded education, which aims at preparing them for the world of work. The FET colleges are now the prime means for providing learners with formal skills qualifications for industry. They have to play an important role to provide an access point to communities for skills development. The purpose of this research was to determine to what extent colleges are fulfilling these roles and their mandate.

The problem led to the enquiry on the role of Further Education and Training in providing skills training in Mpumalanga, hence the research question: What is the role of FET colleges with regard to skills development in the Mpumalanga Province as perceived by the local industries? It is on the basis of this research question that the data collection was targeted at the managers or directors of industries in the province.

5.3 **SAMPLE DATA**

Since the purpose of the study was to ascertain to what extent FET colleges were satisfying the needs of prospective employers, two samples of the population were studied, namely senior office bearers from industries and FET colleges in Mpumalanga. The background information of the managers of industries as well as of campuses of the FET colleges that took part in the research is provided in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 respectively.

Table 5.1: Background information on sample: Managers/Chief Executive Officers of local industries

Industries	Position of respondent	Years of experience (years)	Number of employees
Ingwe Collieries (Ltd)	Manager: Training	5-10	7500
SAPPI	HR Manager	5-10	1744
Eskom	HR Manager	5-10	15100
Transvaal Sugar Company	HR Manager	5-10	3800
Sasol Oil	Training Manager	5-10	12050
Nyati Manufacturing Enterprise	Bookkeeper	<5	27
Karino Concrete	Bookkeeper	<5	112
Highveld Steel and Vanadium	Training Manager	5-10	8011
Buscor Ltd	HR Manager	10-15	2888
Nampak Products Ltd	General Manager	5-10	157
Sonae Novoboard (Pty) Ltd	HR Manager	<5	351
Prestige Home Centre	CEO	5-10	31
Southern Sun Hotel	HR Manager	5-10	97
Manganese Metal Company	HR Manager	<5	699
Chrome Company	HR Manager	5-10	750
TOTAL			**53 317**

The industries agreed that they could be identified in this report (see Appendix 10).

Table 5.1 shows that 15 out of 20 potential local industries responded to the interviews. These industries are located in the Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande regions. The number of employees in these industries range from 20 to 15 000 per company, depending on the size and type of production. Out of the total number of the economically active population of 780 000 employed people, 53 317 are employed by the above-mentioned industries. These industries produce a wide range of products, such as sugar, paper, oil, coal, steel and

vanadium, wood, electricity, plastic products, furniture, manganese, metal, chrome, concrete and bricks. They are also involved in transport and tourism. Most of the respondents have experience in their fields of skills training, human resources development and management.

Table 5.2 provides background information on the sample interviewed at the Further Education and Training colleges.

Table 5.2: Background information on the sample: Managers/principals of the campuses of the three Further Education and Training colleges in the Mpumalanga Province

FET colleges	FET campuses & field of specialisation	Position of respondent	No. of years in position	No of full-time equivalent students
Ehlanzeni FET College	**Mlumati FET campus**: Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	<5	1 110
	Nelspruit FET campus: Business, Commerce and Management	Manager	10-15	1 288
	Mthimba FET campus: Agriculture	Manager	<5	58
	Kanyamazane FET campus: Engineering	Manager	<5	489
	Waterval Boven FET campus: Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	<5	156
Nkangala FET College	**Mpondozankomo FET campus:** Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	5-10	2 282
	CN Mahlangu FET campus: Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	10-15	2 100
	Witbank FET campus: Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	<5	7 453
Gert Sibandze FET College	**Ermelo FET campus**: Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	5-10	1 860
	Evander FET campus: Business, Commerce and Management and Engineering	Manager	5-10	3 350

The FET colleges agreed that they could be identified in this research study (see Appendix 9).

All managers of the 10 campuses of the three FET colleges in Mpumalanga were involved in the research. Seven campuses were established in the early 1970s. There was gradual increase in the student numbers at these institutions. When the FET colleges were established in 2003, FET colleges such as Ehlanzeni witnessed the birth of new campuses such as those at Waterval Boven and Mthimba. The main characteristic of the two sample groups is that they are all dependent on one another. Both groups should contribute to skills development. One of the sources where industries recruit employees is the FET colleges, and on the other hand FET colleges are measuring the effectiveness of their skills training programmes by the number of trainees employed by the industries.

In March 2005, the questionnaires were pre-tested by having four respondents complete the questionnaire. The respondents were from the FET environment but two did not form part of the sample. Those items that appeared not to have been clearly understood were amended. In this way the reliability of the questionnaires was improved. The researcher interviewed the respondents by using the questionnaires as an interview schedule, which meant that all the responses were recorded while field notes were kept, especially with regard to the open-ended items of the questionnaires (see 4.2.6.3). The validity of the questionnaires was further ascertained by interviewing a top official at the end of the research (see Chapter 4 and Appendix 8).

5.4   **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

This section presents the findings as gathered through the use of the questionnaires and interviews. These questionnaires were administered to the managers of industries and campuses of the FET colleges in Mpumalanga, as shown in 5.3. Two questionnaires were designed for managers of the industries and the managers or principals of the campuses of the three FET colleges respectively (see Appendices 2 & 3). The questionnaire covered four aspects: the background information of the sample, services provided by FET colleges, evaluation of involvement and how policy on skills development influences industries. The background information has been covered in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. The findings gathered from the managers of the industries and the FET colleges are reported as follows (also refer to Appendix 4):

Firstly, responses to items that were unique to each of the sectors, namely the industries and the FET colleges, are reported according to the different sections covered by the questionnaire. Secondly, responses to items that were common to both groups are reported in a comparative way.

5.4.1 **Responses of industries (section 2): Services provided by Further Education and Training colleges**

This section tried to determine the status quo of the services provided by FET colleges. An overview of the present programmes, areas of operation and links and the ways of close cooperation were covered by the questionnaires (see Appendix 2). The response to this section was good because all 15 industries responded. The relevant questions are quoted, the intention of each is explained, and the results of the individual sections are reported sequentially below:

i.   What are the sources of recruitment of your company? (Item 2.8)

The intention of the question was to determine whether industries value the existence of the FET colleges (see Table 2.1). The findings derived from the question are reported in the following paragraph.

All 15 industries responded to this question. It was found that only three industries recruit their labour force through agencies. One industry indicated that they recruit from the students that they support financially at higher education institutions. One industry indicated that it prefers learners or out of school youth who reside within a 50 km radius of its area of location. The investigation found that 11 out of 15 industries argued that although there are other ways of recruiting, they prefer to train their employees so that they fit the profile of the work to be done. They take only a small number of recruits from external sources. One industry advertises jobs with the intention of getting people from Gauteng because they have the required skills. One respondent confirmed that they prefer to appoint people who live within their environment and those that are related to their employees. These responses show that there is little recognition of FET colleges.

ii.   Do Further Education and Training colleges respond to the needs of your company? (Item 2.10)

Responses to this question were expected to provide strategies for aligning the FET colleges' offerings towards the needs of the industries (Table 2.1).

Eleven industries indicated that FET colleges did not respond to their needs. They indicated that students are not of the desired quality. One local industry manager argued that this condition could be changed, in other words FET colleges could be assisted to respond to their needs.

The responses show that FET colleges make little contribution to the industries.

iii. If the response is yes, in what ways do they respond to the needs of your company? (Item 2.10.a)

The intention of the question was to determine the impact of the FET colleges in skills development (Table 2.1). The findings of this question are reported in the following paragraph.

Responses showed that only two industries agreed that the trainees that are sent to colleges are trained according to their needs. One of the two industries provides in the needs of the local FET colleges, and the institutions provide skills and competencies that are in line with the industry requirements. Three industries argued that FET colleges are responding partially to their needs because they do not get quality trainees they would like to employ. The responses showed that if FET colleges were effective, industries would be able to support them.

iv. What internal mechanisms are in place in your industry to assess the quality of new employees? (Item 2.11)

The question was asked in order to establish whether new recruits are assessed and to determine what prior knowledge they bring into the industries. The different respondents mentioned how they do quality assurance:

- Six industries test new employees using tests relevant to the production focus.
- Ten industries give tests based on performance and needs analyses that are relevant to the needs of the company.

- Two industries provide on-the-job training, assessment and supervision.
- Ten industries use assessment and moderating policies (company).
- Three industries use psychometric tests, qualifications and interviews;
- Four industries give written, oral and practical assessments conducted by accredited assessors.
- One industry uses recruitment follow-up interviews.
- Two industries apply work sampling or demonstration.

The responses therefore showed that the various industries use different types of quality assurance methods to determine the skills and knowledge of their recruits.

v. How effective are these quality assurance mechanisms? (Item 2.12)

Responses to this question were expected to reveal the reliability of the strategies used by industries. The results are reported in the following paragraph.

In response to this question one respondent indicated that their mechanisms are not effective because some qualifications do not reflect the individuals' knowledge related to certain skills. Only six respondents believed that their quality assurance mechanisms are very effective. One of the six confirmed that trainees complete the portfolios of evidence and verify whether all outcomes have been met. One industry argued that its mechanisms need a high focus to ensure effectiveness. One industry confirmed that their mechanisms are not 100% effective but 80-89% reliable. Seven industries did not respond to the question since they regarded this matter as an in-house issue.

vi.   Do you use Further Education and Training colleges to upgrade the skills of your employees? (Item 2.13)

Responses to the question whether industries use FET colleges to upgrade the skills of their employees (Table 2.1) were expected to assist in developing strategies/operations for the heightened relevance of the FET courses.

Responses to this question showed that 13 industries do not use FET colleges to upgrade the skills of their employees. They prefer internal skills development programmes. Only two use the FET colleges. This shows that industries have a different view of FET colleges.

vii.   Do you get adequately skilled graduates from these Further Education and Training colleges? (Item 2.14)

The aim of the question was to determine whether FET colleges offer relevant skills training programmes (Table 2.1).

Responses to this question showed that 12 industries do not get adequately skilled graduates from FET colleges. Industries indicated that they require minimum qualifications from FET colleges – courses that will lead to the attainment of artisanship. One respondent argued that all employees who attend part-time classes are assisted and their skills are upgraded. Only one agreed and indicated that they are in a process of trying to find a suitable work practice with these colleges. One industry did not respond to the question, citing as a reason that they are not at all involved with any FET college. Responses reveal that the skills programmes and curriculum offered by FET colleges do not meet their needs.

viii. If the respondents agreed to item 2.14, the probing question then followed: Do they perform adequately in your company? (Item 2.15.a)

Responses to this question were expected to suggest ways in which FET colleges could improve the credibility of their offerings. The results of the question are reported in the following paragraph.

Two industries indicated that they do get skilled graduates from the FET colleges. They agreed that trainees who come from the FET colleges perform adequately, but they pointed out that these graduates need intensive job training when they enter the workplace. One of the three respondents argued that about 90% of the graduates have been given permanent jobs in the industry. Most industries emphasised the programme for the recognition of prior learning, followed by skills top-up programmes. From the responses it is obvious that there is a need for graduates of FET colleges to undergo on-the-job training and to be exposed to real-life situations.

ix. If respondents disagreed to item 2.14, a probing question was asked, namely whether they inform the FET colleges of the lack of performance in order to improve the skills development programme (Item 2.15.b).

It was important to ask this question in order to determine the level of communication between the two sample groups (Table 2.1).

Nine industries responded by indicating that they do not inform the FET colleges on the lack of adequate performance of their graduates. They feel frustrated because they are not heard and they do not have a platform to voice their concerns. FET colleges argue that they are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and they follow the offerings prescribed by the government. Three industries indicated that they do indeed inform the FET colleges about their dissatisfaction on the training

programme offered. One of the three indicated that it has engaged FET colleges to find a suitable work practice. Two did not respond to the question because they said FET colleges have never invited them to their campuses. This indicates that there is need for FET colleges to open their doors for industries to be able to contribute effectively.

x.   What is the role of your industry in the development and delivery of skills training programmes in the FET colleges? (Item 2.17)

The question aimed to determine the level of engagement between FET colleges and industries (Table 2.1). The results of the question are reported in the following paragraph.

Responses to this question revealed that nine industries played no role. However, they argued that they did have an interest in this sector since they suggested that they could assist in the practical skills training, afford learners an opportunity for workplace experience, and develop training material together with the colleges. They further argued that they wanted to be part of the planning of skills training programmes so that their needs could be addressed. The industries voiced their frustration, stating that, for example, some FET colleges did not want to hear anything from them. One industry confirmed that they were playing a major role in delivering skills training, but without collaborating with FET colleges. The findings showed that industries are willing to participate in the activities of FET colleges. Responses received from FET colleges indicated that industries do not play any role in the development of skills in Mpumalanga. Respondents indicated that they wish to see industries involved in the planning, development and sharing of training programmes, the provision of learnerships and workplaces, and the in-service training of employees.

xi.   Can you say that the college/s that is/are engaged with your industry, if any, has/have contributed to the increase of production in your company? (Item 2.18)

The question aimed at determining the impact of the engagement of industries with FET colleges in terms of productivity (Table 2.1). The results of the question are presented in the paragraph below.

Responses showed that only one industry agreed that their engagement with colleges has resulted in the increase of production in their industries. Fourteen disagreed, indicating that their successes could not be attributed to any engagement with FET colleges because they do not work with them. The findings showed that, due to the lack of collaboration between the two sample groups, industries do not attribute their performance to the involvement of the FET colleges.

5.4.2 **Responses of Further Education and Training colleges (section 2): Services provided by Further Education and Training colleges**

This section was aimed at determining the services and/or other related activities in which FET colleges are involved with local industries of the Mpumalanga Province. The responses to this section are reported below.

i.   Do industries recruit graduates from your college? (Item 2.8)

The intention of the question was to determine the kinds of relationships that exist between the FET colleges and the industries. The responses to the question were as follows:

Six campuses agreed that industries do indeed recruit graduates from their FET colleges. The recruitment is limited to the specific needs of the industries and it could possibly happen only once in two years. Four respondents indicated that industries do not recruit from their campuses. This situation reflects the gap between the two sample groups.

ii.   What is the role of the surrounding industries in the development and delivery of skills training programmes in the FET colleges? (Item 2.11)

Responses to this question were expected to assist in developing operations for the heightened involvement of the industries in FET colleges (Table 2.1). The results of the question are reported in the following paragraph.

