Transforming student counselling services for a future Stellenbosch University

by

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In remembrance of my father, John, and sister, Marlize

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 sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any other qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Stellenbosch University is a transforming higher education institution (HEI) affected by political and societal changes in South Africa. In many respects this reflects transformation of higher education (HE) internationally. Increased access, especially for students from previously disadvantaged communities, and support for student success are two important factors to consider in the transformation of HE. However, there are gaps in our understanding of how centres for student counselling could or should transform to stay relevant to the changes that are occurring in HE. The study explored the transformation of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) as a sub-system of Stellenbosch University and answers the following research question: *How could the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University transform to contribute optimally to student success?*

Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA), a qualitative research methodology that is grounded in systems theory, was used to collect data to answer the research question. Participants from three constituencies, namely *Staff of the CSCD, University Staff: Non-CSCD* and *Students* were selected to participate in focus group and individual interviews.

My research confirmed that the CSCD is in need of transformation that is in line with the transformation of Stellenbosch University. The different constituencies conceptualised the transformation of the Centre differently, which is indicative of a lack of alignment between these three different sub-systems. The research confirmed that students should be the primary clientele of the CSCD and that their needs should drive the transformation. The student participants motivated for transforming HEIs to create ample opportunities that would empower them to grow by recognising their own strengths and utilising them to reach their envisioned goals.

The findings of the study contribute to both practice and theory, and point to the need to substitute the problem-centred medical service delivery model with a holistic developmental approach. The study also concludes that counselling centres that function within a developmental paradigm should convey positive and empowering messages to students. They should recognise students' wealth of experiences when they enrol at the institutions, and they should create opportunities for students' growth and development. It is also important for counselling services to transform into open systems that promote interactions between the different sub-systems of the university. The research contributes to theory by laying the foundation for a theory that informs the future service delivery model of student counselling centres.

ABSTRAK

Die Universiteit Stellenbosch is 'n transformerende hoëronderwysinstelling (HOI) wat deur politieke en sosiale veranderinge in Suid-Afrika beïnvloed word. Dit reflekteer in verskeie opsigte die transformasie van hoër onderwys (HO) internasionaal. Groter toegang, veral vir studente uit voorheen benadeelde gemeenskappe, en ondersteuning vir sukses van studente is twee belangrike faktore om in die transformasie van HO te oorweeg. Ek het egter 'n gaping in kennis oor hoe studentevoorligtingsdienste moet transformeer om relevant te bly, met inagneming van die veranderinge in HO, geïdentifiseer. Die studie het die transformasie van die Sentrum vir Studentevoorligting en -ontwikkeling (SSVO), 'n substelsel van die Universiteit Stellenbosch, ondersoek en beantwoord die volgende navorsingsvraag: *Hoe kan die Sentrum vir Studentevoorligting en -ontwikkeling (SSVO) by die Universiteit Stellenbosch transformeer om 'n optimale bydrae tot sukses van studente te lewer?*

Interaktiewe kwalitatiewe ontleding (IKO), 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie gebaseer op stelselteorie, is gebruik om die transformasie van die SSVO te ondersoek en die navorsingsvraag te beantwoord. Deelnemers uit drie populasiegroepe, naamlik *Personeel van die SSVO*, *Universiteitspersoneel: Nie-SSVO* en *Studente* is gekies om aan fokusgroep- en individuele onderhoude deel te neem.

My navorsing het bevestig dat die SSVO transformasie benodig en dat dit met die transformasie van die Universiteit Stellenbosch belyn moet wees. Die verskillende populasiegroepe het die transformasie van die sentrum op verskillende maniere gekonseptualiseer, wat aanduidend is van 'n gebrek aan belyning tussen hierdie drie substelsels. Die navorsing het bevestig dat studente die primêre kliënte van die SSVO moet wees, en dat hul behoeftes 'n bepalende rol in die transformasie van die sentrum moet speel. Die studente wat deelgeneem het, het gemotiveer vir HOIs wat aan hulle geleenthede vir bemagtiging en groei bied sodat hulle hul eie sterk punte kan herken en benut om sodoende hulle doelwitte te bereik.

Die bevindings van die studie dra by tot die praktyk en teorie, en stel voor dat 'n probleemgesentreerde mediese diensleweringsmodel moet met 'n holistiese ontwikkelingsbenadering vervang word. Beradingsentrums wat binne 'n ontwikkelingsparadigma funksioneer, moet positiewe en bemagtigende boodskappe aan studente oordra. Wanneer studente by die instellings aansluit, moet beradingsentrums studente se rykdom van ervarings erken, en geleenthede skep vir studente om te groei en ontwikkel. Dit is ook belangrik dat adviesdienste omskep word in oop stelsels wat interaksies tussen die verskillende substelsels by die universiteit bevorder. Die navorsing dra by tot teorie deur 'n grondslag te lê vir die teorie van ‘n toekomstige diensleweringsmodel vir studenteberadingsdienste.

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ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
APA	American Psychological Association
CET	Community Education and Training
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CSC	Centre for Student Communities
CSCD	Centre for Student Counselling and Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DNE	Department of National Education
DoE	Department of Education
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
EDP	Extended Degree Programme
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IACS	International Association of College Counseling Services
IF	Institutional Forum
IQA	Interactive Qualitative Analysis
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NP	National Party
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NSFAS	National Students Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OIHC	Office of Institutional HIV Coordination
OSP	Overarching Strategic Plan

PSO	Private Student Organisation
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAACDHE	Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education
SAFT	Student Alliance for Transformation
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
SID	Systems Influence Diagram
SRC	Student Representative Council
SSCSA	Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCGH	University of the Cape of Good Hope
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1. POSITIONING OF STUDY

Traditionally, higher education institutions (HEIs) across the globe were elitist in nature. Access was limited to a select group of individuals and was determined by social class, financial means, and the quality of school education. Accessibility in terms of location was also a determining factor, as people in rural areas were less likely to have access than those in cities (Mohamedbhai, 2011; Burrage, 2010; Pandery, 1998). This led to significant differentiation in access to different levels of education where only a small minority of the population was university graduates.

Near the end of the twentieth century, democratisation of higher education (HE) and accessibility of HE for the masses gained momentum. This resulted in dramatic changes in the student profile across the world (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Witt, 2010, Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014; Mohamedbhai, 2011; Burrage, 2010). However, the widening of access did not guarantee student success. Many students experienced the opposite, namely access without success. Brock (2010) argues that, although previously disadvantaged groups in the United States of America (USA) – like women, minorities, and non-traditional students – gained increased access, this did not translate into success in terms of persistence and degree attainment. He advocates remedial education, student support, and financial aid. Hlalele and Alexander (2012; also Hurst, 2015) take a similar stance when they refer to the challenges of the so-called 'non-traditional' students[1] in South Africa.

In South Africa, the increase in access to HE for students from previously disadvantaged communities follows a similar trajectory as in the case of the USA and Europe. The South African transformative process is characterised by its own intricacies, however. The increase in access in South Africa is related closely to the political reform of the country. The South African education system was an important role player in promoting the Apartheid ideology. Schools and HEIs were separated according to race. Funding and resources for black schools and black HEIs were limited compared to those for white schools and white HEIs. This contributed to an unequal education system of which the remnants are still rife more than twenty years after the country became a democracy in 1994. The pro-democracy African National Congress (ANC) government replaced the oppressive Apartheid government of the National Party (NP) in 1994 and applied itself to remove the injustices of the past. The increase in access to education in South Africa is grounded in the principle of 'equity for all'.

[1] Non-traditional students in South Africa are those who gained access because of the democratisation of the country since 1994. The majority are disadvantaged black students.

Increasing access to HE in South Africa yielded several challenges. Many of the students who entered HEIs were not well prepared for higher education and lacked academic knowledge and general skills needed to succeed on a tertiary level (Archer & Prinsloo, 2014; Botha & Cilliers, 2012:243; OECD, 2008:340). In addition, financial strains, emotional problems, housing, general safety, a lack of a support structure at home and at the institution, and challenges regarding transport made adjustment in the HE context challenging (McGhie, 2012).

Students' underpreparedness for HE is a global issue and applies to students from different spheres of society. The underpreparedness of South African students and its effect on academic success are reflected in poor throughput rates (Mdepa & Tshiwula, 2012; Van Zyl, Gravett & De Bruin, 2012) (*cf.* Chapter 4). Only 29% of students who enrolled for three-year degrees in 2011 graduated in 2013, while 58% of the same cohort managed to graduate within six years by the end of 2016 (CHE, 2018:62). A task team of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) investigated the underpreparedness of South African students and advised that the undergraduate curricula of HEIs should be reviewed (CHE, 2013). The CHE task team argued that "longer programme time, more flexibility, more system self-awareness and more rigour and steadfastness around the principles designed to hold the system together are needed" (CHE, 2013:9). It was also suggested that HEIs take more responsibility in terms of their readiness for receiving underprepared students, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 4. In the report *South African higher education reviewed: Two decades of democracy* (CHE, 2016) the CHE criticises the role of the South African school system in the underpreparedness and low throughput rates of students, and calls for HEIs to take up the obligation to support students to be successful. Yet, HEIs should be cognisant that special attention to students who are 'less prepared' or 'not ready' could be experienced as marginalisation (Botha & Cilliers, 2012).

In order to minimise the possibility of marginalisation, institutions should be careful of a 'make students ready' discourse that is informed by a deficit approach. Schreiner and Anderson (2005) argue for a strength-based approach that will enable students from diverse groups to experience success. Institutions that support a strength-based approach acknowledge that every student has something to offer to the university community. This is independent of where students grew up, if they were poor or rich, and if they were from disadvantaged schools or not. Institutions are encouraged to recognise that every student has the ability to develop and should therefore be provided with opportunities for growth.

In Chapter 4, I allude to a discourse where student success is not restricted to students' academic performance. Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2006; Kinzie & Kuh, 2017) argue that students' success is not limited to what happens in the lecture halls. Their out-of-class experiences have a strong influence on their being successful or not. Kuh and others (2006:7) explain this broader

definition of student success as "academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives and post-college performance". Backhouse (2010) adds another perspective to this definition when she suggests that students are not necessarily unsuccessful if they do not officially complete a qualification.

A variety of factors can predict student success (Hepworth, Littlepage, & Hancock 2018; Kuh *et al.*, 2010; Norvilitis & Reid, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Van Zyl *et al.*, 2012). Some important predictors are the level of academic preparedness with which students enter HE and their level of motivation, mastery of study skills, socio-economic status, level of social integration, and the availability of support. Kuh *et al.* (2010) and Quinlan (2011) are of the opinion that the role of HEIs in promoting student success is the encouragement of holistic student learning and development. I am of the opinion that student counselling services could contribute significantly to promoting student success if a discourse of holistic learning and development is supported instead of one that is problem-focussed (Chapter 5).

Lomax (2002:1) describes the role of student counselling as follows:

> A university counselling service provides a calm space in which distress can be acknowledged and contained, and in which thinking can occur. In this it supports and reflects the primary purpose of the university to enable students to engage successfully with their programmes through thoughtful collaborative and independent activity.

The Southern African Association for Student Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) mentions in its 2007 Position Paper that South African student counselling services provide "a comprehensive range of counselling, career and development services to empower students to meet the challenges of the 21st Century individually and corporately" (SAACDHE, 2007:3). It also states that one of the objectives of counselling services should be "the promotion of wellness through the enhancement of healthy, holistic growth and development" (SAACDHE, 2007:3).

The descriptions of the role of student counselling services by Lomax (2002) and SAACDHE (2007) indeed allude to a service delivery model that is of a developmental nature. However, student counselling centres worldwide tend to follow a medical model approach. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is the ever-increasing number of students with mild to severe psychopathology on campuses (Dalton & Crossby, 2007; LeViness, Berchad & Gorman, 2017; Reetz, Bershad, LeViness & Whitlock, 2006). Another possible reason may be a long history of arguing that focusing on students' deficits would help them to perform. Naturally, counselling centres that support this deficit view will deliver services that are supported by a problem-centred medical model. This approach

alludes to fulfilling a role where students' illnesses or deficits should be cured, because it could be a potential barrier to students' ability to be successful.

Student counselling services are confronted with a dilemma where on the one hand they are described as a service that develops students and promotes their wellness, but on the other hand are confronted with a reality of students experiencing severe psychological problems and who are often in crisis to such an extent that their lives might be in danger. Counselling services cannot ignore this reality, and often the bulk of its resources are utilised to deal with these problems.

My argument is that when counselling services rather support an approach where students' strengths are acknowledged and where opportunities for development are fostered, they will be in a better position to contribute to students' success. Working in a developmental model that focuses on students' strengths does not imply that counselling centres will deny their role in counselling students who are experiencing psychological distress and crises. Smith (2006) and Schreiner and Anderson (2005) argue that a strength-based counselling model is more appropriate when working with students from diverse backgrounds. Jackson (2016) found that the strength-based approach is indicated when working with students with severe psychopathology, because it prevents them from over-identifying with their problems or psychological distress. Young adults are in a critical phase of identity formation and therefore should develop the skills to differentiate between their own identity and the psychological problems confronting them. Being able to do so allows them to develop a positive identity, which forms a crucial part of student success.

The strength-based counselling approach supports a service delivery model that is defined by a holistic developmental approach. It supports the belief that people are resilient and that they can bounce back, should they experience crises. Strength-based counselling teaches students to recognise their strengths and to develop them. Students need this essential skill throughout their lives to experience success and to flourish.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Like other South African universities, Stellenbosch University – a traditionally white and privileged HEI – is undergoing a process of transformation. In 2013, Stellenbosch University adopted Vision 2030 to guide the transformation of the institution over the next decade (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). Vision 2040 was adopted in 2018 (Stellenbosch University, 2018d) to build on the transformational goals of Vision 2030, which included the broadening of access, sustaining momentum in excellence, and enhancing societal impact. Naturally, the transformation of a system includes the transformation of its sub-systems (Skyttner, 2001; Zenko, Rosi & Mulej, 2013). Thus, transformation of the university as a system also implies the transformation of sub-systems such as

the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD). The CSCD was evaluated externally in 2017 as part of the fourth quality assurance cycle of Stellenbosch University, 2011 - 2016. The external evaluation committee reported as follows:

> The Centre for Student Counselling and Development is no exception in this regard, with the psychotherapeutic and support services as well as the academic counselling and development units stretched to the limit. Students have to wait inordinately long for appointments, as many students prefer individual therapy to group sessions. This was corroborated by the students we interviewed, who indicated that it is extremely difficult to get an appointment with counselling staff around examination and test times. Staff members are inundated with student/client work, so much so that it is difficult for them to keep administration duties up to date and some are unable to find time to do research. In addition, it is quite difficult for staff to institute preventative programmes because of being too preoccupied with and caught up in the curative mode of service delivery (Stellenbosch University, 2018a:4).

In the CSCD's 2017 Annual Report, the Senior Director of Student Affairs, Dr Birgit Schreiber, congratulated the Centre on its outstanding service and contribution to student success. Yet, she shared her concerns as follows:

> [I]t gives rise to bottle necks and waiting lists, as the Therapeutic Services in particular are oversubscribed. The national increase in mental illness has reached worrying proportions and we will find innovative and systemic ways of assisting more and more students seeking to resolve challenges, thereby enabling them to reach their goals (CSCD, 2017:2).

Later in the report, the following is written about the increasing demand for psychotherapeutic interventions experienced by the centre: "The demand for psychotherapeutic services exceeds our resources despite innovative processes such as screening because of the escalation in intensity and duration of intensity of crisis clients" (CSCD, 2017:42). In 2018, this is of an even greater concern.

Against this background, the following research question guided the research:

> *How could the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University transform to contribute optimally to students' success?*

This comprehensive research question was broken down into the following sub-questions:

> *How do different role-players in the Stellenbosch University community conceptualise the transformation of the CSCD?*
>
> *What are the different role-players' suggestions regarding the transformation of the CSCD?*
>
> *What are the practical implications of transformation for the CSCD?*

1.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I followed a qualitative approach in my quest to answer the research question and sub-questions. I wanted to explore the research phenomenon by focussing on the inner experiences of the research participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) was chosen as research design. IQA was developed by Norvell Northcutt and Danny McCoy, who explain it as a design "grounded in systems theory whose primary purpose is to represent the meaning of a phenomenon in terms of elements (affinities) and the relationships among them" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:xxi). Seeing that this study focussed on the phenomenon of the transformation of a sub-system (CSCD) due to transformation in the larger system (Stellenbosch University), I regarded the interactive and systems approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, provided by IQA, as an appropriate way to answer the research question. IQA required me to answer the following questions:

- What are the components of the phenomenon?
- How do the components relate to each other in a social system?
- How do the systems compare, in terms of components, intra-systemic relationships, and inter-systemic relationships? (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

I identified three different groups (constituencies) from which the research participants were chosen, based on their distance from and power over the phenomenon. The constituencies identified were:

- staff of the CSCD;
- Stellenbosch University staff who do not work at the CSCD; and
- registered students of Stellenbosch University.

IQA follows a structured approach in four distinctive phases, namely:

- research design (identification of the research problem and formulation of research questions);
- focus group discussions;
- interviews; and
- report. (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004)

Both focus group discussions and individual interviews were utilised to collect data about the researched phenomenon. Participants for the focus groups were selected by means of purposive sampling, while the participants for the individual interviews were selected by means of both purposive and convenience sampling.

Focus group discussions were conducted with each one of the constituencies. The focus groups had to identify and describe different elements that, according to them, were components of the researched phenomenon. IQA refers to these elements as affinities. A systems influence diagram (SID) was designed after each focus group discussion. The SID is a "visual representation of an entire system of influences and outcomes" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:48). The purpose of the focus group discussions was to produce the semi-structured interview guides that were used during the individual interviews with the participants of each constituency.

I conducted four individual interviews per constituency. After a process of inductive and deductive coding, I was able to compile a SID for each individual interview. I combined the individual SIDs to form a composite SID for each constituency. These SIDs were interpreted to answer the research question and sub-questions.

1.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study involved interaction between people and their environment in order to understand or explain a phenomenon. My role as researcher was to collect information from the participants in order to search for truth and meaning. Mouton (2001:239) states that "the scientist has the right to search for truth, but not at the expense of the rights of other individuals in society". Hence, I needed to obtain ethical clearance from the appropriate institutional structures (Addendum 2), and because I included university staff and students in my study, I secured institutional permission (Addendum 1) for the research.

Although all the research was conducted with the purpose of understanding and improving a sub-system, I constantly had to be aware of the possible harm to which participants could be subjected. Therefore, as a researcher, my actions were informed by specific ethical considerations. All potential participants were informed beforehand of the purpose, scope, envisioned outcomes, as well as possible harm before they provided written informed consent (see Addendum 3 for example of informed consent form) for taking part in the study. I also took special care not to coerce anybody to participate. Participants were informed that should anybody decide against participation, it would not have any negative consequences for them. Thus, participation was voluntary.

All the information gained from the focus groups and individual interviews was managed confidentially. The recorded information was stored in a safe environment during the research and was destroyed after the research had been concluded.

Participants were informed of my role as researcher/practitioner, and before any data were collected, we first gained clarity regarding possible power relationships as well as the potential for a conflict of interest. As a registered psychologist, I am subject to the Ethics Code for psychologists as

promulgated in the Health Professions Act 56 of 1974 (HPCSA, 1974). Power relationships and conflict of interest are discussed particularly as an ethical issue in this Act. Befitting my role as a researcher in the study, I did not and will not provide individual and/or group counselling sessions to any of the participants because of the ethical complexities that can arise from the multiple roles.

As practitioner/researcher, my focus was to cause no harm and to contribute to research that would be used in participants' best interest. Their well-being was always my priority and was not undermined by the envisioned research outcomes.

1.5. EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.5.1. Student success

Student success refers to "academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives and post-college performance" (Kuh *et al*., 2006:7).

1.5.2. Counselling

Counselling refers to the professional communication between counsellors and clients. Counselling empowers "diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education and career goals" (Kaplan, Tarvydas & Gladding, 2014:368).

1.5.3. Medical counselling model

A medical counselling model focuses on people's deficits or problems and attempts to improve or cure them. Deficits can be classified as psychopathology and may be diagnosed according to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) (APA, 2013).

1.5.4. Positive psychology

Positive psychology studies positive emotions, positive characteristics, and positive institutions. It embraces students' strengths in order to optimise their potential as holistic human beings (Schreiner & Anderson, 2015; Seligman, Steen, Park & Peterson, 2005).

1.5.5. Holistic student development

Holistic student development refers to all the developmental processes included on a continuum with formal curricular learning and development on the one end and informal co-curricular processes on the other end.

1.5.6. Strength-based approach

The strength-based approach emphasises that everybody has strengths and resources. Allowing individuals and organisations to utilise their strengths and resources will equip them with knowledge and skills to improve their quality of life and to flourish.

1.5.7. Transformation

The transformation of a system is the result of a paradigm shift. A transformed system is characterised by dynamic changes in form, culture, identity, nature and appearance (Du Preez, Simmonds & Verhoef, 2016; Rothwell, Stavros & Sullivan, 2015). Pattman and Carolissen (2018) explain that, in the South African context, transformation is about redesigning and re-engineering an unequal society with the purpose of becoming just and equitable

1.6. OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the research study. It provides an overview of the research problem, the research question, and the methodology. Important terminology is defined. Chapter 2 focuses on the transformation of HE internationally and nationally. The transformation of HE in South Africa is discussed against the background of the history and political developments in the country. In Chapter 3, I discuss the history of Stellenbosch University. I also pay attention to the transformation of Stellenbosch University in the 21st century. Student success is deconstructed in Chapter 4. I investigate the importance of student success, the factors that affect it, barriers to student success, and the promotion thereof. Chapter 5 pays attention to student counselling and its role in student success. I discuss the theoretical framework of the study in Chapter 6 and explain the research methodology in Chapter 7. The results of the research study are discussed in Chapter 8, and Chapter 9 contains the findings and recommendations.

1.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Stellenbosch University is in the midst of a transformation process that is driven by the international transformation of HE as well as transformation in the South African society. The CSCD is a sub-system within the Stellenbosch University system. The transformational changes in the larger system are intertwined with changes in the sub-system, namely the CSCD. The one cannot transform in isolation from the other. The research study explores the transformation of the CSCD as a sub-system and its role in student success within a changing student community. I discuss the transforming HE landscape in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2
CREATING A CONTEXT FOR TRANSFORMATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Internationally, HE is tasked with developing the intellectual capital of society. Lange (2013) points out that HE is a public good, because it strengthens societies. Countries that invest optimally in education and training, especially HE, have higher levels of economic growth, their citizens have higher levels of social well-being, and they are better equipped to critically engage in democratic processes (CHE, 2004). Thus, the quality of the HE system in a country will significantly affect the quality of the society and ultimately the successful existence of a country.

In this chapter, I focus on the transformation of the South African HE landscape since the inception of a democratic government in 1994. I provide an overview of the history of HE in South Africa to contextualise the higher education transformation process. Next, I provide a comprehensive layout of relevant policies, White Papers, and Acts that were released by the South African government after 1994.

2.2 THE 'OLD' SOUTH AFRICA – BEFORE 1994

2.2.1. Early colonialism

South Africa has a long history of oppression, inequalities, segregation, and marginalisation of various groups based on race, gender, class, and geographical settings. It can be dated back to as early as 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck, a Dutch colonial administrator, set foot on African soil and established the Cape of Good Hope as a resupply camp for the Dutch fleet on its way to the East (Maylam, 2016; Sehoole, 2006). Van Riebeeck and his Dutch colleagues had various confrontations with the indigenous people named the Khoikhoi. From the beginning, the relationship between the Dutch and the Khoikhoi was characterised by an unequal distribution of power in favour of the Dutch. This was the onset of segregation based on race in South Africa. The Dutch East India Company ruled the Cape for 150 years. In 1806, the British became the official rulers of the Cape, and an official colony was established.

The literature shows that at the Cape, the first forms of basic education were delivered separately to children of the various races (Van Zyl, 1997). Much later, this differentiation spilled over into the HE system of the country (Sehoole, 2006). The establishment of HE in the country can be traced back to 1829, when the first college opened in Cape Town. The South African College catered exclusively for the Anglo-Dutch elite (Philips & Robertson, 1993).

The University of the Cape of Good Hope (UCGH) was founded in 1873 and became the first South African degree granting institution (Philips & Robertson, 1993), modelled on the University of London. The UCGH developed syllabi, controlled examinations and granted degrees to successful students of colleges in the Cape Colony and later to colleges in the other colonies. All these students belonged to the white Anglo-Dutch elite.

2.2.2. The Union of South Africa

In 1909, the British government passed the South African Act, and South Africa was declared a Union in 1910. This further entrenched segregation between the white minority and the black, coloured, and Indian citizens in the country. The South African education system was deeply rooted in the superiority of whites. With the promulgation of the University Acts of 1916, the University of Cape Town, an English-medium institution, and the University of Stellenbosch, an Afrikaans-medium institution, were established. The remaining colleges formed the federal examining University of South Africa (UNISA). The first HEI for black South Africans was the South African Native College Fort Hare, which was also established in 1916 (Sehoole, 2006).

South Africa's HE landscape developed quickly after the promulgation of the University Acts in 1916 to consist of universities, university colleges, and technical institutes. Eventually, all the university colleges were awarded university status.

2.2.3. Apartheid

Although the injustices against black (African, Indian and coloured[2]) people date back to the earliest years of the country's existence, this process was legalised in 1948, when the National Party (NP) claimed victory in the national elections, and Apartheid was formalised in the country's laws, policies and South African society in general. The term 'Apartheid' refers to formal separation, primarily based on race, in all aspects of society, including education, politics, and the use and availability of various amenities. The South African society developed into one where the minority ruled and the majority experienced discrimination to a level where they suffered economically, socially, and educationally. After South Africa had become an independent republic on 31 May 1961, the country became increasingly isolated from the rest of the world due to diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions by the international community.

The ethos of Apartheid in society in general was strongly reflected in the education system of the country. The NP government pressurised HEIs to act as instruments for realising their ideological goals. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 created a separate education system for blacks. In 1963,

[2] This racial terminology was instituted during Apartheid and is still widely used to monitor demographic change in organisations.

coloureds received their own official education system, while Indian Education was established in 1964. The result was that different education departments governed the black and white schools (New learning, n.d.; Ocampo, 2004; South African History Online, 2017; Thobejane, 2013).

The differentiation based on race, ethnicity, class, and geography was extended to tertiary training institutions (NCHE, 1996; Thobejane, 2013). The Extension of University Education Act of 1959 resulted in the formal segregation of HEIs based on racial criteria.

Initially, after the passing of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, the HE sector in South Africa consisted of universities and vocational colleges. Vocational colleges were divided into three types – according to its vocational focus – namely agricultural, nursing and education colleges.

Industry and commerce experienced an increasing shortage of people with specific and advanced applied skills. This was addressed by the passing of the Advanced Technical Education Act (Act 40 of 1967) (RSA, 1967) which led to the creation of a third type of HEI in South Africa, namely technikons. Technikons served as an intermediate between technical colleges and universities. The technikons were, like the universities and vocational colleges, entrenched with the rhetoric of Apartheid.

With the establishment of more black institutions, black students' entry into white institutions became severely restricted. Such students could be admitted to a privileged white institution only if their programmes of choice were not offered by a black HEI. The Minister of Education also had to give permission for their registration at a white institution (Bunting, 2006).

Privileged white training institutions (including schools) were much better resourced by government when compared to their black counterparts. HE funding was distributed unequally between the black HEIs and white HEIs (Luescher & Symes, 2003). The vast differences in the availability of resources significantly affected the quality of education received. Black students, the largest demographic group in South Africa, had the lowest rate of enrolment and participation in HE. Black students who did enrol at HEIs were highly underrepresented in the science, engineering, and technology (SET) disciplines because the historically black institutions did not offer degrees in these fields (Luescher & Symes, 2003). Students at black HEIs also had higher dropout rates than students at white HEIs had. This contributed to a work force consisting of a majority of unskilled people in need of basic education and training (NCHE, 1996:54).

Thus, it can be claimed that one of the main goals of HE under the governance of the Apartheid regime was to promote and ensure reproduction of power of the white elite and the suppression of the underprivileged blacks. Unequal access, separate development, and segregation became the legacy of HE under Apartheid. However, it should be acknowledged that, although the Afrikaans white HEIs

acted to a great extent according to the ideologies of Apartheid, the English white HEIs refused to be intimidated by government (Bunting, 2006). The English HEIs often proclaimed their disagreement with the dealings of the Apartheid regime. They rather encouraged black students to enrol for courses at the English HEIs as far as it was allowed. By the end of the 1980s, students at black HEIs and students from English white HEIs openly protested against Apartheid (Cloete, 2004a). The period 1976-1990 was typified by civil unrest and school boycotts. A large proportion of the learners that were affected by the unrest and boycotts did not pass matric and thus could not get access to HE.

By 1990, the South African HE landscape consisted of 21 universities, 15 technikons, and about 140 colleges that catered for students' needs according to race (NCHE, 1996:29). Ten universities and seven technikons were reserved exclusively for white students. A total number of 283 330 students were enrolled at the 21 universities in 1988, and 57 345 students were enrolled at the 15 technikons. The number of enrolments at both universities and technikons increased significantly towards 1994, although by 1992, the percentage of white students at universities were still four times more than their share of the South African population, whereas the number of black students contributed to only half of its share in population (NCHE, 1996).

2.3 THE "NEW" SOUTH AFRICA – 1994 AND THEREAFTER

2.3.1. The birth of a new democracy

In 1994, the first democratic national elections took place in South Africa. Blacks, coloureds, Indians, and whites were allowed to vote in one single election. The African National Congress (ANC) was elected by a majority vote as the new ruling party, an outcome that promised a better dispensation for all South African citizens, including promises of a growing economy and successful reintegration and participation in the international society (CHE, 2004). The new government committed itself to a comprehensive societal transformation process.

The transformation of societies is a global phenomenon that is not limited to South Africa only. However, in South Africa, transformation had a clear onset and it was driven strongly by political ideals. The democratisation of South Africa ended the isolation of the country from the rest of the world. Since 1994, the country had to deal not only with its own history-related challenges, but also with the challenges and complexities of being part of a global society. The effects of globalisation included vast changes in the social organisation of knowledge and learning (NCHE, 1996).

2.3.2. Transformation of Higher Education

Although the process of transformation in South Africa has its own idiosyncrasies and nuances, it did not and still does not exist in isolation. Nationally and internationally, the focus is an increase in

accessibility for every citizen. This phenomenon is often referred to as the 'massification' of HE. One of the purported benefits of massification is that it improves the socio-economic status of a country (Hornsby & Osman, 2014). In South Africa, massification specifically embraces equity and equality as core values, is related to a vision of eradicating the injustices of Apartheid and thus has a strong political connotation (Badat, 2009; CHE, 2004).

The comprehensive transformation of the South African society demanded much from higher education. The CHE (2004) refers to a double transformation challenge for South African HE. On the one hand, transformation had to address the inequalities of HE due to the legacies of Apartheid, while on the other hand, it had to encourage the economic growth of the country (Badat, 2009). The second challenge pertained to globalisation and enabling South Africa to participate in a global economy.

The process of developing new policies for HE in South Africa commenced before the official elections in 1994. The unbanning of the ANC in 1990 set the stage for future transformations and developments. In 1991, the NP published a discussion paper titled *Education Renewal Strategy* (DNE, 1991), in which an overview of the prevailing education system (including HE) was provided, and its deficiencies were pointed out. In 1994, the ANC issued *A policy framework for education and training* (ANC, 1994), in which its vision for a reconstructed and democratic education system was discussed. Cloete (2004b:58) points out that this document "contained no warnings about the possible trade-offs between equity and development, or between individual and institutional redress" that would play key roles in the comprehensive transformation process. A significant turn of events was marked by the appointment of a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in 1995.

2.3.2.1. National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)

The newly elected President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, required of the NCHE to investigate existing practices in the country in order to advise on a transformation plan for the HE system (Luescher & Symes, 2003; NCHE, 1996). He was clear in his assignment that what was valuable in the 'old system' should be preserved but deficiencies needed to be transformed (Cloete, 2004b). Many role-players were consulted nationally and internationally.

In 1996, the NCHE issued a report titled *A Framework for Transformation*. In this report, the NCHE proposed the following central features of a new framework for HE:

- Increased participation in a system by a diverse range of constituencies.
- Increased cooperation and more partnerships between HE and other social actors and institutions.
- Greater responsiveness to a wide range of social and economic needs. (NCHE, 1996:76)

The NCHE advised that HE should be expanded significantly through the massification thereof. This could lead to the production of more highly skilled citizens who could contribute to the economic growth of the country (Cloete, 2004b; Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007).

The NCHE report drew attention to the fact that, although HE should be 'massified' to ensure equity and access for all, the percentage of the national budget allocated for HE would probably not increase. More had to be done with the same amount of resources. The NCHE stated that HE should not rely on government funding only. Partnerships between HE and stakeholders in civil society, private institutions, and industries were called for.

The third feature of the report, namely the call for greater responsiveness, suggested that HEIs should be open for interaction with the rest of the South African society and thus be more in tune with the social, economic, and political needs of the country. HEIs should adjust their programmes and the content thereof to confront the complexities of South Africa and to deliver knowledge, skills, and solutions that could effectively deal with these complexities (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; CHE, 2004; Cloete, 2004b; NCHE, 1996).

Lastly, the NCHE clearly highlighted that the report did not serve as an implementation plan. The NCHE stated that the development of appropriate policies for an implementation plan were necessary. Various Green Papers, White Papers, and legislation followed to guide the transformation process. These papers and policies had three distinct goals in mind, namely equity and democratisation, effectiveness, and efficiency (CHE, 2004).

2.3.2.2. Education White Paper 3

A Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation that built on the recommendations of the NCHE report was published in December 1996 (DoE, 1996). The Green Paper was followed by the Draft White Paper on Higher Education in 1997, and the Education White Paper 3 was finalised in 1997 (DoE, 1997). The Education White Paper 3 served as a legal framework that could guide the implementation of post-Apartheid transformation policies in HE (Odhav, 2009).

The Education White Paper 3 called for a single national HE system as a substitute for the unequal and fragmented HE system of the past. A single national HE system would allow for the creation of a learning society in a country that was in need of creative problem solving, new initiatives, and skills development. HE in South Africa had to play a key role in the societal transformation of the country by developing people to build a better life for all (CHE, 2004). The Education White Paper 3 defined the role of HE in South Africa as follows:

- To meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives. HE equips individuals to make the

best use of their talents and of the opportunities offered by society for self-fulfilment. It is thus a key allocator of life chances and an important vehicle for achieving equity in the distribution of opportunity and achievement among South African citizens.

- To address the development needs of society and provide the labour market, in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy. HE teaches and trains people to fulfil specialised social functions, enter learned professions, or pursue vocations in administration, trade, industry, science and technology, and the arts.
- To contribute to the socialisation of enlightened, responsible, and constructively critical citizens. HE encourages the development of a reflective capacity and a willingness to review and renew prevailing ideas, policies, and practices based on a commitment to the common good.
- To contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge. HE engages in the pursuit of academic scholarship and intellectual inquiry in all fields of human understanding, through research, learning, and teaching. (DoE, 1997:7-8)

The Education White Paper 3 confirmed a need for transformation of the HE system of the country. A thorough review of the prevailing HE system was needed. This document highlighted the unequal access to HE for students from different races and stated that the knowledge and skills of graduates not necessarily provided in the needs of the South African economy. Other challenges included that HE did not contribute sufficiently to a critical society whose members question prevalent issues, some South African institutions had limited international acclaim, research formed part of a closed-system disciplinary approach that led to academic isolation, and governance of the institutions was characterised by fragmentation, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness. The various activities of HEIs were also isolated from one another, from the state, the society, and the international intellectual sphere (Luescher & Symes, 2003).

To realise the visions and ideals for a transformed HE system, the following had to be initiated:

- Equal access opportunities for all South Africans.
- A single HE system that houses universities, technikons, colleges, and private tertiary training institutions.
- Incorporation of education, nursing, and agriculture colleges into universities and technikons.
- Growing distance education.
- Equipping students with knowledge and skills that meet national development needs.

- Promotion of critical discourse and creative thinking.
- Research outputs that meet rigorous academic standards and that contribute to national and international knowledge.
- Establishing an expanded national student loan and bursary scheme.
- Developing a new government funding formula for HEIs (DoE, 1997).

However, the proposal made by the NCHE that HE in South Africa should be massified was rejected largely because it might compromise the quality of the education offered. Increased access with quality was still promoted. Therefore, the implementation of policy instruments that included a new funding formula, a reliable information system, and a national plan providing benchmarks for future planning was advocated for (Cloete, 2004b:61).

2.3.2.3. Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)

In 1997, the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) (RSA, 1997) was promulgated. The preamble of this Act states that the main purpose it serves is:

> To regulate higher education; to provide for the establishment, composition and function of a Council on Higher Education; to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public higher education institutions; to provide for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor; to provide for the registration of private higher education institutions; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education; to provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws; and to provide for matters connected therewith (RSA, 1997:2).

The Higher Education Act has been amended several times since its promulgation in 1997. These amendments (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2016) were related closely to an increase in the government's authority over HE. Amendments included the right by the Minister of Education to appoint administrators at institutions that did not meet the expected financial requirements and goals, better regulations of private HEIs by the minister, the accreditation of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as an education and training quality assurance body that is primarily responsible for HE, empowering the minister to decide on the physical location of institutions, and granting the minister the right to require mergers and incorporations of institutions.

After the issuing of the Education White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) in 1997 and the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (RSA, 1997), many change processes were initiated in the HE system. Cloete (2004b) is of the opinion that the transformation agenda outlined in Education White Paper 3 was very

ambitious. Proposals in the policies and related papers were not well related to the existing realities in the country at that stage; consequently, the South African society began to lose trust in the ability of HE to transform as envisioned, and the period after 1997 is often referred to as an implementation vacuum (CHE, 2004).

2.3.2.4. National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE)

In May 1998, as was recommended by the Education White Paper 3, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established. In 2000, the CHE issued a report titled *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century* (CHE, 2000). This document was often referred to as the 'size and shape' document. With this report, the CHE highlighted the prevailing transformation challenges as the increased fragmentation in the system, the geographical location of some institutions, issues with throughput and graduation rates, the continued unequal distribution of students in sciences, commerce, humanities, and education, the overall low research output, and academic and administrative staff ratios that did not represent the national race and gender scenario (CHE, 2000). The CHE core proposal was that the number of HEIs in South Africa should be reduced and differentiated according to the type and level of qualifications offered. It also pointed out that immediate action was required to implement the proposed guidelines.

The CHE report (2000) was highly contested and rejected by the Minister of Education (Cloete, 2004b). At that stage, the Minister of Education expressed her displeasure with the rate of transformation in HE and responded with the publication of the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) in 2001 (Badat, 2009; DoE, 2001). The minister did not permit any consultation and negotiations regarding the NPHE.

The NPHE served as a framework for realising the goals of Education White Paper 3 and addressing the issues highlighted in the report of the CHE. A HE system for the 21st century was engineered strategically through the framework set by the NPHE. Thus, the NPHE affected all HEIs in South Africa. The focus of the NPHE was fourfold, namely:

- ensuring that the outcomes set in the Education White Paper 3 were reached and that they corresponded with the needs of the South African society;
- coherence on national level with regard to the provision of HE in South Africa;
- efficient and accountable usage of the limited available resources; and
- improvement of the quality of academic programmes. (DoE, 2001)

The overarching focus of the above-mentioned was to increase the number of qualifications obtained from HEIs within the following five years. The NPHE stated 16 outcomes to structure and streamline the transformation of the whole South African HE system. These outcomes pertained to restructuring the institutional landscape by means of mergers and incorporations, but also transforming the student body in HE. The promotion of access and graduate outputs, recruitment of older, non-traditional students, and a redistribution of the enrolments for particular programmes with a specific focus on the increase of students in the SET programmes were emphasised. The development of the cognitive skills of graduates also received attention (DoE, 2001).

The NPHE brought the preparatory planning phase during which HEIs had to submit three-year implementation plans to a close. It also served as a starting point for aligning funding and institutional plans. The NPHE was a first attempt to put the HE policies of the 'new' South Africa into practice. However, it did not escape some criticism (Jansen, 2001; Van Niekerk, 2004).

Although the NPHE acknowledged the lack of capacity to implement the actions for transformation and tried to compensate for it, the ability of the country to accommodate these changes was questioned widely. In this regard, Jansen (2001:9) states, "South Africa's capacity to build high quality competitive universities that also deliver on the equity demands made of a nation at the margins of powerful globalisation pressures, depends crucially on how the state makes decisions about the sector in the next 24 months." Another point of criticism was the growing role of the government in HE management and thus a reduction in the autonomy of institutions. The contestation of the NPHE signalled the beginning of a fragile relationship characterised by strong power dynamics between government and HEIs.

Initially, when the transformation process began, a cooperative governance model between the state and HEIs was negotiated (Cloete, 2004b). One of the principles of the Education White Paper 3 was institutional autonomy (DoE, 1997:13).

> The principle of institutional autonomy refers to a high degree of self-regulation and administrative independence with respect to student admissions, curriculum, methods of teaching and assessment, research, establishment of academic regulations and the internal management of resources generated from private and public sources. Such autonomy is a condition of effective self-government.

However, the NPHE was the beginning of an increase in governmental control over HE transformation.

Policymaking and the implementation of the resulting actions served as important vehicles for transforming and democratising HE (Luescher & Symes, 2003). According to Badat (2009), three

distinct periods of policymaking could be identified. Between 1990-1994, the system inherited from the Apartheid regime was evaluated critically. Values, principles, and goals envisioned for a transformed system were proposed. During a second period stretching from 1995 to 1998, the government reviewed HE comprehensively and established a new regulatory framework. During that period, the NCHE was established, various reports were published, and the Education White Paper 3 was issued (Cloete, 2004b). During the third period, after 1998, the role of the ministry with regard to decision-making became more prominent, and the institutions' sense of autonomy began to decrease.

In the years after the launch of the NPHE, until 2009, HE was characterised by implementation, mergers, and stabilisation. During that period, various successes were achieved. The enrolment of students in HE was expanding rapidly, quality improvements in parts of the system were achieved, and black and female students gained better access. According to Cloete (2004a), the abolishment of racial indicators for admission at HEIs was the most important factor contributing to the increase of student enrolments and more specifically the significant increase of black students in HEI. However, many challenges remained. Although the representation of students at the various institutions became more diverse, access was still easier for the small number of students who could afford it. Black students were still underrepresented in the science, engineering and postgraduate programmes. Retention rates remained poor; thus, an increase in access did not guarantee success (Cloete, 2004a).

The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, founded a Ministerial Committee on *Progress towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* in 2008. The Committee was tasked to investigate the occurrence of discrimination in public higher education institutions. The findings of the committee were that discrimination, especially in terms of race and gender, was still widespread in these institutions, despite the implementation of the NPHE (DoE; 2008). It was also echoed in the report of the CHE (2016) after reviewing HE transformation in the last twenty years after the democratisation of HE.

2.3.2.5. Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

In 2009, Blade Nzimande was appointed as the new Minister of Higher Education, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) was established. HE was now governed separate from basic education. In the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET, 2012), the findings of the Ministerial Committee on *Progress towards transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions* (DoE, 2008) were reiterated. The HE system was still divided with the existence of disadvantaged and advantaged institutions. Infrastructure, teaching facilities, and staffing facilities were still divided unequally

among these institutions. The Green Paper also pointed out that the success rates of students at HEIs were very low and that many institutions did not regard student support services as a priority (DHET, 2012).

The *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system* was approved by Cabinet on 20 November 2013. This White Paper formulated the vision of the DHET for post-school education and training in 2030 (DHET, 2013). One of its focus points was the promotion and improvement of quality and diversity in HEIs.

It was expected that the participation rates of students in HE would increase up to 25% by 2030 (in 2011, the participation rate was determined at 17.3%). The enrolment of about 937 000 students in 2011 had to increase to about 1.6 million in 2030 (DHET, 2013). It was emphasised that the 2030 vision did not focus only on greater access. A significant increase in students' successful performance was of utmost importance (CHE, 2013). Thus, access, success, and throughput rates should be important future priorities.

2.3.2.6. White Paper for Post-School Education and Training

The DHET issued the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* in 2013 (DHET, 2013). One of the focus points of the paper is to establish a single, coordinated post-school education and training system that could further eradicate the remnants of Apartheid education. Universities, universities of technology, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, and community education and training (CET) colleges should be managed by DHET. Other important areas highlighted are a further expansion of access to HEI, increased diversity of provision, and the promotion of the quality of teaching and learning across the HE system. Staff development was seen as a priority, and there was a plea for improving the student housing conditions to improve student success (DHET, 2013). The *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (2013) did not discuss the importance and role of student support services in student success.

2.3.2.7. DHET Strategic Plan 2015/2016 – 2019/2020

The DHET issued the *Strategic Plan 2015/2016 – 2019/2020* (DHET, 2015) to operationalise the policy goals of the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET, 2013). In the strategic plan, the DHET committed itself to utilise the next five years as follows:

- Develop and renew legislative frameworks aimed at steering the post-school education and training system in line with the imperatives of the White Paper.

- Strive to expand and improve the quality of post-school education and training by introducing appropriate teaching and learning support interventions for universities and TVET colleges as well as artisan development.
- Establish, develop, and expand a new institutional type –community colleges – primarily to promote education and training opportunities for young people who cannot access universities or the TVET colleges.
- Improve the capacity of the system by means of infrastructure development for technical and vocational education and training.
- Maintain good stakeholder relations in support of an effectual post-school education and training system.
- Ensure good corporate governance, including effectual resource management, in the department and its entities. (DHET, 2015:2-3)

The Strategic Plan 2015/2016 – 2019/2020 was revised in 2017. Strategies for teaching and learning support in HEIs to enhance the quality of HE were added to the initial strategic plan, declaring the following:

> Support provided to students must focus on addressing different student socio-economic backgrounds in a holistic manner and the implementation of a national student support plan across the sector, should therefore take into account the differentiation across localities within the system and respond to geographical and sectoral challenges, while dealing with all economic and sociological student profiles. Efficient and effective student support must therefore address the internal inefficiencies in institutions and the system as a whole with the overall objective of improving student success and completion. (DHET, 2017:25)

Reference to student support in the Revised Strategic Plan 2015/2016 – 2019/2020 is rather vague and may entail many different support functions.

While government attempted to transform the HE system in South Africa by introducing various plans and strategies – including several policies and papers – many debates concerning HE in South Africa have arisen since 1994.

2.3.3 TRANSFORMATION DEBATES

Decolonisation of HE and the provision of free HE are two prevailing transformation debates that are closely related to black identity politics. Identity politics concern the formation of groups based on race, social class, religion and cultural identity. These groups are identified as either oppressors or the oppressed (Hayward & Watson, 2010, Ngoasheng & Gachago, 2017). The groups' existence is justified by their participation in debates, discussions and protests about political and societal issues

(Hayward & Watson, 2010). In South African HE identity politics are informed by the dualism between black and white students. It is especially the narratives of Black students that are often riddled with feelings of inferiority.

The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests of 2015 and 2016 were manifestations of tensions between black students identifying as 'the oppressed' and management of HEIs who were identified as 'the oppressors'. These protests also demonstrated a more prominent stance that students took towards the transformation of South African HE (Badat, 2016).

On 9 March 2015, a student activist threw faeces on the Cecil John Rhodes statue at UCT. This act initiated the #RhodesMustFall protests on different HE campuses across South Africa. It demonstrated black students' dissatisfaction with the remnants of colonialism in South Africa (Badat, 2016) (see 2.2.1). Colonialism, in South Africa, is synonymous with black oppression and black students were determined to eradicate the 'colonial oppression' depicted at HEIs by statues, plaques and academic curricula. The #RhodesMustFall protests culminated in the countrywide #FeesMustFall protests.

The #FeesMustFall protests were a reaction to the high costs of HE and the government's underfunding of HEIs (Pillay, 2016). Students with limited financial means still found it challenging to gain access to HEIs and to survive financially while studying. Students also complained about the lack of support and low pass rates of especially first-generation students. I will further discuss decolonisation and the #FeesMustFall protests in Chapter 3 and I will contextualise it in terms of the Stellenbosch University transformation process.

2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, an overview of the history of HE in South Africa has been provided. The transformation of HE in /South Africa has been discussed by referring to the different legislature, policies and White Papers that were implemented by government after 1994. I am aware that HE transformation is rather unique for different HEIs. The context and history of each institution have a significant effect on the trajectory of its transformation process.

The transformation of HE is a dynamic and ongoing process. After 20 years, we can reflect on various successes, but also challenges. Especially the challenges need urgent attention in the years to come.

Although the transformation process of HE in South Africa already has delivered many measurable outcomes, I chose to focus specifically on the change in student profile as an outcome and thus also on the challenges associated with a changing student body. The increasing emphasis on 'access with success' is probably the most pertinent challenge to be faced in the near future. The HE community

seems to become increasingly aware of the inherent tension in this concept. Mechanisms that can enable increased access and improved success simultaneously should be operationalised to realise the visualised outcomes discussed in the *White Paper on Post School Education and Training* (DHET, 2013).

This thesis focuses on the transformation of the student counselling service at Stellenbosch University. Therefore, before more attention will be paid to the changing student counselling services in a transforming context, I shall discuss the transformation of post-Apartheid Stellenbosch in Chapter 3. I shall aim to set a context-specific stage for further discussions with regard to the mechanisms needed to move towards reconciling ‘access’ and ‘success’.

CHAPTER 3
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY: TRANSFORMING INTO A 21ST-CENTURY UNIVERSITY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, I deliberated the transformation of HE in South Africa. I indicated that HEIs are confronted by ongoing demands for transformation in order to reverse the injustices of Apartheid, to contribute meaningfully to the development of a democratic South African society and the economy, and to respond to the challenges of globalisation. Several policies, and the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) (RSA, 1997) guided the process. Initially, the role of government was limited, and HEIs were encouraged to apply the principles of transformation according to their own unique contexts. Since the implementation of the NPHE in 2001, the roles have changed significantly, and the South African Government has become more involved in the transformation process of the HE sector.

However, HEIs are context specific and they have their own histories that should be considered during a process of transformation. This is evident in the different ways in which HEIs have implemented the NPHE. Cloete (2004b) warns against relying exclusively on a government-driven, policy-implementation-change paradigm to direct transformation, but to rather recognise the intricacies of each institution in this process. Stellenbosch University is often described as an elite institution, and it has its own, unique history that affects the response of the institution to the ongoing national transformation process. For this study, I focussed on the interpretation, construction, and implementation of transformation in a sub-system of Stellenbosch University; the institutional context in which this transformation should take place is consequently of significance.

3.2. THE EARLY DAYS

The history of Stellenbosch University can be traced back to the Theological Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church that opened in Stellenbosch on 1 November 1859. Stellenbosch Gymnasium opened its doors in 1866. The purpose of this institution was to provide refined education to young men before they enrolled for studies at the Theological Seminary.

From 1873, the University of the Cape of Good Hope (UCGH) was established under the auspices of the University of the London. The UCGH acted as a regulatory and qualifications body for various colleges in the Cape and later also colleges in the other colonies. Stellenbosch Gymnasium was one of these colleges. In 1881, Stellenbosch Gymnasium became Stellenbosch College and Public School, and in 1887, it was renamed Victoria College.

Although the initial language of instruction at Victoria College was English, since 1893 the Stellenbosch community actively lobbied for Afrikaans-Dutch as the medium of instruction. At that time, the Stellenbosch community envisioned itself as a growth point for the Afrikaner nation. One of their strategies to promote Afrikanerism was the implementation of Afrikaans as the language of teaching and learning at Victoria College. Under the University Act of 1916, Stellenbosch University emerged from Victoria College as an independent, Afrikaans-medium university in 1918.

At the same time, the university inherited the amount of £100 000 from Mr Jannie Marais, the owner of the farm Coetzenburg, to promote higher education at Stellenbosch, on condition, as stated in his official will, that the university will use Afrikaans-Dutch as a medium of instruction, occupying "no lesser place than the other official language" (Brink, 2006:20). From this can be inferred that the establishment of Stellenbosch University was rooted strongly in the ideas of the Afrikanerdom.

As can be expected, Stellenbosch University came to be regarded as the 'university of the National Party government'. Four of the six prime ministers that served during the Apartheid era were graduates of Stellenbosch University. The university itself was also directly involved in a politically sensitive situation when, under the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950) (RSA, 1950), many coloured residents were forced to vacate their houses in Stellenbosch to make way for the expansion of the university campus. The people were resettled on a designated area on the periphery of the town now known as Idas Valley. This caused a divide between the coloured community of Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch University and these events became an important element in transformation discussions between the University and the community in the new South Africa.

From having been the intellectual hub of the Apartheid government, the University faced major transformation challenges after the election of the new democratic government. The rest of this chapter will focus on the transformation process at Stellenbosch University since the inception of the ANC government. Since the senior leadership and management of HEIs plays an important directional role in institutional transformation, the discussion will be structured according to four rectors' terms of office.

