

**A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED STUDIES
AS A MEANS OF ADDRESSING TRANSFORMATION AT A HISTORICALLY
WHITE UNIVERSITY**

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ABSTRACT

Foundation provisioning has a long history in South Africa, and is central to the transformation agenda, particularly the broadening of successful participation in higher education (HE). As access initiatives underpinned by various conceptualisations, foundation programmes evolved from peripheral, to semi-integrated and finally fully integrated curricular models in the form of current Extended Studies Programmes (ESPs). Underpinning the provision of Extended Studies is the acknowledgment that students who enter institutions are essentially ill equipped to cope with the demands of higher education studies, “leaving institutions themselves free of the responsibility of student failure” (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:391). This under-preparedness has been attributed to the ‘articulation gap’ between secondary and higher education, which in turn contributes to low retention and graduation rates (CHE, 2013:17). Situated within an overarching commitment to access and success, the Extended Studies Programme attempts to systematically address the ‘articulation gap’.

This study evaluated the extent to which the Rhodes University Humanities Extended Studies Programme is achieving its objectives from a transformation perspective, specifically the broadening of successful participation in higher education. The majority of previous works on the evaluation of foundation programmes focused on measurable dimensions of student access and success – that is retention and graduation rates. This thesis considered both the measurable outcomes of the programme as well as the actual teaching and learning process. Given the shifts that have taken place in foundation provisioning, the evaluation of the current model of foundation provisioning necessitated their location in history. Therefore, the evaluation of the Rhodes University Humanities Extended Studies Programme was undertaken in view of the shifts, achievements, challenges and critics of its predecessor programmes.

Specifically, the following dimensions were considered in the evaluation of the programme: i) assumptions underpinning the design and purpose of the programme, ii) teaching and learning practices in the programme, iii) student and staff perceptions of the programme, iv) students’ experiences of the programme, v) the validity of the programme in the broader institution, and vi) the measurable outcomes of the programme – that is retention and graduation rates of students enrolled in the programme. The triangulation of qualitative data collection techniques provided access into the different layers of institutional relations, processes and structures, which not only affect teaching and learning in the programme, but

also determine students' engagement with different academic and social aspects of the broader university.

The theoretical insights of Pierre Bourdieu and Amartya Sen were integrated in order to provide analytical tools for both understanding the causes of inequalities in higher education, and evaluating institutional processes and structures that perpetuate or transform inequalities. Whilst Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis exposed the ways in which social structures shape educational processes and outcomes, Sen's capability approach provided tools for evaluating both institutional arrangements and individual capabilities – that is, the freedom to achieve desired educational outcomes (Sen, 1992:48).

Key Terms:

Access, articulation gap, academic development, Extended Studies Programme, transformation, Pierre Bourdieu, social reproduction, Amartya Sen, capabilities approach.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Academic Development
ADP	Academic Development Programme
AL	Academic Literacy
ANC	African National Congress
ASP	Academic Support Programme
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHERTL	Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning
DET	Department of Education and Training
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ELAP	English Language for Academic Purposes
ESP	Extended Studies Programme
ESU	Extended Studies Unit
HBU	Historically Black University
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HWU	Historically White University
IDT	Independent Development Trusts (IDT)
IEB	Independent Examiner's Board
NBT	National Benchmark Test
NCHE	National Council on Higher Education
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OBE	Outcome Based Education
QA	Quantitative Literacy
RU	Rhodes University
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The rapid deracialisation of South African higher education since 1994 resulted in the increasing enrolment of non-traditional¹ students bearing the enduring effects of apartheid education. As such, numerous studies have reported that these students are less prepared for and unfamiliar with the rigours of higher education.² Taken in the context of numbers that enter university from the schooling system, there appears enough evidence to doubt the extent of black student success (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:390). The poor retention rates of black students in South Africa's higher education institutions have largely been attributed to the articulation gap³ (CHE, 2013:17). Although it is widely accepted that the articulation gap affects the majority of students in South Africa, it has been established that it negatively affects students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds or non-traditional students (CHE, 2013:60).

Owing to the transformation agenda, particularly the need to broaden access and success of under-privileged students, universities adopted various academic development (AD) strategies aimed at integrating such students in ways that ensured not only their participation but also their success. Extended Studies Programmes (ESPs)⁴ are one of the means by which universities hope to specifically address the articulation gap through curriculum intervention. This study investigated the Extended Studies Programme in the Rhodes University Humanities Faculty. This programme admits previously disadvantaged first year students and it is also “presented as a national and institutional strategy for transformation” (Badat, 2011). Specifically, the study investigated the extent to which the programme is achieving its objectives from a transformation perspective. The study applied a sociological lens to the analysis of the provision of Extended Studies. Notwithstanding other pioneering

¹In the South African education context, ‘non-traditional’ refers to black, African and second language students. At the same time, the black racial category refers to black South African, Indian and Coloured.

² See Agar 1990; Cross & Carpentier 2009; Akoojee & Nkomo 2007; Dhunpath & Vithal 2013.

³ The articulation gap is conceptualised as “the mismatch or discontinuity between the exit level of secondary education and the entry level of higher education” (CHE, 2013:60).

⁴ ESPs are forms of foundation provisioning which aim to address the articulation gap by providing “additional curriculum time for foundational learning to enable students to develop sound academic and social foundations for succeeding in higher education” (CHE, 2013:18).

contributions on foundation provision,⁵ qualitative research on the current model of foundation provision is still in its infancy in South Africa. Specifically, less attention has been given to pedagogical relations in the programme or student experiences of the teaching and learning processes in the programme.

This chapter serves as the introduction to the study. It starts with a brief motivation for undertaking the study. Included in this chapter is also a general background to the South African Higher Education system. This is followed by a comprehensive discussion of the transformation agenda, particularly the broadening of access and success to higher education. The chapter also introduces the goals, research objectives, research questions, research paradigms and theoretical framework that guided the study, and the methods of data collection, and ends with the chapter outline.

1.2 Personal history and motivation

My initial concern in undertaking the study was underpinned by the observation that South Africa's higher education sector draws a large number of foreign students. As a foreign student coming from Zimbabwe where universities mostly enrol local Zimbabwean students, this raised questions about the affordability of higher education in South Africa as well as the admission criteria for enrolment in higher education. Further research drew my attention to the legacy of apartheid, particularly its enduring effects in higher education. This for me raised questions about government policy following the transition to democracy and, in particular, policy directed at the previously excluded groups. Before I could settle on a topic on the comparison between the Zimbabwean and South African education systems, given the high failure rates and hence the limited access for most students, my attention was drawn to foundation provisioning as a means of providing access to students who do not meet the normal admission requirements. My particular focus on the Extended Studies Programmes was driven by my curiosity about the effectiveness of the programme as well as their potential for addressing the widespread articulation gap/under-preparedness of the majority of educationally disadvantaged students in South Africa's education system.

⁵ See for example CHE 2013, Kloot, Case & Marshall 2008; Fourie 2009; Kloot 2011; Kioko 2009; Garraway 2009.

1.3. Setting the scene: The apartheid education legacy

According to CHE (2004:230), “a particular higher education system was inherited from apartheid, one that was deeply divided internally, and isolated from the international community of scholars”. As such, it was designed to imprint and reproduce the social relations of white supremacy, privilege, and permanent black inferiority and impoverishment (Dison, Walker, & Mclean, 2008:8). The passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 legalised and enforced the segregation of public facilities and the separation of educational standards (Ali, 1955:124). Evidently, Hendrik Verwoerd – the then minister of education – justified the Bantu education policy:

There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live (Quoted in Nkabinde, 1997:7).

Consequently, black education was largely characterized by “an inequitable allocation of resources, overcrowded classrooms, high dropout rates, and an insufficient number of teachers, most of them poorly qualified” (Phendla, 2009:57). Accordingly, Boughey (2011:65) also noted “that the policy of separate development not only ensured that the black majority were denied the sort of learning experiences which would prepare them for tertiary study, but also that access to well-resourced institutions of higher education was largely available only to white students”.

Although the 1953 Bantu Education Act applied to all levels of education for blacks, it did not have an immediate impact on higher education until the passing of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959. The former was an attempt to separate the youth of South Africa at the level of higher education based on race, as was already the case at primary and secondary school levels.

Contrary to what the name ‘Extension of University Act’ suggests, the Act “barred Africans from attending the previously open English universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Natal and Rhodes without ministerial permission” (Fiske & Ladd, 2004a:46). Subsequently, in the late 1970s, universities were established for African students in the self-governing territories and homelands (Fiske & Ladd, 2004a:46). According to Reddy (2004:10), instead of relying on racist admission policies to deny university education to black students, the apartheid government implemented policies that led to the creation of universities for the variously state defined ethnically classified black groups. These universities included the University

College of the North based in Sovenga for the Bosothe, vha-Vhenda and vha-Tsonga; the University of Zululand for the Zulu speaking people; the transfer of the University of Fort Hare into the Department of Bantu Education to provide higher education for Xhosa-speaking people; the University College of Durban (later called Durban Westville) for Indians; and the University College of the Western Cape for Coloured people (Schoole, 2005:15).

In view of the creation of black university colleges, Nkomo and Schoole (2007:2) contended that the apartheid government succeeded in entrenching a most pernicious form of institutional marginalisation imaginable. As such, these ethnic-based universities were detached from catchment areas with modern infrastructure, denied research infrastructure and subjected to chronic under-funding (Nkomo & Schoole, 2007:2). Consequently, higher education institutions were classified using the broad categories ‘Historically White Universities’ (HWUs) and ‘Historically Black Universities (HBUs) prior to 1994. The black and white institutions assumed particular structural positions, institutional characteristics, academic cultures and profiles that ascribed to separate development (Nkomo & Schoole, 2007).⁶

Although apartheid came to a formal end with the country’s first truly democratic election, it left South Africa with high levels of inequality, none more enduring than in education. In light of the challenges that the new government had to address, Van der Berg, Burger, Burger Louw & Yu (2005:1) pointed out that the new government inherited a situation of large-scale educational inequality, the effects of which were likely to remain pervasive for decades. Similarly, in his analysis of the legacy of apartheid, Wilson (2001:3) observed that:

The destructive impact of the “Bantu education” system wrought damage that will take decades if not generations to repair. The old pre-apartheid education system, despite its many faults, had the potential for ensuring a decent education for all South Africans during the second half of the 20th century. But the mean-spiritedness which underlay the philosophy of “Bantu education”; the inadequacy of the funds made available throughout

⁶ See also Schoole, 2005:22 for a discussion on unequal offering of specialised courses. For example, black universities were restricted to offering Social Sciences, while white universities had, in addition to Social Sciences, courses in Architecture, Engineering, Medicine and Dentistry, which were not allowed to be offered in black universities.

See also Davies 1994; Nzimande (1997:5); Mabokela (2002:206) for a discussion on alien curriculum in black universities. According to CHE (2004:94), the curriculum in African universities was manipulated to prevent the development of student political consciousness. In a similar vein, Nzimande (1997:206) noted that the curriculum offered to black students was “the single most important and devastating instrument for producing third class intellectuals and the control of the black mind”.

most of the apartheid years; and the crippling effects of job-reservation and the colour-bar on the acquisition of skills and experience by the majority of workers could almost have been designed to prevent them from being adequately prepared for the challenges of globalization in the 21st century.

The apartheid legacy portrayed above presented challenges that had to be addressed in the transformation agenda. Four aspects of the apartheid legacy were particularly pertinent to higher education restructuring: inequalities in student access, low educational attainment and achievement, institutional inequalities and, lastly, the fragmented and uncoordinated governance structures.

1.3.1 Inequalities in student access and success

The first and obvious inequality in higher education was the inequality in student access. Many of the debates and struggles in higher education, especially in the 1980s, were focused on the inequalities in access for blacks (African, Coloured and Indian) to higher education institutions (NCHE, 1996:32). Although there was a significant increase in the enrolment figures of black students during the period between 1986 and 1993, much of this growth was due to increasing enrolment numbers at Historically Black Universities. This growth can be misleading and should be seen in the light of the fact that the growth mainly took place at institutions without the necessary capacity and resources to cope adequately with the special needs of an influx of students with unfavourable schooling backgrounds (Jairam, 1996:33). A crucial point to note is that the apartheid schooling system effectively restricted the entry of black students to higher education. Additionally, the leadership within many of the black institutions was also poor and this impacted directly on the educational outcomes as teachers lacked training and skills required to teach (Fiske & Ladd, 2004a).

Racial differences in access prior to 1994 were not limited to the total number of students participating in the system, but existed across disciplines in the higher education system (NCHE,1996:33). The concentration of black students in Historically Black Universities had significant implications on the type and level of programmes. According to Jairam (1996:33), only 20% of first time entering students were enrolled for a degree in the natural sciences at HBUs. As such, the ratio of enrolment in natural science degrees in white universities was nearly 4:1 to those at the HBUs (NCHE, 1996:33). The inequalities suggested by these figures indicated that without intervention the imbalances would continue to exist.

With respect to graduation rates, it was reported that only 37% of students registered at HBUs in 1993 completed their undergraduate diplomas, thus indicating that these institutions were

dealing with many students who did not meet the statutory requirements for degree studies (Jairam, 1996:35). Interestingly, even with the end of apartheid and the implementation of transformation strategies aimed at improving the educational outcomes of students, the retention rates of black students remained relatively low when measured according to international standards.

A study conducted by Moeketsi Letseka, Michael Cosser, Mignonne Braier and Mariette Visser in 2010 revealed the acute student attrition in South African education institutions. According to Letseka et al. (2010:32), academics who were interviewed in the study revealed that the very small pool of matriculants, particularly Africans and Coloureds who met the criteria for admission into university, were often academically under-prepared and socially ill-equipped for higher education study (2010:32). It is therefore not surprising that the participation rate only increased by 3% between 2000 and 2010. According to CHE (2013:14), the participation rate was 15% in 2000 and 18% in 2010, which shows that post apartheid restructuring in higher education has not impacted the participation rates in any significant way.⁷

1.3.2 Institutional inequalities – staffing resources, funding and research output

The discussion on apartheid education showed that major inequalities existed between the different groupings of higher education institutions. The main inequalities to which attention was drawn during the transition period were: institutional funding, research output and staffing resources. Although government investment in education grew in the period 1991-1995, this did not keep pace with the increasing enrolments. Due to the absence of a national student financial aid scheme at this stage, many students from economically deprived backgrounds were unable to pay tuition fees, leading to disastrous consequences, especially for students in HBUs. It is therefore not surprising that when the new government came into power, the higher education transformation agenda focussed on broadening the access of black students by not only opening the gates of learning but by also providing the means to access university. As such, funding frameworks were established to enable black students who, because of their class position, could not afford to pay for higher education studies (Odhav, 2009:46).

⁷ See also Wangenge-Ouma 2012 for a recent discussion on the low participation trends in South Africa's higher education sector.

In light of staffing resources, it was reported that the staff composition in higher education did not reflect demographic realities in South Africa (NCHE, 1996:38). Moreover, since the growth of staff complements between 1988 and 1993 failed to keep pace with growth in student enrolments, the academic staff at universities and technikons remained predominantly white (NCHE, 1996:38).

It was also noted that prior to 1994 most of South Africa's research activity was concentrated in the HWUs. This was attributed to inequalities in the enrolment of postgraduate students (NCHE, 1996:39). In 1993 for instance, HBUs had a total of 197 (5%) students registered for Masters and PhD and published a total of 367 research articles. The HWUs had a total of 3513 (81%) students enrolled for Masters and Doctoral studies and a research output of 4391 (83%) articles (NCHE,1996:41). Interestingly, even after the implementation of the transformation agenda, the above trends continued.⁸

1.3.3 Uncoordinated and fragmented governance structures

Until the beginning of 1994, “the higher education system was highly fragmented in structural and governance terms, and was far from being a coherent and coordinated system” (CHE, 2004:230). The conception of educational institutions as creations of the state had implications for the governance of these institutions. According to Bunting (2006:36), the introduction of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act in 1984 considered education to be an ‘own affair’ as far as whites, Coloureds and Indians were concerned. Responsibility for the education of Africans was vested in a ‘general affairs’ government department which was termed the Department of Education and Training’ (DET) (Cloete, Fehnel, Maassen, Moja Perold & Gibbon, 2002:60).

Typically, the DET schooling system was characterised by periodical strikes, which disrupted learning, little emphasis on individual learners due to the class sizes, and transmission teaching in the form of rote learning and assessment methods (Angelil-Carter, 1998:140). Consequently, students from former DET schools were reported to lack competence in English, due to the fact that “English second language instruction in the DET schools concentrated on developing grammatical rather than communicative competence” (Angelil-Carter, 1998:140). Given such educational backgrounds, which limited the potential of

⁸ See CHE (2009:176) for a discussion of trends in postgraduate studies in South Africa. According to this report, academic staff members in HWUs are still predominantly white. At the same time, while there is a notable increase in postgraduate enrolments, it was argued that most of these students are international students (CHE, 2009:28).

succeeding or gaining access to higher education institutions, transformation initiatives such as foundation programmes drew students from former DET schools in order to address the inequalities of the past.

1.4 Higher education transformation

In South Africa, the advent of democracy necessitated a radical transformation in education policy. Accordingly, the country's constitution enshrined everyone's right to human dignity, equity and freedom to participate in all of the political, socio-economic and cultural spheres of society of which education is one (Kioko, 2010:79). In 1994, South Africa's new democratic government committed itself to transforming the inherited apartheid social and economic structures by institutionalising a new social order. According to Waghid (2003:91), the restructuring of Higher Education in South Africa was profoundly influenced by policy developments expressed in the formulation of several documents that included the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) Report (1996), the Education White Paper 3 of 1997, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) Report⁹ (2000) and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001).

The NCHE (1996) serves as a useful introduction to the key issues, ideas and debates surrounding higher education in the period immediately after the end of apartheid. According to Reddy (2006), its broad mandate was to advise the minister of education on restructuring education. The major contribution of NCHE was that it offered a detailed and extensive study of higher education, which informed the other documents that led to legislation regulating higher education (Reddy, 2006). Consequently, the recommendations of the NCHE were endorsed in the Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education (1997). The framework for HE transformation was laid in the 1997 Education White Paper, which set the envisaged transformation of higher education in the following manner:

South Africa's transition from apartheid minority rule requires that existing practices and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for a new era ... In South Africa today, the challenge is to address the past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities (Doe, 1997:7).

⁹ Entitled 'Towards a Higher Education Landscape: meeting the equity, quality and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century'.

The vision contained in the Education White Paper 3 was that a transformed higher education system would:

- “Promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress of past inequalities”.
- “Meet, through well-planned and coordinated teaching, learning and research programmes, national development needs, including the high-skilled employment needs presented by a growing economy operating in a global environment”.
- “Support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order”.
- “Contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship and, in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality”.

In 2000, the broad goals of the Education White Paper were reformulated into three broad transformation pillars, namely, 1. Increased and broadened participation, 2. Responsiveness to social interests and needs, and 3. Co-operation and partnership in governance (Bunting & Cloete, 2004:36-37). This thesis engages with the first goal of transformation, by evaluating the extent to which the Extended Studies Programme is fulfilling its mandate of providing access and ensuring the success of disadvantaged students.

As will be discussed at length in Chapter Two, there are two conceptions of access discernible in South Africa. In the years following the transition to democracy, the main concern in higher education restructuring was fulfilling the political mandate of the new democracy, which required a rapid deracialisation of higher education institutions. Consequently, there was a notable increase in female representation as well as black student participation. However, Cooper and Subotzky (2001) termed this rapid increase in the admission of black students in higher education a ‘skewed revolution’, as most of the enrolments were mainly in the Humanities and Social Sciences – fields associated with the previous role of blacks in the racially determined division of labour (Subotzky, 2003:356).

In addition to the disproportionate enrolment in programmes, the graduation rates continued to be differentiated along racial lines (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:31).¹⁰ These trends posed challenges for the efficiency of the higher education system; hence, attention was paid to the balancing of equity and efficiency through academic development initiatives (CHE, 2004:90). The following section discusses the challenges briefly as a way of providing a context for the introduction of AD initiatives such as the Extended Studies Programme.

1.4.1 The challenge of higher education democratisation or massification

While significant progress has been registered in the improvement of access, challenges still abound in terms of success. As such, it was recently noted that in spite of the significant growth in higher education enrolments, “graduate output has not kept pace with the country’s needs” due to the low graduation and high attrition rates (CHE, 2013:9). The low graduation rates were highly attributed to first year attrition, which has a long history in South Africa (CHE, 2013:44). In 2006, first year attrition was recorded at 34% for African students, 39% for Coloureds, 34% for Indians and 29% for white students. The actual first year loss was recorded at approximately 42 000 out of 127 000 in 2006 – which means that one in every three students that entered higher education in 2006 didn’t make it to the second year of study (CHE, 2013:44).

The impact of the articulation gap is not a recent observation, this problem has been recognised for a long time. According to CHE (2013:60), the effect of the ‘articulation gap’ was first recognised in state policy in the Education White Paper of 1997.¹¹ Prior to that, various studies had reported the significant adjustment problems of black students to the demands of higher education and the corresponding poor performance of such students. These studies reported that inadequate pre-university preparation resulted in high levels of anxiety amongst first year students, alienation from institutional cultures and academic discourse, evaluation processes and the institution itself.¹²

¹⁰ The low graduation rates were also coupled with the slow demographic change in the academic workforce. Cooper and Subtzky’s (2001) analysis of the academic workforce over a ten-year period (1988-1998) revealed the difficulties in changing the racial profile in higher education. This was attributed to the low numbers of black and women graduates among other reasons. Similar trends were also noted in a report by the Centre for Higher Education (CHE, 2009) which attributed the predominantly white staff profiles to the failure of institutions to produce black Doctoral students.

¹¹ See Doe 1997: 2.34.

¹² See Agar 1990; Kagee, Naidoo & Mahatey 1997; Leon & Lea 1988. See also Sennette, Finchilescu, Gibson & Strauss 2003; Letseka & Maile 2008; Cross & Carpentier 2009.

Owing to these observations, it became clear that access initiatives had to be accompanied by success/quality. In a parliamentary address, the Minister of Science and Technology – Naledi Pandor – indicated the need to end the cycle of poor performance: “It is necessary that higher education institutions do not become arenas for thwarted ambition” by enrolling students, it cannot support academically (Pandor, 2005). In a similar vein, Akoojee & Nkomo (2007:385) argued that access and quality should not be seen as mutually exclusive. Instead, they contended that achievement of both access and success or equity and quality represented “the cornerstones for the successful transformation of higher education in South Africa” (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:385).

Given the early acknowledgement of the effects of the ‘articulation gap’, it is therefore not surprising that the 2001 NPHE emphasised the role of extended programmes in ensuring equity of both access and outcomes.¹³ Subsequently, the programmes were implemented following the establishment of the foundation provision grant scheme in 2004 (CHE, 2013:60).

1.5 Researching foundation provisioning

The Extended Studies Programme falls within the broader field of foundation provisioning in South Africa. As will be shown in Chapters Three and Six, foundation provision has a long history and has thus evolved from peripheral stand-alone courses to more integrated programmes. Although there is available literature on the evaluation of various foundation programmes as they evolved over time, there seems to be a strong focus on quantitative analysis of retention and graduation outcomes of the programmes.

Moreover, these studies are predominantly undertaken in Science and Commerce Faculties.¹⁴ The focus in these studies is largely on measurable dimensions of the academic outcomes such as graduation rates and class marks. Yet student experiences and their perceptions of the curriculum, pedagogical practices and the broader university are hardly known. A further limitation of most of these studies is that they only evaluate the success of AD strategies in the first year of study as well as graduation rates. Yet, nothing is said about the transition of students into the mainstream, particularly how they cope without extra support from access strategies. Such an interrogation is crucial given the shift to institutional development, which locates these programmes within the functions and practices of the broader

¹³ See DoE 2001:2.3.2).

¹⁴See Edwards 2000; Horn & Jansen 2009; Mabila, Malatje, Addo-Bediako, Kazeni & Mathabata, 2006.

university/mainstream. The experiences of students as they progress into mainstream are important in revealing other issues within the wider institution, which determine or hinder the success of students who are admitted through alternative access programmes, such as the Extended Studies Programme.

While retention and graduation statistics are equally important, it is my view that they only serve as a warning about the existence of problems in the programmes or the broader institution. This research fills an important gap in AD research by applying a mixed method approach, which yields both qualitative and quantitative data. Such an approach makes it possible to address a wide and more defined range of research questions. For example, the question about the effectiveness of the Extended Studies Programme requires an evaluation of retention rates and an investigation of the impact of the programme from the perspective of students and those directly involved in the programme.

As the findings of the research revealed, focusing on one dimension would have resulted in a less comprehensive analysis of the transformative potential of the programme. While the experiences of students revealed a positive impact of the programme, the retention rates revealed a completely different picture from that portrayed by the experiences and perceptions of students. Therefore, combining quantitative and qualitative data insights provided stronger evidence for conclusions regarding the extent to which the programme is achieving its transformation objectives.

This study conceptualises retention rates as a function of individual and institutional factors, which interact to shape student experiences and academic outcomes.¹⁵ Given the heterogeneity of institutions (Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001), a sociological analysis has the potential to reveal the complex layers of institutional relations, processes and structures that influence the academic outcomes of students as well as their social and academic experiences. For this, it is useful to turn to Pierre Bourdieu and Amartya Sen's theoretical concepts for a deeper understanding of access initiatives and their impact on academic achievement.

¹⁵ Individual characteristics and institutional characteristics are framed within Bourdieu's concept of capital as determinants of student academic engagement. At the individual level, capital may include aspects such as prior schooling, socio-economic background and literacy practices. At the institutional level, capital consists of institutional recognition of specific ways of doing things, for example, literacy practices or proficiency in the institution's medium of instruction.

At the heart of Bourdieu's work on education is his desire to expose higher education as a contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequalities (Naidoo,2004:457). In his early analysis of the French education system, he concluded that it was not that working class students were less intelligent or gifted but rather that the curriculum favoured those that were naturally acquainted with 'highbrow culture' which refers to the cultural capital of the dominant or elite class (O'Brien & O'Fathaigh, 2004).

Implied in institutional transformation through AD is the reasoning that AD initiatives would disrupt social reproduction and prompt a process of transformation to the university field. In relation to the Extended Studies Programme, the interrelationship between Bourdieu's central concepts offers an invaluable lens through which the impact of the programme on student academic engagement and performance can be assessed. In addition to this, Bourdieu's concept of institutional capital allows us to locate the provision of Extended Studies within the socio-historical context of South African higher education broadly and the institutional context more specifically.

A sociological perspective on the provision of Extended Studies has the potential to enhance understanding of the structures and processes in the programme, experiences and perceptions of those involved and, importantly, the impact and significance of the programme as a means of addressing transformation. The insight so gained can go a long way towards improving the design and delivery of the programme as well as other social integration strategies that affect the experiences of students and academic outcomes. Whilst Bourdieu's approach illuminates the causes of higher education inequalities – for example the impact of prior schooling on the articulation gap, Sen's capabilities approach offers tools for evaluating access initiatives that are designed to address the articulation gap.¹⁶

While the assumption in Bourdieu's social reproduction theory is that Extended Studies Programmes potentially avert the reproduction of inequalities, the reasoning in the capabilities approach is that such programmes will only function effectively to reduce inequalities if they provide opportunities for students to exercise their agency.¹⁷ Agency may be in the form of freedom to voice one's opinion, freedom to learn in a particular language or

¹⁶ The capabilities approach was pioneered by Amartya Sen in the 1980s and 1990s and further developed by Martha Nussbaum and Melanie Walker who applied it to education.

¹⁷ Student agency in the capabilities approach may be interpreted as the willingness and ability to take on an 'academic identity' by pursuing valued goals and objectives (Sen, 1992).

freedom to make academic-related decisions such as being able to access the library or being able to use a computer to type up an assignment. Such freedoms are what students value and their fulfilment depends on the extent to which they are recognised in the teaching and learning process or by the institution as expressed in the institutional culture.

Beyond an assessment of the programme in terms of design and graduation output, the capabilities approach calls attention to the student experience. Overall, observations about the performance patterns of Extended Studies Programmes, their contribution to widening access and assessment of their effectiveness were recently reported in the Four Year Degree Proposal.¹⁸ That being considered, there is still a need for an in-depth institutional analysis of these programmes, particularly an investigation into the teaching and learning practices and philosophies, and the perceived impact on student experiences of teaching and learning. This study hopes to build on available research by incorporating the voices of agents involved in the programme – that is Extended Studies students and Extended Studies lecturers. Moreover, it brings to light the pedagogical processes and practices and how they are experienced and perceived by students.

It is hoped that the study will reveal opportunities and challenges that can assist Rhodes University to focus its Extended Studies Programmes more effectively. Overall, the research will add to the body of knowledge on institutional provision of Extended Studies, which is critical for a holistic understanding of the role of AD in a transforming higher education system. Lastly, embedding the analysis of the Extended Studies Programmes in the social, historical and institutional context assists in revealing other issues within the wider institution, which need to be addressed for real transformation to take place.

1.6 Research objectives and research questions

This research fills an important void in foundation provision work, which allows the following question to be answered: Is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objectives, particularly when viewed through the first goal of transformation, which aims to improve the access and success in higher education? The overall objectives of the study were to:

¹⁸ See CHE 2013:70-90.

1. Critically analyse the provision of Extended Studies and the structure and assumptions behind their development and implementation, with a view to understanding their impact on teaching and learning in a transforming Historically White University.
2. Investigate the academic and social experiences of students in Extended Studies, particularly the way they were treated by lecturers, tutors and students in their mainstream courses and socially in residences. Here we took into account the fact that the Extended Studies Programme is not autonomous; instead, it functions within processes and structures. A sociological understanding of these programmes as well as the experiences of students in these programmes, therefore, required that their analysis be embedded in the social, historical, cultural and institutional context.
3. Investigate students' perceptions of the impact of Extended Studies on their education.
4. Lastly, given the fact that the Extended Studies Programme draws a wider range of students into the university, the research also explored the ways in which students with different kinds of cultural capital fit or do not fit in the education field and how the university as a whole responds to these students.

1.7 Research methodology

This research was undertaken using a qualitative research design located within an interpretive and critical paradigm (See Chapter Three for a comprehensive explanation of research paradigms and research techniques used for the empirical work). The case study approach was used as the main method, and within it different sub-methods were triangulated to reduce systematic biases inherent in the use of single methods (Bickman & Roj, 2009:245). The sub-methods included document analysis, classroom observation, written reflections and in-depth interviews. Rhodes University was purposively selected as the case study for the simple reason that it is an HWU undergoing transformation, hence the provision of Extended Studies by the university amongst a variety of other programmes and strategies aimed at institutional transformation.

The case study approach was utilised in the study for it had the potential to provide a holistic picture of the Extended Studies Programme, by capturing the different yet connected and related aspects of the programme. A sociological insight into the provision of Extended Studies required that their analysis be embedded in the context of transformation – which is the broader university. The Extended Studies Programme falls within the broader field of Academic Development, which encompasses four interlinked areas of work: “student development (particularly foundational and skills-oriented provision), staff development,

curriculum development and institutional development” (HEQC, 2007:74). AD was defined as “a field of research and practice that aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education and to enable institutions and the higher education system to meet key educational goals, particularly in relation to equity of access and outcomes”.

The use of mixed methods allowed access into the four interlinked areas cited above. This involved an enquiry into the history of the Extended Studies Programmes – that is the history of its predecessor courses, philosophies underpinning the implementation and design of the current programmes, equity issues surrounding the design of the programmes, the targeted groups of students, teaching practices in the programme and experiences of students and lecturers involved in the programme. The main participants in this study were first year students enrolled in Extended Studies in 2012, those previously enrolled on the programme prior to 2012, first year lecturers in two of the four departments that offer Extended Studies, Extended Studies lecturers, the Dean of Humanities and the Dean of Teaching and Learning. Other research participants were interviewed in order to verify information obtained in interviews with Extended Studies students. For example, a few mainstream students and teaching assistants in two departments that offer ES courses were interviewed in order to verify claims made by ES students about general academic support on mainstream.

Data collection took place in different phases, and each research phase addressed specific research questions. Phase one took place from February 2012 until August 2012, and the main objective in phase one was to develop a contextual case record of the programme as well as establish a relationship with the key participants – first year Extended Studies students and Extended Studies lecturers. Preliminary work in phase one involved a review of institutional documents on the history of the ES Programmes – that is the history of its predecessor courses and, in particular, teaching and learning on the programmes and philosophies underpinning the practices in the programmes. In order to gain background information on the programme, interviews were conducted with former ES students who were registered for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th year of study or postgraduate studies. This was followed by classroom observation in first year Extended Studies classes.

Phase two of data collection took place between August and October 2012, and it involved in-depth interviews with first year Extended Studies students. These interviews elicited information on students’ socio-economic and educational backgrounds, students’ perceptions,

and experiences of the programme and, ultimately, perceptions about the impact of the programme.

Phase three involved interviews with Extended Studies lecturers, first year lecturers in two of the four Humanities departments that offer Extended Studies, and teaching assistants in two departments. This took place between January and May 2013. Interviews with these strategic participants elicited information on the general history of the Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes University, perceptions about students in Extended Studies, and the role of the Extended Studies Programme at the teaching and learning interface, as well as its role in the social and academic integration of a wider range of students into the academic and social fabric of the university.

The final phase of data collection involved phone interviews with former Extended Studies students who left or dropped out, and in-depth interviews with the Dean of Humanities and the Dean of Teaching and Learning.

1.8 Key concepts in the study

1.8.1 Articulation gap: According to CHE (2013:60), the ‘articulation gap’ refers to the “mismatch or discontinuity between the exit level of secondary education and the entry level of higher education”. Although it is recognised that this problem affects the majority of higher education intake, “it most negatively affect students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds” (CHE, 2013: 60).

1.8.2 Disadvantaged students: In this research, ‘disadvantaged students’ are students from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds. In view of Bourdieu’s framework, which underpinned this study, these students lack the recognised cultural capital necessary for enrolment in higher education. As such, they are also perceived as non-traditional students. While policy equates educational disadvantage with racial categories, such a conceptualisation seems to have been loosened in discourse on education disadvantage. That being noted, however, disadvantaged students in this research fall within the black racial category – which includes black South African, Indian and Coloured.

1.8.3 Foundation Provision: Rubby Dhunpath & Renuka Vithal (2013:4) defined ‘foundation provisioning’ as “the offering of modules, courses, programmes or other curricular elements that are intended to equip underprepared students with academic foundations that will enable them to successfully complete a recognised higher education

qualification”. These programmes are specifically designed to “support educationally disadvantaged students who are underprepared despite meeting minimum admission criteria, by enabling them to be placed on an extended curriculum that will give them the academic foundations for successfully completing their studies” (DoE, 2012:1).

1.8.4 Extended Studies Programmes: are forms of foundation provisioning which aim to address the articulation gap by providing “additional curriculum time for foundational learning to enable students to develop sound academic and social foundations for succeeding in higher education” (CHE, 2013:18).

1.8.5 Academic Development: In South Africa, AD is defined by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) as “a field of research and practice that aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education, and to enable institutions and the higher education system to meet key educational goals, particularly in relation to equity of access and outcomes” (HEQC, 2007:74). Foundation provisioning falls within the broader field of AD.

1.8.6 Field: This concept is derived from Bourdieu’s thesis which underpins the study. In this study, the field concept serves as the context in which the Extended Studies Programme operates. The Extended Studies Programme is conceived of as a sub-field of the broader university field. Given the autonomy of the two inter-related fields, it is argued that the structure of these fields is defined by the power relations between agents in each of the fields. That being noted, it is also argued that, although the Extended Studies Programme field is independent, it operates within the confines of the broader university field.

1.8.7 Capabilities: The concept of capabilities is derived from Sen’s capability approach that underpins this study. The concept refers to “the substantive freedoms” that allow an individual to “lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value” (Sen, 1999:87). This concept is used as a tool for evaluating the extent to which social arrangements (the Extended Studies Programme in this case) enable individuals to achieve desired educational outcomes.

1.8.8 Capital: the concept of capital is key to Bourdieu’s social reproduction thesis. The concept of capital is applied in the study in order to explain power relations between various agents in the Extended Studies Programme and the broader university field. The concept is also applied to individual and institutional characteristics that order events and interaction on the education field. At the individual level, capital may include aspects such as prior

schooling, socio-economic background and literacy practices. At the institutional level, capital consists of institutional recognition of specific ways of doing things, for example, literacy practices or proficiency in the institution's medium of instruction.

1.9 Chapter outline

Chapter One is a discussion of the context of the study; it offers a brief analysis of South Africa's experience with student access, particularly the legacy of apartheid education. Apartheid is presented as the most plausible predictor of the woes in higher education. This is used as a backdrop for understanding the current academic development strategies. The chapter also provides the background to the study and the broad rationale for conducting the study. In addition to this, the chapter introduces the main research question of the study, research objectives, methodology, and, lastly, the theoretical framework, which framed the study.

Chapter Two provides a discussion of the two conceptions of access discernible in the South African education system. These are derived from a historical analysis of access trends and education policies, which were broadly underpinned by social justice commitments. As such, it is argued that distributive and relational notions of social justice respectively underpinned the two conceptions of access discernible in South Africa – which are 'access as participation' and 'access with success'.

Chapter Three locates the two conceptions of access in debates and history of foundation provisioning in South Africa. In doing so, a history of foundation provisioning is provided with a view to show how the evolving conceptions of access and conceptions of educational disadvantage shifted the practices and philosophies in the broader field of academic development. Foundation provision is discussed in relation to the three phases of academic development identified by Volbrecht and Boughey (2004). These are summarised as 'Academic Support' (ASP), 'Academic Development' (AD) and 'Institutional Development' (ID).

Chapter Four discusses the main theoretical approaches that underpin the study, namely Pierre Bourdieu's social reproduction theory and Amartya Sen's capability approach. The chapter opens by discussing the benefits of integrating the two theories, and argues that these theories address the weakness of the other. While Bourdieu's conceptual tools provide a lens for understanding the causes of inequalities, Sen's capabilities approach offers tools for

evaluating social conditions or institutional arrangements within which inequalities manifest. The rest of the chapter provides a discussion of the tenets of each of these frameworks, and ends by discussing their relevance and application to the study.

Chapter Five describes the research design, methodological consideration, data sources, data collection techniques, and sampling strategies used in the study to address the research question and research objectives.

Chapter Six is a case study of foundation provision at Rhodes University. It locates the Extended Studies Programme in the history of its predecessor programmes (ASPs and ADPs) with a view to show how the programme evolved to be what it is today. Following from this history, the structure, purpose, design and teaching and learning practices on the Extended Studies Programme are discussed.

Chapter Seven provides background information on the Extended Studies students by exploring their socio-economic, educational and family backgrounds. The chapter also explores the reasons for coming to university, expectations prior to enrolling in university, first impressions of the university and student experiences during the transition to higher education.

Chapter Eight focuses on student experiences of the Extended Studies Programme, particularly learning on the programme. As such, it provides insight into students' perceptions of the programme, challenges faced, coping mechanisms adopted and perceived impact of the programme. Lastly, the chapter considers the transition to mainstream, with a view to explore the ways in which the wider university responds to under-prepared students.

Chapter Nine addresses the main research question: To what extent is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objective from a transformation perspective. The programme is evaluated in light of the shifts that have taken place in AD work broadly, teaching practices on the programme, graduation and postgraduate enrolment statistics of former Extended Studies students, validity of the programme in the university, as well as the design and structure of the programme.

Chapter Ten draws conclusions on the overall findings in relation to the main research question. It makes recommendations with respect to identified challenges and opportunities in the provision of Extended Studies. Importantly, the chapter highlights the key contributions of the study and implications of the key findings.

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS A CONCEPTUALISATION OF ACCESS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.1. Introduction

Given the fact that foundation provisioning falls within the broader goal of increasing access and success in higher education, it seems critical to interrogate the conceptualization of ‘access’ in the South African higher education sector. The concern with greater access to education became an urgent imperative following South Africa’s transition to democracy in 1994 (Machingambi, 2011:13). According to Akoojee and Nkomo (2007:385), a similar drive at the global level was evidenced in the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, which, in its preamble, called for equality of access. It is therefore not surprising that the subsequent change from an elitist to a ‘mass system’ – a process referred to as ‘massification’, gave rise to the access of “a larger number of learners to levels of education from which they had been excluded due to their membership to a disadvantaged social class, marginalised race or ethnic group” (Cross & Carpentier:2009:7).

Consequently, “debates and discourses in higher education have foregrounded access as a key component of successful higher education transformation” (Machingambi, 2011:13). Akoojee and Nkomo (2007:390) contended that the two conceptions of access discernible in South African policy (‘access as participation’ and ‘access with success’) “offer significantly different outcomes”. This chapter locates the two conceptualisations of access in the broader social justice debates. As such, it is argued that ‘access as participation’ is representative of a distributive notion of justice, and ‘access with success’ is representative of a relational notion of justice. The above interrogation requires a location of access in its historical and conjectural context. In doing so, a link between history and the present is established by tracing where we have come from, the political (and educational) routes travelled and the vehicles used to arrive at the present situation (Kallaway, 2002:10). Moreover, such an interrogation provides answers to key access questions that potentially influenced institutional transformation strategies aimed at increasing access or access with success. These include: Access for whom? Access to what? Access for what?

2.2 Social justice and access issues in the post apartheid education context

Since the early 1990s, increased access and broadened participation in higher education comprised one of the policy agendas, informed by social justice, as one of its goals to redress the imbalances of the apartheid regime. While there appears to be no single definition of

social justice, in this research it is conceptualised as the extent to which “higher education institutions reflect and pursue commitments to equity, democracy and redress in their institutional policies, plans, programmes and practices” (Tjabane, 2010:2).¹⁹ Although issues of equity in education encompass “dimensions of race, class, gender, disability, the urban/rural divide and adult access, race-based equity is nevertheless an overarching theme in post-apartheid South Africa”, reflected in the “government’s aspirations and arrangements for social justice as part of the reconstruction and development of the country” (Martin, 2010:54). In South Africa, equity is deemed a necessary condition for democratic life and this suggests that for any education system to become meaningful, the circle of opportunity must be extended to those who might otherwise not be considered worthy enough.

Nelson, Creagh & Clarke (2012:3) put forward the claim that “the notion of social justice coexists with expressions of human rights, fairness and equality”. In a similar vein, Machingambi (2011:14) argued that “the thrust of access as social justice is premised on the moral high ground that education is a basic human right that empowers the socially and economically marginalised and vulnerable groups in different communities to get out of impoverishment and safeguards them from exploitative and inhuman practices”. With respect to the South African education context, the need to achieve social justice meant addressing the inequalities in access created by the apartheid government. For Machingambi (2011:14), this involved, among other things, the removal of all perceived barriers that affected individual or collective participation in educational activities.

Scholarly debate on educational inequality in South Africa has called for and evolved towards broader, more nuanced conceptualizations of access to education (Hill, Baxen, Craig, & Namakula, 2012:241). Scholars who examined educational inequality in South Africa articulated increasingly complex conceptions of access to education, and drew on one dimension of social justice or another – that is distributive or relational conceptions of social justice. According to Hill et al. (2012:246), distributive justice is informed by a stream of research that has investigated access to education in South Africa, by focusing on access as participation (whether or not citizens enrol in learning institutions) and outcomes (the pace of their progress through the system and their attainment and achievement of outcomes (Hill et al., 2012:246).

¹⁹ Such a conceptualization of social justice is also reflected in Wilson- Strydom 2011; Unterhalter , Vaughan & Walker 2007; Doe 1997.

On the contrary, the relational justice conception of access focuses more on the nature of social relations in schools – that is, “the policies and practices in learning institutions that influence students’ day-to-day experiences and the quality of their learning experience (Hill et al, 2012:249). Therefore, while distributive justice focuses on quantitative aspects such as the total number of students who get admitted to higher education institutions and the graduation rates, relational justice is concerned with issues such as, who gets admitted and why them, and how the process of teaching and institutional structures affect the learning process. As will be shown, the above notions of social justice had implications for redress policies aimed at addressing the broader goal of increasing access and success in South Africa’s higher education system. Moreover, the debates about foundation provisioning strategies revolved and shifted in response to commitments underpinned by distributive and relational notions of social justice.

2.3 Access as participation: A distributive justice perspective

The distributive justice conception of access proceeds from the assumption that broadening the participation of disadvantaged groups is one of the means of achieving equity.²⁰ The concern with greater access became an imperative after the demise of apartheid. Evidently, the main thrust of education policy in this period was driven by considerations of redistribution and redress. This involved urgently addressing the problem of access by increasing the participation of black learners at institutions previously denied to them (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:390). The need to address access issues can be detected in one of the first ANC policy documents – *A Policy Framework for Education and Training Draft* (1994), which outlined the policy shift from apartheid to post-apartheid education (Odhav, 2009:38). Higher education was perceived to be in need of “reconstruction and redevelopment, and in particular the development of capacity, resources and a student financial aid system” (Odhav, 2009:38).

In line with the distributive notion of justice, the policies adopted post 1994 were “affirmative-action oriented, with priority given to the most disadvantaged groups” (Odhav, 2009:38). In view of access to education, admission criteria had to consider race, gender and class (Odhav, 2009:38). To add, the focus here was equity of opportunity and equity of outcomes. Integral to these early discourses on social justices was a conception of access as

²⁰ See for example Fleurbaey, Gary-Bobo & Maguain (2001:114); Nelson et al (2012:17); Pendlebury & Enslin (2004:31).

participation (Hill et al., 2012:246). As such, through to the end of the 1990s, this literature included both conceptual and empirical analysis of barriers to access that informed the distributive dimension of social justice. As such, improvements in the quality of education were thus identified “as a necessary complement to quantitative expansion of physical access to schooling”, and arguably higher education (Hill et al., 2012:243). However, these improvements were limited to the “redistribution of educational goods and access to them” as opposed to improving the learning experience or pedagogical practices (Pendlebury & Enslin, 2004:31).

The Education White Paper 3, issued in 1997, stipulated that increased participation in higher education was essential for both economic and social reasons. In addition, it singled out equity as one of the guiding principles for the process of transformation of South African higher education (Martin, 2010). As the White Paper put it:

The principle of equity requires fair opportunities both to enter higher education programmes and to succeed in them. Applying the principle of equity implies, on one hand, a critical identification of existing inequalities which are the product of policies, structures and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination and disadvantage, and on the other, a programme of transformation involves not only abolishing all existing forms of unjust differentiation, but also measures of empowerment, including financial support to bring about equal opportunity for the individuals and institutions (Doe,1997,1.18).

The above commitment to equity was underpinned by the political mandate of the new democracy, which required a rapid democratisation of access through the deracialisation of higher education institutions (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:390). According to Cross & Carpentier (2009:7), “when the scope of this historical movement reaches significant proportions, it is generally referred to as massification”. In the the NCHE’s view, massification would be achieved through a change from an elite higher education system to a mass higher education system.²¹ According to du Toit (2010:95), this process of policy formulation was driven by “a strong social demand for democracy and equity, not for efficiency, quality or skills”. Evidently, in a remarkably short period of operation (1995-1996), the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) laid the ground work for higher education policy in South Africa. According to Jansen:

²¹ See NCHE 1996.

The central proposal of the the NCHE was that South African higher education should be massified. Massification was the first proposal that attempted to resolve the equity-development tension since increased participation was supposed to provide greater opportunity for access (equity) while also producing more high-level skills that were necessary for economic growth (2003:292).

The 1996 NCHE growth projections were based on assumptions that:

- a) “The number of school leavers obtaining matriculation exemption would increase at an annual average rate of 10% from the 1994 total”, and
- b) “That overall university plus technikon enrolments would grow at a rate of more than 4% per annum over the decade 1995-2005” (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:9).

Subsequently, both HWUs and HBUs in that period adopted a distributive justice approach to access initiatives by increasing the intake of black students. Apart from broadening physical access to previously disadvantaged groups, funding was made available. National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding became available in 1999, and it was aimed at increasing access to education to students who qualified for admission to university (CHE,2010:5). NSFAS facilitated access for a significant number of disadvantaged students who would otherwise not afford to pay for higher education studies (CHE, 2010:5).

Owing to the government’s agenda to broaden access to education, South Africa experienced a tremendous leap in the proportion of black students entering higher education. To cite an observation by Akoojee & Nkomo (2007:390), “the proportion of African students at Historically White Universities increased dramatically from 13 per cent in 1993 to 39 per cent in 1999”. Similarly, female representation also increased in the period between 1988 and 2002. In 1988, women represented 42 per cent of total enrolment in higher education and this proportion increased to 53 per cent by 2002 (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:390). A study by Cooper and Subotzky (cited in Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:390) revealed that the ratio of black students in total university enrolments increased from 32 percent in 1990 to 60 per cent in 2000, while in technikons enrolments rose from 32 per cent to 72 per cent over the same period. This was a remarkable achievement by any standard. In light of the shifts in the demographic profile in terms of participation in higher education, Cloete & Galant (2005:13) claimed “that this may have been the greatest change in racial and gender composition of a student body anywhere in the world during the same period”.

The beneficiaries of this democratisation of education in South Africa included non-traditional students, students who belonged to families that, “within the context of the process of democratisation, are more and more distant from the cultural and intellectual norms required by the educational institutions, usually dominated by the values of the elite” (Cross & Carpentier, 2009:7). In Bourdieu’s terms, these students are conceptualised as lacking academic capital.²² Cross & Carpentier (2009:7) argued further that the academic trajectory of such students is “strongly characterised by low throughput, drop-outs and failures”, which “leaves much room to cast doubts upon the prospects of democratisation of academic success”.