Three campuses indicated that industries provide learnerships. Two indicated that they cooperate in developing skills training programmes and send their students to visit their training centres and workplaces within the industries. Five campuses argued that industries are using their own training facilities to train employees and that it is therefore difficult for them to work with the industries. Responses from the industries confirmed that they do not play any role but they are interested to be part of the planning of skills training programmes with the FET colleges. This question yielded significant findings because it showed that each group is operating in isolation from the other.

iii.   Can you say that the industries that are engaged with your college, if any, have assisted your college to address the problem of skills shortage and unemployability of people in your communities? (Item 2.12)

The question aimed at finding strategies that would strengthen the possibility of aligning FET colleges to the needs of industries (Table 2.1). The responses to the question are provided below.

Four managers agreed that the engagement with industries has assisted them in addressing the skills shortage. Six managers did not respond to this question, citing the fact that they have no engagements with industries. The findings revealed that 60% of the FET colleges do not see industries playing a role in curbing unemployment.

5.4.3 Comparative analyses of section 2

In section 5.4, it was mentioned that items that were common to both groups would be reported in parallel. Table 5.3 reports the findings gathered from both industries and FET colleges on items that were common to both groups.

Table 5.3: **Responses provided by Further Education and Training colleges and industries (Section 2)**

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
i. If the response is yes, please state the focus areas of their programmes. (Item 2.2) This question was asked to determine whether industries are aware of the offerings or programmes that are offered by these colleges (Table 2.1). Responses to this question showed that five FET colleges focus on training programmes such as Business Studies, three in Engineering studies, three in utilities such as tourism, two in Social Services and one in ABET. The results showed that industries were aware of the different programmes that were provided by the colleges, since 14 of the 15 industries knew what programmes are provided. From this one can infer that a first condition for collaboration between industry and colleges has been met, namely that employers are at least aware of the potential services available in FET colleges.	i. If the response to item 2.1 is yes, please state the types of businesses they are involved in. (Item 2.2) This question was asked to determine whether colleges are aware of the types of businesses these industries are involved in. (Table 2.1) All 10 campus managers responded to this question as follows: Three campus managers indicated that their local industries do retail and wholesale, three indicated technical and engineering works, three indicated that local industries specialise in utilities such as tourism, hospitality, food services or arts. Five campus managers responded by indicating that the local industries are involved in the production of oil, sugar, paper and wood, and five indicated transport. Some campus managers gave one to three responses. The findings confirmed that FET colleges are aware of the business focus of the industries located close to them.
ii. Do you have (a) FET college(s) in your surrounding area? (Item 2.1) It was important for the research to ask this question in order to determine whether these FET colleges do have industries that are located close to them. All 15 respondents agreed that they do have FET colleges in their surrounding areas. (This, incidentally, is an indication of validity.)	ii. Do you have industries in your local area? (Item 2.1) When comparing the responses to the same item, eight managers of the FET colleges also agreed that they do have industries in their local areas, and two managers indicated that there are no industries close to them. When industries responded to this question, all 15 industries agreed that they do have FET colleges that are located close to them. The findings showed that the industries and the FET colleges are located close to each other.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
iii. Does your company cooperate with any of these Further Education and Training Colleges? (Item 2.3) The question was asked in order to find out whether there is a relationship between the industries and the FET colleges. (Table 2.1) The responses to this question indicated that six of the industries do cooperate with the FET colleges and nine respondents do not cooperate with FET colleges. One of the cooperating industries indicated that it encourages the trade test centre to include a semester for practical training. This result shows that there is still a notable gap between industries and FET colleges.	iii. Does your FET College cooperate with any of these industries? (Item 2.3) While six managers of industries responded that they do cooperate with the FET colleges, four managers of FET colleges agreed that they do cooperate with the industries and three indicated that they do not cooperate. One of the campuses that are not cooperating with the industries responded by indicating that industries withdrew their employees from their campus due to insufficient and outdated training materials in the workshops. One indicated that industries do not allow students to get practical training within their facilities.
iv. If the response is yes, specify ways in which you cooperate with the FET colleges in promoting skills training. (Item 2.3a) The responses to this question were expected to give guidance for future strategies aimed at optimising the collaboration between FET colleges and the industries. The results are reported as follows: The responses that were noted were: sharing of training resources: 1; planning of training programmes: 1; development of training materials: 1; in-service training of employees: 2; learnerships: 3; ABET: 1. Six industries did not respond to this question; they stated that they had nothing to say because FET colleges do not want to hear from them at all. One industry replied that their FET college does not give them the quality of students they need. Only nine managers of industries responded. None of	iv. If the response to item 2.3 is yes, specify ways of doing it. (Item 2.3a) Responses to this item differed slightly from those of the industries because the FET colleges were more interested in four areas, namely planning of training programmes, in-service training, learnerships and placement of graduates in the industries. This question gave the managers two extra options to choose from, such as sharing of training resources, and development of training materials and others. None of the three options were indicated as areas of cooperation. The findings confirmed that even though there is cooperation between the two sample groups, areas of cooperation are still limited.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
the industries place graduates in the workplace. The responses to this question reveal that some industries are prepared to contribute towards skills training.	
v. What benefits/gains have you received through cooperation? (Item 2.4) Responses to this question would provide cues as to what strategies could be developed to improve cooperation. The results are reported in the following paragraph. The responses to this question revealed that four out of the six industries that cooperate with FET colleges do indeed benefit through the cooperation. The three industries that cooperate by means of learnerships indicated that colleges assist them to prepare their employees for the N-courses examinations and one stated that the FET college has been very good in the ABET programmes that are offered to their employees. They argued that employees are able to read and write. Nine industries argued that they do not benefit at all from the FET colleges. They confirmed that there is no cooperation and therefore no benefits could be expected (response to item 2.3). This indicates that if collaboration is forged, both industries and FET colleges could benefit from each other.	v. If you do cooperate, what benefits/gains have you received through the cooperation? (Item 2.4) The responses revealed similarities to the responses provided by industries. The four FET colleges that cooperate with industries stated that they experience gains in different forms. For example, graduates are given an opportunity to be exposed to real work situations and related work training. Two managers did not respond because they stated that they were still not sure of any benefits. Industries were also asked the same question and the researcher found that 11 industries do not benefit at all through their cooperation with FET colleges. The findings showed that collaboration between FET colleges and the industries should be forged and strengthened.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
vi. What problems have been experienced by your industry in cooperating with Further Education and Training colleges? (Item 2.5) This open-ended question tried to ascertain the limiting factors for industries in forging any cooperation with the FET colleges. Findings are reported in the following paragraph. From the nine respondents mentioned in table 5.4, only one respondent indicated that there were no problems experienced, except that the classroom training should include English as a fundamental subject and a licence for the new qualifications. Seven industries indicated that they have experienced problems because FET colleges lack certain fields of study and knowledge around new qualifications, learning programmes and learnerships. These industries also argued that they are frustrated by the fact that they do skills training to the youth but they cannot employ them. They call this practice "training for the street" because they cannot place them in the workplace due to the limited vacancies in their industries. The responses to item 2.5 revealed that FET colleges were not ready to form a stabilised relationship with industries. This finding is important in terms of showing that industries are not fully assisting students to contribute to the economy of the country.	vi. What problems has your FET college experienced in cooperating with the industries? (Item 2.5)? This item yielded divergent responses from the FET colleges. Three campuses indicated that they do not experience any problems and one indicated that the problem they encountered was that students are not well disciplined to work with passion. The findings showed that if the relationship between the FET colleges and industries could be enhanced, both parties could benefit.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
vii. How in your opinion can the problems in item 2.5 be resolved (Item 2.6)? Responses to this question were expected to suggest strategies that could be developed to solve problems between FET colleges and industries. Responses to this question indicated that only 15% of the industries wish to work closely with the FET colleges so that their suggestions in the skills training programmes could be heard. More emphasis was placed on the introduction of English as a fundamental subject that should be taught in FET colleges. Industries want colleges to provide training that addresses their relevant needs. This would enable them to place more graduates in the workplace. The responses to this question placed more emphasis on the transformed curriculum, especially the introduction of English as one of the offered subjects in order to enhance understanding and communication.	vii. How, in your opinion, can the problems be resolved? (Item 2.6) This item elicited different responses. Only one campus manager made proposals with regard to this item. He proposed that the introduction of learnerships could solve the problem. Furthermore, FET colleges should have enough and relevant training materials, suitably qualified instructors and accredited practical workshops. They should also introduce learnerships. These proposals indicate that some FET colleges were aware of their weak areas.
viii. Do you have an interest in cooperating with FET colleges to make skills training more relevant? (Item 2.7) Responses to this question were expected to assist in developing cues as to what strategies could be developed to improve cooperation between the two sample groups (Table 2.1). The findings of the question are reported in the following paragraph. Respondents indicated that FET colleges should do all the fundamental training and that industries should concentrate on	viii. Do you have interest in cooperating with industries to make skills training programmes more relevant? (Item 2.7) Responses to this question were similar to the responses from industries. Both groups were keen to collaborate.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
practical training. The majority of industries argued that FET colleges do not want to cooperate. Industries also indicated that they are interested in cooperating with FET colleges in order to make skills training more relevant.	
ix. If the response is yes, specify ways of doing it. (Item 2.7a). The responses to this question were expected to give guidance for future strategies aimed at optimising the collaboration between FET colleges and the industries. This question would provide background information on the degree of services provided to the industries by the colleges. The following responses were noted: sharing of training resources: 1; planning of training programmes: 1; development of training materials: 1; in-service training of employees: 5; learnerships: 5; placement of graduates in industries: 2; ABET: 1. This is an indication that industries are keen to be partners in skills.	ix. If the response to item 2.7 is yes, specify ways of doing it. (Item 2.7 a) Convergences were experienced in this item. The managers of FET colleges were optimistic about the ways in which collaboration could be brought about. All options were chosen by an average of five managers. The following responses were noted: sharing of training resources: 5; planning of training programmes: 5; development of training materials: 5; in-service training of employees: 5; learnerships: 4; placement of graduates in the industries: 6 ABET: 6. The findings confirmed that FET colleges are aware of the areas in which they need help.
x. What, in your opinion, can be done to increase the recruitment of graduates from Further Education and Training colleges to your company? (Item 2.9) Responses to this question were expected to direct future strategies aimed at optimising the employability of FET college graduates (Table 2.1). The findings of this question are reported in the following paragraph. The responses to this question produced a number of suggestions that can address the employability of graduates from FET colleges to the local industries, namely:	x. If the response to question 2.8 is no, what, in your opinion, can be done to increase the industries' recruitment of graduates from your college? (Item 2.9) Responses to this question yielded partly convergent findings. The few strategies that were proposed by the FET colleges were also provided by the industries. Managers of the FET colleges recommended the following strategies to increase the employability of their graduates: • Learnerships should be introduced. • Colleges and industries should participate in planning. • Industries should inform the colleges about the skills they

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
• FET colleges should provide industries with graduates that are disciplined and knowledgeable, and industries should be responsible to intensify the training and experience of FET College graduates. • The industries indicated that they want to train more artisans, because that is their core function. • The industries indicated that they are keen to share training costs with the FET colleges. • FET colleges should take the different industries' job specifications and focus of operation or products into consideration and provide outcomes-based training that meets specific unit standards. • FET colleges should align themselves with applicable and relevant learnerships. • FET colleges should work more closely with local industries to analyse their long-term needs. • FET colleges should also concentrate on need-based skills or shortages. This question yielded meaningful proposals from the industries. It showed that the industries could assist FET colleges in meeting their skills development mandate. The agenda of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa requires interaction between industries and FET colleges in order to stimulate the skills development agenda (Office of the Presidency, 2006). Responses from FET colleges on the same	would like their employees to have; in other words, programmes offered should address the needs of the industries. Industries argued that FET colleges should provide them with disciplined and knowledgeable graduates, and they would intensify the training provided by these colleges. The industries further noted that they would have to share training costs. Training linked to unit standards was also mentioned. Industries want FET colleges to provide relevant learnership programmes and need-based skills. When the two groups' responses are integrated, it shows that there is a gap due to the lack of proper collaboration.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
question revealed that these FET colleges are interested in providing needs-based training that meets specific outcomes.	
xi. To what extent are you satisfied with the skills training programmes offered by the FET colleges in your area? (Item 2.16) The responses to this question were expected to provide guidance on ways of strengthening collaboration (Table 2.1). The results of the question are reported below. Responses to this question showed that four of the respondents do not know what activities are taking place in these colleges. Five of the responses showed that industries are not satisfied because graduates lack practical exposure and the short courses offered by these colleges barely cover the use and recognition of hand tools and different machines. Two industries showed satisfaction in the basic knowledge and skills offered to them. They indicated that they only top up with their skills programmes in order to meet their requirements. The responses show that FET colleges should provide industries with a platform to assist them to plan how the practical training component should be dealt with. On the side of the FET colleges, the majority of these institutions are not satisfied because graduates lack practical exposure and their skills programmes are not up to the required standard.	xi. To what extent are you satisfied with the skills training programmes offered by your FET college in your area? (Item 2.10) The findings in this item were divergent. Five campuses indicated that they are excited about their skills training programmes. One of the five indicated that change comes very slowly, and two of the five campuses indicated that their concern is that their skills training programmes do not address the present needs of the communities and industries, and this raises concern because it impacts negatively on their campus. As a result the number of student enrolment is very low. Four campus managers did not respond to the question. Reasons cited were that they are not sure because no study has been conducted to study the impact of their skills training programmes. On the other hand, four industries were concerned about the lack of practical exposure of the graduates from FET colleges. Two industries argued that they are satisfied about the basic knowledge that these graduates bring to their workplace. They further indicated that their responsibility is to top up on the foundation that graduates already have. The findings confirmed that there is no healthy collaboration in terms of programmes conducted by both groups.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
xii. How many graduates from (a) FET college(s) has your company permanently placed in work since 2001 in total? (Item 2.19) Responses to this question were expected to give guidance on how collaboration could be strengthened. The results of the question are reported as follows: The study found that, since 2001, only four industries have managed to put fewer than 50 graduates in the workplace and three industries have placed between 50 and 100 graduates. Eight industries have not placed any graduates permanently since 2001. The findings showed that industries have not played their role in recruiting graduates from the FET colleges.	xii. How many graduates from your FET college did industries permanently place in work since 2001? (Item 2.13) Whilst four industries argued that they have managed to place fewer than 50 graduates in the workplace since 2001, the FET colleges revealed that only one industry has placed fewer than 50 graduates; two industries have placed 50 to 100 and two have placed more than 100 graduates from FET colleges in Mpumalanga. The findings showed the lack of proper consultation and links. This puts the graduates at a disadvantage because they are not placed in workplaces.
xiii. How many graduates from (a) Further Education and Training college(s) has your company placed in learnerships since 2001? (Item 2.20) Responses to this question were expected to give guidance on how collaboration could be strengthened. The results of the question are reported as follows: The study found that, since 2001, only four industries have managed to place fewer than 50 graduates in learnerships; two industries have placed between 50 and 100 graduates and one has placed more than 100. The findings showed that industries have not played their role in providing learnerships to graduates from the FET colleges.	xiii. How many graduates from your FET college did industries place in learnerships since 2001? (Item 2.14) The research found that four industries have placed fewer than 50 graduates each; one industry has placed 50 to 100 and one industry has placed more than 100 graduates from FET colleges in Mpumalanga. In relation to the responses from the industries, there was a similarity because four industries have placed fewer than 50 graduates; two industries have placed 50 to 100 and one industry has placed more than 100 graduates from FET colleges in Mpumalanga. When the findings are integrated with responses given by the industries, it confirms that cooperation between the two sample groups could be strengthened.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
xiv. What developmental needs or activities do you consider to be crucial in Further Education and Training colleges for better skills development? (Item 2.21) Responses to this question were expected to assist in developing operations for the heightened relevance of the FET courses (Table 2.1). The results of this question are reported in the following paragraph. For better skills development, industries recommend the following as developmental needs or activities that Further Education and Training colleges should be engaged in: • Research areas of need and focus on trades and skills are required. • A Memorandum of Understanding should be established between SETAs, industries and colleges. FET colleges should also recognise Standard Generating Bodies such as Merseta, Umalusi, ETQAs and quality assessment bodies. • Funding mechanisms should be established. • Learners should be assisted to be exposed to work programmes. • The fundamental subjects such as mathematics, science and language should be considered. • Courses should be offered that are related to industry and should include short courses as well as bridging courses, such as ABET.	xiv. What skills training programmes do you consider to be crucial in FET colleges that would contribute to better skills development for the industries? (Item 2.15) Divergences in responses were experienced in this item. The managers of the FET colleges suggested a range of skills training programmes that should be offered by their institutions. These programmes are listed below. Agriculture, mechanics, entrepreneurship, tourism, electronic machines repairs, furniture making, computer hardware repairs, mill-wrighting, auto-electrical technology, boiler making, air-conditioning, refrigeration and fitting and machining. The responses revealed that FET colleges are aware of their mandate in terms of which skills programmes should be offered by their institutions.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
• They should work within the unit standards and the NQF requirements. • Learners should be encouraged to do science, mathematics and languages as fundamental subjects that lead to well-recognised qualifications. Courses should be related to industry. The unit standards and NQF requirements should be met. Learners should be exposed to industry rules, regulations, normal HR grievances and disciplinary procedures. In view of the suggested approaches by industries, FET colleges following these proposals could succeed in meeting the skills development priorities. FET colleges regard the following two aspects as more important than others: (1) the involvement of industry in developing related courses with relevant unit standards; (2) FET colleges consulting industries and all trade and business-related programmes.	