3.3. PROFESSOR ANDREAS VAN WYK (1993-2001)

Prof Andreas van Wyk's appointment as Rector and Vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University in 1993 was controversial, because the position was never advertised. The Senate of the University nominated three candidates from current Stellenbosch University staff. The council made a final decision, and Prof Van Wyk was appointed. Critics regarded his appointment as an effort to protect the Afrikaner identity of the university in the face of expected radical socio-political changes in the country (Vergnani, 1992).

Van Wyk's inauguration took place on 17 September 1993, on the eve of the first democratic elections. His inaugural address focussed on the following two questions:

- How will these changes affect Stellenbosch University?
- How will Stellenbosch University respond to the changes in the country?

These seem to be relevant questions for the specific time in the history of the university and the country, but in the same breath, he also affirmed the importance of institutional autonomy and institutional diversity. According to Van Wyk, institutional diversity referred to the right of institutions to decide how they will position themselves in the changing South African HE landscape. His viewpoint was that institutional autonomy is crucial for the conservation of excellence at universities. According to Van Wyk, African universities in general were suffering from a lack of autonomy and he was of the opinion that it would be "a bad day if the heavy hand of central management in the New South Africa is forced on universities" ["*…'n kwade dag as die sware hand van sentrale beplanning in die nuwe Suid-Afrika op universiteite afgedwing word…*"] (Oosthuizen, 1993:15). Thus, Van Wyk made it clear that the new South African government should not meddle with the internal affairs of the university.

During Van Wyk's time as rector, Stellenbosch University was branded as an Afrikaans university with Christian values that attracts the best students in the country based on their final school results. Van Wyk was of the opinion that the Afrikaans character of Stellenbosch University was relevant and meaningful because the institution was situated in an area of the country where 70% of the population spoke Afrikaans. He deemed it necessary that the percentage of Afrikaans-speaking coloured students studying at Stellenbosch University should be increased, but he highlighted the importance of protecting the quality of the outputs of the university (including graduates), while Stellenbosch University serves the wider South African community (Brand, 1993; Oosthuizen, 1993).

Many colleagues, students, and alumni described Van Wyk's management style as autocratic, principle-based, and following a 'yes' or 'no' approach without much room for wider consultations. He was widely criticised for the time and energy spent on preserving the *status quo* as far as the institutional culture was concerned. He was also accused of not paying enough attention to initiating and facilitating institutional change. Many of his critics referred to his time as rector as a 'wait-and-see' period (Thiel, 1997).

In 1997, the chairperson of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) invited the then Minister of Education, Prof Bengu, to address the Student Alliance for Transformation (SAFT) at Stellenbosch University. During a public speech on 28 May 1997, Bengu expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of transformation at Stellenbosch University. He also accused the university of using its language

policy to prevent non-Afrikaans-speaking students from entering and being successful at Stellenbosch University (Beyers, Cameron, Love & Malan, 1999). By the end of 1997, a significant representation of lecturers and students at Stellenbosch University demanded that Van Wyk step down as rector (Thiel, 1997). They based their arguments on the slow pace of transformation at Stellenbosch University and Van Wyk's authoritative leadership style. In spite of this opposition to Van Wyk, the Council reappointed him in 1998 for another five-year term as rector. At his re-appointment, Van Wyk again emphasised the importance of Stellenbosch University as an exclusive Afrikaans HEI.

By the end of the 1990s, the racial composition of the staff and students at Stellenbosch University had not changed significantly. The university focussed on improving its research output and its relevance in the international arena. It seemed as if there was a reluctance to acknowledge its role in discriminatory practices of the past. This was already evident in van Wyk's inaugural speech in 1993 when he stated the following:

> I want to see a new South Africa that is forward-looking and that is open to the world, and not a country that is introspective and involved with the issues and questions of its past. [*Ek wil 'n nuwe Suid-Afrika sien wat vooruitkykend is en oop is na die wêreld, en nié 'n land wat introspektief en gemoeid met die kwellinge en vrae van die verlede is nie.*] (Oosthuizen, 1993:15)

With the passing of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) on 26 November 1997, all HEIs were compelled to adhere to the new rules and regulations within 18 months. Thus, Stellenbosch University had to rethink its transformation process. As required by the Higher Education Act an Institutional Forum (IF) was established in August 1999. The functions of the IF were (and still are) to advise the university council on issues affecting the university, including:

- the implementation of the Higher Education Act and the National Policy on Higher Education;
- race and gender equity policies;
- selection of candidates for senior management positions;
- codes of conduct, mediation and dispute resolution procedures;
- the fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning; and
- such other functions as determined by the Council (Stellenbosch University, 2016b).

Van Wyk then established a task team with Prof Bernhard Lategan as chairperson to begin a process of self-examination and self-renewal at the university. The group was tasked to reposition Stellenbosch University as a national asset in the New South Africa. This can be seen as the beginning

of Stellenbosch University's serious engagement with transformation. The work of the task team was followed by the appointment of a Strategic Planning Committee, which coordinated a process of planning for Stellenbosch University's future (Stellenbosch University, 2000). The university-wide consultation process by the Strategic Planning Committee resulted in the publication of the '*A Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond'* document.

The purpose of the strategic framework was to guide the positioning and development of Stellenbosch University for the first decade of the 21st century. The strategic framework was not to be regarded as cast in stone. It emphasised that the framework should be adapted by means of continuous strategic reflection and renewal (Stellenbosch University, 2000). In the framework, international and national realities in HE were acknowledged. Among these were the change from elite HE to a form of mass education and the resulting change in the general student profile. With regard to the South African scenario, specific reference was made to the number of students from previously disadvantaged communities that had to be increased.

Some of the strategic priorities that were included in the strategic framework alluded to the university becoming more student-centred, thereby catering for the specific needs of all its students. The development of generic skills in addition to subject-specific skills was emphasised particularly (Stellenbosch University, 2000).

According to Yoyo (2007), some people regarded the strategic framework as the 'Bible' of transformation at Stellenbosch University. However, Prof Elize Botha, the Chancellor of Stellenbosch University at the time, highlighted the complexities around change and innovation as follows:

> Innovation is in no sense a trivial undertaking. It is also not simply a matter of survival. In essence, it is the necessary task of regularly opening up our fundamental values to re-examination, to preserve us from becoming rigid – thus in effect going into a decline – and even from error, to free us to strive for higher things and to keep our focus on the future. (Botha, E., 2007)

Van Wyk's second term as rector ended in 2001. By that time, the university was in dire need of a new rector who could act as a facilitator for transformation and who would ensure the realisation of the strategic goals formulated in the Strategic Framework of 2000.

3.4. PROFESSOR CHRIS BRINK (2002-2007)

The position for a new rector was advertised widely in both national and international media. This already signalled a different approach by the Council of Stellenbosch University with regard to the appointment of a new rector. Three candidates, of whom two were internal, were shortlisted. Brink

was the only candidate who had had no ties with Stellenbosch University. Although he was South African, he was employed by an Australian university at the time. To the surprise of many people, Brink was appointed by a small majority vote in the Council as the new rector of Stellenbosch University in 2001.

Brink's appointment as rector served as a landmark in the transformation history of Stellenbosch University. The headline of an article in the Afrikaans Sunday weekly, *Rapport*, read as follows: *Maties choose a Rector and say: "We are open to new influences"* (Retief, 2001). Brink stated in a press conference shortly after his appointment as rector that this decision by Stellenbosch University "was a brave one" and that a "broad demographic profile which transcends many boundaries should be developed at Stellenbosch" (SAPA, 2001:n.p.). He quickly became known as a 'transformer' and 'change manager'.

In his inaugural address on 10 April 2002, Brink asked four questions specifically directed to the community of Stellenbosch University:

- Where do we come from?
- Where are we now?
- Where do we wish to be?
- How do we get there? (Brink, 2007a:66)

These questions later became known as the 'Brink questions'.

Another trademark of Brink's term as rector was a continuous deconstruction of what he referred to as 'institutional myths'. He was convinced that, by changing people's minds through this process of deconstruction, a change in behaviour would occur. Already in his inaugural address, he referred to what later became known as the 'myth of paradise' (Brink, 2007b:5). He compared the recurring idea of Stellenboschers that 'Stellenbosch is unique' with 'Stellenbosch being a chosen secluded paradise'. The problem with this way of thinking was that only a selected few were allowed to enter 'paradise' and gatekeepers prevented the rest of the people from entering. Brink was of the opinion that these ideas were not sustainable and that Stellenbosch was actually not a paradise for everybody (Brink, 2007c).

The 'myth of excellence' refers to the institution's history where the perception was that Stellenbosch University was a place of excellence. However, Brink argued that, by isolating itself, Stellenbosch University was not able to make sound comparisons with other universities. In addition, for a very long time, the focus of Stellenbosch University was to sustain Apartheid and not to create new knowledge as was actually expected from outstanding universities (Brink, 2007d).

According to the 'myth of authority', it is assumed that authority and power should form part of the general functioning of Stellenbosch University. Thus, decision-making should be guided by rules and the top-down exercising of power. However, Brink supported a value-driven approach where decision-making involved all role-players and where the values of Stellenbosch University guided the process (Brink, 2007b).

There was a growing assumption among staff, students, and alumni that Stellenbosch University was very dependent on government subsidies. Brink called it the 'myth of constant government pressure' (Brink, 2007b:11). He debunked it by revealing that only a third of the income of Stellenbosch University depended on government funds. Closely related to this myth was the 'myth that the university is largely dependent on the contributions of its alumni' (Brink, 2007e:88). Again, Brink made it known that donations by alumni at that stage amounted to only between six and eight percent of the total donations Stellenbosch University received annually (Brink, 2007e).

During Brink's term as rector, the *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond* (Stellenbosch University, 2000) served as a guiding document for transformation at Stellenbosch University. To make the strategic focus areas of the strategic framework simpler and more tangible, *Vision 2012*, which summarised the strategic framework in five key points, was formulated (Stellenbosch University, 2003). This vision statement had to answer the following question: "If this were the year 2012, what would we wish to be able to say about the course of events at Stellenbosch University over the last ten years?" (Stellenbosch University, 2003:1)

Vision 2012 reads as follows:

- Stellenbosch University is internationally considered an institution of excellence and a national asset to South Africa. It is a highly sought-after academic institution among students not only from the whole of South Africa and the rest of Africa, but from beyond Africa as well, and a respected partner in key areas for prominent research institutions across the world. Stellenbosch University graduates provide strong leadership in the community and in professional life.
- Stellenbosch University is making a positive and substantial contribution to the intellectual, technological, and natural and human sciences capacity both in South Africa and in the whole of the rest of Africa. In particular, Stellenbosch University is taking a leadership role in the building up of a knowledge economy in the country. Both the government and the business sector recognise Stellenbosch University as a valuable partner in knowledge.
- Stellenbosch University is an active role-player in the development of South African society and culture, and the past decade has seen Stellenbosch University playing a positive role in the solution of some of the country's major issues.

- Stellenbosch University puts a high premium on diversity of ideas and is successfully attracting both staff and students from diverse sections of our society. There is an ease of acceptance regarding the various cultural backgrounds. There is a keen demand for Stellenbosch University graduates on the labour market. Students and staff alike find Stellenbosch University an environment eminently suited to learning and self-development.
- Afrikaans is accepted as a language of teaching, scholarship, and science, successful in giving students access to world-class scholarly and scientific practice in a uniquely multilingual context. (Stellenbosch University, 2012:1)

With this vision statement, Stellenbosch University commits to an outward-oriented role in South Africa, Africa, and globally. Stellenbosch University:

- is an academic institution of excellence and a respected knowledge partner;
- contributes towards building the scientific, technological and intellectual capacity of Africa;
- is an active role player in the development of the South African society;
- has a campus culture that welcomes a diversity of people and ideas; and
- promotes Afrikaans as a language of teaching and science in a multilingual context. (Botha, E., 2007:xiii)

Vision 2012 emphasised Brink's belief that Stellenbosch University should break free from its own isolation and create an inviting culture for everybody.

Brink did not hesitate to work towards changing the institutional culture of Stellenbosch University. For example, he focussed on changing the initiation of first-year students to the welcoming of first–year students, authoritative management to cooperative management, and the composition of staff and students to be more diverse and representative of the South African society (Esterhuyse, 2007). He continuously advocated the values of respect and human dignity.

Brink did experience significant resistance from the alumni of the university who wanted to protect the traditions and institutional culture of the past (Botha, L., 2007; Retief, 2006). Especially the language debate formed a critical part of his term as rector. A strong contingent of the Convocation (consisting of Stellenbosch University alumni, the rector, vice-rector, and full-time academic staff of Stellenbosch University as well as retired full-time academic staff of the University) wanted Stellenbosch University to maintain its exclusive Afrikaans character (Hertzog, 2007). Yet, in 2004, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences decided to adopt the so-called 'T-option' with regard to the language of instruction during lectures (Brink, 2007d). In practice, this decision implied that lectures could be provided in both Afrikaans and English during the same period depending on the needs of the students in the class. This decision by the Faculty caused much outrage, especially among alumni, but a decision by Senate in 2006 that Afrikaans should not be the only language of instruction at

Stellenbosch University indicated that the university supported a new language policy to accommodate students who were not Afrikaans-speaking (Brink, 2007e).

Although Brink took Stellenbosch University on a journey of transformation during his term as rector, it was not an easy road. As the face of transformation, he received great resistance inside and outside the university. Especially the Afrikaans press portrayed him very negatively (Botha, L., 2007). His critics often held the opinion that he was too radical in his transformation approach and that he did not understand the world of the Afrikaner. However, as stated by Esterhuyse (2007:186) when discussing Brink's role in transformation, transformers are "adventurous types, sometimes even brutal and self-assured types".

In spite of all the negative criticism against him, a majority of the members of the Council re-elected Brink as rector for a second term. He declined the re-appointment, however, and resigned in 2006 to be appointed as Vice Chancellor of Newcastle University in England (Botha, A., 2007).

3.5. PROFESSOR RUSSEL BOTMAN (2007 – 2014)

One can predict that, after the controversial and challenging leadership of Brink, Stellenbosch University was probably in need of a rector who had insider knowledge of the institutional culture, who understood the Afrikaans community, but who could also take the transformation of the university to the next stage. Professor Russel Botman, at that stage the Vice-rector for Teaching, was deemed fit for this position by the Institutional Forum, Senate, and the Council.

Botman was the first black rector to be appointed by Stellenbosch University. He was a theologian and alumnus of the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Already as a student leader, he played a prominent role in the struggle against Apartheid. He served on the Students' Representative Council of UWC during the student riots in 1976. Later, as a theologian, he argued on various platforms against the 'religious principles' of Apartheid (Stellenbosch University, 2013a). In his doctoral thesis (Botman, 1994), Botman described himself as a 'theologian of transformation' and introduced his 'theological logic' when he was appointed at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. He lobbied for a vision of transformation that was based on Biblical principles. His Biblical approach seemed to be quite controversial for a Faculty of Theology that, for many years, took the opposite stance where the existence of Apartheid was justified with Biblical texts (Smit, 2015). Botman's appointment as rector could be interpreted as proof of the measure of transformation accomplished at Stellenbosch University under Brink.

With his inauguration on 11 April 2007, Botman declared that this event and his appointment as rector of Stellenbosch University symbolised his "dreams for a new generation of young people who will know Apartheid only from hearsay" (Botman, 2007:1). Botman envisioned a multicultural university

where different cultures could meet and learn from one another. He firmly believed in creating more opportunities for access to promote student and staff profiles that were representative of the demographics of the country. Together with a call for greater access, he also emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for students and staff to experience success.

Botman's signature project during his term as rector at Stellenbosch University was the Hope Project. This project found its theoretical grounding in the 'pedagogy of hope' advocated by the Brazilian philosopher, Paolo Freire. During the 1970s and 1980s, many struggling black universities in South Africa supported Freire's ideas, because they regarded him as "a champion of the poor in the struggle against illiteracy and disempowerment" (Waghid, 2011:7). Botman's vision, based on the pedagogy of hope, was especially rooted in Freire's belief that education should play an important role in changing the world for the better (Botman, 2011). He thus envisioned a university that could contribute to changing the community of Stellenbosch, the South African society, and the African continent for the better. As part of the pedagogy of hope, Botman also emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for access with success. One of his well-known quotes was, "We can only feel satisfied that there is fair access when the daughter of the farm worker has the same future opportunities as the son of the farmer" (Botman, 2007:2).

At Stellenbosch University, the adoption of a pedagogy of hope implied that 'hope' should be the main driving force of the university (Botman, Van Zyl, Fakie & Pauw, 2009). Hope was viewed as a prerequisite for all learning, because it guaranteed that knowledge would not simply be transferred from the teacher to the student. The student with hope would ask critical questions and adapt meaningfully (Botman *et al.*:2009:11, Waghid, 2011:7-8).

Botman's approach to the strategic management of Stellenbosch University during his first term as rector was also guided by the *Strategic Framework of the Turn of the Century and Beyond* (Stellenbosch University, 2000) as well as *Vision 2012* (Stellenbosch University, 2003). However, with his inauguration, he announced that his rectorship would take Stellenbosch University through a process of self-renewal to move from success to significance (Botman, 2007). He also proposed that the activities of Stellenbosch University should be aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were announced by the United Nations (UN) during the Millennium Summit in 2000 (UN, 2000).

After two years of wide consultation, the management of Stellenbosch University accepted an *Overarching Strategic Plan (OSP)* in 2009 (Stellenbosch University, 2009b). The OSP was viewed as a manifestation of the pedagogy of hope. It served as a vehicle for positioning Stellenbosch University in the future. Stellenbosch University took five development themes from the MDGs to form the foundation of the OSP and to focus its vision and mission, namely:

- consolidating democracy and ensuring regional peace and security;
- contributing to human dignity and health;
- eradicating endemic poverty;
- ensuring environmental and resource sustainability; and
- maintaining the competitiveness of the industry (Botman *et al.*, 2009:12).

The three core processes of Stellenbosch University, namely teaching, research, and community interaction were guided by the development themes. Twenty-one visionary projects developed around the five themes (Botman *et al.*, 2009:12).

In 2009, after a campus-wide consultation process, *Vision 2012* was amended to *Vision 2015*. The amendments were also guided by the five development themes. According to *Vision 2015*, Stellenbosch University as a 21st-century university, would aim to reach the following goals by 2015:

- Establish new and future-aligned niche areas in science.
- Be a pioneer in technology-driven learning and research.
- Develop a new generation of academics, geared to tackle the challenges of a future knowledge economy.
- Train new generations of graduates that have the flexibility to adapt to future careers.
- Establish community interaction driven by development.
- Create sustainable scientific solutions to meet Africa's challenges. (Stellenbosch University, 2009c)

In November 2009, the Council of Stellenbosch University approved a number of institutional objectives and priorities for the period 2010 to 2015, namely:

- a moderate growth in undergraduate student numbers with a focus on growing the number of students in engineering, health sciences, and education;
- increasing the ratio of postgraduate students to undergraduate students from 34:66 to 40:60;
- increasing the percentage of black, coloured, and Indian students from 24% to 34%;
- allocating more funds towards bursaries for black students;
- increasing the student success rate from 82% to 84%;
- increasing retention rates in order to reduce the number of students leaving Stellenbosch University without degrees by 2015 to be less than 30%;
- decreasing the average time for completion of postgraduate studies with 50% by 2015;
- establishing a support centre for postgraduate students;
- increasing the number of student learnership programmes;

- increasing the number of undergraduate students in student accommodation to 50% by 2015;
- accommodating at least 55% of vulnerable students in university accommodation; and
- increasing permanently appointed black, coloured, and Indian staff from 38.4% to 53%. (Stellenbosch University, 2009a)

In his speech at the official launch, Botman (2010) mentioned that the HOPE Project would allow Stellenbosch University to be of service to society, to be the best university for a new generation and to galvanise others to join Stellenbosch University in their quest to help make the world a better place.

The HOPE Project served as the action plan for reaching the university's development goals by means of the various projects. To ensure that Stellenbosch University would maintain its position as a leading HE institution it included steps to:

- recruit the best calibre students, researchers, lecturers, and support staff;
- improve the diversity profile;
- expand postgraduate studies; and
- establish excellent facilities and structures (Botman, 2010).

Thus, the HOPE Project was a way of using concrete activities to create hope for the university, the community of Stellenbosch, South Africa and Africa. It also served as a practical vehicle for further transformation of Stellenbosch University. Within one term as rector, Botman succeeded in reconstructing transformation at Stellenbosch University into a process with a more positive slant by using developmental language, wide consultation, and literally creating hope for many.

Botman was re-elected as rector for a second term in 2011. His focus for his second term as rector was to create a sustainable future for Stellenbosch University in the 21st century. The *Stellenbosch University Institutional Plan: 2012-2016* (Stellenbosch University, 2012) was developed to provide a vision of how and where the institution should be heading to reach certain goals in 2016. The specific strategic focus areas of the institutional plan were:

- the knowledge base of the staff of the university;
- diversity of students and staff;
- student success with a specific emphasis on ensuring the same levels of success for all racial groups; and
- systemic sustainability. (Stellenbosch University, 2012)

The institutional priorities and objectives for the period 2010 to 2015 were adjusted to the new institutional objectives for 2012-2016. The adjusted objectives, especially those concerned with student access and success, included:

- increasing the student diversity from 24% to 33%;

- increasing the undergraduate success rate from 82% to 85%;
- an 88% retention rate for first-year students;
- shortened completion time for master's and doctoral degrees by 15%;
- accommodating 55% of undergraduate and a minimum of 7% of postgraduate students in university accommodation;
- 50% of students registered for an extended degree programme (EDP) should be accommodated in university residences;
- a minimum of 60% undergraduate studies should be in Afrikaans; and
- making a fundamental contribution to student success with the academic enabling elements of the HOPE Project. (Stellenbosch University, 2012)

The above-mentioned priorities and objectives clearly spelled out what the institution planned to achieve by 2016 with regard to increased access for students from various backgrounds. Clear indicators for the demonstration of success were also included. Measures to achieve this ranged from focussed recruiting programmes for underrepresented groups, recruitment bursaries, residence placement for students at risk, expansion of the First-year Academy as well as increased tutor support (Stellenbosch University, 2012). However, minimal detail was provided with regard to the scope and content of support that students would receive by means of various systems in the university community to guarantee success.

An *Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018*, including *Vision 2030*, was issued a year later (Stellenbosch University, 2013b). When one reads Botman's preface to *Vision 2030*, it is apparent that the transformation process was no longer one that primarily rectifies what went wrong in the past. As stated by him, it turned into a proactive process "to ensure that continuous transformation is integrated as part of the core 'being' of the University" (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:10). Three strategic themes were highlighted, namely the broadening of access, sustaining momentum on excellence, and enhancing social impact. Thus, increasing access as well as ensuring student success was still part of the vision. However, with regard to access, special reference was made to new teaching models to accommodate new student markets. These included, for example, the use of virtual and blended learning experiences to allow the 'learn and earn' market (adults already earning their own salaries) to enter higher education by means of off-campus studying. Increasing the diversity profile of students to represent the greater South African society better remained a priority. Specific mention of using virtual platforms to increase student success also formed part of the document. However, again, no detailed plans of the role of various support environments to enhance success of a student profile that was more diverse, were included.

Professor Botman unexpectedly passed away in 2014 when he had a heart attack in his sleep. Subsequently several newspaper articles (Pelser, 2014; Rooi, 2014; Tham, 2014; Willemse, 2014) published after he had passed away alluded to a week of considerable tension between members of the Council and other interested parties about the way transformation was managed under Botman's management. Professor Jonathan Jansen, at that stage the rector of the University of the Free State, referred to this difficult time before Botman's death as follows:

> Russel did not fall to his death on his own. I do not think people realise under how much pressure he was because many people here (in Stellenbosch) still do not understand that Apartheid is over and that one cannot have a white-dominated university 20 years after Apartheid. It is a source of concern for me. (Willemse, 2014:2)
>
> [*Russel het nie op sy self doodgeval nie. Ek dink nie mense besef onder watter groot druk hy verkeer het as gevolg van die feit dat daar baie mense hier (op Stellenbosch) is wat nog nie verstaan dat Apartheid verby is nie en dat jy nie 'n wit gedomineerde universiteit 20 jaar na Apartheid kan hê nie. Dit is vir my 'n bron tot kommer.*]

The consensus was that the next rector of Stellenbosch University would be challenged with the resistance against transformation that Botman had to deal with. On the other hand, the rector would also have to deal with the increasing pressure from government to accelerate the transformation of HE in South Africa.

3.6. PROFESSOR WIM DE VILLIERS (2015 – CURRENT)

Professor Wim de Villiers was inaugurated as Rector of Stellenbosch University on 29 April 2015. De Villiers grew up in Stellenbosch and is an alumnus of the University. Before his appointment as rector, he was the Dean of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town.

De Villiers's task was challenging from the inception of his contract. It was expected of him to manage a university faced by several transformation challenges, of which the underrepresentation of black students, and the language policy – to keep Afrikaans as a medium of teaching and learning – were the most prominent. Jonathan Jansen (previous Rector of the University of the Free State) remarked on De Villiers's appointment as follows:

> [Stellenbosch] is an institution that remains largely untransformed because of its deep racial conservatism, which has tripped up more than one good rector. Any institution that remains majority white 21 years into our democracy, and with only a small percentage of black African students, is clearly not serious about its role in overcoming inequalities of race and resources in our country against the backdrop of our violent history (Collins, 2014:6).

In his inaugural speech, De Villiers (2015) acknowledged the challenges related to transformation, inclusivity, diversity, and the institutional culture. He also referred to cultural symbols on campus that echo the Apartheid history of the university. In spite of all the challenges that awaited De Villiers, he emphasised in his speech that "the best interest – and success – of the student is the only interest".

Within the first year of De Villiers's appointment as rector, the #FeesMustFall protests erupted on the campuses of South African HEIs. During the Second National Higher Education Summit on 15 to 17 October 2015 student representatives criticised the extent of transformation since 1994. They also expressed concerns about the impact that the high costs of tuition had on the transformation process and warned that by increasing annual fees "more poor black students would be locked out of higher education and this worked against the transformation agenda" (DHET, 2016b:7). Shortly after the Summit an average increase of 10,5% for 2016 student fees were announced and students reacted with the country wide #FeesMustFall protests.

Stellenbosch University was not that familiar with student protests on its campuses before #FeesMustFall. The formation of Open Stellenbosch earlier in 2015 preceded the October 2015 protests at Stellenbosch. The members of Open Stellenbosch described themselves as a "collective of students and staff working to purge the oppressive remnants of apartheid in pursuit of a truly African university" (https://www.facebook.com/pg/openstellenbosch/about/?ref=page_internal).

In a Facebook post on 16 April 2015 they expressed their dismay with Prof De Villiers's reaction to a student mass meeting on the previous day as "reflect[ing] the remnants of Apartheid attitudes towards mass gatherings of black people" (https://www.facebook.com/pg/openstellenbosch/posts/?ref=page_internal). They were upset about the presence of security forces and the lockdown of the University's Administrative Building - where the Rector's office is situated - in response to the mass meeting.

Open Stellenbosch was openly opposed to Afrikaans being the official language of teaching and learning at Stellenbosch University and experienced it as a measure to exclude non-Afrikaans students. On 13 May 2015 they issued a Memorandum of Demands directed at the senior management of the university (Open Stellenbosch, 2015). They demanded that by 1 January 2016 lectures should be presented in English and that having translation services[1] available should not be a compensating arrangement anymore.

Further to this they demanded that the Centre for Diversity and Inclusivity should be re-established. The Open Stellenbosch members stated in the memorandum that a black director should be appointed to manage the centre and that "the importance of this office must be reflected in its name. The

[1] Translating from Afrikaans to English

philosophy of mere 'inclusivity' is itself an upholding of whiteness, since it relegates black subjects to mere appendages of a white Afrikaner culture" (OpenStellenbosch, 2015:4).

Another demand was that the curricula of courses offered by the university should be audited in terms of its content and teaching methods. This would contribute to the decolonisation of curricula that were still influenced by Apartheid ideologies.

The members of Open Stellenbosch described the university as a bureaucratic institution that used public announcements about superficial changes to create an image of a transforming university (Peterson, 2015). They demanded that transformation at the university should be accelerated and that the Language Policy should be changed so that English could be the language of teaching and learning with the inception of 2016.

The University responded by establishing a task team that had to explore Open Stellenbosch's demands regarding a transformative language policy. The task team reported in September 2015 that English should become the official language of instruction and that Afrikaans and isiXhosa should be accommodated (Stellenbosch University, 2015). Their recommendation had to be sanctioned by the university's Council before in could be instated January 2016. Various court cases followed in an attempt to prevent changes to the Language Policy as was recommended by the task team.

On 19 October 2015 a group of 60 students occupied one of the Administration buildings and renamed it as Winnie Mandela House – an action that demonstrated that they will force the university to transform. These students were removed by the police on the 20th of October 2015 and the university instituted interdicts against them (Fourie-Malherbe & Müller, 2017).

Nationally students continued with protests in January 2016. Again, Stellenbosch University was not exempted from it, but the intensity thereof was a lot less. Many students preferred to rather focus on their studies. A small group of students occupied the library during that time and other students reacted violently in response to the occupation. Other isolated incidents also took place. A heavy security presence was experienced on campus and the atmosphere was tense. Students were especially angered by the interdicts against students that was instated in October 2015. Due to the late payments of fees by NSFAS many of them were also not able to register in 2016. In spite of 2015 being a year where students actively demonstrated their dismay with the level of transformation at Stellenbosch University, 2016 was characterised by no significant institutional changes.

De Villiers reported to parliament in 2017 that SU was on track with its transformation process, but students did not necessarily agree. It should however be noted that Stellenbosch University did take several measures since 2016 to promote institutional transformation. One of the measures was the compilation of a Transformation Plan (Stellenbosch University, 2017b).

The University's focus on financial transformation is limited, but, according to Fourie-Malherbe and Müller (2017) it can be attributed to the fact that a large proportion of students are from middle to higher socio-economic classes. The university also allocates a growing percentage of its annual budget to student bursaries.

With regard to the language policy – the focus of OpenStellenbosch's campaign – a revised language policy was implemented in 2017 (Stellenbosch University, 2016a). The policy provides for all undergraduate classes to be taught in English, availing notes in both Afrikaans and English and allowing students to ask questions in either English or Afrikaans during lectures. It also provides for teaching parallel medium classes if the student numbers allow for both Afrikaans and English classes. Translation services in both languages should be available for all first year classes.

The Transformation Plan provides for institutional transformation. It refers to "experiences of inclusion and co-ownership, hospitality and being welcome" (Stellenbosch University, 2017b:2). Fourie-Malherbe and Müller (2017) warn that it should not be expected that institutional change will happen overnight. It is a long process that depends on different role players' commitment to the changes.

Institutional transformation refers to supporting universal access for students and staff with disabilities and creating spaces that are non-discriminatory in terms of gender, race and sexuality. With the establishment of the Equality Unit at the CSCD Stellenbosch University aspire to counter discrimination against and unfair treatment of minorities.

Student and staff demographics are changing to be more representative of black, Indian and coloured people. Diversity goals need to be adhered to when appointing staff members and the admission policy of Stellenbosch University also encourages that not only academic potential and race should be considered, but also social-economic status, when students are selected for degree programmes (Fourie-Malherbe & Müller, 2017).

A call for the decolonisation of the curricula of the universities is partially addressed by the appointment of a decolonisation task team. A programme renewal project is currently underway across the university and decolonisation is a focus thereof. De Villiers also committed himself to decolonisation in various discussions by referring to Stellenbosch University's acknowledgement that Africa plays a central role in knowledge production and that the notion of Africa being an add-on to the Western intellectual paradigm should be negated (Fourie-Malherbe & Müller, 2017). This stance is reflected in Vision 2040 where there is specifically referred to Stellenbosch University being Africa's leading research-intensive university.

The university announced its *Vision 2040* in 2018. The new *Vision 2040* envisages the following:

> Stellenbosch University will be Africa's leading research-intensive university, globally recognised as excellent, inclusive, and innovative, where we advance knowledge in service of society (Stellenbosch University, 2018d:n.p.).

A *Strategic Framework 2019 – 2024* guides the processes and objectives that will enable the implementation of *Vision 2040*. Six core strategic themes are identified, namely:

- a transformative student experience;
- networked and collaborative teaching and learning;
- research for impact;
- purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks;
- employer of choice; and
- a thriving Stellenbosch University (Stellenbosch University, 2018d:7).

The transformative student experience – one of the strategic themes – is described as one where the university will be accessible for students from a variety of backgrounds. These students could face various barriers when participating in HE. Hence, opportunities for growth by means of guidance and support should be available to promote student success.

3.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

When scrutinising the transformation history of Stellenbosch University, one becomes aware that it is a complex and emotionally loaded process. Protecting the history of the institution and developing the institution into a 21st-century university are regarded as two opposing forces that the management of the university must continuously mediate. Although the transformation process at Stellenbosch University began rather slowly, it has now gained momentum. The university embraces an approach where an increase in access for diverse groups of people should translate into success by means of providing support. In Chapter 4, the focus will be specifically on student success *per se*, the tension that often exists between access and success, as well as the role of support in marrying these two apparently contradictory concepts.

CHAPTER 4
CONCEPTUALISING STUDENT SUCCESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, I discussed the transformation of Stellenbosch University – a traditionally white Afrikaans university. The University was confronted with a reality that was often perceived as a threat to an identity that had been informed since its existence with the Apartheid ideology of the National Party. Consequently, transformation was a slow process. Professor Andreas van Wyk, who was the first rector after the demise of Apartheid, held a strong conviction that the quality for which Stellenbosch University was known, should be protected. The salient message was that the transformation of the student profile, including an increase in access for students from previously disadvantaged communities, posed a threat for throughput rates – a very restricted view of what student success entails.

The transformation of Stellenbosch University follows a rather unique trajectory where a discourse about student success was used as a mechanism to protect the Afrikaans identity of the university. Only the 'best' performers in schools were able to register. At the end of the twentieth century, the diversity of the student community of Stellenbosch University reflected insignificant changes – although the number of Afrikaans-speaking black students did increase.

In 1998, after the promulgation of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (RSA, 1997) Stellenbosch University established the Division of Academic Support Services as one of the first structures to support a more diverse student community. The mandate of this division was to support students who lacked the necessary skills and knowledge that would be required to complete degrees at Stellenbosch University successfully. One of the ways to do this was to enrol such prospective students into bridging programmes to get them 'ready' to access the University, or enrolling them into extended degree programmes (EDPs) so that they eventually would fit the profile of the Stellenbosch University graduate. The underlying frame of reference for these initiatives was a 'deficiency' one. The assumption was that historically disadvantaged students lacked certain knowledge and skills that were essential for success at Stellenbosch University, and this had to be remedied.

Student success is a consistent theme in institutional documents related to the transformation of the university. To position Stellenbosch University as a 21st-century university, one of the strategic priorities of the institution for 2013 to 2018 was the promotion and maintenance of student success (Stellenbosch University, 2013b:37). *Vision 2040* and the *Strategic Framework 2019 – 2024*

(Stellenbosch University, 2018d:20) list 'a transformative student experience' as one of its priorities, which includes a vision to "enhance our student success rate through educational innovation".

As discussed later in this chapter, many students are not well prepared for the demands of HE. Being underprepared is not so much a matter of intellectual abilities, but rather of socio-economic factors, emotional readiness, physical challenges, knowledge of themselves, knowledge of the world of work, and many more. As holistic beings, students are in need of support to help them achieve success. In South Africa, although not limited to this group, the majority of students from historically disadvantaged communities are not well prepared for the demands of HE. The HEIs (e.g. Stellenbosch University) do have a responsibility to support these students.

By means of various definitions and arguments, I shall deconstruct the concept 'student success' in this chapter. I shall discuss the challenges as well as factors that affect student success. Special attention will be paid to student readiness, socio-economic diversity, and first-generation students as important considerations with regard to student success. I shall challenge an approach that views students' readiness as the most important indicator of their success at a HEI, and I shall argue that student success can be promoted by developing students holistically. This will lead to the conclusion that it is imperative for HEIs to create conditions for such holistic development of students so that they can experience success.

4.2 DEFINING AND DECONSTRUCTING STUDENT SUCCESS

A variety of indicators is recognised as measures for student success. There is a relationship between researchers' views of possible indicators and how the concept is defined (Kuh *et al.*, 2006; Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, Kim & Wilcox, 2013; Mullin, 2012). Many experts in the field equate success with pass rates, throughput rates and retention rates (Robbins, Allen, Cassillas & Peterson, 2006; Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst & Usdan, 2005). This view implies that students must pass their modules and programmes to be regarded as successful. This is a narrow approach to defining student success and does not allow for students' intrinsic potential for growth and development during the time they spend at a HEI.

A broader view of student success recognises that the effects of HE on students are not limited to what happens in the classroom or to measurable academic achievements (Mullin, 2012; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Students engage in a variety of meaningful experiences that have a significant influence on their development both inside and outside of the formal classroom. Botha and Cilliers (2012) argue that students spend up to 86% of their time at a HEI outside of the formal classroom. Thus, it can be argued that students' experiences outside the classroom not only are an extension of

learning in the formal classroom, but also contribute in various ways to their development. This implies that students can utilise their overall HE experience to contribute to their success.

When they enter HE, many students expect that achieving an academic qualification will pave the way for their successful entrance into the world of work. However, it is important for students to understand that, as students, they need to acquire new knowledge and develop new skills, but they should also engage in rich experiences while at the HEI to equip them for making a successful entrance into the world of work and into society (Backhouse, 2010; Baum & Ma, 2007; Baum, Ma & Payea, 2013). By means of the out-of-class experience, HEIs can offer learning opportunities that consist of more than just the academic programmes. In fact, Chickering (2010:54) emphasises that the HE experience should involve more than "cultivating the intellect".

Kuh and others (2006:7) define a more comprehensive view of student success as including "academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives and post-college performance" (see also Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2007). Backhouse (2010) adds to this broader definition by arguing that students are not necessarily unsuccessful if they do not officially complete a qualification. They may still have attained some of the expected outcomes successfully. This implies the converse as well, namely that students who complete their academic programmes cannot necessarily be regarded as successful students. These students might have mastered the academic component of their academic programme, but might not be successful in acquiring the skills to navigate the HE environment successfully. Here, I refer to, for example, social skills, taking responsibility for physical well-being, organisational skills, and many more.

In short, I support a broader view of student success. This implies that HEIs should provide a rich and inclusive environment that can play a comprehensive role in developing students. In South Africa, as envisioned in the Education White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997), HE has the responsibility to promote a society that is more equal. Zepke and Leach (2010) emphasise the role of HEIs in developing students and institutions to become active citizens who can challenge the social beliefs and practices of society. Successful students should be equipped with new knowledge and dispositions that can contribute to the South African transformation process.

Nevertheless, in order to have a real effect on the South African society, students must practice and promote social consciousness. Demonstrating social responsibility, valuing the principles of equity and redress, contributing to the economic development of the country through entrepreneurship and innovation, and participating critically in the political transformation of the country are some of the unique outcomes that successful students should demonstrate. This view complements Walker and McLean's (2015) call for a normative approach to the role of HE in South Africa where successful

graduates will demonstrate knowledge, skills, and values that are valued in a transforming South African society. In the next section, I shall provide a broad overview of how students and societies can benefit from student success.

4.3 BENEFITS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Students at HEIs who are deemed successful – according to a broader definition of student success – not only benefit from the HE qualifications they obtain. Their cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions are developed, they gain skills and insight needed for the world of work, and they are prepared for adulthood (Braxton, 2006). HE experiences can develop students as holistic human beings.

Kuh and others (2006) distinguish between academic development outcomes that involve becoming proficient in writing, speaking, and critical thinking, and personal development outcomes that entail developing self-awareness, confidence, self-worth, social competence, and a sense of purpose. My view is that, in addition, successful students have the potential to present themselves as change agents and to contribute significantly to the economy of the country, the generation and distribution of knowledge, and the promotion of social consciousness and thus the development of the South African society.

Schreiner (2015:4) complements my view by mentioning that HE – and thus the successful students it delivers – has "the power to enrich one's life, to open new horizons and develop new perspectives, to engender open-minded compassion, to develop habits of mind and spirit that can sustain one in difficult times and to develop moral and ethical principles for participating as a contributing citizen of the world".

There are ample benefits for students, institutions, and societies if students are successful. Many factors should be considered by institutions to improve the success rates of their students. I shall elaborate on these in the next section.

4.4 CONDITIONS AND PREDICTORS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

An important step towards creating opportunities for students to be successful is for HEIs to develop a better understanding of the variety of conditions that affect students' experiences and their chances of success in HE. This will help institutions to comprehend how these conditions can also serve as predictors of success. Predictors of student success and conditions that affect student success provide valuable information regarding admission to HE as well as support for students in order to overcome possible barriers to success. Concerns about student success are a global phenomenon. In this section, I shall focus especially on the South African context.

Conditions affecting student success are extensive and multi-dimensional (Cruse, Wolniak, Seifert & Pascarella, 2006). A study by Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, King and Wilcox (2013), which focussed specifically on identifying psychological conditions that could influence first-year students' success, highlighted academic self-efficacy, organisation and attention skills, stress and time management, involvement with college activities, as well as emotional satisfaction with their academic performance as important indicators of possible success.

A study conducted by Bokana and Tewari (2014) at a South African university identified the following conditions that affected the participating students' success:

- Total Grade 12 marks
- Marks for Mathematics in Grade 12
- Marks for English Home Language in Grade 12
- Personal and demographic factors
- External factors, including:
    - institutional environment;
    - intellectual leadership;
    - learning infrastructure at the institution;
    - socio-economic factors; and
    - psychological factors.

After Robbins, Lauver, Le, Langley, Davis and Carlstrom (2004) considered the different conditions that could affect student success, they divided them into three groups of predictors. These are traditional predictors, demographic predictors, and psychosocial predictors. While the traditional predictors refer exclusively to academic marks and standardised test scores, the demographic predictors are socio-economic status, race, and gender. Psychological predictors include social involvement, motivation, self-management, and study habits.

A study of the factors affecting student success, as well as the predictors thereof, provide comprehensive insight into the barriers students may experience. For this study, in which support for student success is one of the foci, it is important to understand the barriers before possible ways of addressing the barriers can be discussed. In the literature on international student success, two prominent barriers are identified that are also applicable to the South African scenario, namely student readiness and socio-economic diversity.

4.4.1. Student readiness

A theme that often predominates the discourse about student success, is that of students being 'not ready' for HE. Globally, research shows that many high school learners are ill prepared for what will

be expected of them when studying at an HEI (Kuh, 2006, Kuh, 2007; Robbins *et al.*, 2006; Strom & Strom, 2013). Kuh, Cruse, Shoup and Kinzie (2008) emphasise that a combination of individual and institutional factors could affect student readiness for HE negatively (also refer to Mullin, 2012:127). Individual factors include making uninformed decisions regarding the courses and programmes they choose to study, insufficient finances, poor psycho-social fit, family demands, lack of family support, and balancing work and study obligations (Kuh *et al*., 2006:3; Strom & Strom, 2013). Poor course planning, ineffective communication by lecturers to students, and unrealistic expectations by faculties are institutional factors that affect students' success (Braxton, Bayer & Noseworthy, 2004:42; Strom & Strom, 2013).

In South Africa, the poor quality of the school system is often linked to the unpreparedness of students for tertiary studies. Especially schools in the previously disadvantaged areas are known for the poor quality of teaching and learning. Large contingents of learners from these disadvantaged backgrounds attend under-resourced schools located in the townships and rural areas (Lemmens, Du Plessis & Maree, 2011:615; Zulu, 2011). Studies show that learners who attend such schools are academically underprepared, and are lacking in reading, writing, and mathematical skills (Van Dyk & Weideman, 2004; Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007). These comprise some of the basic academic skills needed to acquire and master new knowledge and skills.

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013:32) concedes that one of the major barriers to student success is a school system that does not prepare the majority of prospective students to negotiate the challenges of HE successfully. The *National Senior Certificate Examination Report 2017* (DHET, 2018) proudly announces that 75,1% of Grade 12 learners passed their National Senior Certificate exams at the end of 2017. However, this same report also acknowledges that only 28,7% of these learners qualified to register for bachelor studies at HEIs. In addition, even those learners who did satisfy the minimum requirements to enter HE, were found by Botha and Cilliers (2012), as well as Fisher and Scott (2011), to be generally not well prepared for what their future studies would expect from them.

The probability that the South African school system could over the short or even medium term improve sufficiently to contribute meaningfully to prospective students' readiness for HE is slim, mainly because of a lack of political will and strong leadership. In addition, expertise and resources needed to turn the school situation around are lacking (Fisher & Scott, 2011:7). The current unstable economic situation in the country exacerbates the challenges of a school system that is already underperforming. Seeing that this problem will not be solved in the short to medium term, the following question can be asked: How can HEIs be better prepared for students who are a product of the South African schooling system?

A lack of student readiness pertains not only to students' deficient academic skills, but also to general poor knowledge of specific subject areas when entering HE. Socio-economic factors also play a major role in this regard.

4.4.2. Socio-economic diversity

The educational factors that affect student readiness are enmeshed with several socio-economic factors that are also related to students' success in HE.

Although the democratic government that was elected in 1994 envisioned equal HE opportunities in the form of widening access to the system, students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds are still less successful than students who attended well-resourced traditionally white schools (Letseka & Maile, 2008). The challenges posed by the socio-economic differences in the South African society are part of a reality that needs to be considered when HEIs attempt to promote student success.

In South Africa a huge discrepancy exists between students coming from families with ample economic and social resources and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Boughey (2012), the poor performance of especially black students can be related to the poor socio-economic environment in which most of them grew up. She also points out that the detrimental effect of Apartheid on these communities is still rife as it could not be eradicated in the past 23 years.

In many cases, students from disadvantaged communities do not have access to influential social networks for support, as is the case with their middle-class peers. These students can be described as poor in terms of social capital. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:14) define social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition". These students have limited or no access to networks that will support them through higher education or to enter the workplace. Boughey (2012:138) refers to the "social accounts for learning" and how learning is embedded in the society in which the learners grow up.

A study conducted by Lourens (2013) found that students from previously disadvantaged communities indeed experienced several socio-economic challenges. They were not only subjected to academic challenges that could be related to the quality of education they received at school, but also to financial, linguistic, social, and system challenges. These students reported occasionally feeling alienated and marginalised in the higher education institution. Of the seven students included in the qualitative study, three dropped out without graduating.

4.4.3. First-generation students

Many HE students from disadvantaged communities are the first members of their families to pursue a university education. Such students are often referred to as first-generation students. When these students enter HEIs, they usually have little knowledge of the internal workings of the institution, they do not have a previous generation's experiences of HE to draw on, and appropriate emotional and financial support from their families are usually limited or absent (Slonimsky & Shalem, 2006).

Support from the family could serve as an important source of external motivation (Strom & Strom, 2013:55), and relates directly to levels of motivation and consequently student success. Siyengo (2015:94) summarises one of the findings in her research about experiences of South African first-generation students as follows:

> It may seem natural to other young people who are not first-generation students that when they finish high school they will go into higher education because they know the value of what higher education holds. Yet, first-generation students in this study were always guided by second-hand information of what higher education entails. They did not anticipate nor understand what it meant to be a higher education student and be successful in their studies because no one in their families had ever ventured into higher education.

In this section, I discussed student readiness, social diversity, and first-generation students as factors that have an explicit effect on students' success. Although these factors are not unique to the South African society, their influence on success has specific implications for participation and throughput of students.

4.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Worldwide HEIs are under pressure to promote student success. By recruiting the best-performing school-leavers, HEIs believe they can improve their pass rates, throughput rates, and retention rates. These factors are interpreted as indicators of successful institutions and position the specific HEIs as among the top choices for graduates. This perspective on student success is informed by a commercial mindset. When HEIs view themselves as commercial entities, they treat their students as their clients. In a commercial mindset, institutions have to compete for clients by offering a quality service. Heightened competition among HEIs puts more pressure on institutions to demonstrate excellent student success rates when marketing themselves in order to attract new entrants. However, the importance of student success cannot be limited to this narrow commercial viewpoint.

The broadened definition of student success (see 4.2 for the definition) implies that the recruitment of high-achieving school-leavers by HEIs should not necessarily position these institutions as centres of academic excellence. Being an HEI that is known for its high levels of student success entails more than being able to recruit the top achievers in the final school-leaving exams.

HEIs that view themselves as promoters of student success recognise that HE is a powerful societal change agent and that it plays an important role in contributing to the economic and social development of a country by delivering graduates who will be responsible citizens. Graduates should be equipped with skills and knowledge that will enable them to contribute to the broader society (Cruz & Haycock, 2012; Boughey, 2012). Pinto-Coelho and Carvalho (2013) refer to the "public task" of HEIs. Walker and McLean (2015:61) argue that HEIs should support students to develop "a life worthy of human dignity" that will also transfer to their lives after graduation. Graduates' capability to contribute to the quality of life of society will be strengthened. In this way, HEIs can play an active role in transforming the society via their graduates.

As the generator and the transfer agent of knowledge, HE is also in an ideal position to contribute to the knowledge economy. The World Bank explains the important interaction between knowledge and societal change as follows:

> By improving people's abilities to function as members of their communities, education and training increase social cohesion, reduce crime, and improve income distribution (World Bank, 2007:9).

Student success in South Africa is crucial for the transformation of the South African economy and society.

In White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997:3), Bengu (former Minister of Education) explained this as follows:

> The transformation of the higher education system to reflect the changes that are taking place in our society and to strengthen the values and practices of our new democracy is, as I have stated on many previous occasions, not negotiable. The higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities.

According to the National Development Plan 2030 (RSA, 2013:316), it is projected that by 2030 South Africa will have over 10 million HE graduates who have obtained at least a bachelor's degree. However, the Plan warns against aiming for larger numbers of graduates without ensuring that high-quality graduates are delivered. The National Development Plan 2030 emphasises the importance for universities to encourage student success where the focus is on:

- educating and training people with high-level skills that can meet the needs of the public and private sector;
- producing new knowledge, critiquing information, and finding new local and global applications for existing knowledge;
- providing new knowledge to equip South Africans for a changing society and economy; and
- providing opportunities for social mobility – especially in South Africa with its Apartheid history – to strengthen equity, social justice, and democracy. (RSA, 2013:319)

According to the Annual Report: 2000 – 2001 of the CHE (CHE, 2001), an estimated 600 000[1] students were at that time enrolled at HEIs. Of these, 352 000 were African,
164 000 were white, 39 000 were Indian, and 31 000 were coloured students. The NPHE (DoE, 2001:n.p.) interprets these numbers in terms of a percentage of the total population. It states that in 2000, only 9% of the black population in South Africa participated in HE. Of this group of black participating students, 49% were registered at historically black HEIs, 3% were registered at historically white institutions, and 38% studied at distance HEIs. Fifteen years later, in 2016, the profile of HE in terms of racial composition had changed dramatically (CHE, 2018). The total number of students enrolled at HEIs increased from 600 000 in 2000/2001 to 975 837 in 2016. The number of black students doubled from 352 000 students to 701 482 and the number of white students decreased from 164 000 to 152 489. The numbers of registered coloured and Indian students also increased significantly to respectively61 963 and 50 450.

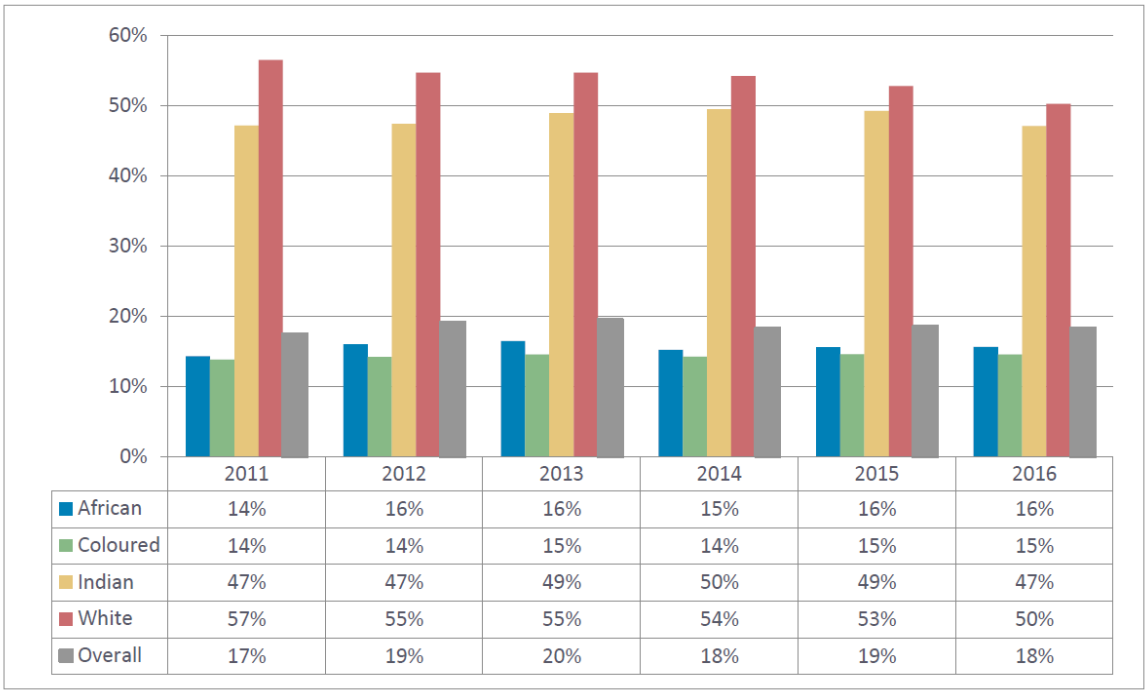
To comprehend the current scenario regarding student success in South Africa I shall discuss the latest available statistics that are provided by the CHE (2018) on headcount participation rates and throughput rates for the five-year cohort 2011 – 2016. I shall compare this cohort with the numbers that were provided by the CHE (2001) to demonstrate the changing HE landscape since the implementation of the NPHE in 2001.