The initial achievements of the post-apartheid restructuring in South African higher education can be seen in an overall increase in enrolments and, above all, in the dramatic increase in the number of black students. While the remarkable improvement in black student enrolment in higher education is uncontested, du Toit (2010:99) argued that more than a decade into post-apartheid democracy, the secondary schooling system produced “only a small elite core prepared for effective entry into higher education”. Although the racial order was significantly different from what it had been during apartheid, du Toit contended that its order of magnitude remained much the same (du Toit, 2010:95).

Moreover, Ratangee (2007:9) argued that although access trends over the years reflected some positive change, the education outcomes continued to be differentiated along racial lines. Similarly, Cloete and Bunting (2000:31) argued that although the enrolment rates increased between 1995 and 1998, this increase in enrolments was not accompanied by an increase or improvement in outcomes. As such, they concluded that graduation trends between 1991 and 1998 suggested that the legacies of apartheid were still firmly in place (Cloete and Bunting, 2000:31). It is against this background that Soudien (2010:64) concluded “that even after apartheid, the ‘revolving door’ syndrome of high drop-out and failure rates continued to be a feature of the higher education system in general, and for Africans in particular”. For Griesel (2003:3), this scenario created a challenge for higher education in terms of balancing the dual demands of equity/redress and development/efficiency.

²² Rajani Naidoo (2004:458) defined academic capital as an institutionalised form of cultural capital “based on properties such as prior educational achievement, a ‘disposition’ to be academic (seen in the manner of speech and writing) and specially designated competencies”.

The deterioration of education standards following the calls for massification posed social justice problems, but a different set of problems than those related to equity in physical access. While massification and democratisation of access may suggest a reversal of reproduction, the persistence of inequalities in academic outcomes affirmed Frédéric Lebaron's claim that massification results in "exclusion from inside" (Bourdieu & Champagne cited in Lebaron, 1998:3), as opposed to a reversal of the tendency to reproduction. The persistence of these inequalities following the transition to democracy draws attention to the impact of structural factors which were often neglected in the first attempts to achieve equity of access. In light of this, it can be argued that in the early years of democracy, access-driven strategies paid attention to manifestations of the problem (low enrolment and retention of blacks and women), and failed to address the structural issues from which these problems emerged.

In view of this, Hill et al (2012:248) argued that researchers who invoked a distributional justice framework did not conceptualise access to education in ways "that link access barriers to contemporary manifestations of oppression (i.e exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence) as they emerge in daily interactions in schools". Although they were writing with specific reference to the schooling system, their arguments are relevant to the access debates in higher education. The impact of contemporary manifestations of oppression in the education process broadly suggests that a change in institutional arrangements and practices was a necessary condition for the achievement of real access.

Owing to these observations, the conception of access as participation was replaced by a conception of 'access as success' – an approach that suggests that it was perhaps more important that the outcomes of greater participation are given attention. Implicit in this shift was a relational notion of social justice, which is underpinned by the recognition of the impact of social arrangements and institutional factors on student access and academic outcomes. Furthermore, this perspective is underpinned by notions of recognition and inclusion of diverse students in higher education. In Bourdieu's framework, these inclusive practices involve attempts to "level the playing field", in order to equalise opportunities for success.²³

²³ See Section 4.7.3 for a discussion on how inclusive educational practices, pedagogical practices in particular, can be structured in ways that reduce the inequalities caused by an uneven education field.

2.4 Access as success: A relational justice perspective

A second stream of research that examined educational inequality in South Africa analyzed access to education from a relational justice perspective. According to Vusumazi Mncube (2008:79), “the relational aspect of social justice has to do with procedural rights and is concerned with ordering social relations according to formal and informal rules that govern the way in which members of society treat each other at both micro and macro levels”. The relational justice framework focuses more on the nature of social relationships – that is the policies, practices, students’ experiences, institutional context, individual characteristics and the quality of the learning experience.²⁴

Such a conception of justice invokes notions of inclusion and “recognition of differences between groups and individual in terms of various identities” (Gerwitz cited in Shuayb, 2012:23). In distinguishing distributive justice from relational justice, Gerwitz highlighted the ontological assumptions of each and argued that relational justice is “holistic and non-atomistic, being essentially concerned with the nature of inter-connections between individuals in society, rather than with how much individuals get (cited in Ernest, Greer & Sriraman, 2009:118).

While distributive justice notions of access were evidenced in policy with the demise of apartheid, some HWUs had made efforts to admit black talented students prior to 1994. As such, from the early 80s it was recognised that providing mere access to black students was not a sufficient condition for the achievement of real equity. Hence, the introduction of Academic Support Programmes in the English medium liberal universities, namely, Rhodes, Cape Town, Natal and Wits. Although these programmes were not perfect as will be argued in Chapter Three, they were underpinned by a recognition of the underpreparedness of black students which affected their chances of succeeding in higher education. It is, however, worth noting that although concerns about the need for access go way back as evidenced in the introduction of ASPs, under-preparedness was premised on individual deficit assumptions.²⁵ Hence the need to ‘fix’ the student, as opposed to adapting the institution to the realities of prior learning in the wider student body.

²⁴ See Hlalele & Alexander 2012; Wilson-Strydom 2011; Pendlebury & Enslin 2004 – for scholarly debates that conceptualise access from a relational social justice perspective.

²⁵ See Smit, 2012 – for a discussion on the reconceptualization of under-preparedness as a combination of individual factors (students’ cultural capital expressed in rote learning educational backgrounds, for example) as well as institutional factors in the form of elite institutional cultures which result in the marginalisation of certain students.

With regards to the earlier recognition of the need to think about social justice in relational terms, it is worth citing a few research studies undertaken prior to 1994 and the period immediately after the transition to democracy. A study conducted by Leon & Lea (1988) reported the impact of institutional characteristics on academic outcomes of black students. It was observed that black students did not feel integrated into what Leon and Lea referred to as a predominantly white universities or HWUs. This alienation was attributed to the fact that the institutions did not cater for the social and political needs of the students and, as such, it was perceived as representing the interests of white students.

Similarly, a study by Van Heerden (1995) revealed that alienation of students from the various aspects of the institutions affected their academic outcomes. Van Heerden (1995:50) carried out ethnographic research to “determine which and how sociocultural factors influenced the academic performance of students at a distant education university in South Africa”. This study revealed that academic performance of students was shaped by an intersection of a multiplicity of individual, historical and socio-economic factors. All these factors were argued to be interlinked. For instance, Van Heerden (1995:74) argued that childhood circumstances could not be divorced from political and economic factors and, as such, these circumstances were closely related, nor could they be “divorced from indigenous ideas and norms”. These factors, Van Heerden (1995:74) argued, “were all interactive in inhibiting the adequate preparation of the child for learning at school and later at university”. The above observations resonate with Bourdieu’s view of cultural capital, in particular the impact of social economic background and prior schooling on student academic engagement in university.

In the years following the democratic transition, it became clearer that efforts towards access had to be accompanied by successful participation. These sentiments were expressed in the light of the alienation and marginalisation of students in HWUs, which, for Bourdieu and Sen alike, results from misrecognition of students’ capabilities or capital.²⁶ A case in point is a research study by Sennett, Finchilescu, Gibson and Strauss (2003) which analysed the adjustment of both black and white students at a HWU. While Van Heerden’s (1995) study focused on the impact of individual factors on academic performance, Sennett et al (2003) identified a new set of factors that they reported to impact on academic performance in HWUs.

²⁶ ‘Capabilities’ in Sen’s terms and ‘capital’ in Bourdieu’s terms.

For Sennett et al (2003), low levels of education among parents (an indication of cultural capital) as well as institutional characteristics influenced the adjustment of students to higher education institutions. Recent research also indicated the impact of institutional factors on the adjustment and academic performance of black students in HWUs. For example, Jeff Jawitz (2010:2), writing on the white academic experience, argued that the racialised nature of higher education in South Africa results in the marginalisation of black students while favouring white experiences. For Jarwitz (2010:2), this broadly occurs because of “uncompromising institutional cultures” and assessment practices. Similarly, Barney Pityana – former UNISA Vice-Chancellor – highlighted the impact of institutional cultures in view of the retention of previously disadvantaged black students into the academic sector (cited in Kgosana, 2010). Pityana (cited in Kgosana, 2010) argued that the “culture at many Historically White Institutions was still viewed as alienating by black students, even though student enrolment at many of them had changed dramatically, with black students now in the majority”.²⁷

The above research studies are indicative of relational conceptions of social justice. This is evidenced by the focus on the interaction between agents, social structures, practices and institutional context. This relationship is representative of structural relationships in Bourdieu’s (1993b:3) field, which are defined by power relations between agents and institutions. These power relations, which are, in turn, determined by the capital possessed by agents, determine their positions on the field – either a dominant or a subordinate position as is the case with black and white students in Jawitz analysis of the white academic experience. Therefore, in view of social justice achievement, access to the field or university is a necessary condition but insufficient for the achievement of real justice if it does not ensure ‘internal’ access – which can be conceptualised as success. In agreement with this Pendlebury (2004:37) noted that:

Genuine inclusion has to overcome external and internal exclusion. Externally excluded groups remain outside of both the distributive domains for public goods and the arenas of public deliberation. External exclusion can be variously imposed; for example, through policies like apartheid or social practices such as the domestic confinement of women and severely disabled people. Internal exclusion can be much more insidious. Under pretence of inclusion (or naïve or insensitive understanding of it), previously excluded groups may be brought into a public deliberative

²⁷ See also Dhlanga 2013; Odhav 2009 – for research that highlights the impact of institutional factors on the success of black students in HWUs.

domain but remain on the margins of deliberation, silenced or ignored by dominant terms of discourse and privileged styles of action and expression.

In making this point, Pendlebury (2004) was suggesting that distributive justice has to be accompanied by other forms of justice that address internal/relational factors. Therefore, democratisation of access in South Africa had to be accompanied by a democratisation of success by providing what can be conceptualised as opportunities for success in Sen's framework. These opportunities, as Bourdieu and Sen show, are structural in form and manifest in the form of institutional cultures, practices and ways of seeing and doing things. In recognition of this, Pendlebury (2004:4) argued, "social justice requires the establishment of institutional and other structural conditions for promoting self-determination and development of all members of society". The key word here is "all", which implies equity of opportunity or a levelling of the education field in Bourdieu's terms.

In view of the persistence of inequalities in education, particularly the racial discrepancies in educational outcomes, Fiske and Ladd (2004a:163) blamed this phenomenon on the uneven education field in South Africa. They argued:

When racial groups start out on an uneven playing field, as they certainly did in South Africa in 1994, equal treatment does not, in and of itself, go far enough ... Even if admission policies no longer explicitly discriminate against students on the basis of their race, black students in South Africa may be differentially excluded from some schools because of the language they speak, their family's poverty, inability to pay fees, or prohibitive transportation costs. Thus equity defined as equal treatment, important though it may be for symbolic reasons in South Africa, would not move the country very far in terms of the other two standards.

Fiske and Ladd (2004a, 222) argued further that when the government introduced policies to restructure education in South Africa, they did so under the assumption that the education field was even, yet this was not the case. It is therefore not surprising that there were racial discrepancies in educational outcomes in the period immediately after democracy. In view of unequal educational outcomes, Gerwitz (cited in Hlalele, 2012:489) seemed to suggest that equity of access could only be achieved by creating inclusive institutional and structural conditions:

Overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating on par with others as full partners in social interaction.

Drawing on the work of Gerwitz, Hlalele (2012:489) suggested that equity in access could thus be achieved by not only providing physical access but also by "disrupting and subverting

arrangements that promote marginalisation and exclusionary processes”. In South Africa, it seems – and I say this with great caution – that issues of quality, retention and educational outcomes were sacrificed in the quest to get as many students into higher education as possible. Although this was not deliberate, some commentators have argued that the emerging trend of high attrition rate was an unintended or unforeseen outcome of post-apartheid education restructuring. Badat (2005) perceived that the unregulated widening of student participation in higher education caused a significant financial strain as institutions failed to account for their failure to graduate these learners out of the system.

It is in the context of the above considerations and debates that Akoojee & Nkomo (2007:385) contended that quality and equity issues should not be addressed as mutually exclusive issues. They argued further that “Indeed just as there can be no quality without access, there can be no real access without possibilities for success”. They drew on the work of Berquist (1995) to support their transformative notion of quality. Like Berquist, they argued that “quality can be achieved through and by means of, open and unfettered institutional access, and that real access cannot be achieved without attention being paid to quality” (2007:394).

Studies that have developed a relational justice conception of ‘access as success’ in understanding educational inequalities in South Africa seems to build on the notion that students can either be excluded or included in educational contexts. The overall impression that surfaces from the conceptualization of access as success is a comprehensive and expanded notion of access which pays attention and seeks to address enduring exclusionary mechanisms such as institutional culture and elitist teaching methods which do not cater for the increasing enrolment of the so called ‘non-traditional students’ in South African universities.

2.5 Conclusion : Evolving conceptions of access and implications for academic development work

The debates on the different conceptualisations of access in South African higher education have revealed aspects of both individual and institutional structures, cultures and practices that facilitate and constrain access, quality learning experiences and outcomes. In this regard, these debates offer insights about access to education that extend beyond a mere analysis of educational outcomes, but draw attention to complex individual factors, and institutional conditions and processes underlying educational outcomes. As already noted, evolving

conceptions of ‘access’ had implications for academic development work in South Africa. Similarly, and consistent with the evolving conceptions of access, the broad field of academic development also went through a number of ideological shifts which have seen it moving from a focus on equity to a focus on efficiency (Boughey, 2007b:1).

The White Paper (1997) included academic development programmes as one of the primary means of affecting transformation within the sector.²⁸ They were to be seen as “integral elements of a higher education system committed to redress and to improving the quality of learning and teaching” (Section 2.3.4). The NPHE considered the critical role of academic development in improving the efficiency of the higher education system (Doe, 2001:31). The following chapter provides a review of the shifts in academic development work in South Africa broadly. This is done with the aim to highlight the implications of these shifts in the conceptualization of access on academic development work. Additionally, this review provides a context for the institutional analysis of foundation provisioning at Rhodes University, particularly how the history of AD work at Rhodes University relates to broader shifts and developments in academic development work in South Africa.

²⁸ It is worth noting that these programmes have a long history. The early programmes were developed in “response to opportunities to widen access” (CHE, 2013:70) as opposed to addressing the ‘articulation gap’. Hence, these programmes aimed to ‘fix’ students who were perceived as lacking certain skills. With the shift in the conceptualisation of access, particularly the recognition that there existed a gap between secondary schooling and higher education (which mostly affected students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds), foundation provisioning shifted focus from the student to the institution. Significant to this shift was the attempt to address the gap, by facilitating epistemological access which enables students to become successful participants in an academic practice/ university in this case (Morrow, 1999:78).

CHAPTER THREE

A CRITICAL OUTLINE OF FOUNDATION PROVISIONING IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a historical review of foundation provisioning in South Africa in terms of its academic development history, with a view to highlighting the various models from which the current model of the Extended Studies Programme emerged. According to Kloot, Case and Marshall (2008:1), these programmes were critical to the agenda for educational change in the 1980s, and the transition to democracy since 1994. According to the DoE (2012:5) “foundation provision is the offering of modules, courses or other curricular elements that are intended to equip under-prepared students with academic foundations that will enable them to successfully complete a higher education qualification that has been approved by the Minister of Education”.

Furthermore, “foundation provision is intended primarily to facilitate the academic development of students whose prior learning has been adversely affected by educational or social inequalities” (DoE, 2012:5). Taken in the context of the access with success debate in Chapter Two, foundation provision is aimed at facilitating equity of access and outcomes. Critical to an understanding of the emergence and evolution of foundation provision in South Africa are the philosophical assumptions and ways of thinking about educational development/support and access. In view of this, McKenna (2013:31) noted that the different models of foundation provision “arise out of particular understandings of knowledge and how knowledge is constructed”.

Looked at collectively, the ways of thinking about student support can be located in the three phases of AD identified by Volbrecht and Boughey (2004). These phases, broadly termed ‘Academic Support’ (ASP), ‘Academic Development’ (AD) and ‘Institutional Development’ (ID), are not distinct from each other nor are they set out in terms of a specific period. Instead, they are indicative of dominant thinking and philosophies about educational development and student support (Boughey, 2010:4). Importantly, it is worth noting that the student support practices that have characterised each phase “have co-existed in many cases and, in some, continue to do so alongside dominant practices” (Boughey, 2010:4).

Broadly speaking, foundation programmes evolved from separate structures aimed at redressing gaps in the students’ knowledge and skills, to more forward looking, integrated approaches that were closely articulated to mainstream offerings, hence making more room

for effective learning (Warren, 2002:89). Boughey and Volbrecht in a number of papers provided a detailed analysis of these shifts.²⁹ In this study, these shifts are revisited and the point in doing this is not to repeat facts that are already known, but to take the conversation further by highlighting the critical debates that emerged as the educational development paradigms and practices shifted over time.

This is a first attempt at addressing the research question “to what extent is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objectives when viewed from the transformation perspective?” It is, therefore, imperative to locate historically the Extended Studies Programmes in order to understand fully how they have evolved to be what they are today. Emphasis is placed, therefore, on the way they have evolved from being separate forms to more integrated forms, as well as the theoretical underpinnings and discourses that have informed their development.

It is through a critical analysis of these phases of educational development and their implications on foundation provision that the transformative potential of the Extended Studies Programme can be understood. In South Africa generally, higher education transformation is broad and encompasses a wide range of issues that are located within the country’s broad political and socio-economic transition to democracy. This research focuses particularly on institutional transformation and pays attention to the provision of Extended Studies as a means of providing epistemological access to educationally disadvantaged students. Additionally, the broader review of foundation provisioning in South Africa provides a context for the analysis of foundation provisioning at Rhodes University. The three phases of educational development work will now be discussed with a view to highlighting the philosophies, teaching and learning practices that underpinned the range of foundation provision that developed in South Africa.

3.2 The precursors to foundation programmes

Foundation provisioning evolved from an approach that targeted students from former Department of Education and Training (DET)³⁰ schools, and focused on general academic

²⁹ See Boughey 2003; Volbrecht & Boughey 2004; Boughey 2007a & 2007b; Boughey 2010; Boughey 2012.

³⁰ The Department of Education and Training (DET) was the brainchild of the Bantu Education system. Owing to the significant restructuring in higher education governance at systemic level affected in 1983, a distinction was drawn between ‘general’ and ‘own’ affairs. Education became an ‘own affair’ for all groups except Africans, in whose case education was a ‘general affair’ vested in the central department – Department of Education and Training (Cloete et al., 2002:60). DET schools were under-resourced in terms of teachers and learning conditions. More importantly, the classrooms were overcrowded and hence it was impossible for

skills and language problems towards integrated or infused models where efforts were directed at integration into the mainstream. According to Kloot (2011:4), the term ‘foundation’ only came into use in South Africa in the 1990s, but its conceptual origins go back to the early 1980s to the academic support initiatives that were founded in 1980 or shortly thereafter at the English–medium liberal universities. ‘Academic Support’ was the dominant term used in the 1980s, and it was used in reference to “structured teaching arrangements which were supplementary to mainstream departmental provision of lectures, tutorials and practicals, or constituted enriched forms of mainstream courses” (Hunter, 1989:68). Academic Support Programmes were implemented to assist students on entering a tertiary curriculum, and some entailed a restructuring or stretching of the student’s curriculum by spreading it over one year longer than the minimum degree or diploma (Hunter, 1990b:24). Academic Support Programmes were introduced to facilitate the entry and integration of black students into institutions which had been statutorily whites-only since the so called Extension of University Education Act of 1959.

The implementation of early precursors of foundation programmes, ASPs in particular, stimulated debate on issues related to the conceptualisation of ‘disadvantage’ and more importantly the role of foundation programmes in the overall development of the university (Hunter, 1990a:65). Foundation provision has remained a topic of debate and a contested terrain largely because of the equity and social justice concerns in the higher education transformation agenda. Although the term ‘transformation’ is conceptualised in a variety of ways in the South African context, for the purposes of this research, as has already been discussed, the term ‘transformation’ is used in reference to the calls for change in institutions and specifically the need to move foundation provision from the periphery to the centre of departmental activities or the mainstream.

To elaborate further, the fact that the early precursors of foundation provision were designed for an ‘underprivileged minority’ resulted in their peripheral location in separate units. As a result, the students and lecturers involved in the programmes were marginalised from the rest of the institution. Therefore, transformation or change in light of this state of affairs was perceived as involving a rethinking of the perceived ‘disadvantage’, followed by efforts to restructure the programmes based on these shifts in thinking about what constituted ‘disadvantage’.

teachers to focus on individual students. While these categories have been done away with, former DET schools are by far the worst off even today (Fiske & Ladd, 2004b:122).

The programme under review in this study – the Rhodes University Extended Studies Programme – emerged from these early precursors of foundation provision. As such, their transformative ability can be understood only by embedding their analysis in these early initiatives. The institutional context in which foundation programmes were introduced in the 1980s were highly varied, and as such their structure and form depended on the institutional context in which they operated and their relationship to the mainstream, as well as the ways in which they were perceived in the institutions broadly.

For this reason, Hunter (1989:68) pointed out that this makes it difficult to discuss South African Academic Support Programmes or foundation programmes in general terms. Kloot (2011:40) made a similar point and argued that providing an overview of foundation programmes in South Africa is difficult for three reasons. Firstly, “there was no co-ordinated strategy for the implementation of foundation programmes in South Africa”. Secondly, foundation programmes evolved and generally started off as “quite separate from the mainstream and were then modified as they became, structurally at least, more integrated”. Thirdly, “foundation programmes were implemented within a fragmented education sector despite the government policy of separate education”.

That notwithstanding, attention can be drawn to certain commonalities which serve to guide an analysis of foundation programmes. To begin with, early foundation provision was centrally concerned with the idea of non-discrimination. Through ASPs, the liberal universities professed their stand against separate education and apartheid (Reddy, 2004:14). In the early 1980s, these liberal universities took advantage of the relaxed state policies and began to admit students from Department of Education and Training and by the 1990s there was formal access for students from non-designated groups to white universities (Pavlich & Orkin, 1993). Although some of those working with black students had a much more critical and transformative agenda in mind, it is probably fair to say that, at an institutional level, student support initiatives were largely constructed around the idea of giving black students an equal chance in institutions modelled on European universities (Boughey, 2007a:7).

3.2.1 Deficit thinking in early foundation programmes

From the on-set, it was established that black students came from disadvantaged educational backgrounds and poor socio-economic backgrounds and, as such, could not cope without additional support. Black students were therefore institutionally positioned and constructed as ‘disadvantaged’ in that they lacked certain skills. According to Hunter (1990b:29), black

students lacked “language proficiency, the conceptual background or the skills necessary to engage with higher education and, therefore, needed to be supported and developed in order to be able to benefit from it”. Although this situation applied to a wide variety of students in the country, systematic attempts to provide such supplementary pedagogical arrangements were made mainly with black students in mind, or, more strictly, those students who came from the black schooling system (Hunter, 1990b:29). Furthermore, the school experiences of black students were thought to be ‘out of phase’ with the expectations of tertiary teaching. The term ‘out of phase’ was used in respect of the increasing minority of black students who had gone from the black schooling system into the HWUs (Hunter, 1990b).

According to de Klerk, van Deventer & van Schalkwyk (2006:152), students were referred to in terms of what they were not; “non traditional, not prepared for higher education, not in a position of privilege”. Hence, the need to fill the gaps left by inadequate schooling or to ‘fix’ the students by exposing them to a set of atomised skills which were perceived to be transferable to other contexts (de Klerk et al., 2006:152). Since the problem of underpreparedness was considered a minority problem, support for these students was located outside mainstream teaching and learning. The job description of ASPs was, therefore, to assist the so-called disadvantaged/underprepared students in order for them to cope with university course structures (Sobahle, 1990:156).

Implied in this deficit approach was what Boughey (2012:65) argued to be an assurance about the ‘rightness’ of the practices which characterised the institutions to which the students were being admitted. The assumptions about black students and the conceptualisation of disadvantage had implications for the kind of support with which they were provided. Since this deficit conception of educational disadvantage was perceived to apply to a disadvantaged minority who, in turn, required support from the dominant society or culture, the support programmes offered were often in the form of adjunct courses outside the mainstream offering (Hunter,1990a:68). Additionally, practitioners employed to teach in these programmes were regarded as support staff rather than as academic staff (Boughey, 2012:68). This was mostly because, during this phase, funding for ASPs “was donor based with institutions contributing in fairly minimal ways in the form of established posts” (Boughey, 2012:68).

3.2.2. The nature, structure and practices on early foundation programmes

Academic support in the precursors of foundation programmes was provided under a number of different kinds of teaching structures. According to Warren (2002:87), it was either offered in advance or alongside mainstream modules “usually of a traditional kind (i.e. oriented towards coverage of subject content and transmission modes of teaching)”. As will be shown in Section 3.3, this model is different from an integrated model which is integrated and “closely articulated with the rest of the curriculum so that it is developmental rather than remedial, and appropriate to the subject domain” (Warren, 2002:82). In early ASPs, attempts were made to ‘fix’ students on the margins of the mainstream academic activity before being allowed fully into the mainstream, and, as will be noted, this further stigmatised the already marginalised group.³¹

Although the basic concern of ASPs was with students who had been disadvantaged through their schooling (which in practice meant mostly black students), in some cases certain components of the programme included a small number of white students (Hunter, 1989:69). That being said, Hunter’s claim was made in light of broader trends in ASPs across HWUs. As such, it can be argued that some of the trends didn’t necessarily apply to some institutions. At Rhodes University, for example, it was recognized that, in terms of the specific demands of university study, many white students were also under-prepared, e.g. taking notes in lectures, time planning, essay writing, exam writing. As a result, there were often as many white students as black students in Rhodes University ASPs.

Overall, these courses were developed primarily to improve competence in English since English was and still is a second language for black students. The reading and writing problems experienced by students were usually “understood in relation to their status as second language speakers rather than in relation to theory which takes into account literacy as a socially embedded phenomenon” (Boughey, 2010:6). In this regard, the language work was based on a “model of language as an instrument of communication” or “language as a vehicle for transmitting pre-formed ideas and concepts” (Boughey, 2012:66). For Boughey (2012:67), “this contrasts with a model of language as a resource for making meanings which draws on social contexts in order to make the choices necessary to make meaning”.

³¹ The need to ‘fix’ students as per the purpose of ASPs was premised on the idea that there was a need to fill in gaps from students’ poor socio and educational backgrounds. As such, students were blamed around language issues, which were addressed in separate units. As such, the institutions remained unchanged, since it was believed that students had to adapt to the institutions.

According to Angelil-Carter (1994:9), the rationale for adjunct English courses or content-reduced language had to do with transfer of skills. It was assumed that linked courses would assist students in developing academic coping strategies and cognitive skills which would transfer from one discipline to another. As will be argued later, the possibility of transfer was often questioned and with specific reference to the University of Cape Town (UCT), Angelil-Carter (1994:11) argued that there was no clarity about the extent to which students transferred the skills taught to their tasks on the mainstream courses.

In addition to the language courses, other adjunct support included study skills courses and additional support tutorials for specific subjects. In some cases, these adjunct courses were provided concurrently with degree credit courses, the inclusion of the former usually resulting in the curriculum being prolonged by a year or as part of a bridging programme which needed to be completed before entry to a tertiary curriculum. Although the precursors of foundation programmes differed in structure and ranged from concurrent courses to bridging courses which had to be completed prior to enrolment in a tertiary curriculum, what they had in common was their pre-occupation with equipping students with basic skills. The skills discourse inherent in ASPs was founded on a view of education and human action which is “a-cultural, a-social and a-political”, hence the skills that were perceived to be ‘lacking’ in students were taught independently of the disciplines (Boughey, 2007a:7).

In practice, early foundation programmes were involved in the transmission of unquestioned values and ways of behaving to black students. In so doing, the institutions were implicated in the construction or production of the dominate elite (Boughey, 2007a:7). In the language of discourse, as Gee (1990) would argue, the membership of black students in the liberal universities was thus dependent on them acquiring a set of shared understandings and values which would then give rise to certain kinds of behaviour. According to Boughey (2012:66), the practises arising from the early initiatives were “inherently liberal in intent in that they focused on attempting to give black students ‘equal opportunity’ by filling the gap between their poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds and university”. Significant here was “the lack of acknowledgement of tertiary learning as a socially constructed phenomenon underpinned by values about what can count as knowledge and how that knowledge can be known” (Boughey, 2012:66). Consequently, by attributing academic performance to factors inherent to individuals only, the impact of structural arrangements such as alienating teaching methods was not recognised.

While it is tempting to reduce the deficit thinking approaches to the racist discourses that were prevalent in South Africa at the time of the implementation of ASPs, this was interestingly not the case. HWUs that implemented ASPs clearly recognized that the problem was the apartheid government and its unequal education system. Hence, at Rhodes University, in the mid-80s in particular, all students were welcome to attend ASPs because of the general problems with all South African education. However, what was recognized by some was that by offering support in a remedial manner the universities were effectively ‘blaming the victim’ rather than changing the system.³² In view of this, Hunter (1990a:67) pointed out that, from the inception, university chancellors and ASP personnel acknowledged that adaptations had to be called for not just on the part of the black students but also on the part of the universities (Hunter, 1990a:67).

The substantial increase in the number of Black students drew increased attention to the limitations of ASPs in view of the distinctive characteristics of white universities (Hunter, 1989:72). The realisation that the disadvantaged minority at the time would soon become the majority, resulted in a shift from the student to the institutions as the higher education system prepared to transform itself in anticipation of a new political order which would result in a demographic change in the student body (Boughey, 2007b:2). The key issues in these debates will now be discussed with a view to showing how this subsequently impacted on the involvement of foundation provision in the years that followed.

3.2.3 Implications of the deficit conception of disadvantage

Although informed by noble ideas of social justice and equity, the implementation of the precursors of foundation programmes was not without criticisms and problems. As such, there had been ongoing debates critiquing ASPs from the time they were implemented – that is, in the early 1980s. These debates increasingly became more dominant at the end of the decade, following the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC (Boughey, 2012:70). Some of the challenges encountered in the provision of ASPs had to do with the philosophical underpinnings and rationale of the programmes, which addressed ‘disadvantage’ by locating it in individuals as opposed to locating disadvantage in structures that act on individuals (Boughey, 2007a:7).

Deficit thinking is believed to “strengthen stereotypes in the minds and thought of educators, policy makers and students themselves” (Smit, 2012:372). Consequently, it was reported that

³² See Mehl, 1988 & Moulder 1991. These authors acknowledged that under-preparedness was a majority problem. Therefore, to address this problem, institutions had to adapt to an under-prepared student body.

deficit thinking in ASPs allowed generalisations about student ability to be made and this resulted in the labelling and stigmatisation of already disenfranchised students (Hunter, 1990b). With the exception of a few universities – Rhodes University, for example, where both black and white students attended ASPs – black students in ASPs were stigmatised owing to the separation of academic support courses from mainstream academic subjects.

Compulsory attendance at additional tutorials and enrolment for additional courses in some universities resulted in students being marked as different in the eyes of their peers who were not required to attend (Boughey, 2010:8). With respect to additional courses such as language courses, Tema (1988:29) pointed out that the fact that the benefits derived from special English courses were diffuse and not directly measurable in terms of the main academic courses further endorsed the students' initial suspicion that the courses were wasting their time. In light of this, one of the respondents in Tema's study asked, "How is it that this support programme does not link with what I am supposed to be weak in – my academic subjects? What kind of help is this?" (Tema,1988:29). Interestingly, similar sentiments were shared by one black student in the Rhodes University ASP. The student complained:

Last year we had such classes, instead of dealing with the work we had been doing during lectures, we were given topics such as my dog, describe a car. What's that. No exam paper would pose such a question. We felt undermined and we stopped long before we'd even written exams (Quoted in Bekker & Mqingwana, 1983:11).

The study by Bekker & Mqingwana (1983) was specifically focused on the experiences of black students. More insight would have been gained from the perceptions and experiences of white students in the programme. In the Rhodes University context, however, it can be argued that negative attitudes towards ASPs emanated from the teaching practices and curriculum of the programmes as opposed to the stigma attached to the programmes.

The dissatisfaction with adjunct courses also raised questions about the real nature of educational problems being confronted. Since these educational problems were perceived to be a product of the students' deprived or disadvantaged background, Tema (1988:31) argued that academics needed to determine or answer questions about what it is the students had been deprived of and perhaps what they had also learnt from these backgrounds. Although it was often assumed that students from DET educational backgrounds needed supplementary English courses which often covered basics such as language skills, grammar and spellings, Dison and Rosenberg (1995:4) argued that the problem which needed to be addressed was in

actual fact academic literacy. Academic literacy was understood to be the language of the discipline and this needed to be addressed within the context of the discipline. As such, this was a task most suitable for the departments themselves for they were familiar with the linguistic and cognitive codes of their various disciplines (Dison and Rosenberg, 1995:4).

In a similar vein, Knott (1997:23) argued that the dominant “commonsensical” views of academic literacy in South Africa had to be reconceived in order to integrate academic literacy into the curriculum. In view of this, learners had to be seen as interactive producers of meaning as opposed to passive receivers of knowledge (Knott, 1997:25).

Tisani (1993) also observed that students enrolled in these programmes often felt alienated from the rest of the institution. She added that perceiving students as disadvantaged or lacking certain skills influences the way institutions and staff interact with such students. According to Tisani (1993:3), “the students who are perceived as needing fixing have to bear the pain and stigma of being marginalised as they undergo a process of being ‘filled up’ or ‘remoulded’ into the accepted model of a student”. For such students, Tisani (1993:3) added, “dropping out is always an option”. She argued that institutions needed to keep up with changing student bodies so instead of talking about under-prepared students, there was a need, instead, to address the problem presented by “under-prepared institutions” (Tisani, 1993:3). This line of thinking questioned the general understandings of the phenomena of ‘disadvantage’ and ‘under-preparedness’ and redirected educational challenges to new targets, besides students (Tisani, 1993:3).

Consistent with this rethinking of disadvantage, Mehl (1988:17) argued that the major issue with the Historically White Institutions then was the concern with the “assimilation of the colonised within the colonial structures instead of changing the colonial structures themselves – an Africanization of South African education”. As such, he elaborated that “providing access to students was no longer a matter of simply changing the student to fit into the university, but rather a matter of bringing the university more into contact with the stark reality which the colonized student represents” (Mehl, 1988:17).

In view of the above concerns, early precursors of foundation programmes were criticised and perceived to be concentrating on changing students to fit the institution rather than on attempting to bring about progressive change in the institutions. Although the traditional role of Academic Support Programmes was to do the missionary work of supporting disadvantaged students to adapt to university, Jo Lazarus – former Director of Academic

Support at the University of Natal – argued that they had the potential to bring about progressive change. For him, ASPs “needed to attempt to help institutions and students to cope with each other” (Lazarus, 1987:12).

To elaborate, the concern here was whether this arrangement (provision of Academic Support Programmes) was a temporary need to achieve a certain end, or whether it had a permanent role to play. Since Academic Support Units were conceived of as a “convenient repository for the problems of disadvantaged students” (Hunter, 1989:75), mainstream departments trusted these units to solve all educational and developmental problems. Sieberhagen (1995:7) found this problematic in his reflection on the Rhodes University Accounting and Mathematics Academic Support Programme. He pointed out that mainstream departments needed to avoid seeing academic support as solving all educational and developmental problems since many issues in teaching needed to be addressed in departments themselves (Sieberhagen, 1995:7).

Similarly Mehl & Gerwel (1990) had earlier on complained that the peripheral nature of ASPs and their location outside mainstream teaching and learning was inhibiting transformation of the universities by diverting pressure for fundamental change. They argued “universities cannot simply tinker at the periphery and carry on with business as usual” while it was left to the foundation programmes or Academic Support Programmes to deal with the job of preparing disadvantaged students for an institution that was itself to remain unchanged (1990:52). In a similar vein, Moulder (1988) referred to ASPs as the university’s “master strategy for avoiding organisational change”. Instead of the students learning how to cope with what the university demands of them, Moulder (1988) suggested that universities too had to adjust and change in order to cater for a growing student body from DET educational backgrounds.

In view of the need for universities to change, Pecham (1990:85) also lodged a complaint against the early precursors of foundation programmes. He pointed out that since ASPs were a sign of the failure of the education system, pouring resources into such programmes without simultaneously attempting to remedy the cause of the problem was merely treating the symptom rather than curing the disease. He argued further “An ASP cannot wipe out 20 years of ingrained social, cultural and educational disadvantage nor can it even approximate the package of skills required by the employers of graduates” (Pecham, 1990:86). Like other authors who criticised ASPs, Pecham argued that the solution lay in efforts directed towards the provision of a solid basic education for all people so that, eventually and ideally,

ASPswould become redundant. Implied in the redundancy of Academic Support Programmes was an envisioning of a point at which institutions would take responsibility for student under-preparedness by addressing the problem at curriculum and disciplinary level as opposed to separate structures.

Booyesen (1990) deliberated on the question of whether it was the task of the university to remedy the educational gap which existed between the secondary schooling system and the university system in South Africa. He argued:

... the universities best know the nature of the gap which needs to be bridged and have for some years now had to wrestle with the problem. Their own future depends on the gap being satisfactorily bridged so they have both a vested interest and a social responsibility to address this matter (Booyesen, 1990:127).

Booyesen, therefore, saw no need to establish peripheral support structures but argued that these structures had to be embedded in the institutions themselves which then had to take on the responsibility and cater for the needs of students coming from DET schools. In harmony with this, Mehl (1988) argued that ASPs required an elevated status for them to be able to change universities from within. It was generally accepted that this would be achieved by shifting the responsibility from separate units to departments. In this way, Mehl concluded, “the ownership of Academic Support activities will be placed within the the university’s departmental fabric - where, of course, it belongs” (1988:20).

Moulder (1991) in his article *‘Remedial education programmes: miracle or failure’* made the point that liberal universities had to change their curriculum to cater for an increasing number of students from DET educational backgrounds. He pointed out that the solution to the problems brought by DET students was not necessarily remedial programmes but better teaching as this was more cost effective than remedial programmes. He argued:

Academics are employed to teach all the students who register for a course. They aren’t employed to teach only those students who have the knowledge and skills they would like them to have (Moulder,1991:7).

He argued further that Historically Black Universities could not afford too many remedial programmes and as a result they focused on good teaching. With respect to the liberal universities, he concluded that the increasing numbers of black students would soon drain the resources for remedial programmes thus forcing the institutions to change, “ When most of their students are black, they won’t be able to afford such expensive remedial programmes. They’ll have to change the curriculum and require academics to improve their teaching”

(Moulder, 1991:7). The form of curriculum transformation implied in this argument is also signalled in Preston-Whyte and Angus's (1995) article on '*Coping with change.*'

Preston-Whyte and Angus (1995) argued that transformation mattered the most at the level of the lecture theatre where teaching took place. Although they acknowledged the need to transform other structural features brought about by apartheid, they argued that the lecture theatre mattered the most because "this is where the problems produced by decades of unequal education must be addressed" (1995:1). They argued further that the success of transformation lay in the lecture venue since what happened in the lecture venue was directly translated into competent graduates and satisfied employers. Implicit in all these arguments is a concern with the restructuring of the curriculum and inclusive teaching practices. As a result of the pressures triggered by these debates, educational development initiatives in the universities gradually shifted from Academic Support to Academic Development which was also called the "infusion model" (Volbrecht & Boughey, 2004).

3.3 The shift to semi integrated foundation programmes

The shift to academic development was, according to Boughey (2010:10), indicative of a 'social turn' involving a shift from a 'neo-classical' understanding of the construct of 'disadvantage' as located in individuals to a 'historical' understanding which locates 'disadvantage' in structures that act on individuals. Academic development practitioners recognised as early as the mid 1980s that there were key problems with adjunct foundational interventions and that they were a necessary but not sufficient condition for equity (Scott, 2009:26). As has been argued, they were marginalised and served only a minority of the student intake, yet the problem that they were designed to address affected the majority of the population.

It "therefore became evident that equity would not be attainable until mainstream higher education curricula and teaching approaches developed the capacity to accommodate talented students from all communities and educational backgrounds" (Scott, 2009:27). This more critical discourse argued that the way to student development was through curriculum, staff and institutional development (Volbrecht, 2003). Attention was, therefore, given to the way structures such as curriculum, language, literacy and pedagogy intersected with race and social class in order to produce inequity in education (Boughey, 2010:11).

The need for curriculum development was mostly reflected in the People's Education discourse which was centred on the idea that change at the curriculum level could empower

and transform within a wider social context (Boughey, 2012:72). Mehl (1988:18) acknowledged the role of the People's Education Movement and emphasised the point that change had to take place at the institutional level as opposed to the individual level. In line with the prior argument by Ndebele that in the South African context one cannot talk about blacks as being previously 'disadvantaged' but rather colonised, Mehl (1988:18) proposed "a change of the colonial structures themselves", in other words, an Africanization of South African education as opposed "to an assimilation of the colonised within the colonial structures" (1988:18).

In line with this shift, academic development practitioners began to draw on the work of social theorists such as Gee (1990), Bourdieu (1988) and Vygotsky (1986). According to Boughey, these theorists understood "academic life as a form of social practice to which some have more access than others because of previous social and cultural experiences" (Boughey, 2010:11). In addition, common to these theories was the view that learning involved engagement with new and different ways of knowing. Hence, all students, being outsiders to the discourse of academics, needed to be familiarised with the kinds of knowledge valued in higher education. Instead of 'fixing' students in adjunct classes or courses, what students required was access to academic practice, which could only be developed over time through support, which was embedded in the discipline (Boughey, 2010:11).

Similarly, Smit (2012:375) also argued that students require access "to the ways of being in the disciplines that take into account what matters in higher education". According to Smit (2012:375), Gee referred to this form of literacy as discourse of the discipline and Morrow (2009) referred to it as epistemological access, which simply put means that, "for students to become participants in academic practice, they need to understand and care about the relevant epistemic values". For Morrow (2009:78), epistemological access involved learning how to "become a successful participant in an academic practice" or a way of constructing knowledge in various disciplines. Hence it cannot be transmitted but rather involve active engagement on behalf of the student. Common to all the theories outlined above was their ability to sustain an infused approach to student support because of the "i) acknowledgement of academic ways of knowing and of the behaviours related to those ways of knowing as social practices, and ii) their shared understanding that those practices are only developed over time and through contact with those who are already 'literate' in Gee's (1990) terms" (Boughey, 2012:74).

Since support was seen to be narrow and to have patronising connotations, the concept of 'development' was then experienced as forward-looking and positive as opposed to the idea of 'remediation' and its associations of inferiority. According to Tamminga (2006:29) "academic development became the umbrella term, which incorporated staff development, student development, curriculum development and organizational development". Consequently, foundation provision moved from the periphery and became integrated into the mainstream. Foundation programmes were at this stage semi-integrated since students attended mainstream and peripheral academic support. The significance of this shift lies in the fact that, for the first time, institutions began to take ownership of the phenomena of disadvantage and underpreparedness. This shift in thinking had major pedagogical and curriculum implications for foundation programmes in terms of the structure as well as teaching and learning practices on these programmes.

3.3.1 Pedagogical and curriculum implications of the shift to AD in relation to foundation provision

The peripheral nature of ASPs was one crucial element that had to be addressed. This was made possible by the provision of soft funding administered by the Independent Development Trust (Boughey, 2011:11). Academic Development Units were established and those who had initially worked in the adjunct Academic Support Units could now work with mainstream staff on curricula and on their development as educators in higher education (Boughey, 2010:11). This was also accompanied by "efforts to 'embed' tutorials in mainstream teaching so that they became the responsibility of the department, a process which then allowed AD practitioners to focus on tutor development rather than tutoring themselves" (Boughey, 2012:71).

According to Myers and Picard (2007:44), foundation provision based on the infusion model moulded the student to the institution. With respect to language development for instance, the collaboration between learning professionals or language professionals and subject experts made it possible to incorporate language and study skills within the discipline itself (Myers & Picard, 2007:45).

Volbrecht & Boughey (2004:63) noted that key to infusion "was the idea that academic development staff themselves needed to be developed if they were to be able to engage with mainstream academic staff in a way and at a level which would facilitate the sort of curriculum change envisaged". Therefore, as the infusion model gained momentum in the field of academic development, mainstream staff were also tasked with becoming more

involved in the teaching and learning issues of non-traditional students, and also served on related academic development faculty committees (de Klerk et al., 2006:152). Consequently, there began to emerge a growing vision for institutional transformation and the wider higher education system (Boughey, 2007a:6).

Internationally, educational development followed a pattern similar to the one described above. Initially, a deficit model with its focus on fixing students by exposing them to a “set of atomised skills ... which are transferable to other contexts” was accepted (Warren, 2002:87). The notions of transferability were subsequently challenged, and this led to the development of the academic socialisation model which “focused on orienting students towards appropriate forms of learning for undertaking disciplinary tasks” (Warren, 2002:87) – hence a move away from ‘generic’ approaches (de Klerk et al., 2006). This socialisation model was also critiqued and accused of lacking in the way it appeared to assume that there appears to exist a homogeneous culture in the academy. Consequently, a more encompassing ‘academic literacies’ model which viewed student writing and learning as issues at the level of epistemology and identities rather than skill or socialisation was adopted (de Klerk et al., 2006).

Owing to the funding uncertainties, Boughey (2010:12) noted that work completed during this phase was very “patchy and had no guarantee that it would be sustained”. The unavailability of funding also had negative implications for the development of stable practitioners, since posts established to further ‘transformation’ and ‘infusion’ were lost and in more extreme cases the entire units were closed (Boughey, 2012: 76). Therefore, continuity in terms of the achievements of this phase was highly dependent on “the willingness of mainstream academic staff members to engage with the need for change as there was no structural need for them to do so” (Boughey, 2010:12).

As a result, support discourses continued to dominate at the majority of the institutions as work which attempted to address curricula and teaching methodologies was resisted by conservative mainstream academics “who resented being told that curricula and teaching methodologies needed to change” (Boughey, 2007b:5). In the context of these challenges and constraints, another discourse which focused on the need for quality and efficiency emerged and this marked the third phase of academic development work. The move to institutional development symbolised a firmer commitment to students in relation to their ability to participate in a globalised economy hence the emergence of the high skills discourse.

3.4 Institutional development

As already been noted, the shift to a focus on institutional development was essentially an augmentation of the gains of the second phase. Accordingly, the tradition of drawing on critical approaches continued into the third phase of academic development work (Boughey, 2012:77). Critical to this phase was the “construction of the work of the Academic Development movement as a resource for institutional efficiency in relation to teaching and learning”. (Boughey, 2012:76). According to Quinn (2012), this phase was most influenced by change in the national policy context post-1994 and this in turn positioned academic development work within discourses related to efficiency rather than equity. According to Myers and Picard (2007:45), the reasons for this shift in policy varied from a pragmatic desire to cut costs to more idealistic goals of democratisation and globalisation. The need for South Africa to participate in a globalised economy began to influence thinking about education in the form of the ‘high skills’ discourse which constructed higher education as a provider of a skilled workforce (Boughey,2012:76).

Although the high skills discourse was evident elsewhere in the world, in South Africa it gained “prominence because of its perceived link to education, the labour market and macro economic restructuring” (Boughey, 2007a:12). Consequently, the shift to a focus on efficiency resulted in new forms of student development/support practices which were geared towards the improvement of graduation and throughput rates. Theoretical positions which influenced the calls for ‘infusion’ and ‘transformation’ in the second phase continued into the third phase and they were developed and expanded (Boughey, 2012:77). One of the most important developments that occurred directly as a result of the ‘high skills’ discourse was the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the introduction of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) (Boughey, 2007a: 12).

In short, the introduction of NQF and OBE resulted in the “possibility of aligning entrance criteria, learning outcomes, associated assessment criteria, assessment tasks, pedagogical approaches, learning resources, credit values and more direct forms of student support” (Boughey, 2010:13). Specifically, NQF allowed the “integration of education and training into a single, coherent and unified approach” (SAQA, 2012). This has been achieved through a new process of registering qualifications “using the construct of the learning outcome as a descriptive and organizing principle” (Boughey, 2007a:12).

According to Boughey (2007a:12), “the use of the outcome as an organizing principle to describe qualifications can be attributed to the need for an educational system that would produce the knowledge workers necessary for the new nation to compete in a global economy”. Additionally, the manifestations of the ‘skills discourse’ in NQF and OBE impacted the field of educational development in that academic development in general moved away from the margins of institutional life to the more prestigious sectors of curriculum and staff development as academic development professionals (who were experts in areas of teaching and learning) were called upon to work in areas of staff development as well as organizations concerned with the development of the higher education sector (Boughey, 2003:67).

Another policy development which impacted on academic development culminated in the White Paper (DoE, 1997) and called for, among other things, a single integrated, yet differentiated national higher education system. In line with this vision was a general recognition within policy that one of the ways of addressing the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged black students was through foundation programmes. As such, ear-marked funding in the form of grants was allocated in 2000. The Department of Education (DoE) foundation programme grants required students to be “admitted to ‘extended programmes’ or fully accredited programmes which have been lengthened by up to a year of additional study in order to allow for the inclusion of activities intended to support and develop students enrolled in them” (Boughey, 2010:16).

The type of ‘extended programmes’ proposed by the Department of Education had to be fully articulated with the mainstream and therefore represented a significant shift for foundation programmes nationally. Kloot (2011:86) pointed out that the provision of funding for Extended Studies Programmes legitimised their presence in higher education and also assisted with their integration with the mainstream. While there has been a shift at curriculum level which has seen academic development specialists engaging with both course content and academic skills, the level of integration of department structures with Extended Studies units remains a contested terrain.