5.4.4 **Synthesis of section 2**

In the section of services provided by Further Education and Training colleges, it was noted that the findings had received several converging responses from both sample groups. The findings confirmed that FET colleges provide limited services to the industries. It was further discovered that industries provide limited commitment to assist these institutions. The respondents confirmed that there is minimal industry/FET college-based training in order to align the industry-specific requirements. This was shown by the overarching findings where both groups confirmed that industry needs are not met; industries do not recruit graduates from the FET colleges; the usage of FET colleges by industries is limited; industries do not play any role in influencing the skills training programmes offered by these institutions; and both groups have different needs.

The findings confirmed that both the industries and the FET colleges are located in close geographic proximity to each other and that they are aware of each other's business focus. There are unlimited areas of cooperation but they are not explored. The FET colleges are aware of their weaknesses and they are interested in forming close cooperation with industries. The research found that 60% of the FET colleges do not see industries playing a role in curbing unemployment and this situation raises concern.

5.4.5 **Interpretation of the findings (section 2)**

The intention of the interpretation is to analyse the data in order firstly, to answer the research questions properly; secondly, to observe whether the FET colleges execute their functions as identified in Chapter 2; and thirdly to present the results of the study to the readers in an understandable and convincing form.

The research findings were interpreted as follows: Even though industries were informed about programmes offered by FET colleges, the gap between industries

and FET colleges is still substantial. The responses to this question reveal that some industries are prepared to contribute towards skills training. This indicates that if collaboration is forged, both industries and FET colleges could benefit from each other. The responses show that the FET colleges are not ready to form a stabilised relationship with industries. The research found that industries are not fully helping students to contribute to the economy of the country because only seven industries have managed to place FET college graduates in the workplace.

The industries are demanding a transformed curriculum, especially the introduction of English as one of the offered subjects in order to strengthen understanding and communication. This is an indication that industries are keen to be partners in skills development in Mpumalanga. At the time of the research there was little recognition of FET colleges by industries. Industries have brought a number of proposals to assist FET colleges to be more responsive, which indicates that industries realise the importance of these institutions. Such contribution shows that industries could assist FET colleges in meeting their skills development mandate as per the agenda of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA).

The findings affirm that if the FET colleges were effective, in return, industries would be able to support them. The fact that industries use their own mechanisms to do quality assurance with regard to the kind of employees they recruit confirms that they do not trust the processes that could be offered by FET colleges. FET colleges need to restructure their skills programmes and curricula towards meeting the needs of industries. From the responses it has become obvious that there is a need for graduates of FET colleges to undergo on-the-job training and be exposed to real-life situations. This indicates that there is a need for FET colleges to open their doors for industries to be able to contribute effectively.

The responses showed that FET colleges should provide the industries with a platform to assist them in planning how the practical training component should be dealt with. The findings confirm that industries are willing to participate in the activities of FET colleges. The findings showed that due to the lack of collaboration between the two sample groups, industries do not attribute their performance to the involvement of the FET colleges. The findings showed that the industries have not played their role in recruiting graduates from the FET colleges. The findings also show that the industries have not played their role in providing learnerships to graduates from the FET colleges. In view of the suggested approaches by the industries, if FET colleges could follow these proposals, they could succeed in meeting the skills development priorities.

There is a lack of proper consultation and linkage between the two sample groups, which puts the FET college graduates at a disadvantage, because they are not in jobs. The FET colleges are aware of their mandate in terms of which skills programmes should be offered and beyond that they are aware that they need to communicate with industry.

In view of this interpretation, the suggested role of FET colleges in the theoretical framework chapter (Chapter 2) is far from being realised. A strong intervention by government is required to reposition the FET colleges so that they can contribute in the economic growth of the country.

5.4.6 **Responses to section 3: Evaluation of involvement of the industries in Further Education and Training colleges to promote skills development**

The intention of this section was to determine how the Further Education and Training colleges in Mpumalanga work together with the local industries. The section consisted of rating scales ranging from "strongly agree with the statement" (4), or "agree with the statement" (3), or "disagree with the statement" (2), to "strongly disagree with the statement" (1). As stated in paragraph 5.4, the evaluation of the involvement of industries and FET colleges in promoting skills development is reported in parallel because the items were common to both sample groups. The results of these statements are reported below.

Table 5.4 reports the findings gathered from both the industries and the FET colleges on common items.

Table 5.4: **Responses provided by Further Education and Training colleges and industries (section 3)**

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
i. The level of unemployment in the Mpumalanga Province can be reduced by, among others, the level of provision of basic skills training. (Item 3.1). Responses to this statement would provide clues as to how both FET colleges and industries could contribute to basic skills training (Table 2.1). Responses to this statement were received from nine industries. Five strongly agreed and three agreed that the level of unemployment in Mpumalanga could be reduced by, among others, the provision of basic skills training. Only one disagreed and six industries were not sure whether the problem could be solved. Six industries did not respond to the statement because they said they were not sure whether they agree or not. The findings showed that industries are not aware whether FET colleges can reduce unemployment.	i. The level of unemployment in the Mpumalanga Province can be reduced by, among others, the provision of basic skills training. (Item 3.1) The responses to this statement were similar to the responses provided by the industries because all 10 managers of the FET colleges strongly agreed that basic skills training could reduce unemployment in Mpumalanga**.**

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
ii. Industries in the Mpumalanga Province provide the necessary cooperation required by Further Education and Training colleges in their geographic area of location. (Item 3.2) The rating of the statement was imperative in order to determine the impact made by the FET colleges in skills development, (Table 2.1). Eight industries responded to this statement. Six industries disagreed and one strongly disagreed that they provide the necessary cooperation required by FET colleges in their geographic areas of location. Only one agreed and others did not want to comment. Seven industries did not respond to this statement. They indicated that they are not aware of any role played by industries. The findings indicate that the relationship between industries and FET colleges needs to be strengthened.	ii. Industries in the Mpumalanga Province provide the necessary cooperation required by Further Education and Training colleges in their geographic area of location. (Item 3.2) Divergences were experienced in this item because two managers strongly agreed that industries do provide the necessary cooperation required by their colleges; three managers agreed and four managers disagreed, stating that they do not receive any cooperation from the local industries. Only one did not respond to the statement. The manager did not want to give reasons for not responding.
iii. There is great potential for skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location. (Item 3.3) Responses to this statement were expected to inform the investigation as to whether both groups have strategies to contribute in skills development. Four industries strongly agreed and five agreed that there is potential for skills development of human resources in their nearby areas. Six industries did not respond to the statement. Those that did not respond argued that they are not aware how could that be done. The responses showed that some local industries are willing to be part of the skills development agenda.	iii There is great potential for skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location. (Item 3.3) Responses to this statement were expected to inform the investigation as to whether both groups have strategies to contribute in skills development. The investigation found that there was a convergence in the findings because more that 50% of each group agreed with the statement. In the FET colleges, four managers strongly agreed, two agreed and two strongly disagreed that there is a great potential for skills development of human resources in their area of location.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
iv. Further Education and Training colleges are actively involved in the skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location. (item 3.5) Responses to this statement were expected to provide clues as to what operations could be implemented to assist FET colleges to focus on addressing the needs of industries and communities (Table 2.1). Eight respondents indicated that FET colleges are not actively involved in the skills development of human resources in their areas of location. Three industries did not respond because they argued that they are not sure what programmes are given by the colleges or whether communities do indeed accept those programmes. Only four agreed that FET colleges are involved in skills development of human resources in the areas where they are located. Industries and FET colleges do not work closely together, hence only four industries agreed that FET colleges are actively involved in skills development.	iv. Further Education and Training colleges are actively involved in the skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location. (Item 3.4) Responses to this statement differed from what industries argued. The FET colleges agreed that they are actively involved in the skills development of human resources in the province, whereas industries did not see them making any impact. The managers of the FET colleges rated the statement as follows: Three managers strongly agreed, two agreed, one disagreed and four strongly disagreed that FET colleges are actively involved in the skills development of human resources in their area of location. Those that strongly disagreed stated that what the statement was saying was far from being achieved because even their surrounding communities were not aware of what they are doing.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
v. According to your judgement, many students have benefited from the collaboration between the college(s) and your company. (Item 3.6) Responses were expected to reveal the value added by collaboration between FET colleges and industries (Table 2.1). The findings to this question found that one industry strongly agreed that many students benefited through the collaboration between their industry and FET colleges. Five agreed that learners benefited, eight disagreed that many learners benefited and one strongly disagreed that many learners benefited from the collaboration of their industry with FET colleges. The interpretation of the findings is that there is no link between the two sample groups because if eight industries argued that students from FET colleges do not benefit from any collaboration that means that there is no industry that pays attention to the interest of the students.	v. According to your judgment, many students have benefited from the collaboration between the industries and your FET College. (Item 3.5) Judging by the number of respondents to this item, convergence in the two groups was experienced. The managers rated the statement as follows: Two managers strongly agreed, two agreed and two disagreed that many students have benefited from the collaboration between the industries and the FET college. Four managers did not respond to this statement.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
vi. When it comes to the promotion of skills development, FET colleges do deliver the expected programmes. (Item 3.7) Responses to the statement were expected to heighten the relevancy of the offerings of FET colleges (Table 2.1). Five industries disagreed and two strongly disagreed to the statement. Two industries agreed and only one strongly agreed that FET colleges do deliver the expected skills development programmes. Five industries did not respond. The five that did not respond to the question argued that they were not sure whether the programmes offered by these institutions are of good quality and could be used by them to their advantage. This question yielded significant responses to inform the research that collaboration in the formulation of programmes is not strengthened.	vi. When it comes to the promotion of skills development, FET colleges do deliver the expected skills development programmes. (Item 3.7). Both industries and the FET colleges disagreed that FET colleges do not deliver the expected skills development programmes. The responses to this statement were as follows: Three managers agreed, four disagreed and three strongly disagreed that FET colleges do deliver the expected skills development programmes that promote skills development.

5.4.7 **Synthesis of section 3**

The overarching findings revealed that there were convergences in the responses provided by the FET colleges and industries. Both groups agreed that FET colleges are not actively involved in the skills development of human resources. Furthermore, industries were not sure about the skills programmes offered by the FET colleges or whether communities do indeed accept those programmes. It was also confirmed that FET colleges do not deliver the expected skills development programmes. The collaboration between FET colleges and industries in the formulation of programmes was not strengthened. The findings confirmed that there was no link between the two sample groups because eight industries argued that students from FET colleges do not benefit from any collaboration.

All 10 campuses of the FET colleges agreed that the provision of basic skills training could reduce unemployment in Mpumalanga. Five respondents agreed that industries provide the necessary cooperation. The responses showed that FET colleges realise the potential for skills development of human resources in the province. Five of the campus managers indicated that FET colleges are still lagging behind in terms of skills development in the Province. Five respondents argued that the colleges do not deliver the expected skills development programmes that promote skills development in Mpumalanga.

5.4.8 **Interpretation of the findings (section 3)**

The intention of the interpretation is to analyze the data in order firstly, to answer the research questions properly, secondly, to observe whether the FET colleges were executing their functions as identified in Chapter 2, and thirdly, to present the results of the study to the readers in an understandable and convincing form. The findings revealed that FET colleges were not responding positively to the

research questions because both sample groups agreed that FET colleges could not reduce unemployment. Furthermore, even though industries were willing to partner with FET colleges to contribute in the skills development agenda, the relationship between the two sectors needed to be promoted.