In the first place, it is important to consider the participation rates[2] of students, because these numbers provide an indication of the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds for each race that are enrolled in HE. This information is provided in Table 4.1.

[1] Headcounts: The total number of students enrolled at each institution as full-time, part-time or occasional students.

[2] The total headcount enrolment over the national population of 20- to 24-year-olds calculated as a percentage (CHE, 2017:iv).

Table 4.1: Participation rates per race from 2011 until 2016



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
African	14%	16%	16%	15%	16%	16%
Coloured	14%	14%	15%	14%	15%	15%
Indian	47%	47%	49%	50%	49%	47%
White	57%	55%	55%	54%	53%	50%
Overall	17%	19%	20%	18%	19%	18%

Source: CHE (2018:6)

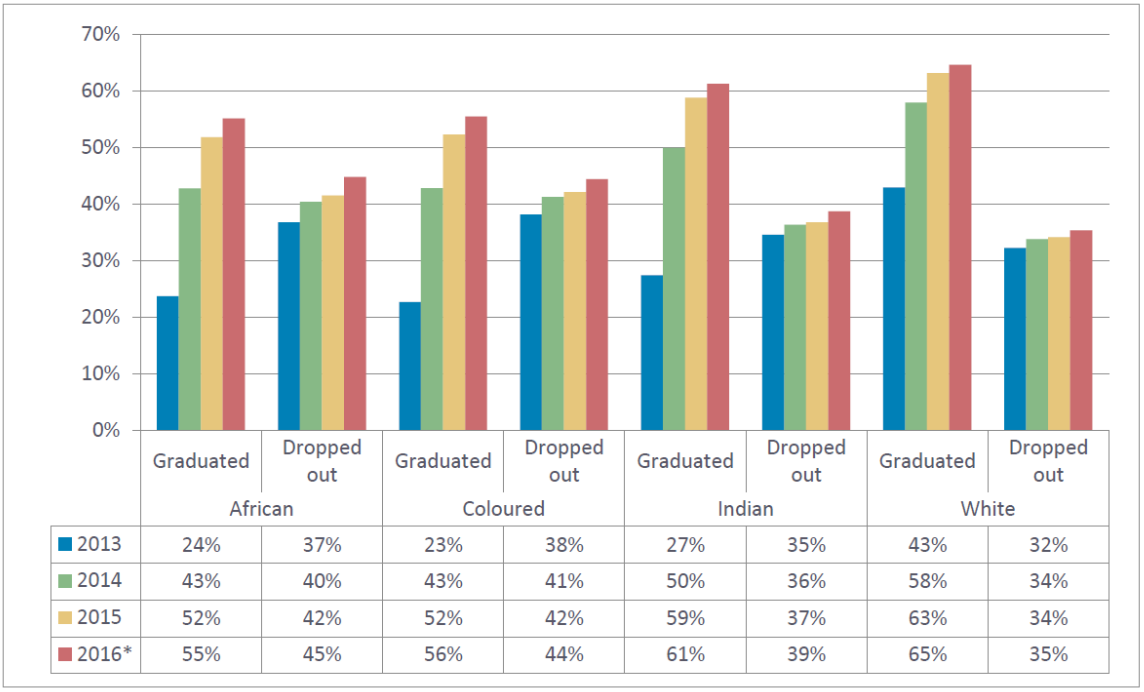
As can be seen in Table 4.1, the participation rates for each race have been more or less consistent over the past five years, but they are still skewed when compared with the 2000 scenario. Even though the number of African and coloured students who participate in undergraduate programmes have almost doubled, their participation rates are still significantly lower than those of white and Indian students. The majority of African and coloured students come from previously disadvantaged communities. The overall participation rates, which fluctuate between 17% and 20% over the same period, are an indication of the small fraction of South African school-leavers who have the opportunity to acquire a tertiary qualification.

After twenty years of democracy, the demographics of students at HEIs are still not representatative of the racial composition of South Africa, although it should be noted that there has been significant improvement in terms of participation since 1994 (CHE, 2016). It is important that the students who enter HE be successful, regardless of their participation rates.

There is often tension between access targets and throughput[3] targets. Although the percentages of black students who accessed HE had changed significantly by 2016, it is important to consider their throughput rates as well.

[3] The throughput rate calculates the number of first-time entry undergraduate students of a specific cohort of a specific year who have graduated either within the minimum time, or up to 2 years after the minimum time, to the number of students in the baseline enrolments of that cohort. (CHE, 2017:vi)

Table 4.2: Throughput rates by race for 3-year degrees with first year of enrolment at a HEI in 2011 (accumulative)[4]



	African		Coloured		Indian		White	
	Graduated	Dropped out	Graduated	Dropped out	Graduated	Dropped out	Graduated	Dropped out
2013	24%	37%	23%	38%	27%	35%	43%	32%
2014	43%	40%	43%	41%	50%	36%	58%	34%
2015	52%	42%	52%	42%	59%	37%	63%	34%
2016*	55%	45%	56%	44%	61%	39%	65%	35%

Source: CHE (2018:63)

Table 4.2 indicates that only 24% of African and 23% of coloured students managed to complete a three-year degree within three years, while 27% of Indians graduated after three years. However, the white students' throughput rates are significantly higher, with 43% of them graduating after three years of studies.

Of the African and coloured students who registered for a three-year degree in 2011, 42% had dropped out by the end of 2015. Fewer Indian students (37%) had dropped out after five years of studies. Compared with African and coloured students, considerably fewer white students (34%) dropped out within five years since registration. The dropout rates remain high for all four races. It can be assumed that, with dropout figures fluctuating between 52% and 34% for students who registered in 2011, the HE system in South Africa cannot meet the socio-economic demands of the transforming country and developing economy. The report of the CHE on the past 20 years of HE raises concerns about student success in South Africa and warns that the development of human capacity to meet the developmental goals of the country is at risk (CHE, 2016).

South African HEIs should not focus on access only and use those numbers as a measure of success. This approach will not encourage the role of HE in the transformation and growth of the South African

[4] These figures exclude UNISA.

society. To be successful, students should remain in the system and complete their programmes, preferably within the minimum period allowed.

The discourse of access should intertwine with a discourse of creating opportunities for the development of students. If not, Thomas (2002) emphasises that an increase in access will simply imply an increase in students' struggles to survive the challenges of HE. Pravin Gordhan (a former Minister of Finance), emphasised in his 2011 budget speech that every student who drops out from his or her studies will be reabsorbed into the cycle of poverty in his or her community of origin (Gordhan, 2011). This will add to an ever-increasing rate of unemployment and poverty in the country.

Low throughput rates of students in South African HE have negative implications for the students themselves and their families, but also for the taxpayer, the government, and the general South African public. It is expensive to be a university student. The annual cost of a degree programme at Stellenbosch University in 2018 averages between R34 000 and R55 000. This excludes academic handbooks and materials, accommodation, food, pocket money, and other additional costs. Yet, the student fees cover only a fraction of the cost to offer degree programmes. HEIs are also dependent on government to subsidise them. For the 2015/2016 financial year, approximately R30 billion of the government's budget was reserved for HE (CHE, 2016). In his 2017 budget speech, the Minister of Finance announced that R105.9 billion would be transferred to universities over a three-year period. These amounts exclude the money allocated for the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (Gordhan, 2017).

On 16 December 2017, at the 54th national conference of the ANC, Mr Jacob Zuma – then president of South Africa – unexpectedly announced fee-free education for poor and working-class undergraduate students, which put government funding under even more strain (The Presidency, 2017). For the new 2018 government budget, Malusi Gigaba (Minister of Finance) allocated R326 billion rand for HE expenditure that would be availed over a three-year period (Gigaba, 2018). The financial support of students who are in need does improve opportunities for access to HEIs. Nevertheless, with every opportunity being created for access to HE, the responsibility of HEIs to support students to be successful, increases.

The focus is often on the monetary cost to society when students drop out of university, with limited focus on the student's own experience thereof. In this regard, I refer especially to the social-emotional cost for students who drop out before graduating. Students enrol for HE as part of a plan for their future (Yorke & Longden, 2004). Should they drop out, the risk of experiencing emotional challenges is high. Disappointment, shame, losing hope, and anger directed at perceived unfair treatment are some of the emotions they experience after the termination of their studies. These students are also at

risk for mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and other psychiatric disorders. The students' negative experiences are exacerbated when they face their families and communities who shared their dreams, and have to admit their failure.

In summary, an increase in access to HE in South Africa is not negotiable, as HE must be one of the primary contributors to the transformation of the country. However, it is important to acknowledge that an increase in access alone cannot be regarded as contributing to transformation. Students should also be successful. An exclusive focus on increasing access while neglecting the importance of throughput and success could be a costly financial, socio-economic and emotional exercise for the various stakeholders. Considering the importance of student success as discussed, it is clear that institutions have an ethical responsibility toward government, society, and the students themselves to offer quality education. In real terms, HEIs are promoting success once they have created an environment for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values that can contribute to their own quality of life and that of a transforming society (Walker & Mclean, 2015). Only then do HEIs empower their students.

4.6 STUDENT SUPPORT IN ORDER TO ENHANCE STUDENT SUCCESS

Many HEIs in South Africa have developed a host of support programmes and initiatives to help students with acquiring important skills and knowledge. Bridging programmes, extended degree programs, preparation courses, first-year seminars, tutor and mentor programmes, and career advisory services are examples of opportunities offered by some institutions before or at the beginning of the first academic year to help first-year students to be 'ready' for HE. In addition, once these students are in the system, services that focus on 'fixing' students' 'deficits' are offered. These may include additional academic courses, module-specific tutoring, academic and career counselling, as well as support with time management, study skills, stress management, communication skills, and other soft skills (Strom & Strom, 2013:54).

Stellenbosch University is no exception in this regard, as it offers an extensive range of support programmes in both the academic and out-of-class environment. One example is a well-structured mentor programme in residences and in private student organisations (PSOs)[5] where senior students are assigned as mentors for first-year students. The mentors are trained in the principles of wellness and basic communication skills to support first-year students with their adjustment at Stellenbosch University. Other initiatives, for example providing support with writing and reading skills,

[5] Registered students who do not reside in a university residence.

development of basic academic skills, leadership programmes, psychotherapeutic services, and career planning services form part of many more SU student support services. In February 2017, Stellenbosch University also appointed a manager for the co-curriculum of the university, who is tasked to develop a more structured approach to the activities and opportunities provided in the out-of-class experience of students.

Research confirms that HEIs that embrace supportive practices contribute positively to the development and improvement of skills essential for lifelong learning in the 21st century (Kuh & Ewell, 2010:9; Mullin, 2012:137). These skills include content- and career-specific skills, analytical reasoning, critical thinking, innovative and creative thinking, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and collaborative skills, problem-solving, effective communication, global understanding, and responsible citizenship.

In addition to the development of the above-mentioned skills, there is ample evidence of other benefits of student support services (Bergeron, 2013; Braskamp & Engberg, 2011; Brock, 2010; Morrison, Brand & Cilliers, 2006). The reasoning underpinning this approach is to fast-track new entrants' readiness by equipping them with skills that are essential for their success in HE. Du Plessis and Botha (2012) emphasise the importance of identifying factors that affect first-year students' success. This is essential for the strategic development of support programmes to assist these 'struggling students' (Du Plessis & Botha, 2012). Krumrei-Mancuso and others (2013) support this stance and suggest that students will be more invested and actively involved in the HE experience if support programmes are developed based on needs that were identified in consultation with them. The support programmes should also be based on research to identify the most appropriate interventions to contribute optimally to student success.

The purpose of the support programmes is mostly to improve students' readiness and to equip them with certain skills. By doing that, students' academic success experiences are improved. It is often referred to as developmental work. In the United States, student support services claim that, since the 1970s, its work has been substantiated by such a 'developmental paradigm'. Schreiner and Anderson (2005) question their claim and explain that their work is still supported by a 'get-them-ready' approach. The same approach is still followed in South Africa, too – support programmes are provided to 'help' students.

In current literature, a problem-based paradigm focussing on deficits is still dominant. Phrases like 'struggling students', 'preventative focus' and even 'student support' imply that underprepared and underperforming students have or experience deficiencies or problems that need to be addressed and supported and that the possible negative outcomes thereof should be prevented. In practice, it may

entail that students who are not performing well in their studies are referred for a study skills course so that they can be equipped with skills that will improve their grades.

Botha and Cilliers (2012) indicate that if a deficit approach – a focus on remedying students' 'shortcomings' – is followed, they may actually start to believe that something is wrong with them (Hlalele & Alexander, 2012). These students may interpret this approach as an indication that they are not good enough to achieve success. It may also imply that students must have specific abilities and skills to succeed, and should they not have (or acquire) these abilities and skills, they cannot be successful (Schreiner, 2015).

The reality in South Africa is that many of the students who are referred for such support and advice come from disadvantaged areas, and most of them are black. This may sustain a prevalent discourse of discrimination based on race and social class. In the light of this, I support the view that institutional readiness increasingly is becoming a key determinant of student success. Krumrei-Mancuso and others (2013:248) argue that when students do not experience success, this may be a reflection of "a failure on the part of the institution to support students' progress and to respond effectively to students' needs". I am of the opinion that, instead of trying to remedy the challenges that students experience, HEIs should rather focus on creating opportunities for students to develop their student identities during the course of their studies. By doing this, institutions can demonstrate their own readiness to receive the students in the HE environment and facilitate experiences that will support them towards success.

I argue that student-counselling services can contribute significantly to institutional readiness, should it support a developmental paradigm. Student counselling services can provide opportunities for students to develop. These opportunities can help with laying the foundations for lifelong learning. Students could be allowed to deconstruct their own identities, engage in critical introspection and reflection, and reconstruct a new understanding of themselves and the realities that surround them. Baxter Magolda (2009:630) refers to this process as "working to hear their own voices".

Student counselling services can contribute to a context that empowers students to shift from defining themselves and their environments through other people's perceptions – parents, lecturers and peers – and value systems, towards using their own internalised sense of selves (Baxter Magolda, 2003; Braskamp & Braskamp, 2007). Students are then able to "reconstruct a sense of purpose in their own lives that integrate expanded perspectives and worldviews" (Quinlan 2011:8). When students are able to demonstrate the above, HEIs have empowered students to be successful.

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Considering ‘student readiness’ exclusively as a factor to ensure that students will be successful in HE is not viable anymore. Students enter HE on different levels of readiness, and institutions must create environments and opportunities for these students to be successful during and after their studies. Many programmes that help students to become ‘ready’ for HE – while they have already started their studies – exist, and many students benefit from them. However, these programmes often operate from a deficit paradigm where students’ shortcomings are addressed in order to change them to fit the ideals and expectations of the institution. The readiness of institutions to receive and support a diverse student body with students of different levels of development is becoming extremely relevant. Therefore, institutions should create contexts that promote holistic student development for students to be successful.

In the next chapter, I shall elaborate on the role of student counselling in promoting development and success. I shall discuss the international and South African history of student counselling services. Thereafter, I shall discuss the CSCD as a support service at Stellenbosch University.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENT COUNSELLING AS A PARTNER IN STUDENT SUCCESS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Student counselling contributes significantly to students' success. Cholewa and Ramaswami's (2015) research about the essential role of student counselling in the retention and academic performance of underprepared first-year students found that there is a significant relationship between the academic performance of underprepared first-year students and the fact that they received counselling. In their study about the effect of counselling on the academic performance of students, Renuka, Devaki, Madhavan, and Saikumar (2013) concluded that counselling could help students to deal with personal difficulties constructively. Thus, research studies provide evidence of the positive effect of student counselling on student performance.

In Chapter 4, I argued that student success cannot be explained only in terms of students' academic success. This implies that students' success does not depend exclusively on their academic interactions and learning in a formal classroom setting. I also cautioned against an approach that focuses primarily on students' deficits and suggested a developmental approach that recognises that all students have the potential to succeed. I argue that, if students are viewed as multidimensional human beings with multiple strengths and capabilities who influence systems and vice versa, HEIs will be better positioned to receive a diversity of students and provide them with opportunities in which their unique potential can be realised.

I begin this chapter with a reflection on the national and international history of student counselling as background for a discussion of the relevance of the service and its role in promoting student success. Next, I discuss the challenges that student-counselling centres are facing not only internationally, but also in the South African HE system. In the last section of the chapter, the history and organisational development of the CSCD are explored.

5.2. DEFINING COUNSELLING AND COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

Introductory to my discussion of the role of student counselling, I need to clarify the differences and similarities between 'counselling' and 'counselling psychology'. Various definitions in literature describe the concept 'counselling'. The following two definitions mirror my understanding of its meaning:

'Counselling' is a process of communication that can be defined as: "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education,

and career goals" (Kaplan *et al.*, 2014:368). Information, guidance, and counselling services refer to services intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training, and occupational choices and to manage their careers (Kay & Fretwell, 2003:2).

'Counselling psychology' is a specialisation area of psychology as a discipline. The American Psychological Association (APA) defines it as follows:

> Counseling psychology is a general practice and health service provider specialty in professional psychology. It focuses on how people function both personally and in their relationships at all ages. Counseling psychology addresses the emotional, social, work, school, and physical health concerns people may have at different stages in their lives, focusing on typical life stresses and more severe issues with which people may struggle as individuals and as a part of families, groups, and organizations. Counseling psychologists help people with physical, emotional, and mental health issues to improve their sense of well-being, alleviate feelings of distress, and resolve crises. They also provide assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of more severe psychological symptoms (APA, 2017:n.p.).

My interpretation of the difference between counselling and counselling psychology is that counselling refers to a process and counselling psychology refers to a discipline. Counselling describes a psychological process by which a counsellor empowers individuals and groups to unlock their potential and to make decisions that will have an influence on their life trajectory. It includes helping individuals and groups who are in distress and in need of psychological support. Counselling psychology refers to a specialised field in psychology. The work of counsellors is supported by the application of the theories and practices of 'counselling psychology'.

In this chapter, I shall consistently consider the above-mentioned explanations of 'counselling' and 'counselling psychology'. I shall often refer to 'counselling services' in the context where practice is grounded in 'counselling psychology'.

5.3. HISTORY OF STUDENT COUNSELLING

5.3.1. International origin and developments

The origin of counselling services for students can be traced back to the beginning of the 1900's when the work of Parsons spearheaded the vocational guidance (later known as career counselling) movement in the USA (De Jager, 2012). Initially, counselling services focussed on assessing individuals' character and traits to match them with a specific job or career. Parallel to the development of Parsons's contribution to the counselling profession, Jesse B. Davis initiated a school guidance (counselling) programme that focussed on prevention and helping students to deal

effectively with life events (Gladding, 2016; Pope, 2009). At more or less the same time, Clifford Beers advocated for better mental health and became a pioneer in the field of mental health counselling (Gladding, 2016). The work of Parsons, Davis, and Beers provided the foundation for counselling as a profession and established the field in the USA.

During and immediately after the two world wars until about the 1950's, the major focus of the counselling movement was vocational guidance (De Jager, 2012; Hodges, 2001) to satisfy the needs of war veterans to be reintroduced into the world of work (Mack, 2004). Over time, vocational guidance evolved into a more comprehensive counselling service that also addressed the personal and educational challenges of individuals, including students. Vocational guidance was the precursor of vocational counselling, which later developed into the more comprehensive field of counselling psychology (Gladding, 2016).

In the course of the 1930's and 1940's, specific attention was paid to developing and using counselling models that would be appropriate for the HE context (Hodges, 2001). At that stage, counselling services were viewed as the work of lecturers. These services focused primarily on 'normal' academic concerns. Confusion about the role and allocation of student counselling services at HEIs was rife, and questions about who was best equipped to deliver the services were often raised. This period is also defined by debates about the specific duties of a student counsellor as well as the training and specialisation required to qualify for the job (Hodges, 2001).

Although the student counsellor's expertise initially was vocational guidance, this counsellor role evolved over time into a more comprehensive service (Aubrey, 1977). This was in response to students' diversified needs for support (Lafollette, 2009). As the awareness of the personal and emotional needs of students deepened, HEIs began developing a more comprehensive support service for students. The very sensitive and personal nature of some cases served as motivation for the establishment of specialised counselling services at HEIs (Hodges, 2001). Hence, student counselling services evolved into a professionalised service that was not an add-on to the responsibilities of faculty staff anymore. Specially trained counsellors from the fields of counselling psychology and social work were appointed to render specialised services. The advancement of student counselling services in HE was characterised by a number of milestones, namely:

- the development of ethical strategies for counselling professionals;
- the establishment of protocols for assisting with specific student concerns;
- adopting professional standards and accreditation processes;
- developing a unique identity to distinguish it from other units of student affairs;
- development of professional organisations;

- addressing and distinguishing between the developmental, vocational, and personal needs of students;
- conducting scientific research in the field of student counselling and development, and publishing in scholarly journals;
- the introduction of unique models for service delivery;
- developing new counselling theories;
- developing standard personal and professional inventories; and
- developing increased sophistication in assessment, diagnosis, and training (Bishop, 2016; Hodges, 2001; Morrill, Oeting & Hurst, 1974).

Student guidance and counselling services were most prevalent at HEIs in the USA. However, over time, this practice spread to other parts of the Western world (De Jager, 2012). By comparison, the development of counselling services in other parts of the world was slower, as the relevance and format of these services were interpreted in various ways.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 symbolised the beginning of an era of significant political, social, and economic transformation in Europe. The clear divide between communism and capitalism was diminished. People throughout Europe experienced a newly found freedom of movement between different countries. Although this historical moment in the European history created hope for many, it was also a time of huge adjustments for individuals. Westerhof and Keyes (2006) found that these changes and adjustments had a significant effect on the subjective well-being of the people in Europe. It also affected the well-being of the student body at HEIs. Their needs became more diverse and complex, which necessitated the provision of professional psychological services that were more comprehensive (De Jager, 2012).

The launch of the Bologna process in 1999 paved the way for student counselling services in Europe to gain further momentum. Participants in the Bologna process proposed student-centred education where the focus shifted from the lecturer as a source of knowledge to the student's role in the learning process (Attard, Di loio, Geven & Santa, 2010). The Trends IV Report (Reichert & Tauch, 2005) states in this regard that the focus on the student's role in the learning process emphasises the need for the student to develop specific skills in order to be successful. These skills include autonomous and reflective action, critical thinking, information management, study and research skills (self-regulated learning), time management and other self-management skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills like empathy, language, mathematical and digital competence, and the ability to learn how to learn (Rott, 2008:20).

The need for and awareness of the role of student counselling led to the establishment of reputable services in the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Australia, Israel, Germany, Hong Kong, and South Africa (Naidoo & Cartwright, 2017).

The societal context has a significant effect on the role that student counselling services play. Lafollette (2009) mentions that counselling services during the early days had a humanistic and developmental character, which evolved into working according to a medical model that focuses on curing students' problems. In addition, the role of student counselling in terms of crisis intervention and debriefing after a traumatic experience is increasing in relevance, as society is more prone to violence, e.g. hijackings, kidnappings, and homicide.

The brief overview of the history of student counselling in the USA and Europe highlights the fact that changes in the field of student counselling relate to the transformation of society in general, and more specifically the transformation of HE. One can anticipate that a similar change trajectory of student counselling would occur in a transforming South Africa.

5.3.2. South African origin and developments

The history of student counselling in South Africa demonstrates a similar trajectory of development as in the case of the USA and Europe. However, the South African history is more nuanced with its own idiosyncrasies. Literature about the earliest developments regarding student counselling in South Africa is sparse. I had to depend largely on the most recent and comprehensive book published by the Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) under the editorship of Beekman, Cilliers and De Jager titled *Student counselling and development: contemporary issues in the Southern African Context* (2012).

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2011) maintain that the origin of student counselling in South African lies in vocational guidance and counselling. Dovey (1983) dates the origin of vocational guidance back to the 1930's. South Africa was in the midst of the Great Depression, and many white and black people migrated to the cities in the hope of finding employment. The National Institute of Career Guidance was established to assist people to find work (albeit only whites).

The first written evidence of student counselling services was the establishment of the Student Advisory Service at the Pietermaritzburg campus of the University of Natal in 1948 (Joubert, 1988, cited by Naidoo & Cartwright, 2017). It focussed primarily on vocational guidance and helping students with their subject choices. The University of Pretoria followed with the appointment of the Student Counselling Committee in 1951 and the resulting establishment of the Student Counselling Bureau in 1957 (De Jager, 2012). In 1967, the Committee for University Principals proposed that academic student advice bureaus should be founded at all (white) universities. The Universities of

Cape Town, Witwatersrand, and Rhodes launched career offices during the late sixties and early seventies; these offices supplied general information on career and employment opportunities (De Jager, 2012).

By 1965, eight of the ten white HEIs in South Africa (including Stellenbosch University) had student counselling units. The counselling units focused primarily on career counselling for prospective and first-year students. The rationale was that early and professional support of career choice would solve issues of low pass rates at South African HEIs. They also had to address the high dropout rate of white students (De Jager, 2012; Leach, Akhurst & Basson, 2003; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). De Jager (2012) refers to this stage in the history of student counselling as the reactive stage because services focussed mainly on possible threats to student success. Developmental and preventative work was almost non-existent. Typically, counsellors at the centres consulted with students by appointment. Outreach programmes were not really part of their focus.

According to De Jager (2012), the reactive stage was followed by the proactive stage. This kicked off with recommendations by the Van Wyk de Vries Commission of Enquiry into white universities made in 1974. De Jager (2012:9) describes the proactive stage consisting of services for students being extended to ″include not only their career developmental needs but also their academic and personal-emotional-social concerns″. In addition, support at that stage shifted from being rendered mainly to prospective and first-year students to services for all students. Although the services delivered during this stage are referred to as proactive, Naidoo and Cartwright (2017) point out that they were still linear and not developmental. The focus of the services was on prevention and cure.

De Jager (2012) describes the latest phase of student counselling as the integrative phase, referring to its professional integration into the wider HE community. Over time, student-counselling services demonstrated their relevance (Botha & Cilliers, 2005) as an important stakeholder in HEIs and the greater HE system. ‘Integrative’ also implies the alignment of the mission and vision of the counselling centre with the mission and vision of the university (Naidoo & Cartwright, 2017). Naidoo and Cartwright (2017:10) list the following services that are typically delivered by student counselling centres during this integrative phase:

- Individual and group counselling/psychotherapy;
- Career assessments and career counselling for prospective and registered students;
- Academic skills development;
- Address needs of and advocate for students with disabilities;
- Advocacy for students whose circumstances affect their emotional well-being and academic performance;
- Faculty consultations and advisory roles;

- Research;
- Training and development of staff; and
- Community outreach.

The scope of services delivered by student counselling centres differs between HEIs as such services are largely dependent on the institutional mandate assigned to a counselling centre.

A narrative of empowerment of whites at the cost of blacks is engraved in the history of student counselling in South Africa (Kay & Fretwell, 2003; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). The vocational guidance that was provided by the different student counselling centres focussed on supporting white students with their choices of degrees or diplomas to prepare them well for their future occupations. These services were not available for black students at the historically black HEIs.

When black students began to enrol at historically white, mainly English, HEIs, choosing appropriate degree programmes was a particular challenge. Advice on subject choice and career counselling in black schools were rare. Black students perceived career counselling, which was in place for white students but to which they now had access, as oppressive and racist, because it was rooted in the Apartheid ideology (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2011). Especially career counselling (previously known as vocational guidance) was criticised. The exclusive practices supported by an individualist Western worldview were being challenged for not being indigenous to South Africa (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2011).

Thus, the historical trajectory of student counselling cannot be isolated from the political ideology of South Africa. As HEIs in South Africa began moving from being elitist and exclusive institutions towards becoming more inclusive institutions, the operations and focus of student counselling also came under scrutiny.

As I reflected on the history of student counselling services in South Africa, I was reminded of the similarities in the development of the South African society and student counselling services. Transformation is a dynamic process. Student counselling should transform as society transforms, as it must serve the needs of 21st century students and play a pivotal role in student success. As argued in Chapter 4, student success includes “academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post-college performance” (Kuh *et al*., 2006:7). Student counselling centres can play a significant supportive role in facilitating these various components of student success.

5.4. THE ROLES OF STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES

As implied by the name, student counselling services have the student community of HEIs as their primary clientele. According to the International Association of College Counselling Services (IACS) (2016:4) student counselling has four essential roles to perform, namely to:

- provide counselling to students experiencing personal adjustment, vocational, developmental, and/or psychological problems that require professional attention;
- play a preventive role assisting students in identifying and learning skills that will assist them to meet their educational and life goals effectively;
- support and enhance the healthy growth and development of students by means of consultation and outreach to the campus community; and
- play a role in contributing to campus safety.

The above-mentioned roles apply to the international HE scenario. More specifically, pertaining to South Africa, the SAACDHE describes student counselling services as "a comprehensive range of counselling, career, and development services to empower students to meet the needs of the 21st century individually and corporately" (SAACDHE, 2007:3). SAACDHE formulates the core objectives of the services delivered as:

- promotion of wellness by enhancing healthy, holistic growth and development;
- assistance of students in identifying and enhancing learning skills that help them to meet their educational and life goals effectively and to increase graduate output; and
- provision of guidance, counselling, and/or therapy to students experiencing personal adjustment, vocational, developmental, and/or psychological problems (SAACDHE, 2007:3).

As professional associations, both the IACS and SAACDHE provide broad descriptions of the roles that are expected of student counselling services. In the rest of this section, I shall elaborate on specific roles that demonstrate contributions of student counselling on an institutional level.

Over the years, the focus of student counselling services has evolved into a collection of related acts, tasks, and goals (Bishop, 2016). HE is a dynamic environment; therefore, it is to be expected that the roles of student counselling will also constantly change.

With institutional resources at most HEIs being under pressure, student-counselling centres are increasingly challenged to justify their roles and significance, and to convince decision makers of HEIs that it is worthwhile to invest financial and other resources in this service. In the rest of this section, I shall continue to discuss the institutional contributions of student counselling, not limiting its role only to the service of the clients reporting for support. I shall further reiterate the significance

of the service for the larger institution. Insight into the institutional contributions will demonstrate the systemic role of student counselling. It will also strengthen the argument regarding the relevance of the service and cast some light on the role of student counselling within the larger HE system.

5.4.1. Counselling and support

Parents of students and prospective students alike are increasingly becoming educated about the relevance and importance of specific resources to support students attending HE, such as faculty tutors, study groups, and educational support interventions.. The needs for the specific services rendered by student counselling centres are increasing, however, and parents are well aware of the role that counselling centres can play in students' success (Bishop, 2008). Bishop (2010:251) explains the growing awareness as the "understandable fear that families may have is that a student will be left to struggle with the ever-increasing complexities of college life without adequate support from the campus services".

A primary reason for families prioritising the need for support services is that they are becoming more aware of the psychological and emotional needs of students (Bishop, 2008). By implication, families may motivate their decision of a specific HEI based on the quality and extent to which student counselling services support students.

The services to which Bishop (2008; 2010) refer are psychosocial and psychiatric support for students with emotional needs. I want to argue that, in addition to the need for psychosocial support, the role of student counselling should be extended to a service where students' potential is realised and where the stance is that all students can be successful. An approach that emphasises strengths that are related to success may be even more attractive to parents. Schreiner (2015) suggests that student counselling can offer preventive outreach services, web-based interventions, and resilience workshops to empower students. She suggests that these services should focus on development of strengths and other principles of positive psychology. In this regard, she refers to the approach in psychology that focuses on "positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions [that] promise to improve the quality of life and [to] prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5).

5.4.2. Throughput and retention

HEIs that manage to attract students based on their provision of services that can aid students' success would usually also have a clear commitment to high throughput and retention rates of their students.

Although the improvement of throughput and retention rates generally is not a primary goal of counselling centres (Sharkin, 2004), Bishop (2008) suggests that the outcomes of student counselling may contribute to an improvement of throughput and retention rates. This is supported by research

that found that students who received support from student counselling centres could be in a more favourable position to achieve their academic goals. An example is a study by Bishop and Brenneman (1986) in which 86 percent of at-risk students who participated were able to enrol for another semester after engagement with student counselling services. In a study by Bishop and Walker (1990), participating students reported having someone to listen to them, helping them to organise their thinking and providing personal support, as the main reasons why they decided to continue with their studies. Turner and Berry (2000) found that students who engaged in a counselling process had a retention rate of 85 percent, compared with a 74 percent retention rate for the general student body. Later studies by Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt (2009) and O'Keeffe (2013) confirm the positive relationship between student counselling and academic performance. However, this should not create the impression that the prime responsibility of student counselling services is to improve throughput and retention. Student counselling must always act in the best interest of the students as clients. Improved student academic performance is a secondary result emanating from their primary focus.

Counselling should also play a role in the discontinuation or interruption of a student's studies. For various reasons, students can be in a position where continuation of studies is not advisable. It is the responsibility of a student counselling service to provide professional advice in this regard and to facilitate the process of termination or interruption (Rummel, Acton, Costello & Pielow, 1999).

The role of student counselling regarding throughput and retention is not limited to 'curing what is wrong'. Demitriou and Shmitz-Sciborski (2011) highlight the role of strengths in throughput. Actually, success is facilitated by utilising one's strengths. They specifically refer to goal setting, self-efficacy, academic self-concept, motivational orientations, and optimism as strengths that have a direct influence on student retention.

Another important role of student counselling is to manage potential psychological risks that can jeopardise students' safety in the larger community.

5.4.3. Risk management

HEIs have a duty to guarantee students' safety. Student counselling services can contribute to the protection of students by rendering direct psychological services. Staff members can assist with the overall risk management strategy of an institution by means of prevention, consultation, and the referral of students who are at risk (Bishop, 2010). Student counselling services can provide HEIs with specific data regarding students' adjustment to the campus community, barriers to students' learning, students at risk, interventions required, and the effect of these interventions (Wilson, Mason & Ewing, 1997).

Flynn & Heitzmann (2008) highlight the key role that student-counselling staff can play when they serve on the risk assessment team of the institution. These professionals add unique and valuable perspectives on mental health, educate other members of these teams about psychological disturbances, and help with determining appropriate interventions. Bishop (2010) is of the opinion that the role of student counselling services in risk management at HEIs will increase in the future. At Stellenbosch University, the CSCD offers a 24-hour Crisis Service that renders support to students in crises. The need for this service has grown to such an extent that an external private service provider, ER24, had to be contracted in 2017 to compliment the crisis management services of the CSCD.

The different roles that counselling services should play in supporting and especially promoting student success pertain to an ideal scenario. Initially in South Africa, counselling psychologists rendered the service. The changes in the roles of the counselling service had a significant effect on the staff component. Currently, psychologists from different registration categories are employed. Centres also appoint registered counsellors, social workers, and psychometrists to contribute to the "complex and multi-layered problems" they have to deal with (Naidoo & Cartwright, 2017:2).

The reality at most HEIs is that student counselling faces a myriad of challenges, which may hamper the execution of the services they are supposed to render. Some of these challenges will be discussed next.

5.5. CHALLENGES FOR STUDENT COUNSELLING

I discussed the role of student counselling services in the previous section. Although the important role of these services on campuses cannot be denied (Botha, Brand, Cilliers, Davidow, De Jager & Smith., 2005), they face many challenges, particularly in South Africa. Although challenges are not limited to South Africa, I shall particularly discuss the South African context, bearing in mind the intrinsic uniqueness of the transformation of the South African HE landscape. However, I shall also refer to international literature and research to enrich my discussion.

5.5.1. Political and societal transformation

As mentioned earlier, student counselling services in South Africa could not function in a vacuum during the political turmoil the country underwent over the last twenty years of the twentieth century. Historically, student counsellors at the white Afrikaans HEIs took a neutral political stance. Until 1990, they did not actively question the unequal services delivered based on the racial composition of HEIs (Naidoo & Cartwright, 2017). However, during the early nineties, some of the members of the then Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa (SSCSA) began to apply pressure and challenged the Society to "re-examine its identity and operations in order to remain relevant to its

members and continue to play a meaningful role in the broader student support and development endeavours at member institutions" (SAACDHE, 2007:4). This pressure group also demanded that the SSCSA open up its membership to student counsellors from all HEIs in South Africa. One of the outcomes of this process was the disbanding of the SSCSA and the establishment of the SAACHDE. This was met with great resistance from some of the members of the SSCSA, and the society went through a period of turmoil.

During this watershed period, an appeal was made to student counselling services to move away from the traditional Westernised model of counselling where students' needs were addressed during one-on-one sessions. This should be replaced by an approach where student counsellors rather proactively reach out to students for preventative purposes (Naidoo, 1997, as referred to by Naidoo & Cartwright, 2017).

I want to comment on these transformational highlights of student counselling services in South Africa. Based on their specific roles, student counsellors at the traditional white Afrikaans HEIs had a specific identity that was hugely influenced by the American models of student counselling. Suddenly, this identity was challenged with a view that student counselling services should become more accommodating for the broader South African HE population. Naidoo and Cartwright (2017) discuss the ambivalence and internal conflict many of the counsellors had to deal with. This contributed to centres as well as counsellors reacting with resistance against the expected changes in their identities.

5.5.2. Decolonisation of student counselling services

The call for South African student counselling services to translate traditionally Westernised counselling approaches into services that are more Africanised implies that counselling practices should be critically interrogated in order to identify the remnants of colonialism and oppression (see 2.2.1) (Mkhize, 2004), in other words, student counselling services have to be decolonised. This suggests that counselling should not be restricted to identifying problems and symptoms so that a diagnosis according to the DSM-5 could be made.

Makanya (2014) argues that Western approaches in psychology have a limited view of the interrelatedness between mind and body while Africanism views the person as a whole. Health is not identified from a medical perspective, but rather in terms of a person's role in a community. A student will, for example, be viewed as healthy when he/she can contribute significantly to the growth and development of the student community.

Counsellors should thus acknowledge culture-bound experiences and admit that what may present as pathology in a Westernised model may be rather 'normal' in an Africanised model (Naidoo, 2012).

It may often be in the best interest of the student to be referred to an alternative healer or sangoma for support. Decolonisation of student counselling could imply that consideration be given to appointing traditional healers to support students and to contextualise developmental opportunities.

There is still ample evidence of Westernised practices in centres where the traditional deficit approach is supported by a medical model of service delivery. This was confirmed when I visited[1] four student counselling centres at historically white Afrikaans HEIs in South Africa (Sinclair, 2017). These centres are characterised by a tendency to devote more resources to curing students' problems, and spending most time on individual counselling sessions. This is contradictory to availing proactive and preventative services to the larger student population.

5.5.3. Recognition of the professional status of student counselling on campuses

Botha and others (2005:73) describe student-counselling services as ″an indispensable and integral part of HEIs in South Africa″. However, this perspective may rather reflect the ideal than actual reality. Counsellors who participated in research by Naidoo (2016) referred to the service as the 'step child' of the institution that is not always recognised for its service. The participants also indicated that they were 'wearing many hats' and displayed a perception that the HEI misused them. One of Naidoo's interpretations is that the participating psychologists experienced an identity conflict with what is expected from them by the HEI and what can expected from them according to their professional scopes of practice. All these factors put the staff of the centres at risk for burnout and threaten their professional identity.

5.5.4. Diversity of the student population

Student communities at HEIs all over the world are increasing in diversity. A more diverse student community gives rise to a greater diversity in the needs for support from counselling centres. Typical issues that demonstrate the diversity in students' needs are diversity and gender issues, career development needs, and issues related to life transitions, stress, and violence (Kitzrow, 2003).

In South Africa, the democratisation of the country served as a catalyst for the increase in diversity in student communities. A single coordinated national HE system under the governance of the Minister of Higher Education and Training substituted a system of separate HEIs for different population groups. HE also became more accessible for disadvantaged groups. That added to the diversity in the student body. Students with various socio-cultural backgrounds, who speak different mother tongues, are now part of a typical campus community.

[1] 5 – 8 June 2017

Although research about the presentation patterns of students at counselling centres after the democratisation of South Africa is limited, Bowman and Payne (2011) found in a study at the University of Witwatersrand that there was a significant increase in the numbers of black students who reported for counselling regarding academic problems. This finding correlates with the research of Flisher, De Beer, and Bokhorst (2002) that was conducted at the counselling centre of the University of Cape Town. The latter study also found that, amongst others, non-English speaking students, students eligible for financial assistance (economically disadvantaged students), and students who do not reside in the same city as the university had a higher incidence of using counselling services. These characteristics are related closely to black students (previously disadvantaged students) in general.

Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson and Strauss (2003) did research on the adjustment of black students at historically white South African HEIs. Their research indicates that these students in general have difficulties with adjustment on a social level as well as a personal-emotional level. The hypothesis is that these adjustment problems may relate to academic and social difficulties. Thus, black students' challenges with adjustment at historically white HEIs (of which Stellenbosch University is an example) may contribute to an increase in the need for interventions by counselling centres.

Bowman and Payne (2011) are of the opinion that this increase in the need for counselling services may also be because many of these students can be classified as first-generation students. Research has shown that, being the first members of their families to attend a HEI, first-generation students generally experience the demands of university life as rather challenging and find it difficult to adjust (Siyengo, 2015). One of the reasons may be that they are not necessarily emotionally, socially, and academically prepared for the challenges of HE. However, one should be careful to label these students as 'not ready' for HE. As discussed in Chapter 4, one should also consider that HEIs are not necessarily ready to receive these students, who form the majority of the South African student population. One of the core functions of HEIs, and specifically their counselling services, can be to embrace the strengths of these students and thus to motivate them to experience success (Schreiner, 2015).

Diversity in student communities is not limited to diversity in race, language, and nationalities. An increase in the admission of students with special learning needs and disabilities, as well as an increase in the number of international students that enrol at HEIs in South Africa, add to the diversity profile of the students. Howell (2010) draws attention to the psychosocial stressors of students with disabilities. These stressors are related to a dominant medical discourse in which students' disabilities to some extent determine what they are capable of and how they will be able to cope at the HEI. Many

of these students fail due to a lack of appropriate support in terms of their disabilities by the HEIs. Support for students with disabilities is essential to their success.

Student counselling can play an integral role in determining the specific needs of these students, advising students and faculty with regard to accommodating the students and supporting students individually by means of counselling and psychotherapy. De Jager and Van Lingen (2012) are of the opinion that student counselling services have a specific role to play in handling learning disabilities.

Another group of students that contributes to the diversity in HEIs is international students. Lee and Sehoole (2015) confirm that students from Africa, Europe, and America view South Africa as a global HE destination. The majority of international students at South African HEIs are from African countries. Although these students choose to study in South Africa, for reasons like quality and affordable education, they also have to face certain challenges. Research done by Dominguez-Whitehead and Sing (2015) found that discrimination, financial difficulties, and xenophobia are some of the most prominent factors that may have a detrimental effect on international students' success.

One of the risks of the diversifying student population is that institutions may view these students as 'different' and as students with deficiencies. The students may be set up to be unsuccessful. Institutions are not always prepared to accommodate them, and often it is a case of 'adapt or die'.

Counselling centres that embrace the deficit view and that function according to a medical service delivery model strengthen the institutional view that these students do not meet the criteria to be successful. In their efforts to support the students by identifying or diagnosing weaknesses, these centres are actually reinforcing the prevailing message that the students are 'not good enough' and that, without external help, they cannot be successful.

Centres that adopt a holistic view of students can advocate for the students' identities not to be reduced to only one dimension of their existence. Here I refer, for example, to a predisposition where the expected levels of success for a blind student are attributed primarily to the physical dimension (the disability). The other dimensions – the emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions – are not considered as potential contributors to success. However, as multidimensional human beings, students have more to offer than just the factors that contribute to them being classified as 'diverse'. Centres are challenged to convey the message that all students have the potential to succeed, and they can play a central role in advocating for this potential to be unleashed by HE. Challenges of student counselling centres are not limited to diversity factors. The severity in terms of pathology of cases that present for support at the centres and need their attention also has increased drastically.

5.5.5. Increase in and complexity of cases

Students at HEIs are exposed to many stressors. The stress caused by adjustment, peer pressure, tests, examinations, and general life events should not be underestimated. Although stress is an important role player to motivate students, it may be detrimental should it last too long or if the stress levels get too high. Dalton and Crosby (2007) emphasise the effect of the normal stressors of life at HEIs on the adjustment of students who are already at risk. This can lead to the development of depression, anxiety, and severe psychopathology (Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton & Benton, 2003). Naidoo and Cartwright (2017) also mention self-injurious behaviour, psychosis, suicidal ideation, personality disorder, sexual assault, and substance abuse as presenting problems of clients. Gallagher (2014) points out that students whose resilience and interpersonal skills are not well developed may be at risk for experiencing significant emotional challenges when they arrive at a HEI.

According to a recent survey conducted under the auspices of the Association of University and College Counselling Centre Directors (AUCCCD) in America, 57,1 percent of the participating directors were of the opinion that the mental health concerns and related behaviour of students have increased significantly in 2015 when compared to previous years (LeViness *et al.*, 2017). Anxiety and depression topped the list of psychopathology students reported (Reetz *et al.*, 2016). Eiser (2011) acknowledges the high incidence of anxiety and depressive disorders on HE campuses. She also highlights that the incidence of severe psychological problems like eating disorders, self-injury, and substance abuse is increasing rapidly.

It should be emphasised that not only the number of students who are in need of counselling services is increasing, but also that many students, on arrival at HEIs, are already diagnosed with severe psychiatric diagnoses (Douce & Keeling, 2014). Counselling centres are under pressure to render a comprehensive service to these students. More time and resources are spent on case management, psychotherapy, referrals to other health professionals, and crisis services. Kitzrow (2003) warns that, because of the demand on counselling services, the severity of cases may lead to less time available for proactive work.

In South Africa, a similar scenario is playing out. According to a study by Schreiber (2007) conducted at a South African HEI, the majority of clients at the student counselling centre experienced problems with concentration, motivation, depression, tiredness, and fatigue. Another study identified that one of the common themes of new students at a South African HEI was the “threat to self in the context of basic survival needs” (Bojuwoye, 2002:288). Naidoo’s (1999) research among black South African students found that the HE environment could be perceived as very stressful. A large number of the participating black students indicated a need for student counselling services.

Many South African students are from communities where gang fighting is the order of the day, women and children are abused, and crime rates are very high. The amount of trauma they need to deal with is significant. Students are also exposed to rape, assault, dealing with sexual identity issues, protest actions, and many other traumatic circumstances. These scenarios contribute to student counselling centres being required to spend a great deal of their time and resources on crisis interventions.

When reviewing international and national research, it is apparent that the need for counselling services at HEIs is more prevalent than ever (Bishop 2010). Kitzrow (2003) emphasises that, owing to the increase in severity of students' psychological problems, the role and function of student counselling should be expanded in order to provide optimally in the needs of the students. However, to do this in a resource-constrained environment is a great challenge.

5.5.6. Scarcity of resources

An increase in access for students from all spheres of society has led to the massification of HE. Access with support should be the ideal, because without support, students may find it difficult to adjust and be successful. Counselling centres are one of the entities in HE that has an integral role to play in supporting students. The increasing severity of the problems with which students present at counselling centres, in combination with the results of massification, cause resources of student counselling centres to be stretched beyond the limit (Kitzrow, 2003).

Not only are the numbers of students reporting at student counselling centres for support increasing annually, but the need for long-term psychotherapy, after-hour crisis interventions, and intensive case management of students with severe psychiatric disorders is also more prevalent. However, the increasing numbers and complexity of problems do not reflect in the number of counsellors being appointed at HEIs (Benton *et al.*, 2003). This results in challenges regarding the effective utilisation of resources of student counselling services.

Student counselling centres interpret their roles according to the specific needs of the institution in which they reside. Usually, the institution will grant the centre a mandate according to which services can be rendered for the student community. However, this mandate does not always ensure that counselling service centres keep up with changing HEI contexts. The mandate also does not always acknowledge the challenges centres have to deal with due to changes in the institution.

The CSCD provides counselling services for registered students at Stellenbosch University. The above-mentioned roles and challenges are affecting the daily services and existence of the CSCD. In Section 5.6, I shall provide an overview of the history and organisational development of the CSCD, as well as information on the current scenario at the centre and the challenges confronting it.

5.6. CENTRE FOR STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT (CSCD) AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

5.6.1. History[2]

The Bureau for Student Counselling at Stellenbosch University was established in 1965, with Mr Ernst Conradie as the first head and later director. The bureau was the predecessor for the current Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD). The task of the Bureau was to provide a comprehensive psychological support service for students by rendering services involving:

- career counselling and development;
- academic counselling and development; and
- personal counselling and development.

In 1987, the Bureau was incorporated into the newly established Centre for Psychological Services and Training, which consisted of four distinct and independent units, namely the Unit for Student Counselling (previously the Bureau for Student Counselling), the Unit for Counselling Psychology, the Unit for Educational Psychology, and the Unit for Clinical Psychology. In May 1997, the Careers Office was launched by Stellenbosch University. Initially, the Careers Office operated as a separate entity and thus did not function under the auspices of the Bureau for Student Counselling. The Careers Office was responsible for supporting registered students with their career development. It also acted as a link between students and potential employers.

In September 1997, after a process of institutional restructuring and transformation, the Centre for Student Counselling (CSC) was founded. The CSC was the result of the amalgamation of the Units for Student Counselling, Clinical Psychology, and Counselling Psychology, as well as the newly established Careers Office. The name was changed officially to the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) on 7 September 1999, when Professor Charl Cilliers was appointed as the director of the centre. Cilliers was passionate about the development of people's skills and therefore decided to add 'development' to the name of the centre. The focus of the CSCD was on offering an integrated, multidisciplinary, psychological counselling and career development service for registered and prospective students of Stellenbosch University. The organisational structure of the CSCD is captured in Figure 5.1.

[2] The history of the CSCD is summarised in the document *Geskiedenis van die Sentrum* (SSVO, 2002). This section is a condensed version of the above-mentioned document.

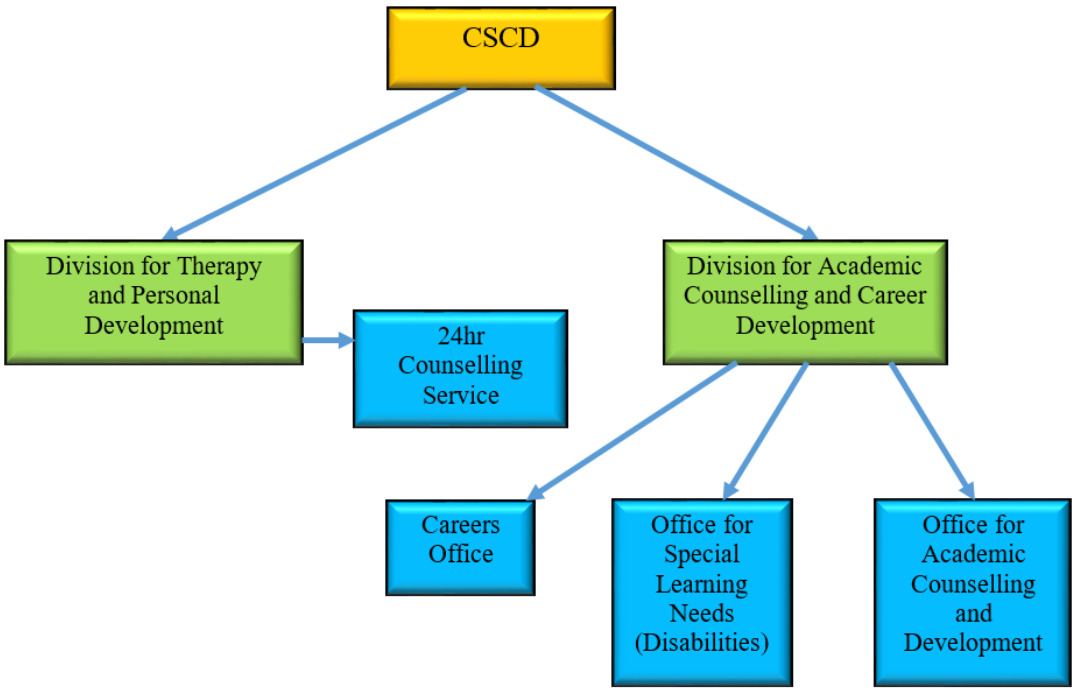


Figure 5.1: Organisational diagram: CSCD before 2015

In 2015, with the appointment of a new director, Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee, the structure of the CSCD structure was changed to consist of four specialised units, namely the Unit for Psychotherapy and Support Services, the Unit for Graduand Career Services, the Unit for Academic Counselling and Development, and the Disability Unit (Figure 5.2).