Debates around institutional change in the Academic Support phase clearly indicated the need for departments to take ownership of the programmes. Interestingly, another issue that has remained a characteristic of academic development initiatives, particularly foundation provision has been the marginalisation of the students from the rest of the student body.

Although in the case of Extended Studies Programmes, students attend mainstream lectures from the start, the attendance of additional classes has continued to result in the stigmatisation of students who enrol into university through alternative access initiatives.

The history of foundation programmes has highlighted the shifts in thinking about educational ‘disadvantage’ and consequent shifts in approaches designed to address the perceived disadvantage. As noted, educational development initiatives evolved from being adjunct structures, to semi-integrated and finally integrated or fully integrated structures. Boughey (2012) cautions that not all programmes have evolved concurrently with shifts in thinking about educational disadvantage. In some cases, some institutions have continued to offer foundation provisioning modelled on deficit thinking.

3.5 Conclusion

The shift of student support work from the periphery to the mainstream is perhaps the key historical development in the field of academic development in South Africa. Considering the origins of foundation provisioning or the broader field of academic development in South Africa, it is not surprising that institutional transformation or ‘change’ in higher education was thought about in terms of mostly mainstream change. Mainstream change was conceived of as involving change in the curriculum and transformation of the teaching and learning process in order to cater for the increasing numbers of black students entering higher education institutions.

In line with this, Moulder (1991) argued that other strategies such as a focus on good teaching would need to be adopted given the increasing numbers of under-prepared students. He therefore envisaged a new paradigm which did not include the idea of academic support but rather mainstream change in terms of the teaching practices. Hunter made a similar argument, pointing out that:

We should envisage South African Universities of the future which would have developed the will and the competence to provide within mainstream curricular structures more flexible than at present, varieties of intra-departmental and inter-departmental teaching arrangements responsive to the educational heterogeneity of the university intake. Under such dispensation, there would be no need for academic support programmes in their present structures, though there would be a continuing (and growing) need for consultancy, staff training and evaluation services in this area (1990a:75).³³

³³ See also Hunter 1991

The above envisaged shift in the function of academic support initiatives has been achieved at Rhodes University. Rhodes has followed the thinking in the two phases of academic development; it started with an Academic Skills Programme, moved to an Academic Development Centre and now has the Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning (CHERTL). Chapter Six will provide a history of foundation provisioning at Rhodes University Humanities Faculty and, in particular, how it relates to the three phases outlined above. This will also include an account of the initial design of the programmes and the modifications that occurred to them over the years. The following Chapter provides a discussion of the conceptual frameworks that informed the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORISING EQUITY AND QUALITY IN EDUCATION: INTEGRATING PIERRE BOURDIEU'S SOCIAL REPRODUCTION THESIS AND AMARTYA SEN'S CAPABILITY APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the meta-theoretical framework that informed the study. Bates (cited in Hartel, 2012:39) defined 'metatheory' as "the philosophy behind the theory, the fundamental set of ideas about how phenomena of interest in a field should be thought about and researched". Elsewhere, theoretical frameworks are characterized as "tools for looking at the social world", hence these tools are shaped by personal experiences and the social context in which they are produced (Stillman, 2003:1). Duldt & Griffin (1985:1) also defined meta-theories or theoretical frameworks as systems of interrelated propositions, which "enable phenomena to be described, explained, predicted and controlled".

The main objective of the study was to evaluate from a transformation perspective, the extent to which the Rhodes University Humanities Extended Studies Programme is achieving its objective of broadening the access and success in higher education. The achievement of access and success is, in turn, underpinned by a commitment to equity and quality.

The ways in which the issues of educational equity and quality have been conceptualised and addressed have changed over the years, reflecting a firmer commitment to a transformed education system in South Africa. There are two key aspects of the first goal of transformation, namely, the achievement of access with success or equity with quality. Since Extended Studies Programmes were implemented with the aim of addressing the articulation gap in order to facilitate access and success of talented but disadvantaged students, it is essential to evaluate them in view of the realities facing students participating in these programmes. These realities include prior learning and socio-economic backgrounds. A key question here is whether the programmes and the institution (which serves as the context of transformation) respond to the above-mentioned realities in their efforts to address the articulation gap. In view of this, it also becomes important to ask further questions:

1. What are the specific educational and socio-economic realities of the so-called 'disadvantaged' students enrolled in Extended Studies Programmes?

2. How different are these students from other students in the mainstream/or how much do their backgrounds deviate from the standard backgrounds of students drawn by HWUs like Rhodes University?
3. How do these realities affect their academic and social engagement in higher education institutions – in other words, how do these students adapt to the demands of higher education given their backgrounds?
4. How do access programmes address the articulation gap of these students in view of their prior schooling and socio-economic backgrounds?

The research theories chosen for the study were those that enabled me to explore in detail not only the social, economic and educational trajectories of students, but also the teaching practices and philosophies in the Extended Studies Programme. This study drew on Pierre Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis and Amartya Sen's capability approach.³⁴ Bourdieu developed his theory of social reproduction in the context of his work on the French education system, whereas Sen's concepts were developed whilst working in India in the field of welfare economics. Although the work of Sen and Bourdieu is rooted in different disciplinary frameworks, their common ground is based on the fact that they both draw on the ideas of Aristotle and are both concerned with inequality (Bowman, 2010:3).

Both Bourdieu and Sen developed tools that allowed them to uncover many things about human behaviour or institutional behaviour that would not be visible. In his works, Bourdieu sought to understand the process of the reproduction of inequality and used this understanding to affect change (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977:v-xii). Sen's capability approach provides tools for not only understanding the conditions for the reproduction of inequalities, but it can also be applied in the evaluation of social conditions or social structures which may potentially produce or reproduce inequalities. In particular, his concept of 'freedoms' deviates from the usual focus on institutional structures and individual factors, such as academic preparation, by focusing on what people are able to be or do regardless of their educational backgrounds. Furthermore, it provides a clearer indication of the relations or social structures that may need to change in order to enable such freedom of choice (Sen, 1992:39).

³⁴ The idea of integrating Bourdieu and Sen was adapted from Dina Bowman (2010) who integrated Bourdieu and Sen's concepts in the analysis of labour market inequalities.

4.2. Conceptual integration of Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis with Amartya Sen's capability approach

Although Bourdieu and Amartya Sen wrote in different fields, their approach to social life can be merged to provide a denser framework for understanding the dynamic relationship between structure and agency in the education field and the evaluation of the Extended Studies Programme. Bourdieu's framework was used in this study as a thinking tool or lens for understanding the different power relations between key players in the Extended Studies Programme (the university as an institution, students and academic staff), as well as the outcomes of those relations. Bourdieu's theory of capital interaction with habitus was applied to show how the unequal distribution of capital (in its various forms) leads to reproduction of inequalities or unequal educational outcomes.

Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis is relevant for its ability to reveal the central role that institutions have in both changing and reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next. Writing about schools, Bourdieu argued that it is the culture of the dominant groups which is embodied in the schools, and that it is this 'embodiment' that works as a reproduction strategy for the dominant group (Harker, 1990:86). It is in this context that his concept of capital applies. Bourdieu (1974:32) argued that although education is often perceived as a liberating force or a means of increasing social mobility, it is, in fact, "one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it provides an apparent justification of social inequalities". As will be noted later, this is achieved through the education system, which is structured to favour those who already possess its cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1974:34-43).

Bourdieu (1974:39) argued further "what the education system both hands on and demands is an aristocratic culture and, above all, an aristocratic relationship with it". The implication of this is that all students are treated as if they have equal access to cultural capital or other forms of capital in the education field. Bourdieu argued that since this is not the case, those with the 'appropriate' cultural capital are reinforced with 'success', while others are not (Harker, 1990:87). Although this observation was made in the context of French schools, Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (1988) seems to suggest that the higher education system resembles the school system through its practices, which potentially reproduce social inequalities.

Although Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis is appropriate for an inquiry into the dialectical relationship between structures and agency to produce inequalities, it is not very

explicit about agency for structural change or the conditions under which transformation occurs. As such, Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis is often criticised for being structurally frozen with no room for human agency and thus believed to have less potential for understanding moments of transformation and the conditions under which such transformation or change occurs (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes, 1990:102).

Giroux (cited in Harker et al. 1990:102) made the claim that Bourdieu's theory "is a theory of reproduction that displays no faith in subordinate classes and groups, no hope in their ability or willingness to reinvent and reconstruct the conditions under which they live, work and learn". Furthermore, it was also claimed that "his world is far more reproductive than transformative; his social universe ultimately remains one in which things happen to people, rather than a world in which they can intervene in their individual and collective destinies" (Mills, 2007:79). That being said, however, Harker et al. (1990:102) noted that a careful reading of Bourdieu's ethnographic work "provides a foundation for a theory of practice which incorporates social change" and human agency, "as well as an examination of the structural limits within which they must work".

Although this is open to debate, it is rather suggested that there is an implied transformative potential in Bourdieu's theoretical concepts and these suggest possibilities for education systems, in this case, to improve educational outcomes of marginalized groups (Mills, 2007:79). Nevertheless, Sen's capability approach is suggested as a useful link between capital interaction theory and action to reduce inequality. Sen was an Indian philosopher and economist who is best known for his contributions to welfare economics and, like Bourdieu, he has an interest in the problems of society's poorest members (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:1).

The capability approach, initially conceived in the 1980s as an approach to welfare economics, has a wide disciplinary audience and application (Wilson-Strydom, 2011:409). The same is true about Bourdieu's work and this makes their theoretical insights relevant and credible. Sen's capabilities approach, which is essentially a social justice framework, is underpinned by three concepts, namely (1) functionings (2) capabilities and (3) agency (Sen, 1992: 4-6). These concepts can be applied to higher education studies in order to understand and evaluate institutional processes and arrangements.

Sen's capability approach provides a normative framework for conceptualizing and evaluating equality (Wilson-Strydom, 2011:409). The capabilities approach draws on the

notion of social justice, which coexists with expressions of human rights, fairness and equality (Nelson et al., 2012:3). Effectively, the capability approach is about focusing on what people are effectively able to do and to be, i.e. their capabilities (Wilson-Strydom, 2011:409). In view of the Extended Studies Programme which was introduced to avoid reproduction in the education sector (Kloot, 2011:207), Sen's approach allows us to take the reproduction debate further by asking the following questions: (i) Have we achieved equality in education through widened access? (ii) What is the nature of inclusion or are new forms of exclusion being created in the name of widening access?

The union of Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis and Sen's capability approach shows greater potential for revealing the hidden transformative potential in Bourdieu's concepts. Since the capability approach speaks about the need for social structures or social institutions to expand human capabilities – that is, their freedom to achieve what they value doing and being (Sen, 1992:81), Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital implicitly draws our attention to the enhancement of capabilities in the ways that teachers can draw upon/recognize varieties of cultural capital in order to act as agents of transformation rather than reproduction. The discussion now turns to Bourdieu's reproduction thesis followed by Sen's capability approach, which sheds more light on how reproduction can be averted in the education field.

4.3 Bourdieu's ontological and epistemological positions

According to Nord (2005:858), any scientific endeavour is established on the researcher's assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and of scientific practice (epistemology and methodology). Bourdieu's ontology is resolutely dualistic and rests on the assumption that "there is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them" (Bourdieu, 1984:110). As such, it is through the relationship between habitus and field that cultural practices and meanings of the social practices are established (Bourdieu, 1984:110). For Bourdieu, the task of social science is to understand how the "objective" structures of society (e.g. social norms, roles, institutions) influence subjective behaviour (what Bourdieu referred to as 'practice'), and in turn how the totality of social behaviour serves to reproduce the reality, which is society (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002:66). Consequently, Bourdieu sees a dialectical relationship between structures and people, hence his focus on presenting an account of the relationship between social structures and groups in his works (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:12).

Bourdieu arrived at this position – that he called a ‘double historicity’ of practice – by thinking beyond Marxism and phenomenology or objectivism and subjectivism. He argued that:

Perception of the social world is the product of a double social structuration: on the “objective” side, it is socially structured because the properties attached to agents or institutions do not offer themselves independently to perception, but in combination that are very unequally probable...; on the subjective side, it is structured because the schemes of perception and appreciation available for use at the moment in question, especially those that are deposited in language, are the product of previous symbolic struggles and express the state of the symbolic power relations, in a more or less transformed form (Bourdieu, 1985:727).

For Bourdieu, then, the extent to which agents can attain knowledge of and negotiate various cultural fields is dependent on two epistemological positions, namely i) a “logic of practice” and ii) a “reflexive relation to cultural fields and one’s own practice within those fields” (Webb et al., 2002:61). Before these can be elaborated on, it is worth mentioning how Bourdieu arrived at these epistemological positions. His ideas emerged from diverse intellectual forces such as Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and from schools of thought ranging from phenomenology and structuralism to analytic philosophy (Webb et al., 2002: 61). For this reason, he is often regarded as being eclectic given his tendency to draw upon multiple theoretical traditions to gain complementary insights into a subject (Webb et al., 2002:2). It is therefore not surprising that Bourdieu made significant contributions to various aspects of contemporary cultural theory.

Webb et al. (2002:4) noted that Bourdieu’s eclecticism provided him with two distinct virtues. The first was that, as a visiting non-specialist in and across fields such as history and linguistics, he was not directed or limited by the ‘ways of seeing’ of that field. As such, he was also free to ignore issues or problems which practitioners considered essential to their thinking or inquiries, and to ask questions, or pursue lines of inquiry, which might be unthinkable to those closely involved with the field and its ways of thinking. Secondly, his eclecticism enabled him to use insights derived from different theorists to transform bodies of knowledge and give them a practical or political edge (Webb et al., 2002:4).

4.3.1 The logic of practice

Bourdieu’s epistemology is best captured in two of his books, *The logic of practice* (1990a) and *Outline of a theory of practice* (1977) which theorize how humans do what they do and how we are to understand the world they construct in so doing (Ritzer, 2005:68). Bourdieu

emphasized the link between theory and practice and how these should feature in social science research. Practice is what people do and, for Bourdieu, it should not be confused with voluntarist notions of action (Ritzer, 2005:68). By proposing a logic of practice, Bourdieu (1990a) sought to develop a new ontological account of the social world that transcends the most important conceptual oppositions that have burdened traditional social science. Chief among these is the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism (Bourdieu, 1990a:25). Bourdieu's intention to overcome the binary opposition between subjectivism and objectivism is well captured in his opening statement in the *The logic of practice*. He argued:

Of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism (Bourdieu, 1990a:25).

According to Bourdieu (1973: 53), all of traditional social science falls under the scope of one of these two competing theoretical paradigms, or 'modes of knowledge'. These perspectives differ in their respective conceptions of human action and social order. As an alternative to the antagonism between the modes of knowledge, Bourdieu transcended this opposition and transformed them into a dialectical relationship between structure and agency (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:12-13). This for Bourdieu (1990a:25) preserves the gains from each of them "(including what is produced by self interested lucidity about the opposing position)". Before the gains from each mode of knowledge are discussed, a brief discussion of Bourdieu's critical account of these modes of knowledge is necessary.

Put simply, objectivism is the idea that people's actions and attitudes are determined by objective social structures such as those relating to class, ethnicity, gender and language (Webb, et al., 2002: xiv). Objectivism neglects to explore adequately the objective social conditions that produce subjective orientation to action. "Objectivism takes no account of what is inscribed in the distance and externality with respect to primary experience that are both the condition and the product of its objectifying operations" (Bourdieu, 1990a:26). Moreover, it holds "that reality consists of sets of relations and forces that impose themselves upon agents, irrespective of their consciousness and will," as Marx would say (Wacquant, 2006:6).

Subjectivism, on the contrary, asserts that social reality is produced through the thoughts, decisions and actions of individual agents. Bourdieu argued that subjectivity is useful in that it draws attention to the ways in which agents, at a practical, everyday level, negotiate various

attempts (by governments, bureaucracies, institutions and capitalism) to tell them what to do, how to behave, and how to think (Webb et al., 2002:32). Subjectivism therefore stands in contradiction to Marxist theories which presume that people are ‘cultural dupes’ mindlessly consuming the ideologies of government and capitalism (Webb et al., 2002:33).

According to Bourdieu, neither of these positions can adequately describe social life. Social life, Bourdieu argued, must be understood in terms that do justice both to objective material, social and cultural structures and to the constituting practices of individuals and groups (Bourdieu, 1990a:26). Bourdieu’s theory of practice is an account of how objective structures shape our mental representations and practices, and vice versa. According to Webb et al. (2002:34), Bourdieu’s insights on objectivism were drawn from structuralism which in turn influenced his notions of the cultural field and the habitus. Structuralist accounts of human practice that influenced Bourdieu can be summarised as follows: i) objective structures produce people, their subjectivities, their worldview and, as a consequence, ii) they also produce what people come to know as the reality of the world, and iii) everything, object and idea, within a culture only has meaning in relation to other elements in the culture (Webb et al., 2002:34). According to Bourdieu (1990a:26-27), structuralism can be understood then as a form of objectivism which:

Sets out to establish objective regularities (structures, laws, systems of relationships, etc.) independent of individual consciousness and wills ... It ignores the experiential meaning which social phenomenology makes explicit and the objective meaning that is constructed by social physics or objectivist semiology, it is unable to analyze the conditions of the production and functioning of the feel for the social game that make it possible to take for granted the meaning objectified in institutions.

That being said, however, Lawson, Latsis & Nuno (2007:72) pointed out that Bourdieu acknowledged “that the greatest insight of objectivism is that it recognizes that the factuality of our practices is socially constrained and that it therefore correctly treats sociology as an ‘objective’ science”. By the same token, Bourdieu (1973:53) argued that the greatest weakness of subjectivism is that it “excludes all interrogation about its own conditions of possibility” which are portrayed in the objective structures of culture such as values and ideas “produced by and characteristic of cultural institutions such as family, religion and educational systems” (Webb et al., 2002:33).

Bourdieu argued further that it is only by constructing the objective structures (changes of access to higher education, for example) that one is able to pose the question of the

mechanisms through which the relationship is established between the structures and the practices or the representations which accompany them (Bourdieu, 1977:21). For Webb et al. (2002:36), objectivism and subjectivism are useful notions in accounting for practice, “mainly because they point to the shortcomings of the other”. As such, subjectivism draws attention to the point that objective structures edit out intentionality and individuality whilst objectivism draws attention to the fact that individuality and intentionality are regulated by cultural contexts (Webb et al., 2002:36). The core of Bourdieu’s method is, therefore, the process of the “internalization of externality and the externalization of internality” (Bourdieu, 1977:72).

For Bourdieu (1977:3-4), practice is an outcome of the above depicted dialectical relationship between structure and agency. He argued further that “just as objectivist knowledge poses the question of the conditions of the possibility of primary experience”, the theory of practice similarly “puts objectivist knowledge back on its feet by posing the question of the (theoretical and asocial) conditions which make such knowledge possible” (Bourdieu, 1977:4). Consequently, Bourdieu’s reflection on the dialectic between objectivism and subjectivism reveals that although practice is always informed by a sense of agency, the possibility of that agency is determined by its relationship to the objective structures (Bourdieu, 1977: 72-73).

4.3.2 Reflexivity

Epistemic reflexivity is also a distinctive feature of Bourdieu’s intellectual enterprise and social theory, underpinning his attempts to transcend the gap between the subjective and the objective dimensions of social life. Wacquant (1993:236) defined epistemic reflexivity as “the inclusion at the heart of a theory of society and knowledge, of a theory of intellectual practice and of its inherent limitations”. Swartz (1997:272) argued that reflexivity is a principle concern in Bourdieu’s work which arises “from the need to control the relationship of the researcher to the object of inquiry so that the position of the researcher is not unwittingly projected into the object of study” (Swartz, 1997:272). In Bourdieu’s account, the principle sources of the researcher’s projection can be summarised as (1) their position in the objective relations of the academic or the sociological field, (2) their position and trajectory in the objective relations of the social field, and (3) that of “theoreticist” bias inherent in the scholarly gaze itself – that is the tendency for some agents to abstract practices, and to see them as ideas to be contemplated, rather than problems to be resolved (Swartz, 1997:271-277).

According to Webb et al. (2002:52), the notion of reflexivity informs Bourdieu's work in three ways. Firstly, it produces a break with the mindset through reference to the notion of radical doubt as a departure point for any research activity. As Bourdieu and Wacquant write:

The construction of a scientific object requires first and foremost a break with common sense, that is, with the representations shared by all, whether they be the mere commonplaces of ordinary existence or official representations, often inscribed in institutions and thus present the objectivity of social organizations and in the mindsets of their participants. *The preconstructed is everywhere*. The sociologist is literally beleaguered by it, as everybody else is. The sociologist is thus saddled with the task of knowing an object – the social world – of which he is a product of, in a way that the problems that he raises about it and the concepts he uses have the very chance of being the product of this object itself (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:235).

Secondly, the notion of reflexivity “contextualises social issues and objects of knowledge within a historical framework” (Web et al., 2002:52). Bourdieu's field metaphor offers a more sociological view by calling attention to the institutional aspects of group action which are in turn found in their history. In the light of the role of history, Bourdieu argued that:

“Suffice is to say that *the separation of sociology and history is a disastrous division*, and one totally devoid of epistemological justification: all Sociology should be historical and all history sociological... We cannot grasp the dynamics of field... without a historical, that is, a genetic, analysis of its constitution of the tensions that exist between positions in it, as well as between this field and other fields, and especially the field of power” (Bourdieu cited in Webb et al., 2002:52).

Bourdieu's commitment to reflexivity has implications for methodology, particularly the use of mixed methods. According to Wacquant (1998:220), reflexive sociology is driven by an “epistemological emphasis on overcoming the antinomy of objectivism and subjectivism” thereby accounting for the dialogical interplay of objective and subjective social factors. This warrants the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. In this sense, Bourdieu views the social world as relational, hence he advocates a relational or structuralist mode of thinking, which is, in turn, fundamental to all scientific thought. This relational thinking is best illustrated by the interplay of Bourdieu's dialogical theoretical constructs of field, capital and habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant cited in Fries, 2009:5).

As will be noted later, Bourdieu interrelates the three central concepts and on the basis of these three he formulates a reflexive approach to social life. Such an approach uncovers the conditions of the production of the social structures and of those dispositions and attitudes

that are related to it (Calhoun, Lipuma & Postone, 1993:7). Additionally and more importantly, such an approach exposes the social and cultural reproduction of inequalities. These concepts will now be discussed in detail.

4.4. Field

The notion of 'field' is, together with those of habitus and capital, central to Bourdieu's work (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:94). Bourdieu stressed the importance of the concept of field as a way of reading through the objective relations that define the social space within which habitus and capital function. According to Ritzer (1992:436), Bourdieu's concept of field is an attempt to overcome the false opposition between objectivism and subjectivism. As Bourdieu puts it, "the most steadfast (and, in my eyes, the most important) intention guiding my work has been to overcome" the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism (Bourdieu cited in Ritzer, 1992:94).

According to Mahar et al. (1990:8), the conception of field which Bourdieu uses does not refer to a field with a fence around it; instead it is defined by "a system of objective relations of power between social positions which correspond to a system of objective relations between symbolic points: works of art, artistic manifestos, political declarations, and so on". Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (1988) is a good example of the use of the concept of field. In this book, he writes about the field of French academic life and considers it a separate field (Mahar et al., 1990:8).

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:97) defined the field as:

... a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.).

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:96) argued that "to think in terms of field is to think relationally". By this, they refer to the objective relations of power between agents as well as larger groupings and institutions (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:97).

Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:98) used the analogy of a game to convey their sense of social life as well as to describe the different fields into which social life is organised. They, however, cautioned that, unlike a game, "a field is not a product of a deliberate act of creation, and it follows rules or, better, regularities, that are not explicit and codified"

(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:98). Again, Bourdieu (1993a:73) uses the game analogy to reveal that agents involved in the game “share a certain number of fundamental interests”, that is “everything linked to the very existence of the field”.

According to Calhoun (2007:275), the metaphor of ‘game’ refers to “the experience of being passionately involved in play, engaged in a struggle with others and with our own limits, over stakes to which we are (at least for the moment) deeply committed”. Importantly, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:99) pointed out that players or agents play to increase or conserve their capital, “in conformity with the tacit rules of the game and the prerequisites of the reproduction of the game and its stakes”. They argued further that players can also get into the game in order to transform the immanent rules of the game “partially or completely” by changing, for instance, “the exchange rate between various species of capital, through strategies aimed at discrediting the form of capital upon which the force of their opponents rests (e.g. economic capital) and to valorise the species of capital they preferentially possess” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:99). Another important element of these games which is relevant to educational research is access to the games which has to be negotiated. Bourdieu (1993:74) argued that “the new players have to pay an entrance fee which consists in recognition of the value of the game” and in “knowledge of the principles of the functioning of the game”. As will be noted later (in section 4.6), this entrance fee is always in the form of capital (s) which enables but not necessarily guarantees participation in the game.

In order to study a field, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:104) suggested that one has to “analyze the position of the field”. In this research, this involved a location of, firstly, the South African higher education system in the wider socio-economic and political context. This was followed by an historical location of foundation programmes in the national context and then the institutional context. Secondly, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:105) suggested that, “one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions” and, lastly, they also suggested that “one must analyze the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition, and which find in a definite trajectory within the field under consideration a more or less favourable opportunity to become actualised” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:105).

4.4.1 Structural properties of fields

Bourdieu (1993:72) identified some structural features of fields which he referred to as “invariant laws” and “universal mechanisms”. The structural properties are outlined below:

4.4.1.1 Fields as autonomous social spaces

The autonomy of fields is based on the fact that they are structured to a significant extent by their own internal mechanisms of development and thus hold a degree of autonomy from the environment (Bourdieu, 1993a:72). In other words, the autonomy of the field implies that “it can be engaged in the play of its own distinctive game, can produce its own distinctive capital, and cannot be reduced to immediate dependency on any other field” (Calhoun, 2007:295). Maton (2005:690) made a similar point and argued that the autonomy of Bourdieu’s field is “illustrated by the way it generates its own values and markers of achievement”. However, he argued further that economic and political power also play a role though in a form specific to each field (Maton, 2005:690).

Writing about the education field, Bourdieu used the idea of the ‘relative autonomy’ to theorize a complex relationship between the education system, political and industrial interests, culture and its own organizational and professional interests (Swartz, 1997:206). This autonomy, Swartz (1997:206) argued, stems from the self reproductive capacity of the education field and its vested interests in protecting the value of scholastic capital. According to Maton (2005:690), Bourdieu described the French education system as principally structured by an opposition between agents possessing ‘scholastic capital’ (scientific prestige and intellectual renown) and ‘academic capital’ (institutional control over appointments, funding, etc.). Maton argued further, “higher education is hierarchically structured not only into ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ but also by competing ideas of what should count as having” (2005:690). It can therefore be concluded that it is the autonomous character and hierachization of fields that form the basis of struggles between agents “who attempt to conserve or transform the established relations of power in order to maximise their position” (Maton, 2005:690).

4.4.1.2 Fields enforce on agents specific forms of struggle

As has already been noted, fields are spaces of struggle(s) aimed at preserving or transforming capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:101). For Bourdieu (1993a:73), the structure of the field is defined by power relations among agents or institutions who are engaged in a struggle for capital. The ability of agents to compete for capital is determined by the capital they already possess, hence Ritzer (1992:440) portrayed the field as “a competitive

market place in which various kinds of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) are employed and deployed”. For Bourdieu (1993a:73), the capital that agents employ in the field is a product of “previous struggles and which orients subsequent strategies”. The ability to employ strategies suggests that Bourdieu’s actors have at least some freedom (Ritzer, 1996:406). According to Mahar, Harker & Wilkes (1990:17), Bourdieu’s concepts of strategy and struggle are connected. The concept of struggle, they argued further, is “not conscious or calculated nor is it mechanically determined”. Instead, it “is the intuitive product of knowing the rules of the game” (Mahar et al., 1990:17).

4.4.1.3 Fields as spaces of dominant and subordinate positions

Positions in the field represent “power relations among the agents or institutions engaged in the struggle”, and these relations are in turn determined by the unequal distribution of ‘relevant’ capital as opposed to personal characteristics or attributes of the occupants (Bourdieu, 1993a:73). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:167) saw power relations and resulting domination as the main cause for the reproduction of inequalities and class positions. Hence, Bourdieu (1974:39) argued that knowledge is a marker of distinction and social privilege which results in the reproduction of inequalities.

Bourdieu’s best illustration of fields as spaces of domination is found in his discussion of the role of language (academic discourse) in universities. Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:145) argued that language is an instrument or medium of power rather than a mere means of communication. They argued further “every linguistic exchange contains the *potentiality* of an act of power, and all the more so when it involves agents who occupy asymmetric positions in the distribution of the relevant capital” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:145). Webb et al. (2002:130) conceptualised language in the university context as academic discourse. Drawing on Bourdieu’s work, they argued that, “academic discourse is a specialised language that confers distinction and value (that is cultural capital) upon those who employ it”.

In Bourdieu’s work, this is reflected in his portrayal of the relationship of domination and subordination between lecturers and students, with the student being the subordinate, of course (Webb et al., 2002:130). Since the role of the lecturer is to ground students in academic discourse or the discourse of particular disciplines, the lecturer is always in a position of power by having mastery of the discipline which s/he teaches on his/her own terms without having to ‘reach’ out to students by speaking at the same level as them (Webb et al., 2002:130).

4.5 Habitus

According to Maton (2008: 49), habitus “is central to Bourdieu’s distinctive sociological approach, ‘field’ theory, and philosophy of practice, and key to his originality and his contribution to social science”. Although Maton (2008:49) recognized that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is widely cited and used in a variety of disciplines, he also made the point that it is also one of the most misunderstood, misused and hotly contested of Bourdieu’s ideas. According to Swartz (1997: 96), Bourdieu and Wacquant attributed this to the fact that “critics systematically misread Bourdieu’s theoretical intent by unwittingly projecting variations of the subjective/objective dichotomy onto the very concept that Bourdieu employed to transcend that antinomy”. Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is yet another way in which he stressed the dual character of social reality by stressing that “social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127). Habitus therefore “emphasizes the mutually penetrating realities of individual subjectivity and societal objectivity (Swartz, 1997:96).

As has already been noted, Bourdieu’s habitus is an attempt to overcome what he considers to be the “false opposition between objectivism and subjectivism” (Ritzer, 1996:400). Bourdieu (1993a:86) defined habitus as “that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions”. Bourdieu (1993a:86) argued further that the term habitus “refers to something historical” and this aspect forms one of the major characteristics of the habitus which will be elaborated on.

According to Bourdieu (1977:214), the word ‘disposition’ captures the essence of the habitus as it “expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination”. In other words, habitus represents the ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being, gained from our cultural history that generally stays with us across contexts (they are durable and transposable); and in turn determine how we make choices to act in certain ways and not others (Bourdieu, 1993a:86). Habitus has various characteristics which will now be outlined below.

4.5.1 Habitus as a product of history

Bourdieu (1977:82) makes the point that habitus is a product of history and it can also be changed by history, that is by new experiences.

... the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with schemes engendered by

history... And it is at the same time the principle of the transformations and regulated revolutions which neither the extrinsic and instantaneous determinisms of a mechanistic sociologism nor the purely internal but the punctual determination of voluntarist or spontaneous subjectivism are capable of accounting for (Bourdieu, 1977:82).

For Bourdieu (1990a:56), dispositions are part of a past which survives in the present and are perpetuated into the future by making themselves visible in practices structured according to their principles. Bourdieu (1990a:56) elaborated further:

In each one of us, in differing degrees, is contained the person we were yesterday, and indeed, in the nature of things it is even true that our past *personae* predominate in us, since the present is necessarily insignificant when compared with the long period of the past because of which we have emerged in the form we have today.

In *Sociology in Question* (1993a:87), Bourdieu expanded his claim about the historical nature of the habitus and pointed out that the habitus is “powerfully generative, meaning that it is a kind of transforming machine which reproduces the social conditions of its own production, “but in a relatively unpredictable way”. Although it is produced by history, Bourdieu (1993a:87) cautioned that the habitus is relatively detached from history but its dispositions (which are produced by history) are durable in that they last over time. The historical element of the habitus has implications for our approach to understanding and interpreting social phenomenon.

4.5.2 Habitus as a structured structure and structuring structure

According to Bourdieu (1990a:53), habitus is a structured structure predisposed to function as a “structuring structure”. The habitus is structured by one’s history and is, therefore, a product of socialisation as it shapes individual action through the influence exerted by cultural trajectories (Swartz, 1997:141). Bourdieu (1977:82) also described this as the “dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality”. Ritzer (1996:405) put it more simply and argued that “the habitus both produces and is produced by the social world”. As a structuring structure, “it is a structure that structures the social world”, on the other hand, it is a structured structure in that “it is a structure which is structured by the social world” (Ritzer, 1996:405).

As a structuring structure, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:18) argued that the habitus is a “structuring mechanism” which operates from within individuals/agents, although it is neither fully individual nor determinative of conduct. The habitus is in this sense a “strategy generating principle” which enables agents “to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing

situations” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:18). According to Bourdieu (1984:125), there are two sets of strategies; i) reproduction strategies designed to maintain and improve one’s position depending on the amount of capital and ii) re-conversion strategies corresponding to movements within the social space, dependent upon capital. Agents, therefore, act in such a way as to reproduce their position or gain position in the social world.

Implied by the concept of habitus is its creative ability. This can be deduced from Bourdieu’s response to the question on why he came up with the notion of habitus. Bourdieu (1990b:13) responded “I wanted to emphasize that this ‘creative’, active, inventive capacity was not that of a transcendental subject in the idealist tradition, but that of an acting agent”. Whilst acknowledging the agentic aspect of the habitus, he cautioned that “habitus is creative, inventive, but within the limits of its structures, which are the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19).

Therefore, for Bourdieu, the concepts of field and habitus function fully only in relation to one another (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19). For Maton (2008:12), the relationship between habitus and field provides the key for understanding practice. Both structures are homologous in that “they represent objective and subjective realisations of the same underlying social logic and they are also mutually constituting, meaning that “they help shape the other” (Maton, 2008:12). Additionally, Maton (2008:12) argued that their relationship is on going, dynamic and partial but they do not match perfectly in their evolvment since each has its own internal logic and history. For Maton (2008:12), this allows for the “relationship between the structure of a field and the habituses of its members to be one of varying degrees of fit or mismatch”.

4.5.3 The habitus is always constituted in moments of practice

According to Webb et al. (2002:38), “the habitus is always constituted in moments of practice” which means that it is brought out when certain dispositions meet a particular problem, choice or context. For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:135), “it is only in relation to certain structures that the habitus produces given discourses or practices”. They argued further that the habitus can be thought of as a spring that needs a trigger, of which the outcome is dependent on the stimuli and the structure of the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:135). The relationship between the habitus and field highlighted above suggests that the habitus is not “an unchanging, fixed structure, but rather is adapted by individuals who are

constantly changing in the face of contradictory situations in which they find themselves” (Ritzer, 1992:541).

Therefore, the habitus makes some adjustments in response to new and unforeseen situations, and this may bring about “durable transformations of the habitus”, but these remain within certain limits (Bourdieu, 1993a:87). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:127) argued further that “when habitus encounters a social world of which it is a product, it is like a “fish in water” : it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted”. Likewise, when the objective conditions of the habitus are not met, the experience is like ‘fish out of water’. In the event of a ‘fish out of water’ experience, Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:87) noted that the habitus has power to adapt to the objective conditions which create the ‘fish out of water’ experience, and this they argued “only exceptionally takes the form of a radical conversion”.

4.5.4 Habitus always makes virtue out of necessity

In *The Logic of Practice* (1990a:54), Bourdieu made the point that the very conditions of production of the habitus are a virtue made out of necessity. According to Schirato & Yell (2000:48), this means that the close relationship between “objective probabilities” (for example, chances of success in higher education) and an “agent’s subjective aspirations (‘motivations and needs’), does not mean that “people make those kinds of calculations and decisions freely, uninfluenced by habitus”. On the contrary, those decisions are always already made. As Bourdieu explained:

The most improbable practices are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue out of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied and to will the inevitable (Bourdieu, 1990a: 54).

According to Jenkins (1992:50), this has the consequence of reproduction as history repeats itself, thus perpetuating the *status quo*. It can therefore be argued that through the notion of habitus, Bourdieu provides an explanation for the extent to which dominated groups maintain the structures of domination by accepting or wanting what is objectively allotted to them.

4.5.5 The collective aspect of habitus

According to Webb et al. (2002:40), “habitus is certainly informed by, without being entirely explicable in terms of, class affiliations”. For Bourdieu (1977:80), homogenous conditions of existence result in the homogenizing of group or class habitus, and this enables practices to

be objectively harmonised without any intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm. Bourdieu (1977:81) noted the following about practices:

... because they are the product of dispositions which, being the internalization of the same objective structures, are objectively concerted that the practices of the members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class are endowed with an objective meaning that is at once unitary and systematic, transcending subjective intentions and conscious projects whether individual or collective.

For Bourdieu (1977:81), all interaction between agents is a reflection of the “objective structures which have produced the dispositions of the interacting agents”, which in turn determine their position in interaction and elsewhere. For this reason, relationships and the truth about the interactions between people are never entirely contained in the interaction (Bourdieu, 1977:81).

Although Bourdieu (1977:86) argued that the habitus produces collective practices, he also acknowledged the potential for individuality when he indicated that individuality “can never be entirely removed from sociological discourse”. He used the notion of *social trajectory* to account for the relationship between class habitus and organic individuality (Bourdieu, 1977:86). For Bourdieu (1977:86), individual differences in a group lie in the fact that the habitus, “being a product of structuring determinations”, and which at “every moment structures in terms of the structuring experiences which produced it”, brings about a unique integration in the individual personality and vision of overall social habitus. As Bourdieu (1977:87) explained, “the habitus acquired in the family underlies the structuring of school experiences”, and “the habitus transformed by the schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences, and so on, from restructuring to restructuring”.

4.6 Capital: a field mechanism

As mentioned earlier (see Section 2.4.1), a field may be considered an arena of struggle for positions and legitimate authority. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:101), capital is a social relation of power within a system of exchange, which orders struggle in the field and therefore exists and functions only in relation to the field. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:107) also defined capital as an “admission fee” which is imposed by fields on agents to ensure or enable their participation in them. For Bourdieu, the term ‘capital’ extends “to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation” (Bourdieu, cited in Mahar et al.,

1990:13). According to Mahar et al. (1990:13), capital gives meaning to a field and the value attached to it is related to the social and cultural characteristics of the habitus.

An important characteristic of capital (in all its forms) is its ability to be converted to other types of capital of which the most powerful conversion to be made is to symbolic capital (Mahar et al., 1990:13). According to Mahar et al. (1990:13), it is in the symbolic form that the different types of capital are perceived and recognised as legitimate. The symbolic “is that which is material but not recognised as being such (dress sense, a good accent, style, etc.)” (Mahar, 1990:13). Symbolic capital presents itself in the form of cultural capital and social capital.

4.6.1. Cultural capital

Bourdieu’s definition of cultural capital is broad and includes material things:

In the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace of realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart (Bourdieu, 1986:242).

Bourdieu (1986:243) noted that the concept of cultural capital presented itself to him in the course of research as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible for him to “explain the unequal scholastic achievement” of children originating from families with different educational though similar origins. Consequently, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:160), argued that Bourdieu’s ‘thinking tools’ or concepts of field, capital and habitus – are not built as such; instead “they are visible through the results they yield”. In other words, these tools lie in research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:160).

The concept of ‘cultural capital’ was proposed by Bourdieu in the early sixties to account for the fact that students from upper class backgrounds or ‘cultured backgrounds’ in Bourdieu’s account, had higher pass rates and also exhibited “different modes and patterns of cultural consumption and expression in a wide gamut of domains” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:160). For Bourdieu then (cited in Moore, 2004:83), cultural capital symbolises a “transformation of economic capital and cannot be understood as a social phenomena, independently from it”. Similarly, Swartz (1997:74) perceived cultural capital as a form of symbolic “power resource” which covers a wide range of resources such as “verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school system, and educational credentials”.

Furthermore, Ritzer (1996:409) noted that Bourdieu sees cultural capital as largely a result of people's social class origin. According to Bourdieu (cited in Ritzer, 1996:409) "there is a strong correlation between social positions and dispositions of the agents who occupy them". Bourdieu (1986:241) distinguished three forms of capital: the embodied, objectified and institutionalized form.

4.6.1.1 The embodied state

According to Bourdieu (1986:244), "the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment". Moore (2004:84) also pointed out that Bourdieu describes the embodied form of cultural capital "as external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into habitus". Swartz (1997:76) also noted that cultural capital in its embodied state, consists of a collection of class-based dispositions which are acquired over time through socialization. As such, Bourdieu (1986:244) suggested that since "the social conditions of its transmission and acquisition are more disguised than those of economic capital, it is predisposed to function as symbolic capital". For Bourdieu (1986:244), the transmission of cultural capital is the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital which consequently receives greater weight in the system of reproduction strategies.

4.6.1.2 The objectified state

According to Bourdieu (1986:245-245), the properties of the objectified form of cultural capital are defined "only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form". The objectified form of cultural capital exists in objects such as "books, works of art, and scientific instruments, that require specialised abilities to use" (Swartz, 1997:76). For Moore (2004:85), the embodied form (the habitus) is that which enables the individual to 'see' the art or "to read the books". Consequently, Bourdieu (1986:245) pointed out that "cultural goods can be appropriated both materially – which presupposes economic capital – and symbolically – which presupposes cultural capital".

4.6.1.3 The institutionalized state

Finally, cultural capital exists in an institutionalized form such as the educational credential system or academic qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986:245). For Bourdieu, the education system plays a big role in the allocation of statuses in advanced societies, hence "it becomes essential for parents to invest in good education for their children so they can reap the "profit" on the job market" (Swartz,1997:76). Swartz (1997:77) contended further that the growth and

unequal distribution of objectified and institutionalised cultural capital across social classes is the single most important determinant of social inequalities.

4.6.2 Social capital

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:119), “social capital is 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 institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”. For Bourdieu (1986:248), the value of social capital possessed by a given agent “depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected”. Therefore, for Bourdieu (cited in Moore, 2004:85) social capital requires “an increasing effort of sociability” as well as a continuous “series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed”. For this reason, Moore (2004:85) suggested that social capital is “collective in character” since it is the group that is the source of the capital.

4.7 The field of education

This section looks at the ways in which Bourdieu’s field concept relates to education. Education was of significant importance to Bourdieu because for him it was “the mechanism through which the values and relations that make up the social space are passed from one generation to the next” (Webb et al., 2002:105). According to Swartz (1997:189), Bourdieu’s concern with understanding the relationship between class, culture and power in stratified societies led him to study educational institutions. Bourdieu’s work on educational institutions was aimed at addressing the question on why inequalities persisted intergenerationally without conscious recognition or resistance from the public (Swartz, 1997:190). For Bourdieu, the answer could be explained by the fact that individuals and groups used their privileges and power to maintain and perpetuate their positions. Hence, Bourdieu found the education system to be the main cause of inequalities in modern societies (Swartz, 1997:190).

Swartz (1997:190) pointed out that for Bourdieu the education system performed three crucial functions. Firstly, the education system functioned to conserve, inculcate and consecrate a cultural heritage, and this was for Bourdieu its “internal and most essential function”. Swartz (1997:191) argued further that the second function conceived by Bourdieu was an “external function of reproducing social class relations”. Finally, the education system

performed a third function of “legitimation” by “concentrating the cultural heritage it transmits” (Swartz, 1997:191).

Although Bourdieu wrote extensively on the education system, he confined his comments to the French education system. However, Webb et al. (2002:127) noted that similar trends in the French system apply to a greater or lesser extent to other education systems around the world. Likewise, although Bourdieu’s works on education were primarily on the schooling system, Webb et al. (2002:128) also noted that “for Bourdieu, the higher education system resembles the school system in its work to ‘concentrate’ social distinctions by cultivating certain ways of acting that have the effect of reproducing social inequality”. According to Webb et al. (2002:128), the only difference is that whilst schools are concerned with the transmission of knowledge, universities are concerned with the production of knowledge.

4.7.1 Schools and social reproduction

Bourdieu’s work on the schooling system is important for it exposes the ways in which the education system functions to reproduce inequalities in higher education. As argued earlier, the higher education system resembles the schooling system for Bourdieu (Webb et al., 2002:128). Bourdieu (1974:37-39) argued that in the same way dominant economic institutions are structured to favour those who possess cultural capital, education institutions are structured to give those of superior social standing an unfair advantage in reproducing their stocks of cultural capital. Writing with specific reference to the French schooling system, Bourdieu (1974:39) argued that French schools allowed elite groups to maintain power by only recognizing as “intelligent” their cultural capital, that is their tastes for certain cultural products, their manner of deportment, speech, style, dress, and the like. According to Harker (1990:86), Bourdieu believed that schools valued and recognised the habitus of dominant groups and treated it as natural. As a result, schools treated all students as if they had equal access to it (Harker, 1990:86). As Bourdieu noted (1974:39):

The culture of the elite is so near to that of the school that children from the lower middle class (and *a fortiori* from the agricultural and industrial working class) can only acquire with great effort something which is given to the children of the cultivated classes – style, taste, with – in short, those attitudes and aptitudes which seem natural in members of the cultivated classes and naturally expected of them precisely because (in the ethnological sense) they are the culture of that class.

This way, Harker (1990:87) concluded, “the dominant habitus is transformed into a form of cultural capital” which acts as an effective filter in the reproduction of inequalities.

According to Bourdieu (1974:40), one of the more obvious mechanisms by which inequalities are perpetuated in the school is through the complex and academic variant of language embodied in academic practice. For Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992,145-149) language is a class cleavage which figures primarily in education as a code of power and is thus a constraint on pedagogical innovation. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977:116) drew a distinction between linguistic capital and linguistic habitus. Linguistic capital refers to class-linked traits of speech differently valued in a specific field or market, whereas linguistic habitus is a class-linked relation to language (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977:116).

Bourdieu and Passeron (cited in Swartz, 1997:198) argued that the linguistic habitus of upper class students which is an automatic tendency towards “abstraction, formalism, intellectualism and euphemistic moderation”, served them well in classroom encounters whilst the converse habitus of working class students, a tendency towards “expressionism ... mov[ing] from particular case to particular case, from illustration to parable, or shun[ning] the bombast of fine words” served them poorly in classrooms. For Bourdieu then, the emphasis on the spoken as well as the written word in French schools, actually helped “secure the privileges of those rich in cultural capital” (Swartz, 1977:200).

According to Harker (1990:91), inequalities in the French education system were also perpetuated through “the learned ignorance of the schools and selection of agents”. Harker (1990:91) defined this ‘learned ignorance’ as the “tendency of schools to recognize only those who recognize them”. Consequently, social advantages or disadvantages are transformed into educational ones, “through choices which are linked to social origins, thereby reinforcing their influence” (Harker,1990:92). Moreover, the transformation of cultural inequalities into educational ones was argued to result in the treatment of all pupils, however unequal they were in reality, as equal in rights and duties (Bourdieu, 1974:38). Furthermore, Bourdieu and Passeron (1977:115) argued that teaching techniques took for granted the cultural backgrounds of certain students and perpetuated inequalities through *symbolic violence*, a situation whereby “instruments of knowledge ... which are arbitrary” are nevertheless made to appear universal and objective.

In the education system, such violence causes recipients to develop a sense of their social position, that is a “sense of their social limit” which becomes permanently inscribed on their habitus, causing them to self-censor and self-silence in the presence of those with greater social standing (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977:115). Bourdieu’s work on higher education

proves that the higher education system is a continuation of the schooling system (Webb et al., 2002:128). In *Homo Academicus* (1988), Bourdieu attempts to show how higher education acts as a contributor to the maintenance and reproduction of social inequalities. As the case is in most of his works, Bourdieu (1988) uses his concepts of *field*, *capital* and *habitus* in his unveiling of the processes of the French higher education system.

4.7.2 Higher education and social reproduction

The previous section provided a brief account of Bourdieu's views on the role of schools in reproducing social and cultural inequalities. Bourdieu's subsequent investigations into French higher education institutions drew on his earlier studies of the schooling system. Whilst Bourdieu's work on the schooling system focused on reproduction through the transmission of knowledge (Webb et al., 2002:128), his work on higher education focused on how "the higher-educational system reproduces, rather than redistributes, the unequal distribution of cultural capital" (Swartz, 1997:199).³⁵ Bourdieu's work on the structural features of the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation provide an explanation of how reproduction occurs in higher education.

In making his arguments about the higher education field, Bourdieu drew on his core concepts of field, capital and habitus to illustrate the social reproduction function of higher education. For Bourdieu (1996:152-154), the amount of academic capital possessed by agents determines their position in the academic field as well as their academic outcomes. Rajani Naidoo (2004:458) defined academic capital as an institutionalised form of cultural capital "based on properties such as prior educational achievement, a 'disposition' to be academic (seen in the manner of speech and writing) and specially designated competencies".

Bourdieu (1996:153) observed that higher education institutions in France privileged students with greater cultural capital by attaching great importance to less directly academic properties, "such as particular ways of behaving, carrying oneself, and speaking". As such, Bourdieu (1996:52) described higher education institutions as "cognitive machines," which produce pre-existing social classifications by transforming social classifications into academic classifications. For Bourdieu (1996:52), then, the acts of cognition engaged in by institutions "are hidden from view" and are implemented to privilege those possessing the most cultural capital by recognising them as "academically talented". Bourdieu (1996:96)

³⁵ See Bourdieu 1988, Bourdieu & Passeron 1979.

gave an example of pedagogy and argued that pedagogical relations present the most well hidden form of cognitive acts, which reproduce inequalities in the university context.