In view of the expected role of the FET colleges as stipulated in Chapter 2, these institutions need to work hard and have vision in order to be able to meet the standards that are set in the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework chapter showed that FET colleges should be involved in skills development programmes that are relevant to both industry and learners (see pp. 36 – 37).

5.4.9 Policy landscape: Responses to section 4

This section focused on the policy position of the business sector. Its main aim was to determine whether both the business sector and the FET colleges had any specific aim in addressing the skills development and training needs of people in order to meet the national call for skills development. The items on policy landscape would be reported in two ways (refer to paragraph 5.4). Responses to items that were unique to each sector, such as industries and FET colleges, are therefore reported according to the different sections covered by the questionnaire, while items that were common to both groups of participants are reported in parallel. The responses to this section are reported below.

5.4.9.1   Responses from the industries (section 4)

i.   Do you submit your Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) to your Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)? (Item 4.5)

Responses to this question were expected to emphasise the importance of skills development legislation. The responses to the question found that 13 industries submit the Workplace Skills Plans to the SETAs. Only two did not submit the Workplace Skills Plans and reasons were not given.

5.4.9.2 **Comparative analyses of section 4**

In section 5.4, it was mentioned that items that were common to both groups would be reported in parallel. The following table reports the findings gathered from both industries and FET colleges on items that were common.

Table 5.5 reports the findings gathered from both industries and FET colleges on items that were common.

Table 5.5: **Responses provided by Further Education and Training colleges and industries (section 4)**

Responses from industries	**Responses from FET colleges**
i. Does your company have a working link with any FET college(s) in the Mpumalanga Province? (Item 4.1) The question was asked to determine whether a working relationship had been established between FET colleges and industries (Table 2.1). This question is related to 5.4.1.1 iii, because six industries stated that they do cooperate and nine indicated that they do not cooperate with FET colleges.	i. Does your FET college have a working link with any industries in the Mpumalanga Province? (Item 4.1) The responses to the item concurred with the responses received from the industries because four managers agreed that their colleges do have working links with the surrounding industries and six managers indicated that they do not have any links. In other words only 40% of the FET colleges do have links with industries.
ii. If the response is "yes", which college(s)? Kindly provide the name(s) of such (a) college(s). Responses to item 4.2: This question aimed at finding out which industries have a working link with the FET colleges. The responses to the question indicated that six campuses of the three FET colleges do have links with the industries.	ii. If the response in item 4.1 is "yes", provide the name(s) of such industries. Responses to item 4.2: Unlike industries, the four managers of the FET colleges could not mention the names of industries without getting permission from them.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
iii. In your opinion, do you see FET colleges succeeding in meeting the demands of skills shortages in the Mpumalanga Province? (Item 4.3) The question was asked to determine the value industries see in the offerings of the FET colleges (Table 2.1). The results of the question are reported in the following paragraph. This question elicited very mixed responses. Two respondents argued that FET colleges could play a role in meeting the demands of skills shortages in Mpumalanga. Four responded by indicating that it would be good if students were exposed to accredited training providers that offer programmes related to learnerships, apprenticeships and other skills programmes needed by industry. Colleges should provide training that has SAQA unit standards. One of the four industries argued that FET colleges will not succeed unless they get out of their comfort zone and begin to analyse real industry needs and start to develop training programmes to meet these needs. Furthermore, they indicated that FET colleges should market their training packages to attract the interest of society. Two respondents indicated that, in view of their financial status, local people could not afford to register with the FET colleges. For learners to gain access to these colleges, government should mobilise donors for funding. Since industries do not know what FET colleges do, they do not see any value in these colleges. These two industries further proposed that FET colleges	iii. In your opinion, do you see FET colleges succeeding in meeting the demands of skills shortages in the Mpumalanga Province? (Item 4.3) There were divergences between industries and FET colleges. To highlight a few areas: Five managers did not see FET colleges succeeding in meeting the demands of skills shortages in Mpumalanga. One of the five FET colleges confirmed that these colleges will not manage because of the under-utilisation of the capacity of the FET colleges and the lack of support by the Department of Labour. Three managers agreed that they do see that colleges will succeed provided they are given relevant and enough support in terms of training equipment and properly skilled staff, and if learnerships are introduced. Two managers felt that these colleges would partially succeed in meeting the demand for skills.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
should embark on the process of college advocacy.	
iv. What do you envisage as the most important success factors of the new legislation in skills development? (Item 4.4) Responses to this question were expected to provide clues as to what aspects of skills development legislation were most relevant to the industries (Table 2.1). The results of the question are reported in the following paragraph. Responses to this question revealed that industries see the potential of the legislation. The following factors were counted as some of the successes of the legislation: • More opportunities have been provided for Africans in terms of employment and training opportunities. • The skills development framework has given workers the opportunity to get recognition for their skills. • Learnerships have been established. • The Shutdown Network Forum, which is responsible to service the machines during shutdowns, has been put in place for big industries. • Specific outcomes for unit standards provided by SAQA are in place. • Outcomes-based education has come into effect. • The Skills Development Levies Act has been developed.	iv. What do you envisage as the most important success factors of the new legislation in skills development? (Item 4.4) The FET colleges diverted from what industries envisaged as the success factors of the legislation in skills development. For example, the FET colleges noted that what they envisage as the critical success of the skills development legislation is that industries are able to access the skills levy from government, and that industries are made aware of the need for development. The Skills Development legislation promotes the cooperation between FET colleges and industries. Two respondents argued that the legislation focuses on FET colleges that are in urban areas only; it does not accommodate rural FET colleges. One respondent confirmed that FET colleges could succeed if the Department of Labour could be involved in the utilisation of FET colleges to utilise their capacity to roll out skills and learnerships throughout the province.

Responses from industries	Responses from FET colleges
v. Do FET colleges address the training needs as stipulated in your workplace skills plan? (Item 4.6) Responses to the question were expected to provide as to what extent to which FET colleges were in line with the developmental needs of the industries they serve, (Table 2.1). The responses to this question were as follows: The responses indicate that 11 industries argued that FET colleges do not address the training needs aimed for in the Workplace Skills Plans submitted to the SETAs. One of the 11 industries confirmed that their training providers have overshadowed the FET colleges. Only two agreed that FET colleges do address the training needs as planned in the Workplace Skills Plans. Those that responded to the preceding question did not respond to this question.	v. Does your FET college address the training needs as identified in the industries' workplace skills plans? (Item 4.5) The responses to this question were similar for both the industries and the FET college. Industries viewed FET colleges as institutions that do not address their needs as stipulated in their workplace skills plans. On the side of the FET colleges, eight managers of the campuses argued that they do not address the training needs as specified in the workplace skills plans of the industries because they cannot access these plans, and two agreed that they do address these needs.

5.4.10 **Synthesis of section 4**

The findings in this section showed that there were different responses from both industries and FET colleges. It was found that few industries do have a working link with FET colleges and that industries believe that FET colleges could play their role in meeting the demands of skills shortages in Mpumalanga. Industries argued that learners should be exposed to accredited training providers that offer programmes related to learnerships, apprenticeships and other skills programmes needed by industry. Industries proposed that FET colleges should use the unit standards as developed by SAQA. For learners to gain access to these colleges, government should mobilise donors for funding. Due to the lack of knowledge of some industries about what is happening in FET colleges, these industries do not see that these colleges have any value. Industries confirmed the importance of FET college advocacy. Industries have noticed the impact made by the skills development legislations. The research found that industries do submit their Workplace Skills Plans to their SETAs.

Responses to this section showed that only four FET colleges do have working links with industries. Five managers do see that FET colleges meet the demands of skills shortages in the Mpumalanga Province and three of the five managers see that FET colleges succeed in meeting the skills demands. All FET colleges see the new legislation succeeding because industries do allow them to form collaborations, although it is on a small scale. In terms of the training needs of the industries, eight managers agreed that they do not address the training needs of industries since they do not access the Workplace Skills Plans of these industries.

5.4.11 **Interpretation of the findings (section 4)**

This section focused on the policy position of the business sector. The main aim was to determine whether both the business sector and the FET colleges had any specific aim in addressing the skills development and training needs of people in order to meet the national call for skills development. The intention of the interpretation is to analyse the data in order firstly, to answer the research questions properly, secondly, to observe whether the FET colleges were executing their functions as identified in Chapter 2, and thirdly, to present the results of the study to the readers in an understandable and convincing form.

Not many industries have formed a working link with the FET colleges. This means that very little contribution could be made by industries towards assisting FET colleges to meet their obligation of skills training. It is important for FET colleges to align their skills programmes to the SAQA unit standards so that communities can be exposed to accredited training programmes. Funding has been a prohibiting factor for many poor young people. It has denied young people access to these institutions. The industries regard the skills development policies as important guiding documents. The fact that FET colleges do not follow the skills plans presented by industries shows that there is no healthy relationship between the two sample groups.

The findings revealed that FET colleges largely work in isolation. The small number of institutions (4 out of 10) that have working links with industries verified this fact. Furthermore, the non-response of FET colleges to address the workplace skills plans of industries has confirmed that they do not collaborate closely with the industries.

The findings showed that FET colleges do not respond to the research questions or to their expected role that was discussed in Chapter 2.

5.5 **SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS**

The synthesis of the findings was done in order to combine the different responses of the two sample groups to produce a new unified whole. In other words, the responses of the two sample groups were combined to form a connected whole (Soanes, 2001) This section provides the complete synthesis of the results gathered during the data collection stage of the research, as well as the directives of the literature review and the theoretical framework. The following paragraphs provide the synthesis of the findings.

5.5.1 **Synthesis of the findings for services provided by the Further Education and Training colleges: Responses from industries**

In view of the literature review, emphasis has been placed on the challenges of change of the technological applications in the workplace and the demand change brings to the training institutions (see 3.3). The literature review has confirmed that as a result of change, industries want a new worker – one with a broad set of basic workplace skills including creative thinking and problem-solving abilities, as well as reading, communication and computation (see 3.6.1). Consequently, industries place a premium on workers with a solid foundation of basic skills that can help them learn on the job. The literature further confirmed that to meet this challenge, FET colleges should form working relationships with employers so that they can benefit (see 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.7, 3.7, 3.8). The research found that the theoretical framework of the study supports this argument (see 2.2.1.1 iia). It has indicated that an FET college cannot function as an isolated entity, in other words it requires the involvement of employers. Furthermore, in the theoretical framework it was noted that FET colleges should adhere to the new curriculum that the Department of Education has developed so that they can be relevant to what industries expect (2.2.1.1 id).

The research findings showed that although industries were aware of the programmes offered by the FET colleges, only a few were involved with these institutions. Very few industries share resources, plan training programmes, develop training materials, offer opportunities for development, or offer learnerships or placement of graduates in the workplace. Industries indicated that they do not gain anything from their cooperation with the FET colleges. The respondents indicated that they experienced problems with the cooperative efforts with FET colleges. In the literature review and the theoretical framework more emphasis has been put on the importance of collaboration between the two sample groups (see 2.2.1.1 iia, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.7, 3.7, 3.8).

The research found that the industries proposed that FET colleges should provide programmes that are responsive to the needs of both society and industry. This responsiveness is described in both the literature review and the theoretical framework (see 2.2.1.1 iic, f, 2.2.1.2.ii a, b, 3.3, 3.4). The FET colleges should also provide industry with graduates that are disciplined, knowledgeable and skilled. Industry, in return, should intensify both the training and the learning experience. Industry wants to produce artisans because that would address their core needs. The industries indicated that they are interested in sharing training costs with the FET colleges. FET colleges should reciprocate by taking different industries' job specifications and industrial processes into consideration and providing outcomes-based training to meet specific industry needs (see 2.2.1.1 iia, 3.6.6, 3.6.7)

The FET colleges should offer applicable and relevant learnership programmes. To do this, FET colleges should work closely with local industries by analysing their long-term needs and by concentrating on developing needs-based skills that address specific skills shortages. The importance of introducing and maintaining meaningful learnership programmes in FET colleges and industries was argued in the literature review and the theoretical framework (see 2.2.1.1 iia and 3.8).

The industries argued that a Memorandum of Understanding should be established between Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), industries, FET colleges, Standard Generating Bodies such as Merseta, Umalusi, Education and Training Quality Authorities (ETQAs) and quality assessment bodies. It was stated in the literature review that stakeholders' participation is significant for positive skills development of people (see 3.7).

Industries suggested that learners should take science, mathematics and English as fundamental subjects that could lead to recognised NQF qualifications. Courses should relate to industry needs and learners should be exposed to industry rules, regulations, normal human resources grievances and disciplinary procedures. The synthesis of the FET colleges' responses is also captured below. This supports the arguments found in the theoretical framework and which support the alignment of the skills training programmes to address the needs of industries (see 2.2.1.1 i d, 2.2.1.1 ii a, c, g and 2.2.1.2 i b).

5.5.2 **Synthesis of the findings for services provided by the Further Education and Training colleges: Responses from Further Education and Training colleges**

The majority of campuses of the Further Education and Training colleges do have industries located within their geographical areas of location. These industries are involved in different types of businesses and FET colleges are aware of their businesses. Very few campuses of the FET colleges have working links with industries. Few campuses that link with industries responded that industries withdrew employees from campuses due to insufficient and outdated training materials in the workshops. Few campuses indicated that industries do not allow students to get practical training through the use of their facilities. Those that have formed working links with industries they link in four different ways, namely by:

- planning training programmes;
- developing training materials;
- providing in-service training programmes for employees;
- overseeing learnership programmes.

In view of the arguments raised by the literature review and the theoretical framework on the formation of working links and services provided by industries as well as by FET colleges, the opening statements in paragraph 5.5.2 showed that there is gap between the two sample groups. Both the literature review and the theoretical framework view working links as the route that needs greater focus (see 2.2.1.2 ii a, b, 3.6.6).