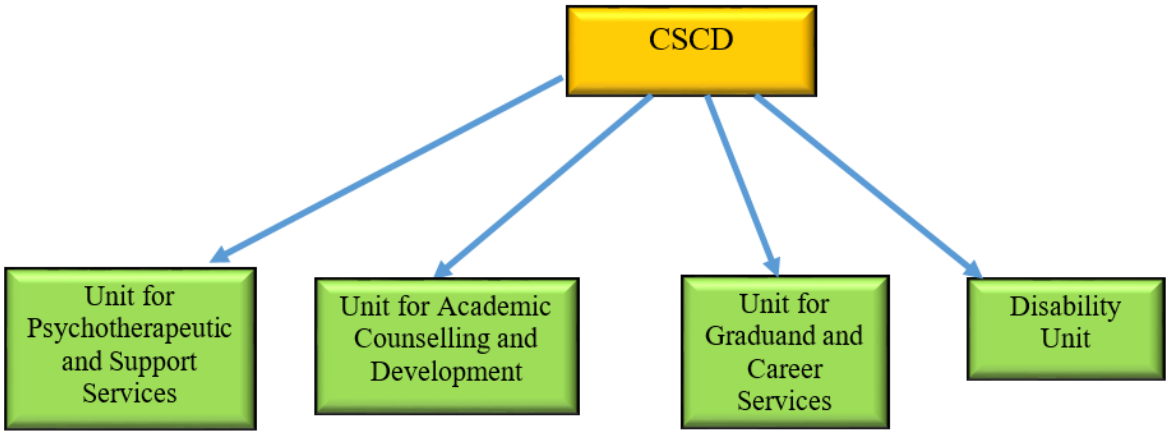


Figure 5.2: Organisational diagram: CSCD 2015

In December 2015, Office for Institutional HIV Coordination (OIHC) at Stellenbosch University was included in the new Equality Unit, the fifth unit of the CSCD. Figure 5.3 illustrates the organisational structure of the CSCD since 2016.

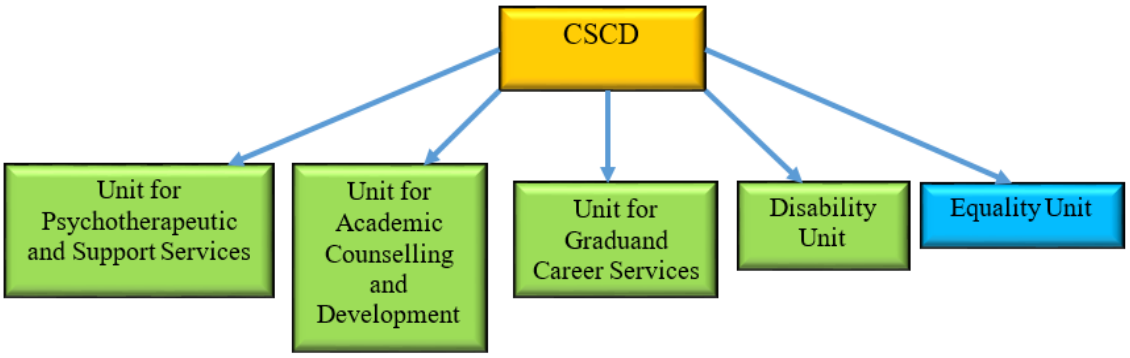


Figure 5.3: Organisational diagram: CSCD since December 2015

The organisational structure of the CSCD changed due to changes in the institution – Stellenbosch University – and the needs of a diversifying student community.

5.6.2. Organisational development

The CSCD is obliged to keep up with changes in the greater Stellenbosch University environment. Should the Centre stagnate, it might be at risk of losing its relevance in the institution.

Figure 5.1 shows that a clear distinction was made between psychotherapeutic services (Division for Therapy and Personal Development) and the traditional student-counselling services (Division for Academic Counselling and Career Development). This reflected an international tendency where student counselling services evolved from being a vocational guidance and support service to one that acknowledges students' need for psychotherapy.

Over time, the Division for Academic Counselling and Career Development transformed to consist of three offices, namely the Careers Office, the Office for Students with Special Learning Needs (Disabilities), and the Office for Academic Counselling and Development. Each office was established due to the specialised counselling needs of a diversifying Stellenbosch University. The diversification of the Division for Academic Counselling and Career Development paved the way for the establishment of a Centre consisting of first four (Figure 5.2) and later five specialised units (Figure 5.3). The CSCD did away with the clear division between psychotherapeutic services and counselling services.

The establishment of the fifth and latest unit – the Equality Unit – mirrors a stronger focus on human rights, sexual violence, gender issues, and unfair discrimination. It evolved from the HIV/Aids Unit, which was justified by an earlier need to reduce the number of HIV infections, provide HIV/Aids testing and counselling, and inform students about treatments for HIV/Aids. This Unit was established

at a time when society experienced HIV/Aids as a highly infective disease with no cure available for it. In later years, this changed and, although HIV/Aids campaigning, counselling, and testing were still prevalent, the availability of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) and combining them with a healthy lifestyle allowed for those being infected to 'live with HIV' and to experience a 'normal' life. The discourse in society and at Stellenbosch University shifted to one where the university community is increasingly more aware and outspoken about human rights, equality, sexuality, and gender issues.

Figure 5.3 reflects five units each of which is responsible for rendering a specialised service (Stellenbosch University, 2018c).

The **Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services** offers psychotherapy, group interventions and social work services for students with psychological, emotional, personal and welfare needs.

The **Unit for Academic Counselling and Development** offers consultations, career counselling, and work sessions focused on academic skills, with the aim to equip students with the necessary skills to reach their potential.

The **Unit for Graduand Career Services** provides student support during the process of entering the world of work. This includes sessions about careers, compiling a CV, exposure to network opportunities, and job-searching methods.

The **Disability Unit** offers various services to students with disabilities or special learning needs, including the development of accessible texts, advice about and access to support technology, and innovative academic support.

The **Equality Unit** promotes collective action towards social justice and discourse regarding social asymmetries at Stellenbosch University with foci on HIV/Aids, gender, sexualities, and anti-discrimination.

The vision of the CSCD is the following:

> We strive for our centre to be approachable, inclusive and client centred, with our values based on shared humanity, and we aim to promote citizenship by facilitating wellness, personal agency, and sustainable equity.

The mission that supports this vision states the following:

> To provide the university community with psychological, developmental and support services with the focus on critical engagement, advocacy, personal growth, and graduateness (Stellenbosch University, 2017a:3).

A review of the organisational development of the CSCD reflects a transforming student community. However, this does not imply that the overarching model of service delivery of the centre has shifted

significantly from being primarily problem focussed to one with a developmental nature that can contribute optimally towards student success for a diversifying Stellenbosch University.

The CSCD is challenged by the changing needs of the diversifying student community. There is an increase in the pressure that lecturers, parents, management of the university, and students put on the CSCD to 'help' and relieve problems that are experienced. To some extent[3], the increase in needs is reflected in the number of support sessions that are facilitated every year. Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 demonstrate the increase in support sessions between 2015 to 2017.

Table 5.1: Number of support sessions

Year	Educational support	Clinical support	Total
2015	2 882	5 468	8 521
2016	4 441	6 049	10 490
2017	3 607	7 715	11 322

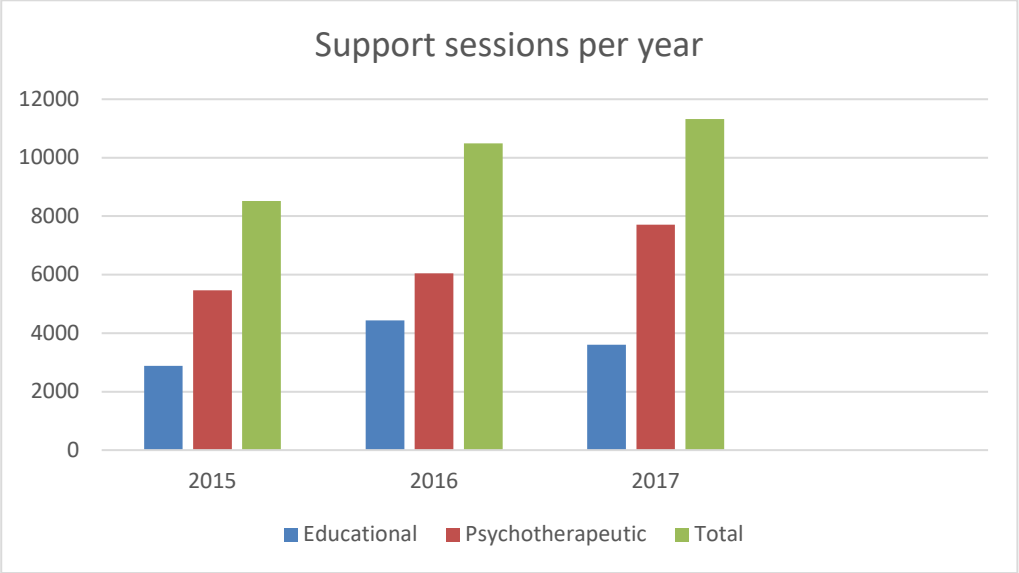


Figure 5.4: Graphic representation of the number of support sessions per year

Not only has the number of support sessions increased during this time, but also the severity of the problems that students presented with. Concerns about the workload of the CSCD staff are often voiced. In the 2017 Annual Report of the CSCD (Stellenbosch University, 2017a) such concerns are referred to more than once.

[3] UACD and UPSS statistics

> It is clear that our students make excellent use of our services, and while this is testimony to the significant work of the CSCD, it gives rise to bottlenecks and waiting lists, as the therapeutic services in particular are oversubscribed. The national increase in mental illness has reached worrying proportions and we will find innovative and systemic ways of assisting more and more students seeking to resolve challenges, thereby enabling them to reach their goals (Stellenbosch University, 2017a:2-3).
>
> For the past few years, we annually note that the demand for psychotherapy escalates, particularly students who present in crisis. CSCD was compelled to buy in additional help from consultants and ER24, particularly in September and October, due to the high demand and intensity of students' challenges (Stellenbosch University, 2017a:40).
>
> UPSS had an increase in lecturing staff who approached the unit for assistance with students who experience psychiatric and psychological conditions. UPSS is very aware of students who are in dire need of psychiatric treatment and who are not able to afford private medical care and have to rely on state facilities (on both campuses) (Stellenbosch University, 2017a:42).

External, independent evaluators[4] who were involved in the fourth quality assurance cycle of the University – 2011 to 2016 – also voiced their concern about the challenges of the CSCD and reported as follows:

> The highly pressured and volatile climate that has swept universities across the country over the recent past has brought additional psychological pressures to bear on students and, inevitably, on student counselling services at universities. The Centre for Student Counselling and Development is no exception in this regard, with the psychotherapeutic and support services as well as the academic counselling and development units stretched to the limit. Students have to wait inordinately long for appointments, as many students prefer individual therapy to group sessions. This was corroborated by the students we interviewed who indicated that it is extremely difficult to get an appointment with counselling staff around examinations and test time. Staff are inundated with student/client work, so much so that it is difficult for them to keep administration duties up to date, and some are unable to find time to do research. Also, it is quite difficult for staff to institute preventative programmes because of being too preoccupied with and caught up in the curative mode of service delivery (Stellenbosch University, 2018a:3).

The CSCD, in alignment to the transformation of Stellenbosch University and HE in South Africa, became increasingly involved in a variety of services and in dealing with more diverse clients and needs. Botha and others (2005) warn that centres must be careful not to respond to change through

[4] Not staff of Stellenbosch University

just adding to their workload without a strategic improvement of the management of their available resources. It is important for student counselling centres to stick to their core business and not to overextend themselves. The concept ‘core business’ is blurred at the moment, due to various systemic demands. Different role-players on campus often misinterpret the scope of the CSCD, and protecting the Centre from excessive demands is a challenge.

5.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The current situation at the CSCD motivated me to embark on a study in which I could explore a different service delivery model in order to empower staff and students in promoting student success. In Chapter 4, I have already alluded to a developmental approach in facilitating student success. With regard to student counselling services, I explored the value of a developmental approach that is grounded in positive psychology with specific reference to the strength-based approach. I also explored systems theory to guide the transformation of the CSCD as part of the larger Stellenbosch University and also of the national and international society. Organisational development theory can provide insight into the implementation of transforming practices at the centre. In Chapter 6, I shall discuss the conceptual model that guided the empirical study, as well as the interpretation and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 6
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, I discussed the role of student counselling services in promoting student success. I alluded to challenges the CSCD is experiencing and how they relate to the transformation process at Stellenbosch University. Transformation of the CSCD also relates to the international transformation of HE, but more specifically to HE transformation in South Africa. The number of registered students in the HE system and at Stellenbosch University has increased significantly since the democratisation of the country in 1994. In 1995, 14 964 students were registered at SU. By 2017, the number has increased to 31 369 (Stellenbosch University, 2018b). A growing and more diverse student community has resulted in a diversity of needs that have to be addressed (Chapter 4). Although the throughput rates at Stellenbosch University are better than those of most of the other HEIs in South Africa, the institution is experiencing the brunt of students who are not prepared for the challenges of HE and who find it difficult to persevere and to experience success (Chapter 5) (Stellenbosch University, 2016c).

In this thesis, I argue that the CSCD plays a significant role in promoting the success of Stellenbosch University students (Chapter 5). However, I also question the relevance of the largely medical model approach of the CSCD and argue for a service-delivery model with a developmental focus.

The conceptual framework that I discuss in this chapter informed my choice of research methodology, the interpretation and analysis of the research results, answering the research question and sub-questions, and the application of the findings of the study. My argument is informed largely by the principles of positive psychology. I pay specific attention to Seligman's well-being theory, the strengths-based approach, and the growth mindset. In addition, the principles of organisational development and the systems theory are discussed as they guided me in applying the research results to the CSCD as sub-system of the SU system.

6.2. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

My argument that the CSCD should substitute the medical problem-centred model, which aims to fix students' shortcomings, with a holistic learning and developmental model (Kuh *et al*., 2010) that can empower students, resonates with the premises of positive psychology.

In 1998, Martin Seligman, who was at that stage the president of the American Psychology Association (APA), and a colleague, Mihalay Csikszentmihalyi, started advocating for a

psychological approach that fosters happiness, excellence, and optimal human functioning. They argued that the bulk of psychology research in the twentieth century focussed on psychopathology, and overemphasised "depression, racism, violence, self-esteem management, irrationality and growing up under adversity" (Gable & Haidt, 2005:103).

With the inception of the positive psychology movement in the 1990s, people's 'happiness' was a key focus of the approach. It has been described as a science that studies positive emotions, positive traits, and positive institutions (Kim, Keck, Miller & Gonzales, 2012). Positive psychology embraces people's strengths to optimise their potential as holistic human beings (Donaldson, Dollwet & Rao, 2015; Seligman *et al*., 2005; Schreiner, 2015:4). A core belief of positive psychology is that human beings have an innate quest for a meaningful, happy, and good life. According to Seligman's authentic happiness theory, people's life satisfaction determines their happiness. Therefore, one of the goals of positive psychology in the 1990s was to increase people's life satisfaction (Seligman, 2002a; Seligman, 2002b).

In spite of its apparent appeal, the positive psychology movement has come under heavy criticism. Gable and Haidt (2005) question its validity referring to a possible assumption that it is the opposite of a 'negative psychology'. Other scholars cite the lack of empirical research in the field and question the validity of findings (Miller, 2008; Yakusho & Blodgett, 2018; Wong & Roy, 2017). Miller (2008) criticises it for oversimplifying human behaviour when it claims that pessimistic people are more prone to depression and that optimistic people are well-functioning, can set and achieve goals, can persist with activities until they have mastered them successfully, and that they are happy individuals. Another point of critique is that it denies the role that people's negative experiences play in their own experience of unhappiness.

The progression towards Positive Psychology 2.0. is a reaction to the above and other criticisms. Wong (2011) describes the later version as a more balanced approach where confronting 'the dark side of healing' is necessary for one to heal and flourish. Acknowledgement of the role of both positive and negative emotions in optimal human functioning is advocated.

Subsequently, in reaction to similar critique on his book *Authentic Happiness,* Seligman (2011) authored *Flourish* in which he introduced the well-being theory, which substituted his authentic happiness theory. The focus shifted from happiness to well-being and flourishing. Seligman (2011) defines well-being as a multidimensional concept that consists of five pillars, namely positive emotions (P), engagement (E), positive relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A), constituting the PERMA model of well-being. Each one of the pillars has a specific identity and meaningfulness that is explained in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: The PERMA model

P	Positive emotions	Hedonic feelings of happiness: Thriving people are more persistent, set higher goals, and are less stressed, less fatigued, and show better problem-solving skills.
E	Engagement	Psychological connection to activities and organisations: Individuals need to enjoy activities or tasks that absorb them into the present moment. It is also referred to as 'flow'. Flow helps to unlock potential, improves different skills, and develops emotional capabilities.
R	Positive relationships	Being socially integrated, cared for and supported by others: Humans thrive on being socially connected and experiencing love, intimacy, joy and support in difficult times.
M	Meaning	Belief that one's life is valuable and that it is connected to something greater than oneself: It provides purpose and meaning in one's life, which are important for experiencing happiness and fulfilment.
A	Accomplishment	Progress towards goals, sense of achievement, and feeling capable to do daily activities: People with realistic goals who can accomplish through the needed effort will thrive and flourish.

Sources: Seligman, 2011:16; Kern, Waters, Adler & White, 2015:263

Each one of the elements contributes to a person's well-being. Thus, the promotion of well-being cannot be limited to one or two of these elements. According to the well-being theory, people should focus on developing all five of the elements of the PERMA model in order to flourish. Seligman's well-being theory also emphasises that practitioners should not focus exclusively on alleviating psychological illness. They should rather support clients to develop beyond the point where the symptoms of illness are resolved towards a state of 'flourish'. Figure 6.1 demonstrates the continuum between psychological illness and flourishing. It is an adaptation of the illness-wellness continuum of Travis (Myers & Sweeney, 2008).

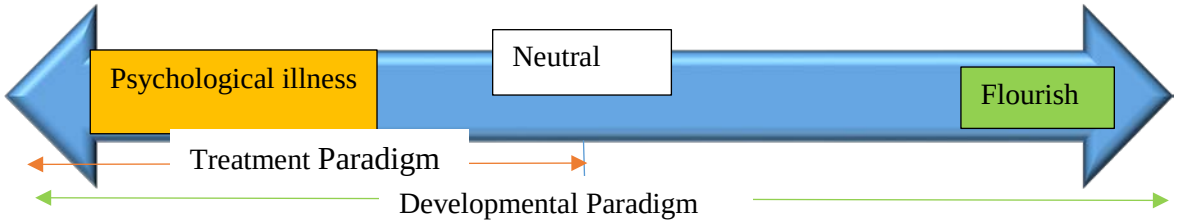


Figure 6.1: Psychological illness-flourish continuum

Source: Meyers & Sweeney (2008)

Research by Kern and others (2015) indicates that the PERMA model can be utilised successfully in promoting students' well-being. The research of Levitt (2015) and Leontopoulou (2015) confirm the findings of Kern and others (2015). All three of these studies were done in the USA. Research about the application of the model to promote students' well-being in South Africa is limited. A South African study by Melato (2014) formulated guidelines for improving the well-being of African youths between the ages of 15 and 18 years. At Stellenbosch University, a study about first-year medical students' wellness and student success confirmed a positive relationship between wellness and success (Du Plessis & Strauss, 2014; Kroon, Du Plessis, Louw, Sinclair & Koch, 2018).

Another approach that has a positive influence on student success is the strengths model. The strengths model existed before the inception of positive psychology, but it is now widely recognised as an approach that is informed by the principles of positive psychology, lately being referred to as the strength-based approach. It was developed as an alternative for the medical model approach, especially in environments where the focus was on the treatment of psychopathology (Rapp & Goscha, 2012).

A strength-based approach explores and utilises the strengths of individuals and environments in promoting their wellness. These strengths include:

- a person's own resources, for example abilities, skills, and potential;
- a person's social network, which includes its own resources, abilities, and skills; and
- the community's resources (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2018).

This approach embraces an individual's uniqueness and acknowledges that everybody can learn, grow, and change. Individuals are respected for their expertise about their own lives. Support services that work according to a strength-based paradigm are responsible for developing resources from which people can benefit to promote their own wellness.

Student counselling services that are informed by a deficit discourse are tasked to address students' problems and 'shortcomings', which leads to practices where students are viewed as 'not ready for

HE', people that need to be 'helped' and to whom 'advice and solutions' should be provided; they are often referred to as in need for a 'cure' to make them 'healthy' again. In counselling services, it manifests as a medical model of support.

Schreiner and Anderson (2005) are of the opinion that support services should rather be informed by a strength-based paradigm. Such an approach will focus students' attention on their own uniqueness, potential, and ability to learn and develop. Developmental opportunities should be created where students can utilise their own strengths to negotiate the often challenging HE environment. They will learn to trust themselves in setting their own goals, solving problems, and identifying and utilising resources in the student community.

When students are made aware of their own strengths and potential, they develop a growth mindset. In her seminal work, *Mindset: Changing the way you think to fulfil your potential*, Dweck (2017:12) defines a growth mindset as "the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts, your strategies and help from others" and "the passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well". A growth mindset helps people to believe in themselves and to thrive, even if times are challenging. People with a growth mindset are the opposite of people with a fixed mindset where individuals perceive their abilities, traits, and qualities as fixed and therefore unable to change. People with a fixed mindset want to prove themselves repeatedly, and are often driven by high levels of anxiety.

Dweck (2017) explains that mindset is a changeable belief. However, changing one's mindset does not imply that old beliefs of 'not being able to' are wiped out. The beliefs that are associated with a growth mindset exist alongside the old ones. Thus, creating opportunities for students to develop a growth mindset does not imply that the old, fixed mindset will suddenly disappear. Development is a process that never ends. Developing a growth mindset co-exists with the older beliefs of people, but as the growth mindset becomes stronger through practice, the way of thinking about challenges, success, and the future changes. This has a positive effect on communities, including, for example, student communities.

Research by Yeager and Dweck (2012) found that students who stress, feel vulnerable, and demotivated are more resilient when they learn that people can change and can overcome challenges. Hochanadel and Finmore (2015) are of the opinion that HEIs should create opportunities for students to develop a growth mindset, because then these students will also develop grit, which is defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. Grit entails working strenuously toward challenges, maintaining effort and interest despite failure, adversity and plateaus in progress. Research by Cross (2014), Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007), and Wolters and Hussain (2015) confirm a positive relationship between grit and student success at HEIs.

Positive psychology embraces the values of well-being, strengths of people and communities, and a mindset believing that people can overcome challenges. Research has proven the positive relationship between positive psychology approaches and student success. For these reasons, I motivate for transformation of the CSCD built on the principles of positive psychology.

6.3. POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ORGANISATION

Organisation development theory stems from Kurt Lewin's work about group dynamics, change processes, and action research (French, Bell & Zawacki, 2005). Burke and Noumair (2015:9) define organisation development as "a process of fundamental change in an organisation's culture". They describe the following four steps that are essential for the organisation development process:

- Diagnosis: Individuals and groups are interviewed, the situation is observed, and thereafter the collected data are analysed.
- Feedback: Results regarding the organisation's collective experience of its problems are reported to the participants from whom the data were collected.
- Discussion: The meaning of the data is utilised to plan steps that should be taken to relieve the problems.
- Action: Those steps are taken (Burke & Nomair, 2015:8-9).

This approach to the development of an organisation focuses on identifying problems, developing interventions, remediating problems, and solving them.

Cooperrider (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011) introduced an innovative inspired positive organisation development (IPOD) approach that, according to him, is informed by the strengths revolution in management. The focus is on innovation instead of intervention, and the envisioned outcome is the transformation of an organisation into a positive institution where human strengths are connected internally and transferred into society (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011).

The collective term for the IPOD approach to the stages of positive change is 'profusion'. Positive change happens when a positive fusion of strengths in an organisation takes place. The three stages of profusion are:

- the elevation-and-extension phase;
- the broaden-and-build capacity stage; and
- the establish-and-eclipse stage of innovation (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011; Coopperrider & McQuaid, 2012).

The **elevation-and-extension phase** depends on the value of questions being asked out of curiosity. This phase also supports the principle of several small changes together contributing to significant changes on a holistic level. This is often referred to as the 'starfish principle'.

The **broaden-and-build phase** embraces a positive-strengths perspective. It is known that organisations and their members do not respond well to change. This is related to the fact that trauma and fear affect human beings' behaviour negatively. Fredrickson (2009) found in her research that when people interact with one another as a collective, their emotions would be amplified. Frederickson refers to this as the 'broaden-and-build' theory, which is applicable to both positive and negative emotions. She also found that interaction that embraces people's strengths would increase their experience of positive emotions and thus lead to organisational development, supporting her broaden-and-build theory.

During the last phase, the **establish-and-eclipse stage of innovation**, the members of the organisation collectively embrace the positive core of the system when they view the past, present, and future capacity of the system. Members' minds are broadened, new knowledge is generated, and the morale of the organisation is positive. This leads to a process that will not only provide solutions, but also provides a platform for innovation and transformation of an organisation and the larger system in which the organisation exists.

Appreciative inquiry –not action research as is the case for traditional organisational development – serves as the vehicle for IPOD (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The starting point of IPOD is the assumption that organisations are not 'problems' and that they have an inherent quality to innovate and transform by utilising their strengths. Organisations should explore their individual members' strengths as well as the collective strength to excel and should refrain from only fixing what is wrong (Cooperrider & McQuaid, 2012). The value of IPOD lies in working with what Cooperrider and McQuaid (2012:73) refer to as the power of wholeness:

> The best in human systems comes about naturally, even easily, when people collectively experience the wholeness of their system, when strength ignites strength, across complete configuration of relevant and engaged stakeholders, internal and external, and top to bottom.

Principles of positive development of organisations are rooted in positive psychology. This approach also embraces the value of inter- and intra-systemic influences.

6.4. SYSTEMS THEORY

A system is "a set of things interconnected in such a way that they produce their own pattern of behaviour over time" (Meadows & Wright, 2008:2). An overarching system may consist of many different sub-systems. HE and HEIs are systemic elements of society (Figure 6.2).

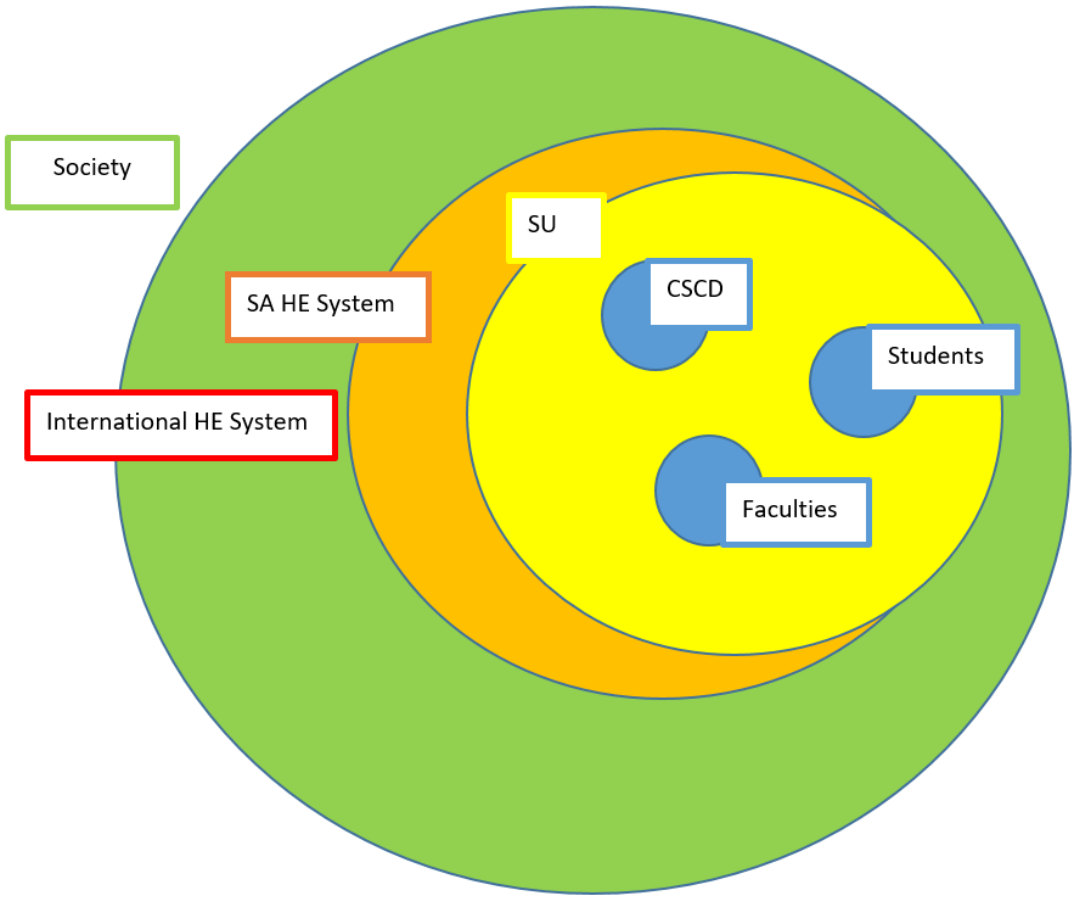


Figure 6.2: A systems perspective on HE

Systems theory argues that a change in any system/sub-system will affect systems/sub-systems with which it interacts (Skyttner, 2001). This implies that, because of international and national changes in HE, student counselling and development services as sub-systems of HEIs will have to change and transform. In this regard, I am mindful of not falling into the linear 'if-then' thinking trap inferring that a HEI and its sub-systems (including student counselling and development) will transform only because of changes occurring in the overarching HE system. Many, often unknown, factors affect transformation on different levels in systems (Von Bertalanffy, 1969:34).

Adopting a systems approach in this study was helpful to understand transformation processes occurring on different levels in HE better and assisted me in answering the research question appropriately. A student counselling and development centre of an HEI (in this case, Stellenbosch University) is part of the South African HE system and is thus a fragment of the South African society.

The South African society is embedded in an international/global society that also entails different HEIs. This confirms Von Bertalanffy's (1972:415) viewpoint that transformation occurs at various levels and that, therefore, a variety of influences drives transformation in a specific system/sub-system – in this case, the CSCD at Stellenbosch University.

To illustrate the interrelatedness of systems, which explains the complexity of HE, I present the following very simple – but typical – example of systemic interactions:

A student at Stellenbosch University enrols for an undergraduate degree. The student completed the final school year at a school in a previously disadvantaged community. The community could be viewed as a system that is embedded in the larger South African society. Stellenbosch University, which is also viewed as a system that interacts with other systems, e.g. the student's community of origin, recruited the student based on academic potential. Transformation in the HE system has an effect on the student, interactions within the student communities to which he/she belongs, the community of origin, and society. The student's success is affected not only by the university system and sub-systems, but also by other systems of which society is the umbrella system.

6.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I discussed various theories and concepts that were integrated to construe the conceptual framework that informed my analysis and interpretation of the data (Figure 6.3).

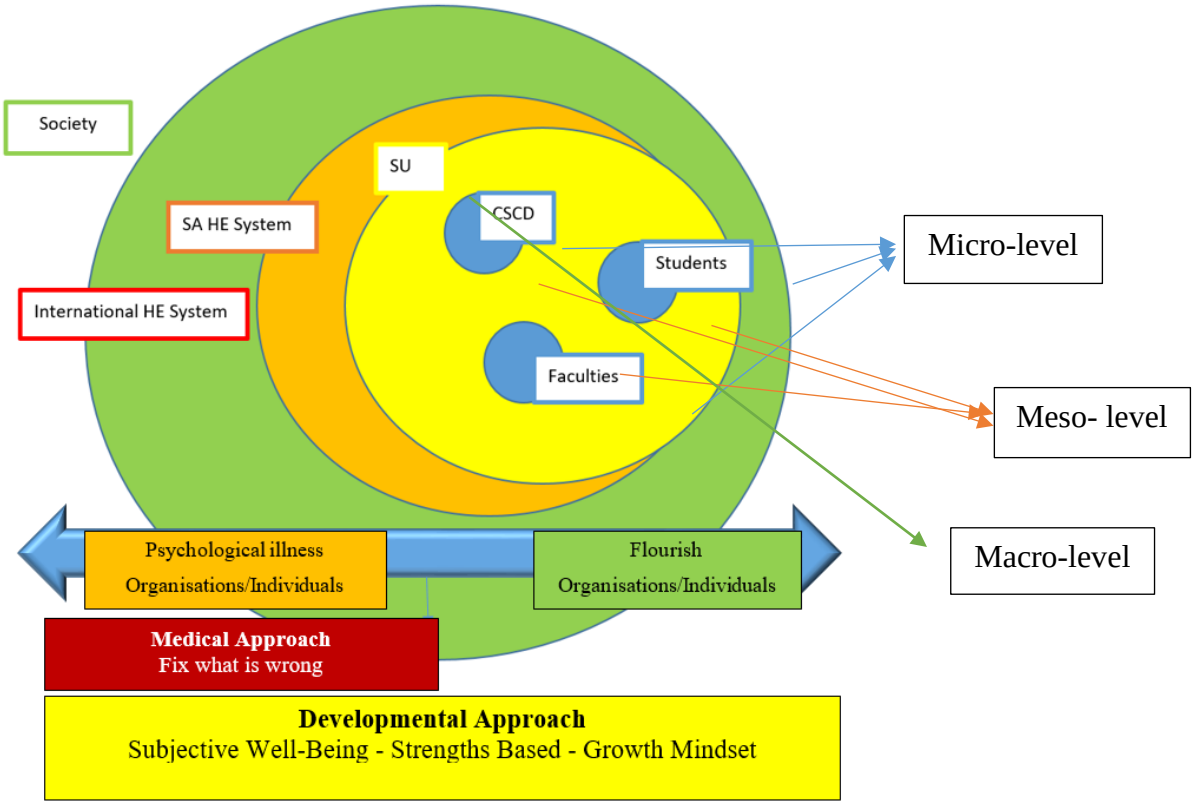


Figure 6.3: Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework allows me to explore the transformation of the CSCD on a micro-level - different individuals' constructions of the phenomenon, a meso-level – different constituencies constructions – and on a macro-level – Stellenbosch University.

Systems theory enabled me to understand the complexity of the interactions between different sub-systems of the university system and the integral role that these interactions play in the construction of a transforming CSCD. Systems theory also gave me insight into the influences of society, the international HE system and the South African HE system on the transformation of Stellenbosch University and the CSCD as a sub-system of Stellenbosch University.

The conceptual framework positions both inter-systemic and intra-systemic interactions, as illustrated by Figure 6.3, in a positive psychology framework where the focus is shifted from a primarily medical approach – red section of Figure 6.3 - towards a developmental approach – yellow section of Figure 6.3. The developmental approach recognises psychological illness, but shifts the focus to the promotion of flourishing organisations and individuals. In this study I argue for the developmental approach to enable students to flourish and to support a flourishing CSCD. Seligman's subjective well-being theory, the strengths-based approach and the growth mindset informs the developmental approach that I advocate for.

The conceptual framework allows for a focus on solutions, empowerment, and the acknowledgment of people's and organisations' strengths. Whereas the research methodology and design that I followed are explained in Chapter 7, the conceptual framework guided the collection of information, the interpretation thereof (*cf.* Chapter 8) and answering the research questions (*cf.* Chapter 9).

CHAPTER 7
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the transformation of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD), Stellenbosch University, against the background of a transforming HE system. I critically discussed HE transformation at international and national levels in Chapter 2, while Chapter 3 provided an overview of the ongoing transformation process of SU specifically. Although the institutional, national, and international transformation processes do have much in common, each process is also interspersed with its own intricacies. For example, discourses about student success are universal at all levels of HE. However, the complexities of how transformation initiatives play out are illustrated by the predominance of mass higher education in most of Europe and the USA, whereas the discourse in South Africa is one of equity and success. In Chapter 4, I deconstructed and discussed the concept of student success as well as the various discourses relating to the topic. I particularly focussed on differentiating the deficit discourse from a developmental discourse when conceptualising student success. My intention with Chapters 2 to 4 was to create a background for exploring transformation of student counselling and development services (Chapter 5).

In Chapter 5, I discussed the CSCD as a unique entity in a HEI. Owing to its uniqueness, not only intra-systemic changes, but also global changes in the field of student counselling and development necessitate a comprehensive investigation of this service at SU to ensure that its proposed transformation is aligned with systemic as well as entity-specific changes.

I discussed systems theory and organisational development as a theoretical framework (Chapter 6). Systems theory underpinned the research process, because I needed to acknowledge that the phenomenon studied did not exist in isolation, but that it formed part of an intricate network of systems. Thus, to study transformation of student counselling, I had to be cognisant of different systems and sub-systems that interacted and affected the different elements of the phenomenon. Organisational development was applicable, because the studied phenomenon was about the transformation of the CSCD, an organisation that was affected by changes in the larger system. Interactions between the CSCD and other sub-systems were of cardinal importance to understand the organisational forces at play.

In this chapter, I elaborate on the process that I followed to answer the research questions. Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) was the research design that guided the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. In the rest of the chapter, I deliberate how I designed the research to answer the

research questions from a specific paradigmatic viewpoint. I elaborate on my choice of research design by discussing my research paradigm in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The research design will be deconstructed to demonstrate how it was crafted to address the central focus point of this thesis.

7.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

In South Africa, an increase in access for students from previously disadvantaged communities brought forth unique challenges to both students and HEIs. At Stellenbosch University, which is often described as an elite institution, the student community is diversifying at a rapid rate. Students from all walks of life present with specific needs for support to be successful. Support services – of which the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University is one – are under immense pressure to provide for clients' needs. The relevance of a support service to the role it plays in the institutional community can be questioned if it does not transform alongside the transformation of the institution. The CSCD has a long history of supporting students. The primary service-delivery model can be depicted on a continuum between a medical model at the one end and a developmental model on the other end.

The focus of this study was to explore the transformation of the CSCD at Stellenbosch University in view of HE transformation. The role of the Centre in student success particularly was brought to the foreground.

My approach to solving the research problem was informed by my paradigmatic perspectives.

7.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

My understanding of reality (ontology), what knowledge is (epistemology), and my ethics and value systems (axiology) determines the paradigm for my approach to research (Durrheim, 2006). As a researcher, I support a postmodernist view of reality. I experience reality as relative and acknowledge that it never could be determined with finality (Lincoln & Guba, 2013:38). I view the existence of phenomena as the result of complex interactions between systems and sub-systems.

My ontological view originates in the interpretive paradigm that claims that reality is discovered by means of interpretation of the participants' constructions thereof (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Lincoln (2012:85) describes interpretive research as "an interactive process shaped by one's history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting". The interpretive researcher values a person's or group's understanding of their subjective realities (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta, 2007). Interpretivism promotes quality and rigour of qualitative research in the

sense that the view of reality presented is not exclusively dependent on the researcher's understanding of it. The participants' views, emanating from their interactions with the environment, are respected. Working within the interpretive paradigm, my ontological view substantiates the decision to interview the CSCD staff, other staff of Stellenbosch University, and students of the university to understand their perspectives about the studied reality. Although I gathered information from different sources, I had to acknowledge that the results and findings of the study provided me with in-depth insight into the transformation of the CSCD but not with a finite answer to the research question. These answers would develop constantly in a dynamic system.

My epistemological stance ties in with the principles of social constructivism. Social constructivism emphasises the importance of interactions between individuals who share a particular social and cultural set-up to co-construct meaning (Adams, 2006). Meaning is not discovered from one individual's experience of a phenomenon. Active social interaction,where a phenomenon can be discussed by a group to create a collective understanding thereof, is needed. Cresswell (2012:8) explains this as follows: "Knowledge is not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives." Therefore, the involvement of different role-players was essential in the process of understanding the transformation of the CSCD.

As a researcher with an insider view of the studied phenomenon, I had to be cognisant of my own ethics and values in the research process. My axiological stance was that, as a researcher, I would never be able to separate myself from the studied phenomenon. However, I should respect the viewpoints advanced by the participants and not infiltrate them with my own biased ideas.

The research approach that I chose had to acknowledge my ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. All of these predisposed me to following a qualitative approach.

7.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Denzin and Lincoln (2018:10) describe qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible." This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attach to them.

According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), a study is qualitative in nature if it aims to explore the inner experiences of the participants and how meanings are formed and transformed. Qualitative studies follow a comprehensive and holistic approach to studying a phenomenon.

The trustworthiness of qualitative research is often under scrutiny. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), four criteria, namely credibility, transferability, reliability, and confirmability, are relevant in this regard.

Credibility indicates the extent to which the researcher and other interested parties believe in the research and trust the research results. I utilised different research techniques, including focus groups and interviews to accumulate information about the phenomenon that was researched. I also made use of inductive and deductive coding to create understanding, through the eyes of the participants, about the studied phenomena. IQA operationalises a particular protocol for interpreting the results and reaching conclusions. These measures minimised the possibility of researcher bias and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Transferability alludes to enabling other researchers to duplicate the research in a similar environment. IQA requires the researcher to generate specific 'products' along each step of the research process. This ensures the creation of an audit trail that contributes to the transparency of the research process, making it easier to be replicated by other researchers. This will increase the trustworthiness of the research.

Reliability refers to the extent to which the research could be repeated, and be of value in a similar context and reach similar conclusions. Although each HEI has its own unique character, the findings of this study should inform student counselling practices at other HEIs in South Africa. All the HEIs in South Africa – and thus student counselling services – are facing challenges with promoting student success in a transforming society. I followed a consistent process to collect the data, to analyse it and to interpret the results. Therefore, the results of the study should be applicable and valuable in the broader South African HE context.

When the credibility, transferability, and reliability of data are high, **confirmability** will be high as well. Confirmability indicates the extent to which an outsider can confirm data and findings. Therefore, confirmability also indicates the neutrality of data.

In following a qualitative research process, I embraced a stance where social reality was viewed as consisting of multiple truths. Denzin and Lincoln (2018:4) refer to the "qualitative-researcher-as-bricoleur" that pieces different participants' understanding of reality together. Qualitative research allowed me to discover new information in a specific context by analysing the participants' perspectives of the phenomenon (Morgan, 2014). Therefore, by consulting different role-players in the Stellenbosch University system, I could piece their understandings of reality together to answer the research questions

7.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my quest to explore the phenomenon of the transformation of student counselling services, I had to seek answers to the following research question:

> *How could the Centre for Student Counselling and Development at Stellenbosch University transform to contribute optimally to student success?*

This comprehensive research question was broken down into the following sub-questions:

> *How do different role-players in the transforming SU community conceptualise the role of the CSCD in student success?*
>
> *What are the different role-players' suggestions in terms of the role of the CSCD in student success?*
>
> *How can the centre implement the suggestions?*

I selected interactive qualitative analysis (IQA) as an appropriate research design to answer the research question.

7.6 RESEARCH DESIGN: INTERACTIVE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

A research design serves as a blueprint or plan that informs the actions the researcher will take to answer the research question and sub-questions (Durrheim, 2006). I approached the research using IQA to guide the research process.

I worked from a perspective that presupposed that the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data would be approached from a systems point of view (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). IQA values research design as a recursive process. Northcutt and McCoy (2004:61) describe the researcher's role in the recursive design process as "a systematic internal dialogue, moving around the hermeneutical circle until he or she is satisfied with the answers to the questions that have been raised". Figure 7.1 demonstrates the recursive process.

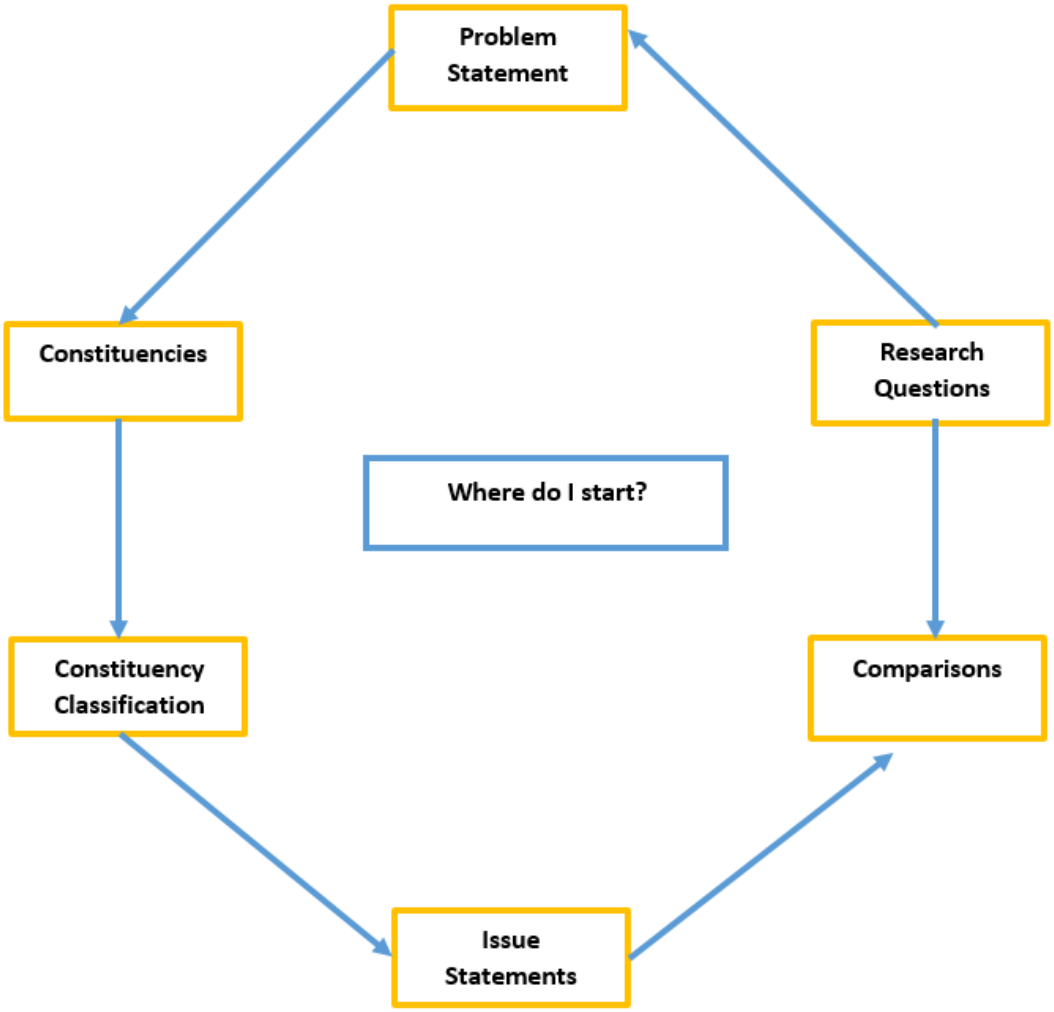


Figure 7.1: IQA Research design as a recursive process

Source: Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:57

During the design stage of the research, I had to provide for such a recursive process. My planning had to include the possibility of working through several of these research cycles until I was satisfied that I could answer the following questions as required by IQA:

- What are the components of the phenomenon?
- How do the components relate to one another in a social system?
- How do the systems compare, in terms of components, intra-systemic relationships and inter-systemic relationships? (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

7.6.1. Interactive qualitative analysis (IQA)

The developers of IQA, Norvell Northcutt and Danny McCoy, explain this research design as "grounded in systems theory whose primary purpose is to represent the meaning of a phenomenon in terms of elements (affinities) and the relationships among them" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:xxi).

Researchers that use IQA as research design should identify a social system to be studied; thereafter, they should identify the sub-systems of that social system, and lastly, they identify the interpretation of the researched phenomenon by the sub-systems. Northcutt and McCoy (2004:41) describe the purpose of IQA as follows:

> … to describe both the elements and the relationships of social systems in such a way as to delineate the patterns of influence among the elements. The product of an IQA study is a visual representation of a phenomenon prepared according to rigorous and replicable rules for the purpose of achieving complexity, simplicity, comprehensiveness and interpretability.

My motivation for choosing IQA for this research study was primarily grounded in my worldview where phenomena are the result of complex interactions between systems and sub-systems (see also 7.1 and 7.3). I viewed the transformation of the CSCD as interrelated to transformation in society, HEIs, and Stellenbosch University. The knowledge and power of entities in the system and sub-systems were acknowledged in selecting the research participants who contributed to the construction of better understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Further, the transformation of a work environment – in this case the CSCD – is guided by principles of organisational change (see 6.3). Changes in society necessitate changes in an organisation. Burke (2018:2) refers to "factors and forces" in the external environment that cause changes in organisations. Organisational development is a reaction to the external factors and forces and seeks creative transformation to ensure the future relevance of an organisation. Northcutt and McCoy (2004:xxvi) indicate that IQA is an appropriate design for researchers who are "interested in planning and organisational development". This substantiates my decision to utilise it to gain insight into the development of the CSCD as a transforming organisation.

Another important consideration in my choice of IQA relates to researcher bias. I am a staff member of the CSCD and part of the management team. Therefore, I needed to make conscious efforts to reduce researcher bias as far as possible. IQA departs from the premise that the observer and the observed are dependent on each other. Therefore, supporters of IQA challenge the general practice of qualitative researchers who presume that they exclusively are qualified to interpret data. Bargate (2014:12) summarises this stance on the interpretation of data as "constituents' voices are privileged over that of the researcher".

IQA is a rigorous process in which prescribed procedures for the collection and interpretation of the data are followed in a specific order. This serves to reduce and prevent researcher bias by allowing the researcher to perform the role of a facilitator/co-facilitator while the research participants are partly responsible for interpreting the data. Northcutt and McCoy's (2004:93) description of the

researcher/facilitator as the 'process guide' implies a more objective stance because the participants interact and play an active role in the process of data analysis and formulation of new meanings.

7.6.2. The research phenomenon

The phenomenon that was researched is complex. I focussed on the **transformation of a student counselling centre** – more specifically the CSCD at Stellenbosch University. The transformation process was qualified by the role that such a Centre should play in **student success**. The phenomenon existed in Stellenbosch University as a transforming HEI in a transforming national HE system. I considered it important to identify the mandate of the CSCD in the larger Stellenbosch University, because that could assist me in understanding its relationships with other entities in the transforming university environment.

Although no official mandate for CSCD is proclaimed by Stellenbosch University, the Centre described its functions as follows:

- Present developmental and counselling programmes that would lead to optimising the existing potential of students and empower them to confront contemporary challenges and problems successfully on their own.
- Provide information and guidance regarding effective career development, choices, and entrance to such a career.
- Provide confidential psychotherapeutic services.
- Provide an office for students with special learning needs.
- Make a confidential 24-hour crisis service available.
- Provide consultation services to university committees and academic personnel.
- Initiate, conduct and publish research related to the main functions of the centre. (Services and Functions, n.d.)

IQA researchers aim to study a research phenomenon through the eyes of research participants who are knowledgeable of the phenomenon and/or who have power over the phenomenon. Therefore, I had to select research participants who would meet certain criteria to answer specific questions about the phenomenon.

7.6.3. Research participants

IQA values the experiences of people according to their distance from the phenomenon and their power over the phenomenon. I had to identify groups of people who were familiar with the CSCD and its role in student success to generate a conceptual understanding of how it could transform as a sub-system of the transforming university. It was important to identify groups of people from sub-systems who had different experiences with the phenomenon to generate a rich variety of information

that could contribute to answering the research question and sub-questions meaningfully way. IQA researchers refer to the groups of research participants as constituencies (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

I identified the following possible constituencies that could be included in the research:

- Staff of the CSCD
- Support staff of Stellenbosch University who are not staff members of the CSCD
- Students of Stellenbosch University (both CSCD clients and non-clients)
- Academic staff situated in the various faculties of Stellenbosch University
- Management concerned with student support services.

After identifying the possible constituencies, I had to consider the issues of power and distance[1] regarding the relationship of each constituency with the phenomenon. Table 7.1 summarises these relationships.