4.7.3 Reproduction and interruption of reproduction through pedagogic action

Walker (2006:11) defined pedagogy as the method of teaching which extends beyond the role of the teacher or the lecturer; “it involves not only who teaches, but also who is taught (and of course is interwoven with what is taught - the curriculum), and the contextual conditions under which such teaching and learning takes place” (Walker, 2006:12). For Walker (2006:12), pedagogic action is a “practical expression of whether existing cultural, economic and political patterns in any society ought to be reproduced or transformed”. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (cited in Walker, 2006:12), “pedagogic action involves a relationship of power in the transfer of knowledge”. In their book *The Inheritors* (1979), Bourdieu and Passeron examined the hidden role played by cultural capital in both the selection process of students for university and their subjection “to a pedagogy which privileged the culturally advantaged”. Bourdieu and Passeron (1979:14) illustrated how differences in cultural styles, “previously acquired intellectual tools” and cultural habitus among French university students resulted in educational success or failure.

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1979:14), “the ability to manipulate the abstract language of ideas”, what Bourdieu conceptualised as ‘academic discourse’ in his other works, is an important determinant of success in higher education. Webb et al. (2002:132) defined academic discourse as “a specialized language that confers distinction and value (that is cultural capital) upon those who employ it”. Referring specifically to French universities, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979:20) argued that the universities assumed that good students would master the mysterious academic discourses without being told or needing to be told. Therefore, since teaching was based on assumptions about certain levels of skill, knowledge and culture which are/were “the heritage of the cultivated classes” or elite classes, learning occurred through osmosis or without effort for students with the right cultural capital whilst lower middle class students struggled to exhibit such mastery of the learned discourse since it was foreign to them (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979:21). According to Webb et al. (2002:131), it is in this sense that Bourdieu viewed higher education as involving a series of games in which lecturers and students are complicit. In addition, Webb et al. (2002:131) argued that the “games are designed to show that the transmission of knowledge is taking place”.

Implied in Bourdieu's thinking about pedagogic action, is the view that it involves some form of symbolic violence or domination as it consecrates the gifts or cultural capital of the bourgeois, whilst concealing their distinction as an outgrowth of their privilege (Burawoy 2012:103). Burawoy (2012:103) further argued that the real source of privilege, which is cultural capital, is hidden not only from the privileged classes themselves but also from the dominated classes, "who see themselves as undeserving". It is in this sense that reproduction occurs in education through simultaneous privileging of the elite.

To address inequalities caused by certain pedagogic practices, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979: 53-54) proposed a "rational pedagogy" which, as they argued, sought "to neutralise the effects of the social factors of cultural inequality". For Burawoy a 'rational pedagogy' does not only cancel inequality of access to education, but, he argues further, it also "counteracts the advantages of the dominant class habitus by inculcating the relevant aspect of that habitus in all classes" (Burawoy: 2012:109). In the same way, Bourdieu's notion of rational pedagogy suggests that reproduction can be averted by recognising different capitals.

By arguing that institutions allow the elite groups to maintain power by only recognizing as "intelligent" their cultural capital, Bourdieu (1974:32) seems to be suggesting that recognising and cultivating diverse capital(s) has the potential to reduce reproduction of inequalities in education. Likewise, it can also be argued that the habitus of lower class students which results in their failure in higher education can be modified through pedagogic action which enables individuals to identify opportunities for transformation (Tyler, 2011:26).

Although Bourdieu's critics have argued that his concept of habitus is unable to account for innovation, in that it reduces action to the interests of the types of capital it internalises in dispositions, and generates only practices corresponding to those interests (Swartz, 1997:211), Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 132) rejected this criticism and argued that the habitus is inventive since it is an open concept. According to Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:132):

Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal.

For Bourdieu (1977:44), modifying the habitus through rational pedagogy is an opportunity for the transformation of inequalities. Although Bourdieu was not very explicit about what a

‘rationale pedagogy’ would entail, it is arguably implied by a reversal of what he considered to be the source of reproduction through pedagogic action. Although Bourdieu (1998:121) argued that reproduction occurs when the dominated unconsciously collide with their domination through misrecognition of the process of domination, he contended, however, that change cannot come only as a result of the ‘awakening of consciousness’. Instead, he strongly believed in the need for a ‘transformation of the objective structures’ that produce and sustain dispositions and beliefs in the first place (Bourdieu,1998:121).

In this way, Bourdieu acknowledged the role of agency and its ability to shift in response to specific contexts and over time. In light of this, Mills (cited in Tyler, 2011:27) suggested that “while it is possible for students’ habitus to be transformed, it is transformation of educational opportunities available to students that will benefit disadvantaged and marginalised students”. Similarly, Swartz argued that, although habitus is an adaptive mechanism, change comes about when traditional strategies are deployed in relation to novel phenomena (1997:213).

Mills also suggested that teachers can become agents of transformation by broadening the types of capital available to students through “real-world curriculum and pedagogy” (cited in Tyler, 2011:27). Drawing on Bourdieu’s field analogy, Tyler (2011:27) argued that transformation occurs as the marginalised are included in the game and this should be based on leadership principles and belief that “all students can learn”. These sentiments are also echoed in the works of bell hooks³⁶ (1994, 2003) and Basil Bernstein (2000) who advocate alternative pedagogies that seek to empower rather than marginalize or alienate students from underprivileged backgrounds. The conception of ‘education as freedom’ discussed in bell hook’s work is a useful way of thinking about ways of empowering rather than marginalizing students.

In *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*, hooks (1994:14) pointed out that Freire’s insistence on the practice of freedom in education encouraged her to practise freedom in the classroom through her teaching approaches. According to hooks (1994:11), education as the practice of freedom had to extend beyond the teaching role to a more holistic involvement with students. For Freire, education can only be liberatory “when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labor” (cited in hooks, 1994:14). For hooks (1994:14), this meant that every other student had to be an active participant, not a passive

³⁶ She spells her name in lower case letters.

consumer. This for her had the potential to empower both the student and the teacher (hooks, 1994:21). For hooks (1994:38) active participation in this sense is a democratic process which has the potential to transform pedagogy in multicultural settings. The idea of freedom is also central to Amartya Sen's capability approach. Amartya Sen's capability approach was utilized in this study to complement Bourdieu's social reproduction framework.

4.8 Amartya Sen's capability approach

The capability approach was pioneered by Amartya Sen in the 1980s and 1990s and further developed by Martha Nussbaum who related it directly to education (Wilson-Strydom, 2011:409). The starting point of Sen's capability approach is his argument that social arrangements should aim to expand people's capabilities – "that is freedom to enjoy valuable functionings"³⁷ (Deneulin & Shahani, 2009:32). The relevance of the capabilities approach for this study lies in the fact that it offers a normative framework for conceptualising and evaluating individual well-being and social arrangements (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:3). The capability approach is grounded on three interrelated concepts: capabilities, functionings and agency (Sen, 1992:).

4.8.1 Capabilities

The capability approach involves a "concentration on freedoms to achieve in general and the capabilities to function in particular" (Sen, 1995:266). Sen (1992:30) defined a capability as "a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being; [it] represents the alternative combination of things a person is able to do or be". Elsewhere, capabilities are defined as "the substantive freedoms" that allow an individual to "lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value" (Sen, 1999:87). Sen and Nussbaum viewed education as a basic capability that affects the development and expansion of other capabilities (cited in Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:8). Similarly, Bourdieu argued that educational attainment is a form of capital that can be enhanced or used to access other forms of capital hence his conception of capital as a social relation in a system of exchange. Like Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:19), Nussbaum (2000:31) suggested that what people are able to be or, put in other words, their choices, are shaped or informed and deformed by material as well as cultural circumstances which in turn affect the inner lives of people ('dispositions' according to Bourdieu), what they hope for, what they fear as well as what they are able to do.

³⁷ The concept of 'functionings' refers to being or doing what one values and has reason to value (Wilson-Strydom, 2012:92).

According to Walker and Unterhalter (2007:3), the capability approach is concerned with questions of the balance between freedoms and equality, hence the central question “equality of what?” in the analysis and assessment of equality. Given the legacies of apartheid and the ongoing transformation agenda in the education sector, this question emerges in works on how to theorize and analyze the provision of learning opportunities. As argued in Chapter Two, equity in education as a social justice issue in South Africa was framed within two broad frameworks: i) a distributive justice framework, which views justice as equality of opportunity or resources, and ii) a relational justice framework, which is concerned with the equality of outcomes (Hill, Baxen, Craig, & Namakula, 2012:242).

In the light of the distributive justice conception of equity, Sen argued that what should be equalised is not resources but human capabilities, “that is what people are able to be and to do” (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:3). Therefore, what is important in the evaluation of social and educational arrangements (the Extended Studies Programme, in this case), is people’s capabilities rather than resources since “resources are the means but not the intrinsic ends, of human wellbeing” (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:4). Walker and Unterhalter (2007:4) suggested that evaluation in education should be concerned with “a dynamic relationship between opportunity and outcome” (access to education for students who don’t normally meet the requirements to enrol in higher education in this case, and the outcome of that access), “or capabilities and functionings”.

4.8.2 Functionings

The distinction between capabilities and functionings is of great significance to the capabilities approach (Sen, cited in Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:4). Whilst capabilities refer to the potential to achieve functionings, functionings refer to achieved outcomes (Walker and Unterhalter: 2007:4) or “the various things a person may value being or doing” (Sen cited in Walker, 2006:28). Furthermore, functionings involve our practical way of life and may include basic things such as being well-nourished or more complex ones such as being educated or being respected (Sen, 1992:5). Therefore, for Walker and Unterhalter (2007:4), the difference between a capability and a functioning is one between an opportunity (access to education, for example) and the actual achievement (outcomes of that access).

Walker and Unterhalter (2007:5) pointed out that the evaluation of wellbeing requires us to find a measure which incorporates references to functionings, that is, what has been achieved, but also reflect the intuition that what matters is not merely achieving the functioning but

being free to achieve it. In other words, we should also look at the freedom to achieve actual functionings that one can have reason to value or the capabilities to choose a life one has reason to value (Sen, 1992: 40). Like capabilities, functionings are dependent on individual circumstances and social conditions (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:8-9).

4.8.3 Freedom and agency

Central to the capability approach are the concepts of ‘agency freedom’ and ‘agency opportunity’ (Walker, 2006:34). For Sen (1985:203), agency is the capacity to bring about change. As such, it is important in evaluating “what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important” (Sen, 1985:203). Sen’s concept of agency is linked to the idea of freedom to make choices, hence the lack of agency or constrained agency equates to disadvantage when an individual faces barriers to genuine choice and life of reflective choices (Sen, 1999:13-19). Sen’s concept of ‘agency freedom’ can be interpreted as having the “freedom [opportunities] to bring about the achievements one values” (Sen, 1992:57).

Agency achievement refers to a person’s success “in pursuit of the totality of her considered goals and objectives” (Sen, 1992:56). Effectively, there are agency opportunities (freedoms) and agency outcomes (achievements), and these are evaluated in the context of power relations (Walker, 2006:34). In light of this, Sen (1999:90) argued that the exercise of freedom is mediated by values, which are, in turn, influenced by social interactions. Like Bourdieu, Sen (1999:xi-xiii) integrated individual agency and social arrangements, and he argued that individuals and their opportunities should not be viewed in isolation. He insisted that individual agency depends on social arrangements of which education is one of them:

...the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political, and economic opportunities that are available to us. There is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom. To counter the problem we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment (Sen, 1999: xi-xiii).

Sen (1999:3) argued that development can be seen as “a process of expanding the freedoms that people enjoy”. He argued further that viewing development in terms of expanding substantive freedoms “directs attention to the ends that make development important, rather than merely to some of the means that inter alia play a prominent part in the process” (Sen 1999:3). Since people are considered to be active participants in development, agency here is

taken to mean that human beings are responsible and have the ability to shape their own lives (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:5). In education, individuals are agents of their learning and the agency is practised both individually and collectively with others, through educational opportunities and appropriate processes (Walker and Unterhalter, 2007:6). For Walker and Unterhalter (2007:6), embracing agency in and through education practices opens the possibility to interrupt pervasive relationships in education that link learners' origins and outcomes. Therefore, in considering agency, Walker & Unterhalter (2007:6) suggested that we need to ask if different learners are being recognised socially and educationally "as having equal claims on resources and opportunities".

4.8.1 Applying the capability approach to higher education studies

This research considers the rich potential of the capability approach for evaluating university access and success. Whilst Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction is rich in its explanation of the causes of inequalities in education, the construction of student identities and their agency across the education field, Sen's capability approach offers a normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of social and institutional arrangements within which individuals exercise their agency (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:1). Unlike Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis which sees education "as an effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern" or inequalities (Bourdieu, 1974:32), Sen considered the role of education as an agent of transformation. In view of this, Maria Hoffman and Aline Bory-Adams (2005:1) contended that transformation in education can potentially be achieved if "the learning needs of all are met through equitable access to an education of such quality that it leads to learning outcomes that ultimately enhance individual freedom".

According to Walker and Unterhalter (2007:1), evaluation in education is a fiercely contested terrain, since there is a lack of consensus "over what should be measured, and how educational equality should be defined". Given the need to work towards equality as part of the broader transformation agenda in South Africa, issues around equity in access have dominated academic debates on Higher Education transformation. It has been accepted that increasing access without increasing the chances of success presents a new form of social exclusion within Higher Education (Wilson-Strydom, 2011:407).

Given Wilson-Strydom's (2011:1) ideas about 'access for social justice', it can be argued that the need to achieve access for social justice resulted in the introduction of Extended Studies Programmes in South Africa. It is in this sense that Amartya Sen's capability approach is

useful for this study. Thinking in terms of capabilities raises a wider range of issues than simply looking at alternative access to the university for students who don't normally meet the requirements for admission. In the case of the Extended Studies Programme, one might argue that the question about whether the university has transformed or not is not about the numbers enrolled in the programme or even the availability of such an initiative. Instead, such a question can be answered by looking at the relationship between the resources/opportunity to study and the ability/freedom of the students enrolled in the programme to convert the resources available into valued capabilities (academic outcomes) (Walker, 2006:32).

It is proposed in this section that approaching issues of access from a capability perspective (as developed by Amartya Sen) provides a means of understanding the ways in which institutional arrangements can function to enhance the freedom of students to achieve in higher education. Whilst complementing Bourdieu's theory, the capabilities approach adopted in this study was also used to overcome some of the shortcomings in Bourdieu's theory outlined in the previous sections (See Section 4.7.3).

Bourdieu's emphasis on the ways in which reproduction occurs in higher education through power relations and differences in individual engagements with contested meanings, denies him the opportunity to address questions about "rights, needs, and how one might develop a complex idea of disadvantage in education settings" (Unterhalter et al., 2007:2). For Unterhalter et al. (2007:1), the usefulness of the capability approach in the assessment of equality relates to the very broad scope of what is meant by education. Since the key idea of the capability approach is that social arrangements should aim to expand people's capabilities – that is the freedom to promote or achieve functionings which are important to them (Unterhalter, Vaughan & Walker, 2007:13) – education per se is in this respect aimed at facilitating arrangements and processes that enable the freedom to achieve valued outcomes.

As Sen argued:

Individuals live and operate in a world of institutions. Our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist and how they function. Not only do institutions contribute to our freedoms, their roles can be sensibly evaluated in the light of their contributions to our freedom. To see development as freedom provides a perspective in which institutional assessment can systematically occur (Sen, 1999:142).

Therefore, to think in terms of capabilities is to argue that higher education ought to widen each person's capability set to be able to make choices from a range of equally significant

options in choosing a valuable life (Walker, 2008:478). This calls attention to an awareness of student capabilities. But, beyond that, there is also a need for the recognition and development of capabilities of diverse students, and not just those whose families and socio-economic backgrounds and cultural capital are taken for granted in education.

According to Sen (1999), the freedom to achieve is qualified and constrained by social arrangements which means that “there is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements” (Sen, 1999:xii). Like Bourdieu, Sen made the claim that individual capabilities (‘capital’ in Bourdieu’s framework) do not develop in isolation but relationally, meaning that they depend on individual circumstances – the relations a person has with others and social conditions and contexts within which potential options (freedom) can be achieved (Sen, 1999:xii). In this way, the capabilities approach provides a space in which we can be critical about educational processes such as pedagogical arrangements, which in turn influence the possibilities for equality in learning opportunities provided by institutions.

In view of pedagogy, Both Sen and Bourdieu acknowledged the role played by pedagogy in reproducing educational inequalities (in Bourdieu’s framework) or enhancing capabilities (in Sen’s framework). According to Walker & Nixon (2004:5), the pedagogical relationship produced between teacher and pupil has the possibility to enhance agency (freedom) but also the possibility to deny agency. For this reason, they argued that “the curriculum and pedagogy need to be the focus of our practical concerns and our attempts to develop ways to measure capabilities” (Walker & Nixon, 2004:14).

For Bourdieu and Passeron (1977:13), a rational pedagogy cancels inequality of access to education as well as counteracts the advantages of the dominant class habitus by inculcating the relevant aspects of the habitus in all classes. In a similar vein, Nussbaum (1997:301) argued that the purpose of education is to cultivate humanity through nurturing virtues, which tend towards abolishing oppression and instilling an understanding of the moral worth of each person. Although Sen does not allude directly to pedagogy per se, insights from his expositions of human capacity for action and capabilities have immense potential for pedagogy.

Nussbaum (2000) developed Sen’s capability approach and applied it to higher education in order to understand education processes and outcomes. Like Bourdieu, she argued that the relations of power shape the expectations of agents who adapt to certain preferences as a result of misrecognition of their capabilities/capitals in the education field. According to

Nussbaum (2000:31), unequal social and political circumstances both in terms of redistribution and recognition lead to unequal chances and unequal capacities to choose. Likewise, external circumstances “affect the inner lives of people: what they hope for, what they love, what they fear, as well as what they are able to do” (Nussbaum, 2000:31). Bourdieu’s concept of habitus implies the same as it similarly suggests that choices are structured by available opportunities as individuals adjust their hopes to their probabilities even if these are not in their best interest (Bourdieu, 1990a:54).

Both Nussbaum and Bourdieu proposed alternative pedagogies (‘rational pedagogies’ in Bourdieu’s framework and ‘critical pedagogies’ in Nussbaum’s framework), in the fostering of equity in education through the recognition of the diverse capabilities of students from diverse backgrounds. Hooks (1994:10) also highlighted the need for inclusive/alternative/critical pedagogies, and argued that each classroom should be viewed as different, hence the need for strategies to be constantly changed and invented in order to address each new teaching experience. As such, she defined teaching as a ‘performative act’ in that “it offers a space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom” (hooks, 1994:11).

Unlike Sen and Bourdieu, Nussbaum came up with a list of normative pedagogical guidelines (her list of capabilities) on how to promote freedom through pedagogic action or pedagogical arrangements. According to Walker (2006:91), Nussbaum’s list of capabilities is multi-dimensional and some of the capabilities point more to education than others. Walker (2006:91) noted that if these capabilities were to inform pedagogy and curricula, they would certainly enable inclusive higher education processes and culture as well as participation and progression of diverse groups of students.

For the purposes of this research, only two types of capabilities are discussed as Nussbaum considered them important. These are ‘practical reason’ and ‘affiliation’ both of which are significant in relation to widening participation and enabling critical or rational pedagogies in higher education (Walker, 2003:174). Importantly, their significance lies in the fact that without them other valued capabilities cannot be converted into functionings. They point to a holistic approach to critical thinking which includes the capacity to make appropriate and informed choices about one’s life. Additionally, “they are a more subtle and complex working out of teaching methods of ‘group’ or ‘team work’ to include values of empathy and

mutual recognition, compassion, respect, dignity and meaningful relationships with peers” (Walker, 2003:174).

According to Nussbaum (2000:79), practical reason involves “being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life”. Affiliation “includes social relations, respect and equal valuing of difference, compassion, friendship and being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others” (Nussbaum, 2000:79). For Walker (2003:174), Nussbaum’s capability approach has the ability to enable collective problem solving through processes of critical dialogue, respect, inclusion of diverse perspectives and ‘reasonableness’ – that is the willingness to listen to other views, histories, and experiences different from one’s own. Put in other words, a capabilities pedagogy sees working class experience as an important knowledge resource.

For this to happen, Walker (2003:176) argued that higher education pedagogy would need to recognize and value the diverse cultural resources students bring to learning, thereby doing away with repeated encounters of non-recognition, misrecognition, indifference and disrespect. hooks (1994: 39-40) linked the idea of recognition to a community experience, which she premised on the view that “there is a shared commitment and a common good that binds us”. According to Florence Namulundah (1998:108), such a conception of the classroom as a community creates dialogue between students and teachers and avoids “the imposition of one individual’s ideas on the other by creating an environment in which “truth” is explored and arrived at through an interaction that honors each party’s contribution to a discourse”.

For hooks (1994:40), community is therefore achieved through the recognition of the value of individual voice. In Walker’s (2008:478) framework, voice is representative of a particular freedom in education. For example, Walker (2008:478) argued that it would not be enough for a student to value a capability for voice but be prevented from exercising her voice in learning contexts through educational arrangements which value some identities over others.

In a similar vein, Walker (2006:32) argued that focusing on capabilities shifts our attention from an assessment of equality that is based on available resources to a focus on the relationship between the available resources and the ability of each student to convert these into valued capabilities which then inform choices to achieve specific outcomes (functionings). For Sen (1992:33), “equalizing ownership of resources or holdings of primary goods needs not equalize the substantive freedoms enjoyed by different persons, since there

can be significant variations in the conversion of resources and primary goods into freedoms". Therefore, while unequal distribution is an issue, redistribution is necessary but not sufficient for equality of capabilities (Walker, 2006:33).

Therefore, it can be argued that the provision of programmes that enable access for non-traditional students does not automatically lead to an equal education system or equal educational outcomes. Instead, it is the ability of diverse students to convert that access into valued functionings (outcomes) such as good grades, which determines the achievement of real equality. The concept of conversion factors plays an important role in bringing together agency and social contexts. The differences in people that are in turn shaped by their individual qualities and social arrangements affect the extent to which they can convert opportunities (capabilities) into achievements (functionings). Whilst differences do not inherently imply inequality, Walker (2006:33) argued that differences turn into inequality when they impact on capability.

To conclude this section, it can be argued that the capability approach has much to offer in the evaluation of the Extended Studies Programme. The capability approach is more than a proposal to focus on human capabilities. It necessitates critical engagement with other factors that shape people's preferences, expectations and perceptions which then influence the choices made from freedoms that people have. Walker (2008:478) argued that in education, both capability (potential and opportunity) and functioning (being able to exercise valued capabilities) would be important. Working within a capabilities framework enables the researcher to locate individual agency and social and institutional arrangements on the same plane. This directs our attention to pedagogical or institutional factors that enable or constrain learning. Lastly, Sen's question 'equality of what?' prompts an enquiry into other important capabilities that institutions could work towards cultivating or enhancing.

4.9 Conclusion

Reconciling or merging the two theoretical frameworks outlined above has two benefits. Firstly, Bourdieu's social reproduction theory enables an enquiry into institutional conditions that impact on the provision of Extended Studies, as well as teaching and learning in the programme. Secondly, and more importantly, Sen's capabilities approach enables the consideration of the role of individual agency in making education related choices within the confines of institutional conditions, however enabling or disabling they are. As will be argued in the following chapters, the Extended Studies Programme does not function in

isolation. Instead, it is embedded in the institution, which necessitated its location in the social, cultural and academic processes and practices of the institution under study.

Since the provision of Extended Studies is based on the need to achieve equity in the higher education sector, the theoretical insights of Bourdieu and Sen provide an analytical lens for understanding the causes of inequalities in higher education and also analytical tools for evaluating institutional processes and structures that impact on teaching and learning in the programme under study. Whilst Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis exposes the ways in which social structures shape educational processes and outcomes, Sen's capability approach provide tools for evaluating both institutional arrangements and individual capabilities – that is students' perceptions of the freedom they have to achieve or pursue valued educational outcomes (Sen, 1992:48).

Both approaches have methodological implications which will be discussed further in Chapter Five. Additionally, working within Sen's and Bourdieu's theoretical perspectives necessitates the review of specific literature as was argued in Chapter Two – the literature review chapter. The structure vs agency debate calls attention to an historical analysis of social, cultural and academic institutional arrangements that directly or indirectly impact or shape student experiences both socially and academically. Similarly, it is necessary to map out the South African higher education field in terms of power relations and shifts in policy. Likewise, the shifts in academic development work are also discussed in order to show the impact of national policy change on institutional arrangements.

The power relations, as argued earlier on, impact on individual capabilities or dispositions. For this reason, it is necessary to interrogate the different structural relations in the institution under study in order to understand their impact on teaching and learning in the Extended Studies Programme. Practically in my research, this involves enquiry into teaching and learning in the programme and the mainstream, investigation of the experiences of both the students and lecturers involved in the programme as well as an enquiry into curriculum and pedagogical issues.

Lastly, Sen, unlike Nussbaum, deliberately left the capabilities unspecified, this makes room for an inquiry into other capabilities that agents (both students and staff) regarded as needing expansion in the Rhodes University context. Bourdieu's thinking tools and Sen's capability approach call attention to the ways in which social contexts shape the conditions for

individual freedom or unfreedoms (in Sen's framework). Furthermore, the integration of the two approaches makes it possible to potentially explore the complex processes underlying education outcomes in a manner that exposes power relations that may otherwise be masked.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to provide answers to one basic question: ‘To what extent is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objectives, particularly when viewed from the transformation perspective? The aim of this chapter is to provide background information about the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research, as well as the research design, research strategies and empirical techniques that were applied in the study. The case study approach was used as the main method, and Rhodes University was purposively selected as the case study. Different sub-methods were triangulated within the case study in order to reduce systematic biases inherent in the use of single methods (Bickman & Roj, 2009:245). The sub-methods included document analysis, classroom observation, written reflection and in-depth interviews. Following this introduction, a detailed description of the research methods and rationale for the paradigms adopted in the study is given. Also discussed in detail are the data collection methods as well as sampling decisions and procedures. Finally, ethical considerations, measures taken to ensure the reliability of the study and potential limitations of the study are described and discussed.

5.2. Research paradigms

One of the important decisions I had to make was choosing a research paradigm within which to situate my study. The term ‘paradigm’ derives from the work of Thomas Kuhn and it can be summarised as a “cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, [and] how results should be interpreted” (Bryman, 1988:4). Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) defined a paradigm as “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but also in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways”. According to Guba & Lincoln (1994:108), the beliefs about a paradigm are underpinned by “responses to three fundamental questions, which are interconnected in such a way that the answer given to any one question, taken in any order, constrains how the others may be answered”. The ontological question addresses questions about the nature of reality and what can be known about it. The epistemological question provides insight into the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known and, lastly, the methodological question is about how the knower “can go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:108).

The methodological question is constrained by ontological and epistemological questions. Therefore, not just any methodology is appropriate. In this regard, Maxwell (2009:224) made the point that choosing a research method is not a matter of free choice. There has to be a fit between the paradigm, assumptions about the reality under study and the theoretical framework adopted. For Maxwell (2009:224), working with the wrong method or a theory, which does not fit assumptions made about the reality being studied, is like “trying to do a physically demanding job in clothes that don’t fit” – which may keep one from doing the job well. For this reason, the paradigms, theoretical framework and research methods were carefully chosen and grounded in the ontological and epistemological assumptions about social reality.

In keeping with Bourdieu and Sen’s theoretical frameworks that informed my study, the overall orientation underpinning my research is the interpretive paradigm with elements of the critical perspective. The critical approach, while sharing features of the interpretive paradigm, adds a further dimension, which focuses on societal values by trying to identify inequities as well as ways to remedy them. Although both Bourdieu and Sen worked from largely interpretive orientations, there are elements of critical orientations in their work. In line with the critical orientation, they were concerned with the hidden power structures of society and institutions (pedagogic action, for instance) that permeate inequalities. Sen and other authors who subscribe to the capabilities approach take it further by grounding their concerns in societal values such as social justice. In so doing, like other critical scholars, they use their research as an attempt to change society for the better (Connole, 1993:14).

5.2.1 The interpretivist paradigm

Interpretivism is a contrasting epistemological position to positivism, which subsumes the views of writers who reject the natural sciences as an appropriate foundation of social science enquiry (Connole, 1993:13). Broadly speaking, “the canvas of interpretivism is layered with ideas stemming from the German intellectual tradition of hermeneutics and the *Verstehen* tradition in Sociology”, phenomenology and “critiques of scientism and positivism in the social sciences” (Schwandt, 1994:118). According to Bryman (2012:28), hermeneutics is “concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action”. Its clash with positivism is reflected in the “emphasis on the explanation of human behaviour that is the chief ingredient of the positivist approach to the social sciences and the understanding of human behaviour” (Bryman & Bell, 2007:18). Positivism, though, is concerned with the “empathic understanding of human action rather than with the forces that are deemed to act

on it” (Bryman, 2012:28). Phenomenology is concerned “with the question of how human beings make sense of the world around them and how in particular the philosopher should bracket preconceptions in his or her grasp of that world” (Bryman, 2012:30).

The two opposing views to positivism outlined above share the view that there is a fundamental difference between the subject matter of the natural sciences and the social sciences. The phenomenological tradition asserts that social reality has a meaning for human beings. As such, human beings act on the basis of the meaning “they attribute to their acts and the acts of others” (Bryman, 2012:30). The focus in interpretivism is human action as opposed to human behaviour, and this reflects a decisive move away from a natural science which views human behaviour as the outcome of external influences (Connole, 1993:13). From an interpretive perspective, human actions have reasons, which are preceded by intention and may be accompanied by reflection. Importantly, these actions take place within social structures within which they have meaning for both actor and observer (Connole, 1993:13).

The task of the researcher becomes that of understanding human action by “gaining access to people’s common-sense thinking and hence to interpret their actions and their social world from their point of view” (Bryman, 2012:30). Similarly, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007:39) noted that the aim of research within an interpretivist framework is to “understand the subjective world of human experience” and the perspectives and experiences of the researched in a natural setting. According to Connole (1993:13), this requires not detachment but active involvement in the process of negotiated meaning. This paradigm necessitates the use of a research design, which reflects interest “in contextual meaning-making, rather than generalised rules” (Janse van Rensburg, 2001:16). Connole (1993:83) argued that this paradigm also adheres to the view that reality is “multiple and divergent”; therefore, it is perceived differently by different people in the same social setting, hence the need to capture that reality through different methods and techniques.

The use of a mixed method approach served to address some of the limitations inherent in the interpretive paradigm. Since interpretivism emphasizes the ability of individuals to construct meaning, the role of the researcher is to “understand, and demystify reality through the eyes of different participants” (Cohen et al, 2007:19). This poses a problem in terms of the validity and reliability of the research findings. Focusing on the insider’s perspective may cause the researcher to neglect to acknowledge the influences of other factors on knowledge and

reality. For example, while the data suggests that the programme was positively impacting student learning, the graduation rates of the programme revealed a different picture. Therefore, the use of a mixed method approach made it possible to overcome the shortcomings presented by a mere focus on participants' interpretation of reality. This does not in any way suggest that the students' perceptions were wrong. Instead, it made it possible to undertake a holistic evaluation of the programme by focusing on multiple indicators of success. As such, it was noted that although the retention rates of the Extended Studies students were generally low, students did benefit a lot in that the Extended Studies lecturers assisted them in gaining epistemological access to the disciplines – which as interviews revealed, is not deliberately done by some lecturers on the mainstream.

In addition to this, interviewing mainstream lecturers (who may be viewed as outsiders to the Extended Studies community) served as a way of cross checking claims about the perceived effectiveness of the programme portrayed by agents (lecturers) in the programme. This was also useful in revealing the influence of outside forces on the programme (the level of integration and validity of the programme in the wider university), which are often unacknowledged when working in the interpretivist paradigm.

Working in the interpretivist paradigm involves emotion, which may result in a biased interpretation of reality due to the active involvement of the researcher. To overcome this, I spent a considerable amount of time in the field by collecting data at different phases over a one-year period. This made it possible for me to track changes and trends in student perceptions, particularly their attitude towards the programme. Additionally, the availability of data insights from various sources enabled me to adopt an objective stance in the data analysis process by bracketing my assumptions and allowing the data to inform my evaluation of the Extended Studies Programme.

5.2.2 The critical paradigm

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:31), the critical paradigm is an emerging paradigm in educational research, “entailing a view of what behaviour in a social democracy should entail” (Fay, cited in Cohen et al., 2011:31). Whilst sharing features of the interpretive paradigm, critical theory tends to promote the notion of social justice which is underpinned by the need to create a world which is “fairer, more equitable, more inclusive and harmonious” (Taylor, cited in Koul, 2008:2). Like the interpretive approach, it seeks to give an account of society and behaviour as well as understand situations and phenomena (Cohen

et al., 2007:31). It differs, however, from the interpretive paradigm in that it does the above with the intention to “emancipate the disempowered, to address inequality and to promote individual freedoms within a democratic society” (Cohen et al., 2011:31). The emancipatory interest in the critical paradigm requires and subsumes both hermeneutics and phenomenology but goes beyond them by focusing on emancipation (Habermas, cited in Cohen et al., 2011:32).

The ontological assumption in the critical paradigm is premised on the idea that “politics and interests shape multiple beliefs and values, as these beliefs and values are socially constructed, privileging some views of reality and under-representing others” (Cohen et al., 2011:33). Therefore, the task of the researcher is to “uncover the political interests at work in particular situations and to interrogate the legitimacy of those interests”. In this respect, the critical paradigm is intensely political and practical and this requires the researcher to not be “dispassionate, disinterested, and objective” (Morrison cited in Cohen et al., 2011:32). Additionally, the researcher and the researched are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the researcher inevitably influencing the enquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110). For this reason, Guba and Lincoln (1994:110) argued that the research findings are value-mediated.

Kinchloe (1991:26) also approved of the emancipatory principles in the critical approach, and focused on the relationship between the knower and the known (that is, the researcher and the research). Writing with specific reference to teacher researchers working in the critical paradigm, Kinchloe (1991:35) argued that research or social enquiry should seek to expose what constitutes reality for both the researcher and the participants in educational research. In making this claim, Kinchloe (1991:35) echoed the *verstehen* approaches of Weber which are premised on the view that reality is socially constructed. Moreover, Kinchloe (1991:35) cautioned that researchers should “see a socially-constructed world and ask what are the forces which construct actor consciousness, the ways of seeing of the actors who live in it”.

For Kinchloe (1991:35), the task of the researcher is to rethink and reconceptualize the questions that are asked about research. A central theme of these reconceptualised questions involves an inquiry into “whose constructions of reality prevail and whose ought to prevail” (Kinchloe, 1991:36). Kinchloe (1991:36) cautions that there is, therefore, a need to attempt to

construct a system of meaning on which to ground analysis of the questions being pursued rather than accepting unproblematic assumptions of mainstream research.

Unlike quantitative research techniques, qualitative research techniques provide a means of cross-checking assumptions or claims about reality. This is achieved through participatory research which gives the researcher access into real life situations. In my research (as will be noted in the section on data collection techniques), this involved classroom observation and interaction with the Extended Studies students. Classroom observation and interaction with students cleared up a lot of misconceptions I had about the students and these were based on the literature I had read about the types of students that are enrolled in similar programmes in South Africa to be specific.

The above ontological and epistemological assumptions had a number of implications for the methods used in the study. These are explained in the following sections.

5.3 Methodological considerations

As argued earlier on, the response given to the epistemological and ontological questions determine the responses to the methodological question which addresses issues concerning how researchers can go about finding out whatever they believe can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:108). According to Janesick (1998:37), any research design begins with the question “What do I want to know in this study?” The main research question in my study was “To what extent is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objectives when viewed from a transformation perspective?” This in turn raised other questions summarised below:

1. What is the Extended Studies Programme, when was it implemented, by whom and why?
2. Who is involved in the programme and why them?
3. What sort of teaching and learning takes place in the Extended Studies Programme?
4. What is the history of the students involved in the programme and how does that history shape their social and academic lives?
5. How do these students experience the university academically and socially?
6. How does the institution respond to their presence; in other words, how are they treated by those they interact with (lecturers and other students)?
7. How is the university structured to fit their needs?
8. Lastly, what kind of transformation was envisaged by introducing this programme?

9. Has that transformation been achieved?

Not only did the above questions inform the research paradigms applied in the study, but they also had implications for the specific techniques employed to generate data aimed at addressing the questions. The above questions necessitated the use of a qualitative case study. According to Yin (1993:31), “case studies are an appropriate research method when you are trying to attribute causal relationships – and not just wanting to explore or describe a situation”. In addition, they are used when phenomena under study (for example, a project or programme in an evaluation study) are not readily distinguishable from the context (Yin, 1993:3). Yin (1993:3) argued further that because the definition of this programme under study may be problematic with regards to where it started or ended, it becomes important to include the context as a major part of the study which then necessitates the use of multiple methods of data collection and evidence.

5.4 The method: Qualitative case study

The term ‘case study’ has been defined and used in a variety of ways by different writers. For this study, I adopted Gillham’s definition of a case study as “a unit of human activity embedded in the real world; which can only be studied or understood in context; which exists in the here and now; and which merges with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw” (2000:1). According to Denscombe (2002:39), “case studies focus on one (or just a few instances) of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance”. Yin (cited in Cohen et al., 2011:14) also made the point that since a case study is a study of a case in a context, the boundary line between the phenomenon and its context are blurred or ambiguous. Nevertheless, Stake (1994:237) argued that “boundedness and behaviour patterns of the system are key factors in understanding the case”. For example, certain features may be found within the system or within the boundaries of the case and other factors outside. For this reason, Stake (1994:237) pointed out that we cannot study the case without knowing about other cases.

The main benefit of using the case study approach is that it enables the researcher to explore relationships and social processes in ways that are otherwise impossible in quantitative approaches. Additionally, such an approach is “holistic rather than based on isolated factors”, hence it allows and encourages the use of multi methods “in order to capture the complex reality under scrutiny” (Denscombe, 2002:45). The use of multiple methods assisted in revealing the totality of the Extended Studies Programme and thus holistically reflected the

interrelationships between people, institutions, events, values and social structures. Such an all-encompassing method was considered appropriate seeing as the programme is not autonomous; it functions within processes and structures which require its analysis to be embedded in the social, historical, cultural and institutional context.

5.4.1 Case selection and case sampling

Yin (1993:8) pointed out that while the selection of a case is a difficult task, the elaboration of theoretical issues related to the objectives of the study can provide guidance. After carefully considering the literature on debates in the shifts in AD work and subsequent changes in foundation level provision, I made the choice to use Rhodes University as a case study. In this sense, Rhodes University was purposively selected for the reason that it is an Historically White University. This made for an interesting case because of the history of Historically White Universities (outlined in Chapter Two) and their place in an education system under transformation. The selection of Rhodes University was also conscious and deliberate on the basis of known attributes and distinctive features as well as its relevance to the practical problems and theoretical issues being researched (Denscombe, 2002:39). As a transforming institution, Rhodes University draws a wide range of students (both international and local) from different socio-economic backgrounds and thus offers an opportunity to explore the ways in which students with different kinds of cultural capital fit or do not fit in the education field, and how the university as a whole responds to these students.

Yin (1993:32) pointed out that once the case study has been selected, one needs to make a decision about the major unit of analysis. Yin (1999:32) argued further that the education sector offers a wide range of units of analysis which range from a) student to teacher, (b) a classroom or class, (c) a school, (d) a teaching practice, or (e) a curriculum. Interestingly enough, my unit of analysis included a combination of all the above mentioned units, which are combined and embedded within each other to form a programme or an embedded single case design (Yin, cited in Cohen et al., 2011:291). For Yin (1999:33), such a combination of multiple units requires different research questions to be asked as well as different instruments/data collection techniques for each unit of analysis.

Research participants were purposively selected. The case study targeted the 2012 first year class of Extended Studies students as well as former Extended Studies students enrolled in both undergraduate and postgraduate Humanities degrees. The Extended Studies Programme

is composed of two streams: the Politics and Sociology stream and the Anthropology and Journalism stream. The study also targeted academic staff in the departments mentioned, Extended Studies lecturers and academic development practitioners in the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning. The above participants were chosen for their direct involvement in the programme and, therefore, could best speak to the issues that were being addressed in the research.

Although I had the option of using an embedded multiple case design consisting of a Historically White University and a Historically Black University for comparative purposes, I decided to use an embedded single-case design consisting of one university. The reason for this had to do with issues of access and also the level of engagement with the subjects in the study given the ethnographic nature of the case study. Practical considerations also played a role in the selection of the single embedded case (Denscombe, 2002:41). Due to limitations in time and resources, it seemed reasonable to choose Rhodes University for its convenience to the researcher in terms of accessibility and fieldwork expenses.

5.5 Data collection

My study required me, firstly, to enquire about the historical background of the programme, which involved an investigation into the timing of its implementation, reasons for its implementation and also a general assessment of its shifts, successes and challenges. This was then followed by a general enquiry into its current functions and form. This involved answering questions about i) the criteria for enrolment in the programme as well as questions about the types of students who meet that criteria, ii) teaching and learning in the programme, and iii) students' perceptions of the programme and its effectiveness in preparing them for the rigours of higher education.

The complexity of the case study in terms of the various units of analysis necessitated a multi-method approach or triangulation of various research techniques. According to Cohen & Manion (2007:233), "triangular techniques attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data". This reduces bias and distortion of the researcher's picture of reality.

According to Greene (2007:100), "triangulation seeks convergence, corroboration, or correspondence of results from the different methods". According to Cohen and Manion (2007:234), triangulation is used in interpretive research to investigate different views of the

actor, and this naturally yields/produces different sets of data which should correspond with each other. Consequently, if the results from multi sources provide consistent or convergent information, confidence in inquiry inferences is increased (Greene, 2007:100). Similarly, Stake (2005:453-454) argued that the use of multiple methods reduces “the likelihood of misinterpretation”. Additionally, triangulation serves to clarify meaning by identifying different ways of seeing the case, hence the interest in people’s diverse perceptions and multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:454).

Although observation and participant observation are pre-eminent in case studies, they are not the only sources of data (Cohen et al., 2011:299). As such, data for this research was collected through the following methods: document analysis, classroom observation, written reflections and in-depth interviews. Table 5.1 below provides a summary of the empirical work and the phases in which it was undertaken.

Table 5.1 Summary of research activities and data collection techniques

Research phase and dates	Research activity	Research objectives
Phase One February 2012 - August 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analysis • Classroom observation • Written reflections • Interviews with former Extended Studies students: 2nd, 3rd and postgraduates students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a contextual case record of the programme. • Historical analysis of the emergence and shifts in AD work • Negotiating a research relationship • Establishing a relationship with the main group of students under study (ES class of 2012) • Seeking in-depth information on the experiences of former students, their perceptions of the programme and their transition and adjustment processes during their transition to higher education and mainstream.
Phase Two August 2012- October 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with first year Extended Studies students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking in-depth understanding of the first year ES students’ experiences of the university, their perceptions of the programme and transition and adjustment processes during the transition to higher education
Phase Three January – June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with academic staff: • Extended Studies lecturers • Mainstream lecturers • Teaching assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth follow up on emerging insights on student experiences of the programme and the university • Cross referencing and validating of emerging insights relating to the programme and reflections on teaching and learning on the mainstream • Generating rich data on the history and future of the programme
Phase Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with former 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to make meaningful claims

June – December 2013	Extended Studies students who dropped out, left or got excluded, interviews with academic development practitioners and the Dean of Humanities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up interviews • Data processing and analysis 	about those who dropped out and the reasons behind them doing so <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth follow up on emerging insights • Writing up
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5.6 Data collection methods

The data collection methods listed above will now be discussed in detail. It is worth noting that these methods were chosen because they:

- Allowed a naturalistic inquiry into the programme in that the researcher interacted directly with the people in the programme and was based in the context/ institution in which the programme was being offered. This made it possible for the researcher to understand the experiences of the researched by locating their interpretations of their reality and experiences in the institutional context (Kincheloe, 1991:144).
- The research methods chosen gave participants a voice and made it possible to “probe issues that lie beneath the surface” or “presenting behaviours and actions” (Cohen et al., 2011:219).
- Allowed extended interaction with the group under study, during which the researcher immersed herself in the learning and teaching processes in the programme. As a result, the holistic description of the programme and teaching and learning on the programme incorporated the views of both the group members and the researcher’s perceptions and interpretations of the group interaction and relationships. (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:31).
- As with *Verstehen* phenomenology, the research methods employed in the study provided access into meanings that the research subjects ascribed to their educational experiences and their place in the educational context (Kincheloe, 1991:147).
- Lastly, the methods provided access into the insider’s perspective by allowing respondents to express their perceptions about the programme.

5.6.1 Document analysis

Bowen (2009:27) defined document analysis as a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer based and internet-transmitted material)”. Like other methods in qualitative research, document analysis was undertaken in order to “elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge” (Bowen, 2009:27). McCulloch (2011:248) pointed out that document analysis specifically provides or

facilitates access into knowledge about the past, processes of change and continuity over time. It also provides knowledge about “the origins of the present that explains current structures, relationships and behaviours in the context of recent and longer term trends” (Mcculloch, 2011:248).

Document analysis was undertaken in a complementary fashion to provide the necessary institutional background for understanding the context within which the Extended Studies Programme was implemented as well as the context in which the research participants operated. Document analysis also provided historical insight into the emergence, shifts and developments in AD work in which the Extended Studies Programme is located. This also included the history of the Extended Studies Programme – that is, the conditions and debates around its emergence, and philosophies underpinning the different shifts in AD work and subsequent impact on the nature and form of foundation provision in general. Lastly, analysis of policy documents provided insight into the ways in which institutional arrangements were affected or driven by government policies.

The information obtained from the above-mentioned documents was particularly important for it guided the researcher in terms of the specific issues to explore in the field. For example, literature on early foundation programmes criticised the different perceptions about black students in Historically White Universities and how these perceptions subsequently influenced what was taught and how the students were taught. This for me raised questions about teaching approaches and students’ experiences of that teaching, and this led me to consider classroom observation as a data collection method. As will be noted later, this actually helped me to make sense of students’ experiences of teaching and learning on the Extended Studies Programme. Appendix 1 provides a summary of all the documents that were reviewed before the fieldwork commenced and the reasons for reviewing them.

5.6.2 Classroom observation

According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:134), observation is the second most popular form of collecting data in interpretive research. Werner & Schoepfle (cited in Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2011:467) defined the observation method as the “mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise” in that it seeks to make sense of social phenomena in their natural settings. Morris (cited in Adler & Adler, 1994:378) provided a much broader definition of observation and noted that it is the “act of noting a phenomenon, often with instruments, and recording it for scientific or other purposes”. Adler & Adler (1994:378) and Cohen et al.

(2011:456), however, both emphasised that observation is more than just looking or seeing. It also involves “looking (often systematically) and noting systematically (always people, events, behaviours, settings, artefacts, routines and so on)” (Marshall & Rossman cited in Cohen et al., 2011:456).

Observation was undertaken in this study in order to gain a more objective understanding of students’ experiences of the programme, particularly teaching and learning (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:46). This involved sitting in on Extended Studies classes (Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, Journalism, Computer Literacy and Academic Literacy) at different intervals throughout the year 2012. Classroom observation was necessary for my study because it prepared me for interviews with the first year Extended Studies students who were being observed during classes.

In the subsequent interviews with students, they generally reflected on the activities in class and their perceptions about learning and interaction in class. Since I gained some objective insight into these experiences through classroom observation, it made it easier to probe certain questions on learning and teaching in the Extended Studies Programme during in-depth interviews with both the students and Extended Studies lecturers. Additionally, classroom observation enabled me to make sense of and accurately interpret student reflections on teaching and learning in Extended Studies.

Data obtained from classroom observation was used to complement data gathered by other techniques and this greatly enhanced and enriched the database for my study (Simpson & Tuson, 2003). Foster (1996:12) made the point that “observational research can provide detailed information about aspects of school life which cannot be produced by other methods”. In particular, reference to teaching in Extended Studies (which like any other teaching practice is underpinned by certain assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes knowledge and perceptions about student learning) and a detailed record of the language and non-verbal communication used by lecturers and students in classroom interaction cannot be obtained from interviews or documents only. It can only be produced by observation (Foster, 1996:12). Whilst interviews provided one picture of the social reality – for example, student experiences and perceptions – classroom observation provided a more holistic understanding of student experiences and assisted with the interpretation of the experiences.

In a way, classroom observation also served as a way of negotiating the research relationship. According to Maxwell (1996:66), gaining access/negotiating entry/negotiating the research

relationship is necessary for a successful study. For this reason, I had to decide on the kind of relationship I would have with the research participants as this would have an impact on my ability to learn ethically the things I needed to learn in order to answer my research questions validly (Maxwell, 1996:66). Cohen et al. (2011:457) identified four relationships that can be assumed by researchers in observation. I assumed the ‘observer-as-participant’ kind of relationship in which the researcher, though not a member of the group, participates a little or peripherally in the group activities. Additionally, Cohen et al. (2011:457) noted that the role of the ‘observer-as-participant’ is clear and overt and is as unobtrusive as possible. In this sense, I made my intentions very clear from the first day by explaining a bit about my research and asking students for their consent. Students were asked to sign a consent form in order to approve my intention to interact with them, study them and later interview them.

This was important for the purposes of building trust. As time went by, I was accepted as a member of the class due to the frequent classroom observations and interaction with students. As a result, my conversations with the students extended beyond the lectures. For example, students would just walk up and explain what they were struggling with and how I could help. Although this made the research process a bit complex, careful attention was given to the issues discussed. I kept the conversations very casual and avoided digging deeper into student experiences before the actual planned time for the interview. The random conversations, though useful in understanding and knowing the students, were not recorded and were therefore not used as a source of data in the research. They only facilitated the establishment of trust between the researcher and the research subjects.