The few managers who indicated that they do not experience problems in the forged cooperation with industries raised a concern that students are not disciplined and do not work with dedication and passion. The majority of the managers of FET colleges indicated that they are not involved with industries and therefore they could not respond. Paragraph 3.5.6 of the literature review mentions authors' view that FET colleges should assist industries in providing accurate theoretical expertise. This is supported by the theoretical framework, which states that collaborative relationship could uplift the effectiveness of FET colleges (see 2.2.1.1 ii h)

The FET colleges agreed that they are keen to see the implementation of learnership programmes and wish to have adequate and relevant training material and suitably qualified instructors. Furthermore, they want to offer accredited, practical training and to form closer links with industry. The FET colleges indicated that industry could assist them by donating training materials, having more consultative meetings and contributing stationery. Drawing up programmes for training and other initiatives could be an initial collaborative exercise. FET colleges noted that they have to be registered with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Industry further confirmed that they

want to assist by placing graduates in the workplace and providing them with workplace experience. Industries indicated that they do recruit graduates from colleges, albeit on a very limited scale. The research found that the responses of the two sample groups are aligned with the issues raised by the theoretical framework and the literature review. A number of collaborative areas were suggested in the theoretical framework and the literature (see 2.2.1.1 ii a, c, h and 3.8).

The FET colleges made suggestions as to what should be done to increase the recruitment of graduates from colleges. These suggestions included introducing learnerships into industry, increasing interaction between industry and colleges, and the introduction of college training programmes that are relevant to the needs of industry. Industry should also inform FET colleges about the skills they require to address their particular needs. The literature review made it clear that scholars agree that the collaboration of FET colleges and industries should include the placement of learners in the workplaces, and the sharing of resources and training materials and programmes (see 2.2.1.1. ii a, g, 3.6.4, 3.8, 3.9)

The majority of managers of FET colleges are not satisfied with their skills training programmes. They agreed that their skills training programmes do not address the present needs of immediate communities and industry. The majority of managers affirmed that skills training programmes in the following subjects are crucial for the development of the people in the Mpumalanga Province: agriculture, mechanics, entrepreneurship, tourism, electronic machines repairs, furniture making, computer hardware repairs, mill-wrighting, auto-electrical technology, boiler making, air-conditioning, refrigeration and fitting and machining.

Both groups agreed that there are mismatches between them because FET colleges are not responsive to the human resources needs and requirements of industry. FET colleges do not know what programmes should be offered to meet

the needs of industry, or how they should be offered. The FET colleges and industry agreed that FET colleges should follow the Workplace Skills Plans developed by industries. This would assist them to align themselves with what industry requires. Both groups argued that one of the methods to deal with this situation is to allow FET colleges, organised labour, industries and communities to take part in the Skills Development Forums and to determine what skills development programmes are required in a specific context.

5.5.3 Synthesis of the findings for involvement of Further Education and Training Colleges in skills development: Responses from industries

In view of what is stated in the literature review, FET colleges need to take a step back and ask themselves fundamental questions of contemporary government efforts to skill its communities (see 2.2.1.1.ii c, 3.2.3). It further argues that the skills programmes offered have to be responsive both to the challenges of social transformation and to the ongoing reconfiguration of scientific and technological knowledge (see 2.2.1.1.ii d, 3.3).

The findings showed that FET colleges are not actively involved in skills development in the Mpumalanga Province. Industries argued that they are not sure what programmes are offered by the FET colleges and whether communities accept those programmes. Industries further registered that FET colleges do not deliver relevant and needs-based skills development programmes to the people.

5.5.4 **Synthesis of the findings for involvement of Further Education and Training Colleges in skills development: Responses from Further Education and Training Colleges**

The research found that managers of the Further Education and Training Colleges strongly agree that the provision of basic skills training can reduce unemployment in the Mpumalanga Province. Half of the managers agreed that industry does offer the necessary cooperation. Few managers disagreed that industries do cooperate with their institutions and indicated that industries are interested in FET colleges that are in urban areas. The FET College managers confirmed that they do realise the potential for skills development in their geographical areas but they also need proper guidance from senior managers in the provincial education department. For responsiveness of the FET College, the literature review pointed out that the issue of basic skills training is imperative. In the theoretical framework, it was spelt out that an effective FET College needs to align itself with the new curricula that the Department of Education has introduced which is more relevant to industry (see 2.2.1.1. i d, 3.2.3, 3.6.4).

Few managers strongly agreed that they are actively involved in skills development in the Province. The FET colleges' managers confirmed that proper contribution in skills development by their institutions is far from being achieved because some surrounding industries are not aware of what they are offering. The majority of the managers disagreed that they deliver the expected skills development programmes that promote skills development in the Mpumalanga Province.

To conclude this synthesis of the involvement of both the FET colleges and the industries, the findings of this research showed that both samples of the two main interest groups did agree that FET colleges were not providing relevant skills training programmes that addressed the needs of industries. They

proposed a formation of close collaboration, which establishes a Memorandum of Understanding. This would allow industry to voice its concern and give strategic direction in terms of what skills programmes should be offered by the FET colleges.

5.5.5 Synthesis of the findings for policy landscape in skills development: Responses from industries

In the literature review and the theoretical framework, it was found that both FET colleges and industries should align themselves with policies (see 2.2.1.1.i c, 2.2.1.1.ii b, 3.2). Both industries and FET colleges should note that the Skills Development Act was put in place as a strategy and as a plan to focus resources on priority skills and knowledge needed to grow industries and their employees (see 3.2.3). In the literature review, it was confirmed that the purpose of the FET Act is to take a strategic view as to how education and training can be transformed and developed to meet the needs of industry and communities in a rapidly changing technological, social and economic environment (see 2.2.2, 3.2). In the theoretical framework, emphasis was placed on the alignment of the FET colleges by responding to the transformation of curricula, learning and teaching, funding, quality assurance and qualifications as demanded by the Education White Paper 4 (see 2.2.1.1.i c).

Very few respondents believe that FET colleges can play a role in addressing skills shortages in Mpumalanga. They argued that students should be exposed to accredited training providers that offer programmes that incorporate learnerships, apprenticeships and other skills programmes needed by industry. FET colleges should also offer unit standards-based programmes. Industries noted that many learners could not afford to register with the FET colleges (see 2.2.1.1.iif).

5.5.6 Synthesis of the findings for a policy landscape in skills development: Responses from Further Education and Training colleges

Since 1994, the government has developed a number of policies that attempt to regulate the offering of the skills development programmes in the country. The aim of these policies is to give direction in skills development processes so that the country would be able to meet the challenges of skills shortages. According to the Department of Labour and GTZ-Support Programme (RSA, 1999a) and the Ministry of the Office of the Presidency (2006), FET colleges are seen as one of the means to be used to promote skills development in the country. Even though government has put legislation and policies in place, the research showed that both the FET colleges and industries are struggling to reach a workable solution that would see them achieving what the policies are seeking to accomplish.

In the theoretical framework and the literature review, it was stated that both sample groups should align themselves with the legislation and policies (see 2.2.1.1.i.c, d, 2.2.1.1.ii b, 3.2).

With regard to the policy landscape, both groups agreed that FET colleges do not address the needs of industries. Industries suggested that FET colleges should be provided with their Workplace Skills Plans to enable them to address their needs. Industries argued that they should be offered a platform to voice their concern and assist FET colleges wherever they can.

5.6 **CONCLUSION**

The findings from this research have shown that the provision of quality and relevant skills programmes on the scale required for the priority areas identified by government is a challenge. The government initiatives in the Ministry of the Office of the Presidency (2006) regard FET colleges as institutions that would improve employment prospects in the country. It is therefore important that both FET colleges and industries work together, and that they align all skills training programmes as required by the government policies. Industries and communities have high respect for and confidence in training providers who bring hope of survival. Nkosi, Shabangu and Marais (2000) argued that for any intended training in the community it should first be validated. Industries should validate the programmes offered by these institutions. Industries would have confidence in FET colleges if close cooperation with industry were established and these institutions were output-driven.

Since 1994, government has developed a number of policies that would attempt to bring skills development in the country to a level that would meet the challenges of skills shortages. According to the Skills Development Act, the Human Resource Development Strategy and the Accelerated Shared Growth in South Africa, FET colleges are seen as the engine to be used to promote skills development in the country. The research found that both industries and FET colleges are struggling to reach a workable solution that would see them achieving what the policies are seeking to accomplish.

After the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, people had high expectations regarding the creation of opportunities for development and human emancipation. This was also true for people in the Mpumalanga Province. It is unfortunate that data presented in this chapter does not show sufficient drive by the FET colleges in moving towards the development of people, as perceived by

industries in the Mpumalanga Province. It was discouraging to note that the data indicated that neither the FET colleges nor the industries have dedicated sessions where issues of skills training are extensively debated. There is no indication of a vigorous development practice in the province. The following chapter provides the synthesis, conclusions and recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER 6

SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

To conclude this dissertation, the findings reported in Chapter 5 are discussed and interpreted within the context of the problem statement, the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and the literature review (Chapter 3). The purpose of this chapter is also to provide a number of conclusions and a limited number of recommendations that can be inferred directly from the research. This chapter consists of the following sections: overview of the research, research problem, research design and methodological approach, conclusions, an overarching conclusion and recommendations.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

It was argued in Chapter 2 that Further Education and Training colleges should play an increasingly important role in providing social and economic development services, particularly in the provision of education and training programmes. Since 1994, both the Department of Education and the Department of Labour have implemented numerous interventions aimed at improving the quality of education. Various pieces of legislation, of which the most important are the Education White Paper (RSA, 1995), the FET Act (RSA, 1998c) and the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a), now provide the legislative framework for the groundbreaking reforms that have taken place in the sector responsible for technical and vocational qualifications, namely the Further Education and Training band.

FET colleges are expected to deliver a diverse range of programmes and curricula, whilst developing niche areas of specialisation. They are also expected to put into place adequate quality assurance mechanisms, adopt a variety of delivery modes, make available opportunities for students with special needs, facilitate access to and articulation with higher education, and provide increased learner support and guidance. Colleges are also expected to be more responsive to communities and the business sector by developing partnerships with communities and business.

This research has attempted to examine the roles of the FET colleges in skills development and their impact on the world of work in the Mpumalanga Province as perceived by industries. This research has, furthermore, attempted to relate these roles to current developments in education and training policies (RSA, 1998c). The point of departure of the research was that education and training are essential elements of human resources development. The research has proceeded to offer approaches that could assist FET colleges in focusing on being responsive to community and industry needs.

6.3   RESEARCH PROBLEM

The following research problem, outlined in the first chapter of this research, guided the design of the research:

6.3.1   How well are the services provided by the FET colleges received by the intended sector?

The theoretical framework, the legislation and the literature review confirmed that FET colleges are ideally placed to respond to the learning needs of specific communities, and to offer a cross-section of general, further and higher education programmes that fall into both formal and

non-formal categories of learning. In this research it emerged that industries were not satisfied with the programmes offered by these institutions. The dissatisfaction is attributed to the fact that the Department of Education has introduced a rigid curriculum of 12 programmes, meaning that these programmes are the only programmes funded by the Department of Education – no other programmes could be offered.

The underlying challenge for FET colleges is to keep abreast of social and business development and to constantly reposition themselves in response to the emerging trends. Such a strategy and attitude will ensure continued growth, increased responsiveness and relevance of the programmes offered by FET colleges.

6.3.2 **How are these colleges involved in skills development in the selected industries?**

The research has found that an integrated approach to education and training implies a view of learning that rejects the rigid division between "academic" and "applied", "theory" and "practice", "knowledge" and "skills", and "head" and "hand". Both industries and FET colleges realise the potential for skills development in Mpumalanga. The theoretical framework showed that collaboration between the two groups and accessibility to programmes offered by the FET colleges would have the potential for the realisation of skills development. Furthermore, the offering of skills training programmes that address the call for the Accelerated Shared Growth in South Africa) and other legislation could assist the FET colleges in fulfilling their mission

6.3.3 **What are the roles and/or involvement of FET colleges in the skills development of human resources in selected local industries?**

What has emerged from this research is that FET colleges in Mpumalanga are not fulfilling their roles as implied by government policy and expected by the economy. This situation is attributed to the fact that they operate parallel to industries. If these industries could guide the FET colleges in terms of what they need, they could play a positive role in the skills development of human resources in both local industries and society.

Both the legislation and policy framework argue that the key tenet of the FET system is the delivery of programmes that are flexible, with multiple entry and exit points that support different learning pathways, and that have clear, built-in articulation. The research could not over-emphasise the need for a qualification framework that allows for the mapping of responsive qualifications. This is a policy challenge currently in the hands of both the Department of Education and the Department of Labour.

6.3.4 **Do all the stakeholders follow the relevant skills development legislation mandate?**

The research has shown that legislation regarding skills development has been successful in the sense that funds are made available for skills training, and that employers are made aware of the need for development. The skills development legislation has tried to forge cooperation between FET colleges and employers, but industries do not respond to the government's call. There is a drive to empower the workforce and the youth. Even though skills development legislation is available, in a

practical situation there are problems in bringing the FET colleges and industries together.

6.4   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The research was qualitative by nature; hence a descriptive survey method was adopted through the use of questionnaires. The project focused on two sample groups, namely the FET colleges and industries in the Mpumalanga Province. Two different questionnaires were administered to the sample groups. Each sample group had its own questionnaire. All three FET colleges, which are made up of 10 campuses in the Mpumalanga Province, and 15 local industries, were interviewed through the use of the questionnaires.

6.5   REALISATION OF THE RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the research was to determine the role of FET colleges towards skills development in Mpumalanga as perceived by the local industries that are expected to be the main employers of graduates from FET colleges.

The research would determine whether the FET colleges in Mpumalanga do indeed supply industries with graduates that have appropriate skills and knowledge to meet their needs. The research would particularly examine the impact these institutions have in local industries of Mpumalanga. Within the context of specific socio-economic development of the people in this province, the following research objectives were the focal point of the research:

- To determine the views and perceptions of the industries and FET colleges about their role in skills development in the Mpumalanga Province: The responses of a sufficiently representative sample of industries and colleges were obtained on key issues concerning the

role of FET colleges in skills development in the Mpumalanga Province.

- To analyse whether both FET colleges and the industries are following the Skills Development legislative mandate: A set of six questionnaire items covered the legislative mandate; in addition the questionnaire was shown to be reliable and conceptually valid.

- To investigate the role and/or involvement of these colleges in skills development in the Mpumalanga Province and to determine whether industries appreciate their role: Reliable and key responses were received from the representative sample. Furthermore, all questions were shown to be valid.

- To evaluate the contributory role that FET colleges have to play or can play towards skills development in the Mpumalanga Province: Key issues concerning the contributory role of FET colleges towards skills development were gathered from the sample.

The researcher confirms that these aims and objectives have been achieved in this research.