Table 7.1: The relationships of the constituencies with the research phenomenon

Constituency	Distance from phenomenon	Power over phenomenon
Staff of CSCD	closest to the **transformation** of the CSCD close to **student success**	high level of power to effect change in CSCD
Other support staff	close to the **transformation of SU**, but not within the CSCD specifically close to **student success**	almost no power to effect change in the CSCD
Students (including clients of CSCD)	close to **transformation** of SU and the CSCD (current and potential clients) closest to **student success**	almost no power to effect change in the CSCD

[1] Power and distance help the researcher to get a sense of the added value of a constituency's construction of reality (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

Academic staff (including lecturers, support staff and senior management)	close to **transformation** of SU, although not specifically the transformation of CSCD close to **student success**	almost no power to effect change in the CSCD
Management concerned with student support services	close to **transformation** of SU including the transformation of CSCD close to **student success**	high level of power to effect change in CSCD

After a recursive process of considering the different constituencies and their relationships with the phenomenon, I decided to include the following three constituencies in the research design to generate information that could help with answering the research question and sub-questions:

- Staff of the CSCD at Stellenbosch University (including managers).
- Support and academic staff of Stellenbosch University who are not staff of the CSCD (including managers).
- Students of Stellenbosch University.

Sampling in the different constituencies will be discussed as part of the IQA research protocol.

7.7 IQA RESEARCH FLOW

The trustworthiness of qualitative research often comes under scrutiny. One of the important tools used to promote quality is the establishment of a research audit trail. Carcary (2009:15) refers to the audit trail as “an account of all research decisions and activities throughout the study” that is documented by the researcher. This is supported by Koch’s claim that creating a trail of all the decisions that the researcher makes during the research process improves the rigour of the research (Koch, 2006). Northcutt and McCoy (2004:44) posit that in IQA, the researcher/investigator “leaves tracks at the moment the very first questions enter their minds”. These tracks are continued through a set of protocols for data collection and analysis that forms part of the research audit trail. This increases the trustworthiness of the research findings.

Once the research question and sub-questions regarding the phenomenon being studied have been formulated and the constituencies involved with the phenomenon have been identified, data collection and analysis protocols direct the IQA research process (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The typical flow of an IQA research project is illustrated in Figure 7.2.

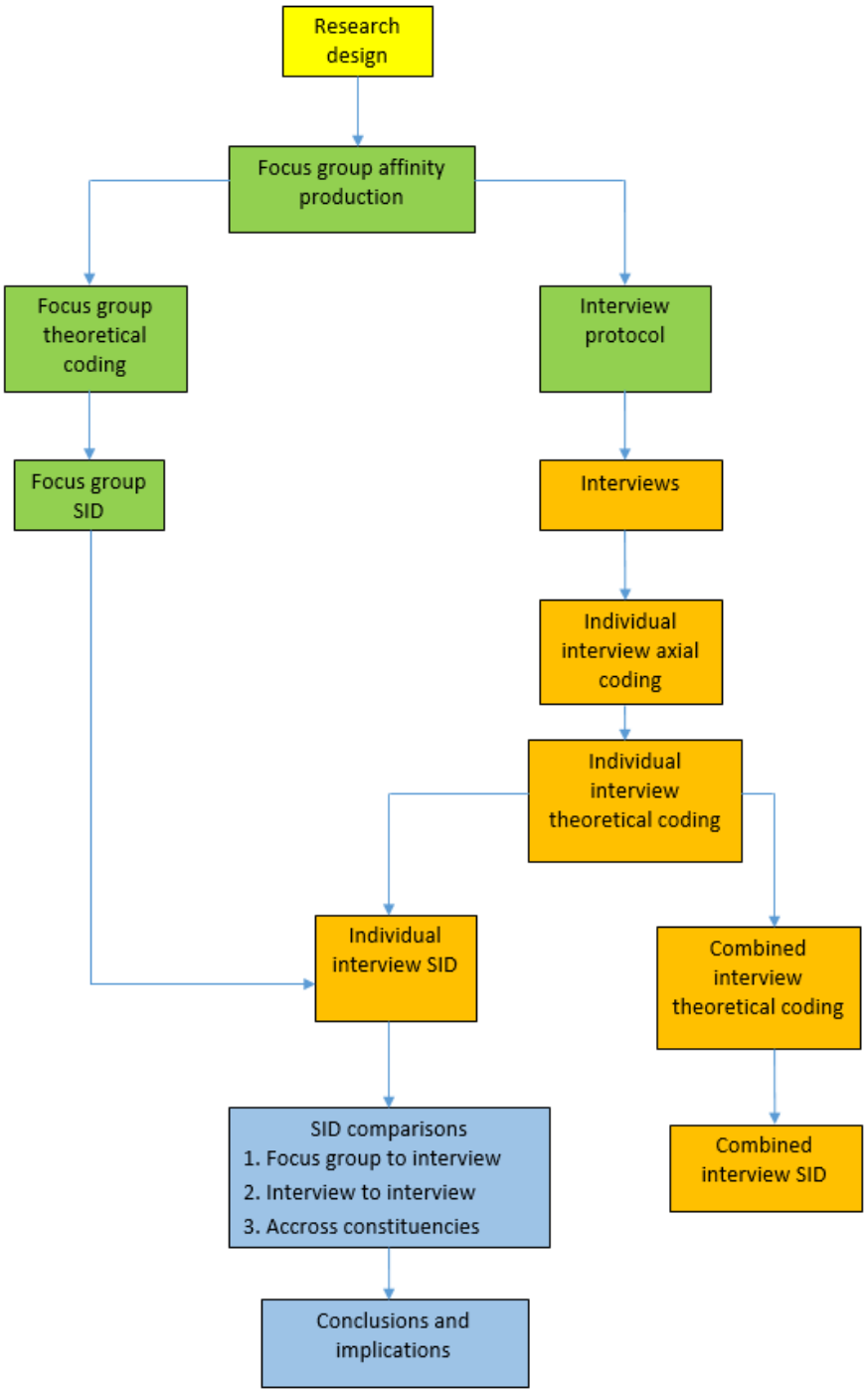


Figure 7.2: IQA research flow

Source: Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:45

Four distinct phases can be identified in the IQA research flow, namely:

- research design (identification of research problem and formulation of research questions);
- focus group interviews;
- interviews; and
- report (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:44).

The research design phase was discussed in Chapter 1, as well as in previous sections of this chapter. A discussion of the following two phases, namely focus group interviews and individual interviews, follows in the remainder of this chapter.

7.7.1. Focus group interviews

In IQA studies, focus groups are used to generate an initial set of information about the phenomenon that is researched. A focus group is a selection of individuals in a specific constituency who "share some common experience, work or live within a common structure, or have a similar background" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:47). The value of focus group interviews is that the interaction between the members facilitates a constructive process of making meaning. I conducted focus group interviews with the members of the different constituencies. The members of each focus group represented a specific constituency.

I shall discuss the flow of the focus group process by referring to the green section of Figure 7.2 (more comprehensively displayed in Figure 7.2a).

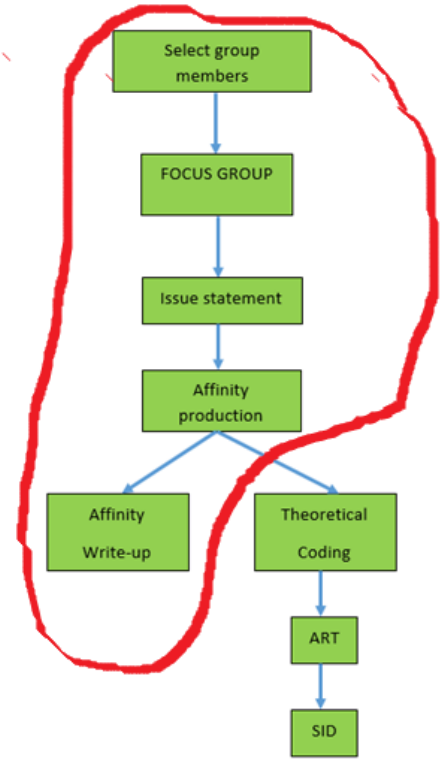


Figure 7.2a: The flow of the focus group process

7.7.1.1. Selection of group members

Members from each one of the three selected constituencies were invited to participate in the focus group sessions.

a. Constituency 1: Staff of the CSCD

An email constituting a letter of invitation (Addendum 4) was sent to each one of the staff members[2] (psychologists, a psychometrist and social workers) of the CSCD to invite them to join a focus group session. The staff members work with diaries in which bookings for sessions are made well in advance. Therefore, it was quite a challenge to plan a single focus group session that would represent members of all areas of specialisation. To compensate for this, I conducted two focus group discussions for this constituency.

The first focus group consisted of four members with the following professional registrations and areas of specialisation:

- Three clinical psychologists who specialised in psychotherapy for individuals and groups
- A counselling psychologist who specialised in career development.

The second focus group consisted of five members with the following areas of specialisation:

- A clinical psychologist who specialised in psychotherapy
- A counselling psychologist who specialised in psychotherapy and the development of general life skills
- Two educational psychologists who specialised in career and academic counselling
- A social worker who specialised in supporting students with disabilities.

Although the two focus groups were rather small, all the members participated actively in the whole session. Clinical psychologists who belonged to the Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS) dominated the first focus group in numbers. The second focus group consisted of a variety of professionals who represented all the different areas of specialisation at the CSCD. Rich data that contributed significantly to an understanding of the transformation of the Centre to promote student success were generated.

b. Constituency 2: Stellenbosch University staff: Not CSCD

I first consulted with a senior staff member at the Centre for Teaching and Learning at SU who was involved in coordinating student support staff in faculties and who did research on student success. The staff member helped me to identify participants who could provide perspectives that would be of significant value in answering the research question. An email invitation was sent to each one of the

[2] Excluding administrative staff

staff members identified (Addendum 4). Six people volunteered to join the focus group discussion. The group consisted of two full-time lecturers, three academic coordinators for first-year students in two different faculties as well as a senior advisor situated in a support centre.

c. Constituency 3: Registered students of Stellenbosch University

An open invitation was extended to undergraduate and postgraduate students who attended the Sixth Stellenbosch University Leaders Conference (12-13 September 2014) to join in focus group and individual discussions related to the research topic. The purpose of the conference was to equip new student leaders with a better understanding of the vision of the University (Stellenbosch, 2013b:16). My assumption was that these students would have knowledge about SU as a transforming university as well as elements of student success. Fourteen students indicated their interest. An email invitation was sent to all these students (Addendum 4). Five students accepted the invitation to join the focus group.

The selection of participants for each constituency was purposive. Participants for the focus groups were selected based on "certain characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study" (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79). I was guided by Northcutt and McCoy's guidelines for the selection of group members, namely that they:

- were information rich, possessing knowledge of and experience with student counselling and student success;
- were able to reflect on the question and to transfer those thoughts into words;
- had the time and inclination to participate in the study;
- were homogeneous with respect to important dimensions of distance and power; and
- could respect and practise group dynamics – they were neither overpowering nor too timid to speak (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:87).

The participants were informed about confidentiality and the protection of their identity, their freedom of expression without penalty, and their right to withdraw from participation at any stage of the process without repercussions for them. They were also alerted to the recording of the group sessions and the measures taken for safekeeping of the recordings and transcriptions. All the participants signed informed consent forms (Addendum 3) before the focus group discussions commenced. I had to put measures in place to prevent or at least minimise the possibility of researcher's bias, because I was a staff member of the CSCD. Thus, strictly speaking, I was a member of one of the constituencies that were included in the study. Therefore, all the focus group sessions were conducted by an external facilitator who had been trained in the IQA process. As the researcher, I took on the role of observer.

7.7.1.2. Issue statement and brainstorming

At the beginning of each focus group discussion, I provided a brief overview of the research problem, the research question and sub-questions. Thereafter, the facilitator explained the IQA process to the group. Two images related to the research problem were projected (Addendum 5) to "prime the group participants' thoughts" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:88) about the phenomenon under investigation. The groups were encouraged to share their own ideas about the concept "university of the future" (Bokor, 2012). Initially the university as an institution that should foster student success was discussed. Examples of prompts that the facilitator used were: "Think about what happens at SU currently"; "What is student success?"; "What makes students successful?"; and "Think out of the box: If you could change something at SU that can contribute to increased student success, what would it be?"

After some free discussion, the facilitator presented an issue statement and requested the group members to think about it silently for a few minutes. During this silent brainstorming period, each participant was encouraged to write on separate index cards words or phrases that represented his/her perspectives on the issue statement. Table 7.2 serves as a summary of the issue statements that were provided to each focus group.

Table 7.2: Summary of issue statements

CONSTITUENCY	ISSUE STATEMENT
Staff of the CSCD	Think about the transformation of SU. What should the future CSCD at the transforming university look like?
Stellenbosch University Staff: Not CSCD	What do you think a CSCD at a future SU should be like or should do to support student success?
Students	Think about what you need to be successful. What do you think a CSCD at a future SU should be like or should do to support student success?

7.7.1.3. Affinity analysis

The silent brainstorming about the issue statements was followed by the process of 'affinity analysis'. All the participants randomly pasted their index cards, on which they had written their perspectives in the form of key words, on a white display board.

Both inductive and deductive coding were performed during this stage. Thomas (2006:237) argues that inductive coding "allow(s) research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant

themes inherent in raw data". The group members did inductive coding when they grouped the index cards based on similarity in meaning. Each group of cards was referred to as an affinity. Once the group members had finalised their organisation of the cards into groups, the facilitator guided the focus groups in refining the affinities by means of reorganising and further clarification.

The participants were then requested to consider a shared and overall meaning for all the index cards in an affinity group by attributing a name to it. The refinement and naming of the affinities formed part of a deductive coding process (Gilgun, 2011; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). (See Addendum 6 for an example of index cards that were organised in affinities.) After naming the affinities, members of the focus groups collaborated on writing a descriptive paragraph for each affinity. The participants created descriptions for each affinity that "were grounded in their own reality" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:100).

For this study, the main purpose of the focus groups was to generate an interview protocol for the individual interviews that followed. The naming and describing of the different affinities served as the interview protocol.

7.7.2. Individual interviews

Interviews with different individuals from the constituencies formed part of the third phase of IQA. The orange section of Figure 7.2 represented the interview process. Figure 7.2b provides a more comprehensive representation of the interview process.

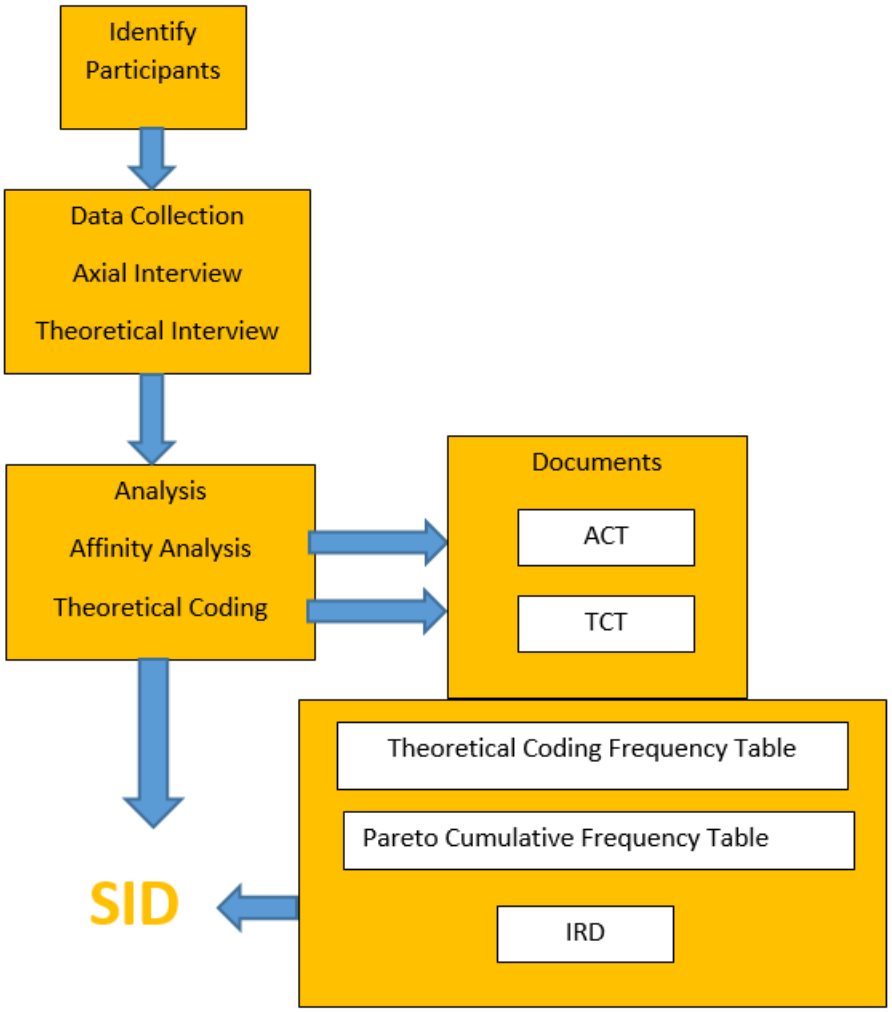


Figure 7.2b: Individual interview process

7.7.2.1. Selection of participants

The focus groups of the different constituencies designed the interview protocols for the semi-structured interviews. Being a member of the focus group was not a prerequisite for participating in an individual interview. I made this decision based on Turner's (2007) warning that, should only focus group members participate in the individual interviews, there was a risk that the dominant discourse of the focus group could determine the content of the individual interviews. Conducting individual interviews with participants who did not necessarily participate in a focus group, allowed me to cast my net wider to get more in-depth information about the researched phenomenon.

I used convenient and purposive sampling to choose specific individual participants. Participants of the focus groups were invited for individual interviews. Those who deemed it convenient were interviewed. Purposive sampling allowed me to enhance the understanding of the transformation of the CSCD by selecting individuals who were information rich and who could provide comprehensive insight to answer the research question and sub-questions appropriately (Devers & Frankel, 2000).

All the individual participants were selected based on their specific involvement with the phenomenon under study (distance from the phenomenon) as well as their power over the phenomenon.

7.7.2.2. Data collection

I conducted the individual interviews with four participants from each of the three constituencies. I did not deem it necessary to use a facilitator to do the interviews as was the case with the focus groups. The reason for having a facilitator for the focus groups was to create an interview protocol that would minimise my own influence and bias. Each interview began with an explanation of the IQA process; more specifically, where the individual interview fit into the whole process. The phenomenon under study was introduced. The participants were asked to provide their own understanding of the different affinities with reference to the transformation of the CSCD. For IQA, this is the open-ended axial interview component, of which the main purpose is to provide rich descriptions of the affinities from the perspectives of individual participants (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:200).

Following this, during the second part of the interview, the participants were requested to identify and describe the relationships between the different affinities. This served as the structural theoretical component of the interview (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:200). The participants could use one of the three options to identify a relationship, as indicated in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Possible relationships between the affinities A and B

A → B	A influences B
A ← B	B influences A
A <> B	No relationship

Each participant's identification of a relationship between two affinities was recorded on an affinities relationship table (ART) (see Addendum 7 for an example of an ART). Participants were requested to provide examples of such relationships, and they were encouraged to formulate these examples in "if … then" sentences. The examples were recorded in the second column of the individual ARTs.

The purposes of the individual interviews were to:

- collect data from members of each constituency for axial coding;
- collect data from members of each constituency for theoretical coding;
- help the researcher code the effect and influences of affinities to create a systems influence diagram (SID) (mind map) for each constituency; and

- provide data representing the group's collective SID. (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:420)

After collecting data by means of interviews, the next step was to code and analyse the data.

7.7.2.3. Interview analysis

With the permission of the interviewees, all the individual interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions (Addendum 8) served as the master documents to be used for the coding process[3]. A standard analytical protocol (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:240) that addressed the issues of trustworthiness and credibility was followed. Each stage of the analytical process was documented to create an audit trail.

a. Affinity Analysis

The individual interview data of all three constituencies had to be coded axially. I worked through every individual's interview transcript, identified themes or discourses that described the meanings of each affinity from the participant's perspective and coded it in an axial coding table (ACT) (Addendum 9). Next, I combined the individual axial coding tables to form one combined ACT for each constituency. I used the coding of the combined ACTs to describe the affinities of the different constituencies (see 8.3.2.1, 8.3.3.1, and 8.3.4.1). Once I had completed the combined ACTs of each constituency, I continued with theoretical coding of each constituency's data.

b. Theoretical Coding

Theoretical coding aims to describe each individual's understanding of the relationships between the different affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:251). The relationships between the different affinities for each constituency, as identified by each individual participant, were recorded in an ART. A combined ART for each constituency was drafted to capture the participants' description of a possible relationship between affinities in one table. The theoretically coded information was used to describe the relationships between affinities (see 8.3.2.2, 8.3.3.2 and 8.3.4.2). IQA analyses data to provide a system view of the phenomenon that is studied. A mind map or SID is the final outcome of the interview analysis process.

c. The SID: a mind map of the system

A theoretical code frequency table captures the frequencies of the different relationships between affinities as they were identified by the individual participants of each constituency. Table 7.4 is the theoretical code frequency table of the constituency **Stellenbosch University Staff: Not CSCD.** Each

[3] I discussed the processes of coding and analysis referring to the data and documents of the **Stellenbosch University staff: Not CSCD** constituency. The coding and analysis of the data of the other constituencies are available on request.

individual interview theoretical code table was examined, and the frequency of each relationship was tallied in the table below[4].

Table 7.4: Theoretical Code Frequency Table

Affinity Name
1. Getting the message across
2. Integration and Alignment
3. Operational Model
4. Psychotherapeutic services
5. Safe spaces
6. Skill development services
7. Target group

Combined Interview

Theoretical Code

Frequency Table

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	3	2 → 4	1	3 → 7	1
1 ← 2	1	2 ← 4	2	3 ← 7	3
1 → 3	0	2 → 5	4	4 → 5	0
1 ← 3	4	2 ← 5	0	4 ← 5	2
1 → 4	1	2 → 6	3	4 → 6	0
1 ← 4	2	2 ← 6	1	4 ← 6	0
1 → 5	4	2 → 7	2	4 → 7	0
1 ← 5	0	2 ← 7	2	4 ← 7	4
1 → 6	3	3 → 4	4	5 → 6	1
1 ← 6	0	3 ← 4	0	5 ← 6	0
1 → 7	2	3 → 5	4	5 → 7	2
1 ← 7	2	3 ← 5	0	5 ← 7	2
2 → 3	4	3 → 6	4	6 → 7	0
2 ← 3	0	3 ← 6	0	6 ← 7	4

[4] Ambiguous relationships (e.g. 1 <> 2) were omitted.

A total of 42 relationships between 7 affinities existed. The total frequency of votes for these relationships was 72.

Before I could draw the SIDs for the different constituencies, the last two steps were to apply a Pareto protocol and a power analysis. The Pareto principle determines that a minority of the relationships will account for a majority variance in the system. IQA operationalises the Pareto principle for the development of a Pareto cumulative frequency chart (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:157). Table 7.5 is the Pareto cumulative frequency chart of the **Stellenbosch University staff: not CSCD** constituency.

Table 7.5: Pareto Cumulative Frequency Chart

A	B	C	D	E	F
Affinity Pair Relationship	**Frequency Sorted (Descending)**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percentage (Relation)**	**Cumulative Percentage (Frequency)**	**Power**
1 ← 3	4	4	2,4	5,6	3,2
1 → 5	4	8	4,8	11,1	6,3
2 → 3	4	12	7,1	16,7	9,5
2 → 5	4	16	9,5	22,2	12,7
3 → 4	4	20	11,9	27,8	15,9
3 → 5	4	24	14,3	33,3	19,0
3 → 6	4	28	16,7	38,9	22,2
4 ← 7	4	32	19,0	44,4	25,4
6 ← 7	4	36	21,4	50,0	28,6
1 → 2	3	39	23,8	54,2	30,4
1 → 6	3	42	26,2	58,3	32,1
2 → 6	3	45	28,6	62,5	33,9
3 ← 7	3	48	31,0	66,7	35,7
1 ← 4	2	50	33,3	69,4	36,1
1 → 7	2	52	35,7	72,2	36,5

1 ← 7	2	54	38,1	75,0	36,9
2 ← 4	2	56	40,5	77,8	37,3
2 → 7	2	58	42,9	80,6	37,7
2 ← 7	2	60	45,2	83,3	38,1
4 ← 5	2	62	47,6	86,1	38,5
5 → 7	2	64	50,0	88,9	38,9
5 ←7	2	66	52,4	91,7	39,3
1 ← 2	1	67	54,8	93,1	38,3
1 → 4	1	68	57,1	94,4	37,3
2 ← 4	1	69	59,5	95,8	36,3
2 ← 6	1	70	61,9	97,2	35,3
3 → 7	1	71	64,3	98,6	34,3
5 → 6	1	72	66,7	100,0	33,3
1 → 3	0	72	69,0	100,0	31,0
1 ← 5	0	72	71,4	100,0	28,6
1 ← 6	0	72	73,8	100,0	26,2
2 ← 3	0	72	76,2	100,0	23,8
2 ← 5	0	72	78,6	100,0	21,4
3 ← 4	0	72	81,0	100,0	19,0
3 ← 5	0	72	83,3	100,0	16,7
3 ← 6	0	72	85,7	100,0	14,3
4 → 5	0	72	88,1	100,0	11,9
4 → 6	0	72	90,5	100,0	9,5
4 ← 6	0	72	92,9	100,0	7,1
4 → 7	0	72	95,2	100,0	4,8
5 ← 6	0	72	97,6	100,0	2,4

6 → 7	0	72	100,0	100,0	0,0
Total Frequency	**72**		Equals 100%	Equals 100%	Power = E-D

A Pareto cumulative frequency chart provides consensus in terms of which affinity relationships identified by the participants and captured in the theoretical code frequency table should be included when a SID for a system is developed.

The data of Table 7.4 were copied into the first two columns (A and B) of Table 7.5. Thereafter, the data in these two columns were sorted in descending order of the frequencies of the relationships. A cumulative frequency was calculated for each relationship (column C).

Column D captured the cumulative percentage based on the number of possible affinity relationships, which was 42. Each relationship represents approximately 2,4% (1/42) of the total possible number of relationships. Northcutt and McCoy (2004:157) state that the cumulative percentages are used to:

- determine the optimal number of relationships to comprise the composite system; and
- resolve ambiguous relationships[5].

The fifth column, column E, captured the cumulative percentage based on the number of votes cast per affinity relationship. The data entered in the first row were derived from the number of votes cast for the relationship (1 ← 3) divided by the total frequency for the relationship and thereafter converted into a percentage, as follows:

$$4 \div 72 \times 100 = 5{,}6\%$$

The percentage calculated for each row was added to the percentage of the previous row. The data in the last column, Power[6], indicated the difference between Cumulative Percentage (Frequency) and Cumulative Percentage (Relation).

I used the last two columns of the table, namely Cumulative Percentage (Frequency) and Power, to determine which relationships should be included in the IRD[7]. Deciding on which relationships should be included in the IRD initiates a process of rationalising the system (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:170). Northcutt and McCoy (2004:160) refer to the MinMax criteria for deciding on the relationships that should be considered in the rest of the process towards designing a SID for a

[5] Relationships that attract equal numbers of votes in both directions.

[6] The degree of optimisation of the system

[7] Interrelationship diagram

constituency. The minimum relationships that accounted for the maximum variation of the system had to be selected.

Referring to Figure 7.3, I could determine that 80% of the total variance of the system was accounted for by the first 18 relationships. Thus, 42% of the relationships were responsible for 80% of the total variance of the system.

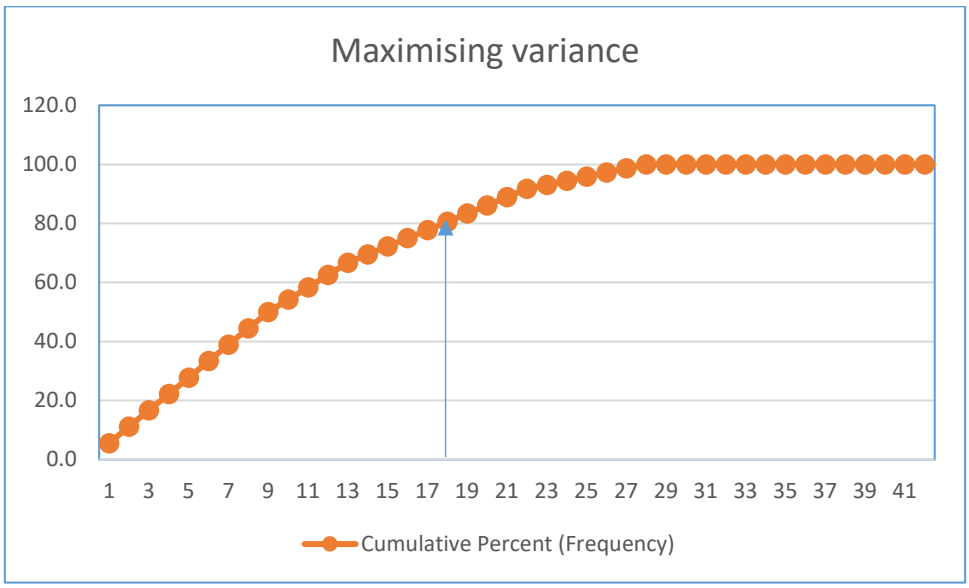


Figure 7.3: Maximising variance: frequency

Figure 7.4 illustrates the power analysis of the system. The power of the system is an index of the difference between the Cumulative Percentage (Frequency) and the Cumulative Percentage (Relation) (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:160). According to Figure 7.4, the power reaches a maximum at the 22nd relationship.

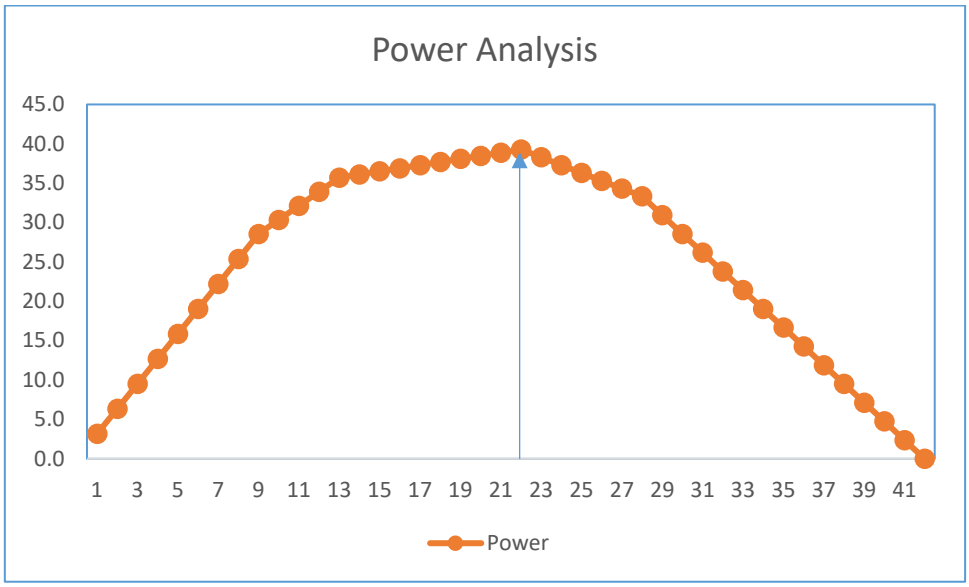


Figure 7.4: Power analysis of system

Both Figures 7.3 and 7.4 confirm Pareto's principle that only a minority of the total relationships in a system determine the majority of the variance in the system. This also leads to the assumption that the minority of the total relationships will account for maximum power in the system. According to Figure 7.3, the 18th relationship should be the cut-off point. Relationships 19, 20, 21 and 22 received the same number of votes, namely 2. Therefore, the first 22 relationships, as confirmed by Figure 7.4, were responsible for maximum power in the system. Therefore, I made a preliminary decision to include the first 22 affinity relationships in the IRD. These 22 relationships and their frequencies (columns A and B of Table 7.5) were copied into Table 7.6. I sorted the data in Table 7.6 in ascending order of the relationships. All the conflicting relationship pairs were identified and those with the highest frequency were selected for the IRD. If the frequencies for a pair were equal, that pair was not selected for the IRD. At that stage of the rationalisation process, six affinity pairs were omitted, and 16 pairs were identified for inclusion in the IRD (Table 7.7).

Table 7.6: Identification of conflicting relationships

A	B	C	D
Affinity Pair Relationships	**Frequency**	**Conflict?**	**Select for IRD**
1 → 2	3		**X**
1 ← 3	4		**X**
1 ← 4	2		**X**
1 → 5	4		**X**
1 → 6	3		**X**
1 ← 7	2	**?**	
1 → 7	2	**?**	
2 → 3	4		**X**
2 ← 4	2		**X**
2 → 5	4		**X**
2 → 6	3		**X**

2 → 7	2	**?**	
2 ← 7	2	**?**	
3 → 4	4		**X**
3 → 5	4		**X**
3 → 6	4		**X**
3 ← 7	3		**X**
4 ← 5	2		**X**
4 ← 7	4		**X**
5 → 7	2	**?**	
5 ← 7	2	**?**	
6 ← 7	4		**X**

Table 7.7a Affinity Tabular IRD

Affinity Name
1. Getting the message across
2. Integration and Alignment
3. Operational Model
4. Psycho-therapeutic services
5. Safe spaces
6. Skills development services
7. Target group

Tabular IRD										
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**OUT**	**IN**	**Δ**
1		↑	←	←	↑	↑		3	2	1
2	←		↑	←	↑	↑		3	2	1
3	↑	←		↑	↑	↑	←	4	2	2
4	↑	↑	←		←		←	2	3	-1
5	←	←	←	↑				1	3	-2
6	←	←	←				←	0	4	-4
7			↑	↑		↑		3	0	3

The value of delta (Δ) indicated the position of an affinity in the system. Positive Δs were positioned as drivers, while negative Δs were positioned as outcomes (Table 7.7a). In Table 7.7b, the data were sorted in descending order of Δ.

Table 7.7b Affinity Tabular IRD

Descending order of Δ										
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**OUT**	**IN**	**Δ**
7			↑	↑		↑		3	0	3
3	↑	←		↑	↑	↑	←	4	2	2
1		↑	←	←	↑	↑		3	2	1
2	←		↑	←	↑	↑		3	2	1
4	↑	↑	←		←		←	2	3	-1
5	←	←	←	↑				1	3	-2
6	←	←	←				←	0	4	-4

Affinities 7, 3, 1 and 2 were the drivers in the system, and 4, 5 and 6 acted as outcomes. Drivers with zero 'Ins' were identified as the primary drivers, and outcomes with zero 'Outs' served as primary outcomes. Table 7.8 indicates the tentative SID assignments in the **Stellenbosch University staff: Not CSCD** system.

Table 7.8 Tentative SID Assignments

Affinity		**Tentative SID Assignments**
7	Target group	Primary driver
3	Operational model	Secondary driver
1	Getting the message across	Secondary driver
2	Integration and alignment	Secondary driver
4	Psychotherapeutic services	Secondary outcome
5	Safe spaces	Secondary outcome
6	Skills development services	Primary outcome

The next step was to use the SID assignments to design a cluttered SID of the **Stellenbosch University Staff: Non CSCD** system (Figure 7.5). The affinities were arranged according to the tentative SID assignments (Table 7.8).

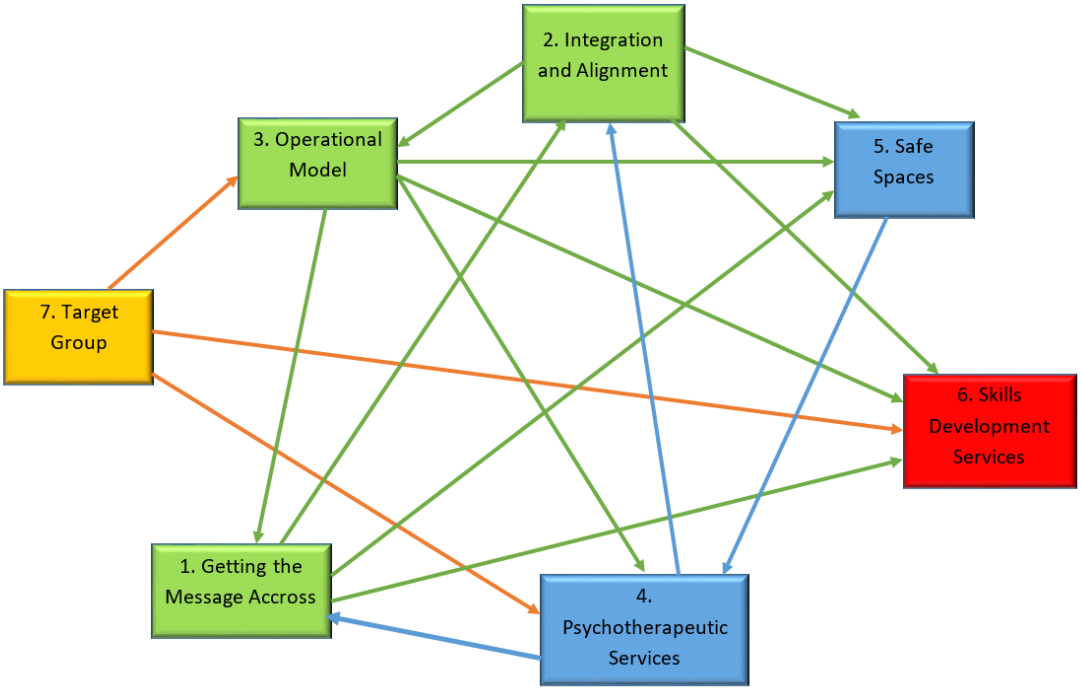


Figure 7.5: Cluttered SID

The cluttered SID is a mind map of the system where all the possible relationships between the affinities – those included in the IRD – are indicated. However, it is quite difficult to interpret due to the vast number of relationships displayed.

I applied the rules of IQA to remove all the redundant links[8]. The link between **Target Group** and **Skills Development Services** is an example of a redundant link, because the influence of the **Target Group** on **Skills Development Services** is mediated by **Operational Model**. After all the redundant links had been removed, an uncluttered SID (Figure 7.6) remained. I also rearranged the affinities for a clearer representation of the system.

[8] Redundant links are those between two affinities in which, even if it is removed, a path from the driver to the outcome can be achieved through an intermediary affinity (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:178).

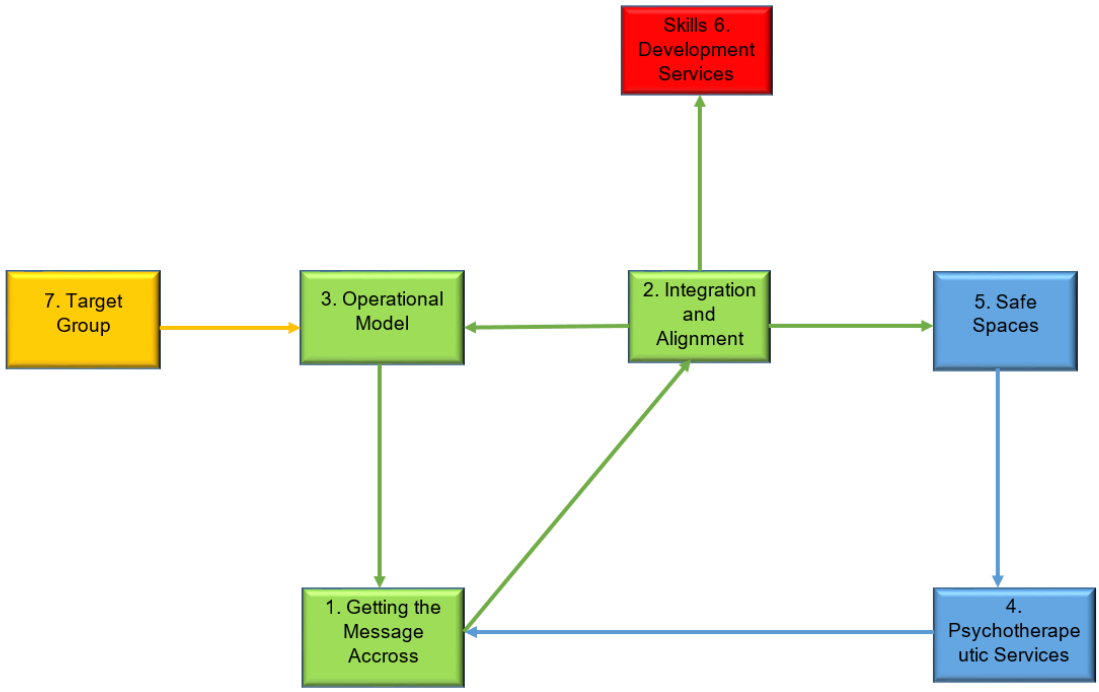


Figure 7.6: Uncluttered SID

I identified two feedback loops in the system. The feedback loops were

- **Operational Model → Getting the Message Across → Integration and Alignment → Operational Model**; and
- **Integration and Alignment → Safe Spaces → Psychotherapeutic Services → Getting the Message Across → Integration and Alignment.**

The meaning and the value of the feedback loops are discussed in Chapter 8.

After completing combined interview SIDs for each of the three constituencies, I could commence with the description and interpretation of the results.

7.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, the research methodology and design were discussed. A qualitative research approach was followed to answer the research question and its sub-questions. I chose IQA as a research design, because I deemed it fit to answer the research question within the paradigmatic framework as discussed. I elaborated on the IQA process in detail, due to its uniqueness and novelty as a qualitative research approach.

The results of this study will be discussed in the next chapter. I shall focus on the description of the meaning of the affinities of each constituency and describe the relationships between affinities identified by the participants.

CHAPTER 8
RESEARCH RESULTS

8.1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of the study was to explore the transformation of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University (SU). Different stakeholders (constituencies) were consulted for their viewpoints regarding such a transformation. I set the scene for the research with a review of the relevant literature in Chapters 2 to 5. The literature review provided me with a conceptual lens that I used to illuminate the findings of the thesis. It also supported me with the analyses and interpretations of the mind maps or system influence diagrams (SIDs) (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

In Chapter 6, I discussed the theoretical framework of the study. The positive psychology approach, systems theory, and organisational development informed my theoretical stance during the processes of interpreting the results and the formulation of findings. It also added to transparency and validity of the study, as I could inform the reader openly which lenses I used to interpret the results. Chapter 7 provides an extensive discussion of IQA as the research methodology. Owing to the complexity of the IQA process, in this chapter, I often refer back to Chapter 7 to shed light on the various sections when discussing the results.

In the rest of this chapter, the results of my investigation are discussed. Unlike other qualitative research methodologies, IQA postulates that participants can contribute to the analysis and interpretation of the data. Thus, this is not exclusively the role of the researcher (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:25, 44). The participants are mainly responsible for analysis and interpretation during the axial coding phase involving construction of axial coding tables (ACTs) and naming the different affinities, and the theoretical coding phase involving construction of theoretical coding tables (TCTs) of the research. The role of the researcher in terms of analysis and interpretation is more evident during the stage where the SIDs are constructed, compared, and interpreted. The researcher is also responsible for drawing conclusions and identifying the implications of the research.

Northcutt and McCoy (2004:302-303) suggest that a systematic approach should be followed when one writes about the IQA study and its results. Figure 8.1 serves as a diagrammatic explanation of Northcutt and McCoy's systematic approach towards the documentation of the study.

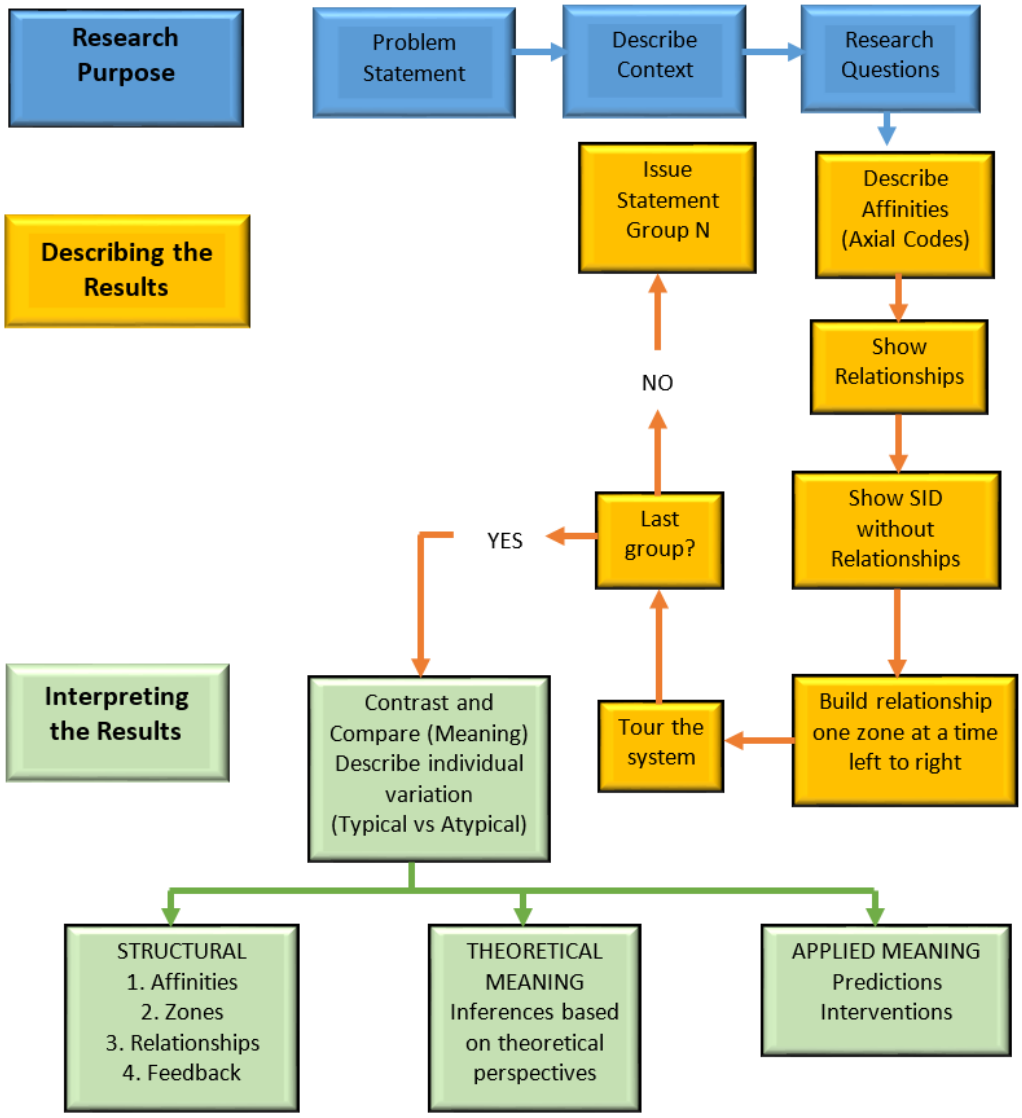


Figure 8.1: Documenting an IQA study

Source: Northcutt & McCoy, 2004.

The rest of this chapter will be guided by the process flow that is summarised in Figure 8.1. I shall begin with an explanation of the purpose of the research (8.2). Next, I shall describe the results (8.3) and lastly, I will do a structural analysis thereof.

8.2. RESEARCH PURPOSE

I collected the data to generate answers for the following research question:

> *How could the Centre for Student Counselling and Development at Stellenbosch University transform to contribute optimally to student success?*

The research question was broad and vague and could imply a variety of interpretations and answers. Therefore, I proposed the following sub-questions:

How do different role-players in the Stellenbosch University community conceptualise the transformation process in the CSCD?

What are the different role-players' suggestions regarding the transformation of the CSCD?

What are the practical implications of transformation for the CSCD?

The research context was limited to Stellenbosch University, more specifically, the CSCD. Different constituencies that interacted with the CSCD were identified for inclusion in the study. Based on power over and distance from the phenomenon that was studied, the constituencies involved were the staff of the CSCD, other SU staff who were involved in promoting student success (not CSCD staff), and students. Data were generated by means of focus group interviews and individual interviews with representatives of each constituency.

A description of the results and the interpretation thereof form part of the fourth phase of IQA research. I shall describe the results first and then provide an interpretation of the results.

8.3. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS

8.3.1. Process followed to arrive at results

Figure 8.2 represents the flow of the description of the results – the fourth phase of IQA. I shall elaborate on this in the rest of this chapter[1].

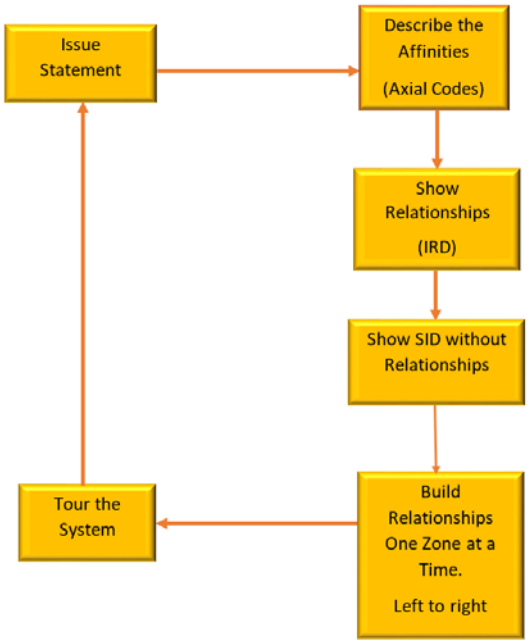


Figure 8.2: Phase 4: Describing the results
Source: Adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:45.

[1] The fourth phase also includes the section on 'Conclusions and Implications', which will follow in Chapter 9.

The fourth phase of IQA (7.7) follows after data have been collected from the focus group and individual interviews. The ultimate goal of the fourth phase is to answer the following three questions:

1. What are the affinities?
2. How are they related?
3. How do the systems compare?

The three questions were answered as follows: As recommended by Northcutt and McCoy (2004), I used the affinities identified by the focus groups as well as the perceived relationships between the affinities as a guide for the individual interviews. The information created during the theoretical coding of the focus group and individual interviews was used to explain how the affinities were related to one another. Comparisons of the different SIDs (focus group, individual interviews, and composite for the individual interviews) were used to answer the third question.

The data generated for this research were vast. There was the risk that I could err by either providing too much detail or not enough detail when documenting the results. Therefore, it was imperative to adhere to the rules proposed by Northcutt & McCoy (Figure 8.2) when I described the results.

This section describes the participants' constructions[2] of the role of the CSCD in a transforming university. The constructions answer the following two questions:

1. What are the elements of the system (the affinities)?
2. How are the elements configured in a system of perceived influence?

As far as possible, I present the data in the participants' own words. By doing so, I aim to demonstrate respect for the participants' interpretations of the research question and the answers they provided. It also strengthens the credibility of the data (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:300). I edited the quotations of participants for the sake of readability, but I refrained from changing the meaning of what they said.

Focus group interviews were conducted with the members of the three constituencies, followed by individual interviews with representatives from each of the constituencies.

The purpose of the **focus group interviews** was to identify and describe elements (affinities) that represented the group's notions when asked about the role of the CSCD in the success of students at Stellenbosch University. The groups also had to provide brief descriptions for each of the affinities. Thereafter, focus groups were asked to indicate the perceived relationships among the different affinities, and a SID was drawn up. The focus group SID provided a 'snapshot' of the group's

[2] In the discussions of the different affinities, the analysis and interpretation by the researcher is limited. According to IQA, it is mainly the participants' responsibility to discuss and answer questions 1 and 2. One of the reasons for this is to minimise the researcher's bias. The risk of imposing my own ideas as a staff member of the CSCD on the results was mitigated in this way.

understanding of the social system that was studied, namely the CSCD (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:200). The information generated by the focus groups informed the interview protocols for the individual interviews. Northcutt and McCoy (2004:238) justify the decision to apply the focus group SIDs as an interview protocol by explaining that IQA presumes that all the members of a constituency "share some common construction of the reality presented in the issue statement". The product of the focus group interview was a "shared or social construction of reality" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:238). The individual interviews provided descriptions of the different affinities that were more detailed. They also allowed in-depth discussion of the meaning of the different affinities and thus "add[ed] richness and depth description of the meaning of affinities that is not possible with the focus group alone" (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:48). Interviewees were expected to identify and discuss their own conceptions of the relationships between the comprehensively described affinities.

Table 8.1 lists the affinities that the focus groups identified by means of axial coding.

Table 8.1: Affinities per constituency

Staff: CSCD	Staff: Not CSCD	Students
Changing and augmenting practices	Getting the message across	Effective education
CSCD as a sub-system within a larger system	Integration and alignment	Inclusive environment
Optimisation of resources • Management • Staff • Technology	Operational model	Personal goals
Paradigm of CSCD	Psychotherapeutic services	Future university
	Safe spaces	
	Skill development services	
	Target group	

After careful consideration of the meanings attached to the different affinities that were identified by the constituencies, I realised that it was not possible to pair off the affinities based on similar meanings, as suggested by Northcutt and McCoy (2004:215). The absence of congruence in the

different constituencies' identification of elements of the CSCD system held significance in itself. Therefore, I decided to refrain from compiling a reconciled affinity list in which the affinities of all three constituencies were combined into one list (also see Groenewald, 2016:130; Robertson, 2015:128). Hence, it was not possible to create a common interview protocol, based on the three constituencies' focus group SIDs, for the individual interviews.