5.6.2.1 The classroom observation process and the researcher’s role

According to Adler and Adler (1994:380), the “research process evolves through a series of different activities as it progresses from start to finish”. Classroom observation was undertaken between February 2012 until August 2012 in order to allow the researcher to develop more intimate and informed relationships with the Extended Studies students. The Humanities Extended Studies class is split into two streams – the Sociology/Politics stream and the Journalism/Anthropology stream. These streams have different lecturers. I attended one of each once a week and a combined academic literacy class, which both streams attended together. Both lecturers taught the academic literacy classes.

Classroom observation necessitated direct contact with the subject(s) of observation (Adler & Adler, 1994:378). In this sense, the researcher/observer acts as the main instrument of data

collection and analysis, hence the need for reflexivity. A reflexive approach suggests, “That researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research, seeking to understand their part in, or influence on, the research” (Cohen, et al., 2011:225). In my study, reflexivity was achieved by identifying and mitigating the effects of my biases and prejudices in order to ensure the impartiality of my conclusions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:47). I had to play down my role as a researcher by becoming a member of the Extended Studies class. This made it possible for me to interpret observations and classroom interactions and attitudes from the perspectives of the group.

I adopted a less structured observation technique which enabled me to observe the students and the lecturer without necessarily looking for answers to specific questions. Ongoing behaviour was discerned as it occurred and appropriate notes were made about the salient features of the behaviour. Denzin (cited in Adler and Adler, 1994:380) suggested that “all observational notational records should contain explicit reference to participants, interactions, routines, rituals, temporal elements, interpretations and social organization”. In the early stages, my observational notes involved a combination of these features but this later shifted as I became more familiar with the classroom setting and grasped the key social group processes that were of relevance to my research (Adler & Adler, 1994:381). After each classroom observation, I would jot down questions emerging from the classroom observation and these later became the focus of future observations. Appendix 2 provides examples of extracts from my classroom observation notes.

After the first month, my observations became more focused as I started paying more attention to specific aspects of the classroom phenomena. These included reflections on the teaching and learning process, actual content covered during classes, student engagement with each other during group exercises and student responses to questions and their engagement with the lecturer. The research questions that emerged from classroom observations shaped subsequent field work investigations by progressively narrowing and directing the researcher’s attention to deeper aspects of the programme, such as the role of language, curriculum issues and the level of integration with mainstream courses.

According to Adler and Adler (1994:381), observational data gathering continues until a point where findings consistently replicate earlier ones. Towards the end of August, I felt that I had reached a saturation point as I was not learning anything new so I decided to stop the observations. One of the most crucial gains from undertaking classroom observation was that

it served as a way of cross-checking claims that were later made by students about the learning environment and what actually takes place in class. This provided me with the necessary background information for evaluating and investigating students' perceptions of teaching and learning in Extended Studies. As I gained in-depth insight into the programme, the research questions and problems that were being pursued were shifted a bit. This enabled me to investigate the programme more thoroughly. These shifts and emerging questions from observations subsequently informed the interviews with both Extended Studies students and Extended Studies lecturers.

5.6.3 Student written reflections

First year Extended Studies students completed student reflections. During classroom observations, students were asked to reflect on different aspects of their learning experiences, the university and their experiences during their transition to higher education. Although interviews have the potential to elicit such information, "the quality of the information obtained is dependent on the skill of the interviewer" since the way they ask questions and respond determines the nature of the relationship (Pepper & Wildy, 2009:18). It can be argued that written reflections help counteract some of the challenges that may come as a result of the researcher's role in an interview setting. Similarly to classroom observation, the reflections served as preliminary insight into the programme in terms of students' social and educational backgrounds, expectations and experiences of the university. Insights emerging from these reflections were subsequently explored in the interviews with students and academic staff.

Students completed three reflections in total, and the intent of each was focused through the use of a reflection template, developed specifically to scaffold students' reflection on their experiences of the Extended Studies Programme and the university. Specifically, the three narratives focused on three aspects of the learning process and were undertaken in the following order i) sociological perspective reflection in which students were asked to describe their lives from a sociological perspective in order to help the lecturer to get to know them better. This was undertaken by one of the two Extended Studies lecturers who personally offered to give this data to the researcher. The second reflection was on the transition to education. This reflection investigated the institutional culture and how it impacted on student experiences during their transition to higher education. Importantly, it also revealed the ways in which the students' cultural capital shaped their perceptions of the university, both as an academic and in terms of social space. The last reflection was an

assignment reflection in which students reflected on the writing process. Appendix 3 provides a summary of the questions asked in each reflection, the purpose of each reflection and the number of students that completed the reflections.

It is worth mentioning that these reflections were only completed by one class. The interviews with participants from the class that didn't complete the reflections, however, addressed the issues covered in the reflections in one way or another. Similar trends and experiences were observed. It is also worth noting that both the interviews and reflections were voluntary and students were not required to write down their names on the reflection template. Interestingly, most of the students wrote their names and this made it possible for me to cross check and compare claims in both the interview transcripts and the written reflections. Although reflections on the transition and essay writing were undertaken early in the year, I anticipated a possible shift in students' perceptions and interpretation of experiences. For this reason, the interviews with all the students also addressed issues to do with their writing and experiences of the university. These interviews were conducted later in the year. This was particularly important because it assisted in making sense of the various transition stages that occur in the first year of undergraduate studies.

5.6.4 In-depth interviews

As shown in Table 5.1, interviews were conducted in the four phases of data collection in order to elicit specific information from various respondents. Connell and Kahn (cited in Cohen et al., 2011:411) defined research interviews as “a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation”. According to Cohen et al. (2011:409), interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretation “of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view”. In this sense, the interview serves three distinctive purposes according to Cohen et al. (2011:411). First, it is “a principle means of gathering information” aimed at addressing research objectives (Cohen et al., 2011:411). Second, interviews are “used to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships” (Cohen et al., 2011:411). Thirdly, interviews may be combined with other methods in order to follow up on unpredicted/unclear results, to corroborate other methods, or “to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do” (Cohen et al., 2011:411).

The above reasons for conducting interviews informed my decision to use interviews. I had initially planned to combine focus groups with interviews but after going through the reflections, I decided to use interviews only. Data from student reflections indicated that the students came from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds, which would make it uncomfortable for some students to open up in a group context. Interviews as opposed to focus group discussions presented a safe space for students to talk freely about their experiences, and enabled me to thoroughly explore interesting themes emerging from the conversations with each research participant. Although Extended Studies students are perceived to be the same in terms of social and educational background, the reflections proved the contrary. Therefore, conducting focus groups would have made it difficult to establish or investigate these differences.

In many ways, data from document analysis, classroom observations and reflections guided the interviews with first year Extended Studies students. As illustrated in Table 5.2, interviews were conducted as well with various groups of participants with the aim of addressing the research questions and other linked questions emerging from prior data collection processes. A summary of the different participants and the reasons for interviewing them is provided in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Summary of interview participants and reasons for interviewing them

Participants	Number interviewed	Reasons
First year Extended Studies students	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with first year ES students were conducted between August and October 2012. These interviews were aimed at investigating the first year experience in terms of the transition to education, their experiences of the university and reflections on learning and the June exam. • These interviews also investigated the general assumptions in literature about the experiences and characteristics of students enrolled in foundation programmes. • The interviews were also a follow up on issues and questions emerging from classroom observation. The interviews provided the researcher with an opportunity to seek explanations for students' reflections of their transition to higher education, writing experiences and their perceptions of learning in higher education.
First year mainstream students	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These students were not initially part of the research. However, due to the general claims about mainstream students I decided to interview a few students to explore some of the issues that had been raised by ES students. Students were randomly selected.
Former ES students (2nd, 3rd, 4th and postgraduates)	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the above, these interviews particularly focused on the transition to the mainstream given the fact that ES is offered only at first year level. • The interviews investigated the adjustment processes of the

		students as well as their coping mechanisms. The aim in exploring these questions was to determine the extent to which the first year of ES prepared students to survive on their own in the mainstream.
Extended Studies students drop outs	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone interviews were conducted with former Extended Studies students who dropped out after the first year of Extended Studies. These interviews investigated students' reasons for leaving the university and their experiences during their time at the university.
Extended Studies lecturers	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with ES lecturers were aimed at investigating aspects of the programme that related to the aims of the programme, perceptions of the students they teach, interpretations of the philosophies underpinning the teaching approaches in the programme and, lastly, the challenges and perceived impact of the programme. • These interviews also investigated the historical background of the programme
Mainstream lecturers in the departments that offer the ES programme	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with first year lecturers focused on their perceptions of the students they teach (both mainstream and Extended Studies students) as well as their perceptions of the impact of Extended Studies programme.
First year teaching assistants in the departments that offer Extended Studies	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching assistants were not initially going to be interviewed. However, their role kept coming up in the interviews with mainstream lecturers and Extended Studies students. • Teaching assistants chosen for the study worked as academic mentors to first year students (both mainstream and Extended Studies). They were interviewed primarily in order to provide more insight into the general challenges faced by first year students and their role in helping students to cope academically.
Dean of teaching and learning (Director of CHERTL)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with the Dean of Teaching and Learning aimed to elicit information on the general history of AD at Rhodes University, perceptions about students in Extended Studies, the role of the Extended Studies Programme in the integration of a wider range of students into the academic and social fabric of the university. • This interview also focused on the future of the programme and institutional plans for support of struggling students.
Dean of Humanities	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This interview reflected on issues emerging from the above interviews. It specifically focused on issues concerning the criteria for ES, its perceived impact, its place in the universities and its future.

The above participants were chosen as key participants in the study for they were in the best position to provide knowledge, opinions and insights regarding the research questions. Although this process was time consuming, it yielded significant amounts of information from each individual's perspective. The interviews were semi-structured which allowed the

researcher to ask “predetermined but flexibly worded questions” and follow up questions “designed to probe more deeply issues of interest to interviewees” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:40).

In this manner, the interview participants were in a position to openly and freely respond to the questions. In some cases, they would ask to talk about issues which they felt were related to the issues or questions that were being asked. This flexibility provided greater insights into the programme under study. A case in point were the interviews with first year Extended Studies students. Whilst responding to the questions about the transition process, they tended to compare themselves to mainstream students or comment on teaching in the mainstream. This raised interesting questions about the experiences of first year students in general, and teaching in the mainstream. This led me to enquire into these issues with the intention to validate some of the claims made by the students. I decided to interview first year mainstream lecturers, a few first year mainstream students and two first year mainstream teaching assistants in order to gain more insight into mainstream issues raised by the Extended Studies students.

5.6.4.1 Reflections on interviewing procedures and processes

In compliance with the ethical requirements, which are discussed in detail in a different section, consent was obtained from the interviewees to proceed with the interviews. Prior to that, letters of invitation to participate in the study were sent to each individual participant and these clearly specified the purpose of the study, the purpose of the interview, the approximate amount of time needed for the interview as well as issues of confidentiality. These issues were reiterated on the day of the actual interview and both the interviewer and interviewee signed a consent form, which also specified the above conditions (See Appendix 4 for samples of the consent forms).

The focus of the interviews varied from one group of participants to another and so did the relationships of power between the interviewer and interviewees. According to Cohen et al. (2011:421), the interview is “a social, interpersonal encounter, not merely a data collection exercise”, which suggests that it “follows an unwritten script for interactions” and therefore the rules only surface when they are transgressed. As such, Kvale (cited in Cohen et al., 2011:422) suggested that the goal of the interviewer as a research instrument is to establish an appropriate atmosphere such that participants can talk freely. In my research, this was mostly important in my interviews with Extended Studies students who were in a sense

vulnerable given their awareness of the ways in which they are perceived in the institution in general.

There was, therefore, a need to establish and maintain a good rapport with the interviewees. Beyond being “clear, polite, non-threatening, friendly and personable” as suggested by Cohen et al. (2011:422), there was also a need to empower the students who seemed uncomfortable talking about their experiences. This empowerment was achieved by allowing the students to share their experiences without any interruptions and giving them the freedom to skip the questions with which they were not comfortable. Furthermore, I created an atmosphere in which the participants could, in a way, determine the direction of the conversation. This was risky but it assisted in eliciting what the participants considered the most relevant aspects of their experiences and perceptions.

Cohen et al. (2011:422) noted the importance of considering the dynamics of the interview situation, such as keeping the conversation going, motivating the participants to discuss their thoughts, feelings and experiences as well as the asymmetries of power in the interview. Although probing is an important part of this process in that “it stimulates an informant to produce more information” according to de Laine (2000:79), this was not really necessary in the case of interviews with first year students since rapport had already been established during the seven months of classroom observation. Students generally opened up and, in some cases, with partial biographies and accounts of difficult moments, hopes, dreams and sufferings. Some of these conversations even continued after the interviews during random encounters on campus. This became an ethical issue in terms of what to consider as data. I then decided to only consider data, which had been collected during planned field work processes.

The interviews were recorded with an audio recorder and consent was obtained from each participant. According to Brenner (2006:365), recording “allows an interviewer to focus on the conversation with an informant and carries a more complete record of the informant’s actual words”. The interviews were later transcribed for data analysis purposes. Although the actual interviews were recorded, I was taking notes during the process and these included details about the context and body language as well as emerging directions that warranted further questions (Brenner, 2006:365). In most cases, these emerging questions were then included in the interview schedules for interviews with subsequent research participants. I kept a field work journal for the interviewing process in which I integrated the field notes and

my general reflections of the interviews. The interview journal notes on each participant were later combined with the interview transcription and analysed together. See Appendix 5 for an example of an interview journal extract.

5.7 Data processing and data analysis

For Litchman (2010:122), data analysis is about process and interpretation. Data analysis happened simultaneously with data collection. As such, data obtained from each phase influenced data collection in subsequent data collection phases. For instance, experiences and observations during classroom observations raised questions about teaching and learning and these questions were further explored in in-depth interviews with students and Extended Studies lecturers. Data and field notes from classroom observations, in-depth interviews and personal reflections were processed and captured into Nvivo – qualitative data analysis software. Given the large amounts of data collected, Nvivo enabled the analysis of the data in a more manageable and organised manner. Specifically, Nvivo was used for the storage of the transcribed data and coding of data, which allowed the researcher to classify the data into themes. It also provided the researcher with flexible tools to find frequently occurring words, concepts or experiences.

The findings of the research were analysed within the overarching theoretical frameworks of Amartya Sen and Pierre Bourdieu. Arguments by these theorists were further complemented by ideas from other scholars in the education field and these include bell hooks and Paulo Freire, to mention a few. I drew on Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis to understand the impact of social and educational background on students' transition and experiences in higher education. Amartya Sen's capability approach and bell hooks' ideas about education as freedom were used to evaluate and understand the Extended Studies Programme as an access initiative and student experiences of teaching and learning, as well as academic staff views on teaching in the university and on the Extended Studies Programme.

One important aspect of the analysis process is the researcher's role of interpreting the data collected. Litchman (2010:121) argued that researchers are "not static humans who maintain an aloof posture" in social enquiry. Instead, they shape ideas through their senses. Litchman (2010:121) argued further that researchers constantly adapt and modify their position with regard to the research topic, the manner in which the questions are formulated and the interpretations given to the data (Litchman, 2010:121). For this reason and in line with Bourdieu's emphasis on reflexivity, I had to self examine myself in order to see how my own

views affected the research process. In line with the reflexive stance suggestion by Ahern (cited in Litchman, 2010:121), I kept myself in check by using a research journal during field work in which I reflected on my assumptions and clarified my belief systems. These journals were particularly helpful in the data analysis phase for they helped me to make sense of my assumptions and the actual data obtained. Self-reflection also helped me to sort through my biases especially with regard to the interpretation of meanings.

5.8 Ensuring reliability, validity and generalizability of research findings

The meaning of 'reliability' and 'validity' differ in quantitative and qualitative research. In qualitative research, reliability can be regarded as "a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched" (Cohen et al., 2007:149). Some authors prefer to replace reliability with terms such as 'credibility', 'neutrality', 'confirmability', 'trustworthiness', and 'transferability' (Cohen et al., 2007:148). According to Cohen et al. (2011:180), validity in qualitative research is guided by principles such as :

- i) The natural setting is the principal source of data
- ii) Context-boundedness and thick descriptions
- iii) Data is socially situated, and socially and culturally saturates
- iv) The data is descriptive
- v) Data is analysed inductively rather than using prior categories
- vi) Catching meaning and intention are essential

In this sense, validity is thus a matter of degree rather than an absolute state. For this reason, threats to both validity and reliability can never be erased completely. Instead, the effects of their threats can be reduced by paying attention to validity and reliability throughout the research process (Cohen et al., 2007:133).

Cohen et al. (2007:134) suggested the need to locate discussions of validity within a research paradigm adopted for the study. An interpretive approach to research focuses on the meaning that people make of their reality. The use of a case study enabled the different realities to be investigated through data triangulation (Janesick, 1994:214). According to Tobin & Begley (2004:393), triangulation offers completeness to the study in that "it allows for recognition of multiple realities" and this enlarges the landscape of enquiry and offers a "deeper and more comprehensive picture".

Denzin (1994:214-215) extended the above view of triangulation to take in several types which were included in this study. The first one is time triangulation which “takes into consideration the factors of change and process by utilizing longitudinal designs”. In my study, this form of triangulation was particularly relevant for capturing student experiences of the Extended Studies Programme. As such, not only were various methods used to gain insight into these experiences and perceptions, but also these methods were employed in different phases. This was particularly useful in that I was able to identify and make sense of the change in perceptions and experiences as well as the ways in which those changes were interpreted by students. Data collection in different phases meant prolonged field experience which allowed the opportunity to cross-check claims made by students in various phases of the data collection.

Another relevant type of triangulation achieved in the study is theoretical triangulation. According to Cohen et al. (2007:142), “this type draws upon alternative and competing theories in preference to utilizing one view point only”. In my research, Bourdieu and Sen’s theoretical frameworks were complemented with other sub theories, for example the works of hooks and Freire. This was done in order to provide a more holistic understanding and evaluation of teaching and learning on the Extended Studies Programme. In a way, each theoretical framework addressed the weaknesses of the other whilst complementing them in other ways as well.³⁸

Lastly, the study used combined levels of triangulation in which various levels of analysis were used to evaluate the programme (Cohen et al., 2007:142). Instead of only focusing on the experiences and perceptions of those directly involved in the Extended Studies Programme (Extended Studies lecturers and students, for example), other sources were consulted. This was achieved by taking into consideration the relationship between the programme and the institution (how it is perceived, how it is integrated into the institution and the impact of these relationships on its effectiveness and functioning). Additionally, the relationships between the Extended Studies students and mainstream students, as well as mainstream teaching and teaching on Extended Studies were also investigated. In summary, the study involved three levels of analysis and these are: group analysis (classroom observation), institutional analysis through interviews with mainstream academic staff and

³⁸ See Section 4.2.2 for a discussion on the benefits of integrating Bourdieu and Sen’s theoretical concepts.

relevant institutional authorities and, lastly, individual level analysis achieved through in-depth interviews with lecturers and students.

5.9 Ethical considerations

According to Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999: 65), ethical research planning is aimed at protecting the welfare and rights of research participants. Litchman (2010:54) summarised the principles of ethical conduct as i) do no harm, ii) privacy, iii) anonymity and confidentiality and iv) informed consent. Although the principle 'do no harm' is often applied in research which involves drugs and treatment which may be physically harmful to participants, it was applied in my study to avoid emotional and psychological harm. Given the fact that the Extended Studies Programme draws students with complex histories, I had to be careful in terms of issues explored during the interviews. For example, I avoided discussing sensitive topics like social background. Instead, I asked indirect questions in which students had the choice to reveal specific information or withhold some information. In cases where students revealed personal details, I always asked them whether they were comfortable with having the interview recorded or not. As mentioned earlier, in some instances, I switched off the recorder and just listened.

Secondly, all research participants were guaranteed confidentiality except for cases where individuals consented to be quoted in their professional capacity. Due to the nature of the study, the identity of the institution was revealed since documents used to understand the institution as a case study would inevitably expose the identity of the institution. For this reason, permission had to be sought from the Dean of Humanities to undertake the research on students in the Humanities Faculty. Authorisation was also given by the Higher Degrees Committee.

In the interest of informed consent, all the research participants were given the full details of the study before they agreed to participate in the study. They were also assured that they could willingly withdraw from the research if they wished to do so. The Extended Studies students were invited to participate in the study by signing a consent form for the purposes of classroom observation. For the interviews, they also signed a consent form in which they agreed to the interview conditions such as the recording of the interview and the use of the interview transcription in the final research output.

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY: THE RHODES UNIVERSITY EXTENDED STUDIES PROGRAMME

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is underpinned by Bourdieu's field concept, which necessitates a mapping of fields in order to understand their structure and the position and relationships of agents in that particular field. As will be illustrated in the Rhodes University case study, the Extended Studies Programme is a field in its own rights in that it is governed by internal mechanisms that are specific, recognisable and valued within its boundaries. In this sense, it holds some degree of autonomy from other fields – the broader university/mainstream in this case, yet at the same time operating within its boundaries.

Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:104-105) suggested that attempts at studying a field should involve the following: i) analysing the position of the field, ii) mapping out the “objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions” and, lastly, analyzing the habitus of agents. Implied in this is ‘relational thinking’ in the analysis of fields, which takes into account not only the structural features of the field but also the objective relations of power between agents operating in that field (Bourdieu, 1992:97).

This chapter reports on the Rhodes University Extended Studies Programme and addresses the first research objective:

- Critically analyse the provision of Extended Studies, the structure and assumptions behind their development and implementation, with a view to understanding their impact on teaching and learning in a transforming Historically White University.

Chapter Three outlined the various models and approaches to student support in terms of their academic development history in South Africa. These student support models are argued in this thesis to fall within the broad scope of foundation provisioning as suggested by McKenna (2012:51). According to McKenna (2012:51), their development was underpinned by “a particular understanding of student learning and the university's practices of knowledge construction”. Broadly speaking, the different models of foundation provisioning evolved from “add-on skills or language courses, one year bridging courses to fully integrate extended curricula” (McKenna, 2012:54).

Although the focus in this chapter is on the current Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes University, an analysis of its emergence will be embedded in the shifts and modifications to its precursor programmes. To address the above objective, I used data from interviews with the Extended Studies staff, the Dean of Humanities, the Dean of Teaching and Learning and academic staff in departments that offer Extended Studies. In addition to this, I also gathered information from Extended Studies course hand-outs, annual reviews of the precursor programmes, conference proceedings and journal articles on the different models of foundation provisioning implemented at Rhodes University. Pseudonyms were used for Extended Studies lecturers, mainstream lecturers and all students. The two Deans cited in this chapter will be referred to by their real names. This chapter is particularly important in that it brings to light not only the functions and structure of the programme, but also the shifts in the conceptualisation of disadvantage at Rhodes University. Moreover, the chapter also provides the necessary background for assessing the extent to which the programme is achieving its objectives as a transformation initiative.

6.2 Historical background of the Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes University

Bourdieu's conception of fields as 'spaces of play' "in which agents struggle, depending on the position they occupy in that space, either to change or to preserve its boundaries and form" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:17) suggests that fields have historical trajectories that shape the nature of games between agents at any given time. These struggles also determine the degree of their autonomy. Bourdieu's conception of fields makes it imperative to historically locate the emergence of the current Extended Studies Programme in order to get insight into the species of capital that operated in the field before it took its current form, and the structural relations between agents. As Bourdieu insisted:

“...We cannot grasp the dynamics of field...without a historical, that is, a genetic, analysis of its constitution of the tensions that exist between positions in it, as well as between this field and other fields, and especially the field of power” (Bourdieu cited in Webb et al., 2002:52).

Foundation provisioning at Rhodes University followed the thinking in the three models of foundation programmes identified in Chapter Three. As such, it evolved from separate add on courses to more integrated foundation structures in the form of an 'extended curriculum' (Reynolds, 2008:82). Specifically, the foundation programmes first emerged in the form of Academic Support Programmes, which were later renamed as Academic Skills Programmes (AD Evaluation Report, 1996:3). In line with the broader shifts in academic development thinking about student support, the programme changed to the Academic Development

Programme (ADP), which later incorporated English Language for Academic Purposes (ELAP) – a credit-bearing course. In 2004 another shift to integrated programmes occurred, and in 2005 foundation provisioning in the Humanities Faculty took its current form (Reynolds, 2008:83).

The critical debates in the first two phases of academic development work in South Africa and subsequent foundation provisioning in those phases were outlined in Chapter Three. Some work on foundation provisioning during the first two phases was also undertaken at Rhodes University by academic staff and students working in the programmes at the time.³⁹ The aim of this present work is to build on the above-cited contributions as well as contribute to on-going debates on foundation provisioning. This was achieved by critically evaluating the Rhodes Extended Studies Programme within the changes and shifts that have taken place in AD thinking about student support in general. Such an approach inevitably locates the analysis of the Extended Studies Programme in the history of the old models. Where appropriate, reference will be made to Academic Support Programmes and Academic Development Programmes. A brief historical background of ASPs and ADPs will now be provided and this is followed by a more comprehensive discussion of the Rhodes Humanities Extended Studies Programme.

6.3 The Rhodes Academic Skills Programme (ASP) 1982- 1993

Drewett (1993) provided a comprehensive chronological discussion of the emergence and evolution of the Rhodes Academic Support Programme. According to Drewett (1993:72), Rhodes generally lagged behind other liberal universities in the move towards the introduction of ASPs. The establishment of the Rhodes ASP in 1982 was a result of several years of deliberation “brought about by the plight of academically ‘at risk’ students at the university” (Drewett, 1993:72). On their inception in 1982, ASPs were formalised with the initial aim of “...improving the quality and quantity of graduates who belong to the so-called Black, Coloured and Indian groups” (Walters, as cited in Drewett, 1993:75). These groups of students were a minority in the numerical sense and were often portrayed as disadvantaged and lagging behind “in terms of academic background, skills and exposure to kinds of experiences enjoyed by more advantaged fellow students” (Nelson and Vorster, 1993:20). In addition, it was believed that although these students brought a “wealth of social and cultural

³⁹ See Drewett 1993; Jefferay 1993; Tisani & Davies 1994; Dison & Rosenberg 1995; Dison, Quinn, Nelson, & Collett 1996; Quinn 1999; Reynolds 2008.

knowledge to their environment”, this knowledge was, unfortunately, not recognised as valid knowledge (Nelson & Vorster, 1993:20).

Unlike other universities that established the programme specifically for black students coming from poor education backgrounds, the Rhodes University programme was open to all students (Drewett, 1993:93). In fact, it was reported that 54.4% of ASP attenders in 1986 were white students, which indicated that inadequate schooling prior to entering university was not a black only problem (Drewett, 1993:93). Jefferay (1993:6) argued, nevertheless, that although the university acknowledged the fact that under-preparedness was not a non-white only problem, the support structures (e.g. support tutorials and language courses) at Rhodes University were designed with English second language students in mind.

The Academic Skills Programme provided support tutorials “in the Arts, Social Sciences, Law and Commerce Faculties” (Jefferay, 1993:6). The English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course was integrated into the support tutorials. EAP was underpinned by a skills discourse, which assumes that literacy skills are automatically transferable. As such, the ASP tutorials were offered separately from the institutional discipline structures (ASP Annual Report, 1989:1). Specifically, students attended one ASP tutorial per week in any of the subjects they felt they needed help. These tutorials were aimed at imparting “a range of general study skills, communicative and language skills, and effective approaches to university life so as to develop confident and independent learners” (ASP Annual Report, 1989:1). The support tutorials also covered “listening, note-making, reading, research, essay writing and exam skills” (Jefferay, 1993:6).

As highlighted in Section 3.2.3, this approach to student support was inefficient in addressing discipline specific problems. According to Reynolds (1997:36), courses offered under the Academic Skills Programme were inefficient in addressing student disciplinary needs as they taught skills in isolation from the disciplines. A study conducted by Sutton (1992) on ‘attitudes and perceptions of the problems encountered by English second language speakers’ also revealed the problems of separating knowledge and content. The results of the study suggested that leaving the responsibility of language skills to ASPs would actually increase the problem, since it was considered “too vast an area to be dealt with successfully in isolation and without support from departments” (Sutton, 1992:13).

Although students generally appreciated the support they got from ASPs, they also indicated some level of dissatisfaction with the fact that the support structures at that time had nothing

to do with content covered in class (Drewett, 1993:78). A study conducted by Becker and Mqingwana (1983) on the experiences of black undergraduate students at Rhodes University highlighted the need for integrated approaches which introduce students to ways of writing and thinking within a discipline as opposed to mere language and study skills.

The study conducted by Sutton (1992) also suggested the need to introduce students to what McKenna (2012:51) refers to as the “discipline-specific ways of knowing found in the university”. Examples of these “discipline specific ways of knowing” identified by Sutton include subject specific language which needed to be learnt by all students and critical thinking reflected by the ability to formulate and motivate one’s individual opinion (Sutton, 1992:15). For Sutton (1992:18), this could only be achieved through the successful integration of the ASP into department structures, which would then enable ASP staff and mainstream lecturers at Rhodes University to work together.

Towards the end of 1988, steps were taken to achieve the desired integration of the ASP with departments and with staff development (Carter, 1990). An ASP liaison person was appointed in each department in order to improve communication between departments and the ASP (Carter, 1990:10). An ASP tutor was also appointed in the Students Advisor’s office on a quarter-time basis to assist students with course- related issues such as course selection and general academic advice (ASP Annual Report, 1989:3). Another new initiative in 1989 was the introduction of the university wide skills modules designed to support students from departments that did not offer ASPs (ASP Annual Report, 1989:3). In addition to this, the focus in tutoring changed from a mere focus on skills to a focus on content. Consequently, tutor training between 1991 and 1992 emphasised the need for tutors to facilitate the acquisition of academic skills through content (Tisani & Davies, 1994:33).

The debates about integration highlighted above grew out of dissatisfaction with the ineffectiveness of ASPs in addressing the challenges faced by under-prepared students (Tisani & Davies, 1994:33). In light of these debates and criticisms, it can be argued that the implementation of ASPs facilitated the institutional learning process, which enabled the institutions to better understand the nature of educational disadvantage. Drewett (1993:84) pointed out that the “most significant lesson which was learnt in the formative years of ASPs at Rhodes University was that of understanding the nature of the problem which was being confronted”. Although he was specifically referring to the years 1982-1984 (the formative years), this perhaps applies to the entire duration of the programme.

6.4 Academic Development Programmes (ADPs), 1993-2003

According to the Evaluation Report of the Academic Development Programme (1996:1), the Rhodes ADP was implemented in 1993 following an evaluation of the ASP by a review committee. The shift to the ADP can be attributed to the critique of ASPs highlighted above. Of particular relevance to the shift to ADP in general was the problem inherent in approaches like ASPs, which augmented the curriculum with tutorials, thereby assuming that the curriculum was unproblematic (McKenna, 2012:55). This implied as well that “the student had to adjust to the institution, which could remain unchanged” (Dison, Quinn, Nelson & Collett, 1996:28). According to Dison et al., (1996:28), “the adoption of the term ‘academic development’ was based on the understanding of the need for institutional change, as well as commitment to staff and student development”. The institutional change envisaged was at the level of the curriculum. As such, Drewett (1995:141) pointed out that the integration of academic skills and content was gradually accepted as the most effective way of dealing with student difficulties. Academic development was consequently introduced with a broader scope of integrating student support and the professional development of the teaching staff (Tisani & Davies, 1994:34).

Although the shift only took place in 1993, Drewett (1993:2) pointed out that conversations about integration actually started in the late 1980s. The delay in implementing integration was largely a result of financial constraints, and this was partly resolved through the provision of soft funding by the Independent Development Trusts (IDT) (Drewett, 1993:2). The mission of the ADP at Rhodes University was “to ensure that all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have a realistic chance of success in the programmes” to which they were admitted to (ADP Annual Report, 1993:1). As such, ADP aimed to influence “the university’s policies, curriculum, teaching methods, and student support systems in response to changing needs in the university and the wider community” (ADP Annual Report, 1993:1). The major steps that were taken because of the shift to ADP involved the placement of full time ADP lecturers in key departments. The aim in doing this was to integrate academic development into mainstream teaching. In the Social Sciences, the group of ADP lecturers in the departments of English, Sociology and Law, the teaching assistants in the departments of Psychology, Journalism and Linguistics, and the English Language development staff met regularly to discuss their experiences and develop approaches in academic development (ADP Annual Report, 1993:4).

Apart from assisting students, this group of lecturers was also involved in the planning and presentation of tutorial programmes in departments (Tisani & Davies, 1994:34). As a result, the tutorial system became “the cornerstone of the initiatives taken in departments” where integration was being followed (Tisani & Davies, 1994:34). Tutor training also took an integrative approach which aimed to assist tutors to identify key skills necessary for the specific disciplines they were tutoring and ways of incorporating those skills when designing tutorials (Tisani & Davies, 1994:34). Nevertheless, in spite all these changes, ADP instruction, like ASP instruction, remained peripheral since “students attended ADP sessions in their own time in addition to course requirements” (Drewett, 1995:142). According to Nelson and Vorster (1993:18), ADP continued to be considered as a “quick fix” solution to addressing student academic problems.

The introduction of ELAP (English Language for Academic Purposes) – an accredited foundation programme was an effort towards more integrated ways of dealing with student under-preparedness (Dison & Rosenberg, 1995:2). ELAP was a year-long credit course which served as a substitute for a normal first year credit (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:7). It was located and run by the department of English Language and Linguistics (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:7). According to Dison (1997:1), the introduction of ELAP in 1994 was an attempt to move beyond seeing the needs of students as purely “second language problems” and focusing more on academic literacy.

At Rhodes University, English language development informed by academic literacy meant that students were “required to conform to a set of cultural understandings or “rules and conventions” broadly shared by academics”, and which defined what could be “broadly constructed as knowledge” (Dison et al., 1996:29). As such, ELAP aimed to “make explicit the general skills required in academic reading and writing, and to teach them in a systematic, scaffolded way” (Dison et al., 1996:29). Dison, Alferts, & Wendelaar (1999:30) also noted that ELAP introduced students to “the ways of thinking required by the university”. According to Dison & Rosenberg (1995:2), these ways of thinking “are rarely addressed directly in exchanges between academics and students and remain covert, to be absorbed through a process of osmosis by students”. In this respect, Dison and Rosenberg (1995:2) argued that the development of academic literacy was crucial for both first and second language English speakers.

ELAP was carefully structured, staggered in a way and carefully taught (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). Students attended two mainstream courses and ELAP. The aim of ELAP was to improve the academic literacy of students whose language and educational histories inhibited their acquisition of academic literacy (Quinn, 1999:3). The course mainly focused on developing students' writing. ELAP was based "on an understanding of writing as a process" which was seen as "consisting of a number of steps including some form of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and final drafting" (Quinn, 1999:11). Research by Quinn (1999:113) on the drafting responding process suggests that although the drafting process helped improve student writing, it would have been more effective if it had been used by experts in all disciplines to help students to acquire the literacies they needed to cope with their academic tasks.

Furthermore, ELAP did not keep up with the fact that students were doing two other mainstream courses. For example, students would learn about academic reading, writing and referencing in the first term, but they would only write a properly referenced essay for ELAP in the third term. At the same time, they needed to do assignments for the mainstream course they were doing alongside ELAP (Author's Interview with Denise, 2013).

Another issue was the actual content used to develop academic literacy. Although ELAP integrated skills with content, this content was not always discipline-specific since it was a general course attended by students from all faculties. As such, Dison et al. (1999:28) claimed that it was sometimes difficult to select relevant content for all students. With reference to the problem of transfer highlighted above, Boughey (2009:3) argued that ELAP could be classed as a stand alone course since the "assumptions on which it was based could be challenged by contemporary understandings of student language/literacy related needs and by theories which contest the idea that language and literacy can be developed outside the discipline". It can also be argued that ELAP was based on a deficit conception of student educational disadvantage in that it sought to fill in perceived gaps in the student's abilities. Hence, English second language speakers deemed to be 'at risk' were required to enrol for ELAP as a condition for admission (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:7).

Dison, Quinn, Nelson, & Collett (1996:29) argued that curricula needed to be shaped in a way that facilitated the development of necessary abilities while at the same time making explicit the language, methods and approaches of the discipline. Since academic discourse differs from one discipline to another, it was argued that it could only be taught by those

immersed in the disciplines (Dison et al, 1996:29). The above authors seemed to suggest that the success of ELAP lay in its ownership by the departments. They argued that there were limitations to what ELAP could achieve in isolation since it was separately funded and not fully owned by the departments (Dison et al, 1996:29). It is in the context of these criticism that recommendations were made as early as 1996 for subject specific AD programmes which could be incorporated into faculty structures (AD Evaluation Report,1996:17). This basic structure of the humanities foundation programme remained the same until 2003 (Reynolds, 2008:83).

The shift from ASPs to ADPs – expressed in changing conceptions about disadvantage and debates about ways of addressing it – is indicative of the ability of agents to change or transform the rules of the game. At the same time, the constraints posed by financial factors in terms of the shift in thinking and actual implementation of academic development practices confirms Sen’s (1999:xiii) claim that “the freedom of agency that we individually have is inescapably qualified and constrained by the social, political, and economic opportunities that are available to us”.

Although Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992:19) acknowledged the role of structural constraints on agency, they appeared to limit these constraints to the structural features of the field. Hence, Bourdieu (1993:72) argues for the relative autonomy of fields from other fields like politics and economics. While structural features in institutions played a role in slowing down the process of integration – for example the resistance to integration of programmes by mainstream academics within institutions– , structural features external to institutions (the provision of finances by donors or the Department of Education) legitimated the continued existence of teaching practices underpinned by deficit assumptions. The impact of forces external to sub-fields like the Extended Studies Programmes is significant in highlighting the fact that institutional change is not only dependent on field specific factors but also conditions in the wider society.

6.5 The Extended Studies Programme (ESP) 2004 – present

Extended Studies Programmes were introduced in various institutions following the provision of funding by the Department of Education which made it possible to support more integrated work (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:3). Debates about integration seem to suggest that the unavailability of sufficient funding delayed the introduction of integrated programmes. Another consequence of the financial constraints was the “instability of the profession due to

contractual employment conditions” (Jairam, 1996:85). It is worth noting in this regard that conversations about funding/redress funding for integrated programmes started as early as the late 90s, and this was reflected in a number of policy documents (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013).

In 1996, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was established to advise the government on issues concerning the restructuring of higher education and it indicated the need for a shift in AD work. This suggestion was premised on the recognition of the ineffectiveness of add-on approaches in a context with increasing enrolments of under-prepared students (Jairam, 1996:85). The impact of financial constraints on these add-on programmes or any efforts to integrate AD approaches into the mainstream was again acknowledged by the task team (Jairam, 1996:85).

Following the recommendations by NCHE, various funding proposals were made. Of particular relevance to this study was the proposal for earmarked academic development funds aimed “at assisting historically disadvantaged students in overcoming the educational deficiencies at the primary and secondary level of such students” (Jairam, 1996:130). The need for integration of AD work into mainstream work as well as the funding of such initiatives was also highlighted in the Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation (DoE, 1996) and the White Paper (1997). Scott (2009:27) noted that, although the coverage of AD issues in the White Paper of 1997 was brief, “it critically included a commitment to funding AD intervention – particularly foundational provision within ‘extended curriculum programmes’ – as ‘integral elements of a higher education system committed to redress and to improving the quality of learning and teaching’”.

Since earlier efforts to achieve integration in AD programmes through funding from IDT had not achieved any measurable impact on the entire education system, a reference group was convened in 1999 to discuss ways in which anticipated funding could be effectively utilized for redress purposes (Boughey, 2009:1). The current Rhodes University Dean of Teaching and Learning, Professor Chrissy Boughey, was invited to be part of this task team. The reference group argued for the anticipated funding to be used towards extended programmes with an integrated foundation phase (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013). When the first tranche of funding became available in 2000, the programmes at Rhodes University did not meet the criteria of ‘extended programmes’ proposed by the reference group, hence it only

received R400 000 for an ELAP foundation course in the Humanities Faculty (Boughey, 2009:2).

By the time calls were made for the second round of funding in 2004, efforts had been made by Helen Alferts – coordinator of the ELAP course – to develop programmes which met the criteria in the Faculties of Science and Humanities in addition to the one in the Faculty of Commerce (Boughey, 2009:2). The establishment of ESPs in departments was voluntary; only four departments in the humanities showed an interest in the programmes (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013). The university received funding of R6 million in 2004 which made it possible to establish the Extended Studies Unit (ESU). The Extended Studies Programme was subsequently launched in the Humanities Faculty in 2005 and students from the four departments that had indicated their interest could enrol for the programme. The departments were Sociology, Politics, Anthropology and Journalism. Since then, the university has continued to meet the criteria and has, therefore, continued to receive funding for the programme (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013).

The programme is run by the Extended Studies Unit which falls under the guidance of the Dean of Teaching and Learning. The Dean of Teaching and Learning also provides “guidance with regard to programme structure, funding, curriculum issues and day to day running” of the programme (ESU Self-evaluation Report, 2009:24). The Dean and her team of AD practitioners in CHERTL act as “resources for the university to go where it wants to go” (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013). The Deans of the faculties in which the programmes are located are generally responsible for “the overall assurance of quality” in addition to the selection process (ESU Self-evaluation Report, 2009:24).

6.5.1 The purpose of the Extended Studies Programme

As highlighted above, the broader shifts in AD work and subsequent introduction of extended programmes in institutions was underpinned by changing conceptions of ‘disadvantage’ and particular understandings of knowledge and knowledge construction (McKenna, 2012:54). In South Africa, the introduction of integrated foundation level work was conceptualised within the context of the need to provide epistemological access; meaning that such provision would be “closely articulated with the rest of the curriculum”, so that it could be “developmental rather than ‘remedial’, and appropriate to the subject domain” (Warren, 2002:88). Research has shown, however, that these programmes vary from one institution to another and in some cases the programmes are still not integrated into departments. I argue that the role of the

Extended Studies Programme or its specific purpose is an area of contestation. Literature on foundation provisioning abounds with examples that reflect superficial understanding of the role of Extended Studies Programmes and how they are supposed to function.

At Rhodes University, Extended Studies Programmes are considered “a vital part of the university’s goal of widening access to include learners with potential from a more diverse range of educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, whose disadvantaged backgrounds may have hindered their school leaving performance” (Boughey as cited in TAI, 2012:5). Extended Studies Programmes are also conceptualised as initiatives aimed at expanding the institutional culture of the university through inclusive practices that are “supportive of a diverse student body” (TAI Annual Report, 2012:5).

The Dean of Humanities – Professor Fred Hendricks – pointed out that the purpose and role of ESPs at Rhodes University can be fully understood by, first of all, considering the problem that is being addressed. Chapter Two discussed the shifts in the conceptualisation of access in South Africa and implications on education policies aimed at transformation. It was argued that broadening access without changing the curriculum to cater for under-prepared students would result in revolving door tendencies, meaning students would fail, drop out or get excluded.

ESPs specifically cater for under-prepared students from the former DET schooling system, which, as argued in Chapter Two, encourages a fixed view of knowledge and rote learning. Specifically, DET schooling backgrounds pose a number of challenges for students coming into higher education contexts. In addition to the effects of former DET schooling, social and family backgrounds also create conditions which may hinder certain students from succeeding in higher education. It is these challenges that ES seeks to address:

- i) The poor reading culture of the students, which can be attributed to the school as well as the culture of the home (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013). Due to the amount of reading expected in higher education, and Social Science degrees in particular, the poor reading culture of students coming from rural or former DET educational backgrounds makes it difficult for them to cope and reduces their chances of succeeding in higher education.
- ii) Passive rote learning in rural schooling or former DET schools discourages critical thinking, which is a crucial aspect of what universities do. As one mainstream lecturer explained:

The role of a university is to confront our pre-conceived ideas, to upset our world, challenge, provoke and make the familiar unfamiliar. This can be unsettling for students who are not exposed to this level of engagement (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012).

- iii) There can be a mis-match in terms of the cultural capital of the student and the cultural capital of the university. Since universities are arguably elitist, thus exposing students to various forms of technologies and ways of doing things that students from poor social and educational backgrounds may not be familiar with, this mismatch is conceptualised as a level of under-preparedness. It is worth noting that this form of underpreparedness is not reduced to the level of one's intelligence or conceptualised as such; rather it is believed that it has the ability to hinder otherwise talented students from reaching their potential (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).
- iv) Computer literacy, as will be highlighted later, is an important component of the university's knowledge system. Students from under-privileged backgrounds lack computer literacy skills which may "hinder them from taking advantage and benefiting from the various information systems put in place by the university to assist them in the learning process" (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013). Since this is a crucial aspect of university life, the ES programme is designed with this consideration in mind.
- v) The ability to engage with new and unfamiliar disciplines is also an important consideration. Although all students generally struggle in this regard, students from poor educational backgrounds tend to struggle more than the average student. Social capital is a determinant in this regard in that it determines the extent to which one can "easily adapt/be in tune with unfamiliar knowledge" (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012). Students from good educational backgrounds and socio-economic backgrounds are most likely to adapt faster. For example, educated parents are likely to informally orient their children into the ways of thinking and doing of the university. The same applies to well resourced schools which actually assist students to apply and also to select courses. Well resourced schools also have career fairs where representatives from universities give presentations about courses offered at specific universities. Therefore, by the time students attend university, they are not completely clueless. In this regard, access to information in the form of career fairs, the internet in the home and

educational backgrounds of parents or significant others places students from good socio-economic and educational backgrounds at an advantage (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012).

- vi) As an international university, Rhodes draws diverse students from a wide range of backgrounds. This is a new experience for most students and this may be a challenge in that some students may struggle to fit in. Although this problem is experienced across the board by mainstream students as well, students from under-privileged backgrounds may struggle to adjust due to lack of exposure (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012).
- vii) Language is another significant issue. This problem has been purposely listed as the last one for the reason that, although students from former DET schools are second language speakers who may have language deficiencies in terms of expressing themselves in English and with English grammar, their real problem in relation to the ability to engage in higher education is much more than language. In the Rhodes University context, this claim is justified by the fact that mainstream students who come in with good English scores still struggle to graduate on time, even with their advantage of mastering the language. Whilst language may be a problem for some students, it is argued by some academics that the real problem lies in what is conceptualised as the "elevated discourse of academic life" – what is commonly known as academic literacy (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013). According to Boughey, academic literacy specifically refers to the "ways of thinking, speaking, and acting necessary for students to gain membership to academic discourse at university level". Although students from under-privileged or poor educational backgrounds bring with them several ways of thinking and doing, these may be different or unacknowledged or not recognised in the university context (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013).

In view of the above, the role of the Extended Studies Programme is to "help students adapt to the university's academic requirements" or, put in other words, to introduce students to the different ways of thinking, being, knowing, writing and valuing in university or disciplines, "through carefully structured courses in supportive learning environments" (Student Support Guide, 2012:16). In this regard, ESPs also attempt to "patch up the inequalities of the school" by providing additional support to talented students in order to help them cope with mainstream work (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013). In doing the above, the

Humanities ESP addresses questions like “What is a university? What is it that we do here? Why do we do what we do? How do we go about doing it? and Where do I as a student fit in all of that? (Observation, February 2012). Clarity on the above has the potential to empower and motivate students to “act in more productive ways which can get them through the system” (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013).

In addition to the above, Extended Studies introduces students to the “rules of making knowledge within the disciplines” (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013). Extended Studies lecturers generally noted that these rules are often not made explicit in mainstream teaching, as it is assumed that students are aware of them or in some cases the task is left to tutors who are, in fact, not adequately trained to engage at that level (Author’s interview with Marian, 2013). In Bourdieu’s terms, the rules for making knowledge are expressed as ‘rules of the game’ or tacit knowledge in that they are not explicitly taught but acquired through active involvement in the game – what Bourdieu (1990) calls being in-the-game.

Writing about French universities, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979:14) noted that due to their mastery of the disciplines, lecturers assumed that good students would master the rules for producing knowledge without being told. Although Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) acknowledged that these rules were acquired through exposure to the disciplines, they argued that students from elite classes had the necessary cultural capital to master these discourses. For Bourdieu and Passeron (1979), educationally disadvantaged students or middle class students struggled to exhibit mastery of academic discourse. While a similar trend has been observed in South Africa, research has shown that academic discourse is foreign to all students entering university for the first time.⁴⁰ As such, some mainstream lecturers and Extended Studies lecturers admitted that all students needed epistemological access to the university (Author’s interview with Lorraine; Denise; 2013).

Intruducing students to the rules of knowledge construction is central to teaching on the Extended Studies Programme, and this is also consistent with shifts in thinking about knowledge and knowledge construction in the AD movement. Where these rules were formerly taught in abstract in former models such as ASPs, in ES these rules are taught in

⁴⁰ See Boughey 2000; Marshall & Case 2010.

relation to the content (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). On the whole, the role of ES is to provide students with epistemological access to the university, which primarily constitute rules for making knowledge and ways of thinking, knowing, seeing, being, acting and writing in the disciplines. However, a closer look at the data indicates that it involves much more than supporting students to cope academically. Some of the work undertaken on the Extended Studies Programme is often unrecognised and this is largely because it inevitably surfaces from the nature of teaching and learning on the programme as well as the class size (Observation, 2012). It was thus noted that:

Extended Studies is a personal relationship with students, so you end up doing things that other lecturers don't do – issues with parents, taking them to the doctor, pregnancy issues. All these issues are part of what you need to manage in order to survive in university. So things often go wrong in university and students need to be able to survive these kinds of issues. And often students with these issues are the ones we lose along the way. So students get excluded not because they are not capable academically but because they are just overwhelmed by family issues, histories of sexual abuse. So it is important, you can't just be a lecturer, you need to be a person because students need someone they can come to (Author's interview with Denise, 2013).