6.6. **CONCLUSIONS**

The main generalised empirical findings with regard to the key research questions were that both FET colleges and industries agreed that there was a minimal impact that the services provided by the FET colleges could have in the intended sector and that there were numerous convergences in the involvement of FET colleges in skills development. The sample further confirmed that industries were not actively involved in assisting FET colleges to succeed in meeting the demands of skills shortages in the Mpumalanga Province.

From the above statement, the following conclusions could be drawn with regard to the role of FET colleges in skills development in the Mpumalanga Province as perceived by themselves as well as by local industries:

6.6.1 Courses offered by FET colleges were not aligned with industry requirements, as graduates from these institutions were purported to have theoretical training but very little practical experience (see 5.4.3.xi, 5.4.1.ii).

6.6.2 The FET colleges were inadequately advocating their programmes to the industries in order to show their commitment and responsiveness to skills development in the Mpumalanga Province (see 5.4.3.ii, 5.4.8.2.iii).

6.6.3 Industries were ignorant of the leadership role, status and participation of the FET colleges as institutions that should be responsive to the industry needs; hence they preferred to do their own training of their employees (see 5.4.3.vii, 5.4.1.vi, 5.4.1.x).

6.6.4 The industries' involvement in the FET colleges did not target the core developmental needs of people in the province, but were driven by profit (see 5.4.5.vi).

6.6.5 The cooperation between industries and FET colleges had an ad hoc nature rather than a coordinated and holistic approach. There was no guideline policy that gave direction in terms of collaboration between industries and FET colleges (see 5.4.3.iii; 5.4.3.iv, 5.4.3.vi, 5.4.3.ix, 5.4.3.xii).

6.6.6 Industries did not comply with the skills development legislation. This situation was shown by the fact that industries preferred to

upgrade their employees instead of providing the youth with skills training programmes (see 5.4.3.iv, 5.4.3. vi, 5.4.3.1 x).

6.6.7   The findings of the research clearly show that it is necessary for FET colleges to be transformed in order for their needs to be addressed. One of the critical areas that need transformation is leadership of the FET colleges. Such transformation would give the colleges a new image in the eyes of the private sector (see 5.4.3.xii, 5.4.3.xiii).

6.6.8   Industries were not cooperative in giving learnerships and work placement to the FET college graduates. This condition explains the shortage of skilled people, not only in the Mpumalanga Province, but also in South Africa (see 5.4.1.i, 5.4.3.xii, 5.4.3.xiii).

6.6.9   Both FET colleges and industries acknowledged the importance of rectifying the situation and have planned programmes to do so. The research has shown that industries were prepared to fund skills training programmes that are offered by FET colleges on condition these programmes address their needs (see 5.4.3.viii).

6.6.10 The research found that the government and the private sector were not injecting funds in the FET colleges in order to support and promote full participation of students who do not have the financial means to access further training (see 5.4.1.x, 5.4.3.ii).

6.6.11 The research found that there was relatively little cooperation between the FET colleges and industries when it comes to the skills development programmes in the Mpumalanga Province (see 5.4.1.vi, x, 5.4.5.iv).

6.7   **AN OVERARCHING CONCLUSION**

It was evident from the findings of the research that there is a discrepancy between what the FET colleges offer and what industry needs. There is thus a need for FET colleges to become more responsive to industry needs. There is also a need for industry to provide material and technical support to the colleges. The FET colleges have the autonomy to develop customised programmes for industry, but it appears as if the onus should be on colleges to initiate the links with industry. To align the FET colleges' training programmes to be responsive to industry, these institutions should meet with industry to determine what skills programmes they need. This would allow FET colleges to integrate these programmes into the new curriculum that the Department of Education has developed. The FET colleges would know the types of developmental programmes that their personnel should offer if they align themselves with industry. Furthermore, FET colleges would support and enhance the employability and entrepreneurship capabilities of learners. This statement supports the theoretical framework (Chapter 2), which emphasised that an effective FET college should offer responsive skills that would simulate the workplace environment. It further supports the theoretical framework that argued that strong features of the curricula should cater for the needs that would enable learners to function effectively within their communities in support of economic, social and cultural development.

The skills training programmes should provide in-depth, work-integrated competence, particularly in the contemporary rapid change of technology. However, this collaborative relationship must be strategically planned and incrementally introduced, with approval from the Province. The FET colleges should become self-critical in evaluating the effectiveness of their programmes and in reviewing the range of learning opportunities offered each year.

The findings further revealed that there is a need for meaningful interaction between the two stakeholders. Opening healthy lines of communication between the two stakeholders could remedy this. The theoretical framework (Chapter 2) showed that if meaningful interaction is established between FET colleges and industry, both parties could benefit from one another. Another factor that affect the responsiveness of the FET colleges is leadership. Leadership of these institutions has raised concerns in the industrial sector. It must also be mentioned that industries have a significant role in ensuring that an environment is created that is conducive to the effective functioning of FET colleges.

6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are provided for a number of reasons, such as further research, the implementation of the findings, and possible policy implications (Mouton, 2001). For the purpose of this research, the last two reasons suffice. FET colleges have a role to play in skills development in the Mpumalanga Province. The recommendations are both informative and directive towards the expected roles of FET colleges.

The following are a selective set of recommendations that have emanated from the findings and the conclusions of the research. It should be mentioned that these recommendations are restricted to those that can be based on the findings and conclusions.

6.8.1 The need for transforming the Further Education and Training colleges

It is recommended that FET colleges should seriously consider transforming from their traditional operation and that they should conform to the demands of new skills legislation. This goal could be realised by developing relevant skills training programmes that

meet the needs of industry and are aligned to the newly registered qualifications. Through these activities FET colleges would become more responsive to industry, businesses and their learners.

FET colleges should be vibrant and adaptive so that they can effectively respond to society and the private sector. They should be efficient and ready to equip their learners with the skills they require in the contemporary world of work (see 6.6.1, 6.6.7, 6.6.9).

6.8.2 **Collaboration between Further Education and Training colleges and industries**

The government should invite business leaders and the business community to work closely on the development of vibrant FET colleges. This could assist the sector in becoming more responsive to the needs of society and the economy. Collaborative ventures would assist in setting up clear goals, attaining benefits for all partners, and maintaining ongoing communication (see 6.6.3, 6.6.4, 6.6.5, 6.6.9, 6.6.10).

6.8.3 **Skills training programmes offered by the Further Education and Training colleges**

FET colleges should provide skills training programmes that are relevant to what industries and communities need. The development of learning materials for FET colleges should be a government priority. It is recommended that FET colleges embark on a consultative process with the industries and the Department of Education to ensure that the skills sets that are included in the curricula are aligned with the needs of industries. FET colleges should conduct needs assessment surveys in order to determine what society and industry need and how these needs could be met. To sustain these efforts collaboration between the Department of

Education, industries and FET colleges should be promoted (see 6.6.1).

6.8.4 **Advocacy of the Further Education and Training colleges**

It is recommended that FET colleges should use the media to advocate the skills training possibilities and opportunities they offer. More young people should be attracted to the FET colleges and be provided with better skills training that are not only synergistic with industry needs but also provide career opportunities that retain skilled workers. FET colleges and industry should develop a targeted marketing campaign to improve community understanding of the range of careers and training opportunities within the two sectors. It is further recommended that FET colleges should drive the national call for skills development in the country (see 6.6.2).

6.8.5 **Role of industries**

The involvement of industries in the skills training institutions is critical in defining a shared goal for future training, based on needs. The benefits of training, with the emphasis on training as an investment rather than a cost, should be marketed to the industries. Linkages between industry and colleges should be improved. It is therefore recommended that government should be involved in the learnerships as well as the placement of graduates from FET colleges into industries. Furthermore, monitoring processes should be established in order to verify whether what industries do is in line with the skills development initiatives of government. Industries should adopt FET colleges so that the two groups could collaborate in planning activities (see 6.6.3, 6.6.4, and 6.6.6).

6.8.6 **Work placement of graduates from Further Education and Training colleges by industry**

Both FET colleges and industry should acknowledge that denying FET college graduates workplace training leads to an unskilled and inexperienced workforce. It is therefore recommended that FET colleges and industry should be encouraged to work together in developing employment and training strategies that meet the needs of people in the province. It is also recommended that both the FET colleges and the industry should design plans that would assist them in running the learnership programmes. Furthermore, the two sectors should share a common goal on the recruitment and placement of graduates from the FET colleges in the industries (see 6.6.8).

6.8.7 **Innovations of the Further Education and Training colleges**

It is recommended that FET colleges should accept the proposed skills programmes that industry seeks from them. This would assist FET colleges to provide aligned skills programmes that address the industry-specific skills programme. The FET college graduates could be equipped with practical skills to contribute to the productivity of industry (see 6.6.1).

6.8.8 **Skills development legislation**

Although an in-depth analysis of the relevant legislation was not the focus of this research, it is recommended that companies should recognise the significance and aims of the Skills Development Act (RSA, 1998a). The aim of the Act is to improve the skills of the working force in this country. Furthermore, it emphasises that the needs of employers, the economy and communities should dictate which skills should be developed. It also aims at providing the best

quality training and makes provision for the standards of training to keep improving and for learnerships that lead to recognised qualifications. It is recommended that industries should strive to play a role in skills development. Industries should assist the FET colleges in promoting the agenda of skills training in the country. Further research could be done in considering which sections of the FET Act 2006 and related policies required attention in the light of the findings reported in this thesis. This implication of the research findings and recommendations will be included in further discussions and possible submissions to the appropriate functionaries, including the executive management of the Department of Education (see 6.6.6).

6.8.9 **Approaches to the planning and development of skills training programmes**

It is recommended that timeframes set for training in FET colleges be implemented in order to meet identified needs, because in some cases the skills training programmes are too long to have a meaningful impact on the current requirements, which highlights the urgency with which likely future needs for skills training must be identified.

In order to align the training provided by FET colleges with the demands of the industries, provision of fully equipped practical training workshops for practical skills should be made. This should equip the FET graduates with appropriate practical experience. Industries should give college learners access to their workshops so that they could be exposed to the practical working situation and become acquainted with the real-life conditions in which they would be expected to operate after their studies. This would encourage industry placements for FET learners (see 6.6.7, 6.6.10)

6.8.10 **Identification of training needs**

In order to ensure the acceptance of skills training programmes offered by the FET colleges, it is recommended that the FET colleges and industry enter into collaborative agreements. This would ensure that industry is afforded an opportunity to bring forward their skills training needs. Furthermore, industry would be able to share in the sustainability of the skills programmes (see 6.6.1, 6.6.7).

6.8.11 **Training priorities**

It is recommended that the training to be provided to people in Mpumalanga should target the following areas:

- Reading and writing skills, which include Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)
- Agricultural projects for food security
- Entrepreneurship training
- Life skills training
- Skills training (technical and soft skills)
- Tourism
- Small business marketing
- Small business finance
- Computer skills
- Lifelong learning
- Out-of-school youth retraining to raise employability

Monitoring and evaluation measures should be developed and applied to the training programmes of all FET colleges. Both FET colleges and industries should be involved in developing the measures (see 6.6.1, 6.6.2).

6.8.12 **Funding of skills development programmes**

It is recommended that substantial funds be sourced for skills development programmes. The research has shown that due to the lack of financial support it is difficult for the youth to gain access to the FET colleges. It is therefore important for the government, the private sector and other donors to inject funds in FET colleges in order to alleviate this problem. People could gain confidence in the FET colleges and participate in the skills development of people if funds are injected in these colleges (see 6.6.10, 6.6.11).

6.8.13 **Resources for practical training**

It is recommended that a special Further Education and Training college task team should be developed to manage and secure practical training resources. The task team should work out a strategy that would address the shortage of training materials. The task team should manage this process and collaborate with interested parties (see 6.5.1).

6.8.14 **Leadership of FET colleges**

It is recommended that leadership of these institutions should be strengthened. Managers appointed in leadership roles should have the necessary experience, knowledge and skills with regard to the FET college environment and current trends in vocational education. Government should equip leaders to manage these institutions in a competitive and effective manner (see 6.6.7).

6.9 **CONCLUSION**

The research has established that both industries and Further Education and Training colleges should ensure that they increase their involvement and participation in the provision of training in the Mpumalanga Province. Taking into account the skills shortage in the country, it is clear that both sectors have a significant role to play. Moreover, FET colleges should by far be regarded as the main producers of skilled people.

Further Education and Training colleges have the potential to play an important role in the provision of education and training, particularly if they demonstrate commitment to implementing the concept of lifelong learning. It can be argued that the implementation of FET and skills-based programmes will be one of the more significant human development strategies devised for South Africa's development. There are high expectations that such an approach will bring about substantial social and economic improvement in the South African environment. It is therefore critically important that as many options as possible be explored to ensure the success of these strategies. FET colleges can be an important component in ensuring the success of such a course of action. FET colleges should therefore be nurtured and be provided with the necessary support and guidance to ensure their viability, responsiveness to community needs and sustainable functioning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: MAP OF THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MANAGERS OF INDUSTRIES IN THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

The purpose of the research project is to assist Further Education and Training Colleges to be more responsive to the needs of employers and the society. This questionnaire is designed to determine the needs and perceptions of employers about on training provided and the employability/non-employability of students from Further Education and Training Colleges in rural areas of Mpumalanga Province. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire.

Confidential: Mainly for research project purposes.

INSTRUCTIONS

Kindly provide answers to the following questions:

1.   Background Information

1.1.   Name of your industry:

_____

1.2.   Your position: _____

1.3.   How many years have you been in this position?

<5	
5-	
10-15	
>15	

2.   Services provided by FET Colleges

Kindly provide answers to the following questions by ticking (√) in or complete in the provided blank space

2.1.   Do you have FET College in your surrounding area?

Yes	
No	

2.2.   If Yes, please state their focus areas of programmes:

Business Studies e.g. Management, Secretarial & Entrepreneurial Development	
Engineering Studies	
Utilities, e.g. Tourism, hospitality, food services or arts.	
Social services, e.g. Care of the aged or Educare	
Adult Basic Education and Training	

2.3.   Does your industrycooperate with any of these FET Colleges?

Yes	
No	

2.3.a. If, yes, specify ways of doing it.