Individual interviews were conducted with representatives (participants) of the three constituencies. Turner (2007:8) warns against the risk of individual participants who were also part of the focus group being influenced by the focus group's understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, I refrained from conducting individual interviews with only focus group members. I invited participants of the focus groups as well as other individuals to participate in the individual interviews. The individual participants were selected purposively based on their contextual knowledge of the phenomenon and their power over the phenomenon.

The SIDs of the different focus groups were presented to the individual participants. I also presented the focus groups' descriptions of the different affinities. The individual participants were encouraged to elaborate further on each affinity as an element of the system. Next, each participant was asked to reflect on the relationships among the different affinities. The purpose of the individual interview was to provide detailed and thick descriptions of the understanding of a constituency of the phenomenon, the transformation of the CSCD.

In the next section, I describe the results for each constituency, beginning with the SID of the focus group. Next, I describe the different affinities, using the participants' own words. The descriptors P1, P2, P3 et cetera, referring to a specific participant, and the number of the line in the combined ACT to indicate the position of the quotation, are used. For example, '[P1:1]' translates to 'Participant 1: Line 1'.[3]

8.3.2. University staff: Not CSCD

The focus group consisting of university staff members, who were not staff of the CSCD, identified seven affinities for the CSCD system. Each one of the affinities and the focus group's description of it were presented to the individual participants.

[3] Some of the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans. I provide the English translations first, followed by the original Afrikaans quotes.

Table 8.2: Affinities[4] identified by the non-CSCD university staff group

Affinity
Getting the message across
Integration and alignment
Operational model
Psychotherapeutic services
Safe spaces
Skill development services
Target group

8.3.2.1. Description of affinities

The description of the different affinities begin with the description by the focus group and then the individual participants' understanding of it.

a. Getting the Message Across

Focus group description: *The category addresses both 'what the message should be' and 'how it should be conveyed'. It is not an operational statement (in other words, it does not indicate how the centre functions). The category is related to the operational model, integration and alignment, and the target group. This relation indicates that the message should be heard by the institution and students.*

Historically, the CSCD viewed itself as an autonomous service on campus. Its primary function was to serve and support students in need of help. It functioned on the premise that students were expected to take responsibility for seeking help themselves, and outreach to students was limited.

The discussion of this affinity created awareness of the importance of a systemic approach with regard to the role of the CSCD at SU. There was a dire need for interaction between the CSCD and other sub-systems at the university where reciprocal learning could take place. At the stage when the interviews were conducted, the CSCD was at risk of isolating itself by taking an expert position in which it did not necessarily display a significant need to learn from other sub-systems.

The participants agreed that they wanted to learn more about and from the CSCD. They wanted to establish a relationship with the Centre that could be beneficial for all the parties involved – more

[4] Affinities are listed in alphabetical order.

specifically the students. Especially Participants 1 and 2, who had limited experience in successful collaboration with the CSCD, called for closer collaboration. Participant 1 put it as follows:

> *I think that, when you speak about a lot of things that need to be mediated, it is about how you convey the message and not what you convey with the message. I think that a way should be found to take the message to the other silos,*[5] *you know. The message should be made relevant to the terrain of that silo, because I think that it may be naive to expect that silo will come to you*[6]*.* [P1:733-740]

> [*Ek dink as jy praat van 'n klomp goed wat gemedieer moet word, is dit 'hoe' jy die boodskap oordra en nie net die 'wat' van die boodskap nie. Ek dink 'n manier moet gevind word om die boodskap te vat na die ander silo's toe, jy weet. Maak die boodskap relevant op die terrein van daai silo want ek dink dit is miskien naïef om te verwag dat daai silo na jou toe gaan kom.*]

During the discussions, it became evident that the participants were not clear about what the services of the CSCD entailed. They were mostly aware of the psychotherapeutic work that was done. Participants 1 and 3 recalled that the CSCD was also responsible for career counselling. The participants did not mention the other functions of the CSCD. Participant 1 was concerned about the limited understanding of the role of the CSCD at SU.

> *I think if people can realise that the CSCD not only has therapeutic services, they will begin to understand that students' needs are different from only those that emerge when students report for therapeutic help. Students have more needs; there are different needs. The CSCD is like a mirror image of students' needs.* [P1:633-642]

> [*Ek dink as mense kan verstaan dat die SSVO nie net terapeutiese dienste het nie, gaan hulle begin verstaan dat studente se behoeftes anders lyk as net dié wat uitkom wanneer studente aanmeld vir terapeutiese hulp. Studente het meer behoeftes; daar is andersoortige behoeftes. Die SSVO is soos 'n spieëlbeeld van studente se behoeftes.*]

The participants had different opinions of when and how the CSCD should share the information of its services. Conversations with first-year students during the orientation period [P2:363] and conversations with faculties – with specific reference to Teaching and Learning Committees [P1:433 and P4:407] – were viewed as important proactive approaches. Although it could be an option, Participants 1 and 3 were not positive about utilising social and other electronic media as exclusive means to share information with students. Participant 3 had the following opinion:

[5] The term silo refers to another sub-system that to some extent also isolates itself from the rest of the university.

[6] CSCD

> *When she*[7] *started here, she went to each class and that was the dominant one when students said how they became aware of it.* [P3:321]
>
> [*Toe sy begin het hier, het sy by elke klas omgegaan en dit is dominant die een wat die studente sê hoe hulle daaraan kom.]*
>
> *The internet generation, I think, appreciates personal contact more instead of less.* [P3:330]
>
> [*Die internetgenerasie, dink ek ook, het meer waardering vir persoonlike kontak eerder as minder.*]

It is important that the role of the CSCD in student success should be communicated to various role-players in the university community. All the participants suggested a systemic approach in which different sub-systems in the larger system collaborate to spread the messages of the CSCD as a vehicle that should be utilised for student support.

b. Integration and Alignment

> Focus group description: *It is about how the optimal synergy between the various elements in the system can be achieved or should function. It does not concern the specific characteristics of the different services or the structural model as such.*

The 'system' mentioned in the definition of the focus group refers to the greater university community. Examples of the 'elements' are the different faculties, types of support services, and student communities, similar to the 'sub-systems' in systems theory.

The individual participants unanimously agreed that the integration and alignment of the different sub-systems within the greater student community were extremely important for student success. Participant 4 compared it with a spider's web [P4:361].

Although the participants highlighted the value of interaction between the CSCD and the rest of the SU, none of them was satisfied with the level of integration that was experienced at the time of the interview. All of them experienced the CSCD as a rather closed system. Several concerns regarding it becoming even more so were discussed. Participant 2 was concerned about the effectiveness of the interventions of the CSCD[8] should the students not be able to utilise their developing academic skills in the class environment under the supervision of an academic staff member in a faculty.

> *Look, you are keeping track of who attends your workshops, who had which sessions, et cetera, but it is not sent back to the faculty. Therefore, we can never follow up those skills. I do not know*

[7] A psychologist appointed by a specific faculty.

[8] Participant 6 referred to academic skills, e.g. study, time management, and stress management skills.

how students get to you; I do not know what they do with the information. So, hopefully, just some feedback … [P2:465-470]

[*Kyk julle hou boek van wie julle werkswinkels bywoon, wie watse sessies hulle gehad het, ensovoorts, maar dit word nie teruggestuur na die fakulteit toe nie. So, daardie vaardighede kan ons net nooit opvolg nie. Ek weet nie hoe kom studente daar by julle uit nie; ek weet nie wat doen hulle met die inligting nie. Soos, net hopelik 'n terugvoer …*]

Participant 3 argued for closer collaboration between the career counsellors of the CSCD and the faculty. His opinion was that the two environments could learn from each other to ensure a rewarding career development process for students.

Regarding these things, I wonder how well informed the counsellors are about the disciplines. I cannot remember that they have ever been here to hear from us … because if they want to market our programmes, they should at least know what they must market. [P3:238-248]

[*Wat dié goed betref, ek wonder hoe goed is die voorligters ingelig oor die dissiplines. Ek kan nie onthou dat daar al ooit van hulle was om by ons te hoor … want as hulle ons programme bemark dat hulle ten minste weet wat hulle moet bemark.*]

Collaboration and alignment of services may have implications regarding confidentiality and transgression of boundaries by different role-players. The participants acknowledged both of these challenges and were open for discussions about them.

Participant 1 had the following perceptions regarding these challenges:

Thus, in other words to say, 'This is not our work. This is the CSCD's work and that is it'. Our responsibility does not reach beyond this point. It does not even stretch as far as to refer a student or accompany a student to get to the CSCD. So, this is a strict sort of, almost autonomous, approach for every environment at the university. The other one is to the other extreme. I think that sometimes people do not recognise specialities or specialised services that are rendered by different environments. For example, a lecturer who has a student suffering from depression or some clinical problem and who then takes action himself/herself and talks about how to make things better and invites the student to come and talk again. This is done with good intentions, but this is kind of the other extreme of this autonomous approach to everything. [P1:113-123]

[*So met ander woorde om te sê: 'Hierdie is nie ons werk nie. Dit is die SSVO se werk en dit is dit.' Ons verantwoordelikheid strek nie verby hierdie punt nie, dit strek nie eens so ver soos om te verwys of om 'n student te ondersteun of te begelei om by die SSVO uit te kom nie. So dit is 'n streng soort van, amper outonome benadering vir elke enkele omgewing in die universiteit. Die ander ene is aan die ander ekstreem. Ek dink dat mense soms nie die spesialiteit en gespesialiseerde diens wat verskillende omgewings lewer, erken nie. Byvoorbeeld 'n dosent wat*

> *'n student het wat aan depressie ly of die een of ander kliniese probleem, en wat self inklim en praat oor hoe om dit beter maak en die student uitnooi om weer te gesels. Dit is met goeie bedoelings maar dit is vir my half die ander ekstreem van hierdie outonome benadering tot alles.*]

Participants 1, 2, and 3 acknowledged that there is collaboration between the CSCD and other staff at SU, but it does not always happen spontaneously. They furthermore argued that certain rules and protocols should be agreed upon and be respected.

Several advantages of the synergy between the CSCD and the other sub-systems were mentioned. For example, integration could empower the tutors in the faculties, and the mentors in residences and private student organisations [P4:187] with knowledge about study techniques, time management skills, and other skills that could promote student success. On the other hand, integration could help faculties to develop a better understanding about interventions (like exam concessions) that were recommended by the CSCD [P3:267], and this could improve the effectiveness outcomes of referrals between faculties and the CSCD [P1:160].

c. Operational Model

> Focus group description: *A broad framework within which the CSCD will function in the future. It includes the vision of the CSCD for the future. It does not propose to address day-to-day operational matters and detail of the services provided.*

Participant 2 defined the operational model as follows:

> *It is an operation that should be run somewhere; therefore, functionalities should be connected to it.* [P2:23]

> [*Dis 'n operasie wat iewers moet bedryf word so daar moet funksionaliteite aan hierdie ding gekoppel word.*]

Participant 2 then continued by affirming the need for an integrative approach as discussed under the affinity **Integration and alignment**. Participants 1, 3, and 4 defined the operational model in terms of what they foresaw students and staff might be confronted with due to the transformation of HE. They alluded to the changes in the student population and the implications that these might have for student support. At Stellenbosch University, staff and students were experiencing the effects thereof progressively. The participants were aware of challenges related to a student population that is more diverse and their responsibilities toward ensuring that students were successful. From their interactions with the students, they experienced that a reconsideration of student support was long overdue.

Participants 1 and 4 suggested that the traditional operational model should be substituted with a model that focussed more on preventative work, even though they also confirmed that a need for psychotherapeutic services would always exist. They believed that individual work should be supplemented with group work, but that group interactions should not be limited to work sessions for the acquisition of academic skills. The importance of collaboration with mentor groups – senior students in residences and private student wards mentoring first-year students – was also emphasised.

d. Psychotherapeutic Services

> Focus group description: *It is related to the advancement of mental health and the holistic well-being of students by sensitising stakeholders about contentious and difficult issues, informing stakeholders about the mechanisms needed to deal with these issues, and empowering stakeholders by delivering the relevant services.*

The participants' understanding of this affinity was in accordance with the definition of the focus group. Although Participant 1 framed it as the traditional services of the centre [P1:367], which implied working in a medical model with an individualised focus on curing psychological problems and disorders as the ultimate goal, none of the other participants discussed it as such. As in the case of the definition of the focus group, the participants preferred to construct their understanding of the affinity as a service that had to empower different role-players with information that could help with promoting students' mental health. Their view of mental health was not limited to supporting individual students; it rather pertained to the psychological well-being of the student community as a collective.

Participant 2 pointed out that, during the 'Fees must Fall' campaign, she missed the role of the CSCD in negotiations and debriefing. One of the other centres of the Division for Student Affairs had had discussions with students who had been involved in the protests during that time, but she emphasised that, because of the expertise of the CSCD in psychological interventions, it could have addressed the issues from a different point of view.

> *That immediately, when something like this happens and you may think that people might have been hurt or relationships were hurt – something that might have influenced their academics and their wellness – that you perhaps become part of those discussions.* [P2:708-716]

> [*Dat daar onmiddellik, wanneer iets soos dit gebeur en julle dalk dink mense half seer kon kry of verhoudings seergekry het – iets wat hulle akademiese en hulle welwees sou beïnvloed – dat julle dalk deel word van daardie gesprekke.*]

She also identified a need for the critical engagement of the CSCD with student communities about the nature of mental health problems they could experience. Examples of such mental health problems

that were prevalent in the student community were depression, anxiety, attention and concentration problems, and hyperactivity. Students may be confronted with disabilities or learning disorders that could affect their studies. Staff of the university should be informed on how to accommodate such learners effectively. For her, there was a definite need to sensitise people about psychological challenges and how to manage them [P2:738-762].

The other important component of the psychotherapists' work was to advise role-players on managing students who were experiencing crises. Based on Participant 3's own experience with a crisis, he found it comforting to know that such a service was available when he needed it:

> *For me, it was necessary to be able to call someone and say, 'What should I do with the guy?' You know, someone to advise me and to whom I can refer the student. Therefore, I think it is essential to have such a service.* [P3:517]
>
> [*Dit was vir my noodsaaklik om iemand te kan bel en sê: 'Wat maak ek met die ou?' Jy weet, iemand wat vir my raad kan gee en na wie ek die student kan verwys. So, ek dink dit is noodsaaklik om so 'n diens te hê.*]

The availability of psychotherapeutic services in a transforming university was non-negotiable, but the proposed format thereof was significantly different from the current model, which was more or less a duplication of a traditional private psychology practice.

e. Safe Spaces

> Focus group description: *It refers to efficient physical and emotional locations/places that can be used without hesitation by students. It is not a physical place without support. It can be distinguished from the other affinities because it refers to a 'place'.*

All the participants agreed that safe spaces referred to specific places that should be created for purposes of, inter alia, the protection of students [P1:494], building healthy relationships [P2:545], emotional support [P2:557], and having courageous conversations in the co-curricular environment [P4:340].

The existence of such places at the time of the interviews was pointed out, but participants were concerned about the fact that the CSCD was not really involved in the spaces. Participant 2 argued that the CSCD should play a key role in establishing and maintaining such safe spaces. In addition, the staff of the Centre should be present physically in some of the spaces to support students in their own environment.

Participants 1 and 3 were concerned that existing resources of the CSCD could be put under more pressure should it be involved on a micro level with the creation and functioning of the safe spaces

as suggested by Participant 6. However, the CSCD could empower other staff to create and sustain such spaces.

> *The student should not be marginalised, due to certain issues, when he walks into the class. The lecturer should have the necessary sensitivity to set up the classroom in a manner that will not marginalise the student. This creates a safe environment for the student.* [P1:479]
>
> [*Wanneer hy in die klas in stap met een of ander kwessie, moet hy nie gemarginaliseer word nie, dat die dosent die nodige sensitiwiteit sal hê om die klas in te rig op 'n manier wat nie die student sal marginaliseer nie. So daar word 'n veilige omgewing vir die student geskep.*]
>
> *However, you know, one unintentionally does things that a student may experience as threatening. I think that it can be positive if more people are sensitive about how to manage students in such situations.*[P3:328]
>
> [*Maar jy weet jy doen goed, wat 'n student as bedreigend kan ervaar, onbedoeld. So hoe meer mense sensitief is vir hoe om studente in sulke omstandighede te hanteer dink ek kan positief wees.*]

Participants 2 and 4 [P2:552] [P4:351-358] emphasised the importance of empowering and utilising the existing mentor system[9] of the university in creating safe spaces. Participant 4 was convinced that the CSCD should be tasked with selecting and training mentors. Their training should include developing skills required in creating safe spaces.

> *So I think it is the best point of contact where we know who the potential mentors are ... I think the CSCD has more expertise about how a mentor can be equipped …* [P4:152-157]
>
> [*So ek dink dit is die beste kontakpunt waar ons weet wie is die potensiële mentors … Ek dink die SSVO het meer die kundigheid oor hoe kan jy so 'n mentor toerus …*]

The premises of the CSCD were acknowledged as an example of a safe space where students could experience emotional safety. Discussions with the participants indicated a need for places of emotional safety throughout the university. In the future, the CSCD should be a significant role player in creating and maintaining these safe spaces.

[9] Stellenbosch University assigns selected senior students to mentor groups of first-year students to help them adjust and develop in the new environment.

f. Skill Development Services

Focus group description: *It refers to services provided by the CSCD that can develop crucial life and academic skills of students to be successful in their studies. It does not refer to psychotherapeutic services.*

The focus group discussed two types of services delivered by the CSCD. Under the affinity **Psychotherapeutic Services,** they discussed the role of the Centre in mental health and well-being. According to the focus group, however, the responsibilities of the CSCD are not limited to these roles. The definition provided by the focus group implied that the affinity **Psychotherapeutic Services** could be distinguished clearly from the affinity **Skill Development Services.** According to the focus group, the latter pertained to life skills and academic skills that needed to be developed.

The participants in the individual interviews did not agree with the clear distinction the focus group had made between these two affinities and had different opinions of what it entailed. Defining skill development services was not an easy task. The different participants had different opinions about what it should entail.

For Participant 2 [P2:114-116], skill development pertained to the development of academic skills like time management, stress management, and study techniques, whereas Participant 4 [P4:316-318] defined it in terms of coping skills.

When one scrutinises the participants' discussions of the affinities, it became clear that, although one can distinguish between the two affinities, they cannot always be separated. Students can make use of the psychotherapeutic services of the centre that aim to improve their emotional well-being, but at the same time the students can also develop different skills to be successful.

Participants 1, 2, and 4 had strong opinions regarding the need for involving the CSCD in developing students' skills. Participant 2 referred to study skills and time management skills that should be developed by means of workshops. She was also convinced that faculties should be involved in subsequent embedding of such skills. An example would be where a CSCD work session on time management skills for a group of first-year students was complemented by a tutorial session where students could apply those skills in an academic setup.

Participant 2's views of the role of the CSCD in developing students' academic skills bordered on what Participant 1 referred to as a remedial service.

> *I think the most basic understanding of it is that it is almost a remedial service. 'You have a problem. Go to them. They will fix you.' For me it differs from a developmental perspective. You know, I often hear lecturers say, 'Students cannot do this, and this and this. We must send them*

> *to the CSCD so that they can learn how to do it.' For me it is sort of the remedial approach.* [P1:379-385].
>
> [*Ek dink die mees basiese verstaan van dit is dat dit amper 'n remediërende diens is. 'Daar is iets fout met jou. Gaan soontoe. Hulle sal jou regmaak.' Dit is vir my anders as 'n ontwikkelingsperspektief. Jy weet ek hoor baie hoe dosente sê: 'Studente kan nie dit en dit en dit doen nie. Ons moet hulle SSVO toe stuur om te gaan leer hoe om dit te doen.' Dit is vir my half die remediërende benadering.*]

Contrary to Participant 1, Participant 3 was quite cynical about the responsibility of the CSCD for student skill development if it was not of a remedial nature, although he acknowledged that students require skill development opportunities. He was referring especially to proactive work and said that his experience was that students were not really interested in it. He believed that students would use the services of the CSCD only when they realised that they were in need of help.

> *You know, children*[10] *do not listen, they are past the stage where you can say, 'Shut your mouth and listen,' and they listen to you. Not that I ever do that, but I do not think it works. If they are not in trouble, they will not listen to you.* [P3:556-559]
>
> [*Jy weet, kinders luister nie, hulle is verby die stadium waar jy kan sê: 'Hou jou mond' en hulle luister na jou. Nie dat ek dit ooit doen nie, maar ek dink nie dit werk nie. As hulle nie in die moeilikheid is nie, gaan hulle nie na jou luister nie.*]

Participants 1, 3, and 4 brought unique ideas about skills development to the table. Participant 1 indicated that skills development should rather follow an approach where skills that students had already acquired before registering at SU, are acknowledged. The aim of skills development services should be to provide all students with the opportunity to expand their repertoire of skills.

> *By implication, this means that you have already managed to clear certain hurdles to get here. Therefore, you are already all right, you can be even better, and you are going to be good when you leave here. But, you know what? You can be great when you leave.* [P1:387-391]
>
> [*By implikasie beteken dit dat jy reeds oor sekere hekkies gespring het om hier te kom. So jy is klaar 'oraait' en jy kan nog beter wees en jy gaan goed wees as jy hier weggaan. Maar weet jy wat, jy gaan 'great' wees as jy hier weggaan.*]

Participant 4 shared a broader definition. For him, it entailed more than the development of academic skills, and he suggested that the ultimate goal should not only be to facilitate students' success at the

[10] Students

university, but to develop life skills[11], as they are essential in preparing the student for the world of work.

> *Often it is focussed directly on a profession for which we prepare the person. Sometimes the preparation is more general, which allows them to enter a variety of professions.* [P4:56-60]
>
> [*Baie keer is dit direk op 'n professionele beroep ingestel, waarvoor ons die persoon voorberei. Soms is dit meer algemene voorbereiding waarmee hulle daarna 'n verskeidenheid van beroepe kan betree.*]

Participant 3 went so far to suggest that skills development, excluding remedial work, should not be the responsibility of the CSCD. His opinion was that it should rather be provided by a separate centre in the form of credit-bearing modules.

The participants shared a variety of ideas about the developmental component of the CSCD's scope of practice. Although some of their ideas were in conflict and others complemented one another, all of them acknowledged the need for developmental work with students.

g. Target Group

> Focus group description: *The parameters that outline which student cohort/year group should be able to utilise the support services. The target group can include both individuals and groups. It does not include students that are not registered.*

At the time of the interviews, the official stance of the CSCD was that only SU registered students were potential clients. The focus group agreed with this delineation of clients as reflected in their final description of the affinity.

The individual participants granted that the CSCD primarily should target registered students, but all of the participants added that the staff of the university should also be regarded as potential clients. Participant 1 made the following comment about the staff as clients:

> *Another group is the staff of the university … In a sense, they are also a target group of the CSCD, but it is in a different way compared to the student group.* [P1:173-177]
>
> [*'n Ander groep is die universiteitspersoneel … In 'n sin is hulle ook 'n teikengroep vir die SSVO, maar dis op 'n ander manier as wat jou studentegroep is.*]

A Centre that follows a systems approach and for which synergy and alignment are priorities cannot shy away from including other members of the system in the target group. The Centre needs to

[11] For the purpose of this thesis, the acquisition of life skills refers to the development of human beings as a whole.

sensitise staff members, as clients, in terms of student profile, the needs of different student groups, and accommodation of students with special needs in the lecture halls and the rest of the community. Participant 1 referred to a need for staff to have access to psycho-educational opportunities similar to those of the students.

> *The question arises whether staff should not also benefit from the inputs of the expert. In the same way, I think, CSCD can also, to an extent, have an impact on them (staff) as a group. You know, it is about empowerment.* [P1:200-204]

> [*Die vraag ontstaan of personeel nie ook voordeel moet trek uit die insette wat hierdie kundige kan lewer nie. Op dieselfde manier dink ek aan die SSVO wat in 'n sin ook 'n impak kan hê op hulle (personeel) as 'n groep. Jy weet dit gaan oor die bemagtiging.*]

An analysis of the interviews revealed that participants believed that students as clients of the Centre should not be regarded as a homogenous group with the same needs. Participant 4 differentiated between a target group that has problem-centred needs and a target group who will benefit from a holistic, developmental, and preventative service. Participants 1 and 4 distinguished between new first-year students that had to adjust to the university, students with disabilities, students who want to take part in developmental activities, and students with salient psychological problems that could develop into disorders once they are exposed to the stressors of student life. On the other hand, Participants 2 and 3 had a more undifferentiated, problem-focussed view of the target group. Participant 2 compared the CSCD to a 'crutch' for students, and Participant 3 regarded it as a place that potentially could assist students with their social welfare needs.

The discussions with the university staff (excluding CSCD staff) for most of the affinities were characterised by a prominent systemic and developmental discourse. However, the discourse changed slightly when they had to discuss the target group of the Centre. Although there were still references to the need for systemic and developmental work, the discourse did become more problem centred.

8.3.2.2. Description of relationships

I asked the individual participants that belonged to the constituency *University Staff: Non-CSCD* to reflect on the relationships between the different affinities as identified by the focus group. The participants were asked to complete their own ARTs individually. The individual ARTs were used to draw a combined SID for this constituency (Figure 8.3). This SID represents the composite view of the understanding of all the individual participants of the constituency of the CSCD system at SU. The SID serves as this constituency's mind map of the CSCD system.

Figure 8.3: Combined uncluttered SID: Non-CSCD staff

In the next section, I shall proceed to describe the relationships between the affinities of the combined SID (Figure 8.3). I shall use the same structure as Bargate (2012) to discuss the relationships among these systems, beginning with the Primary Driver, then the Secondary Driver, Pivot, Secondary Outcome and Primary Outcome of the SID of the focus group[12].

a. Target Group (Primary Driver)

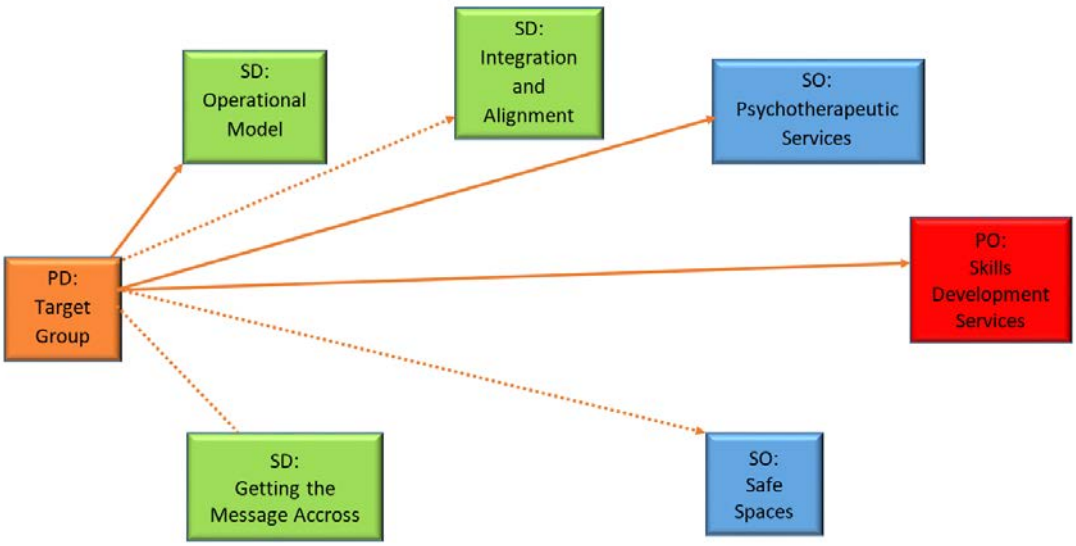


Figure 8.4: Target group relationships

[12] The same structure will be followed to discuss the relationships of the other two constituencies, namely **CSCD Staff** and **Students**.

The **Target Group** as primary driver had a significant cause effect on all the other relationships in the CSCD system (Figure 8.4). This affinity was not affected by any of the other affinities.

From the interviews, it was clear that the CSCD should first know its target group and have a clear understanding of who the target group is and what their needs are, before an operational model could be considered. Participant 1 emphasised that a thorough understanding of the target group was needed before the centre could consider a model that would guide its practices. The target group would determine how the CSCD could operationalise its limited resources in order to deliver an optimal and efficient service to the clients. Participant 1 remarked:

> *If you have a CSCD or a similar type of service that cannot service its target group effectively, I do not know for how long it will be able to survive in a changing environment.* [P1:59-62]
>
> [*As jy 'n SSVO of soortgelyke tipe diens het wat nie sy teikengehoor effektief kan bedien nie, weet ek nie hoe lank gaan hy oorleef in 'n veranderende omgewing nie.*]

During the individual interviews, participants alluded to specific groups of potential clients that should be considered before an operational model could be developed. These were first-generation students, students from disadvantaged communities, students from rural areas, and students with disabilities. Two of the participants (P2 and P3) made special reference to the challenges that first-generation students and students from disadvantaged communities, as target groups, might experience. Participant 2 reported that, in her experience, these students did not possess the necessary knowledge about support services like the CSCD.

> *There are some of the rural students, the impoverished schools, the impoverished parts of the learners of the country who arrive here and who do not know these things. Thus, they do not know about this stuff and that they can seek help somewhere.* [P2:311-313]
>
> [*Daar is tog van die plattelandse studente, die verarmde skole, die verarmde dele van die land se leerders wat hierheen kom, wat nie daai goed weet nie. So hulle weet nie van hierdie goed nie, iewers kan hulle nie gaan vra nie.*]

Her suggestion was that the CSCD should inform prospective students, before they arrive at the university, about the CSCD and the types of services that were available. However, keeping the target group in mind, it was important to consider how the message about the CSCD should be communicated. Prospective students do not always have access to the internet, e-mail, WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media.

The target group would determine how the CSCD and its services should be integrated with other divisions of SU to prevent the CSCD from functioning in isolation. An example of this is an already

existing practice where the CSCD has a satellite psychotherapy service at the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. This faculty is situated on a different campus and is the only one with a satellite service of the CSCD.

b. Operational Model (Secondary Driver)

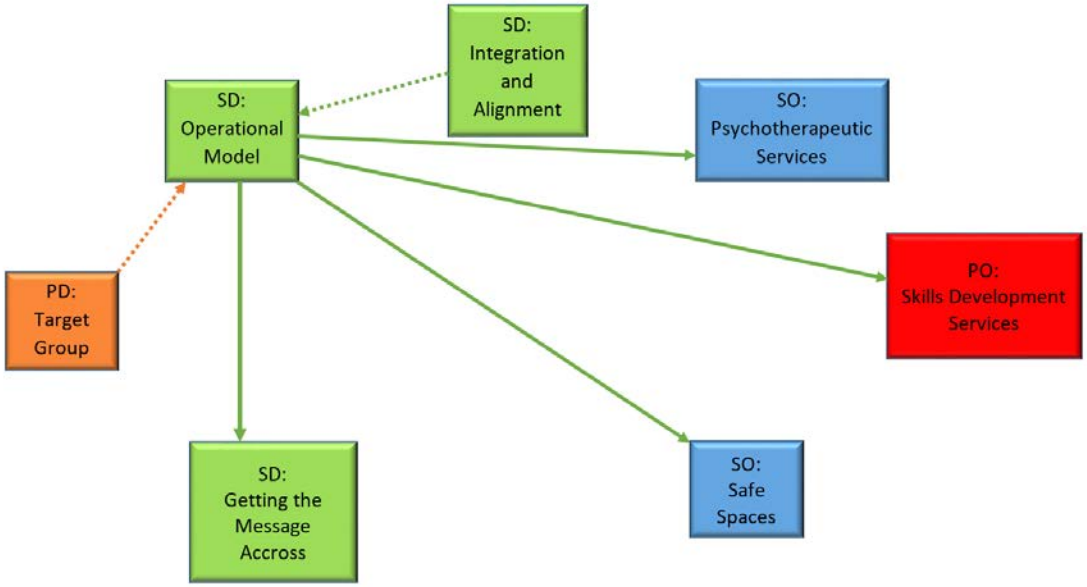


Figure 8.5: Operational Model relationships

The **Operational Model** was identified as a secondary driver in the system (Figure 8.5). As a secondary driver, it had an effect on the message disseminated to the target group, the psychotherapy services that the CSCD offered, and the creation of safe spaces. As a secondary driver, it was affected by the target group and the integration and alignment of the services of the CSCD.

It is useful to recall that the meaning of this affinity (8.3.2.1c) referred to a broad guideline that directly and indirectly guided specific elements of the CSCD system.

In his interview, Participant 2 focussed on the importance of integration and alignment with other SU divisions and services as part of the operational model of the Centre. An operational model that supports such a systemic approach will enlarge the capacity of the CSCD for service delivery. Participant 4 supported this view and suggested that collaboration with student mentors should be considered as part of the operational model of the centre.

> *And I think that it is the most practical way, because they are connected directly with the students and where they live and where they interact, when they are outside of the classroom but on campus. Thus, I think it is the best point of contact. We know who the potential mentors are and where we can begin to organise it.* [P4:149-155]

[*En ek dink dit is die mees praktiese manier want hulle*[13] *is direk geskakel met studente en waar hulle woon en waar hulle interaksie het, wanneer hulle buite die klas is maar op kampus. So ek dink dit is die beste kontakpunt. Ons weet wie is potensiële mentors en waar ons kan begin om te organiseer as mentors.*]

As a secondary driver in the system, the **Operational Model** should be designed according to the needs of the target group – clients – and it must support integration with the other divisions of the University. The designed **Operational Model** should play a role in the content of the message that the CSCD wants to convey to stakeholders, and it should also inform the CSCD on the applicable ways to communicate the message. The nature and modality of psychotherapy that is offered will be dependent on the developed **Operational Model.** One of the outcomes of the transforming CSCD system should be the creation of **Safe Spaces** for students. The **Organisational Model** would play a determining role in what these **Safe Spaces** should entail as well as how and where they will be created.

c. Getting the Message Across (Secondary Driver)

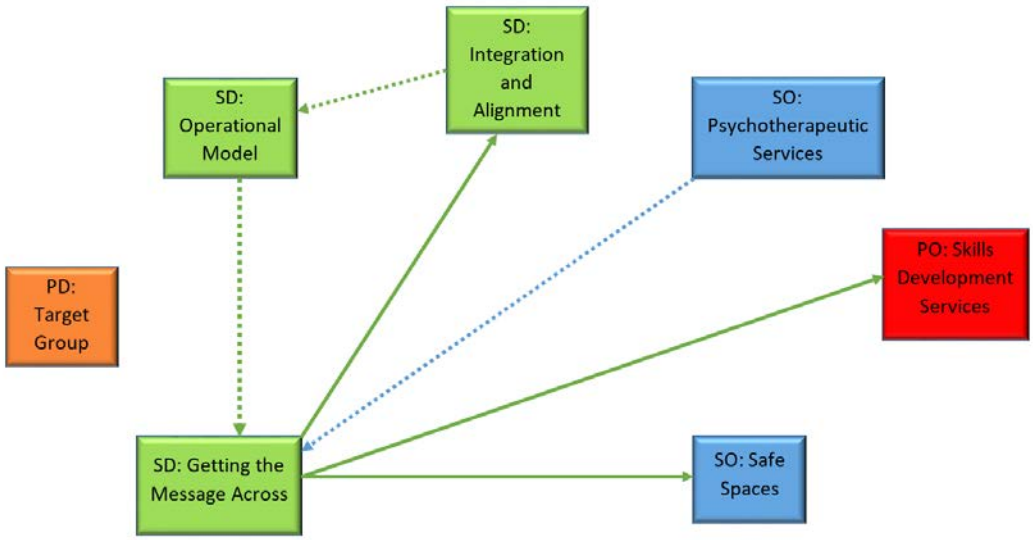


Figure 8.6: Getting the Message Across relationships

Getting the Message Across was a secondary driver in the system and thus did not have a fundamental, but a relative effect on the integration and alignment of the services of the CSCD, its role in developing students' skills, and the creation of safe spaces (Figure 8.6).

As implied by the name of this affinity, it is important that messages about the CSCD be disseminated to all the role-players. This is crucial for the integration and alignment of the services of the CSCD

[13] Student mentors.

in the larger SU community. Without such a message, it may be difficult for role-players to utilise the CSCD services and to refer students to make use of the services that are offered.

Participant 7 mentioned that the message should not be limited to what could be offered by the Centre. The message should also include important information that could empower staff to support a student. An example would be to help a lecturer to create a safe space in the lecture hall.

> *But you know you are doing things unintentionally, which a student may experience as threatening, unintentionally. So, if more people are sensitive to dealing with students in such circumstances, I think, it can be positive.* [P7:482-484].
>
> [*Maar jy weet jy doen goed onbedoeld, wat 'n student as bedreigend kan ervaar, onbedoeld. So, hoe meer mense sensitief is vir hoe om studente in sulke omstandighede te hanteer, dink ek kan positief wees.*]

However, Participant 5 warned against people being responsible for work for which they were not trained.

> *Yes, you empower yourself*[14] *to an extent. You put somebody else in a position to render support. This is not about substituting the specialised service you are rendering, because the people we are talking about are not specialised people.*
>
> [*Ja, jy bemagtig eintlik in 'n sin jouself. Jy plaas ander mense in 'n posisie om te ondersteun. Dis nie om die gespesialiseerde diens wat jy lewer te vervang nie, want die mense van wie ons praat is nie gespesialiseerde mense nie.*]

In summary, the participants believed that the nature of the message that is communicated would have an effect on how collaboration with other role-players will happen. This collaboration will then also empower role-players to help create safe spaces for their students.

[14] CSCD staff

d. Integration and Alignment (Secondary Driver)

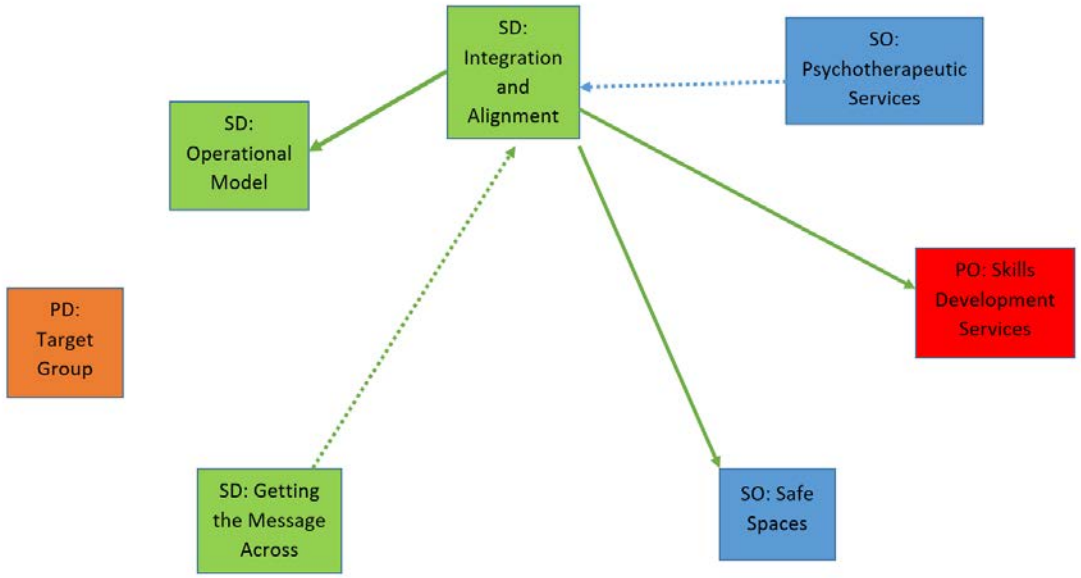


Figure 8.7: Integration and Alignment relationships

The affinity **Integration and Alignment** served as a secondary driver in the system (Figure 8.7). This affinity was affected by the affinities **Getting the Message Across** and **Psychotherapeutic Services.** In its position of secondary driver, it had a relative influence on the affinities **Operational Model**, **Safe Spaces,** and **Skill Development Services**.

Participant 6 demonstrated the effect of **Integration and Alignment** on **Operational Model** when she referred to the possibility of having CSCD staff making presentations in the student hubs[15] on campus. According to her, being in the students' physical spaces could facilitate the CSCD following a preventative model. This will provide an ideal opportunity for the CSCD to support students with the development of skills. To a great extent, it would counter the hegemony of the medical model in which students only go to the offices of the CSCD when they experience problems.

Participant 7 belonged to a faculty that had taken a decision to employ its own psychologists in an effort to bring some of the CSCD type services physically into the faculty. He was convinced that, having the psychologists situated in the faculty building, contributed significantly to help students experience the faculty as a safe space where they could learn and develop.

The services of the Centre should be integrated with the different sub-systems of the university. Integration with other divisions, faculties and the student community would play an essential role in constructing **Skill Development Services** – the primary outcome of the transforming systems.

[15] Physical spaces outside of classrooms where residential students and students from PSOs can interact

e. Safe Spaces (Secondary Outcome)

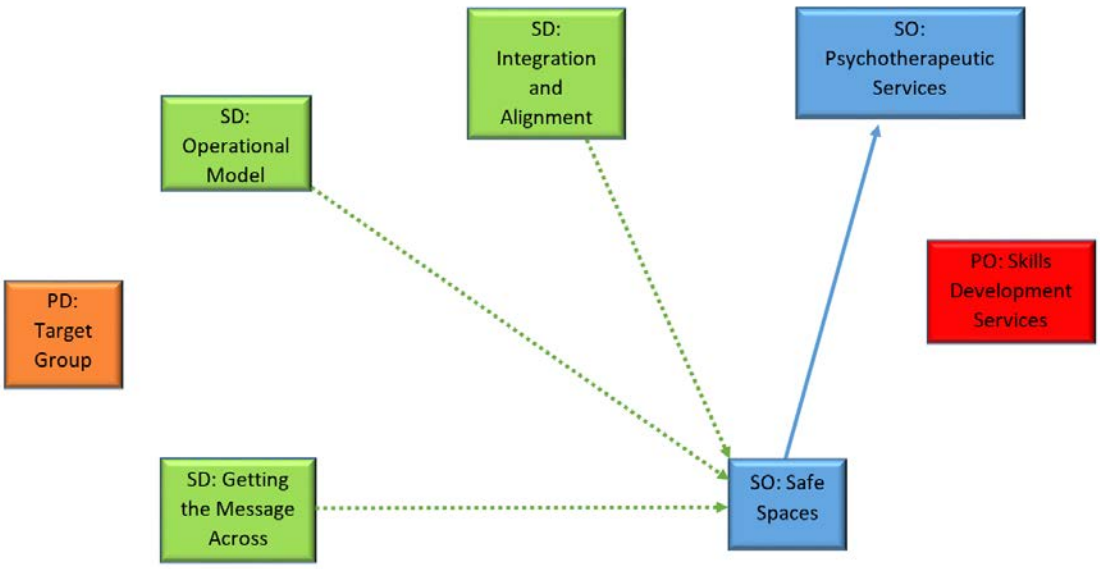


Figure 8.8: Safe Spaces relationships

Safe Spaces was a secondary outcome in the system. It was a relative effect of the influence of **Integration and Alignment**, **Operational Model,** and **Getting the Message Across**. **Safe Spaces** influenced the other secondary outcome **Psychotherapeutic Services** (Figure 8.8).

Creating a safe space for clients is conducive to effective psychotherapy. An environment that embraces unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence can be perceived as a safe space.

Participant 5 found it to be logical that the element **Safe Spaces** should affect **Psychotherapeutic Services.** In his opinion, the one implied the other.

> *So, it is almost synonymous to me, because this particular service is a kind of safe space.* [P5:1087-1088]
>
> [*So, dit is vir my amper sinoniem want jou, hierdie spesifieke diens is 'n soort veilige ruimte.*]

Effective psychotherapy is dependent on the existence of a safe space. However, Participant 5 differentiated between having a safe space as a prerequisite for psychotherapy and a safe space being an outcome of psychotherapy. The effect of **Safe Spaces** on **Psychotherapeutic Services** should be viewed as conditional and not as prescriptive.

> *I do not think the safe environment can prescribe to your therapeutic service. I think your therapeutic service is less flexible. I do not think the environment is going to, or the safe environment will prescribe it to you.* [P5:1115-1127]

[*Ek dink nie die veilige omgewing kan jou terapeutiese diens voorskryf nie. Ek dink jou terapeutiese diens is minder 'flexible'. Ek dink nie die omgewing gaan dit, of die veilige omgewing gaan dit aan jou voorskryf nie.*]

f. Psychotherapeutic Services (Secondary Outcome)

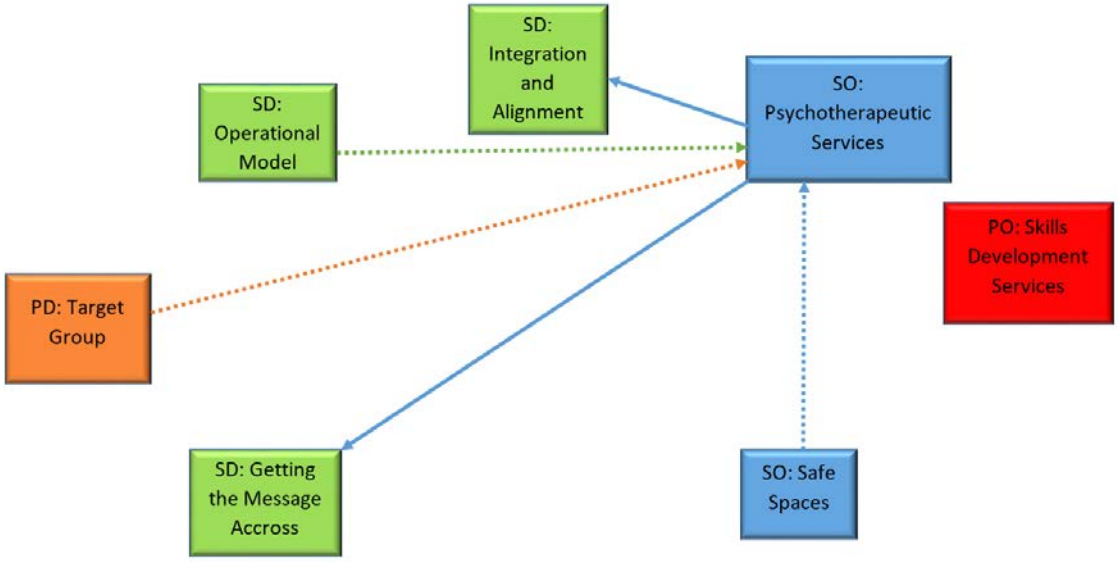


Figure 8.9: Psychotherapeutic Services relationships

The staff that did not belong to the CSCD positioned **Psychotherapeutic Services** as a secondary outcome in the CSCD system (Figure 8.9). This element of the system was experienced as a relative effect due to the influences of the **Target Group**, the **Operational Model,** and **Safe Spaces** in the CSCD system. However, **Psychotherapeutic Services** did have a relative influence on how and what, i.e. what the services of the CSCD were, were communicated to other SU sub-systems.

The participants were concerned about the wellness and mental health of students on campus. They experienced a need for the CSCD to sensitise different role-players about mental health issues and to inform them about wellness practices. Participants 5 and 6 were also of the opinion that the psychotherapeutic services of the Centre should be advertised more widely.

The participating staff members who did not belong to the CSCD were of the opinion that there was no relationship between the affinities **Psychotherapeutic Services** and the primary outcome of **Skill Development Services**.

g. Skill Development Services (Primary Outcome)

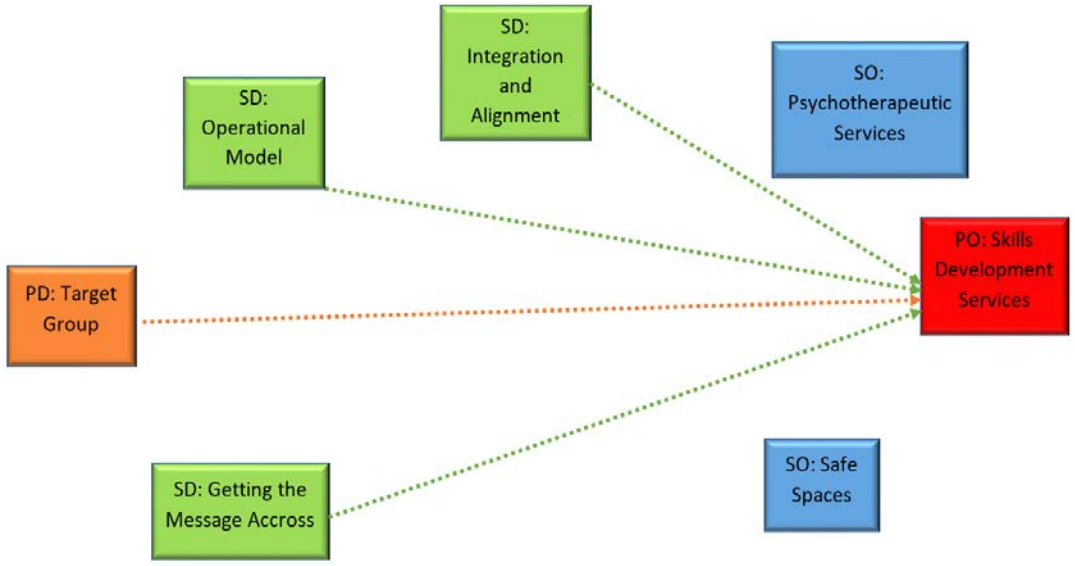


Figure 8.10: Skill Development Services relationships

Skill Development Services was identified as a primary outcome of the CSCD system (Figure 8.10). Thus, it was a significant effect caused by the affinities **Target Group**, **Operational Model**, **Integration and Alignment,** and **Getting the Message Across**. The affinities **Psychotherapeutic Services** and **Safe Spaces** were not perceived as having any effect on the primary outcome, namely **Skill Development Services.**

The constituency *University Staff: Not CSCD* was convinced that the CSCD was indeed in need of transformation. They made a direct link between this need and their experiences of the changing student community. The members of the constituency expressed a need to be empowered by the CSCD in terms of what the role of the Centre is, how interactions between the Centre and role-players in the student community should be managed, and more specifically, helping them to understand mental disorders, disabilities, and the support needs of the diversifying student community.

The members of the constituency *University Staff: Not CSCD* were convinced that the transformation of the Centre would require them to understand clearly who their target group is and what their needs are before the rest of the transformation process could be started. Transformation should see the development of students' skills as the ultimate goal.

8.3.3. CSCD staff[16]

The CSCD staff focus group constructed a transforming CSCD system that consisted of four different affinities. The following four affinities were identified:

Table 8.3: Affinities[17] identified by the CSCD staff group

Affinity
Changing and augmenting practices
CSCD as a sub-system within the broader system
Optimisation of resources: i) Management ii) Staff iii) Technology
Paradigm of the CSCD

8.3.3.1. Description of affinities

The group definition of each of the affinities will be provided first, followed by the descriptions of the individuals with whom interviews were conducted. They will be illustrated by means of verbatim extracts from the interviews.

a. Paradigm of the CSCD

Focus group description: *The CSCD renders a student-focussed service. The centre must also consider the needs of parents, staff, and relevant third parties. The role and responsibilities of the CSCD must be defined clearly.*

The focus group described their understanding of the paradigm that should guide the services of the CSCD. Each of the individual participants first described his or her individual understanding of the concept before they commenced discussing the paradigm that they envisioned for the CSCD.

The participants identified different attributes for this affinity. All of them agreed that the paradigm of the CSCD should speak to the current scenarios facing them.

Participants 5 and 7 referred to it in terms of ‘experiences’.

[16] Participants 5 and 6 of the individual interviews formed part of the management team, while Participants 7 and 8 were practitioners.

[17] Affinities are listed in alphabetical order

> Participant 5: *I think it is to say, 'That is what we are experiencing; that is what we see; that is what we have to put on the table now, and we want to say what we're going to do.'* [P5:436]
>
> [*Ek dink dit is om te sê: 'Dit is wat ons beleef; dit is wat ons sien; dit is wat ons nou op die tafel moet sit, en ons wil sê wat gaan ons doen.'*]
>
> Participant 7: *I think it is to look through glasses that agree with all the changes.* [P7:41]
>
> [*Ek dink dit is om met 'n bril te kyk wat akkoord gaan met al die veranderinge.*]

While Participant 8 had a rather philosophical description, Participant 6 emphasised the importance of it being a reality instead of an ideal:

> Participant 8: … *the worldview realising what we need.* [P8:376]
>
> Participant 6: *It is really an embeddedness. For me, it is not only something that is preached and that is displayed on a wall. It is being embedded in the system, and that, for me, makes the difference.* [P6:61]
>
> [*Dit is regtig 'n deurdrenktheid. So vir my is dit nie net iets wat gepredik word en teen 'n muur opgesit word nie. Dit word deurgetrek in die sisteem en dit maak dit nogal vir my anders.*] [P6:61]

Participant 6 argued that paradigms have an important influence on how things are approached. In practice, a change in paradigm should imply that the staff of the CSCD

> *think differently about things; they think more about things and they would be more in sync with what was happening.* [P6:51-58].
>
> […*dink anders oor goed, hulle dink meer oor goed, hulle is baie meer in voeling met dit wat hulle doen.*] [P6:51-58]

In further discussions about the word *paradigm*, participants used terminology like 'medical model', 'pro-active', 'development-focussed approach', 'curative', 'wellness model', 'holistic approach', and 'reactive'.