The above quote does not in any way suggest that students fail because of personal reasons; it is rather suggested that personal problems may influence learning in one way or another for all students. As such, the university has structures such the Counselling Centre to help students deal with their problems. Therefore, the claim about unrecognised work undertaken on the Extended Studies Programme should be interpreted in the light of the fact that the ES class size provides a safe space for students to not only discuss their personal problems but also academic related fears and concerns.

The Extended Studies Programme is in this sense a field in its own right in that it generates its own values and is structured by its own mechanisms of development (Bourdieu, 1993a:72). The autonomy of the Extended Studies field is further qualified by the admission criteria into the programme – which symbolises the admission fee or capital valued in the field, teaching approaches and interaction of agents – which are also indicators of the structure of the field, the nature of the 'game' and the position of different agents in that 'game'

6.5.2 Criteria for admission into the programme

The issue of criteria in terms of who deserves to be on the programme is highly contested. This is largely a result of the complex nature of educational disadvantage, which results in various levels of under-preparedness. Beyond providing a description of the criteria for admission into the Extended Studies Programme, this section will also explore the various areas of contestation in order to provide in-depth insight into the various constructions of education ‘disadvantage’ and ‘under-preparedness’ at Rhodes University. Although the two concepts are used in the same context (See White Paper, 1997: 2.26 and 2.30, for example), they don’t mean the same thing (Young, 2008:393). According to Young “the proposition educationally disadvantaged = inadequate preparedness does not necessarily hold true” (2008:393).

Rhodes University employs a more holistic approach to the selection of students for ESPs, and this reduces the limitations induced by using the above concepts in their strict sense. As such, a number of issues are taken into consideration when selecting students for the programme and these include i) Matric results and National Benchmark Results (NBTs), ii) education background, and iii) socio-economic background. These criteria can be understood only in relation to the problems being addressed. The Dean of Humanities and the Extended Studies course co-ordinator are involved in the selection of students.

The Rhodes University admissions policy is very clear about its commitment to alternative access:

Rhodes University recognizes that students from socially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds may have National Senior Certificate results that do not reflect their potential to succeed at university. Performance in the National Senior Certificate Examinations is therefore not to be used as the sole admission criterion. The Extended Studies Programme provides an alternative access route for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also provides such students with a carefully designed learning programme and supportive learning environment to enhance their chances of success at Rhodes University (Students Admissions Policy, 2010:5).

An interesting area of contestation that is worth addressing at this point is the issue of race. Although the Rhodes University policy is not explicit about race, the programme predominantly draws black students – that is, black South African students, Coloureds and Indians in a few cases. According to Young (2008:399-400), concepts like “educationally disadvantaged” and notions about educational under-preparedness in South Africa have often been connected to race for obvious reasons. According to Young (2008:400), this is also explicit in policy documents such as the White Paper (1997) which explicitly stated that

educational disadvantage “undermined the preparedness of talented black students for higher education” (DoE, 1997: 2.30 as cited in Young, 2008:400).

In light of this Kioko (2010:42) argued that although the current foundation programmes target students from disadvantaged education backgrounds as opposed to black students as was the case in former programmes (for examples, ASPs in certain universities), “the reality of South Africa is that any definition of disadvantage in South Africa correlates with race”. For this reason, it was observed that the programme at Rhodes University, like other universities, draws mostly black students from disadvantaged economic and educational backgrounds. However, there has been a further shift in the social class of students drawn into the programme (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013).

Whereas previous programmes mainly enrolled poor black students, recent enrolments reveal that students come from upper class backgrounds and well resourced schools (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013). This again forms another area of contestation around the criteria. The change in the class dynamics of students enrolled in the Extended Studies Programme can be explained in terms of shifts in understanding about disadvantage. For example, in the past, foundation programmes mainly targeted students from former DET schooling backgrounds. However, the realisation that disadvantage “lingers for a long time” (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013), in the case of private school students with previous DET schooling backgrounds, resulted in the re-consideration of the entire academic trajectory of students. As such, students from private schools are also considered for Extended Studies if they previously underwent public schooling at some point in their lives.

This point is well illustrated by Bourdieu’s concept of habitus which shows that the ways of acting, feeling and thinking, gained from one’s history and, in this case, educational backgrounds, generally stay with one across contexts (Bourdieu, 1993a:86). This does not in any way suggest that reproduction cannot be reversed; instead “it lingers for a long time” as Hendricks suggested. Therefore, the two years of public schooling do not necessarily guarantee a reversal of inequalities created by bad schooling (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013). Following this introduction, the criterion will now be discussed.

6.5.2.1 Matric results and National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)

Students do not apply to be on Extended Studies. Instead, letters of invitation are sent to students who do not meet the University’s minimum admission requirements as set out in the admissions policy. Students with a matric exemption above 28 points points, and at least four

points for English as an additional language, are considered for the programme (Student Handbook, 2012:39). In the humanities, matric scores in English are considered as opposed to scores for Science courses which may lower the points if the students did badly in them. According to one ES lecturer, these students are considered because “in the Humanities, Science does not matter but your ability to communicate” (Author’s interview with Marian, 2013). Interviews with students who had done Sciences in high school, however proved this to be a wrong assumption. These students particularly complained about the amount of readings and the need to critically engage with readings when writing assignments. This was clearly articulated by two students who complained that:

I did Sciences in high school. This issue of reading and critical thinking is new to me. All I know is to count (Author’s interview with Bongi, 2012).

I did Maths and Sciences, there wasn’t so much reading involved, with biology maybe because you had to understand what’s going on, but with my other subjects in high school I didn’t really have to read a lot, apart from English books that was the only reading and occasional reading that I did for myself just for the pleasure of it. Doing readings and thinking critically was definitely hard. It’s not like Maths where you can practice something. Here you have to do the readings, you have to understand, you have to ask yourself questions and apply the readings to reality (Author’s interview with Karen, 2012)

The above suggests a need to take into consideration the compatibility of disciplines from prior schooling and new disciplines in university when selecting students for Social Science degrees. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the admission criteria for degrees in the Humanities Faculty.

Table 6.1 Admission criteria for degrees in the Humanities Faculty

Faculty requirements	Points			
Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Social Science, Bachelor of Journalism, BFA and BMUS	40 points and above will receive a firm offer	36-39 points admission will be at the Dean’s discretion	30-35 candidates in this range may be considered for the Extended Studies programme	29 points and below - the application is likely to be rejected

Adapted from the student handbook (2012:14)

Extended Studies students are most likely to fall in the fifth option. In some cases, students with points above 35 may be put on ES for a variety of reasons. This decision is based on information provided in the application form, for example, the short essay which may reveal a need for support with writing.



According to the Student Handbook (2012:13), all South African first-time entering undergraduate students are required to write NBTs. NBTs are used to “assess academic readiness of first year university students” (NBT website: 2013). As such, the tests “assess the ability to combine aspects of prior learning in competency areas” which are deemed to directly impact on success of first-year entering students. These competency areas include Academic Literacy (AL), Quantitative Literacy (QL) and Mathematics (MAT). Humanities degree applicants who score between 30-35 may be considered for ES if they score high on AL.

6.5.2.2 Educational background

Information on the educational backgrounds of students is a key factor in placing students in Extended Studies, in that it is a potential indicator of academic capital accumulated in the schooling system. The assumption is that the enduring apartheid legacy in the form of rote learning and other deficits in education (for example, lack of teachers and resources) in former DET schools and rural schools, limits the chances of succeeding in university. The application form also requires students to provide a bit of a biography in which questions like “How do you see yourself?” and “How do you view university education?” are asked. These questions are important in the assessment for admission since they require students to express themselves through writing. With regard to this, the Dean of Humanities pointed out that if the expression of the students in the essay is elementary/basic, he may suggest that they go into Extended Studies even when they have high points (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013).

Another issue that is considered with respect to educational background is the students’ academic performance in schools. For example if a student went to a rural or township school and still managed to do well/come first in their class, it is assumed that such students can potentially do well if given the necessary support (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013).

The Humanities ESP also draws students from Model C schools, and this forms another area of contestation in that these schools are considered privileged both in terms of resources and teaching. At first glance, given the fact that some of the students on ES are quite privileged in terms of class and some even have a good command of the English language, it may appear as though the university is not fulfilling its mandate of providing access to students from under-privileged education backgrounds. However, a closer look at the histories of the students reveals a different picture (Author’s interview with Marian, 2013). The rationale for admitting students from Models C schools is that such students would have gone through

rural or former DET schooling prior to enrolling in Model C schools. The Dean of Humanities thus argued that one has to consider the question, “Are the three years in a Model C school sufficient to get rid of the disadvantage?” He argued that “disadvantage lingers for a long time since it concerns a whole range of issues, most importantly social capital” (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013). He argued further that:

Social capital has to do with the reading material in your house – are there books, newspapers, are your parents educated or were they able to read to you when you were a child? All these things are important in a way a person is formed. So you can’t just obliterate that disadvantage by sending someone to a model C school for three years and argue that the playing field has now been levelled. It’s a much deeper and complex problem which requires profound solutions (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013).

Some Extended Studies lecturers also argued along similar lines when asked to comment on the enrolment of former Model C students in the Extended Studies Programme. Marian and Denise gave an example of students from the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls and argued that, although the school is well resourced, it was established to cater for talented students from poor socio-economic backgrounds. As such, ES students from the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy were reported to have gone through public schooling before enrolling at the Academy.

One of the criteria for admission into the Academy is that the family’s total monthly income should be less than R8 000 per month (Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls, 2013). According to Marian, some of the students from this Academy go through rural schooling and are then fortunate enough to be discovered and admitted into the Oprah Winfrey school (Author’s interview with Marian, 2013). Therefore, these students are considered to be educationally under-privileged based on their schooling history. Moreover, it was also noted that the students that eventually enrol in the Rhodes University ESP actually come from the “bottom end of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy” (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013).

Bourdieu’s distinction of various forms of cultural capital is useful in explaining why some students from good educational backgrounds or upper class backgrounds are considered educationally disadvantaged and admitted on the Extended Studies Programme. Bourdieu argues that whilst the objectified form of capital may exist in the form of material resources (a laptop for example), the embodied form consists of class based dispositions acquired over time (that is the ability to use the laptop for academic purposes) (Bourdieu, 1986:246).

Therefore, one's possession of economic capital does not imply an automatic acquisition of cultural capital. This distinction is often not understood, hence the contested nature of the admission criteria for the Extended Studies Programme.

Bourdieu emphasizes that cultural capital is not transmissible instantaneously but rather acquired over time. This confirms the Dean's claim that two years of private schooling are not sufficient to get rid of disadvantage as it lingers for a long time. At the same time, a sudden change in one's economic status does not in any way change the dispositions acquired over time. Bourdieu's concept of habitus is important in this regard in that it reveals that one's dispositions which shape their educational experiences or determine access to education are developed over time through the "individuals own subsequent experience of class conditions" (Goldthorpe, 2007:5).

The following discussion illustrates the relationship between cultural capital and individual dispositions.

6.5.2.3 Race and family background

According to the Rhodes University Student Handbook (2012:39), the Extended Studies Programme is open to South African English Second Language speakers who show the potential to succeed. Although only black students meet this criteria, there is an inconclusive debate about whether white students should be considered for the programme given the general level of under-preparedness across the board (Author's interview with Marian, 2013). It is, however, beyond the scope of this research to debate the contestations around the racial criterion of Extended Studies. The term 'black' in the South African context raises the question "What is black in relation to transformation?" In South Africa, black South Africans, Coloureds and Indians fall under the racial category of 'black'.

In view of the relevance of the family background as a factor in selecting students for ES, it was also argued that one needs "to ask a question about the extent to which a school can wholly overcome the social cultural backgrounds that the students come from" (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013). She captured the essence of this question in a few dense lines:

The preparation for school begins at birth. The way kids are raised, what is read in the house, language used.....all these model students in a way. A child who comes from a house where parents are educated are most likely to have a clear head start when they enrol for grade 1 or grade R. The

reading culture of the home and the cultural practices of the home scaffold schooling (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013).

The above claim is symbolic of what Bourdieu refers to as primary pedagogical work, which is claimed to “produce(s) an enduring and irreversible primary habitus that sets the conditions for subsequent schooling” (Von Holdt, 2012:3). This for Bourdieu takes place in the home. As such, the educational background and socio-economic status of parents play a huge role in that it determines the linguistic and cultural dispositions transmitted to the children as well as the kind of upbringing – alien or elite. Bourdieu (1974:39) argues that students from elite families are more likely to survive in elite institutions due to the familiarity with the ‘codes’ or symbolic systems of elite institutions.

In view of the above, the socio-economic and education backgrounds of parents is considered when placing students in the programme. If an applicant is a first generation student – meaning the first to go to university – they are usually considered for Extended Studies. The rationale for considering these first generation university students should be viewed against the background of the culture of the home which, as highlighted in interviews with Boughey and Hendricks, may not provide the necessary motivation for learning as may be the case with students with educated parents.

Overall, the university applies a holistic approach to the selection of students for the programme. The criteria are very broad in their conceptualisation of disadvantage which has its pros and cons as will be highlighted in other sections. The students themselves understand disadvantage in very superficial ways (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013). Both the Dean of Humanities and the Dean of Teaching and Learning noted that selection is a complex process:

Admission is not a pure Science, its not an exact Science (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

Selection is an art, not a Science (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013).

Owing to this, it was openly admitted that mistakes were made in the past as students were put on ES when they actually qualified to be in the mainstream (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013). Nevertheless, the university has become better at placing students in the programme (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

6.5.3 Design and structure of the programme

The available evidence seems to suggest that the design of the Extended Studies Programme curricula at Rhodes University was largely influenced by:

- i) Shifts in thinking about knowledge and knowledge construction as discussed in Section 6.1.
- ii) Availability of funding.
- iii) The purpose of the programme in light of the need to introduce students to the ways of thinking and being in disciplines – epistemological access.
- iv) Institutional conditions such as the relationship between departments and the Extended Studies Unit.
- v) The structural conditions in the university, institutional culture and commitment to transformation. These determine the place and status of the programme in the university and departments.
- vi) Perceptions of the problem being addressed and the characteristics of students drawn into the programme.

The history of academic development at Rhodes University provided so far indicates that the design of the various foundation models implemented at various stages was largely determined by factors listed above. It is therefore not surprising that as the above shifted, the design also changed in order to accommodate the shifts in the factors mentioned above. The impact and implications of these factors have been highlighted in one way or another in Section 6.5. For this reason, the discussion on the design of the programmes centres on the structural aspects of the current programme and, where necessary, the above factors will be elaborated on.

6.5.4 Course structure/curriculum design

Students admitted to the Humanities ESP complete their degree over four years instead of three. In this case, the degree is prolonged by a year “in order to provide learning opportunities that either lay the foundation for ‘mainstream’ learning or support it in some way” (Boughey, 2011). In some cases, students who do exceptionally well in the June exam are promoted into mainstream in the second semester. As previously indicated, only four courses are offered under the Humanities ESP according to which departments indicated their interest in the programme (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:7-8). Therefore, the Extended Studies curriculum of the Humanities Faculty was constructed around the four mainstream courses (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:8).

The Humanities Extended Studies Programme is split into two streams – Sociology and Politics or Anthropology and Journalism. Students take two mainstream subjects which are integrated with academic literacy and computer literacy. Students don't have a choice in selecting any two of the four subjects, they are placed by the co-ordinator in order to balance the two classes/streams (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013). Extended Studies students benefit from extra tuition in that, apart from the four teaching periods offered on mainstream lectures, they attend four extra Extended Studies classes per week for each of the two mainstream courses (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

The aim of the Extended Studies classes is to support the mainstream courses through developing “reading skills and conceptual understanding of the subject, assisting students in preparing for tutorials and assignments, and developing subject specific vocabulary” (Student Handbook, 2012:39). The intention in doing the above is to develop language literacy in the disciplines (ESU Self-Evaluation Report, 2009:8). Although students get credits for Extended Studies courses, the credits do not contribute to the total number of credits required for one to complete or earn a Rhodes University degree (ESU Self- Evaluation Report, 2009:22). This is arguably the reason behind the low attendance in Extended Studies classes, especially in the second semester, as well as poor engagement of students who feel that they don't really need the programme (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

According to Boughey (2009:2), the advantage of augmentation of Extended Studies teaching with mainstream is that students attend mainstream classes with other students and “experience normal lecturing from the outset”. This in a way affects the criteria for selection into the programme in that, although the programme targets disadvantaged students who don't meet normal admission requirements, the enrolment of such students is premised on the assumption or confidence that the students would be in a position to cope in the mainstream. This explains why the ‘student’ factor is listed as a determinant of the curriculum design. Table 6.2 summarises the curriculum design.

Table 6.2 sample curriculum structure

	Semester one	Semester two
Year one	Sociology + Sociology augmentation OR Anthropology + Anthropology augmentation	Sociology + Sociology augmentation OR Anthropology + Anthropology augmentation
	Politics + Politics augmentation OR Journalism + Journalism augmentation	Politics + Politics augmentation OR Journalism + Journalism augmentation
	Computer Science CSC 1H	Computer Science CSC 1H

Adapted from the ESU Self-Evaluation Report (2009:9)

Academic literacy is not listed in the course design course because it is integrated in the teaching of content in the four disciplines. After the first year of foundation work, the students join the mainstream and students receive no additional support or tuition thereafter. Table 6.3 shows a sample ES degree.

Table 6.3 Sample ES degree

Year 1: 2 credits plus 2 support credits	Anthropology 1	Journalism and Media studies	
Year 2 : (3 credits)	Anthropology 2	Politics 1	Economics 1
Year 3: (3 credits)	Anthropology 3	Politics 2	Psychology 1
Year 4: (2 credits)	Economics 2	Politics 3	

Adapted from the Student Handbook (2012:39)

With this course design, students start earning credits from the first year of study. In their second year of study, students have the option to either continue with their mainstream courses or pick other courses in the Humanities Faculty/other faculties if permitted by the dean. In summary, students on Extended Studies benefit from double tuition and extra support.

6.6 Philosophies underpinning the teaching approaches on the humanities Extended Studies Programme

Teaching on ES is underpinned by specific philosophies about students, which then shapes what is taught and how it is taught. It is worth noting that the Extended Studies Programme is more than an academic space; it is also a social space. This aspect is important in that it impacts the teaching and learning process, as well as the level of engagement between students and the lecturers. As will be noted in the following discussion, the nature of the student lecturer relationships broadly positions the students in different ways in relation to the learning process and knowledge construction within the Extended Studies community.

There is overwhelming evidence corroborating the view that the Extended Studies classroom was perceived by students to be a “family” or “community”.⁴¹ This was made possible by the small size of the class which made it “a safe space” for students to open up about both their academic and non-academic challenges (Author’s interview with Zahara, 2012). Although the students attended mainstream classes and had friends in the mainstream, the interviews with them suggested that they mainly identified with their peers in Extended Studies. As such, students reported that they had very close relationships with almost everyone in the class, and this was in spite of the diversity of the class in terms of social class and socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

In support of the community experience reported by students, one of the lecturers – Marian – noted that her role was that of “building a community of peers”(Author’s interview with Marian, 2012). Although universities are widely identified as learning communities which “focus on different areas of knowledge”, by interpreting it and constructing it in many different ways (Seligmann, 2012:3), the conception of community in the Rhodes University Extended Studies Programme goes beyond the classroom or academics.

During classroom observation (2012), it was observed that the learning environment was very relaxed and conduct between peers and lecturers was less formal compared to conduct in the mainstream. This enabled students to interact and engage with the lecturer and each other at ease. Although one can easily attribute this to the class size, it can also be argued that the lecturers’ teaching philosophies and perceptions of students promoted such a learning atmosphere. Lecturers did not make assumptions about students; they were very aware of their students in terms of their personalities, challenges, and social and family backgrounds. (Author’s interview with Marian, 2012). Accordingly, ES lecturers often helped students with emotional problems or other personal problems by listening, making time for them, advising them and directing them to other support channels in the university:

Some of them need extra care, some of them come to me with personal issues and in that space you cannot just be a lecturer, you just have to be more than that. At the same time, if it becomes a bit too much we refer them to the Counselling Centre (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013).

⁴¹ This came up in several interviews. Examples include Author’s interview with Zahara 2013; Bokang 2012; Bongi 2012; Jabu 2012.

This does not in any way suggest that mainstream lecturers are uninvolved and unaware of the challenges that students face. They are aware but the only difference is that due to the size of the mainstream classes (like the case in any other university), it is difficult for lecturers to have an individual approach to learning. Therefore, when students in mainstream classes experience problems, they have to take the initiative to approach lecturers for help. Although the mainstream classes are much bigger than Extended Studies classes, it is interesting to note that students generally reported that Rhodes University lecturers have an open door policy. This was attributed to the size of the university (Author's interview with Grace, 2012).

Owing to the recognition of not only the vulnerability of students but also feelings of inadequateness that emanate from the stigma attached to the programme, Extended Studies lecturers deliberately and carefully structure their teaching approaches in ways that empower students. Evidently, the Extended Studies classroom is a highly engaged classroom (Observation, 2012). According to one Extended Studies lecturer, part of the thinking in empowering students derives from the ideas of hooks and Freire:

who emphasize the need to reduce the power divide between teachers and students by subverting it so that students are very aware that power in the classroom does not only reside with the teacher but also with them (Author's interview with Marian, 2012).

This is important because if students “feel that power is also with them they become agents of their own education” (Marian, 2012). In this way, they “don't become dependent” (Author's interview with Marian, 2012). Another important aspect of the teaching approach is an awareness and validity of the different kinds of knowledge that students bring from their diverse backgrounds. In this regard one of the lecturers argued that:

There is a need to transgress the race and class boundaries which are so heavily entrenched in the education system. Lecturers need to be human enough to acknowledge what students bring to the institution. (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

Questions about learning or curriculum need to take into consideration: who is learning, where do they come from, how is he or she going to learn and what am I (as a lecturer) going to do to facilitate that (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

While the Extended Studies lecturers revealed some awareness of the effects of the schooling system and its impact on the learning process of ES students, they also acknowledged and recognised that students brought something valuable to the university. Hence, they built on

that knowledge to help students reach their full potential. For example, one ES lecturer admitted:

Students bring something with them and lecturers need to work with that (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

In a similar vein another ES lecturer highlighted that very often the knowledge brought by under-privileged students is not valued in university contexts. She argued:

There are theories that do not resonate with me, they talk about the kinds of education that build kinds of cognitive skills, that basically writes off students who have had really disadvantaged backgrounds. I think it renders invisible many other things that are important like students who dealt with family members dying of AIDS, massive poverty, having to travel miles and miles to school and having to care for siblings or parents. These are things you learn as a human that give you so many qualities that are not recognised in the narrow lens of what makes a good academic (Marian, 2012).

The thinking highlighted above and the recognition of the diverse knowledge that students bring to Extended Studies appears to have influenced the teaching approaches and the level of interaction between ES lecturers and their students. The link between teaching approaches and how students respond to that as part of the learning process is captured in a few dense lines in the following interview excerpt:

I try to make students understand that I respect them and understand their struggles with the language and the unfamiliar environment. So I try to relate with them on a human level, I do not have boundaries, they are my Facebook friends, and I do not correct their language mistakes all the time. I tell them stories about myself and I purposefully make myself vulnerable in class with them in order that they are aware of their power in class (Marian, 2013).

Although Bourdieu (1993a:73) portrays the education field as a space of struggle as well as dominant and subordinate positions, this is not necessarily the case with the Extended Studies Programme – a field in its own right. The Extended Studies Programme is not a “competitive market place” as is the case with Bourdieu’s ‘fields. Instead, it is a space where capital is accumulated in order to enable agents (students in this case) to compete in other fields – the mainstream. The following section discusses how the above philosophies and approaches to interlearning are put into practice in terms of the day to day learning activities in the programme.

6.7 Teaching and learning on the Extended Studies Programme

As indicated in the section on course design and degree structure, ES is integrated into the mainstream, meaning that students attend mainstream classes and tutorials. The rationale for attending mainstream classes straight away is premised on the view that “there is no specific ‘lack’ in knowledge as far as the disciplines are concerned” (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013). In this regard, all first year students are perceived to be unfamiliar with the disciplines when they enrol for the first year of a degree. The only difference lies in the literacy practices which students bring from different educational backgrounds. It has already been argued that the literacy practices in former DET schools or rural schooling (for example, rote learning) are not acceptable in university, and this reduces any chances of succeeding for students coming from these educational backgrounds. The role of ES is then to gradually introduce students to the literacy practices – the ways of being, thinking and doing in university and in specific disciplines.

Extended Studies lecturers attend lectures with students in order to ensure that they know what is going on in mainstream.⁴² Based on the lecture content covered in mainstream classes, they draw additional support material to assist students (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013). One of the Extended Studies lecturers supported this claim and noted the following:

I do not have a curriculum; I support what happens on the mainstream. I never just go off on my own. Therefore, I only do supportive things for the mainstream (Author’s interview with Marian, 2013).

In view of this, it was also noted that mainstream lecturers are always informed of the additional material used to support Extended Studies students (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013). It is worth noting, however, that at least in practice this is what is supposed to happen. While the extent to which this actually happens could be questioned, the two mainstream lecturers interviewed in the study did show an indication of some level of interaction with ES students on course related matters (Author’s interviews with Carolyne, 2012 & Lorraine, 2012).

⁴² Here it is worth noting that only the four courses (Sociology, Politics, Anthropology, and Journalism) are integrated into the mainstream. Computer literacy is an independent course and is structured to support teaching and learning activities in the four ES courses.

According to the two ES lecturers who support the four mainstream courses, attending mainstream classes places them in a position to better assist the students. As such, it is worth noting that not all ES lecturers are necessarily trained in these mainstream disciplines:

I'm not an expert in XX or XX so I have to work as hard as the student to catch up. So I will think of various exercises – reading, making posters on different things, group work to help students (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

Boughey (2011:14) argued that the employment of non-subject experts to teach in Extended Studies needs to be understood in terms of the purpose of the programme “which is to augment and extend mainstream subjects through specific understandings of knowledge making” rather than “content provision”. That notwithstanding, it is worth noting that the role of ES in this regard is not always understood by academics in the mainstream. Some academics questioned the extent to which Extended Studies lecturers can engage with knowledge in the disciplines. As one lecturer argued:

It is non-subject experts who are teaching in these courses, I have a (doctorate) in my subjects, I research in my subjects, I know my subjects, and now what we are saying is that kids that are struggling are going to be taught by someone who does not know the subject, so that does not make sense to me. I think that the experts should be teaching within the field of their expertise. I understand that I am not an expert in the student learning, studying skills, or something like that, but I do not believe in the separation of those things (Author's interview with Carlyne, 2013).

Interviews with academic staff in two of the four departments that offer Extended Studies revealed that different departments perceive the role of ES lecturers differently. This consequently affects the level of interaction between ES lecturers and mainstream lecturers. Some departments were found to be accommodative and willing to involve ES lecturers in decision-making processes that concern first year mainstream courses which ES students are a part of (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). According to Hendricks, the level of integration is primarily determined by the culture of the departments (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013). Concerning the level of integration, both the Dean of Humanities and the Dean of Teaching and Learning openly admitted that the programme is not ideal and that it would be good to have an ES lecturer in each department, as this would mean offering a much bigger programme (Author's interviews with Hendricks, 2013 & Boughey, 2013).

The curriculum of the Extended Studies lecturers comprises a variety of activities that help students to cope with mainstream work – that is, assignments, tutorials and exams. For the four augmented mainstream courses, the work involves:

- i) going over readings for tutorials or assignments;
- ii) going through lecture notes and readings;
- iii) tutorial preparation;
- iv) discussing essay topics, planning and drafting essays;
- v) referencing; and
- vi) exam and test preparation.

The curriculum is carefully thought out in terms of meeting students' needs at the right time, such that by the time students submit tutorials and assignments or write a test in a mainstream course, ES would have prepared them in that regard. As such, skills like academic writing and referencing are taught from the first term and throughout the year. All the above aspects of the curriculum are geared towards introducing and orientating students into the ways of being and doing in disciplines, hence the above is done around the disciplinary content and not separately (Author's interview with Marian, 2013). The various aspects of the Extended Studies curriculum will now be unpacked with a view to showing their relevance in according epistemological access to students from under-privileged educational backgrounds.

6.7.1 Reading

Most, if not all, students struggle with the amount of reading in university. For most students on ES, this is worsened by the academic jargon in selected texts, which makes it difficult for them to engage critically with the readings. ES lecturers go through the readings for tutorials and assignments in class and unpack them for students with the aim of highlighting the key issues emerging from the readings. During classroom observation in ES classes, it was observed that lecturers taught students effective ways of reading and these included note taking, using mind maps to map relationships between ideas, comparing texts and looking up difficult words in a dictionary for clarity. One of the key issues emphasised is the purpose of reading in order to construct knowledge and make arguments around specific content as opposed to simply regurgitating ideas (Classroom observation, February 2012).

As part of preparation for assignments or weekly tutorials, students were often encouraged to split the readings amongst small groups so that each group would focus on a specific reading. Students would then be required to present key points emerging from the various readings selected for a specific assignment. Such an approach to learning where students are provided a space to learn from each other through class presentations echoes Freire's solution to the banking system of education where a student is just a student and a teacher. Commenting on the work of Freire, Burawoy (2012:111) pointed out that:

For Freire, critical pedagogy must eject the oppressor within, which can only be accomplished through a problem-centred dialogue between teacher and student, in which each learns from the other, the educator must be educated ... when placed in their own context, tackling their own problems, the oppressed can develop critical faculties through collaboration with others.

Although the effectiveness of these approaches needs to be qualified in view of the actual performance of students, the students generally indicated that discussing the readings in class enabled them to engage critically with the essay or tutorial questions by comparing texts from different authors. Additionally, approaching the readings in the form of presentations contributed towards the co-construction of knowledge as it provided a space for students to share ideas, thus bringing different understandings and perspectives. According to one ES lecturer, this process is particularly important for “it models for them what they can do later after ES” (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013).

An interesting aspect of the reading and group discussion process was the flexibility to discuss the readings in an African language familiar to the group members. In this way students who understood the readings better would help struggling students by interpreting their understanding of the readings in a more familiar language. In addition to interpreting the readings, lecturers used various other exercises and methods such as posters and video clips to help students understand the material better. Furthermore, lecturers also provided students with mainstream readings. Unlike mainstream students who had to look for readings in the library or online, ES students were provided with readings for each course. This also helped those who could not afford to buy printing credit or photocopying credit. In some cases, students got readings for the next term way in advance. This enabled them to do the readings during the vacation (Classroom observation, March 2012).

6.7.2 Critical thinking

Critical thinking is an important aspect at university, particularly in the Social Sciences. Considering the role of the university as a space for “challenging, provoking and making the familiar unfamiliar” as indicated by Lorraine, ES provides a safe space for the development of critical thinking – which is again one of the ways of being in a discipline (Author’s interview with Lorraine, 2012). This level of engagement can be unsettling for students coming from educational backgrounds that promote an uncritical approach to knowledge and ideas (Author’s interview with Lorraine, 2012). Through various activities, lecturers empowered students by making them realise that they, too, had a voice and that they could

think beyond the obvious. One interesting example of how a lecturer introduced students to critical thinking in a more informal way was when she hopped on top of the table and asked students to be critical about her clothing (Classroom Observation, June 2013).

In doing this, the lecturer was trying to get students to understand a concept that had been covered in class. Students were asked to justify why they had said certain things about the lecturer's clothing. The lecturer helped the students realise that their comments were based on various individual, social, cultural, and religious values. Based on their comments on the lecturers clothing, the lecturer taught the students that they, too, had a voice and that they needed to approach readings and course content in the same way as opposed to simply receiving information and regurgitating it (Classroom observation, June 2012).

Students also spent time debating various topics covered in class and this is crucial in not only getting students excited about the subjects but also developing their critical insight into course content. In view of this, one ES lecturer claimed that group discussions and class debates provide a platform for the development of critical thinking in that, as students share their ideas, they begin to ask questions, evaluate arguments and evidence provided by their peers, and examine their own beliefs (Author's interview with Marian, 2013). According to Marian, this process helped students to understand that their ways of doing things or thinking are not necessarily the only way of viewing reality" (Author's interview with Marian, 2013). Marian elaborated further that this process contributes to the co-construction of knowledge:

My approach has always been that we are co-constructors of knowledge together and that I may be an expert in some things but not in everything. Part of the expertise resides in the fact that students learn more when they feel that they are helping to build it than when they are being told and learning it by heart. I believe that knowledge is co-constructed and that is vital to how I behave in class (Marian, 2013).

The above implies a recognition and validation of diversity in the learning process that empowers students, gives them a voice, and renders them visible in the academic space. Another related issue are the examples used in the class. Through the use of examples, lecturers made efforts to bring the content or debates home – that is, by reducing the examples to experiences or issues that students could relate to. According to Marian, acknowledging the backgrounds and realities of students through the use of familiar examples or illustrations empowers students to challenge the accepted ways of knowing that are not particularly applicable to universally (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

On a critical note, however, classroom observation revealed that whilst the use of many examples enabled students to understand the material better, there was often a tendency to drift away from discussing the course concepts, in that the discussions would end up in students telling stories that had nothing to do with the initial concepts. This, perhaps, raises questions about the extent to which students construct knowledge as opposed to gaining an understanding of the specific disciplines supported in Extended Studies learning.

Although this research explored the process of learning, it did not go as far as investigating how the perceived learning from ES translated into good academic outcomes (expressed in marks for mainstream assignments and tests). This is, perhaps, an important area to explore as it illuminates the gap between the teaching process and the learning process. While students may claim to be learning and understanding, proof of that learning is to some extent portrayed by their performance in tutorials, tests and assignments. However, poor performance in tests and assignments, for example, is not necessarily a statement about the learning process or the pedagogical relationship between lecturers and students. The point to be made is that while pedagogical processes are important determinants of an engaged classroom, for example, they should be evaluated in terms of their ability to empower students to freely exercise their agency – that is, freedom to achieve good academic outcomes.

6.7.3 Academic writing

Writing is a crucial aspect of learning on the Extended Studies programme. Essentially, the focus on writing skills in ES is to induct students into the ways of writing for specific disciplines, hence the writing skills are taught concurrently or in the context of the content covered in mainstream classes (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). Writing is approached as a process, which involves reading, critically reflecting on ideas, organizing the ideas, and drafting (Classroom observation, 2012). To assist students with their writing, students are encouraged to submit assignment drafts after which the Extended Studies lecturer provides intensive feedback to students. Before students submit the drafts, the essay questions or tutorials are unpacked for them and students are directed to relevant readings, which are also covered in class. Tutorial preparation often includes “more detailed questions around texts than those provided by the mainstream lecturers” (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). Specifically, the Extended Studies lecturer will interpret the question in a way that is easier to understand, state the requirements of each question in terms of the possible themes and

arguments to include in the essay/tutorials and, more importantly, key text to include in the discussion (Classroom observation, 2013).

Feedback is provided individually on the electronic draft and in class to highlight key areas (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). Feedback normally includes issues such as referencing, essay structures, engagement with the readings and the need to apply content to reality (which is part of critical thinking). An important aspect of the feedback process is the focus. Instead of dwelling on grammar and spelling mistakes in ES, the focus is on content and student engagement with the question as illustrated in the sample draft in Appendix 10. In view of the feedback, one ES lecturer noted the following:

My opinion is that students understand the concept and build the arguments using the concepts so even when they make grammar mistakes, I am not that concerned with it. You learn to fix the grammar mistakes from reading so getting people to read is really important for me, ii) being able to debate the concepts in a way that makes sense to them that is bringing in what they know into the mix and this is very important to them. Often my marking is a conversation with them; there are lots of notes on the side (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

The sample feedback excerpt in Appendix 10 illustrates the content of feedback from lecturers and the main areas of concern. The nature of feedback provided helps students in the following ways:

- i) develops students' understanding of what counts as relevant knowledge when addressing specific questions;⁴³
- ii) directs students to the ways of interpreting text and the purpose of using quotes;⁴⁴
- iii) places emphasis on the importance of applying text to reality; and
- iv) directs students to the use of key concepts in a particular course and their broader application to various aspects of life.⁴⁵

Submitting drafts is particularly important in that, through the comments, students are made aware of the assessment criteria, which is often hidden/kept from students in most cases, or it is often assumed that students understand the assessment criteria (Author's interview with Marian, 2013). For instance, students are provided with examples of good and bad arguments when writing assignments and the reasons are explained to students so that they understand

⁴³ See comment 1 Appendix 10.

⁴⁴ See comment 3.

⁴⁵ See comment 3.

what is expected of them (Classroom observation, 2012). Apart from drafting assignments, students are given spontaneous writing opportunities in class on content and non-content related issues to help them learn to address and answer questions within a limited space of time. This is also done for exam preparation purposes where students are given past exam questions to write in class. As part of the exam preparation, students also attend revision classes and the lecturers open discussion forums on RU Connected⁴⁶ for students to discuss the course material in preparation for the exam (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

ES lecturers also elicit feedback from students on work covered in ES classes and what students would want to see improved in ES classes. The outcomes of the evaluations are addressed openly in class and students are given opportunities to respond and make suggestions. In one of the evaluations, students indicated that they wanted to do more readings for one of the mainstream courses they were struggling with. Based on this, the issue of group work was emphasised and a practical solution was implemented (Observation, July 2012). To help students in the course, students were put into groups and each person in the group was given a responsibility. The responsibilities were split as follows:

- i) someone responsible for identifying readings for tutorials for that specific course;
- ii) RU connected person who would check out other material posted by lecturers; and
- iii) test and assignment person whose responsibility would be checking the dates and material needed in preparation for tests and assignments for that specific course.

The lecturer pointed out that by splitting the responsibilities “everyone’s abilities would be used to ensure that everyone is stronger” (Observation, July 2012).

6.7.4 Computer literacy and academic literacy

In addition to the mainstream courses, Extended Studies students also attend academic literacy and computer literacy classes throughout the year. The computer literacy course is designed to support mainstream work from an information literacy perspective. Many students in the mainstream arguably require this form of support (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013). Colloquiums on foundation provision established that most of the students on ES come from educational backgrounds that do not provide access to computers (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013). Although the course is generally perceived as mainly

⁴⁶ RU Connected is an internal teaching and learning platform for all students in the university. It provides a space for lecturers to upload extra reading material, past exam papers, tutorial questions and assignments for students. The RU Connected site is also used for course chat rooms for lecturers and students.

helping students with general computer skills, it does much more than this. Hence, it was claimed that:

Everyone deserves the kind of work we do, given the overwhelming academic demands during the transition to higher education (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

The computer literacy course is designed to equip students with basic skills for “writing assignments, using email, accessing information from the internet, using power point and excel” (ES Course Guide, 2012:1). Students also take an information literacy course which is taught by the library staff in the second semester. This course introduces students to the different ways of accessing information using the Rhodes University library (ES Course Guide, 2012:1). These include using the different search engines, accessing journals and finding books on OPAC.⁴⁷

With regard to the role of computer literacy in university learning, Mangaliso argued that one has to understand computer literacy in terms of the culture of the university which may include how things are done, how knowledge is accessed and where it is stored (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013). Since the general knowledge system in the schooling system differs significantly from the university's complex, technology-driven learning systems, it was argued that all students require introduction and orientation to the learning systems of the university. In this regard, computer literacy was conceptualised as a tool for one's academic development in the university teaching and learning system and beyond.

Academic literacy classes cover different aspects of literacy at different stages. In the first term, it covers basic topics like note taking, writing academic essays, referencing and reading (ES Course Guide, 2012:1). The second semester covers presentation skills which prepare students for the formal presentation at the end of the year. Unlike the adjunct/peripheral approach to academic literacy in ELAP and ASPs, academic literacy in ES is integrated in the disciplines or subject content. As one of the Extended Studies lecturers noted, academic literacy “is around the four mainstream courses, it's about making it specific around a particular discipline” (Author's interview with Marian, 2013). For this reason, these lectures are used to induct students into the literacy expectations in the four mainstream disciplines. Additionally, the lecturers also engage students in discussions about why these expectations exist.

⁴⁷ OPAC is an online library catalogue or database for library material.

6.7.5 The mentoring programme

ES students also have mentoring relationships with former ES students. The mentoring programme is part of the Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) whose purpose is to “offer socio-emotional support to first year students from disadvantaged backgrounds as they adjust to the multiple demands of a new and challenging tertiary and educational environment” (TAI Annual Report, 2012: 5). TAI provides a mentor for each ES student and “aligns its core purposes closely with the core purposes of the Extended Studies Programme” which is, among other things, to prepare students for the rigours of higher education which are both social and academic (TAI Annual Report, 2012:5).

Students are carefully matched with mentors and factors considered include “same residence or hall, same language, past school, home town, province or gender” (TAI Annual Report, 2013:11). Students’ interviews, as will be discussed in the next chapter, revealed that these mentoring relationships, although designed to assist students emotionally, always end up being academic mentoring relationships. In addition to this mentoring programme, most residences pair up first years with senior students who act as mentors to these students. Since most ES students are in the residence system, the Extended Studies students benefit from both informal and less formal mentoring structures in the university. Moreover, the availability of mentoring structures in the broader university shows the university’s awareness of challenges faced by first year students. Evidently, the university has implemented a formal mentoring programme for all first year students registering from 2014 onwards. The “Ciyansedana” (we help each other) mentoring programme is aimed at helping students to cope in their transition to higher education. Interestingly, the design of the programme is closely aligned to the Trojan Academic Initiative which works in conjunction with the Extended Studies Programme.

6.8 Conclusion

A case study of the Rhodes University Extended Studies Programme reveals a more holistic approach to addressing the various problems that students bring to higher education. As such, the different aspects of the programme are well thought out and fit together in addressing the different social and academic aspects of learning. Beyond that, applying Bourdieu’s notion of ‘autonomy’ in examining the purpose of the programme revealed that the Extended Studies Programme can be examined as a distinct object of study since it is “engaged in the play of its own distinctive game” and production of its own distinctive capital (Calhoun, 2007:295). Insights offered by a field analysis of the programme are important in understanding the

experiences and perceptions of those involved in the programme. Importantly, insights into the field specific games and power relations between agents on the programme are useful in explaining the ways in which students negotiate access and engage in learning in other fields – that is learning on the mainstream and beyond.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXPLORING THE TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF HABITUS AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

7.1 Introduction

When students come into university from different social and educational backgrounds, they enter into various interconnected yet independent fields to which they have to negotiate access and gain membership. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:107) argued that each field imposes an “admission fee” in the form of capital, “which defines eligibility for participation, thereby selecting certain agents over others”. The Extended Studies Programme is a field in its own right, yet it exists and operates within the boundaries of the broader university/higher education field. This does not suggest that students enter these fields at different stages; these fields are interconnected, and students experience and occupy them simultaneously. Chapter Six constructed the Extended Studies Programme as a field by outlining: i) the internal mechanisms of its development as an autonomous field – that is the purpose of the field and norms and values governing the field, ii) recognised capital and markers of achievement which also serve as an ‘admission fee’ and, lastly, iii) structural and power relations between agents. This chapter examines the transition to higher education by conceptualising it as a double transition, in that students enter higher education/the university field and the Extended Studies Programme simultaneously. To make sense of the transition process and students’ experiences of this process, attention is given to the relationship between the cultural capital of the students and the institutional habitus.

In view of this, the following questions are first addressed in order to understand students’ experiences during the transition to higher education and its sub-fields: Who are the Extended Studies students? What are their educational backgrounds? Why do they choose to come to university? What do they bring to the university contexts? As Bourdieu (1990a) argued, the personal habitus of the students and the institutional habitus (in the form of institutional practices, values, and ways of doing things) interact to influence the experiences of the students. Similarly, Toman (2010:2) argued, “the student-institution interface” presents a variety of “fields or boundaries of experiential context within which individuals, groups and the institution exist in structural relations to each other”. As such, “responses of both the institution and the individuals are then mediated by habitus” (Toman, 2010:2).

Writing with specific reference to the UK, Toman (2010:1) argued that the changes in diversity and stratification of the student body as a result of massification, add complexity to the nature of the student experience. Likewise, in the South African context, the complexity of the student experience draws our attention to student characteristics such as social class, educational backgrounds and family backgrounds, to mention a few. As highlighted in Chapter Six, it is in consideration of the above and other characteristics that specific students are admitted into the Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes University. As such, students are constructed as agents who have a specific history, belong to a specific social class, and possess specific forms of capital. This chapter draws on data from interviews conducted with first year ES students registered in 2012, former ES students from previous years, interviews with academic staff and notes from classroom observation and written reflections.⁴⁸ Pseudonyms are used for all students quoted in this research.

7.2. Extended Studies students: diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds

As is the case in higher education internationally, students enrolled in the Extended Studies Programme come from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Owing to the complex conceptualisation of educational disadvantage in contemporary South Africa, and Rhodes University to be more specific, the programme draws students from a wide range of disadvantaged backgrounds, which are perceived to limit any chances of succeeding in higher education. Appendix 11 provides brief biographies of the students who were interviewed in the study. It specifically details information on educational backgrounds, schools attended (private or public), university funding, employment status and educational backgrounds of parents and siblings.

7.2.1 Diverse socio-economic backgrounds

With a few exceptions, most of the students that enrol on the Extended Studies Programme come from working class and poor rural backgrounds. This was indicated by the fact that most of the students reported that they were on full or partial NSFAS funding, which was specifically established to “support access to, and success in, higher education and training for students from poor and working class families who would otherwise not be able to afford to study” (NSFAS, 2013). Out of the 43 Extended Studies students that were interviewed for the study, 36 indicated that they were on either full or partial financial aid.

⁴⁸ With the exception of the Dean of Humanities and the Dean of Teaching and learning, interviewees’ names used in this research are pseudonyms.

Another interesting dimension of the social background is the fact that most of them reported that single parents or other relatives such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents raised them.

As indicated in Chapter Six that Extended Studies students are institutionally positioned as ‘disadvantaged’, they too seemed to express their social identities according to specific social categories, which can be argued to be an indication of the cultural capital possessed. According to Menard-Wawick (2007:267), “social positioning is an event of identification, in which a recognizable category of identity gets explicitly or implicitly applied to an individual”. This was clearly articulated by two students who noted the following about the extent to which prior schooling had prepared them for university learning:

I am from a very poor background. I come from Alexandra here in the Eastern Cape; well it is actually better now. I went to a public school. We did not do that much at the school, so I left when I was in grade ten after getting advice from friends who were already in university (Author’s interview with Lundi, 2012).

Yes, I think I was very prepared for higher education because we did IEB⁴⁹ instead of state Umalusi certificate. IEB somewhat prepares you with things like referencing. Our English teacher Mrs Khoza, had been to Greece, she had been overseas teaching English, she had also taught at university level (Author’s interview with Agatha, 2012).

Lundi clearly expressed his social and personal identity in line with the perceived learner identity of Extended Studies students. On the contrary, Agatha implicitly portrayed her identity by talking about her schooling background. Therefore, it can be argued that the information provided by Agatha is possibly not a statement about the teacher, but a statement about the student’s perceived social and learning identity.

There are many accounts within the data that reveal a sense of a collective social identity, which is conceivably premised on the perceptions of ES students in the university. Though some of the students strongly contested the fact they were constructed as ‘disadvantaged’, most of the students perceived themselves as disadvantaged. For instance, one student mentioned that:

Mainstream students call us special kids. We call each other special on ES. So it moved from the mainstream students calling us that to us calling

⁴⁹ IEB stands for Independent Examiner’s Board –an independent assessment agency.

ourselves special. And it is partly for fun but also you kind of start to believe it (Author’s interview with Skumbuzo, 2012).

7.2.2 Diverse educational backgrounds

In corroboration with the Extended Studies admission criteria discussed in Chapter Six, most of the students were actually the first in their family to come to university and in some instances the first to complete Matric. One student explained:

My mother has standard 6, and all of my sisters, the one who has at least tried, has standard 8, that is grade 10, so in my family there is no one that has grade 12 that is matriculation. So when I wanted to come to university, wanting to register to higher learning institution, they did not understand. When I matriculated and got a good symbol they were excited, and although they asked what I wanted to do in university, they were not really aware about university. I’m the only one in my family who managed to make it, even to matric (Author’s interview with Anelisa, 2012).

For the few who had siblings that were studying in other universities, those siblings were reported to be on financial aid. The table below provides a breakdown of the educational and socio-economic profiles provided by the 43 ES students that were interviewed

Table 7.1 Educational profile of students, parents, and siblings

Unemployed parents and parents without matric	Parents with tertiary qualifications	Employed without tertiary qualifications	Students raised by single parents and other	Public schooling and rural schooling	Public schooling prior to private schooling/Model C schooling	Private schooling and Model C schools
16	3	16	11	33	4	6

As shown in the Appendix 11 and Table 7.1, students enrolled in the programme were mostly from public and rural schools. With the exception of four students who went to private/Model C schools from Grade R, the rest attended public schools prior to enrolment in private schools. Students from public schools generally described their schooling backgrounds in terms of resources, the racial and class demographics and, lastly, the calibre of teachers. This was reflected in a number of interview excerpts:

No, the school was in a Coloured area, it was a public school, and the majority of the students were from middle class families (Author’s interview with Mangi, 2012).

In the school where I come from, we used to do things alone; the teachers were not there all the time. You would find them sitting in the staff room, drinking tea and sodas. So we used to form study groups and things like that (Author’s interview with Sandile, 2012).

The school I went to was poor, in Mary Waters we did not have computers at least here we have computer literacy classes. We learn the basics of computers and we are introduced to other stuff as well so that you are equipped (Author's interview with Thelma, 2012).