Sharing training resources	
Planning of training programmes	
Development of training materials	
In-service training of employees	
Learnerships (Training of learners)	
Placement of graduates in the industry	
Other (Specify)	

2.4.　What benefits/ gains have you received through cooperation?

_____

_____

2.5.　What problems have been experienced by your industryin cooperating with FET Colleges?

_____

2.6.　How in your opinion, can the problems be resolved?

_____

2.7.　Do you have interest in cooperating with FET Colleges to make skills training more relevant?

Yes	
No	

2.7.a.　If, yes, specify ways of doing it.

Sharing training resources	
Planning of training programmes	
Development of training materials	
In-service training of employees	
Learnerships (Training of learners)	
Placement of graduates in the industry	
Other (Specify)	

2.8.　What are the sources of recruitment of your industry?

_____

2.9.　What in your opinion, can be done to increase the absorption of graduates from FET Colleges to your industry?

_____

2.10.　Do FET Colleges respond to the needs of your industry?

Yes	
No	

2.10.a. If Yes, in what ways do they respond to the needs of your industry?

_____

2.11. What internal mechanisms in your industry are in place to assess the quality of new employees?

_____

2.12. How effective are these quality assurance mechanisms?

_____

2.13. Do you use FET Colleges to upgrade the skills of your employees?

Yes	
No	

2.14. Do you get adequately skilled graduates from these FET Colleges?

Yes	
No	

2.14.a. If, yes, do they perform adequately in your industry?

_____

2.14.b. If no, do you inform the FET Colleges of the lack of performance in order to improve the skills development programme?

_____

2.15. To what extent are you satisfied with the skills training programmes offered by the FET Colleges in your area?

_____

2.16. What is the role of your industry in the development and delivery of skills training programmes in the FET Colleges?

_____

2.17. Can you say that the College(s) that are engaged with your company, if any, has/have contributed to the increase of production in your industry?

Yes	
No	

2.18. How many graduates from FET College(s) has your industrypermanently placed in work since 2001?

<50			**50 - 100**			**> 100**	

2.19. How many graduates from FET College(s) has your industryplaced in learnerships since 2001?

<50			**50 - 100**			**> 100**	

2.20. What developmental needs or activities do you consider to be crucial in FET Colleges for better skills development?

_____

3.   Evaluation of involvement

In answering this section, kindly read each statement and then decide whether you:

- Strongly agree with it (4), or
- Agree with it (3), or
- Disagree with it (2), or
- Strongly disagree with it (1), tick **(√)** the block of your choice.

3.1.   The level of unemployment in rural areas can be reduced by, among others, the provision of basic skills training.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.2.   Industries in the Mpumalanga Province provide the necessary cooperation required by FET Colleges in their geographic area of location.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.3.   There is great potential for skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.4.   FET Colleges are actively involved in the skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.5. According to your judgment, many students have benefited from the collaboration between the College(s) and your industry.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.6 When it comes to the promotion of rural development, FET Colleges do deliver the expected development of skills?

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

4. **Policy Landscape**

   Kindly provide answers to the following questions:

4.1. Does your industry have a working link with any FET College(s) in the Mpumalanga Province?

Yes	
No	

4.2. If Yes, which College(s)? Kindly provide the name(s) of such College(s).

_____

4.3. In your opinion, do you see FET Colleges succeeding in meeting the demands of skills shortages in rural communities of the Mpumalanga Province?

_____

4.4. What do you envisage as the most important success factors of the new legislations in skills development?

_____

4.5. Do you submit your workplace skills plan to your SETA?

Yes	
No	

4.6. Do FET Colleges address the training needs as stipulated in your workplace skills plan?

Yes	
No	

May I take this opportunity and gratefully thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MANAGERS OF FET COLLEGES

Questionnaire to enquire on the role of the FET Colleges in providing skills training programmes to rural communities of the Mpumalanga Province.

Confidential: For research project purposes only.

INSTRUCTIONS

Kindly provide answers to the following questions:

1.   Background Information

1.1.   Name of your FET College:

_____

1.2.   Your position: _____

1.3.   How many years have you been in this position?

<5	
5-10	
10-15	
>15	

2.   Services provided by FET Colleges

Kindly provide answers to the following questions by ticking (√) in or complete in the provided blank space

2.1.   Do you have industries in your surrounding area?

Yes	
No	

2.2.   If Yes, please state their focus areas of businesses:

Retail and wholesales	
Technical and Engineering works	
Utilities, e.g. Tourism, hospitality, food services or arts.	
Production, e.g. Oil, sugar, paper, wood, etc.	
Transport	

2.3.   Does your FET College cooperate with any of these industries?

Yes	
No	

2.3.a. If, yes, specify ways of doing it.

Sharing training resources	
Planning of training programmes	
Development of training materials	
In-service training of employees	
Learnerships (Training of learners)	
Placement of graduates in the industry	
Other (Specify)	

2.4.   What benefits/ gains have you received through cooperation?

_____

2.5.   What problems have your FET College experienced in cooperating with the industries?

_____

2.6.   How in your opinion, can the problems be resolved?

_____

2.7.   Do you have interest in cooperating with companies to make skills training more relevant?

Yes	
No	

2.7. a. If, yes, specify ways of doing it.

Sharing training resources	
Planning of training programmes	
Development of training materials	
In-service training of employees	
Learnerships (Training of learners)	
Placement of graduates in the industry	
Other (Specify)	

2.8.   Do industries recruit graduates from your college?

Yes	
No	

2.9.   If no, what on your opinion, can be done to increase the recruitment of graduates from your college?

_____

2.10. To what extent are you satisfied with the skills training programmes offered by your FET College in your area?

_____

2.11. What is the role of the surrounding companies in the development and delivery of skills training programmes in the FET Colleges?

_____

2.12. Can you say that the companies that are engaged with your college, if any, have assisted your college to address the problem of skills shortage and unemployability of people in rural communities?

| Yes | |
| No | |

2.13. How many graduates from your FET College did industries permanently place in work since 2001?

| <50 | | 50-100 | | >100 | |

2.14. How many graduates from your FET College did industries place in learnerships since 2001?

| <50 | | 50-100 | | >100 | |

2.15 What skills training programmes do you consider to be crucial in FET Colleges for better skills development of the rural community?

_____

3.   Evaluation of involvement

In answering this section, kindly read each statement and then decide whether you:

- Strongly agree with it (4), or
- Agree with it (3), or
- Disagree with it (2), or
- Strongly disagree with it (1), tick **(√)** the block of your choice.

3.1   The level of unemployment in rural areas can be reduced by, among others, the provision of basic skills training.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.2   Industries in the Mpumalanga Province provide the necessary cooperation required by FET Colleges in their geographic area of location.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.3   There is great potential for skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.4   FET Colleges are actively involved in the skills development of human resources in your geographic area of location.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

3.5 According to your judgment, many students have benefited from the collaboration between the industries and your FET College.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4		2	1

3.6. When it comes to the promotion of rural development, FET Colleges do deliver the expected development of skills?

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	3	2	1

4. Policy Landscape

Kindly provide answers to the following questions:

4.1. Does your FET College have a working link with any industry in the Mpumalanga Province?

Yes	
No	

4.2. If YES, which companies? Kindly provide the name(s) of such companies.

_____

4.3. In your opinion, do you see FET Colleges succeeding in meeting the demands of skills shortages in rural communities of the Mpumalanga Province?

_____

4.4. What do you envisage as the most important success factors of the new legislations/Skills Development Act in skills development?

_____

4.5 Do FET Colleges address the training needs as identified in the workplace skills plan of the companies around your area of geographical location?

Yes	
No	

May I take this opportunity and gratefully thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire?

APPENDIX 4: COMPREHENSIVE TABULATION OF THE DATA

	Managers of Industries data	**FET Colleges data**
1. Services	• The industries agreed that they do have FET colleges in the areas • Out of 15 industries, 14 are aware of the different programmes offered by the FET colleges • Six industries cooperate and nine do not cooperate with the colleges. The cooperation include sharing of resources, planning of training programmes, development of training materials, in-service training of employees, learnerships and ABET. • Four of the six industries that cooperate with FET colleges indicated that they do benefit. • In the collaboration with FET colleges, industries experience problems because the programmes offered do not address their needs. Only one industry argued that it does not experience problems. • 15% of the industries wish to work closely with FET colleges so that they could contribute in a number of ways. They suggested the inclusion of fundamental subjects such as languages, and their core needs be introduced. A complete transformed FET college has been proposed. • Industries indicated their willingness to cooperate with FET colleges. This cooperation should include: sharing of resources, planning of training programmes, development of training materials, in-service training of employees, learnerships and ABET. • Industries recruit their manpower from FET colleges, agencies, by using internal development plans, out of school youth, advertising through newspapers. A view of internal training was generally raised as the strong point of getting relevant manpower that fit the profile of the job to be done. • Industries suggested that the following should be done by	• Eight FET colleges do have industries that are located close to them. • FET colleges are aware of the business areas of the industries. • Seven managers agreed that they do cooperate and three indicated that they do not cooperate. One of the campuses that are not cooperating with the industries responded by indicating that industries withdrew their employees from their campus due to insufficient and outdated training materials in the workshops. One indicated that industries do not allow students to get practical training within their facilities. • Ways of collaboration were suggested, such as planning of training programmes, in-service training of employees, learnerships and placement of graduates into work. • Four of the seven FET colleges that indicated that they do cooperate responded to this question by indicating that colleges benefit in the cooperation because graduates get free training. Graduates are given an opportunity to be exposed to real work situations and related work training. • Three campuses indicated that they do not experience any problems in the cooperation with industries. • Only one campus manager gave response to this item. He indicated that the introduction of learnerships could solve the problem. FET colleges should have enough and relevant training materials, suitably qualified instructors, accredited practical workshops, and the introduction of learnerships. • FET colleges argued that that they are interested in

	FET colleges to increase the rate of recruitment from these institutions: ✓ FET colleges should provide industries with graduates that are disciplined, and knowledgeable, and industries should be responsible to intensify the training and experience of FET college graduates; ✓ Industries indicated that they want to train more artisans, because that is their core function; ✓ Industries indicated that they are keen to share training costs with the FET colleges; ✓ FET colleges should take the different industries' job specifications and focus of operation or products into consideration and provide outcomes based training that meets specific unit standards; ✓ FET colleges should align themselves with applicable and relevant learnerships; ✓ FET colleges should work closer with local industries to analyse their long term needs; and ✓ FET colleges should also concentrate on the need-based skills or shortages. • 11 industries argued that FET colleges do not respond to their needs. • Only two industries agreed that they send their employees to these institutions to get proper theoretical training; and two indicated that they are partially satisfied. • Industries use the following methods to assess the quality of new employees: ✓ they test new employees using tests relevant to the production focus; ✓ tests based on performance and needs analysis that are relevant to the needs of the company; ✓ on the job training, assessment and supervision; ✓ assessment and moderating policies (company); ✓ psychometric tests, qualifications and interviews; ✓ written, oral and practical assessments conducted by accredited assessors;	forming close cooperation with industries. • Five campuses want to share training resources; five wanted to share of training programmes; five wanted the development of training materials; five wanted cooperation in the in-service training of employees; four needed cooperation in learnerships; six wanted cooperation in the placement of graduates in the industries and six needed other means of cooperation such as: ✓ donation of training materials by industries; ✓ consultations and meetings between the industries and the FET colleges should be held; and ✓ registering with relevant SETAs. • Six campuses agreed that industries do recruit graduates from their FET colleges. The recruitment is very limited to the specific needs of the industries and it happens may be once in two years. Four indicated that industries do not recruit. • All ten managers indicated that: ✓ learnerships should be introduced; ✓ there must be full participation of colleges and industries during planning; and ✓ industries should inform the colleges about the skills they would like their employees to have; in other words, programmes offered should address the needs of the industries. • Five campuses were satisfied about their skills training programmes. • Two indicated that their skills programmes do not address the present needs of communities and industries. • Three campuses indicated that industries provide learnerships. Two indicated that they cooperate in developing skills training programmes and send their students to visit their training centres and workplaces

	✓ Recruitment follow-up interviews; and ✓ Work sampling or demonstration. • Eight industries argued that they methods of assessing are reliable. • 13 industries do not use FET colleges to upgrade skills of their employees. • 12 industries stated that they do not get adequately skilled graduates from the FET colleges and two are satisfied except that these graduates need more practical training. They argued that recognition of prior learning should be considered in employment of these graduates. • Nine industries do not inform the FET colleges on the lack of adequate performance of their graduates. Only three industries inform FET colleges about this situation. • Four industries do not know what programmes are offered by the FET Colleges. Nine industries are not satisfied because graduates lack practical knowledge. • Industries do not play any role in changing the ways in which FET colleges operate but they have keen interest in collaborating. A number of ways for effective operating of FET colleges were suggested. The main concern raised was that FET colleges do not want to listen to them. • 14 industries argued that FET colleges do not have any positive impact in their production increase. • Since 2001, only four industries have managed to place less than 50 graduates in the place of work and three industries have placed between 50 to 100 graduates. • Since 2001, only four industries have managed to place less than 50 graduates in learnerships, two industries have placed between 50 to 100 graduates and one have placed more than 100. • Industries suggested the following developmental activities that are crucial in FET colleges: ✓ research the areas of need and focus on trades and skills required; ✓ Establish a Memorandum of Understanding between	within the industries. Five campuses did not respond to this question they indicated that industries are using their own training facilities to train employees therefore is difficult for them to work with industries. • Four managers agreed that the engagement with industries have assisted them in addressing the shortage of skills. Six managers did not respond to this question citing the fact that they have no engagements with industries. • One industry has placed less than 50 graduates; two industries have placed 50 to 100 and one industry has placed more than 100 graduates in workplaces since 2001 from FET colleges in the Mpumalanga Province. • The research project found that four industries have placed less than 50 graduates each; one industry has placed 50 to 100 and one industry has placed more than 100 graduates in learnerships since 2001 from FET colleges in the Mpumalanga Province. • Mangers of the FET colleges suggested the following programmes are considered to be crucial for better skills development for industries: ✓ Agriculture, mechanics, entrepreneurship, tourism, electronic machines repairs, furniture making, computer hardware repairs, millwrighting, auto electrician, boiler making, air-conditioning, refrigeration and fitting and machining.