Participant 5 emphasised the importance of a paradigm shift to guide the services of the CSCD in future. He advocated a change from a curative paradigm to a developmental paradigm. Participants 6 and 7 confirmed this need for a change in paradigm. Participants 5 and 7 were concerned that, if there was not a paradigmatic change, the developmental work would remain an add-on.

> *I think it should be a more proactive, developmental focussed approach, especially if you consider the increase in problems that students are experiencing. You cannot remain curative all the time. Just yesterday I saw in the newspaper that about 30% of people are diagnosed with depression. It is growing. Thus, should we work only curatively and sit and wait, we are going*

> *to lose business. So an important way to approach it is to be preventative but also being more than preventative, because being preventative is also curative.* [P5:47-56]
>
> [*Ek dink dit sal 'n meer pro-aktiewe, ontwikkelingsgerigte benadering moet wees, veral as jy kyk na die toename in probleme wat studente beleef. Jy kan nie net kuratief die heeltyd bly nie. Ek het gister weer in die koerant gesien dat iets soos 30% van mense met depressie gediagnoseer word. Dis 'n groeiende ding. So as ons net kuratief die heeltyd gaan sit en wag, dan gaan ons uit besigheid raak. So die belangrike manier waarop 'n mens sal moet gaan kyk, is na die 'preventative' – maar ook meer as dit want dit is ook eintlik kuratief.*]

Participant 8 confirmed that the CSCD was experiencing an increase in clients[18] with severe psychopathology.

Participant 7 elaborated on the implications of a shift towards a paradigm that was more attuned to the changes in HE and the student population. She referred to the use of technology (e.g. Skype) when interacting with students. Participant 8 stated that a change in paradigm should accommodate students with diverse needs. She alluded to the importance of being sensitive to the worldview of African students [P8:58].

All four participants emphasised that to change the CSCD paradigm would be a challenging process and that it would not happen overnight.

b. CSCD as a Sub-system within the Broader System

Focus group description:

The CSCD is to

- *network in a systemic way with all the role-players at the university, e.g. lecturers, faculties, and support staff;*
- *establish a better or proactive relationship with lecturers and other staff;*
- *establish closer collaboration with academic staff by giving curriculum input;*
- *establish an integrated service for students; and*
- *engage in collaboration with international and national universities.*

The individual participants agreed on the importance of systemic relationships and discussed these relationships, as specified by the focus group, by emphasising the role the CSCD could play in transforming SU.

There were significant differences in the participants' views of the role of the CSCD in transformation. On the one hand, Participant 5 described the CSCD as an important change agent in

[18] Registered students.

transforming SU. He was optimistic about the progressive transformational process that was already taking place in the CSCD. He saw the CSCD as leading transformation and having the potential to be a driver of change in the larger university system. This could position the CSCD as leading the promotion of student success in a changing environment. Participants 7 and 8 did not share his optimistic view.

Participants 6, 7, and 8 agreed that, as a sub-system, the CSCD could have a significant influence on students' success. Participant 6 acknowledged that the CSCD might experience itself as a driver of change in the student community at SU, but she warned against an assumption that the CSCD was the expert on change and that the Centre had the ability as well as responsibility to guide the rest of the University during a transformation process.

> *I do not think we are completely at a point where we have maximum influence on the system. I think we have the ability to create many ripples. I think we have the ability to contribute much stronger to the dialogue, especially in Student Affairs. But, if I look at the bigger picture, it seems as if there is a kind of division between the CSCD and the CSC (Centre for Student Communities)*[19] [P6:94-101].
>
> [*Ek dink tog nie ons is heeltemal op 'n punt waar ons die sisteem maksimaal beïnvloed nie. Ek dink ons het die vermoë om baie rimpels te veroorsaak, ek dink ons het die vermoë om baie sterker tot 'n dialoog by te dra, veral binne Studentesake. As ek nou na die groter prentjie kyk, is daar vir my 'n verdeeldheid tussen die SSVO en die SSG (Sentrum vir Studentegemeenskappe).*] [P6:94-101]

According to Participant 6, the CSCD was still perceived as the environment that mainly served students in dire need of help, and as a sub-system, the role of the CSCD in terms of transformation and student success could be perceived as limited to this particular group of students.

Participants 6, 7, and 8 warned against the CSCD refraining from utilising opportunities to learn from other systems or sub-systems about the changes in HE. Viewing itself as an expert on transformation could be perceived as being over-confident and this could lead to the CSCD missing out on learning from other sub-systems in SU as well as from other HEIs. Learning about transformation and the promotion of student success should be a reciprocal process between the different systems and sub-systems of HE.

[19] The Division of Student Affairs consists of the Centre of Student Communities (CSC), the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) and the Centre for Student Leadership and Structures (CSLS).

All the participants agreed that the CSCD had good insight into and understanding of the holistic development of students; hence, the CSCD could make significant contributions to the discourses of the SU and its sub-systems about the holistic development of students and student success.

c. Optimisation of Resources

Focus group description: *The resources of the CSCD are under pressure. It is important that the management of the CSCD should reconsider the vision and mission of the centre in order to optimise the available resources. This will guide the managers in redefining and realigning service delivery models.*

Staff's buy-in to the change in vision and mission is important. The staff must also meet the required characteristics for the changing working environment. Therefore, staff need to receive continuous training so that they can meet demands with regard to change and transformation. It is also essential to care for the wellness of staff.

Technology should be utilised to expand the services of the CSCD. It will avail the services of the CSCD at any time and anywhere. It can help to reduce pressure on staff.

After careful consideration of their description of this affinity, the focus group decided to divide it into three subsections, namely:

- *Management*
- *Staff*
- *Technology*

During the individual interviews, participants were asked to provide input with regard to all three subsections.

As suggested by the focus group, the rest of this affinity will be discussed according to the three sub-affinities that were identified. This could help to clarify the responsibilities of management, staff, and the use of technology in optimising the available resources.

i. Management

During the interviews, it was evident that the management of the CSCD were expected to be the leaders of change in the Centre. It was the management's responsibility to guide the staff in assessing what was available, what was needed, and how it should be utilised optimally to render proficient services to the SU community.

> *Well, I think that if you look at management, there should definitely be a driver. The main drivers should be more than managers. It should be people who are trained to comprehend what we do not yet comprehend.* [P5:193]
>
> [*Wel ek dink as jy kyk na die bestuur sal daar definitief 'n 'driver' moet wees. Die 'main drivers' sal moet meer as net 'managers' wees. Dit sal moet mense wees wat opgelei is om te verstaan wat ons nog nie heeltemal verstaan nie.*]
>
> *(The) director of the CSCD does not have to be a psychologist. It does have its advantages because I think that the person may have a better understanding, but I do not think that it should be a requirement.* [P5:262]
>
> [*(Die) direkteur van SSVO hoef nie noodwendig 'n sielkundige te wees nie. Dit het sy voordele, want ek dink die persoon verstaan dan miskien beter, maar ek dink nie dit is 'n vereiste nie.*]

Participant 7 [P7:276] posited that management should be equipped with specific skills for change management. A proposition was that the process of change at the CSCD should be discussed at staff meetings. By doing this, management can facilitate the buy-in of staff.

The participants emphasised that although resources might not have kept up with the transformation of the University, it was still important that management prioritise the upgrading and sustaining of infrastructure to support staff in performing their duties. Participant 6, a concerned member of the management team, said:

> *There are people who are using computers that sound like airplanes trying to take off, things that do not want to switch on. Just the fact that Wi-Fi is not available …* [P6:279]
>
> [*Hier is mense wat met rekenaars wat klink soos vliegtuie wat wil opstyg, werk, goed wat nie eens wil aanskakel nie. Net die feit dat hier nie Wi-Fi beskikbaar is nie ...*]
>
> *I think only if one can really empower them around those things, you are actually going to start addressing the system* (CSCD). *The system is rather fragile at the moment.* [P6:285].
>
> [*Ek dink net as mens regtig vir hulle kan bemagtig rondom daai goed gaan jy werklik eers die sisteem bietjie begin aanspreek. Die sisteem is bietjie hinkepink op hierdie stadium.*]

The participants indicated a need for developing staff as an important component of the optimisation of resources. With regard to this, it was pointed out again that management should prioritise the allocation of finances to train staff during a time when HE is transforming worldwide. The CSCD could be at risk of becoming outdated with its practices, should staff not be supported to regularly develop their skills further. These concerns of the participants linked to the discussions they had as part of the affinity **CSCD as a Sub-system within a Broader System** when Participants 7, 8, and 5 warned about the CSCD that might be missing out on valuable learning opportunities.

> *So, managers need to think research and development for example. We mentioned this now in our strategic planning. Does it mean that more focus will be put on development for staff? Yeah, and it means managers need to buy in (laughs).* [P8:259]

Allocating money for research and development could help staff to develop a critical view of the process of transformation.

ii. Staff

The consensus among the participants was that they had to bear the brunt of the huge demand for services of the CSCD, resulting in their having too much work to do. Only limited resources were available to help them with doing their jobs. This awareness added a strong element of negativity to the conversations, although they made it clear that the majority of staff were committed to their work. Participant 7's suggestion for solving this problem was to adopt an approach of working smarter and not working harder [P7:262].

Both management and staff should embrace this approach. An important consideration that was suggested was that early awareness of the services of the Centre should be created. The orientation period at the beginning of the first year of study could be an ideal time to introduce the services of the Centre.

> *How can we use orientation[20] more to our advantage through the marketing committee so that more and more people become aware earlier of what is offered … so that we can possibly become more focused on health promotion and prevention rather than the curative (approach)?* [P8:366]

In addition to the significant role that both management and staff could fulfil in optimising the resources of the Centre, participants especially highlighted technology as an important vehicle to provide a quality service for clients.

iii. Technology

As mentioned under the heading ***Management*** of this affinity, there was a definite concern about the readiness of the CSCD to utilise technology optimally in their daily work. A review of the utilisation of technology to transform the way in which CSCD operated, was a critical requirement. Although the use of technology for especially psychotherapy was rather new – and contentious – internationally, Participant 8[21] highlighted the potential thereof. It was worth investigating the ethical and other implications that this might have. This was an example of one of the areas in which the CSCD could

[20] All the new first-year students of SU are encouraged to participate in a welcoming programme during the week before lecturers start. The focus of the programme is to introduce students to student communities, faculties, the variety of student support opportunities that the University offers, and to create opportunities for interaction with other students.

[21] Participant 4 was a clinical psychologist whose prime responsibility at the Centre was psychotherapy.

learn from international practices in terms of utilising technology ethically and responsibly. Technology could also be used for psycho-educational purposes.

> *Does the client have to be in front of the psychologist, the social worker et cetera to be effective? For example, using Skype[22] as a tool, you know?* [P8:235]

> *Because if we have standard videos, for example, that have clear protocols, or psycho-educational tools for different types of situations such as study methods, for example, or what to do if a friend has been, God forbid, raped, you know?* [P8:242]

The utilisation of technology was an exciting possibility to explore. Participant 7 warned that the expertise of someone who was knowledgeable in the field was required to guide the staff in utilising technology as a way of optimising resources. She especially referred to the development of technological resources, for example, online psycho-educational tools. However, it was the psychologists' responsibility to develop and utilise technological resources. Participant 7 pointed out it could not simply be an add-on to psychologists' and counsellors' work.

> *It is really hard for a staff member, who has a lot of other work, to actually ensure that the CSCD utilise the possibilities of technology optimally.* [P7:188]

> *[Dit is regtig moeilik vir 'n personeellid wat 'n klomp ander werk het, om regtig seker te maak dat die SSVO die moontlikhede wat tegnologie inhou, optimaal sal benut.*]

It was advised that a specialist in communication technology should be contracted by the CSCD to take responsibility for developing and optimising technological resources.

d. Changing and Augmenting Practices

> Focus group description: *Necessary changes should be made to the day-to-day practices. Traditional clinical work[23] will always form part of the core business of the CSCD, but services should be expanded to include preventative and psycho-educational programmes. Faculty-based work and networking is important. An awareness of student safety is also important.*

The affinity **Changing and Augmenting Practices** closely relates to the affinity **Paradigm of the CSCD**. They differ in the sense that the former elaborates on the application of the paradigm by the CSCD.

[22] Skype is a virtual communication platform.

[23] Work according to a medical model.

The participants agreed with the focus group on the importance of changing and augmenting the services of the Centre. A change in paradigm elicits a need for changes in services. Participant 5 was adamant that change was not an option anymore and that it should happen sooner rather than later.

> *It can take us another twenty years, but I do not think we have that luxury. It is like ecology. There will be a time that we can no longer say we hope it will rain.* [P5:276]

> [*Dit kan ons nog twintig jaar neem, maar ek dink nie ons het daardie luuksheid nie. Dit is soos die ekologie, daar gaan 'n tyd kom wat ons nie meer kan sê ons hoop dit reën nie.*]

All four participants agreed on the need to extend the work of the Centre to include preventative and developmental work. On a practical level, this implies that the Centre should not focus exclusively on curing students' problems. Although Participants 5, 6, and 7 supported a shift to services with a preventative and developmental focus, Participant 8 made it clear that curative work will always be a responsibility of the Centre and that this plays a major role in student success. However, Participant 8 agreed that the curative services should be reviewed, and that they were in need of augmentation

> *We acknowledge that there are many different components to success for students and that each student is unique. I think we have a worldview that acknowledges that. Therapy and psychology is very important.* [P8:47-49]

> *Yes, definitely, and it makes it hard because our work often involves us being reactive because we are reactive because there is constantly students in academic crises or emotional crises that want or need response now.* [P8:66-70]

The participants embraced the importance of a more holistic view on student success.

The participants construed their understandings of the practical implications in different ways. Participants 5 and 6, who were both in management positions at the CSCD, reflected in terms of the overall functioning of the Centre, while Participants 7 and 8, who were practitioners, reflected on the interactions they had with students.

Participant 5 had a visionary outlook, but he refrained from providing practical examples of change. However, he emphasised the importance of round-table discussions by different role-players to determine how a process of change should happen.

> *I think it is to say, 'This is what we experience; this is what we see; this is what we must now put on the table, and now we shall say what we shall do. We do not know what to do. We will have to sit together.'* [P5:429-432]

> [*Ek dink dit is om te sê: 'Dit is wat ons beleef; dit is wat ons sien; dit is wat ons nou op die tafel moet sit en nou wil ons sê wat gaan ons doen. Ons weet nie wat om te doen nie; ons moet nou saam sit.'*]

Participant 6 alluded to practical changes that were needed on a managerial level. A review of the core business of the Centre [P6:217] and the optimal utilisation of existing resources were some of the issues that needed to be addressed.

> *For me, it is not only about the doubling of staff. It is about how we extend our interactions and how we strengthen the systemic points of contact. How can we optimise our resources as far as possible?* [P6:229-233]

> [*So, vir my gaan dit nie net oor verdubbeling van personeel nie. Dit gaan oor hoe verbreed ons ons interaksie en hoe maak ons daai sistemiese raakpunte sterker. Hoe kan ons ons hulpbronne so optimaliseer so vêr as moontlik?*]

Both Participants 7 and 8 focused on their daily work with clients at the Centre, but they found it challenging to be optimistic about changes. Although they were convinced about the need for change, they also had concerns about the practicalities thereof. They shared concerns about the effect that change might have on their current workload. Participant 8 pointed out that, because she was so busy trying to contain her daily challenges, it was difficult for her to think about how change should happen.

> *I think it is very hard first of all to find the time to even consider changing it because we are busy all the time*. [P8:294]

Participants 7 and 8 shared a dominant problem-focused narrative regarding change. After being prompted by the researcher, they did suggest a few possible changes to be considered. A specific focus was alleviating the workload of the staff.

Participant 8 had a strong conviction that the psychotherapy process should be reviewed for it to be more effective.

> *Relook means – I think – about which type of therapy would work best, which psychometric tools would work best for the student – an individual setting or group setting? Relook means: 'Is it lucrative and practical to have a free service for everything that we offer?' For example, commitment fees (laughs) for attending groups and workshops? Should that be standard procedures?* [P8:90-95]

Regarding the long waiting lists, Participant 6 suggested that there should be a shift in focus towards group work instead of having individual sessions as the preferred counselling model. An alternative would be to refer students to private practitioners.

Other examples of lucrative and practical augmentations include the utilisation of short-term psychotherapeutic modalities, online support, and the use of technology for online psycho-education.

8.3.3.2. Description of relationships

Each participant constructed his/her own SID. The SIDs illustrated their understanding of the relationships between the different affinities. The combined SID (Figure 8.11) was designed after the individual SIDs had been merged.

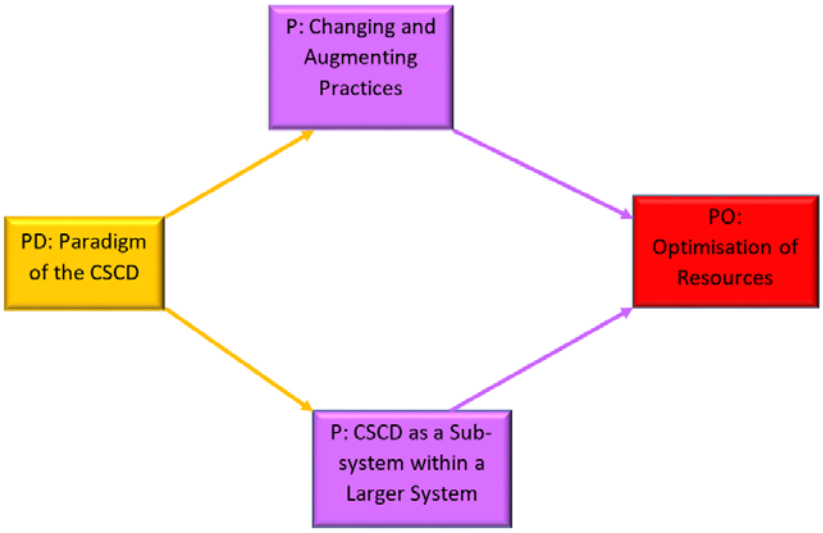


Figure 8.11: Combined uncluttered SID: CSCD participants

In the rest of this section, I shall describe the relationships among the different affinities of the SID. I shall follow the same format for the discussion of the relationship as for **8.3.1.2.**

a. Paradigm of the CSCD

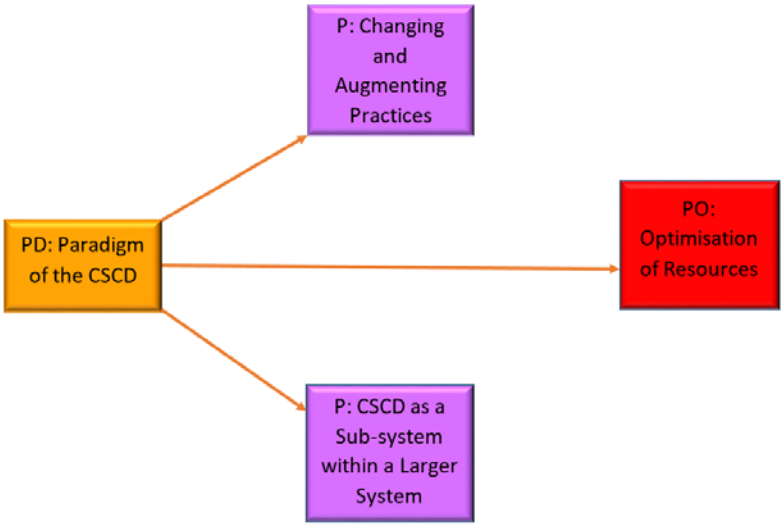


Figure 8.12: Paradigm of the CSCD relationships

The affinity **Paradigm of the CSCD** was positioned as a primary driver in the conceptualisation of the transforming CSCD system by the **CSCD: Staff** (Figure 8.12). As a primary driver, it had a significant effect on both pivots, **Changing and Augmenting Practices** and **CSCD as a Sub-system within a Larger System.** It had a significant cause effect on the primary outcome **Optimisation of Resources**.

The participants unanimously agreed that clarity about the paradigm that directs the services of the CSCD would determine how and what types of services are eventually provided. Examples of how the supported paradigm could influence the types of services that are offered are depicted in the following quote of Participant 7:

> *A move toward a preventive paradigm causes a shift toward preventive group work; more students are seen at the same time, there is a shift in understanding what education and support entail, and the possibilities of using electronic media, for example Skype, for that purpose are considered.* [P7:55-60]

> *['n Skuif in die rigting van 'n voorkomende paradigma veroorsaak 'n skuif in die rigting van voorkomende groepwerk; meer studente word gelyktydig gesien, daar is 'n skuif in die verstaan van wat onderrig en ondersteuning behels en die moontlikhede wat die gebruik van elektroniese media, byvoorbeeld Skype, daarvoor inhou, word oorweeg.]*

Participant 6 noted the importance of considering the paradigm that guided the services of the CSCD before the Centre could commence with marketing its services.

> *For example, we want to consider a CSCD video clip, but the important thing is to consider how it complements what we stand for and what we can do, where we draw our boundaries because the idea with the video clip must not be that we attract another five thousand students to the CSCD. The idea of the video clip has to be, you know, this is what we can offer; these are things that you can do yourself; that's how you can manage your own life; try it and then ...* [P6: 369]

> [*Ons wil byvoorbeeld nou kyk na 'n SSVO video 'clip' maar die belangrike ding daar is mens moet gaan kyk hoe sluit dit aan by dit waarvoor ons staan en dit wat ons kan doen; waar trek ons ons grense, want die idee met die video 'clip' moet nie wees dat ons nog vyfduisend studente trek na SSVO nie. Die idee van die video 'clip' moet wees, weet jy, hierso is dit wat ons kan bied; hierso is goed wat jy self kan doen; hierso is goed hoe jy jou eie lewe kan bestuur; probeer dit en dan…*]

Only once clarity about the paradigm of the CSCD and the types of services that are directed by the paradigm had been achieved, could an optimisation of the resources of the Centre be facilitated. Participant 8 warned against the risk of staff being caught up in the daily activities to such an extent

that they could not reconsider the paradigm of the Centre. She warned that this could be detrimental to the effective use of resources.

> *If we don't reflect on that question of how we see ourselves – our world view as a paradigm – then we may not think of how we can use our resources effectively. We are very comfortable with what we are doing; so, unless you relook the bigger picture, perhaps there won't be change of how to use your resources.* [P8:542-546]

In practice, this might imply that the current service delivery model of the Centre, which is mostly a problem-centred approach, will be maintained. The demands and pressures that the Centre experiences to deliver services for the changing student community will only become worse.

Another important consideration was that the paradigm of the CSCD should embrace an approach that acknowledges the position of the CSCD in the larger university system. Participant 5 remarked that without such an approach, *"it will still be 'us' and 'them'"* [1:149] [dit gaan nog steeds wees 'ons' en 'hulle']. Participant 5 referred to the traditional, more isolated approach that the CSCD had in terms of its delivery of services.

b. Changing and Augmenting Practices (Pivot)

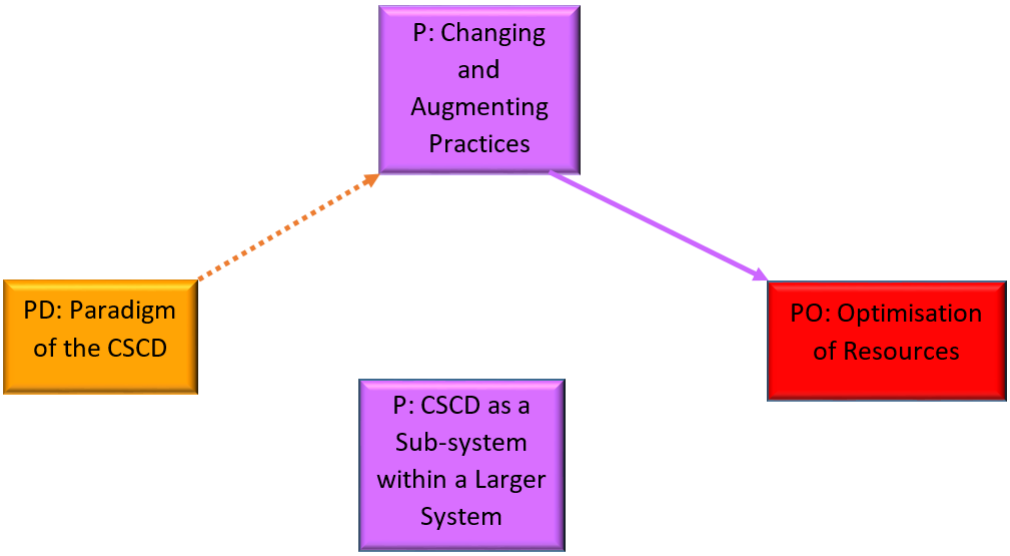


Figure 8.13: Changing and Augmenting Practices relationships

Changing and Augmenting Practices was positioned as a pivot in the system (Figure 8.13). A pivot can be defined as a central important position in a system. The pivot, in terms of IQA, refers to an affinity where the number of drivers that affect it is equal to the number of outcomes it has caused. **Changing and Augmenting Practices** was positioned as being central to the relationship between **Paradigm of the CSCD (PD)** and **Optimisation of Resources (PO).** The paradigm could not affect the optimisation of the Centre's resources significantly before practices had been adjusted.

Participant 8 described the implementation of a screening process[24] in one of the units as a new practice that helped with the strategic utilisation of the available resources.

> *I think of the screening process that we have made use of. We have changed the way things are done, and now every day, a student can come and be screened for a service. Students are being assisted immediately with a problem and they are not sitting on a waiting list. They can be referred appropriately, and that is the optimal use of resource rather than, you know, sitting for an hour with them and only then find out 'goodness, but you should not be here for emotional therapy. You should be here for academic support'.* [P4:438-455].

The use of technology as part of the counselling process was a prominent example of a practice that could facilitate the optimisation of the resources of the Centre. Participant 5 highlighted the fact that transforming the practices of the Centre could imply that staff with a different set of capabilities and strengths should be considered when new appointments are made. An example would be where new staff needed to be equipped with applicable knowledge and skills, should technology be applied more extensively in the functions performed by the centre.

c. CSCD as a Sub-system within a Larger System (Pivot)

The affinity **CSCD as a Sub-system within a Larger System** was positioned as a second pivot of the system (Figure 8.14). It was identified as an important fixed point in the relationship between the primary driver **Paradigm of the CSCD** and the primary outcome **Optimisation of Resources.**

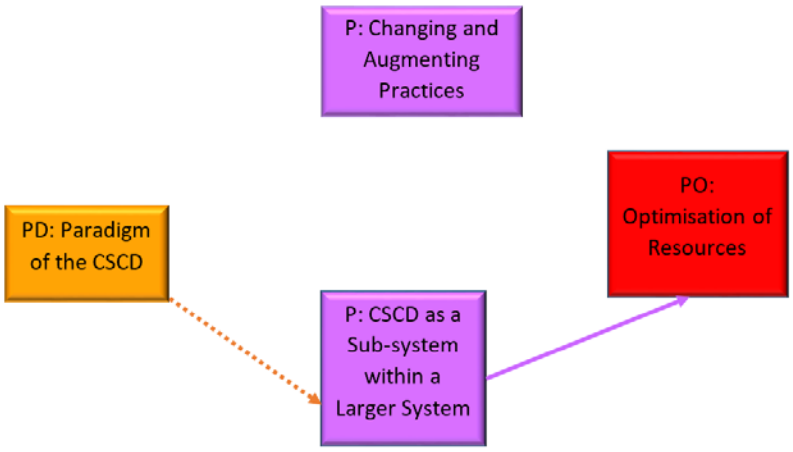


Figure 8.14: CSCD as a Sub-system within a Larger System relationships

[24] A new therapy client's first interview – the intake interview – lasts approximately 45 minutes. One of the outcomes of the first session will be the planning of the rest of the psychotherapy process. A screening session lasts ten minutes, which is conducted before the intake interview, and its exclusive goal is to determine the urgency of a client's needs and if psychotherapy is indicated.

The participants agreed that any changes in the larger university system would have a significant effect on how the centre functioned. Such changes would also significantly influence the availability of resources and how they will be utilised. Participant 6 discussed the uncertainties around the appointment of a new senior director for the Division of Student Affairs[25] and how this could affect the financial budget of the CSCD.

Although a few concerns about continuous changes in the university system were highlighted, Participant 7's opinion thereof was the following:

> *I suspect all that matters to me is that change is not easy for any system. I think it would be important for the university environment, especially the CSCD environment, to really equip management to put these changes on the agenda, because I think it's very easy to just manage things like that as they are. The challenge is actually to have a real big perspective.* [P7:276]
>
> [*Ek vermoed dat al wat vir my uitstaan is dat verandering vir geen sisteem maklik is nie. Ek dink dit sal belangrik wees by die universiteitsomgewing, spesifiek die SSVO omgewing, om regtig bestuur toe te rus om hierdie veranderinge op die agenda te sit, want ek dink dit is baie baie maklik om maar net dinge te bestuur soos wat dit nou is. Die uitdaging is eintlik om 'n regtige groot perspektief te hê.*]

Participant 7 emphasised that, once a sub-system understands the reasons for and the value of system dynamics from a paradigmatic perspective, this understanding can be utilised to optimise the functioning of the sub-system.

d. Optimisation of Resources (Primary Outcome)

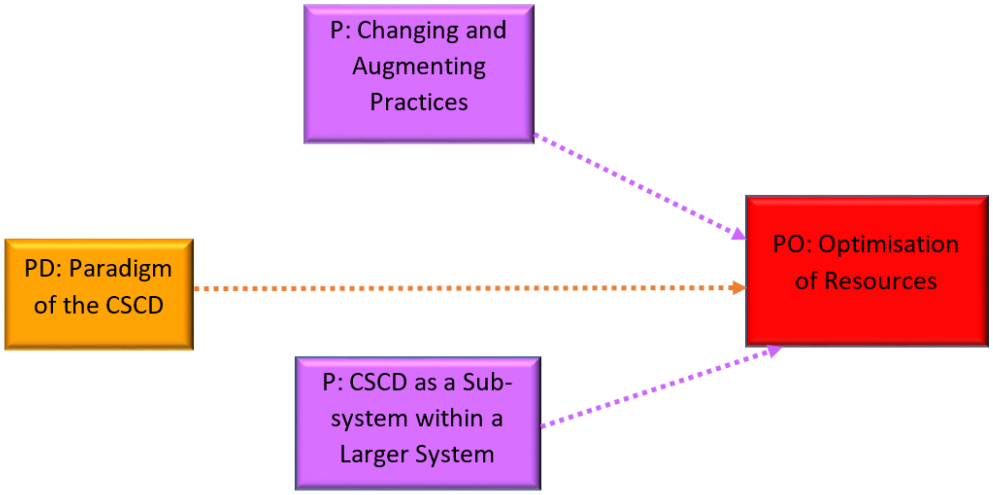


Figure 8.15: Optimisation of Resources relationships

[25] The CSCD is one of three centres under the auspices of the Division of Student Affairs.

The individual participants identified the affinity **Optimisation of Resources** as the primary outcome of the transformation of the CSCD (Figure 8.15). It was identified as the significant effect of the influences of **Paradigm of the CSCD**, **Changing and Augmenting of Resources,** and the **CSCD as a Sub-system within the Larger System.**

The constituency *CSCD staff* agreed with the constituency *University staff: Not CSCD* that the CSCD was in need of transformation. They justified the need in terms of their experiencing a situation in which needs for the services of the CSCD were escalating to such an extent that the Centre could no longer meet the demands. They especially referred to the curative services. The participants highlighted that it would be essential for the CSCD to choose a paradigm that would enable the Centre to contribute optimally to student success. They referred to the paradigm as one that supports preventative and skill development work. The transforming CSCD should shy away from putting even more pressure on the overburdened resources. A transforming CSCD should rather have the optimisation of available resources in mind.

8.3.4. Students

The focus group of the constituency *Students* identified the four affinities that are listed in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4: Affinities[26] identified by the student group

Affinity
Effective education
Future university
Inclusive environment
Personal goals

In the next section, the individuals' descriptions of each affinity are preceded by the focus group's description thereof.

8.3.4.1. Description of affinities

The students' naming and describing of the affinities differed from those of the other two constituencies. The constituencies *Staff of the CSCD* and *Staff: Not CSCD* focussed on the CSCD as an organisation, while the students' affinities were of a more personal nature, future orientated and

[26] Affinities are listed in an alphabetical order.

reminded of a wish list. The affinities were also described in terms of their experiences at the University.

a. Effective Education

> Focus group description: *Effective education offers opportunities for diverse students to interact and prospects for every student's growth. It is responsible for including all students. It does not discourage growth or diverse interaction.*

The focus group formulated their definition of *effective education* by referring to *inclusion* and *opportunities for growth* as important conditions. The participants agreed with the focus group's definition. In their discussions, they included both broad and narrow views of the process.

Participants 9, 10, and 12 shared a broad view of effective education that is similar to the broader definition of student success discussed in Chapter 4. These three participants agreed that effective education involves more than just learning about professional and subject-specific content during a lecture. Participants 9 and 12 expressed their views as follows:

> *How I see student success; it is if you pass your degree. This is my vision for it. And you got the marks you need or want for the direction you want to do one day. Register as a professional or do a master's or whatever. And if you have your social skills at all levels of your life, too.* [P9:117-125]

> [*Hoe ek studentesukses sien; is as jy jou graad deurkom. Dit is my visie vir dit. En jy het die punte wat jy nodig het of wil hê vir die rigting wat jy eendag wil doen. Registreer professioneel, doen 'n meesters of so iets. En ook as jy jou 'social skills' eintlik op alle vlakke van jou lewe het…*]

> *Well, under effective education, I understand that students not only learn to get a good mark but students learn to challenge themselves and also apply what they learned in daily life.* [P12:127]

Participant 11 did not agree with the interpretation of effective education of the other three participants and the focus group. For this participant, effective education refers exclusively to the process that takes place between a lecturer and a student in the classroom. This compares to the narrow definition of student success discussed in Chapter 4.

> *It is much more an individual thing. So, to me, effective education will be only as if the lecturer is good and the resources are there ...* [P11:85]

> [*Dis baie meer 'n individuele ding. So, 'effective education' vir my sal net wees soos as die dosent goed is en die 'resources' is daar…*]

Participant 11 explained her own narrower understanding of the concept in terms of the specific faculty environment to which she belonged.

> *I have never experienced it. They only come and present a class and then they remind us, 'We are actually here to do research; presenting classes is just a sideline'.* [P11:110]
>
> [*Ek het nog nooit dit ervaar nie. Soos hulle kom gee net klas en dan herinner hulle vir ons: 'Jy weet, ons is eintlik hier om navorsing te doen; om klas te gee, is net 'n bysaak'.*]

Participants 9 and 11 studied the same degree programme; yet, their subjective interpretations of effective education differed radically.

The participants interpreted the focus groups' *creating opportunities for growth* as situations in which students were allowed to experience success [P9:146], the ability to empower other students with information at their disposal [P10:266], being inclusive [P11:147], and equipping students with knowledge that they could apply in their daily lives [P12:189].

When asked about the role of the CSCD in effective education, all the participants emphasised that the CSCD had a significant role to play, particularly pertaining to creating and availing opportunities for growth. They categorised the opportunities for growth offered by the CSCD as a part of the students' co-curricular experiences. These opportunities for growth should include the facilitation of challenging conversations, goal setting, and supporting students with transferring knowledge and skills that are needed for student success.

b. Future University

> *Focus group description: A home that breeds focused and responsible students who are accepted for who they are, challenged to grow, supported and encouraged to achieve their goals. It is not merely an institution that offers formal education in the form of a degree. 'Future university' is an umbrella that includes:*
>
> - *personal goals*;
> - *an inclusive environment*; and
> - *effective education.*

From the interviews, it was evident that the participants found it challenging when they had to discuss the affinity **Future University**. This may be attributed to the fact that this affinity represented a future

scenario that was in the early stages of conceptualisation and thus consisted of vague ideas that they had to discuss with others.[27]

Participant 1's opinion of it was as follows:

> *The first thing that came to my mind was like futuristic, Star Wars, that stuff, but I think what we*[28] *meant was to not only think of the now. Obviously it is good to think of the now. To think of how we can challenge the university, how we can push the university to become better in the future. Like, where is the university now and where would we like to see it in the future?*

The participants agreed that the current SU should transform significantly to become the future university they had in mind. Participant 12 admitted that many students at SU were not happy. She envisioned a future where all the students should be happy in their environment. She viewed happiness as a prerequisite for success.

> *So, if we transform the university where people want to apply and when they apply they are happy here and they want to be here and stay here. Then students will easily have motivation to reach their goals and to study with success. The university gives them a chance or helps them to reach that success.* [P12:117-121]

If student success should be equated with happiness, Participant 11's testimony about students who have negative attitudes towards the University, is worrisome. She interacted with many students who had negative attitudes towards the University. For these students, it was difficult to trust the intentions of the university staff. A future university should rather be one where students will realise that the University wants to offer them ample opportunities to develop and to be successful.

Participant 11 summarised SU as a future university as follows:

> *Where a student who comes from a poor background can come in and say I've made it, and when I leave this place, I am going to leave a much better person. I'm going to leave and I would have grown mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and everything. I won't just leave with a piece of paper. I shall leave as a whole being. That's a future university.*

c. Inclusive Environment

> Focus group definition: *A diverse compilation of spaces that creates opportunities for growth of different groups of people. The inclusive environment does not have rigid spaces that only cater for the needs of one group of people. It does not host exclusive places and opportunities.*

[27] *cf.* Bradfield, Wright, Burta, Carns &Van der Heijdena (2005)

[28] Focus group.

> *It is a utility used by the university, people, and education to better the current way of development.*[29]

SU, as a transforming 21st-century university, embraces inclusivity as an important component of its Vision 2030[30]. The discourse of inclusivity is continued in Vision 2040, which will be implemented in 2019 (Chapter 3). A vision is an abstract construct that needs to be concretised by implementing practices that give effect to values. Participant 9 warned against ascribing only a theoretical connotation to inclusivity and not actually implementing the concrete practices thereof. He was not satisfied with the level of implementation of this value at SU.

> *It will then be a very theoretical thing that I actually find happening in the university circles. I see it at some of the meetings that I attend. Because I am a very practical person with an engineering background, I want to implement it.* [P9:80-84]

> [*Dan gaan dit 'n baie teoretiese ding wees wat ek eintlik vind in universiteit sirkels. Ek sien dit by party vergaderings waar ek sit. Omdat ek 'n baie praktiese persoon is met ingenieursagtergrond, so ek wil implementeer.*]

Throughout the discussions, it was evident that the students experienced the affinity as complex. Participant 12 [P12:78] viewed an inclusive environment as one that includes minority groups and does not marginalise them. Participant 10 had a similar notion of inclusion. He was of the opinion that SU was not even close to creating an inclusive environment. The other participants recognised some inclusive approaches, but they stood critical towards their effectiveness.

Participant 10 was of the opinion that the institution was not successful in embracing and implementing the value and that this should be done without further deliberation. He motivated its importance as follows:

> *We can only achieve an inclusive environment where we go deep down and look at things like respect ... look at things like understanding ... things like tolerance; we look at things such as education and being able to put ourselves in a position where we are willing to understand another person.* [P10:50-54]

Participants 9 and 11 stated that they had experienced efforts for inclusion at SU. Their experience was that inclusion, as it was currently practised, actually led to exclusion. Participant 9 described himself as part of the traditional student population at SU. He found that the community naturally included him as an Afrikaans white male. The moment when an effort was made to include a minority

[29] development of students

[30] SU, 2013a

group in an event, he experienced his identity as being threatened. His explanation was that the inclusion of a specific group may lead to the exclusion of another group.

> *It is the nature of people to always exclude somebody. People have different views about these things. Therefore, again, it is about when you try to include one group you challenge the core values of another group.* [P9:69-75]
>
> [*Die natuur van die mense is om altyd iemand uit te sluit. Mense het verskillende 'views' op dinge. So, dit is weereens, wanneer jy die een groep probeer 'include' dan vat jy eintlik die 'core values' van 'n ander groep aan.*]

Participant 11[31] elaborated on Participant 9's statement about inclusion vs. exclusion. How she experienced it differed from the experience of Participant 9. She referred to initiatives taken by the residence in which she lived.

> *When you make it super obvious that, yes we are now doing something special for them so that they can feel included, you actually single them out … like you identify them as 'this is now for you'*. [P11:439-441]
>
> [*Wanneer 'n mens dit super 'obvious' maak dat jy iets spesiaals doen om hulle ingesluit te laat voel, laat jy hulle eintlik uitstaan … soos jy identifiseer hulle as soos 'hierdie is nou vir julle'*.]

The participants' complex understandings of the affinities were reflected in their ideas of what an inclusive CSCD should look like. The participants' discussions of the inclusiveness of the CSCD were of a subjective nature based on their own experience of the service. It was also determined by the composition of the target group for whom they considered the Centre's services should be available.

Participant 9 was convinced that CSCD services should be exclusive in nature. His interpretation of an exclusive CSCD referred to the type of services that would be exclusively available for a specific target group, which he termed "people who need help". However, the "people who need help" should be inclusive of the diverse student community.

> *Yes, as I see it – to put it bluntly – the CSCD must actually be exclusive for people who need the help the most, because we, in fact, still cater for the rest through the mentors*[32]. [P9:693-695].

[31] Afrikaans white female.

[32] Senior students are appointed to mentor first year students (see 4.6)

> [*Ja, SSVO volgens hoe ek dit sien, moet – 'to put it bluntly' – eintlik eksklusief wees vir die mense wat die hulp die nodigste het, want 'n mens 'cater' klaar eintlik nog steeds deur die mentors vir die res.*]

Participant 11 [P11:321] described the CSCD in terms of her experience at the 'houses in Victoria [33]Street'. She experienced it as an inclusive environment when she made use of the services. She described herself as white, Afrikaans, and from an affluent family who made use of the services when she experienced symptoms of depression. Her understanding of inclusiveness was of a subjective nature and based on her own experience of psychological services – limited to a problem-focussed service delivered in a specific space.

Participant 10's view of the CSCD opposed both Participants 9 and 11's ideas of the Centre and inclusiveness. He did not view the target group from a problem-focussed framework. He did not even consider the CSCD to occupy one space – the 'houses in Victoria Street' – as Participant 11 did. He was outspoken about the Centre's low profile in the residential and other student areas. He was of the opinion that the Centre would never form part of an inclusive environment if it did not strengthen its presence in the student environments.

> *You[34] need to demand the presence, because people tend to not take you seriously. You need to demand the presence and ensure that they know just how important the centre is.* [P10:99-103].

Participant 10 continued to explain that should the services of the Centre be delivered only on the premises of the CSCD, students could perceive the Centre as just another university structure and to students that did not relate to inclusion.

> *Everyone says, 'Go to that centre', and immediately they think, 'But it's a university structure. How are they going to help me? They are just like the rest.' And you get students who feel that way.* [P10:108]

Thus, being another university structure[35] was associated with exclusion, while a service that was seen as part of the student community was not experienced as such.

d. Personal Goals

> Focus group definition: *Factors for personal success. It's only focussed on the individual, not the community/university. It differs from the rest in that it is only for personal outcome.*

[33] The CSCD is located in six historical houses in Victoria Street.

[34] The CSCD.

[35] Not a physical structure.

All the participants agreed that goal setting is an important skill to acquire during students' time at university. Its significant role in student success was highlighted when Participant 9 referred to the importance of personal goal setting as follows:

> *We are building foundations for the rest of our lives. It is not, when I leave next year or at the end of the year, that I am now an engineer that can solve every problem in my field.* [P9:136-140]

> [*Ons bou fondasies vir die res van ons lewens. Dit is nie, wanneer ek hier uitstap volgende jaar of aan die einde van die jaar, dat ek nou 'n ingenieur is wat elke probleem in my veld kan oplos nie.*]

The participants were of the opinion that support with personal goal setting was relevant from the very first day of new students' arrival at SU. Participant 10 described his experience as follows:

> *I came here as a student and I had goals for myself and dreams. I wanted to achieve this in short-term goals and long-term goals, but as you come in, you are exposed to different things, different environments.* [P10:219]

All the participants acknowledged that students' goals could change throughout their study years and thereafter. Therefore, they should learn how to reconsider and reformulate their goals continually.

According to the participants, it was a given that support with goal setting was one of the tasks of the CSCD. Three of the participants (P9, 10, and 11) referred to the responsibility of the CSCD towards helping students with the basic principles thereof. With these acquired knowledge and skills, students would be enabled to formulate their own personal goals. Their discussions about the role of the CSCD focussed more on the students who lacked the necessary skills and who were thus in need of the support of the CSCD. This compares with Participants 9 and 11's overt opinion under **d) Inclusive Environment** that the Centre should be an environment functioning within a problem-focussed paradigm.

Participant 12 had a different opinion of the role of the CSCD in personal goal setting. She referred to the role the CSCD could play in students' happiness, should they decide to make use of the developmental opportunities that were available.

> *Through workshops, the CSCD makes people aware that studying is not the only thing in life. I mean, it gets you a degree and everything but if you have a personal goal, for instance to be happy … a lot of people forget about that. They are just like, 'OK, I want to make money, I want a house, I want five cars', but then, are you happy? So, the CSCD could be there to also make people aware and offer workshops where they say, 'Listen, this is what you are studying, but what are your personal inner goals that make you happy?'* [P12:161-176].

The participants were convinced that the CSCD had a responsibility to support students with personal goal setting. Their interpretation of this responsibility stretched between the two extremes of supporting students who had no or limited skills to set goals on the one end, and on the other end offering opportunities for setting goals that would challenge them to accomplish more than the average.

8.3.4.2. Description of relationships

Figure 8.16 is the combined SID of all the individual SIDs of the participants.

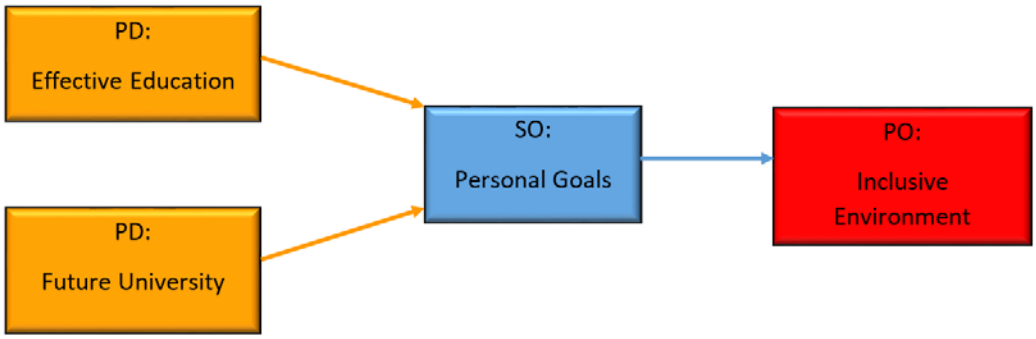


Figure 8.16: Combined uncluttered SID of students

a. Effective Education (Primary Driver)

Figure 8.17: Effective Education relationships

The affinity **Effective Education** was positioned as a primary driver of the system (Figure 8.17). According to the participants, **Effective Education** affects the secondary outcome **Personal Goals.**

Effective Education, as the primary driver of the system, should create opportunities for students to formulate and achieve their personal goals. Participant 10 described the process of formulating such goals as follows:

> *This effective education ... that, in a way, influences my personal goals in terms of 'what do I see', 'where do I fit in here', 'what can I do as a student to ensure that we get to that environment we want to get in'.* [P12:338-342]

The students highlighted the development of their emotional intelligence, the improvement of quality interactions, and altruism as important personal goals that they wanted to achieve. Participant 12 [P12:231] indicated that happiness should be the ultimate personal goal that could be realised because of effective education.

b. Future University (Primary Driver)

Figure 8.18: Future University relationships

Future University, as in the case of **Effective Education**, was a primary driver with a cause effect on the affinity **Personal Goals** (Figure 8.18)**.**

The participants described the **Future University** as an institution that is not only responsible for the acquisition of scientific knowledge. It was described as an affinity that was in a close relationship with the affinity **Personal Goals.** The participants viewed the **Future University** as an institution where students were motivated and where they were challenged to develop and achieve their personal goals. A transformed **Future University** could also be a place where students would experience happiness.

> *So, if we transform the university where people want to apply and when they apply they are happy here and they want to be here and stay here. Then students will easily have motivation to reach their goals and to study with success.* [P4:116-121]

A **Future University** would be attractive for prospective students because it created opportunities for students to be successful – a comprehensive goal of HE.

c. Personal Goals (Secondary Outcome)

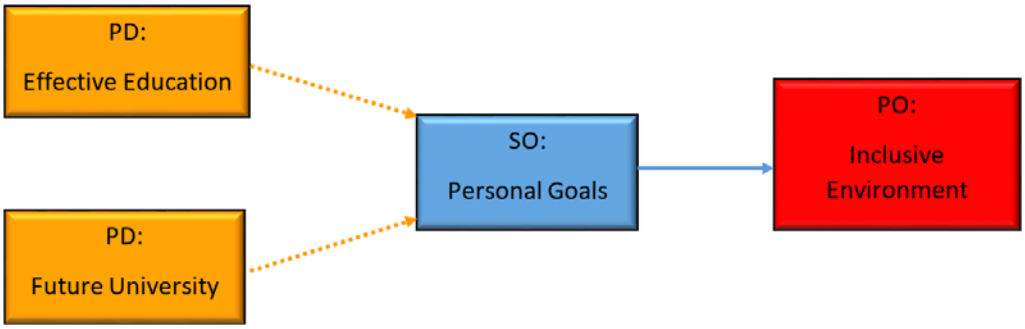


Figure 8.19: Personal Goals relationships

Personal Goals was positioned as a secondary outcome caused by the influences of the two primary drivers **Effective Education** and **Future University** (Figure 8.19). In turn, **Personal Goals** acted as an intermediary affinity that affected **Inclusive Environment.** This effect was ascribed to the strong effect of the two primary drivers.

All the participants agreed that every student's personal goals would play a role in creating an **Inclusive Environment**. Both Vision 2030 and the more recent Vision 2040 value an inclusive student experience. Participants 1 and 2 were concerned about the fact that many students were still experiencing SU as an exclusive institution, in spite of the university advocating the opposite. Participant 4 described the exclusiveness of SU in terms of students' unhappiness.

> *Right now, Stellenbosch University is in a situation where a lot of people are unhappy. A lot of people are happy and comfortable where they are, but a lot of people are unhappy. So I think, to be future orientated, we must recognise this and try to find the balance between the people that are comfortable with the situation now and the people that are uncomfortable. There's stuff going around that the university is racist. I do not agree with everything, but we have to find a balance between the people who are happy right now and the people who are not happy. In a future university, there will always be someone who is not happy, but the majority can be happy.* [P4:105-114]

All the participants, however, shared the opinion that students' personal goals should be aligned with the vision of SU before an inclusive environment could be established. If students' goals were not directed at inclusivity, there would be a disconnection between **Effective Education** and **Future University** as primary drivers and **Inclusive Environment** as a primary outcome.

d. Inclusive Environment (Primary Outcome)

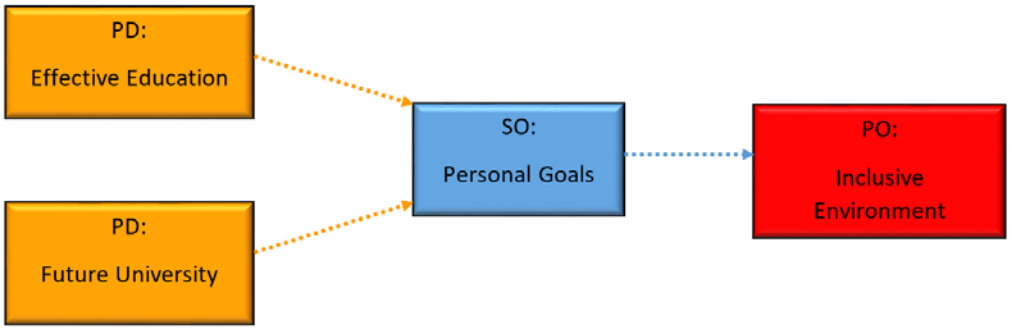


Figure 8.20: Inclusive Environment relationships

The participants positioned **Inclusive Environment** as the primary outcome of their construction of the CSCD system (Figure 8.20). It was affected by the affinity **Personal Goals,** but as discussed in the previous section, it was identified as the significant effect of two primary drivers, namely **Effective Education** and **Future University**.