The above portrayed descriptions of former schooling resonates with Bourdieu's assumptions about the conception of capital and class as indicators of one's social status, identity in society and arguably the validity of one's cultural capital in the educational field. Although Bourdieu was not very explicit about identity and identity formation, his concepts "of field, habitus and capital provides an analytical lens for understanding identities" (Wetherell & Mohanty, 2010:284). According to Wetherell & Mohanty (2010:284), the relational aspect of habitus and field suggests that identity formation or transformation occurs as agents navigate different fields/contexts. Giddens (as cited in Thunborg, Bron, & Edstrom, 2012:24) also argued that identity is a product of the relationship between agency and structure – "assuming an individual to be the acting agent". This claim resonates with Bourdieu's claim that:

The relationship between habitus and field operates in two ways, on one side, it is a relationship of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of the field (or of hierarchy of intersecting fields). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense or with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy (Bourdieu in Grenfell & James, 1998:16).

The dynamic relationship portrayed above illuminates the impact of social context on identity formation as well as the influence and impact of identity on the social context (Wetherell & Mohanty, 2010:248). In this section, it is argued that students develop what Thunborg et al. (2012:25) call a "learning identity", which is based on their social background and how they experience themselves as students. It is argued that students bring social and learning identities into educational contexts. These are either transformed, preserved or reconstructed as they interact in the education field and its sub-fields.

As highlighted earlier, students' descriptions of educational and social backgrounds were statements about their cultural capital, social and learning identities. It is interesting that cultural capital was conceived of in material and racial terms. Consistent with this, students from private schools or Model C schools tended to describe their schools by challenging the very notion of "disadvantaged schooling backgrounds" as a basis for

enrolment in Extended Studies. In justifying the model of schools attended, there was consistent reference to the racial demographics of students and teaching staff:

I think some perceptions and assumptions that mainstream people have that people from ES are from poor backgrounds and illiterate are not true. For me it was simplistic of them to think that way because I was never part of that because my former school is a Model C school but I cannot really say it is on par with private schools. My teachers were actually good enough for me to say we were a Model C school so yah I mean, my teachers were all white. I do not know if that is an advantage or disadvantage but for me that was the norm. So for other people they are thinking that ES students come from schools where students are taught outside, but that was never the case for me, the school was so Model C, proper uniforms, blazers, all that shebang you know. I had been exposed to computers since primary, actually from birth (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

I went to a private school but there were only black students. The only white people there were teachers, there were no black teachers there at all, the only black teachers, were assistant teachers. Therefore, I am assuming that the conditions were really good, it was a good school. However, one thing I realize now that I came to Rhodes is that we did not have a library. (Author's interview with Deliwe, 2012).

The assumption here is that race is an indicator of class or one's social status. Interestingly, this is contrary to the claim that "race is being replaced by class as the dominant social marker in post 1994 South Africa (Puttick, 2011:121). Nevertheless, the conception of social status or cultural capital in terms of class is still evident in the data. At the same time, the claim by Deliwe about not having a library raises many questions about the relationship between schools attended, availability of resources in schools and preparation for higher education. Commenting on the impact of schooling backgrounds of mainstream and ES students, one mainstream lecturer made it clear that:

Economic privilege does not mean that other privileges are dependent. There are many kinds of disadvantages and oppressions that even students from well to do backgrounds experience (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012).

Although first year students are traditionally perceived to come straight from school, young and dependent on parents, this was not necessarily the case with some of the Extended Studies students. Interviews with ES students revealed that some of the students had matriculated couple of years before coming to university; some had been working before coming to university and some actually transferred or were excluded from other universities, and later came to study at Rhodes University. As some students disclosed:

I have always wanted to come to Rhodes. I applied in June and I did not get in because my points were low. I applied again in December but my points were still not good enough. I applied after so many years, so I applied in 2009 after getting a diploma because I needed a degree. And I came here in 2010. I am 25, I did a diploma for two years, worked in a marketing company, and I did not enjoy it, that is why I ended up coming to Rhodes (Author's interview with Vatiswa, 2012).

Well it's not the first time I'm in university; I matriculated in 2008 and enrolled for first year in 2009. But it didn't really go so well, so I dropped out. I was working, just odd jobs, like in restaurants from 2009 until I came to Rhodes in 2012 (Author's interview with Deliwe, 2013).

Although the above trends are characteristic of the South African study body, on the Extended Studies programme, these rare characteristics are much more visible and apparent because of the class size and nature of interaction on the programme. Of the 43 students interviewed, 9 students reported that they had either taken a gap year or repeated matric in order to upgrade some of their marks, and with most of them it was actually English marks. Other students reported that they came from histories of crime and others a history of poverty. As such, coming to university was seen as a second chance in life, hence one mainstream lecturer noted that admission to Rhodes "signals a kind of moving forward in the world" (Author's Interview with Lorraine, 2012).

7.3 Choosing universities and reasons for coming to university

According to Bourdieu (1977:214), habitus determines how we make choices to act in some ways and not others. Nussbaum (2000:31) concurs with Bourdieu's claim and suggests that people's choices are shaped by material as well as cultural circumstances, which affect what people hope for, what they fear and what they are able to do. Unlike Bourdieu's claim about social reproduction which provides little room for agency, the capabilities approach emphasizes the role of individual agency in making education-related choices within the confines of structural limitations. The assumption in Bourdieu's habitus is that students from under-privileged backgrounds, or backgrounds where parents are not educated, are less likely to be motivated to pursue higher education studies. Conversely, the data yielded by this study provide strong, convincing evidence which shows that most students were highly motivated to pursue higher education studies.

Admittedly, some students noted that the choice was a trade-off between finding employment in order to provide for their families or going to university. Undoubtedly, students from under-privileged backgrounds did see beyond matric; they too had big career dreams in spite

of their educational backgrounds or the educational backgrounds of their parents. As one student indicated:

After matric I was hoping that I will get a job because my mom was working in a shop. I am not from a rich family; I am actually from a very poor family. My mom was earning R900.00 a month. I was hoping to get a job so that I could help her with anything that needs to be done at home. However, I did not get a job so my mom told me to apply (Author's interview with Ayanda, 2012).

The response by Ayanda illustrates two things. Firstly, the socio-economic backgrounds of students may determine the choice to come to university. Secondly, human beings have the capacity to exercise agency/or come out of a specific habitus, hence the claim by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:135) that "habitus is not an unchanging fixed structure". At the same time, Bourdieu argues that the habitus of the middle class drives them to immediately submit to order (status) by refusing "what is any way denied and to will the inevitable" (Bourdieu, 1990:54). This was certainly not the case with student Ayanda. She did not just accept that she couldn't get a job and stayed at home; instead, she made the choice to go to university even in the awareness that she could not afford it. Similarly, two other students noted the following when asked to comment on their decision to go to university:

I did not want to stay in the location. I just wanted to come to university (Author's interview with Thelma, 2012).

That is a very difficult question because you will find that most of our teachers did not go to university, they went to colleges and technical colleges. As I said earlier that no one in my family is educated so I didn't really have any role model or anyone to motivate me. But I still decided to come because I wanted a better life for myself (Author's interview with Anelisa, 2012).

Therefore, it can be argued that sometimes the disadvantaged social and educational backgrounds of students actually propel them or motivate them to pursue higher education studies. Other reported reasons for coming to university were attributed to the need for "freedom and independence from parents" (Author's interview with Jabu, 2012).

For some students, university was an opportunity to pursue their dreams:

Since I spent my time working with UBOM, which is affiliated to Rhodes University Drama Department which is the best in the country, coming to university would provide me unlimited access to the Arts (Author's interview with Matthew, 2012).

All students indicated that they got to know about universities at career fairs where representatives from different universities gave talks about universities and assisted students with the application process by providing them with application forms and prospectuses. Interviews with students abound with evidence which reveals that the specific decision to come to Rhodes University was underpinned by the need to be closer to home, perceived prestigious status of the university and, more importantly, the need for an engaged learning experience through close relationships with lecturers. Students seemed to assume that the small size of the university would automatically mean close relationships between students and lecturers, as well as more access to support structures in the university. When asked to give reasons for coming to Rhodes University, some students noted the following:

I chose to study at Rhodes because it is a nice and small university that would allow me to adapt better to university. I was appealed by the idea that lecturers make time for their students and that Rhodes is one of the best institutions to study humanities (Transition to higher education personal reflection by Grace, 2012).

It's one of the best institutions and my friends are here, I didn't want to come to Rhodes, I wanted to go to Cape Town or Port Elizabeth, but then my friends told me about Rhodes how good it is and the support here compared to other universities (Author's interview with Thelma, 2012).

The above motivations, which are representative of students' general motivations for coming to Rhodes University, could be conceptualised as 'freedoms' or 'agency' opportunities (Walker, 2006:34). It is clear from the above that the availability of academic support is of importance to anyone coming into an unfamiliar academic space. Interestingly, in the case of Extended Studies students, agency opportunities in the form of support created contradictions due to the stigma attached to the Extended Studies programme. As will be noted later, students resented the perceptions about ES as being for 'slow', 'dull', 'under-privileged', 'poor' kids. At the same time, they valued it for providing the support and a safe space for them as they were gradually introduced to the new ways of doing, thinking and learning in university. These contradictions are illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

I got so angry after attending my first class of Extended Studies. I had received a letter to say that it was going to be mostly black people in the class; I did not know what that meant. In the letter they included stories from former Extended Studies students. The stories were perfect as they spoke about what we would benefit from ES. However being on ES was a shameful thing. Having known it for a while now, it is helpful yes but there are still people who believe that this place is for dummies. Mainstream students call us special kids (Author's interview with Skumbuzo, 2012).

It can also be argued that the decision to come to university was not well thought through for some students:

To be honest, I did not have a clear picture of what coming to university meant, then it was all about moving away from home, free from school, having my own life. Then when I got here and started attending lectures, I got so confused with the courses and the way of teaching. And you know like at school the teacher will say something and write it on the board, and you just copy it down, or give you a pamphlet and you read it and you will all make notes in class. But then you come here and you are like oh my God what is going on things are moving so fast (Author's interview with Zoleka, 2012).

I did not know anything about university or my career path, all I knew was that I wanted to be a lawyer but I did not know how to go about it... I struggled to get finances for university so I had to take a gap year and then when I applied to Rhodes, they accepted me and here I am (Author's interview with Lundi, 2012).

In light of the motivations given for coming to university, one can argue that coming to university was seen as the expected standard progression in one's academic career – that is after matric, you go to a tertiary institution. Universities as opposed to technikons were reported to be preferable given the assumption that a university degree guarantees one's financial security. It is therefore not surprising that students revealed very superficial understandings of what it means to be in a university. Clearly, though, the opportunity to come into a university context – an unfamiliar field for many – created such an awareness of hidden passions and purpose in life. One interesting example is the case of a mainstream⁵⁰ student who, prior to coming to university, went to study for a BA in Theology. He ended up being expelled because, as he claimed:

I used to talk a lot, if I am not comfortable with something, I would speak out and express my opinion about everything. That didn't sit well with some people, that's why I was expelled...in varsity as I have said I am able to at least express myself, there is that space, there is that opportunity and then you are just able to explore a lot of other ideas as well because basically what informs everything that you say and do is based on your beliefs and those that are held by the community ... In theology, you do not question certain things and there are absolutes, this is just what it is, and there is no other way around it. In academia, what is exciting is that there

⁵⁰Bongani is one of the few mainstream students that were interviewed. He was particularly interviewed to verify claims made by ES students. First year ES students claimed that mainstream students also struggled with the same things with which they struggled. Therefore, in order to get a sense of these claims, a few first year students were randomly selected from each of the departments that offer Extended Studies.

are no absolutes and you cannot claim that this is the one truth because I feel that if you have to use the God arguments it is an escape. You end up sounding like you are breaking a record; it does not challenge you to actually look at something deeper because that is supposed to be the end of the argument . But the argument has to continue, the conversation has to carry on and that is one of the main reasons that university attracted me (Author's interview with Bongani, 2012).

So university in this regard was an eye opening experience for students in that it revealed the valued freedoms that students may not be aware of, for example the capability of voice in the case of Bongani. As will be noted later, the awareness from university experience sometimes explains why Extended Studies students do well in spite of their poor educational and social backgrounds. It also explains why some students don't do well and hence end up doing completely different degrees after the first year of ES or leave to pursue non-academic careers. The following section provides a discussion on the transition to higher education. It can be argued that students' experiences and adjustment processes during the transition to higher education are largely influenced by the relationship between what they bring (cultural capital and experiences from previous educational and social backgrounds), perceptions of the field, and the structural relations and valued capital in the field.

7.4 Making the transition to two simultaneous fields

Bourdieu's field concept makes it possible to construct higher education/university and the Extended Studies Programme as independent fields and social spaces. As argued in Chapter Four, fields are structured by their own unique internal mechanisms of development. Specifically, the intellectual field of university education or higher education "is conceptualized as a field with a high degree of autonomy in that it generates its own values and behavioral imperatives that are relatively independent of forces emerging from economic and political fields" (Naidoo, 2004:458). Higher education as a field thus functions to preserve its field-specific resources, which appear in the form of academic capital. Naidoo (2004:458) defined academic capital as "an institutionalized form of cultural capital based on properties such as prior educational achievement, a 'disposition' to be academic (seen, for example, in a manner of speech and writing), and specially designated competencies".

Accordingly, the positions of agents in the field are determined by the amount of academic capital possessed in relation to other occupants. This inevitably places agents in dominant

or subordinate positions. In view of the above, Wacquant (2006:8) suggests that any explanation of social events or patterns within a field and its occupants requires one to “inseparably dissect both the social constitution of the agent and the make-up of the particular social universe within which she operates as well as the particular conditions under which they come to encounter and impinge upon each other”. In a similar vein, Maton (2005:689) also argues that “the relations comprising a field are not limited to interactions between agents” but are “revealed through analysis of the field’s underlying structuring principles”.

An understanding of the transition processes of Extended Studies students requires one to firstly locate the students in the field to which they are transitioning. Given Bourdieu’s field characteristics, the schooling system, university education, and the Extended Studies programme are constructed in this study as independent fields in their capacity as knowledge spaces. It is argued that students transitioned from the schooling system and simultaneously into higher education and the Extended Studies Programme. The Extended Studies Programme is constructed as a field within a field. This means that while it is generally governed by higher education principles, it generates its own mechanisms which are only recognized and functional within its boundaries. Examples of the field specific resources or capital can be expressed in terms of the admission criteria, markers of achievement, curriculum design and structure and lecturer-student relationship, to mention a few. The following section explores students’ academic and social experiences as they made the transition from school to higher education.

7.5 Student experiences during the transition: navigating two fields - the Extended Studies Programme and the broader university

The transition processes, experiences and challenges faced by students during the first few months of university draw our attention to the educational and social backgrounds of students. Generally, students’ first impressions of the university during the transition were dependent on factors such as the level of academic and social integration, familiarity with ways of thinking, doing and being in the new university context, institutional culture seen in the values of the university (for example, community, diversity, etc.) and also a match or mismatch between the perceived notions of the university and the reality experienced. According to one mainstream lecturer, coming to university gives students:

A freedom they would not otherwise experience at home. It can be a liberating experience and concurrently oppressing in different ways for different students... ES students are often angry at their marginal status as

they are looked down upon. At the same time, they have access to different things: extra support, a community, the library, and internet – things they would not have at home. So for them coming to university is contradictory in some ways, good at times and bad at times (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012).

In the case of the ES students, this contradiction can be argued to emanate from the status of students as agents in two simultaneous fields – the university field and the ES field. Although ES is a field within the university, it generates values, rules, ways of being, codes of conduct, and markers of achievement specific to its boundaries as a field. Given the integrated structure of the current programme, students were members in both fields since they navigated the two simultaneously. As will be shown in the following discussions, the amount of capital possessed by each student determined their positions in each of these fields. Importantly, given the fact that the structure of the two fields differed in some significant ways, students occupied different positions in each of the two fields. This had implications for how students experienced and perceived ES and the university in general. At the same time, it raised identity issues that students worked through as they made the transition to and progressed through higher education.

For many students coming from high school, entering university was an exciting experience as it signaled the beginning of independence, a fresh start and a chance to pursue dreams. In the case of students from middle class backgrounds, the Rhodes University context was a completely new and exciting space, given the access to privileges and resources that students were denied in their homes and previous schooling backgrounds. Certainly, the impression conveyed by the majority of the students was that they were generally impressed by the level of social integration:

I got into res⁵¹ during O Week and Rhodes has this thing, it is very welcoming, you feel that warmth. If you live in res there are so many privileges, they want you to know people, you meet a lot of people. I enjoyed and felt welcomed, everything was so good. Although I had been robbed on my way to Rhodes and did not have anything, it just felt good to be at Rhodes (Author's interview with Lundi, 2012).

It was a great experience, the first time I got to res I met this guy, he was from Johannesburg, he was very friendly, it was very nice to meet someone from somewhere else, I lived in Johannesburg for few years, and I was still very young then, so it was very nice. We met and interacted with different people, white girls, girl from Zimbabwe, different races, it was a great

⁵¹ Res is short for university residence or campus accommodation for students

experience. We learnt so many things; especially during (serenades) we met people from diverse cultures and backgrounds (Author's interview with Thelma, 2012).

The above interview excerpts were with specific reference to orientation week. Unfortunately, the excitement portrayed above died in the first week of lectures as students started attending classes in both mainstream and Extended Studies:

The first day, we went to a mainstream class. It was overwhelming, there was so much information but when I got to the Extended Studies class, the lecturer made it so much easier, she explained things; she actually calmed us down, because we were excited and nervous at the same time. The mainstream lecturer really overwhelmed me, I was really scared, you know, big lectures, there were asking questions and I had no idea what he was talking about (Author's interview with Thelma, 2012).

During the mainstream lecture, I was so confused, I was like "what's going on" but I couldn't show it because I was like people will think, this one is stupid or retarded, something like that (Author's interview with Mandisa, 2012).

Another post graduate student also indicated the similar sentiments as he reflected on the first six months in university:

I still own my journal that I was writing everything in my first year, especially the first six months, I will never forget that time. Firstly the environment that I was exposed to, which was very different, waking up in the morning, people in the corridors, if you are in res you are speaking English, you go to showers, everything is English. Even the behavior is very different. That was difficult for me to cope. You go to lectures, everything is done by time, the lecture is conducted in English, sometimes you do not understand, you have to listen and at the same time you have to take notes, no one you could talk to if you do not understand something, so it was difficult for me to adapt socially, because as English is not my mother tongue for my first year it was very difficult. Sometimes in lectures you do not even understand the language, like when you are reading the reading or the textbook, you have to have a dictionary with you before you understand the context of what you are doing, and then it was painful, but yeah.....I decided to keep it so that even today or later I can read what I went through, because that was a very drastic change in my life. Although I lived and was raised in Grahamstown, when I came to Rhodes I felt like I was in a different city or even country (Author's interview with Anelisa, 2012).

These sentiments are reflective of a 'fish out water' experience. As such, they need to be framed within an understanding of the schooling backgrounds of ES students.

7.5.1. Transition from high school to higher education: a fish out of water experience

To understand why some students felt like “fish out of water” – when the objective conditions of the habitus are not met as argued in Chapter Four – I refer to students’ comparisons of university learning and learning in high school. In doing so, the challenges faced during the transition are also highlighted. Moreover, student experiences also draw attention to specific field structures and relationships which, in the South African context, are important in evaluating the terrain of the field in terms of how it has changed over time. While student experiences may be attributed to personal backgrounds, they in significant ways reveal aspects of the field that may need to change in order to change those specific experiences.

Insight into the social and educational environments that students come from has the potential to shed more light on student experiences of the teaching and learning environment provided by higher education institutions. This also provides explanations for why some students struggle or adapt more easily during the transition to higher education. When comparing university to high school, many students referred to the close relationships between teachers and students, the workload compared to university workload, teaching approaches, level of independence and availability of resources. In light of the above, students noted the following:

The difference is that, in a classroom, it is easy to communicate with your teacher in high school. You can always go to your teacher after the classes. You are friends with your teachers, then here we are a huge number, and there is a lot of pressure. In high school, I used to be in the top 2-3 but now that has changed. I feel like I am failing here (Author’s interview with Siphokazi, 2012).

One of the reasons why I ended up leaving university was that I had problems adjusting in terms of the content covered in class, method of teaching and the teaching personnel. Critical engagement in HE was also tricky for me, I could not get my head around that. Coming from an Afrikaans public school, it was difficult to engage at that level given that we had been taught to write content disseminated in class. So it was quite challenging. (Author’s phone interview with Desmond, 2013).

It was better in high school, here if you do not take down the notes, they move on, and I felt intimidated and scared to ask the lecturer. At least in high school you can go and ask your teacher because you are familiar with them. Also the teachers and the resources here, in Mary Waters we did not have computers, so things like typing assignments and the way of teaching is completely new to me (Author’s interview with Thelma, 2012).

At Rhodes, you are given summaries from several books and you have to read the rest on your own. In high school, the teacher goes through the whole textbook page by page and explains everything to you (Transition to education reflection, 2012).

The above in a way gives an indication of the things that students value and expect as they undergo the transition into higher education. Importantly, as students go through schooling in specific educational backgrounds they develop certain competences which they bring to higher education. Based on the above, it can be argued that the schooling background develops students' capabilities in academic, social and personal competencies. What becomes important is the extent to which such developed competencies are valued and recognized in new learning institutions such as higher education.

Of significant importance are the academic competencies developed, which in most cases manifest themselves in the form of literacy practices. These practices are a result of learning approaches used in high school, the place of the student or teacher in the teaching and learning process and the curriculum, which is, in most cases, underpinned by hidden assumptions about how knowledge should be received and interpreted. A good example is comprehension exercises where students are required to answer questions based on specific texts. There is often no room for other interpretations apart from what is provided by the text. In this case, the assumption here is that the text is the only source of information that can be used. This affects the reading culture of students, hence the 'text book' mentality as opposed to reading widely. One student put this into perspective:

It is very different, because when you are in high school you are just given notes, the textbooks; everything is there, like when you are writing a test you know if you just read the textbook, you will be ok. You don't have to study other books like the case in university. You just take notes from the textbook. But when you come here at Rhodes, you have to attend lectures, you can't just sit in your room and study the textbook, you won't understand the stuff unless you do other readings and attend lectures. It is very different, high school and university, the amount of work is another thing (Author's interview with Nokuthula, 2012).

With the exception of a few students, the majority of students on the programme came from educational backgrounds whose learning approaches were arguably based on rote learning models. This is not to suggest that students from private schools enter higher education adequately prepared for its rigors. They, too, came with values and ways of doing and being that are not necessarily valued in higher education. One mainstream lecturer supported this claim and argued that:

The experience of learning at Rhodes can be intimidating especially given the kinds of knowledge we engage with in higher education. All students are completely new to the disciplines, their preconceived notions are challenged. The role of a university is to confront our pre-conceived ideas, to upset our world, challenge, provoke and make the familiar unfamiliar. This can be unsettling for students who are not exposed to this level of engagement. Some social backgrounds do not provide students with the social capital to come into contexts such as Rhodes. For instance, students for whom both parents are academics would adjust more rapidly (Author's interview with Lorraine, 2012).

Interviews with ES students from private schools revealed that their schooling backgrounds made it easier for them to adjust to university when compared to their counterparts from public schools. With respect to adapting to the ways of learning in university, one student noted the following:

Because I did computer literacy in high school, I was able to adapt quickly and get things done. Like excel, I never did excel in high school, but because I could use a computer, I adapted easily. Now we are going to be doing presentations, work in groups, that is something that I was exposed to (Author's interview with Grace, 2012).

In light of the claim by Lorraine that engagement in university can be unsettling for some students, a former ES student indicated how she was a bit uncomfortable and confused about why certain topics were covered in a particular course as well as what the theories actually meant:

There was a topic we did in politics, and the topic was controversial because they were talking about the superiority of the white people and black inferiority. Therefore, in mainstream, people made racial comments and personally, I do not like everything to be made about race. Given South Africa's history, people still feel sensitive towards race issues and race topics, although as wrong as it seems I would rather just skip the topic because everyone seems to be making everything about race. I may not know much about what happened or the emotional scars that people faced but I noticed that on a day-to-day basis people still make comments. And in Sociology as well, this whole thing about the feminism stuff, I feel like guys don't understand what women do so for me growing up with a single-parent and having my mother as the only parent that I had was sort of different especially hearing people saying that men are still superior, I get it. It is still the reality but you cannot be so naïve and not recognize the women's role in the society (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

Apart from the challenges as a result of new and unfamiliar disciplines offered in university, most of the challenges faced by students seemed to have been a result of their educational backgrounds. Interviews with the Extended Studies students revealed several aspects of the teaching and learning systems in secondary schools which placed students in

different positions as they made the transition to higher education. These aspects need to be evaluated in the context of the purpose of higher education and what is valued and recognised in higher education.

7.5.1.1 Exploring the indicators of rote learning/Freire's 'banking education' approaches

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977:210) conceived of the French schooling system as a vehicle for the transmission of inequalities through its consecration of merits and gifts of the bourgeoisie. Although they proposed a rational pedagogy which attempts to “counteract inequalities in the cultural preparation of different classes” by “inculcating the dominant culture into disadvantaged groups”, Freire would see “in this the perfection of domination” (Von Holdt, 2012:1). As such he sought an alternative pedagogy “that extricates and cultivates the good sense that remains within the oppressed despite internalized oppression – a pedagogy that starts out from lived experience” (Von Holdt, 2012:1). Freire advocated a “problem-posing” education in contrast to a banking approach in which the task of the teacher is to “fill the students with content of his narration” which “leads the student to memorise mechanically” (Freire, 2005, 71-72). Freire’s conception of the ‘banking system of education’ resembles the assumptions and implications of rote learning evident in former DET schools in South Africa.

Freire’s descriptions of the banking model were evident in students’ accounts of teaching and learning in their previous schooling backgrounds. Those backgrounds are what students transition from as they enter higher education and the Extended Studies Programme. As highlighted above, the banking approach turns students into “containers” and “receptacles” which receive and give back the received information (Freire, 2005:72). When asked to compare teaching and learning in university with teaching and learning in secondary school, students generally indicated that all they needed was to remember and cram the material taught in class as opposed to critically reflecting and researching further as is the requirement in higher education and the Social Sciences in particular. As one student disclosed:

In high school, you would read life Sciences textbook – chromosomes are attached to each other and that is exactly what you would write on a question paper. In university, it is different; you have to think outside the box. It is shared learning, with your peers and all of that. High school was straightforward – chromosomes are chromosomes. But in varsity you get different kinds of people who know different things and you incorporate that, it’s amazing (Author’s interview with Bongi, 2012).

...in secondary, we got everything from the teachers. If you are going to read, you just need to read the notes that they gave you. But here you have to take those notes, go back and read more on those notes, like find more, do some research also to get more understanding (Author's interview with Marcus, 2012).

For Freire (2005:74), such an approach to education in which students just receive and regurgitate the taught material minimizes and reduces creativity in them. As such "they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical faculties". Whilst the above is true about former DET schooling, it can be argued that rote learning is also evident in some private schools. A student from a prestigious private school noted the following when asked to comment on whether he experienced any challenges during his transition to higher education:

Challenges yes, I think, the work because in high school what they do, the teacher gives you notes, come exams or the tests you give them back their notes. But here they give you brief notes, but you have to go and find out more. So it is like you have to do your own research, you have to read more because they can't babysit you. .. They give you the book, but they don't really tell you what the book says (Author's interview with Aaron, 2012).

The above raises questions about the extent to which private schooling prepares students for engagement in higher education contexts. Similarly, one also questions the validity of assumptions made about the level of preparedness of students admitted to the mainstream. Although the new National Senior Certificate (NSC) curriculum introduced in 2008 is designed to "encourage a move away from rote learning and content transmission" through a "learner-centred, activity-based" pedagogical approach (Grusendorff, Booyse & Burroughs, 2010:8), this is not usually the case on the ground:

A learner centered approach and activity based approach is currently not always easy to implement in many South African school contexts, where classrooms are overcrowded and poorly resourced, and where educators do not all have the necessary skills to implement this approach effectively. In this respect, the curriculum for the NSC is aimed at an ideal, which will need to be achieved gradually through improved educator training and the steady resourcing and improved management of schools (Grusendorff, Booyse & Burroughs, 2010:40).

Whilst the availability of resources is not necessarily an issue in private schools, the above can also be argued to apply to private schools as well. Freire's alternative to rote learning or the 'banking' approach is a "problem-posing" education which "breaks with the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education" by promoting dialogue which allows both student and teacher to learn from each other (Freire, 2005:80). Such pedagogy is arguably

dependent on institutional cultures in terms of what is valued, who is valued and how students are perceived in a particular context. For this reason, the availability of resources does not guarantee a more engaged and learner centred pedagogy as envisaged by the NSC curriculum or other curriculums such as IB⁵² offered in South African private schools.

The impact of rote learning as noted above needs to be understood in light of the purpose and role of universities which exist to “invite people into the knowledge spaces, to push knowledge spaces and to help people become their own knowledge producers” (Author’s interview with Lorraine, 2012). Similar sentiments were noted by Seligman who argued that:

In our contemporary world, universities have a variety of functions, but primarily a university exists for the pursuit of truth. Its essential form is a community of scholars searching for truth and instructing others. These two functions research and teaching are linked together. Without the continual seeking to extend the boundaries of knowledge and understanding, teaching *atrophies*; and the duty of initiating his apprentices into the mastery of the knowledge which he has won for himself can be the research worker’s strongest *stimulus* (Seligman, 2012:1).

The above suggests the visibility of students in terms of voice in the construction of knowledge. The educational backgrounds from which most Extended Studies and other mainstream students come from do not expose them to the above-portrayed level of engagement. As suggested by Freire, rote learning imposes a passive role on students in which they accept without questioning or thinking beyond the taught content (Freire: 2005:73). In support of the above, one mainstream lecturer argued that:

DET schooling produces a certain kind of subjectivity which is not well suited to the academic environment that we have here. It is a disciplined subjectivity characteristic of rote learning, obedience, acceptance of fine truths. The subjectivity inculcated in Model C learning is imaginative and free (Author’s interview with Lorraine, 2012).

7.5.1.2 Mother tongue tuition

Apart from rote learning, another feature of previous schooling that poses a problem is the medium of instruction. Students from public schools indicated that they were taught subjects like English literature and Geography in their mother tongue. This is completely different from university where the medium of instruction is English.

In my school, our teachers were Xhosas. They taught us in Xhosa most of the time, even during English lessons. If you are reading a story, you will

⁵² IB is a synonym for International Baccalaureate.

read a paragraph and then they will translate it in Xhosa and say this is what is going on here. So when one goes to university there's no one there to translate for you, you read those books and the English is very difficult, you have to find the meanings of the words used in the text and sometimes you read a page three times in order to understand (Author's interview with Lundi, 2013).

You know my school was a Xhosa school, so you learn and think in Xhosa. Even when we did English poems. They would go over them in Xhosa, explaining to us in Xhosa. It was the same with other subjects like Geography. I think they underestimated us. We understood the material better in class but come exam time you would have to go and write the subject in English and translate to English (Author's interview with Bandile, 2012).

Language is in this sense a 'conversion' factor, which, as Walker (2006:120) argues, "impact(s) on the extent to which a person is able to make use of the resources available to them to create capabilities or opportunities". In light of this, Walker poses the question "Do some people get more opportunities to convert their resources into capabilities than others?" (Walker, 2005:109). This is an important question when evaluating the work done on the Extended Studies Programme and the ways in which the language issue is addressed to enable students to convert resources into capabilities. The same can be argued about computer literacy and familiarity with the ways of thinking and doing in university.

As highlighted in Chapter Six, students took a computer literacy course, which introduced them to various ways of using computers for university-specific learning processes. Considering language as a conversion factor, the Extended Studies Programme approaches language as a skill that can be learnt rather than taught as students participate in social and academic activities. Like Vygotsky, Extended Studies lecturers are of the view that "the way children learn is by internalizing the activities, habits, vocabulary and ideas of the members of the community in which they grow up" (Vygotsky, cited in Anwaruddin, 2012:14). As such, Extended Studies lecturers emphasised the point that students learn the language as they develop skills in different disciplines. As highlighted in Chapter Six, Extended Studies students do not take separate language courses, instead the language literacy practices are integrated with the course content. This approach to language problems was clearly articulated by one Extended Studies lecturer:

... a lot of the language I do not even bother with. My opinion is that students understand the concept and build the arguments using the concepts so even when they make grammar mistakes, I am not that concerned with it.

You learn to fix the grammar mistakes from reading. So getting people to read is important for me (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

In light of the importance of reading in developing language skills, one ES student of French origin corroborated the above claim:

No one taught me English, I realized that if you don't know English, you can't get anywhere in South Africa, I needed to push myself, so every time after school I'll go and look for dictionaries and read books and try to understand what the books says. I remember my first book was the Animal Farm... I read Animal Farm and I did not get the book at all. So what I did was I started translating the book from word to word. I took the dictionary, for example, if it says "the pig died" then I'll go to the dictionary and check what's pig in French, ok that's what, and then the next word so the whole book I did that. So I did that with everything that I read (Author's interview with Aaron, 2012).

Similar sentiments about the importance of reading were noted by another student from a public schooling background:

I had to grow and see that this is varsity if I want to achieve what I came here for, I need to talk to people, I need to communicate and I needed to read because I think reading helps with the way you speak English..... Yes every time I read a book I would read aloud, so that I could hear what I'm saying (Author's interview with Ayanda, 2012).

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the social and educational backgrounds of students with a view to show their impact on student choices to enrol in university, as well as their experiences during the transition to higher education. In doing so, the challenges faced by the Extended Studies students during the transition to higher education were identified. Rote learning evident in students' description of the previous schooling and the issue of mother tongue tuition in previous schooling was identified as the main causes of the challenges faced by students as they transitioned to higher education. Admittedly, adjustment challenges during the transition to education are common to all students across the board. However, for Extended Studies students, these challenges were arguably expressed in the context of a comparison between teaching and learning in Extended Studies and the mainstream.

The notions of habitus and institutional habitus are useful in understanding students' first impressions and experiences of teaching and learning in university. This chapter has revealed that while cultural capital in the form of educational and social backgrounds affects students' experiences in higher education, the main reason for the challenges

experienced by new students is a result of differences in capital valued in different fields and the nature of games engaged in. For example, while learning in secondary schooling is primarily about regurgitation of taught material, higher education learning involves knowledge construction – that is extending the boundaries of taught knowledge. It is therefore, the field specific admission fee, resources and games that create tensions and contradictions in the way new students experience learning and teaching in higher education. An exploration of institutional practices has the potential to reveal the extent to which students adapt to the demands imposed by an unfamiliar field.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COPING WITH THE TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION: EXPLORING STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF THE EXTENDED STUDIES PROGRAMME

8.1 Introduction

Chapter Seven highlighted some of the problems experienced by students as they made the transition to higher education. This chapter presents the structure and agency relationship by exploring students' experiences and perceptions of the Extended Studies Programme. In interpreting student experiences of the programme, the ideas of Bourdieu, hooks and Sen are applied in order to illuminate the agency and structure relationship. Student experiences are viewed in relation to the broader role of the programme – which is to provide students with epistemological access to the university.⁵³ Interrogating student experiences is particularly important in revealing the impact of institutional arrangements on learning. As such, we ask the question, in what ways do institutional practices and structures expand individual freedoms (in the capabilities approach) or individual capital (in Bourdieu's framework)?

Whilst Bourdieu emphasizes a deterministic reproduction of inequalities and privilege through the education system, the capabilities approach argues that there is a room for the “rupturing of the habitus” through adaptations to new forms of freedom or ‘unfreedoms’ (Walker, 2006:58). These new freedoms in the form of Extended Studies support, for example, are agency opportunities that enable students to act in productive ways that enable them to achieve desired outcomes such as being educated/getting a university degree. The chapter grounds pedagogical relations in university in the capability approach by identifying the freedoms/agency opportunities that students value as they come into education contexts. In addition to this, the chapter explores other ‘unfreedoms’ apart from the ones mentioned in the last chapter – which, in Bourdieu's terms, result in symbolic violence or ‘fish out of water’ experiences. Lastly, students' reflections on the perceived impact of the programme are also discussed.

⁵³ The notion of epistemological access has roots in the work of Morrow (2003:130) who notes that epistemological access is aimed “at preparing students to gain deeper academic engagement with their modules so they can do better in their later and more advanced subsequent modules”.

8.2 Students' first impressions of the Extended Studies Programme

By the time students arrived at the university, most of them were already aware of their placement on Extended Studies. Nevertheless, it appears as though most students arrived at university without a clear understanding of the programme or what it would entail. This is in spite of the fact that the university had sent out information on the programme. Interviews with students revealed high levels of uncertainty and confusion around the purpose of the programme in the first week of lectures. This observation was also corroborated by Extended Studies lecturers who reported that the first week of class was overwhelming for students as they came into reality with not only teaching and learning in higher education but also with their status in the university as Extended Studies students (Author's interview with Denise, 2012).

According to the Extended Studies lecturers, students raised the following questions in line with their enrolment on the Extended Studies Programme:

- i) Why were they placed on the programme?
- ii) Why was the class small?
- iii) Why was the class predominantly black?⁵⁴
- iv) How was educational disadvantage conceptualized in relation to admission requirements?

These questions are clearly illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

The first thing that came to my mind is that we were all black, no white kid was there, and I was like ok! It was black kids, who went to disadvantaged schools because there were no white kids there. It was the first thing that I noticed, everyone was black (Author's interview with Marcus, 2012).

I went to Extended Studies on the first day. It was hard to accept because it was only black students there, and we had no choice of subjects, so it was hard to accept that (Author's interview with Sandile, 2012).

Of all the students who were interviewed, only one seemed to know about Extended Studies and did not question anything, as she was grateful for an opportunity to come into higher education given her low points:

I already knew a lot about ES, so I did not have that thing, that it has a stigma, I knew I was getting extra help. I spoke to people who had been in

⁵⁴ As noted on page 1, in the South African education context, the 'black' racial category refers to black South African, Indian and Coloured.

the ES class who are now doing their 4th year (Author's interview with Thelma, 2012).

Another student reported that she knew about Extended Studies; at the same time she seemed to suggest that the reason for enrolment of only black students was a racial segregation issue:

I expected to see only black students in the ES class, I didn't see Rhodes as a place to undermine white people like that (Author's interview with Bokang, 2012).

To address the issues highlighted above, all three Extended Studies lecturers pointed out that they spent the first week of lecturers giving students further information on the programme, particularly why they were placed on the programme and how the programme would assist them in the transition to university. Students' perceptions of the Extended Studies Programme were largely influenced by their first impressions of the programme and the racial demographics of the group as well as the perceptions of other students within the university.

Students' understanding or portrayed knowledge about Extended Studies indicated either an appreciation or dissatisfaction with the programme. The feelings were quite mixed for students from different educational and social backgrounds. Some students questioned the criteria particularly the issue of the schooling background and points. As highlighted in Chapter Six, the Extended Studies Programme draws students from poor educational backgrounds as well as students who do not meet the requirements in terms of the admission points. When asked to comment on their understanding of the purpose of Extended Studies, some students highlighted the following points:

I think ES is a very nice way of taking people into the university, and I think it is functioning. Isn't the purpose of Extended Studies is to help bridge the gap between high school and university and I think it does do that a lot (Author's interview with Jabu, 2012).

Our lecturer explained the criteria for ES and gave reasons like educational backgrounds and how Rhodes tries to make it up to those students by admitting them. When she explains it that way, we appreciate it (Author's interview with Skumbuzo, 2012).

I would say Extended Studies is like when you build a house; you have to build the foundation first. That's how I see Extended Studies as a foundation for us people who didn't have enough points to get into mainstream, for those who didn't get enough preparation in school on what to expect in tertiary. I feel like Extended Studies is like a foundation for us

to be a better fit for mainstream which is not different from what we have now, it's just that we are getting that extra help (Author's interview with Matthew, 2012).

Some students responded by questioning the criteria for admission into the Extended Studies Programme. For most students coming from private schools, it did not make sense to them why they had been enrolled on Extended Studies:

When my sisters found out that I was on ES, they were furious. They really were, and when I tried to understand why they were so upset about it, they were like no you are not stupid. In that class they give extra English classes, you went to private schools and obviously you know how to speak English properly and stuff like that. So I was like oh my gosh I'm an idiot that's why I'm on ES (Author's interview with Karen, 2012).

Interestingly, mainstream students seemed to reduce educational disadvantage to class issues such as taste, mannerisms which confirms Bourdieu's claim that cultural capital is expressed in terms of "tastes for certain cultural products,... manner of deportment, speech, style, dress, and the like"(Bourdieu, 1974:39). One mainstream student seemed to question the criteria for enrolment in Extended Studies by arguing that the accent of his Extended Studies friend did not subscribe to the calibre of students on Extended Studies. According to one student:

My friends were on the mainstream and I had no problem explaining that I was on ES. I used to get weird responses like, you are on the mainstream but you speak in a certain way. And I would ask myself "but how do ES people speak"? I spoke in a particular way because of my background and the schooling that I got, like a mainstream person basically. So it wasn't really different. For others I know, like this guy in my ES class, he was struggling to communicate his ideas to the people on the mainstream, so obviously he had a problem because his speaking, the way he spoke, he had the deep accent and it was hard to understand him when he spoke (Author's interview with Luthando, 2012).

Although some students openly admitted that they had gone through public schooling, they nonetheless questioned the fact that they were constructed as 'disadvantaged students' from disadvantaged schooling backgrounds. One particularly articulate young female student, from a Model C school and possibly working class background⁵⁵complained:

⁵⁵ Social class was ascertained by considering factors such as educational backgrounds of students, educational backgrounds of parents, parents' employment status, nature of employment and contribution towards fees (See appendix 11 for a summary of these factors).

In my first year, my friends who had been on ES told me that when people think of ES, they think that they are poor, poor backgrounds and from poor schools with low points. It is not particularly true about everyone on ES. I am not from a disadvantage background, I mean what I understand about disadvantage is very different from what they perceive as disadvantage. To be here is not to be disadvantaged, to have a laptop is not to be disadvantaged, to be in res is not disadvantage and also having certain types of clothes is not disadvantage either. Being exposed to certain things and being so well spoken – that's not disadvantage (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

On the other hand, some students were quite content in Extended Studies and grateful for the opportunity for a variety of reasons. For some it was a second chance to pursue higher education studies following exclusion from other universities or dissatisfaction with conditions or courses offered at other universities. For others, it was an opportunity to get away from home:

I did not want to come to Rhodes but NMMU could only take me in June. I then decided to apply to Rhodes. Based on my results they asked me to write a test and they said I failed the test. They initially placed me on mainstream, but in January they put me on ES. I had 38 points, I did not care at that time, I did not want to stay in the location I just wanted to come to school (Author's interview with Penelope, 2012).

I was fine, because I wanted to be at Rhodes, I wanted to be in a university because I didn't get any place to any university, so it was fine, but then it was hard, I don't love anthropology, I did Sciences in school. I'm not a reader; I'm a practical person (Author's interview with Siphokazi, 2012).

One student who had been excluded at a Historically Black University pointed out that:

I was told that I had been put on Extended Studies because my points were low, they were not enough. I got 30 points, so for Rhodes it was not enough, but it was fine for me, because Rhodes is just the best, so I am willing to start all over again (Author's interview with Onica, 2012).

A local student on full financial aid who had failed to complete a diploma at a technikon due to illness pointed out that:

I was happy about ES; I was counting the years so I was like this would be ok with me. I am enjoying every minute of it, for me to go back to school, to be given information, that extra help that I get from ES. Rhodes is not like Pentech, Rhodes has more work than Pentech, so, I am enjoying every moment of it (Author's interview with Matthew, 2012).

Another student who later got an opportunity to go to mainstream after the June results but decided to stay on Extended Studies nonetheless, noted that:

I was not sad, I was actually happy to be on ES, I wanted this in a way. I was scared that maybe I was not ready for university because I was hearing rumours about mainstream. People were saying that university is hard, the standard is too high so I just said to myself let me try ES maybe I will get help here and there (Author's interview with Malibongwe, 2012).

The above sentiments are evidence of how the habitus – a product of various forms of socialisation – responds when it encounters an unfamiliar or familiar world. In view of this, Bourdieu (1990) argued that the encounters and experiences of habitus in new and unfamiliar fields produce:

A habitus divided against itself, in constant negotiation with itself and with its ambivalence, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities” (Bourdieu, 1999:511).

Implicit in the above interview excerpts is the view that the fields of Extended Studies and higher education are unfamiliar spaces for anyone entering them for the first time. Hence, the ‘fish out of water’ experience of the diverse range of students interviewed for the study. This is clearly expressed by the confusion, suspicions about the programmes and, most importantly, by a questioning of students’ social and academic identities. While Bourdieu’s cultural capital suggests that students from under-privileged backgrounds would be much more comfortable on encountering the Extended Studies field, which for many resembles previous schooling, this was not always the case. For example, whilst Anele indicated that she felt comfortable on Extended Studies, she still had reservations about the class size and the racial dynamics, which made her question the very criteria for admission on Extended Studies⁵⁶ (Author’s interview with Anele, 2012). It can, therefore, be argued that the “fish out of water experience” experienced by most students on their first day of Extended Studies lectures was not necessarily an issue of cultural capital possessed. Instead, it can be attributed to prior encounters with other fields – mainstream class in this case.

Along similar lines, Caroline Sarojin Hart (2013:163) suggested that sometimes people use their “experience of the broader field of education to develop understanding of the sub – field”, that is the Extended Studies field in this case. Moreover, Hart also made the point that even before students enter a field “the habitus is affected by an imagined immersion in that field”. For example, Bokang had heard about the Extended Studies Programme and thus pointed out that “she expected to see only black students” (Author’s interview with Bokang,

⁵⁶ See interview excerpt on page 188.

2012). This does not in any way suggest that she felt like a “fish in water” but her “imagined immersion” (Sarojin Hart, 2013:163) in the field certainly affected the extent to which she adapted to this unfamiliar field. Implied in this process of adapting is a self-conscious negotiation process, which is largely dependent on an individual’s cultural capital.

For this reason, an understanding of the student experience is of great importance as it reveals how diverse students negotiate not only access but also membership in unfamiliar fields. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:135) made the point that the habitus is not an “unchanging, fixed structure”; as such it can adapt to objective conditions which create the ‘fish out of water’ experience in this case. The following section details aspects of this negotiation process, particularly students’ experiences as they progressed through the programme.

8.3 Excitement, confusion, appreciation, frustration and contentment: experiences of the Extended Studies Programme

As indicated above, students developed mixed feelings about Extended Studies as they entered the higher education context. In this section, it is argued that these feelings and attitudes were influenced by their pre-conceived notions of a university and the role of Extended Studies, the way they were perceived as Extended Studies students by other people in the institution as well as their perceptions of the differences between Extended Studies and mainstream in terms of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, a closer look at the data reveals that students’ attitudes and perceptions of Extended Studies or the university shifted as they engaged in teaching and learning on both mainstream and Extended Studies. The shifts in thinking and attitudes towards Extended Studies will now be discussed in relation to the position of students on the broader university field, the ways in which they were perceived and constructed, the curriculum and pedagogical practices in mainstream and the Extended Studies Programme.

8.3.1 Identity crisis and the stigmatisation of Extended Studies students

In chapters Six and Seven, it was noted that students generally felt marginalised from the rest of the institution and this was further worsened by the stigma attached to the Extended Studies Programme and the students enrolled in the programme. It was also noted that even mainstream students struggled in their transition and this was attributed to an unfamiliarity with the university disciplines and ways of thinking and doing in university. Apart from mismatches between students’ cultural capital and the cultural capital of the university – expressed in the specific ways of thinking, being and doing in university, disciplinary knowledge and institutional cultures – which are normally experienced by all

students, the Extended Studies students experienced a further challenge which had to do with their learning identities and position in the university. It is clear from the interviews that the identity crisis experienced by students emanated from the separation of the programme from mainstream and the stigma attached to the programme and students enrolled in the programme.

Although students attended mainstream lectures and interacted with mainstream students in tutorials and residences, they nonetheless felt marginalised. The prevailing stereotypes of ES students were that they are ‘special’ ‘dumb’, ‘not clever’, ‘not smart’, ‘slow’, ‘incompetent’, ‘incapable’, and ‘illiterate’, among other labels.⁵⁷

I think people look at ES as a negative thing, because for example at the beginning of the year when you say that you are on Extended Studies automatically you give that image of you are not clever, you are not smart. People would be like “oh you are on Extended Studies, oh I’m on mainstream, so I’m going to have my three years and I’m going to leave here and you are going to stay longer” you are not smart enough that’s why they put you in Matric⁵⁸ (Author’s interview with Skumbuzo, 2012).

When you say, you come from ES; people think you are stupid or something. They do not take you seriously. At some point, I got 60% for an assignment in Sociology and this guy on mainstream got 50%. He was shocked when I told him; it’s as if he was not expecting me to get a good mark (Author’s interview with Marcus, 2012).

Sometimes we are perceived as, slow, incompetent. When you say you are on ES, then people will say oh that child. So people do know about us. I never used to feel comfortable telling people about ES but now I am because of the help I’m getting. I would not change a thing about ES (Author’s interview with Bonggi, 2012).

Some people say that we are in a day care centre. I don’t mind people’s opinions about Extended Studies, because the same person who says I’m in Extended Studies or day care centre will come to me and ask for help, so for me it’s better for me to be in the day care centre than to not know what I

⁵⁷ According to Extended Studies students interviewed for the study, these labels were used by mainstream students to refer to Extended Studies students (for example, Author’s interviews with Skumbuzo, Bonggi and Matthew). The interviews also suggest that these labels are not new but they have been in use for a long time. For example, Karen (quoted on page 178) indicated that her sister who studied at Rhodes University some years back complained about the programmes being for ‘stupid’ students.