	SETAs, industries and colleges. recognize Standard Generating Bodies such as Merseta, Umalusi, ETQAs and quality assessment bodies; ✓ Establish funding mechanisms; ✓ Assist learners to be exposed to work programmes; ✓ Consider the fundamental subjects, such as mathematics, science and language; ✓ Offer courses that are related to the industry and short as well as bridging courses, e.g. ABET; ✓ Work within the Unit Standards and the NQF requirements; and ✓ Encourage learners to do science, mathematics and languages as fundamental subjects that lead to well-recognized qualifications. Courses should be related to industry. The unit standards and NQF requirements should be met. Learners should be exposed to industry rules, regulations, normal HR grievances and disciplinary procedures.	
2. Involvement	• Eight industries agreed that the level of provision of basic skills training could reduce unemployment in the Mpumalanga Province. • Six industries disagreed that industries provide the necessary cooperation required by FET colleges and two agreed. Seven industries did not respond to the question, citing reason that they are not aware of any role played by industries. • Four industries strongly agreed and five agreed that there is potential for skills development of human recourses in their nearby areas. Six industries did not respond to the statement. • Nine industries strongly agreed, and two agreed that the provincial government has a role in skills development. They also indicated that at present the Province is not playing its role. Only one disagreed that the Province does have a role in the development of people. Three industries did not respond to the statement.	• All ten managers of the FET colleges strongly agreed that basic skills training could reduce unemployment in the Mpumalanga Province**.** • Two managers strongly agreed that industries do provide necessary cooperation that is needed by their colleges; three managers agreed and four managers disagreed that they do not receive any cooperation from the local industries. Only one did not respond to the statement. The manager did not want to give reasons of not responding. • Four managers strongly agreed; two agreed and two strongly disagreed that there is a great potential for skills development of human resources in their area of location. • The managers of the FET colleges rated the statement as follows: Three managers strongly agreed; two agreed; one disagreed and four strongly disagreed that FET colleges are actively involved in

	• Four industries strongly agreed and five agreed that there is potential for skills development of human recourses in their nearby areas. • The findings to this question found that one industry strongly agreed that many students benefited through the forged collaboration between their industry and FET colleges. Five agreed that learners benefited, eight disagree that many learners benefited and one strongly disagreed that many learners benefited from the collaboration of their industry with FET colleges. • Five industries disagreed and two strongly disagreed that FET colleges do deliver the expected programmes to promote skills development in the Mpumalanga Province.	the skills development of human resources in their area of location. • Two managers strongly agreed; two agreed and two disagreed that many students have benefited from the collaboration between the industries and the FET college. • Three managers agreed; four disagreed and three strongly disagreed that FET colleges do deliver the expected skills development programmes that promote skills development.
3. Policy landscape	• Six industries confirmed that they do have working links and nine do not have working link with the FET colleges. • The working links are formed with two campuses per FET college. • Two respondents argued that FET colleges could play a role in meeting the demands of skills shortages in the Mpumalanga Province. Four responded by indicating that it would be good if students are exposed to accredited training providers that give programmes related to learnerships, apprenticeship and other skills programmes needed by industry. Colleges should provide training that has SAQA Unit Standards. One of the four industries argued that FET colleges will not succeed unless if they get out of their comfort zone and begin to analyse real industry needs and star to develop training programme to meet these needs. Furthermore, FET colleges should market their training packages to entice interest of the society to their colleges. Two respondents indicated that local people could not afford to register with the FET colleges due to their financial status. For learners to gain access to these colleges, government should mobilize donors for funding. Due to the unknown of the FET	• Four managers agreed that their colleges do have working links with the surrounding industries and six managers indicated that they do not have any links. • Five managers do not see FET colleges succeeding in meeting the demands of skills shortages in the Mpumalanga Province. One of the five FET colleges confirmed that due to the under utilisation of the capacity of the FET colleges and the lack of support by the Department of Labour, these colleges will not manage. Three managers agreed that they do see colleges succeeding provided they are given relevant and enough support in terms of training equipment and properly skilled staff as well as the introduction of learnerships. Two managers felt that these colleges would partially succeed to meet the skills demand. • Due to the development of the skills development legislations, industries are able to access the skills levy from government, and that industries are made aware of the need for development. The Skills Development legislation promotes the cooperation between FET colleges and industries. Two respondents argued that the legislation focuses on

	colleges, industries do not see any value of these colleges. These two industries further proposed that FET colleges should embark on the process of college advocacy.
	• The most important success factors of the legislation in skills development has succeeded in bringing the following:
	  ✓ by providing more opportunities to Africans in terms of employment and training opportunities;
	  ✓ skills development framework has given workers the opportunity to get recognition for their skills;
	  ✓ learnerships have been established;
	  ✓ Shutdown Network Forum has been put in place for big industries;
	  ✓ specific outcomes for Unit Standards derived by SAQA are in place;
	  ✓ outcomes Based Education has come to effect; and
	  ✓ the Skills Development Levies act was established.
	• Thirteen industries do submit the Workplace Skills Plans to the SETAs. Only two did not submit the Workplace Skills Plans and reasons were not given.
	• The responses indicate that eleven industries argued that FET colleges do not address the training needs aimed for in the Workplace Skills Plans submitted to the SETAs. One of the eleven industries confirmed that their training providers have overshadowed the FET colleges. Only two agreed that FET colleges do address the training needs as planned in the Workplace Skills Plans.
		FET colleges that are in urban areas only; it is not accommodating rural FET colleges. One respondent confirmed that FET colleges could succeed if the Department of Labour could be involved into the utilisation of FET colleges to utilize their capacity to rollout skills and learnerships though out the Province.
		• Eight managers of the campuses argued that they do not address the training needs as specified in the workplace skills plans of the industries because they cannot access these plans and two agreed that they do address these needs.

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Managers of industries

Regions	Date
Gert Sibandze region	18 April 2005
Ekangala region	19-20 April 2005
Ehlanzeni region	21-26 April 2005

Managers of FET Colleges

Name of FET Colleges	Campuses	Date
1. Ehlanzeni FET College	Mlumati Campus	22 August 2005
	Nelspruit Campus	22 August 2005
	Mthimba Campus	22 August 2005
2. Enkangala FET College	CN Mahlangu Campus	23 August 2005
	Mpondozankomo Campus	23 August 2005
3. Gert Sibandze FET College	Ermelo Campus	24 August 2005

APPENDIX 6: LIST OF PEOPLE ON WHOM THE QUESTIONNAIRES WERE PILOTED

Names	Sector	Position
1. Mr Steve Mommen	Department of Education	Director of FET Colleges
2. Dr Jabu Nukeri	Department of Science and Technology	Manager of Science and Technology Education
3. Mr Sam Sibiti	SAPPI	Manager: Training
4. Mr J Venter	Highveld and vanadium	Manager: Training

APPENDIX 7: LETTER OF RESEARCH SUPPORT DURING FIELD WORK

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

To Whom It May Concern

14 March 2005

Dear Sir/Madam

Support for research project, Mr Aaron Nkosi

Mr Aaron Nkosi, who lives in Nelspruit but is presently employed by the Department of Education in Pretoria, is a registered student at Stellenbosch University. He is presently doing research for his PhD. The title of his research topic is **The role of Further Education and Training Colleges in providing technical and entrepreneurial skills training in deep rural communities of the Mpumalanga Province**.

He has completed the planning and preparation phase of his research and is now ready to commence with his fieldwork. The fieldwork includes, inter alia, interviews with selected staff of business and industry in selected areas of Mpumalanga Province.

We hereby appeal to you to support Mr Nkosi's research project. The business community of Mpumalanga will certainly benefit from the research. The form of support and co-operation would include the following:

    (i)   providing time for Mr Nkosi in your diary to enable him to arrange for an interview;

    (ii)   being available and accommodating him when the interview has to take place.

Mr Nkosi's employer can only give him limited leave to do his fieldwork and he thus has to include all the interviews within a limited time frame.

Thank you for your understanding and kind co-operation.

PROF. C.A. KAPP
DIRECTOR : CENTRE FOR HIGHER AND ADULT EDUCATION

CENTRE FOR HIGHER & ADULT EDUCATION

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Private Bag X1	Fax no: +27 (0)21 – 8082270
Matieland, 7602	Email: kapp@sun.ac.za

APPENDIX 8: EXPERT OPINION: TOWARDS A CROSS-VALIDATION OF SELECTED CONCLUSIONS REPORTED IN THE STUDY

The final kind of cross-validation of the main findings and outcomes of this research project consisted of reflections by an expert in the field of Further Education and Training Colleges in the Department of Education. A focussed structured interview with a senior official (Deputy Director) responsible for FET Colleges was conducted on 4 March 2008. This interview focussed on his views on the importance of FET Colleges for economic development in regions such as Mpumalanga Province and to test the feasibility of two most important conclusions and recommendations. The interviewee was assured that his responses would not be interpreted and reflected as an official approval of the research project, and that he would remain anonymous. The following paragraphs summarise the outcomes of the interview.

On the role of FET colleges in general

The interviewee's views on the importance of FET Colleges for economic development in regions such as Mpumalanga Province were

- that FET Colleges should deliver a responsive type of education;
- address self-employment; and employability of the youth, lifelong learners and economically productive members of society;
- offer flexible, viable and diversified programmes that offer knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required by South Africans as individuals and citizens;
- provide vital intermediate to higher level skills and competencies which the country needs to chart its own course in the global, competitive world of the 21st century.

On the main conclusions of the project

The interviewee was not keen on commenting in detail on the researcher's recommendations as he felt he did not have a right to express any value judgements on what was recommended. However, the following opinions relate to conclusions 6.6.1 (viz. abridged version of the conclusion) and 6.6.3 (viz. abridged version). He argued that the NATED courses were also aligned to industry requirements in a lesser extent because the apprenticeship training opportunities were becoming very weak thus leaving the NATED courses barren. This weakness strengthened the emergence of the new NC (V) courses with the learnerships' partnerships in the picture. He argued that FET Colleges should offer current, up-to-date skills and knowledge that are practice oriented; they should offer responsive short courses that lead to meeting specific demands in the economy of the country; and Colleges should offer NQF aligned and accredited courses which are easily linked up with the learnerships; and FET Colleges should opt for flexible approaches that include part-time, full-time and distance education modes.

Conclusion

The interviewee took place in a positive and engaged atmosphere and the perspectives of the interviewee confirmed his status as a very knowledgeable person on the issue of the role of FET colleges. While he did not feel at liberty to express definitive opinions on the specific conclusions without having read the full study, it would be fair to say that his overview of the functions of FET colleges with regard to economic development were aligned to the trend of the conclusions reported in this study.

APPENDIX 9: CONSENT LETTER FROM FET COLLEGES

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Building 5
Government Boulevard
Riverside Park

NELSPRUIT
1200

Private Bag X11341
NELSPRUIT
1200
South Africa

Tel. No.: (013) 766 5571
Fax No.: (013) 766 8236
www.mpumalanga.gov.za/education

Department Of Education

Litiko leTemfundvo   Umnyango weFundo   Departement van Onderwys
Umnyango wezeMfundo

Enquiries: DR van Vuuren
Office Manager: DDG – Curriculum
Tel: (013) 766-5342
Fax: (013) 766-5602
Cell: 076 365 2850
d.vanvuuren@education.mpu.gov.za

Mr. AE Nkosi
P.O. Box 618
Shongwe-Mission
1331

By email: nkosi.a@doe.gov.za

Dear Mr. Nkosi

REQUEST FOR THE CONSENT LETTER

Your letter to the Head of Department, dated 13/10/08, has reference.

You requested permission to mention the names of the FET Colleges Campuses (on the attached list of your letter) that took part in the study you conducted on the role of FET Colleges.

I herewith grant you permission to mention the names of the FET College Campuses in your dissertation.

Best wishes for the approval of the final dissertation.

_____
27 OCTOBER 2008
MS. LH MOYANE   **DATE**
ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX 10: CONSENT LETTERS AND MESSAGES FROM THE LOCAL INDUSTRIES

1.   BUSCOR LIMITED

1 Loco Street, P.O. Box 2527, NELSPRUIT, 1200
Tel. (013) 752-4893 / -4762 / -4841
Fax: (013) 752-4871

A division of Buscor (PTY) LTD
Reg. No. 2000/18878/07

14 October 2008

To whom it may concern.

Re: Thesis - Mr. A. Nkosi.

The above matter refers.

This is to confirm that you have permission to mention Mr. Louis du Preez's contribution in the document.

Please take note that special recognition must also be given to Buscor (Pty) Ltd and its Directors: Mrs. Norah Fakude Nkuna (Chairperson), Mr. F.G. Kinnear (Managing Director), Mr. O. Mathebula (Director Operations) and Mr. L. Bokaba (Assistant Managing Director) for their vision in Human Capital Investment.

The vision includes the establishment and continuous support of their Training Division t/a Thuthukani Training.

Yours faithfully

…………………………
L du Preez
Training and Development Manager
Thuthukani Training

2.   ESKOM

Mr A NKOSI
Date: 17 October 2008
National Department of Education
PRETORIA
Enquiries: Heidi Uys
013 693 2695

Dear Aaron

RE: CONFIRMATION — INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH (2006) PURPOSES

As requested. Herewith an official communiqué to confirm participating in your research project.

I hereby confirm that I've rendered assistance and support to Mr. A Nkosi during his research period in my capacity as the Human Resources Advisor (Training & Development) at the time. He gained in-depth knowledge and exposure to the process and practise of Skills Management and Development in Eskom and in particular, Duvha Power Station.

You are welcome to mention the company in your study and you can contact me should you need more info and/or clarity in this regard.

Yours sincerely

HUYS '
Senior Advisor
HR SSU (Centre of Expertise)
Corporate Division
Human Resources
Head Office
Megawatt Park Maxwell Drive Sunninghill Sandton P0 Box 1091 Johannesburg 2000 SA
Tel + 27 11 800 2311 Fax + 27 11 800 3272 w.eskom.co.za

3.   TRANSVAAL SUGAR BERPEK

You are granted permission to mention our Company name as resource for your studies

Kindest regards

Joe Stephens
Manager:Training and Skills Development
TSB Sugar
P.O.Box 47
Malelane
1320
Tel No. +27 (0) 13 790 3865 (w)
        +27 (0) 13 790 0626 (h)
        +27 (0) 82 783 1586 (c)
Fax No.: +27 (0) 13 790 3945
E-Mail: stephensj@tsb.co.za

4.   PRESTIGE HOME CENTRE

Dear Mr Nkosi,

You have my permission to use the business as well as my name in your research. It was a pleasure working with you, and I congratulate you on your PhD.

Sincerely,

Magda von Benecke.

5.   HIGHVELD STEEL AND VANADIUM

Yes, you may use Highveld's name.

Mr J Venter