The students positioned themselves as active role-players in the transformation process. For them, the focus was on a transforming university experience rather than the transforming CSCD. They envisioned a CSCD that could empower the university society, of which they were members, to drive the transformation of the institution. They asked for a CSCD that would create opportunities for growth, that would support them in formulating goals and that would empower them to transfer knowledge and skills that they develop to other sub-systems and systems.

Important themes that emerged from the description of the result are the confirmation that the CSCD was in need of change, that the paradigm of service delivery should be reconsidered, and that there was a significant need for the integration of the services of the Centre with the rest of the university system. The different constituencies constructed their own idiosyncratic transforming CSCD systems. This can be attributed to lack of insight that different role-players have in the services that the CSCD provides and the disconnection in the CSCD between what is needed and what the current offering entails.

The IQA process determines that the results should be interpreted and analysed after they have been discussed. True to the nature of IQA, the data are interpreted systematically, as depicted in Figure 8.1 (green section).

8.4. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Northcutt and McCoy (2004:343) determine that the interpretation and analysis of the data should be divided into three levels:

- **Structural level**: Compare and contrast systems to answer the research question.
- **Theoretical meaning**: Examine systems through a lens provided by the theoretical framework of the study.
- **Applied meaning**: Focus on prospective and retrospective scenarios and likely effects or implications of extra-systemic influences.

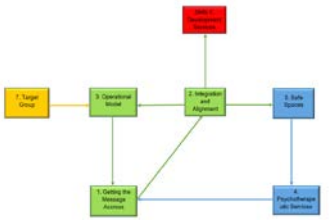
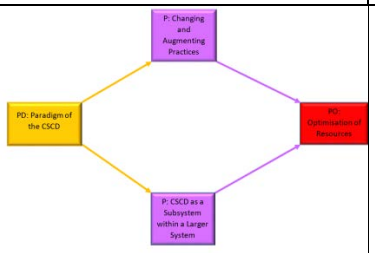
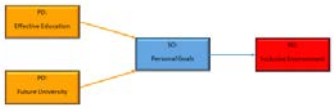
I shall discuss the **structural level** of interpretation in this chapter and the **theoretical meaning** and **applied meaning** in Chapter 9.

8.4.1. Structural level of interpretation

On the structural level of interpretation, the researcher scrutinises the different systems (SIDs) by comparing them with one another. Similarities and differences among the systems are indicated and discussed. The structural interpretation guides the researcher in answering the research question.

An overview of the three systems indicated significant differences in the structure for each constituency (Table 8.5). The SID of the *SU Staff: Non CSCD* was more complex than those of the other two systems. Zooming in, I could determine that the elements of each system were not compatible to such an extent that one composite SID – protocol of IQA (Figure 7.2: orange section) – could have been designed for all three constituencies together. The different elements of each SID and the position of each element in the system are provided in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5: Comparing the systems

SU Staff: Non-CSCD	CSCD Staff	Students
		
Primary Driver: Target Group	**Primary Driver:** Paradigm of the CSCD	**Primary Driver:** Effective Education Future University
Secondary Driver: Operational Model Getting the Message Across Integration and Alignment	**Secondary Driver:** None	**Secondary Driver:** None
Pivot: None	**Pivot:** Changing and Augmenting Practices Sub-system within a Larger System	**Pivot:** None

Secondary Outcome: Safe Spaces Psychotherapeutic Services	**Secondary Outcome:** None	**Secondary Outcome** Personal Goals
Primary Outcome: Skill Development Services	**Primary Outcome:** Optimisation of Resources	**Primary Outcome:** Inclusive Education

On a macro-level, I interpreted Table 8.5 as a scenario where three different sub-systems in the Stellenbosch University community construed the transformation of the CSCD to promote student success optimally in different ways. However, I could not discuss the reasons for the different constructions without zooming[36] in on the affinities, the relationships between them, and understanding the feedback loops in the systems.

8.4.2. Affinities

The constituencies *SU Staff: Non-CSCD* and *Students* provided an outsider view of the phenomenon, whereas the *CSCD Staff* provided an insider view thereof. This could serve as an explanation for the incompatibility of the SIDs of the different constituencies. Barker (1993) refers to the importance of an outsider view of a specific sub-system that is studied. As outsiders, the university staff who did not work at the CSCD and the students were able to share perspectives about external influences on the CSCD as a sub-system and about the influences of the CSCD on the external environment, which pertains not only to the university system, but also to the larger society.

There is a clear distinction between the two outsider constituencies – *Students* and *SU Staff: Not CSCD* – and the insider view of the *CSCD staff* about the transformation process of the CSCD. The *SU Staff: Not CSCD* and *Students* constructed a transforming CSCD system with a pertinent focus on the needs of the client and on the external environment. The insider view of the constituency *CSCD Staff* was more problem driven and focussed on possible solutions for the challenges they were experiencing inside the Centre.

An inspection of the affinities of each system also confirmed significant differences between constituencies. The affinities of the constituency *Students* did not relate specifically to the CSCD as a sub-system. The students discussed their wish lists for the Stellenbosch University system on a macro level. They focussed on how they perceived the future role of the university in supporting student success and not the specific role of the CSCD as a sub-system. During each interview, I asked them to tell me more about how they perceived the role of the CSCD in student success. In general, both the participants who were clients and those who were not clients of the CSCD were quite vague

[36] Northcutt and McCoy (2004:35) use the terms 'zooming in' and 'zooming out' to describe the researcher viewing the system on a micro level and viewing it on a macro level.

in their descriptions. Participant 10's description of **Effective Education** illustrated the above-mentioned observations.

> *OK. I do not really feel that some of these things are now applicable. It is much more an individual thing. It is like student interaction, diversity, and effective education to me will only be if the lecturer is good. [P10:75-88]*
>
> *[OK. Ek voel nie rêrig dat party van hierdie goed nou soos 'applicable' is. Dit is meer van 'n individuele ding. Dit is soos 'student interaction', 'diversity' en 'effective education' vir my sal net wees soos as die dosent goed is.]*

When I prompted her about the specific role of the CSCD, her answer was as follows:

> *I do not really know how the CSCD can change to implement these things. I actually do not know. [P10:185-187]*
>
> *[Ek weet nie eintlik hoe sal die SSVO kan verander om hierdie goed te implementeer nie. Ek weet 'actually' nie.]*

With regard to the constituency *SU Staff: Non-CSCD,* the affinities and the participants' descriptions thereof were informed by their own experiences of a changing student community, changes in students' needs, and what they perceived students could benefit from to experience success.

I was able to group the affinities of the constituency *SU Staff: Non-CSCD* into two related groups. I could relate the affinities **Target Group**, **Operational Model, Integration and Alignment** and **Getting the Message Across** to a strategic change management process, whereas the affinities **Safe Spaces, Psychotherapeutic Services** and **Skill Development Services** described the results due to organisational changes.

The affinities of the constituency *CSCD Staff* originated from the staff's deliberations about the challenges that they experienced as members of the CSCD sub-system. This was understandable from a systems point of view where the members of a sub-system (CSCD) closest to the phenomenon (distance) can discuss the effects of the influences from outside the sphere of the specific sub-system as well as influences in the sub-system itself from their own frame of reference.

Each constituency assigned the affinities to different zones. In the next section, I shall elaborate on the different zones and provide my interpretation of them.

8.4.3. Zones

A system constitutes different zones, namely drivers, pivots, and outcomes. The drivers have a significant effect on the changes that occur in a system. The outcomes are the products of such

changes. A pivot is the fulcrum around which the drivers and outcomes of the system are arranged. Not all the systems necessarily have a pivot.

In this study, the CSCD Staff system had two pivots, namely **Changing and Augmenting Practices** and **Sub-system within a Larger System**. According to the CSCD Staff, positioning of the Centre within the larger university system, as well as how it changes and augments its practices, plays a central role in transforming the Centre as part of a future Stellenbosch University. Having both these affinities in the pivotal position also emphasises a continuous interaction between them, of which one should be cognisant during the transformation process. The cleaned SID[37] (Figure 8.21) of the CSCD Staff system demonstrates this interactive relationship between the two pivotal affinities.

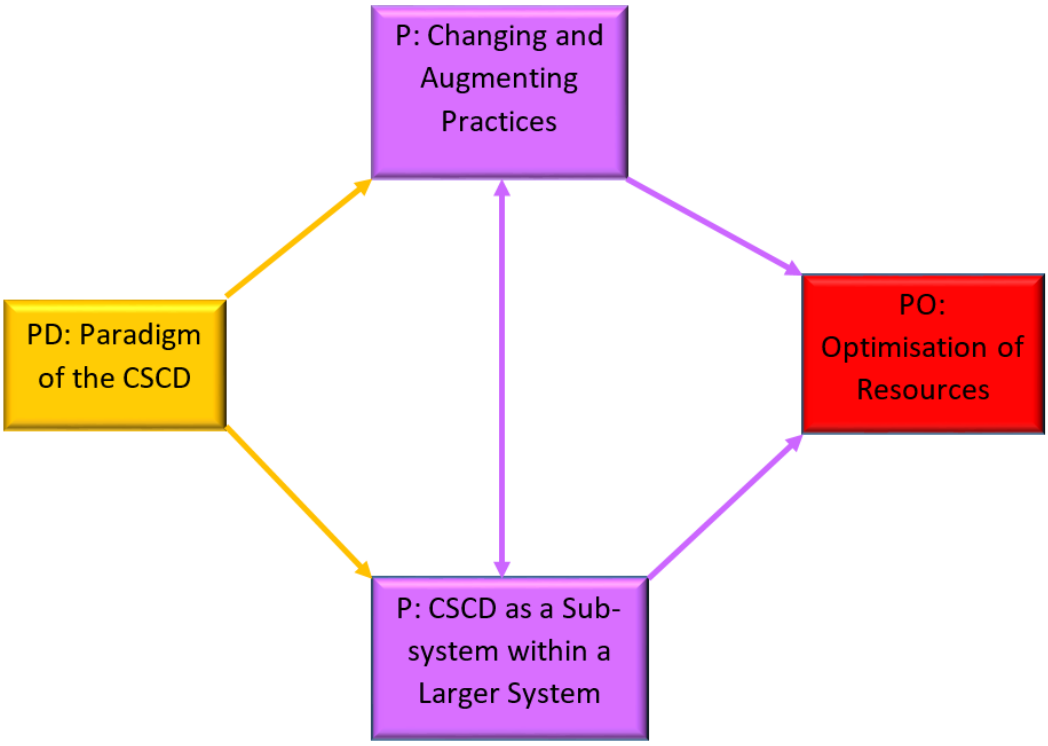


Figure 8.21: Cleaned SID: CSCD Staff system

The cluttered SID (Figure 8.22) demonstrates a direct relationship between the primary driver – **Paradigm of the CSCD –** and the primary outcome **Optimisation of Resources.**

[37] An uncluttered SID with all the redundant links added.

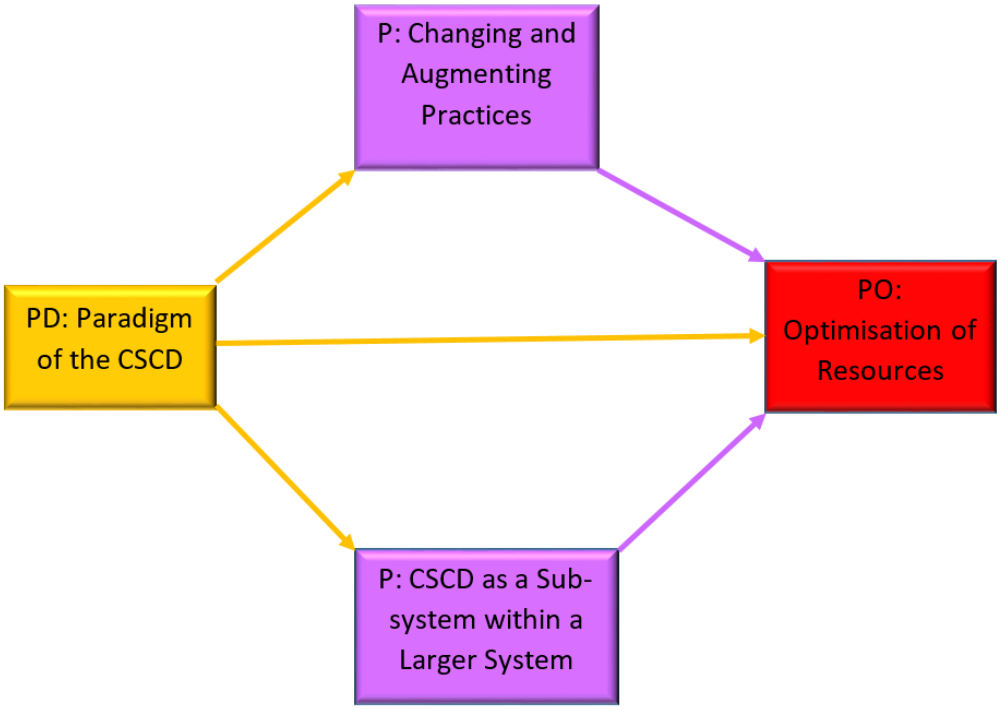


Figure 8.22: Cluttered SID: CSCD Staff system

The paradigm that directs the transformation process has a direct effect on optimising resources that are currently under immense pressure. According to the participants, resources include both staff and physical resources. The paradigm that directs the transformation process also has an indirect effect on the optimisation of resources via the two pivots.

The Non-CSCD Staff system (Figure 8.3) has primary and secondary drivers and primary and secondary outcomes. The outsider view of the Non-CSCD Staff of a transforming CSCD determines that the target group of the Centre influences different intermediary elements in the system in order to ensure that the development of the target group's skills is a primary outcome. The Non-CSCD Staff system is not a linear system. It contains two feedback loops. A feedback loop is a recursion without a beginning and an end (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), and the elements of the feedback loop affect one another directly and indirectly.

The one feedback loop occurs between the different secondary drivers, namely **Getting the Message Across**, **Integration and Alignment,** and **Operational Model** (Figure 8.23).

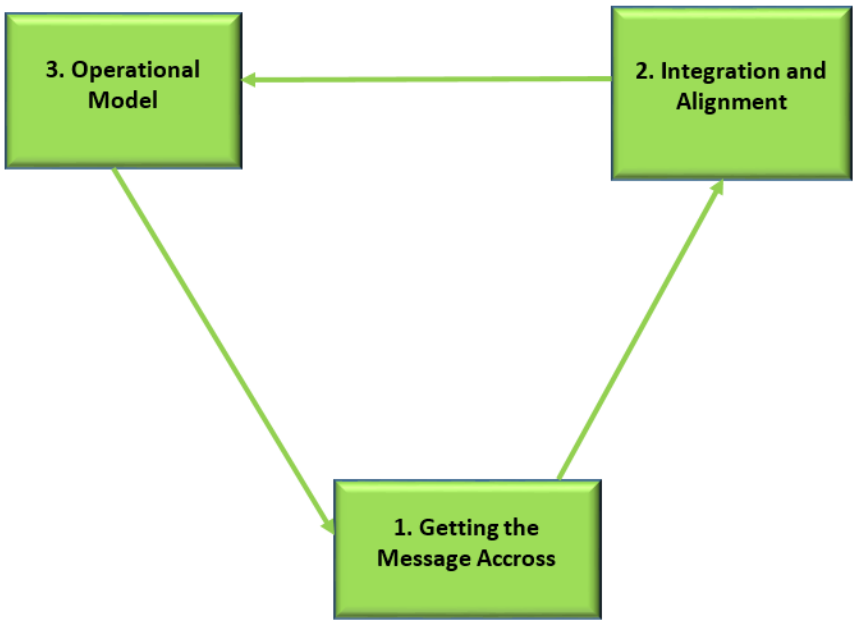


Figure 8.23: Feedback Loop A

Northcutt and McCoy (2004) explain that a feedback loop might represent a common affinity in the sub-system. In this case, my interpretation is that the affinities **Integration and Alignment** and **Getting the Message Across** can be viewed as sub-elements of the **Operational Model**. Thus, this feedback loop can be substituted by one affinity, namely the **Operational Model**.

The other feedback loop (Figure 8.24) is formed by a combination of secondary drivers and secondary outcomes and includes the affinities **Integration and Alignment**, **Safe Spaces**, **Psychotherapeutic Services,** and **Getting the Message Across**. I decided against substituting these affinities with a common one as I did with Feedback Loop A, because it contains both secondary drivers and secondary outcomes. I decided to rather treat it as a sub-system within the larger CSCD system.

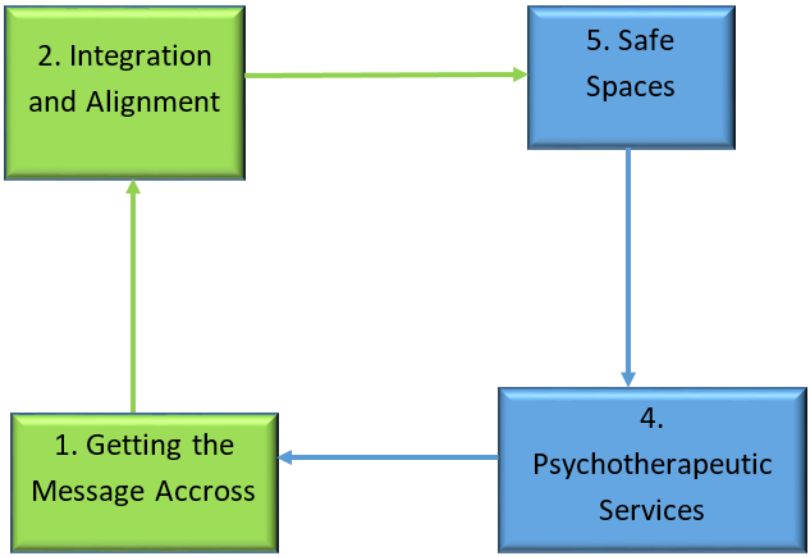


Figure 8.24: Feedback Loop B

The CSCD system that is informed by the students' identification of the different elements of the system as well as the relationships between the different elements (Figure 8.16) consists of two primary drivers, namely **Effective Education** and **Inclusive University**. Without these two drivers, there will not be an **Inclusive System** – the primary outcome of the system. Being able to formulate **Personal Goals** is a secondary outcome of the system.

8.4.4. SIDs

The structural analysis provided me with information about the differences and similarities of the composite SIDs of the three constituencies, but it could not explain why I was not able to combine the composite SIDs of the three constituencies. Scrutinising underlying assumptions about the three constituencies that were selected to participate in the IQA process provided the answers.

In summary, I interpreted the results by analysing the SIDs structurally. IQA postulates that comparing and contrasting the individual SIDs, the composite SIDs of each constituency and the combined SID of all three constituencies will provide answers to the research question. It was, however, not possible for me to reconcile the different affinities. My interpretation is that the expert position that the Centre took for many years isolated it from the other sub-systems to such an extent that they were not knowledgeable enough about the services that the CSCD provides and that the CSCD, owing to a lack of meaningful interaction with the other sub-systems, was not always informed about the needs of the other sub-systems of the university. It is necessary for the CSCD to recognise the value of being an open sub-system that allows for inputs from other sub-systems. However, as elicited by the constituency *Staff: Non-CSCD*, the professional boundaries of the CSCD should be negotiated and be respected.

8.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The fourth phase, namely a description of the results, was the focus of this chapter. I described the affinities of each constituency that had been identified by the focus groups. Thereafter, I discussed the relationships between the different affinities. The descriptions provided in this chapter function as the foundation for interpreting the results of the study, which is the fifth and final phase of the IQA study. In Chapter 9, I shall interpret the results by applying the rules of IQA. I shall also use the different theoretical frameworks that I discussed in Chapter 6 as lenses to guide the process of interpretation.

CHAPTER 9
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. INTRODUCTION

I undertook this study because of a growing awareness that the CSCD at Stellenbosch University has to function in a changing university community, and that the current service delivery model cannot provide optimally for the needs of this community; hence, it is in need of transformation. A review of literature, with specific reference to the role of counselling centres in student success, indicated a gap in the knowledge of how these centres could or should transform to remain relevant, given the changes that are occurring in HE. I could not locate any literature about the transformation of counselling centres in response to a changing higher education system or South African society. In fact, very limited research was published about student counselling in South African higher education during the past ten years. In addition, literature about organisational development and counselling centres is sparse. I identified one study (Lodewyck, 2005) in which IQA was utilised to answer research questions pertaining to student counselling services, but this was limited to career counselling and perceptions about self-efficacy. Clearly, there was a gap in the current body of knowledge on student counselling in South African higher education, and this study endeavoured to contribute to filling this gap.

9.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The transformation of an organisation is a challenging and ongoing process, and there never is a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Every organisation exists in a unique context, has a unique character and culture, and reacts in different ways to a changing environment (Chapter 6). Should the organisation not respond actively to a changing context, it would stagnate and eventually fossilise. A stagnating organisation is characterised by minimal to no growth, lack of innovation, and inability to serve the needs of its clients appropriately. Should the CSCD stagnate and consequently no longer respond adequately to the needs of its primary clientele (students), its entire *raison d'etre* could be questioned.

I deemed it important to first explore why there was a need for the CSCD to transform. It was not exclusively due to the internal requirements of the CSCD (Chapter 5). The need for transformation materialised because of a changing Stellenbosch University (Chapter 3). These changes are related to the transformation of HE in South Africa since the election of a democratic government in 1994 (Chapter 2). International HE dynamics and the continuous development of the larger society are

contributing factors. I viewed Stellenbosch University as a system and the CSCD as one of its sub-systems.

After the 1994 election, when the ANC became the governing party in South Africa, several changes in policies and laws in the country occurred to promote the ideals of the new democracy. HE was identified as one of the vehicles to implement and sustain these ideals. South African HE was expected to play an essential role in eradicating the injustices of the past. The historically privileged white elite institutions widened access to include previously excluded black, coloured and Indian students, who in the apartheid dispensation were denied or had limited access to HE and had to study at HEIs that were not well resourced and where the quality of education was questionable.

Increased access for students from previously disadvantaged groups led to an increase in the diversity of student communities and changes in the kind and extent of student support required. Stellenbosch University patently experienced the effect of a transforming SA and the consequent transformation of HE in South Africa. Institutional transformation was not met without resistance from some SU stakeholders, notably the alumni. As a historically white institution with Afrikaans as language of teaching and learning, SU responded to external changes but also to internal moral imperatives for transforming into a multi-racial, multilingual institution.

As the transformation process at Stellenbosch University was unfolding, several challenges regarding perceptions about and practices for student success surfaced. This affected the work of the CSCD directly. Recognising student success as a multifaceted construct that entails more than successful academic performance, created a platform for supporting a holistic developmental approach to promote student success (Kuh *et al*., 2006). The CSCD finds itself in an ideal position to contribute to such opportunities. Psychology – and by implication student counselling services - should embrace both curative and developmental work (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Counselling centres are sub-systems in institutional systems that form part of the larger university system. Therefore, transformation of the university (the system) implies transformation of the counselling centre (one of its sub-systems). However, the situation becomes precarious if an organisation drives its own transformation in isolation, based on perceptions of what is needed. According to systems theory (Chapter 6), the transformation of the CSCD as a sub-system will affect various other sub-systems at the University. Therefore, I adopted a systems approach by utilising IQA (Chapter 7) as methodology to explore the transformation of the CSCD. The research was guided by the following research question and sub-questions:

How could the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University transform to contribute optimally to student success?

- *How do different role-players in the Stellenbosch University community conceptualise the transformation process of the CSCD?*
- *What are the different role-players' suggestions regarding the transformation of the CSCD?*
- *What are the practical implications of transformation for the CSCD?*

The literature review (Chapters 2 to 5) and the research results (Chapter 8) informed my answers to the sub-questions leading to answering the main research question. In Chapter 6, I provided the conceptual framework that I applied to interpret and analyse the results (Chapter 8).

In the rest of this chapter, I discuss the research findings to answer the research question (Section 9.3), followed by a discussion of the contributions (Section 9.4) and limitations of the study (Section 9.5).

9.3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Data were generated by conducting focus group interviews and individual interviews with participants of three constituencies: *CSCD staff*, *University Staff: Non-CSCD* and *Students* of Stellenbosch University. The dynamic interactive experiences of the participants were essential in the process of understanding and making meaning of the transformation of the CSCD. The research data generated by means of the interactions of the participants were used to answer the three research sub-questions.

9.3.1. Sub-question 1

How do different role-players in the Stellenbosch University community conceptualise the transformation process of the CSCD?

The three constituencies who participated in my study provided different conceptualisations of the transformation process of the CSCD (Figures 8.3, 8.11, and 8.15). I shall first discuss the conceptualisation of each constituency of the transformation process. Thereafter, I shall elicit central themes.

9.3.1.1. University staff: Non-CSCD

The *University staff: Non-CSCD* was of the opinion that knowledge about the target group of the CSCD would be the key determinant of transformation. A transforming CSCD must identify who the target group is and have knowledge about the composition of the group, their strengths, and the

challenges that they experience. The target group is not homogenous and is evolving constantly. Transformation implies that the CSCD and the target group should have an interactive relationship in which each is aware of the needs and expectations of the other and both are aware of the dynamics of the changing sub-systems.

The characteristics of the target group will have a significant effect on the operational model of the Centre. In the literature review, I identified it as a service delivery model, and alluded to the duality of a medical model *versus* a developmental model. An analysis of the target group – a diverse group with diverse strengths that also experiences a diversity of challenges – supports my proposal of a holistic systemic developmental model. An important component of the operational model is to ensure that the members of all the sub-systems, through interaction, stay informed of the role and services of the CSCD. The operational model should also foresee different ways of disseminating information to the target group.

One of the outcomes of a developmental operational model should be the creation of safe spaces for students to interact, learn from one another, and have courageous conversations. Therefore, safe spaces in the transforming CSCD do not refer exclusively to the consultation rooms of the CSCD. Safe spaces should be entrenched throughout the university community, and the CSCD should have a presence in those spaces. This could include staff, peer counsellors, and mentors.

Another outcome of the transforming system should be the provision of psychotherapeutic services to the target group. The target group and operational model should inform the type of psychotherapeutic services that are provided. This constituency suggested group and individual sessions. An operational model that is supported by a developmental paradigm implies that a strength-based psychotherapy approach is indicated.

The primary outcome of a transforming CSCD should be to develop students. A developmental service delivery model recognises that all registered students should be regarded as the target group. This is different from the traditional medical model in which only students with problems and needs are regarded as the target group. By utilising a developmental operational model, the CSCD should create opportunities for students to grow, identify and utilise their strengths, and flourish.

9.3.1.2. CSCD staff

Compared to the *University staff: Non-CSCD*, the *CSCD staff* construed a relatively simple system for transformation. They conceptualised a transformation process that should be driven by the paradigm of choice. They also alluded to a developmental approach/paradigm. For the *CSCD staff*, the primary outcome of transformation should be an optimisation of the resources of the Centre. As

discussed in the literature review, the reality is that the current medical approach places the resources of such centres under immense pressure (Section 5.6.2). The continued expansion of the staff component is not a permanent solution. In view of the dire financial situation in which many HEIs find themselves, the appointment of more support staff is not financially viable. Naledi Pandor, the Minister of Higher Education and Training since February 2018, confirmed this when she said the following to vice-chancellors of South African universities and student bodies at a meeting on 19 October 2018:

> We don't have any more money, there aren't more resources. We are making huge sums of public resources available to properly support poor and working-class students to access higher education. We don't have more money for counselling and social work and we are going to look internally at how senior students begin to play a mentorship role and are supported to do so. So, don't look for more money, it's not there, the country is in dire financial circumstances (Phalaetsile, 2018:n.p.).

The CSCD staff indicated that changes to and augmentation of the current practices of the Centre that relate to the medical paradigm, as well as being an open system that continuously interacts with the other sub-systems of the university, are pivotal in the transformation of the Centre.

9.3.1.3. Students

Students, as the targeted client group, provided a meta-conceptualisation of transformation of the university system. Understanding students' conceptualisation of institutional transformation has a direct influence on the operational model and paradigm that inform transformation of the CSCD (Section 9.3.1.1). Therefore, understanding how the students envision a transforming university, should be a starting point to consider for transforming the Centre.

The students' opinion was that the transformation of the University should be driven by providing education that focuses on their growth and the facilitation of diverse interactions. To ensure their own success, they want education that will encourage the development of social skills. This will stand them in good stead in life and in their work after university, and will help them to challenge themselves and one another. They also indicated a need for opportunities that will allow them to experience success.

Another important driver that the students identified was what they referred to as the 'future university'. They related this concept to an institution that they can experience as welcoming and where their happiness is a priority. For them, it is important that their experience of the institution

should be one that offers various developmental opportunities they can utilise to promote their experiences of success.

For the students, the realisation of their own goals should play a pivotal role in transformation. A transforming institution should offer opportunities for students to be supported in formulating their own goals for student success. The students should develop skills to manage change and to adjust their goals for success throughout their studies and after they have graduated. Transformation implies that goals cannot be cast in stone, but should be responsive to internal and external changes. For the students, the realisation of an inclusive institution that welcomes a diverse student community should be the outcome of the transformation process.

In summary, the common theme in the conceptualisation of the three constituencies of the transformation of the CSCD was that of the students as its primary clientele. The constituency *Students* provided in-depth insight into how they conceptualised the transforming university and what their needs with regard to transformation were. An operational model that supports students' development and endorses a systemic approach to service delivery will address the needs of the target group. A transforming CSCD should counter the increasing pressure on its limited resources by utilising an operational model that will encourage optimal usage of what is available. Services should include providing psychotherapy and creating safe spaces. The development of students' skills should be a primary focus of the CSCD.

9.3.2. Sub-question 2

What are the different role-players' suggestions regarding the transformation of the CSCD?

9.3.2.1. Inter-systemic awareness

The CSCD should function as an open system. This will lead to increased awareness among a broad range of role-players about the type of support provided by the Centre and how to access the services. This will also contribute to expectations regarding the range of services that can be rendered becoming more realistic and will encourage responsible use of the limited resources of the Centre. There are often requests from the larger university community – staff and students – for support and interventions that cause CSCD staff to overextend themselves. This is counterproductive in terms of the wellness of staff and the building of quality relationships with other role-players.

Ignorance among other role-players of what the Centre can do, its resources, and the demands made on the Centre often leads to strenuous relationships and misunderstandings. Students especially often openly criticise the Centre for not providing for their needs. Open discussions between staff and

dissatisfied clients are then needed to resolve the issues. Inter-systemic collaboration should address these dilemmas and would encourage constructive discussions and relationships that can empower all role-players.

Another advantage of inter-systemic collaboration is that the different types of support services on campus can collaborate with regard to referrals and multidisciplinary interventions. An example is utilising tutors in faculties to help with transferring skills. While the CSCD can introduce students to skills like memorisation techniques, tutors can facilitate groups in which these skills are practised.

9.3.2.2. Empowerment

The CSCD should play a central role in empowering different members of the university community. The *Staff*: *Non-CSCD* expressed a need to be educated by the CSCD staff about accommodating students with special needs and facilitating success for a diverse student community. They were also in need of psycho-education and education about mental health issues. This could include the recognition of students who are at risk, insight into different mental health issues, and accommodating students who have been diagnosed with a mental health problem.

It was indicated that the CSCD should play a central role in training student mentors. The mentors form part of the student community and are often the first line of support for students. Students can also be trained as peer counsellors that represent the CSCD in the safe spaces to which the constituency *Staff: Non-CSCD* referred. This will help to reduce the pressure on the resources of the Centre, integrate the Centre into the student communities, develop students' skills, and promote student success.

Empowerment also refers to the role of the CSCD in advocating fair and just treatment of students. This includes students with disabilities, students from different spheres of society, and students from different cultures.

Supporting a holistic systemic developmental paradigm implies creating opportunities for students to be empowered by developing skills that they will need to be successful at the University and thereafter.

9.3.2.3. Prevention and development

The primary focus of the CSCD should be both preventative and developmental. This should pertain to group and individual sessions provided by the CSCD. Preventative and developmental work cannot be restricted to the premises of the CSCD. If this were the case, the services would be available to only a very limited group of students, which would undermine integration and collaboration and only

place further pressure on the resources of the Centre. Preventative and developmental work should rather be provided in a variety of curricular and co-curricular spaces on campus where students interact.

The developmental focus of the CSCD will provide in the needs identified by the constituency *Students* for a transforming university that provides opportunities for growth, diverse interactions, goal formulation, and happiness.

The CSCD should consider different modes of service delivery. Utilising electronic media should be explored. Different social media platforms can be used to provide opportunities for psycho-education. Online interactive group sessions will facilitate flexibility in availing developmental opportunities to on-campus and off-campus students, part-time and full-time students at different times of the day and will contribute to a more cost-effective use of the resources of the Centre. The value of video clips, radio interviews, articles in student publications, and electronic as well as hard-copy pamphlets that provide important preventative and developmental information should not be underestimated.

In summary, the research data provided guidance for a transforming CSCD to provide in the target group's needs. The conceptualisation of the transformation process and the suggestions that were provided for a transforming CSCD have implications for the Centre. In answer to the third sub-question, these implications will be discussed in Section 9.3.3.

9.3.3. Sub-question 3

What are the practical implications of transformation for the CSCD?

A CSCD that functions as an open sub-system will endorse the value of the input that it receives from other sub-systems. This will inform the services that it delivers and ensure that the needs of the target group are addressed. On the other hand, the CSCD can contribute significantly to the rest of the university community through its role in promoting student success. This will lead to an organic interactive relationship that will counteract stagnation. It will support a dynamic system that remains agile in terms of the effects of transformation and change. An agile organisation will refrain from interpreting transformation as a process that threatens the status quo. It will rather focus on opportunities that are created through change.

Organisational transformation is often met with resistance, especially from staff who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo or who are apprehensive about change. As a transforming organisation, the CSCD is no exception to this rule.

The staff of the CSCD pointed out that transformation could not happen overnight. My literature review confirms this. The traditional view of organisational development determines that transformation should happen in four phases, namely the identification of problems, developing interventions, remediating problems, and solving them. My opinion is that such a problem-focussed approach to transformation encourages negative experiences. It endorses resistance to change and may objectify change as 'the problem' that should be resolved.

Referring back to the conceptual model of the research, I positioned it in a positive psychology framework. The problem-focussed organisational development approach is in conflict with the principles of positive psychology. Hence, I suggest an innovative, inspired, positive organisational development approach. The constituencies *Staff: Non-CSCD* and *CSCD Staff* alluded to the important role of organisational development in transforming the Centre. However, they did not delve into a preferred process. They mentioned that it should involve a review of the target group, the paradigm of the CSCD, and the operational model, as well as an alignment of the services of the Centre with the needs of the university system.

Should this process be guided by the principles of innovative, inspired, positive organisational development (IPOD) (Section 6.3), the belief that change is positive, that it is driven by a fusion of the strengths of the organisation, and that it will support growth and development of the system and society, will be encouraged. Thus, a transforming CSCD should encourage its staff to acknowledge the challenges of transformation, explore the existing strengths of the staff of the organisation, reflect on the past, the present, and future, and embrace the positive core of the Centre that has driven its functionality thus far. This will promote a positive morale among the staff of the organisation. From a systems viewpoint, it will be meaningful to involve the other sub-systems to contribute to the process.

I propose that a transforming CSCD should consider a new operational model that is embedded in positive psychology theory. In practice, it implies a change from a problem-centred medical model to a holistic developmental model that embraces people's strengths. With preventative work, the CSCD will create opportunities for students to practise skills that will complement resilience. These opportunities will allow students to embrace their strengths and to develop a growth mindset and perseverance. It will encourage students to believe in their own potential for achieving success, explore and utilise the resources of their social networks, and recognise the resources that the University offers to support them in their endeavours to achieve success.

The CSCD staff members who participated in the study were resolute that the provision of psychotherapy for students should continue. This does not imply that a developmental model of

service delivery will not be applicable for the CSCD. Figure 6.3 portrays a developmental model that recognises that people do experience problems and that they do get ill. A CSCD that supports a developmental model will focus not only on helping these students to be problem free. These students, like all other students, should have the opportunity to become more than 'problem free'. They should be exposed to opportunities that can facilitate their development towards flourishing.

The CSCD should consider a strength-based counselling approach that values people's virtues. Such an approach addresses questions like "What strengths has a person used to deal effectively with life?" and "What are the fundamental strengths of humankind?" (Smit, 2006:16). Smit (2006:30) highlights that the strength-based approach is indicated for counselling "individuals raised in resource-deprived environments". Such an approach will empower the CSCD to counsel a multicultural student community who needs to conquer diverse challenges. As pointed out by the students who participated in the study, the approach will also equip them with skills to formulate the goals that they want to reach as successful students.

In summary, a transformative approach acknowledging the values of well-being, strengths of people and communities, and a mindset that people can overcome challenges is needed. This positive developmental approach should be driven by the interactions between the different sub-systems as well as the intra-actions between staff of the CSCD.

9.4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

9.4.1. Contributions to practice

The phenomenon that I researched was the transformation of a student counselling service with a focus on its role in student success.

A significant finding of this research is that student counselling services are at risk of becoming dying entities in HE, should they continue with a problem-focussed medical service delivery model. This model does not promote a welcoming university experience. The message to students is replete with insinuations that even before they enrol they have deficits that place them at risk for failure. These perceptions need to be addressed because they threaten students' experience of success. The message also insinuates that students have limited capacity to 'solve this problem' themselves and that interventions by experts are needed to rescue them from failure. A prominent discourse in HEIs in South Africa is that students from disadvantaged areas are particularly at risk for failure. It refers to poor education, poor communities that have a limited understanding of what HE entails and limited insight into what HEIs require. HEIs often take a superior expert position in which one of the goals is to save these students and communities. My discussions with the students in particular contradicted

this discourse. They envisioned a university where they play an integral role in advancing their own and others' development and growth. They realise the benefits of an education that entails more than passing their exams and getting their degrees. For them, a university should be the place where opportunities for development are ample.

The research findings emphasise the integral role of counselling services in creating such opportunities for growth. Counselling centres with a developmental focus convey a positive and empowering message to students and recognise their wealth of experiences when they enrol into HE. An inter-systemic relationship among counselling centres and other sub-systems will entrench this empowering, developmental discourse in the university community. Counselling services will remain relevant if they recognise their integral role in the sustainable growth of individuals, institutions, and society. My suggestion is that the concept 'student counselling services' should be reconsidered and be replaced with 'student developmental services' in recognition of its pertinent role in advancing student communities, HEIs, and society.

9.4.2. Contributions to theory

The primary goal of the study was to conceptualise the transformation process of the CSCD. Rich data were generated, and the interpretation and analysis of the data are discussed in Section 9.3.

However, the most significant contribution of this study is laying the foundation of a theory that informs the future service delivery model of student counselling centres. Figure 9.1 is a conceptualisation of this developing theory.

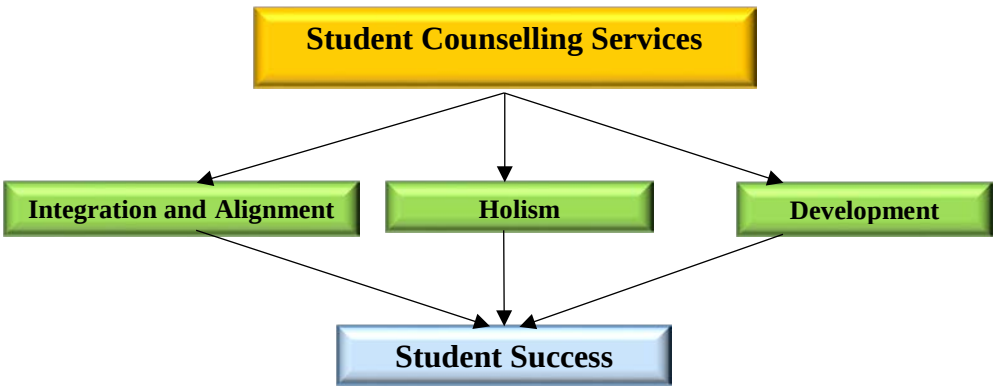


Figure 9.1 Student success model

Developmental interventions are not a new addition to the work of student counselling services, but it is important to realise that these interventions should be supported and guided by a sound theoretical framework. This will counter the more intuitive approach that lacks evidence-based research that could support the work that is done. Academics particularly are often wary of the success of

developmental interventions, and it becomes a challenge to prove it if there is no substantial theoretical motivation or evidence of possible effect on academic success.

The developmental theory taps into the principles of positive psychology, a strength-based approach, and systems theory. It embraces the recognition of students' inherent potential to be successful. It utilises the strengths of a system and the individuals to unlock the potential that leads to success.

The theory alludes to a three-pronged approach, namely 'integration and alignment', 'holism', and 'development'. 'Integration and alignment' refer to the importance of systemic interactions and relationships between the members of the system (inclusive of the sub-systems). It implies that developmental initiatives should not be a separate intervention but a natural part of students' curricular and co-curricular experiences.

The concept 'holism' refers to an approach in which students are regarded as individuals who are more than their problems. Students are biopsychosocial human beings who have the potential to flourish in terms of their studies, their physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being. This component of the theory emphasises that developmental interventions should not focus purely on preventing problems but rather on developing different dimensions of students to encourage them to flourish in all sectors of life.

The developmental pillar of the theory is informed by Seligman's PERMA approach (Section 6.2.) An approach with a focus on students' positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment relates to a comprehensive definition of student success (Section 4.2). This pillar of the theory also alludes to the important role of a strength-based approach for developmental work. Developmental interventions that are guided by a strength-based approach will focus on the students' own resources (skills, abilities, and potential), the resources of the social networks to which they belong, and community resources.

The theory is still in its initial stage of development and needs more research towards further development. A grounded theory approach is advised for further theoretical development.

9.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focussed exclusively on transformation of the CSCD at Stellenbosch University. The CSCD is well resourced compared to other student counselling centres in the country. Organisationally, the Centre consists of a variety of units that specialise in providing different services. This is not typical of student counselling centres in South Africa. In addition, the transformation process at Stellenbosch University differs significantly from that at other HEIs in

South Africa. Because the research is limited to Stellenbosch University, it does not imply that all the strategies and practical examples that were elicited by the research will be applicable to other student counselling services in South Africa.

Three focus groups and twelve individuals that belonged to the three different constituencies participated in the study. IQA alludes to the value of the systemic involvement of the constituencies to answer the research questions. The reality is that the answers are limited to these individuals, the interactions between them, and their construction of the reality and understanding of the researched phenomenon. Reviewing the conceptualised transformation process with other members of the constituencies may be valuable. Their feedback could add another dimension that could guide the development of the CSCD to maintain its relevance in the future Stellenbosch University.

The students who participated in the study did not select and describe affinities that were related directly to transforming the Centre. Their inputs described their needs for a transforming university. A separate IQA study that focuses on their needs and conceptualisations may be meaningful. Different student constituencies can be identified to formulate a theory of the transformation of the whole system from their perspective. This can then be extrapolated to different sub-systems that can include a support service like the CSCD.

I experienced the recruitment of participants, especially for the focus groups, as challenging. It was very difficult to recruit staff and students who could take three hours out of their busy schedules to participate in the focus groups. The recruitment of students is always a challenge. Owing to their availability, I could hold a focus group interview only after the November examinations. The reality was that most of them were already on holiday, and finding participants was difficult. I had to postpone the individual interviews to the beginning of the next year, by which time some of the focus group members had already graduated and I was limited to only two remaining members with whom I could conduct individual interviews.

9.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The CSCD must transform in line with the transformation of Stellenbosch University. It is important for the Centre to gain knowledge and understanding of the transformation from its own perspective, but also from the perspective of the other sub-systems at the university. Societal influences should also be recognised. To ensure that the transformation of the Centre is driven from the perspective of systems theory, it is important that the discussions I had with the different constituencies about transformation should continue. It was clear during the research that the constituencies had significantly different perspectives about how the transformation should happen. This should be

deconstructed with the members of the different constituencies to identify common ground that could inform an ongoing transformation process. The research dissertation was the inception of the process.

As is reflected in the SIDs of the different constituencies, the transformation should be driven by a clear understanding of what a developmental, strength-based paradigm entails and what its implications for transforming the Centre will be. The developmental, strength-based paradigm implies that the Centre should refrain from a focus on curing deficits and problems of the primary target group, namely the students. The Centre should rather acknowledge that all the students have an innate potential to excel. Their strengths should be elicited and developed. The focus of the work at the Centre should be to create and facilitate opportunities for students to explore their own strengths and to utilise them to reach their personal goals.

With this research project, I realised that the transformation of the CSCD is a complex and dynamic process. A society will never stop developing. This will contribute to systems and sub-systems that will continue to change. The findings of this thesis are only a fragment of the transformation process that will continue to evolve as society evolves. Different influences and interactions will always be at play.

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ADDENDUM 1: INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION

UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
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25 October 2013

Ms Elmien Strauss
Centre for Student Counselling
and Development
Stellenbosch University

Dear Ms Strauss

Re: *Transforming student counselling services for the future Stellenbosch University*

The researcher has institutional permission to solicit the participation of Stellenbosch University staff and students for this research project as stipulated in the institutional permission application. Institutional permission is granted on the following conditions:

- the researcher must obtain the permission of Prof Charl Cilliers, Director of the Centre for Student Counseling and Development, before the commencement of interviews,
- the researcher must obtain the participants' full informed consent for all the aspects of their participation,
- participation is voluntary,
- persons who choose not to participate may not be penalized as a result of non-participation,
- participants may withdraw their participation at any time, and without consequence,
- data must be collected in a way that ensures the anonymity of all participants,
- individuals may not be identified in the results of the study,
- data that is collected may only be used for the purpose of this study,
- the privacy of individuals must be respected and protected.

Best wishes,

[redacted]
Senior Director Institutional Research and Planning Division

Afdeling Institusionele Navorsing en Beplanning • Institutional Research and Planning Division
Privaatsak/Private Bag X1 • Stellenbosch • 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa
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ADDENDUM 2: RESEARCH ETHICAL CLEARANCE

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Approval Notice
New Application

30-Sep-2013
Strauss, Elmien E

Proposal #: DESC_Strauss2013
Title: Transforming student counselling services for a future Stellenbosch University

Dear Mrs. Elmien Strauss,

Your DESC approved **New Application** received on **02-Sep-2013**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **27-Sep-2013** and was approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **27-Sep-2013 -26-Sep-2014**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**DESC_Strauss2013**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218839027.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

ADDENDUM 3: LETTER OF CONSENT

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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Transforming student counselling services for a future Stellenbosch University

You are requested to participate in a research study conducted by Elmien Sinclair (Strauss), MEdPsych, from the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University. This research study is part of the requirement for a PhD in Curriculum Studies in the Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The problem that this research will explore is how student counselling services at Stellenbosch University should transform in order to meaningfully contribute to student success at the future Stellenbosch University.

1. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be required

- to be part of a focus group session that will last for a maximum of three hours
- to consent to an individual interview.

2. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Minimal risk or discomfort is anticipated for participants in the study.

The following potential risks/discomforts may arise:

- **Coercion**: Nobody will be coerced to take part in the study and should anybody decide against participation it will not have any negative consequences. Participation will thus be voluntary.
- **Confidentiality**: All information gained from interviews and focus groups will be handled in a confidential manner. The recorded information will be stored in a safe environment and will

be destroyed after the research is concluded. Participants' identities will not be disclosed when data is disseminated.

- **Objectivity:** The researcher's role will be clearly demarcated and the researcher will strive to stay objective during the research process. Data will be triangulated and participants will be encouraged to engage in critical discussions. Participants will not be coached to respond in specific ways in order to influence the data gathered during interviews and focus groups.
- **Power relationships:** An external facilitator will be used to conduct the focus group and individual interviews in constituencies where the researcher's role as staff member may compromise the process.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participants will be able to co-create and advise around the transformation of student counselling services. The research aims to improve and optimize the services of student counselling in order to optimally develop and serve the whole student community. Your inputs through participation in this study will thus be of benefit to the student community of Stellenbosch University.

4. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

None

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Transcriptions of recorded interviews will be handed to the participants to review and to confirm that it represents a true version of what was said before it is coded and interpreted.

6. RIGHTS OF PARTICIPANTS REGARDING PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You may choose to participate in this study or not. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions and still remain in the study. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. The researcher may also withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Ms E Sinclair (Strauss) (Doctoral Candidate and principal researcher)
Tel:
Centre for Student Counselling and Development
Stellenbosch University
Victoria Street 37
Stellenbosch

Prof M Fourie-Malherbe (Supervisor)
Tel:
Room
GG Cillie Building
Stellenbosch University

Prof D Daniels (Co-supervisor)
Tel:
Room
GG Cillie Building
Stellenboch University

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to _____ (*name of participant*) by Ms E Sinclair (Strauss) in (*Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other*) and I, the participant, am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I, the participant, was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

_____

Signature of Participant

_____

Date

_____

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ (*name of the subject/participant*). He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator **Date**

ADDENDUM 4: LETTER TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

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Geagte kollega/student

Die Sentrum vir Studentevoorligting en –Ontwikkeling (SSVO) is betrokke by 'n reeks gesprekke o.l.v Prof Magda Fourie-Malherbe en Me Elmien Strauss oor die rol wat studentevoorligting in die bevordering van studentesukses kan speel. Die gespreksessies vorm deel van 'n geregistreerde PhD-studie getiteld *Transforming student counselling services for the future Stellenbosch University*.

Hiermee nooi ek u vriendelik uit om hierdie projek te ondersteun deur deel te neem aan geskeduleerde fokusgroepe en/of individuele gesprekke. 5 U sal binnekort meer inligting in hierdie verband ontvang.

Vriendelike groete

[redacted]

Direkteur: Sentrum vir Studentevoorligting en –Ontwikkeling (SSVO)

Dear colleague/student

The Centre for Student Counselling and Development is involved in a series of discussions about the role of student counselling in the promotion of student success. The discussions are facilitated by Prof Magda Fourie-Malherbe and Ms Elmien Strauss and forms part of a registered PhD-study with the title Transforming student counselling services for the future Stellenbosch University.

I would like to invite you to support this project through participating in scheduled focus group sessions and/or individual interviews. You will receive more information in this regard soon.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

Director: Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD)

Sentrum vir Studentevoorligting en -ontwikkeling . Centre for Student Counselling and Development
Victoriastraat 37 Victoria Street • Privaatsak/Private Bag X 1 • Matieland, 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa
Tel: +27 21 808 4707 • Faks/Fax: +27 21 808 4706

ADDENDUM 5: INTRODUCTION FOCUS GROUPS

ADDENDUM 6: PHOTO OF INDEX CARDS

ADDENDUM 7: AFFINITIES RELATIONSHIP TABLE

Affinity Name
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Possible Relationships
A → B
A ← B
A <> B (No Relationship**)**

Affinity Relationship Table		
Affinity Pair Relationship		**Example of the relationship either in natural language or in the form of an IF/THEN statement of relationship**
1	2	
1	3	
1	4	
1	5	
1	6	
1	7	
2	3	
2	4	
2	5	
2	6	
2	7	
3	4	
3	5	
3	6	
3	7	
4	5	
4	6	
4	7	
5	6	
5	7	
6	7	

ADDENDUM 8: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTION

R Yes, that is interesting, because the second affinity or element of the system that was identified was the **CSCD as a sub-system within broader systems**.

I Right, yes.

R So what is your experience with that?

I I think it is very challenging to be a sub-system trying to adapt to the changes in a bigger system because staff, I think there is lots of staff here that have intuitional memory that has been here for a very long time and so when it comes to turn-over with staff, it doesn't happen immediately and you want to be respectful to the staff here but you are also thinking of do we represent the current students. And I think that can be very challenging. For example we have many Muslim students on campus and our staff, majority of us, but I think we are Christian. (laughs) We are a lot of Christian staff members and so for example that makes it very hard because you also, you can't force the employee to employ somebody with a specific religious background but that means, how are we going to be different in my therapy approach.

R Yes, so in the bigger system things are happening and as a sub-system we are influenced by that.

I Definitely.

R And we need to be aware of those changes.

I Yes so that we can be inclusive, for example when you are doing therapy, when you are doing academics, having academic support with somebody, do you ask question do they have a disability for example because that impacts

on things if you are providing material for example, paper and are you assuming this person is able to read, are you assuming they are able to write, that they visually, that they function well with all of their senses you know.

R Yes.

I That is something we often assume but we see way more students coming to us with special needs and so it is almost like we need to stop ourselves and help each other to remember that we need to include all types of students in our service.

R Yes okay.

I I think one of the biggest challenges is language. We speak predominantly English and Afrikaans and so it becomes very hard when we have a student coming where their first language is another African language. Like for example Zulu and I think those type of things are so important because it speaks to meaning making and understanding people's presenting problems and their challenges with academics and emotional problems.

R I think what I hear is that you are referring to a student population that is changing all the time and that is in the bigger system that influences us as a sub-system and influence how we think about the work that we do and how we should do it. And you are also saying that we should actually stop and reflect about it.

I Oh yes.

ADDENDUM 9: AXIAL CODING TABLE (ACT)

Affinity Name
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Axial Code Table			
Affinity	**Transcript Line**	**Axial Quotation**	**Researcher Notes**
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			