⁵⁸ Matric is a condescending term for Extended Studies. Although Extended Studies students attend mainstream classes, some students don’t consider them as part of the mainstream because they attend extra lessons and only do two mainstream courses. The nature of work covered on mainstream (for example computer literacy and academic literacy) is considered by some students as matric work. This is regardless of the fact that not all schools offer academic literacy or computer literacy classes.

should do for my academics, I don't mind those people saying those words (Author's interview with Matthew, 2012).

In light of the stereotypes, other students seemed to suggest that having white students on the Extended Studies Programme would do away with the negative stereotypes. As one student suggested:

I still think there should be white people, even though we know that black people were previously disadvantaged, but still I feel that white people should get into ES. That way it will be more comfortable. If we had few white people who are doing Extended Studies, things would be different. Because now they may think that we are inferior (Author's interview with Lungile, 2013)

The above quote is very revealing in terms of racial identity politics and labels. Verna Denis (2007:1069) defined identity politics as the "process by which racially marginalized peoples resist colonization and oppression". Although apartheid is over, it remains uncontested that black people and women remain marginalised in the South African context. Moreover, even a decade after the end of apartheid, the slightest indication of segregation triggers racist suspicions and accusations. Given South Africa's history of racial segregation in education, it is not surprising that the racialised nature of the Extended Studies Programme was interpreted as a deliberate attempt to exclude certain students. Therefore, despite the transition to inclusive education, race still matters. Writing about anti-racist education, particularly how race has been used to justify inequality, Denis (2007:1069) argued that:

Race matters because members of society have internalised racist ideas about what skin colour tells about the value and worth of a person or a group of people. For example, difference in skin colour and other obvious physical characteristics are 'thought to explain perceived differences in intellectual physical and artistic temperaments and to justify distinct treatment of racially identified individuals and groups (Omi & Winant, 1986:63).

Implied in Lungile's quote is a racial identity issue, which arguably stems from racist ideas of the past and contemporary South Africa. Denis (2007:1070) argued "identity is a construction, a product, and an effect of social and historical relations". Although alternative access programmes such as the Extended Studies Programme are under-pinned by a commitment to equality, this however creates contradictions in the provision of Extended Studies. These contradictions stem from the fact that issues of educational disadvantage are primarily class issues, and these inevitably have racial implications in

South Africa. Therefore, whilst the programme is underpinned by commitments to equity, it is not seen as such due to the inevitable race issues that are layered on the programme.

At the same time, the presence of white people in any institution is considered a privilege for some students coming from public schools. As such, coming into a context like Rhodes University is considered as upward mobility in terms of class and social standing:

I wanted to come to Rhodes because it is in my town and most people say that Rhodes is a very good institution. Hence, I considered coming to Rhodes University. In the township, it is known as a white people's university, so I wanted to have that education (Author's interview with Anelisa, 2012).

I've never been really exposed to being with different nationalities of a wide variety, so it's been interesting because in res there are whites, Chinese. But here, I'm mostly surrounded by blacks in ES and my friends in res are Blacks, but I think, not to get too political I think there is still a bit of racism going on, because the whites are sticking together mostly and then the blacks group themselves (Bokang, 2012).

As Denis (2007:1069) suggested, issues of race and colour are used as indicators of value. This is evidenced by Anelisa's reason for coming to Rhodes University. Although some students were not very explicit about the conception of race as an indicator of value, their comparison of Rhodes University to particularly Historically Black Universities seemed to suggest that they perceived Rhodes University to be a good university because it is perceived as a white university. The above quotes suggest that students came with their own expectations, which are based on their perceptions of a white university. Hence, enrolment on Extended Studies (which is predominantly black) was easily reduced to racism as indicated by Bokang. The issue of race in the provision of Extended Studies creates contradictions, which raises suspicions about the purpose of the programme.

To return to the issue of labels used for ES students, Bjornsdottir (2010:1288) pointed out that labels can be understood as a 'nominal identity', i.e. "a name defined by legitimate institutions and imposed upon people". This is particularly true of the Extended Studies students in that they were positionally and legitimately positioned in the institution as 'educationally disadvantaged students'.⁵⁹ Therefore, the stigma and perceptions of the students can be argued to have emerged from this status. This was further reinforced by

⁵⁹ This is evidenced by the criteria for enrolment in Extended Studies, which specified that the programme was designed for educationally disadvantaged students. See Section 6.5.1.

factors such as special curriculum taken by ES students, separate classes and extra support as highlighted in Chapter Six.

The perceptions of Extended Studies as ‘matric’ or ‘day care centre’ are possibly as a result of the fact that students registered for two mainstream courses as opposed to four in the normal mainstream curriculum. It was reported that the stigmatisation of the ES students was predominantly by mainstream students as opposed to lecturers. Although mainstream lecturers did not appear to have any stereotypes about ES students or the programme, one Extended Studies lecturer noted the prevalence of sentiments such as “What do they even do in that programme?” (Author’s interview with Mangaliso, 2012). This is arguably an indication of a lack of validity of the programme by other academics. Therefore, whilst lecturers treated Extended Studies students like other mainstream students and did not make any distinctions per se, they also revealed some level of dissatisfaction with the programme. When asked to comment on their perceptions of the Extended Studies students, two mainstream lecturers noted the following:

You know I do not make such a distinction to be honest. Obviously, some people have less familiarity, reading, maybe something like second language; I actually don’t make that kind of a distinction. I think that while you might say that some students have got some of those so called deficits of background in schooling, other students have deficits namely: laziness, uselessness, drunkenness, lack of motivation, lack of will to succeed. Often I find in Extended Studies group, because there is no safety there, there is nobody to catch them, there is no dad’s business to go to when they complete their studies, there is no motivation⁶⁰ often, so I don’t want to construct these students as in fact they are often shining stars in terms of desire to learn and succeed (Author’s interview with Carolyne, 2012).

I encounter ES students as normal students, just as the mainstream students. Therefore, I cannot really differentiate, except that they normally sit in front (Author’s interview with Lorraine, 2012).

Given the way Carolyne perceived ES students as normal students with talent, it is therefore not surprising that she did not buy into the purpose of the programme. When asked to comment on her general understanding of the purpose of the Extended Studies Programme, she clearly stated that she was not a fan of Extended Studies:

Look I’m not a fan, I’m not a fan for a variety of reasons... making people feel more marginalized than they already feel, it is really bad, because you come in, you already feel marginalized because you went to a bad school,

⁶⁰ While the claim “there is often no motivation” may be contradictory, it should be interpreted in view of Bourdieu’s claim about middle class habitus which influences the decision to go to university or not.

English is your second language, you experience racism, whatever reasons that are making you feel marginalized, and now you get told ok now you are in this marginalized thing and you have to face the pain and sometimes people ask what is your fourth subject, and you are like Oh God I don't have a fourth subject. And there is all of that stuff that I think it adds to marginalization, I don't like it, I think that you do not have to be a brain surgeon to realize that Oh my God all those kids are black, there is that race thing that gets layered on to it (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

The issue of stigma or stereotypes provides new ways of conceptualising identity. Bourdieu's conception of habitus as a "socialised subjectivity" assumes a positional view of identity which implies that "social location determines subjective identity" (Bottero, 2010:4). While this may be true, such a conception of identity fails to acknowledge individual agency, which may be "disembedded from social constraints" (Bottero, 2010:4). The experience of stigma attached to the ES programme and students' responses to the stigma raises questions about the positional view of identity as suggested by Bourdieu. According to Bottero (2010:4), Tilly defined identity as a "blurred indispensable' concept which describes:

An actor's experience of a category, tie, role, network, group or organization, coupled with a public representation of that experience; [which] often takes the form of a shared story, a narrative (Tilly, cited in Bottero, 2010:4).

Implied in the above conception of identity is another aspect of identity, which stems from the "intersubjective relationship between agents" rather than strictly "interrelations between habitus and field" (Bottero, 2010:5). It is in this regard that the extent to which habitus deals with reflexivity in social life is questioned. The shifts in perceptions and arguably student identities as they navigate both the university and the Extended Studies fields indicate that Bourdieu's conception of a positional identity excludes other possibilities. An analysis of the different ways that students respond to the stigma attached to the programme and the factors underlying those responses raises the following questions:

- i) At what point and under what conditions do "dispositional identities convert into conscious calculation, representation and struggle?" (Bottero, 2010:8) and also
- ii) Is it possible to separate the social identity from the learning identity?

The capabilities approach provides analytical tools for addressing the above questions. In doing so, the tools further illuminate how students' perceptions and experiences change in response to specific structural conditions and relationships such as the culture of the

university, pedagogic action and the various ways of recognition and misrecognition in the university. It is worth noting that stereotypes about Extended Studies students are not just an attack on their personalities or personal identities; they are also an attack on the academic/learning identities of students. The following section illustrates the ways in which students develop an academic identity as they engage with learning on both Extended Studies and mainstream. It also explores the adjustment and coping mechanisms adapted by students in response to the stereotypes.

8.3.2 Changing perceptions of ES: appreciation, contentment and adjustment mechanisms

Apart from the stigma attached to Extended Studies, students' initial negative perceptions of Extended Studies were also influenced by the fact that they didn't have the freedom to choose courses as is the case with mainstream students, and also that they would take longer to complete their degrees. That being said, however, students were honest about how their perceptions shifted over time.

8.3.2.1 Recognizing the need for extra support

The experience of mainstream teaching and the workload involved scared the majority of the students, and this made them accept the support offered on Extended Studies. For instance, one student mentioned that:

I am now ok with being on ES. When you realize that you need something, there is no need to be ashamed. This is what is going to help me to get my degree in the end. The help that I get from Extended Studies, it is something that I will keep with me when I do my second year hopefully. In addition, when I get to second year, I will have to learn to do things on my own. I would say that Extended Studies is something that I needed and it is really helping me a lot (Author's interview with Matthew, 2012).

8.3.2.2 ES - the only opportunity to get access into university

On the contrary, whilst acknowledging that they eventually accepted Extended Studies, some students did not show any appreciation or indicate that they needed help. Instead, Extended Studies was seen as a means to an end as it provided the only option of getting into university:

I told myself that it is not about having that status anymore, it is about me being able to move on, being able to understand, it is not about having that high status anymore, it is about being able to understand and pass and get over and do the subjects that I want to do next year. Next year I'll be getting distinctions because I will be doing the courses that I love. I'm slowly coming to terms with the fact that I'm on ES, so it's fine. I wanted to be at Rhodes, I wanted to be in a university because I didn't get any place to any university because of my points (Author's interview with Siphokazi, 2012).

8.3.2.3 ES as community and a safe space

For hooks (1994:39), “it is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of student engagement”. According to Namulundah (1998:106), the portrayal of the classroom or schools as communities “avoids hierarchies in empowering and respecting the contribution of both students and teachers while honoring individual differences”. The above portrayed aspects of a community were evident in the interviews with Extended Studies lecturers and students. The Extended Studies Programme was portrayed as a safe space for students primarily because of the class size as well as teaching and learning approaches used in class. Although students were initially critical of the ES class size, they started appreciating the space of engagement offered by the class size. This is well reflected in their reflection on teaching in mainstream as well as the mainstream class sizes. For most students, Extended Studies resembled the academic space in the schooling system which made them feel comfortable. While the initial experience of Extended Studies was a ‘fish out of water experience’, this later changed. A more conscious negotiation of access into the Extended Studies and mainstream fields resulted in a ‘fish in water experience’ which made students adapt more to Extended Studies than mainstream. As Bourdieu & Wacquant argue:

And when habitus encounters a social world of which it the product, it is like a ‘fish in water’: it does not feel the weight of the water and takes the world about itself for granted (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:127).

For Extended Studies students, mainstream was an unfamiliar space in terms of the class size, the level of engagement, teaching approach, level of assessment and diversity of the class. Extended Studies, on the other hand, resembled the schooling system in terms of the teaching approach, class size and flexibility in terms of language. With specific reference to Extended Studies as a community, students appreciated the fact that they knew everyone in the class and therefore had close relationships which made it possible for them to share ideas on content covered in class. When asked to reflect on their experience in Extended Studies as the year progressed, some students highlighted the following:

To be honest I felt so comfortable, I felt so relieved, we understand each other, I get what I want. If I ask my fellow students, everything will be clear for me. I felt so comfortable and the lecturers their positive attitude, and it is like a class, it reminds me of my previous school, everything is clear (Author’s interview with Anele, 2012).

As time went on, I really enjoyed it because it is a small class and so it was not so much of a big issue, moving from high school to tertiary because

now you have 30 students in a class, I think we were like 29 or 27 somewhere there but it was a very small class. So everyone interacted when we had a class discussion so it was not so complicated compared to mainstream (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

The ES class is a small class so it is easy to ask questions, it is easy to understand, because in a small class when someone asks a question, everyone will listen to the question and the teacher will answer properly. Then on the mainstream, because it is a big class for example journalism we are 200 and something, it is difficult for me to actually ask the question. To be like here I have a question (Author's interview with Aaron, 2012).

The safe space afforded by Extended Studies could be attributed to the teaching philosophies of ES lecturers, which made them approach teaching and learning more holistically by recognizing and addressing other non-academic aspects of learning such as social and emotional issues. Given the fact that the Extended Studies Programme draws a wide range of disadvantaged students, one would not expect it to be a safe space for some students. On the contrary, students' experiences of the Extended Studies Programme provide convincing evidence which suggest that diversity is effectively managed in the programme. Hence, most students claimed that the community aspect of the Extended Studies class made it easy for them to fit in despite the diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the members of the class.

8.3.2.4 The role of pedagogy

Students' experiences on Extended Studies as an academic and social space, particularly the teaching approaches and level of interaction between students and lecturers, played a huge role in shifting the perceptions and attitudes towards Extended Studies. According to Walker (2006:11-12), pedagogy refers to the method of teaching and "extends beyond the role of the lecturer or teacher". Importantly, it involves:

Not only who teaches, but also who is taught (and of course is interwoven with what is taught – the curriculum), and the contextual conditions under which such teaching and learning takes place (Walker, 2006:12).

The above is arguably a reflection of power relations between lecturers and students. According to Bourdieu (as cited in Walker, 2006:12), pedagogic action involves a relationship of power in the transfer of knowledge. The importance of pedagogy in addressing inequality in higher education is evident in the works of Bourdieu, Freire,

hooks, Walker and Nussbaum.⁶¹ Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) advocated a rational pedagogy which they later dismissed as utopian and instead argued that “there cannot be any alternative education so long as the class structure is what it is” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, as cited in Burawoy, 2012:113). In light of this, Burawoy (2012:113) argued that Bourdieu did “not see how education could ever liberate the dominated”. Freire (1996) and hooks (1994) argued that the purpose of education was to liberate the oppressed, hence the idea of “education as the practice of freedom” by hooks. Correspondingly, the conception of education as the practice of freedom resonates with Sen’s (1999) notion of “development as freedom”.

Sen’s capabilities approach offered analytical tools for evaluating teaching approaches on the Extended Studies Programme. Furthermore, applying the capabilities approach revealed what students valued – their freedoms, and how those freedoms influenced the learning process. The following section draws on hook’s idea of an engaged pedagogy and Sen’s capabilities approach in order to illuminate the ways in which these alternative pedagogies to the banking system influenced the learning process of Extended Studies students. The shifts in perceptions about ES were closely aligned to students’ experiences of both mainstream and Extended Studies. Interviews generally revealed that students valued a sense community provided by Extended Studies as it resembled the schooling system. In addition to this, students also valued recognition in terms of what they brought to higher education, flexibility to speak in their mother tongue and, lastly, a more engaged classroom. As will be noted in the following discussion, pedagogic action in the form of teaching methods accorded students the freedom and agency to make academic-related choices.

8.4 Reflections on teaching and learning in the Extended Studies Programme

As discussed in Chapter Six, teaching on Extended Studies is structured in a way that accommodates diversity. For hooks, recognition and celebration of diversity is what makes a community experience (Namulundah, 1998:107). According to hooks (1994:8), the celebration of diversity is achieved by genuinely valuing everyone’s presence, “by recognizing that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes”. On Extended Studies, the diversity of the class in terms of skills acquired from previous

⁶¹ See Bourdieu 1977, 1979; Freire 1996; hooks 1994,2003; Walker 2006,2003, 2005; Nussbaum 1997.

educational backgrounds often posed some challenges which made it difficult for some students to engage with the support offered on Extended Studies.

For instance, whilst some students required computer literacy classes, students from private schools saw this as a waste of time and complained about the boredom experienced in these classes since they had done computer literacy in high school. The same sentiments were also experienced in relation to academic literacy classes which for some students covered basic skills like essay writing. It is clear, though, that academic literacy classes addressed much more than just essay writing, these classes also introduced students to the ways of thinking and writing for specific disciplines – such skills are equally important for mainstream students or anyone coming into university for the first time. In fact, an interview with one teaching assistant revealed that many students on mainstream also struggled in the area of academic literacy. She noted the following:

I was a resident tutor, basically I worked with mainstream students who were struggling, students would contact me to have feedback on the way that they had structured their essays. Of the 400 students in the mainstream class, I would see about 50 in a semester. So quite a number of them were struggling and they were all struggling with the same kinds of things, not reading the question correctly, not understanding what the question was asking, they will read the question, make assumptions, and not actually understand the question. It is almost as they were not reading correctly or when they were reading they did not understand the question correctly. These students also struggled with grammar, shocking grammar, shocking structure of an essay, all over the place, not really leading from one idea to the next, not consolidating ideas. And I know that they do not teach this at high school level because when I did my honours project I understood that they were not teaching how to write essays, they were just teaching them to just cut and paste from Wikipedia in their school projects and this was good enough. Suddenly you get this huge gap between school matric level and university where now they have to read, academic material not just Wikipedia, and need to make sense of it and they need to put in their words (Author's interview with Geraldine, 2013).

Whilst acknowledging that mainstream students struggled in terms of the university literacy practices, Geraldine indicated that Extended Studies students needed more assistance in this regard:

I think the ES students needed a little bit more assistance, they seem to be so much more uncertain or more overwhelmed and I think that it is really, because you learn a new computer strategy, you are learning how to access the library, you are learning how to write English correctly and try to correct grammar. For example, they would use things that they were familiar with. I wish I had one of those essays so that I can pull them out

and we can have a look at them. One ES student wrote this essay referencing her daily life; and she wrote it in English as if it was direct translation, almost like if you do direct translation from Afrikaans to English. Almost in the wrong (tense) it was just in the wrong framework, it did not fit with what she was trying to explain. She just needed to learn how to put that in academic terms (Author's interview with Geraldine, 2013).

To return to the issue of academic literacy on Extended Studies, the negative sentiments about academic literacy classes were mostly expressed by first year Extended Studies students. Former Extended Studies students began to see the value of these classes as they progressed with their studies in the mainstream. Specifically, students appreciated that they had been taught research skills which they later applied after Extended Studies. This is clearly illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

We had academic literacy classes where they would teach us how to research and we had to research a topic and do a presentation in front of the dean and even the vice chancellor. We got to do a power point presentation; it is like a competition at the end of the year. Therefore, everyone got to speak. In Sociology we are doing a research topic and even if I do not have to present it, I know what I am doing unlike mainstream students who are clueless, they keep asking us where we learnt how to do research... we know how to use the library and search for literature in the databases. I have heard people say that I have never used Ebscohost and I am like you are missing out because there is a lot of information on that website... . We had a class for just research in the library; probably most of us know how to use the search engines more than mainstream people. We were taught from scratch and we had to write a test on that. No wonder it is easy for ES students to get a job in the library, even the student bureau (Author's interview with Vhatiswa, 2012).

Regarding the issue of poor engagement with Extended Studies support, lecturers reported that they were very much aware of the differences between students. Hence they claimed that they taught in ways that inspired and motivated even the brighter students to engage with what they perceived as familiar knowledge. One lecturer pointed out that:

It is not easy to manage diversity, sometimes brighter faster and confident students get frustrated when I keep clarifying or explaining things maybe too much. However, even there, it is a constant challenge I try to navigate daily. My individual relationships with students are important; this is where the brighter students will say okay I do get the other students. Some students come to see me in person when they have concerns. Sometimes it is about juggling it in class and sometimes debating it at a level that can inspire the bright kids. It is really about holding the process so that the less disadvantaged students can be part of the conversation (Author's interview with Marian, 2012).

Marian argued further that the co-construction of knowledge through group work was also an effective way of motivating the brighter students:

Group work helps with managing diversity for it allows stronger students to help the weaker ones. This way, brighter students do not get irritated because of the feeling that they know something and that they can help others. In the process, this also helps with the deconstruction of power relations between students (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

Marian seemed to be suggesting the importance of curriculum relevance – that is the view that students only act in productive ways when they see the relevance of the material taught in class. For this reason, it is perhaps necessary to integrate academic skills with content. The need to integrate skills with course content was acknowledged by a teaching assistant whose role was to offer academic support to struggling students in one of the four departments that offer Extended Studies. She noted the following:

My role was to support struggling students on mainstream; I ran workshops, which covered everything from reading, writing, stress management, exam preparation and some of the core academic skills. I essentially focused on “meta skills” which support students in accessing their academics successfully because if those elements are not in place then struggling students for instance may find it difficult to navigate their academics if they are not able to deal with stress or manage their time. Therefore, it is a holistic approach. Classes were voluntary, started as workshops during lunchtime and students would be invited to attend. I was never really trained but I learnt a lot along the way from my students as I went along. The workshops were very generic but we soon discovered that skills transfer is great when students are working with content, for instance working on an assignment they are much more likely to attend as opposed to workshops on writing in general. So it was a matter of streamlining things to address the relevant content. I attended lectures; I have done the course many times. I would get a sense of what they were doing in terms of what they were required to do. From that, I got to know students and we developed a relationship, they began to trust me and they would make an appointment to see me (Author's interview with Noeline, 2013).

It can be argued that the pedagogical relationship between the lecturer, the taught content and the students, is of crucial importance as it determines the extent to which students are accorded freedom to act in productive ways. Perhaps the question – what aspects of the students are recognized and valued on Extended Studies? – needs to be addressed in order to make sense of how students adjust to ES. For hooks (1994:13), “to educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn”. Such teaching is for hooks also underpinned by respect and care for the students' soul, hence the emphasis on ‘wellbeing’. In a similar vein, Walker (2006:27-28) emphasized the central role of

freedom in achieving and being what people value (for example, being educated).

According to Sen:

Freedom is valuable at least for two distinct reasons. First, more freedoms gives us more opportunity to achieve those things that we value, and have reason to value. This aspect of freedom is concerned primarily with our ability to achieve, rather than the process through which the achievement comes about. Second, the process through which things happen may also be of importance in assessing freedom (Sen, as cited in Boni & Walker, 2013:4).

The above view of freedom draws our attention to the teaching and learning process, particularly the ways in which “knowledge is mediated through curriculum” (Walker, 2006:67). As argued earlier, pedagogy involves, among other things, the relationship between the lecturer and the students. This is an important aspect of Extended Studies as it determines how students respond to teaching.

8.4.1 Lecturer – student relationships: a ‘transgression of boundaries’

The lecturer-student relationship helped students adjust easily to Extended Studies. Of particular significance to this relationship was the recognition of students as “whole human beings striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world” (hooks, 1994:15). According to Walker (2006:128), a capability for recognition is a skill and opportunity that needs to be fostered. Wilson-Strydom (2012:15) listed three interconnected capabilities of “respect, dignity and recognition” as transition to university capabilities. Walker defined the three capabilities as:

Being able to have respect for oneself and for and from others, being treated with dignity, not being diminished or devalued because of one’s gender, social class, religion or race, valuing other languages, other religions and spiritual practices and human diversity. Being able to show empathy, compassion, fairness and generosity, listening to and considering other person’s point of view in dialogue and debate. Being able to act inclusively and being able to respond to human need. Having competence in inter-cultural communication. Having a voice to participate effectively in learning: a voice to speak out, to debate and persuade; to be able to listen (Walker,2006:129).

These capabilities were visible in the lecturer-student relationships on the Extended Studies Programme. In addition to this, other capabilities identified in the teaching and learning process include a capability of voice. hooks’ elements of an ‘engaged pedagogy’ were also visible in the teaching and learning process in Extended Studies. As such, they are also conceptualised as ‘opportunity freedoms’ or ‘agency freedoms’ in that they

provided opportunities for agents to make effective use of the support provided in ES. The following discussion provides evidence of these capabilities.

8.4.1.1 ‘Compassion’ – an opportunity freedom

As is the case with mainstream students or any education institution, the Extended Studies Programme draws students with histories of oppression, poverty, and other varieties of disadvantage. Lecturers on Extended Studies recognized the impact of these on learning and made every effort to address these issues. The transition to higher education is an emotional process for most students who may be leaving home and learning to be independent for the first time. Whilst there are resources in the university to help all students adjust as they undergo the transition to higher education, Extended Studies takes a different approach by integrating these adjustment issues in the learning process. Apart from helping students with their academics, ES provided a space for students to raise their concerns and fears about both social and academic issues. With reference to the help provided by the Extended Studies lecturers, one student noted the following:

We went to our lectures, got introduced to Marian, she is very nice, a very lovely woman. She made sure that we were comfortable. She just wanted us to be free and flexible in that she understood that we would stress about being away from home and the workload. Therefore, she would constantly ask us about how we were coping in the new environment. We even had one on one meetings with her. She made us very comfortable and we felt like a family, we all knew each other. I know people came from different backgrounds but once we got to class, we just focused on what we had to do (Author’s interview with Luthando, 2012).

In doing the above, lecturers engaged with students as “whole human beings with complex lives and experiences” (hooks, 1994:15) by acknowledging their struggles and addressing their fears and academic challenges.

8.4.1.2 ‘Respect’: an agency opportunity

Students reported that they valued the respect and recognition they got on Extended Studies, given the ways they were perceived by students in mainstream. In this way, Extended Studies provided a safe space for most students in that they interacted with other students as well as the lecturer, who respected them and understood their experiences. As one student from a private school noted:

ES is that place where you develop closer friendships, there is just the feeling of you have someone who has your back, we respect each other and it feels like family (Author’s interview with Zahara, 2013).

Despite the difference in social and educational backgrounds, Zahara also reported that students in ES respected each other:

Some students are more disadvantaged than others but the class is coping and we are working together, we are sensitive towards each other's feelings; and we all respect each other's opinions and we see the different contexts we come out from and we respect that and work together (Author's interview with Zahara, 2012).

Owing to the safe space provided by Extended Studies in terms of recognition, respect and compassion towards students, students generally noted that they began to warm up to the reality of being on Extended Studies. hooks (cited in Namulundah, 1998:107) argues that "affirming community in diversity enriches classroom discourse by eliciting interaction among students and between students and teacher". Additionally "students 'recognize' each other and, most importantly, they appreciate 'difference' (hooks, as cited in Namulundah, 1998:107).

8.4.2 An 'engaged pedagogy'

The Extended Studies classroom resembles the various facets of hooks' conceptions of an 'engaged pedagogy'. The features of hooks' pedagogy that were evident in teaching and learning on Extended Studies are discussed in detail below. It is clear that these aspects might have played a part in students' adjustment to Extended Studies. In the capabilities framework, the various aspects of hooks' engaged pedagogy can be conceptualized as agency freedoms or agency opportunities in that they "determine one's ability to pursue goals that one values and that are important for the life an individual wishes to lead" (Walker, 2006:34). The different agency freedoms will now be discussed in relation to the ways they were accorded to Extended Studies students. In doing so, insight into the impact of these freedoms on the learning process and shifts in attitudes towards Extended Studies are also provided.

8.4.2.1 A freedom of 'voice'

According to Namulundah (1998:95), power in the classroom is manifested through "conceptualization of knowledge and the manner of transmission", since an educator's view subsequently informs the method of instruction. As indicated in Chapter Seven (See Section 7.5.1.1), students' reflections of the teaching approaches in the schooling system resembles Freire's 'banking approach' to education. As students underwent the transition into higher education, they portrayed unfamiliarity with more engaged and critical learning in higher education, but they nonetheless appreciated it. Furthermore, Extended

Studies provided a space for students to engage critically with content covered in class in a more relaxed and safe environment. In view of this, one Extended Studies lecturer noted that her teaching approach was underpinned by the view that the co-construction of knowledge had the potential to “subvert the power divide between teacher and students”. This, she argued further, awakened students’ consciousness about their power in extending the boundaries of knowledge (Author’s interview with Marian, 2013).

Indeed, data gathered revealed that students appreciated the above portrayed level of engagement. The agency opportunity provided by Extended Studies in the form of an engaged classroom gave students a voice which they were not free or comfortable expressing in other academic spaces. For example, one student noted that he was intimidated by the size of mainstream classes and, as a result, he was always hesitant to engage or ask questions in mainstream lectures:

I’m a bit shy to ask questions in a huge room where there are many people, there are times where I feel like asking questions but I think twice about asking the question. But I can ask a question in ES classes because I know that no one will make funny sounds or make comments about my accent (Author’s interview with Marcus, 2012).

Interestingly, a few students were not happy with this level of engagement and felt much safer in mainstream as they seemed to suggest that it was easy to hide and not be visible.

One student admitted the following:

I’m very shy. I was very insecure, you get people from private schools even on ES so when people gave different answers, my confidence level really went down. I mumbled the answers because I met people who seemed to be of a much higher level. You can imagine ES is a small class and it should be much easier but my confidence just went down, and it affected my work a lot. It was not always like this. People use these big words, I felt intimidated, and that affected my confidence (Author’s interview with Bongi, 2012).

This is arguably an indication of the challenges posed by the range of educational disadvantages that are considered when selecting students for Extended Studies. Whilst acknowledging the ability to manage this diversity and the fact that some students meet the criteria by virtue of having attended public schools prior to private schools, one Extended Studies lecturer also noted the challenges posed by the range of disadvantages in Extended Studies students:

I would actually prefer myself if I had kids from poor backgrounds from rural township schools who struggled then I would be on the same page with everyone. I understand that this is asking a lot but I think those are the

kinds of students that I think would be fulfilling our mandate from the state because the state provides funding for this programme...and the state's notion of widening access in terms of race and class and what Rhodes says is doing could be different. I think sometimes they are not getting it right on the class thing because I think that many of the students are definitely upper class kids from private schools. So maybe they are the first generation in that class but still I don't think Rhodes is being entirely true to its mandate if you are going to take people from very nice schools (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

Although students reported that they generally found it difficult to engage in mainstream lectures, it is worth mentioning that they did admit that some mainstream lectures made an effort to create a friendly environment in which all students could freely engage. There was consistent reference to one mainstream lecturer by both former and students who were first year at the time of the data collection. Students' comments on her teaching resonate with the lecturer's comments on her teaching approach. In line with creating a safe space, the lecturer, Carolyne, pointed out that:

I work very hard in being, on the one hand respected and on the other approachable, so you will find after every lecturer 30 people coming forward. So that is important if you give the vibe that don't bother me, or if you give the vibe that I'm here after the lecturer, some people will call me Prof, some people will call me by my name, that is fine. I think it is because I'm walking around, it's because I'm touching people on the shoulders, they are more likely to feel that they can come forward. I can't guess what people's problems are but what I can try to do is to create that kind of an atmosphere that people feel free. Because the other thing that they say about the course is that it is not the same outline, so that talk, that walking around, that is the effect of saying, hey what do you think, and so on. You get more voices coming and that legitimizes sort of being stupid in a class. It's very important that people ask stupid questions in class. If they do not ask stupid questions they try to be clever all the time, and I will actually say that, I will say I don't understand that big word you are saying, why are you trying to be so clever, so I just try to bring that sort of person down a bit in order to create a space, but again it is not about trying to identify struggling students, it's about the big atmosphere that everybody benefits from (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

8.4.2.2 'Passion and excitement'

The flexibility of the Extended Studies class makes learning fun and exciting. hooks (1994:7) pointed out that her teaching paradigm was shaped by the idea that:

The classroom should be an exciting place, never boring. And if boredom should prevail, then pedagogical strategies were needed that would intervene, alter, even disrupt the atmosphere (hooks, 1994:7).

For hooks, excitement was important for it had the potential to stimulate serious intellectual/and academic engagement. This aspect of hooks' 'engaged pedagogy' was evident in the Extended Studies class. As one student noted:

Well, being on ES was the best thing ever; I mean the lecturer made it so much more bearable. She made the work more understandable and more fun to play around with. I mean she used more examples that we could understand, examples that were a bit more relative to the concepts in our daily lives and just using them to make sense of the content really helped us understand the course better (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

In addition to the above, the lecturer used video clips to help students learn and engage more actively (Observation, March 2012). The value placed on an 'exciting teaching experience' is well reflected in students' perceptions of mainstream lecturing. Mainstream was perceived as boring since students did not take well to the use of slides. They seemed to indicate that the use of slides resulted in disengagement with the teaching process:

I think the lecturers should be more engaging, I don't know maybe I have the wrong idea about what lectures should be about, because I'm used to high school where the teachers will explain on the board. But if you go to the lecturers and find the lecture reading the slides, what's the use of going there, you can just sit ... they should explain as much as they have the slides we need talking, explanations, examples, especially for 1st years because most of them are new to this environment. At the end of the lectures, they must have times where they say if you have any questions privately then you can just go and talk to them (Author's interview with Onica, 2012).

On the contrary, one student actually noted that some mainstream lecturers tried their best to create an exciting learning atmosphere by giving examples and interacting more with students. Again, reference was given to Carolyne's teaching style:

There was a time when we had this lady – Carolyne, where she had this wonderful balance between white and black students. During her second term lectures, I was very excited about her because she had this approach which made it easier for us to interact in class. But the other lecturers treat us as if we come from the same school, we understand English the same way. English is not my first language, so you can't treat us the same (Author's interview with Matthew, 2012).

Similar sentiments about Carolyne's teaching approach were noted by a postgraduate student who had been taught by Carolyne in his first year – that is four years prior to the interview.

She will talk with you, I think she understood the difficulties of students who are coming from disadvantaged high schools, because she will talk with you after lectures when she noticed that you do not have confidence, maybe in class she will not direct a question to you if she can see that

maybe you cannot answer the question, she was trying to boost the confidence of all learners (Author's interview with Anelisa, 2012).

The interview with Carolyne also confirmed the sentiments highlighted above. Recognition, as she argued, is a very important aspect of her teaching approach:

A lot of the work I do is about recognition; it is about when someone looks at you and says you do belong here. I know you did not go to a private school but you do belong here, you are part of this institution, you are an academic, you can have an academic identity, and that identity can come in a variety of ways, so what I believe passionately in is that you have to see students. I like to walk around the room, its stupid things but it works for me, and I do pick up people for a variety of reasons. It could be that group of black females who kind of look away because they do not want to catch my eye, because they are worried that I am going to call on them. Or it could be that group of white guys who think they are so cool and do not want to participate. There are people that are (straying) from learning for a variety of reasons if you know what I'm saying. I think that what really matters is recognition, so I will go up to them and sit next to them and be like "how is it going today" you know, in a lecture of 400, you know you just walk around, maybe touch someone's shoulder, it's about saying, you know I'm here with you, you are not far, we are not far away from each other, and again what I'm saying is that, I'm not going to choose the black kids or something like that, It's about saying that I recognize different people for different reasons (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

In view of the need for excitement evidenced in classroom observation and interviews with students, it can also be argued that this need is also a consequence of the passive identities produced by the rote learning system (Author's interview with Noeline, 2013). Whilst acknowledging the importance of a more engaged classroom, Noeline – a teaching assistant – noted that:

There is a sense that students are passive. Students have the 'entertain me attitude'. Students do not want to take notes or sift information. They want videos, and interesting stuff. We have done exercises about that in order to keep them active and to raise their consciousness...I think students need to be active in order to learn (Author's interview with Noeline, 2013).

To put the issue of changing perceptions into perspective, it is worth noting that the factors attributed to changing perceptions are field-specific mechanisms, which arguably function within the confines of the Extended Studies Programme. For this reason, a comparison of Extended Studies and mainstream does not in any way suggest that there is anything wrong with practices in the mainstream. As argued in Chapter 4 (See Section 4.4.1), fields are structured by their internal mechanisms, hence they can be engaged in the play of their own distinctive games, produce their

own distinctive capital, which suggests that they hold some degree of autonomy (Bourdieu, 1993a:72). Therefore, as students simultaneously navigated the Extended Studies field (a sub-field of the university) and the broader university/mainstream field, it was inevitable for them to compare the two.

Given that the Extended Studies Programme is designed to prepare students to cope in mainstream, it becomes important to evaluate the extent to which students flexibly navigate the two fields. This is well expressed in students' experiences of mainstream after the year of Extended Studies. In view of this, it becomes important to question the extent to which capital generated in Extended Studies can be used in other fields. In doing this, the autonomy of the field is qualified. However, before this can be done, a discussion of other freedoms valued by students apart from the ones discussed above is given. These freedoms are implicit in the factors attributed to the changing perceptions and attitudes towards the Extended Studies Programme.

8.4.3 Other context-specific freedoms and unfreedoms

Interpreting student experiences in terms of 'freedoms' enables us to locate individual agency and social structures on the same plane. Whilst Bourdieu simply argues for a change in the social structures, the capabilities approach draws our attention to the different conditions for agency freedoms and 'unfreedoms' that determine what students are able to do, how they experience teaching and, ultimately, what they manage to achieve – that is their 'functionings'. Sen conceptualised development as the abolition of 'unfreedoms' such as poverty and famine and lack of political rights (Sen, 1999). The concept of 'unfreedoms' can be applied to higher education to address the various forms of inequalities in higher education institutions. Challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning in both Extended Studies and mainstream also provide insight into potential 'unfreedoms'. Unfreedoms can result from a lack of specific resources required for students to learn effectively or provision of unfamiliar resources that students cannot make use of. For example, admitting a blind student to a higher education institution, yet denying her/him braille facilities.

Sen's conceptualisation of freedoms and unfreedoms makes it possible to derive context-specific freedoms and unfreedoms. In fact, unlike Nussbaum, Sen left the capabilities unspecified for he believed that capabilities are context specific and thus could be generated from specific contexts. The freedoms discussed above (expressed in terms of the

various aspects that students enjoyed about learning on Extended Studies) point us to certain ‘unfreedoms’ in the institutional context. These ‘unfreedoms’ suggest the value and need for other unrecognised freedoms in the university context.

8.4.3.1 Technology and learning systems as forms of ‘unfreedoms’

There is no doubt that digital learning systems and technologies have transformed and improved learning immensely. However, a closer look at how students experience these technologies reveals hidden inequalities created by certain learning systems and technologies in institutional contexts. There is evidence supporting the view that students benefit from learning systems if they are taught how to use them. In the case of the ES students, this is evidenced in the appreciation for computer literacy classes by students from public schools. The Extended Studies Programme introduces students to the ways of thinking and doing things in a university context. The ways of thinking include thinking and writing in new disciplines and the ways of doing include things like typing, ways of checking for plagiarism using specific learning systems such as Turnitin.⁶² Not introducing students to the above can result in deprivations – which for Sen (1999:3) occurs when freedoms are denied. In this sense, learning systems and technologies become ‘unfreedoms’ in that the freedoms of technological support would have been denied. One ES lecturer supported this claim and argued that:

Even mainstream students deserve the kind of work we do, the transition to higher education is a challenge for everyone. Imagine now coming to an environment where you are expected to do things differently, in other words enculturation. I do not know and I stand to be corrected, but I don’t remember hearing of any lecturer who accepts a hand written assignment. These guys are supposed to participate in different things. For example the libraries, you need to ask questions such as: Did students have a library at school? What system was used? How can a child coming from Nombulelo navigate some of the systems we use here?⁶³ For instance, RU Connected – one of the primary resources for learning and development. Therefore, how then can students use that to their own advantage (Author’s interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

The view of learning systems as ‘unfreedoms’ is well illustrated by a former ES student who was enrolled for a postgraduate diploma at the time of the interview. He explained:

So now you come to an institution where everything is perfect, if you are submitting a tutorial, each and every week everything has to be typed. There were no computers in my school, so when I first came to Rhodes, I

⁶² Turn it in is a software for checking plagiarism.

⁶³ Nombulelo is a local public school in Grahamstown.

didn't even understand how to log into a computer, how to even send emails, how to even type a tutorial, how to do spacing, how to do like small things, like enter. I had to learn those things every week as I typed my tutorial. How to reference, we were not exposed to such things. And you know, in your tutorials you would have students coming from white schools and they knew these things. .. Immediately you would be exposed that you could not use a computer or type. You would feel small and your confidence would just go away (Author's interview with Anelisa, 2012).

From the above, it can also be argued that 'unfreedoms' or deprivation of certain freedoms may result in the marginalisation of certain students.

8.4.3.2 Stigma and nominal identities as 'unfreedoms'

The data from student interviews revealed that students felt marginalised and alienated from the rest of the student body, both socially and academically. This was arguably a result of the separation of the Extended Studies Programme from mainstream and stigma attached to the programme. Furthermore, the nominal identity of students as 'disadvantaged' also contributed to the stigma. Although most students came to accept the role of Extended Studies and even acknowledged the help they were getting, they still revealed feelings of shame and this possibly made it difficult for some students to take Extended Studies seriously. One student admitted:

I don't tell people that I am on ES, because they think if you are there, you are illiterate or something, I don't know, somehow dumb. Even if you tell them, I'm doing computer literacy, they'll be like, "oh so you've never used a computer before"? So it's kind of stressing, I don't usually talk about it. My friends in the Extended Studies don't tell people that they are doing computer literacy, they lie that they are doing computer Sciences, not the literacy one (Author's interview with Mandisa, 2012).

8.4.3.3 A capability for multilingual academic engagement

During classroom observation, I noticed that students were allowed to speak in their mother tongue. When asked to comment on the flexibility to speak in their mother tongue, students pointed out that this reminded them of high school. More importantly, mostly students from public schools noted that interacting in their mother tongue during group discussions created a space where they could share their knowledge with other students who understood their language. In this sense, the ability to speak in one's mother tongue is an agency opportunity which enables students to make academic choices. Bourdieu would argue that language is in this sense a conversion factor in that it affects how students learn or receive information. Although Extended Studies lecturers conduct lectures in English, interviews conducted with students abound with evidence that supports the fact that most of the learning takes place in group discussions. Therefore, the freedom to speak in one's

mother tongue can be argued to be an important aspect of the learning process. In support of multi-lingual academic engagement, one student noted the following:

I do feel that the university should make some considerations about some local languages. Of course, it does not mean we will have to change the medium of instruction, just the acknowledgement and perhaps provisions being made to that effect so that students who are not of English origin can have the option to study in their language. That would be one of the ways of providing people with a platform for expressing themselves without fear, feeling that you are not making a very good point because you cannot speak good English (Author's interview with Skumbuzo, 2012).

In this sense, language as a freedom and agency opportunity may empower students to actively engage in the learning process.

8.4.3.4 Curriculum relevance – an agency opportunity

Students' reflections on some of the work covered in Extended Studies gave an indication of the impact of curriculum on the ability of students to exercise agency. For instance, students generally dismissed activities that they considered boring or irrelevant for their studies, and some only completed the work in order to fulfil DP requirements. Although students admitted that they got help from academic literacy and computer literacy classes, they also claimed that these classes were a waste of time as they did not get credits for them. For this reason, attendance was sometimes very poor for some academic literacy classes. One student noted that:

I felt very frustrated in some classes, I didn't enjoy the computers or the academic literacy class, the only thing that I enjoyed was our ES sessions for mainstream courses because the lecturer was helping me to understand all the work that we did in the mainstream (Author's interview with Khanyisa, 2012).

This does not in any way suggest the irrelevance of computer literacy or academic literacy classes. The point to be made here is that students only act in productive ways when they feel that what they are taught is relevant for their studies. It therefore becomes important for Extended Studies lecturers to design not only relevant curricular activities around mainstream content, but also to teach in ways that enable students to recognize the relevance of material covered in Extended Studies classes; in that way students can engage more with it. Another aspect of curriculum relevance is the issue of content covered in lectures as well as examples used in lectures. With regard to content covered in lectures, students seemed to suggest that they enjoyed courses that they could apply to real life situations or relate to:

When I moved to mainstream, I took Geography and I really enjoyed it. At first, I thought it was about calculations but realised that we were even doing topics on cities, population and capitalism, some of the things you could relate to, so I actually enjoyed it in the end (Author's interview with Jabu, 2012).

Another student complained about examples used in lectures:

There are those mainstream lectures who just assume that everyone knows about the French revolution. I don't know about the French revolution. So they just say the word and they are done and they go on...but the ES lecturer doesn't just mention things, she takes her time to elaborate further. I only got more information on the French revolution when I went on Google. So every time when mainstream lecturers mention words I don't know, I just write them down and Google them when I get home because I just know that he'll just assume that everyone knows about what he is talking about (Author's interview with Marcus, 2012).

8.4.3.5 Vulnerability of lecturers – an agency opportunity

According to hooks (1994:21), “professors must practice being vulnerable in the classroom, being wholly present in mind, body and spirit”. For hooks (1994:21), the requirement to share, confess and take risks should not be solely on students but lecturers as well. Such an engaged pedagogy allows, “teaching practices to become a site of resistance” (hooks, 1994:21). This aspect of teaching is very evident in Extended Studies and when students leave, it is one of the things they miss. One of the Extended Studies lecturers indicated the ways she made herself vulnerably in her teaching and pointed out that such an approach to teaching is risky:

I also talk about my apartheid experiences although there is a lot of white shame when it comes to apartheid. I am very honest about the fact that I did not do anything and I sat on the whites only chairs, went to a whites only school and these kinds of conversations make me vulnerable. Showing that to my students makes them value the level of honesty that shows them that I am not afraid to reveal things about myself that I am not comfortable with yet so students end up doing the same by admitting parts about themselves that they are not comfortable with. Show me work even when you are embarrassed about it, there isn't shame or judgements but there is acceptance to say let's see where we can go with this so it's that focus on that ontology of students and of me as a lecturer. If I show myself as human then students feel they can also bring that humanity. When they feel visible in this space, then when they are engaging with a philosophical concept, it's them engaging and not a performance because if students perform a role of being a student, they won't even know whether they are doing it right or wrong and performance does not come from inside (Author's interview with Marian, 2013).

A discussion of the opportunity freedoms and unfreedoms provided in Section 8.4 revealed the impact of institutional arrangements and practices on student engagement in education. Thinking in terms of freedoms is particularly important in evaluating not only quality but also equality in education. Therefore, in the case of alternative access through the Extended Studies Programmes, the aim should be equalising the chances of succeeding in higher education rather than a mere focus on equalising the chances of admission into university. In this way, focusing on freedoms allows institutions to adapt their practices to diverse student bodies by taking into account what students value or what they bring to the university context. The table below provides a summary of the agency freedoms and unfreedoms, that impacted on students as they made the transition and engaged in learning in higher education.

Table 8.1: List of Opportunity freedoms and unfreedoms for new students in university

Opportunity Freedoms and unfreedoms	Description
1. Engaged pedagogy	<p>Various aspects of teaching and learning on the Extended Studies programme resonate with hooks' idea of an engaged pedagogy. According to Glass & Wong (2003:73): "An engaged pedagogy requires that teachers grasp the lives of their students in both intimate detail and broad outline, and also understand the roles of schools in identity formation. Engaged pedagogy elevates students' voices, perspectives, historical and cultural backgrounds, and emerging cultural formations to the status of the core curriculum. Engaged pedagogy prefers dialogical approaches, where students' languages, thoughts, and ideas are linked to actions subject to critical evaluation".</p> <p>Aspects of hooks' pedagogy resonate with students' perceptions of teaching and learning on the Extended Studies Programme. When applied to the capabilities approach, these aspects manifest themselves as 'freedoms' in that they create opportunities for students to actively engage in the learning process. These freedoms are outlined below.</p>
1.1 Recognition, respect and compassion	<p>The research findings revealed that the Extended Studies students valued the relationships they had with their Extended Studies lecturers and peers. According to the students, they felt that the lecturers were compassionate about the struggles and challenges faced by students as they made their transition to higher education. In addition to this, lecturers were reported to be respectful and also recognised the different skills and values that students brought from different backgrounds. In this sense, lecturers transgressed various boundaries, which empowered most of the students to actively engage in the learning process. It is for the above-mentioned reasons that most students portrayed the Extended Studies Programme as a safe learning space.</p>
1.2 Freedom of voice	<p>The safe learning space on the Extended Studies Programme enabled students to freely express themselves without fear.</p>
1.3 Passion and excitement	<p>Learning on the Extended Studies Programme was portrayed as exciting due to the interactive approaches used by the lecturers. For hook's, excitement and passion are crucial in stimulating intellectual engagement. This was evident in the various debates that the students engaged in.</p>
1.4. Lecturer vulnerability	<p>Lecturer vulnerability – that is the risks taken by Extended Studies lecturers in sharing their experiences, weaknesses and shame in some cases – enabled students to reveal their challenges and seek help.</p>
2. Multilingual academic engagement	<p>Students valued the fact that they could engage in academic discussions in their first language. This made it possible for them to share their knowledge with peers. In Bourdieu's terms, language is in this sense a conversion factors in that it affects the process of knowledge transmission. Therefore, the ability to learn in one's mother tongue is an opportunity freedom while learning in a second language may be portrayed as an 'unfreedom'.</p>
3. Technology and unfamiliar learning systems	<p>Technology and university learning systems may become 'unfreedoms' if students are not taught how to use or take advantage of the learning systems available to them. This is particularly important in a context like South Africa where universities enrol students from both poor and elite backgrounds. There is therefore a need to introduce students to the ways of doing things in university – in other words, ways of accessing and using the university's learning system. Interviews with students revealed that although they were overwhelmed by the learning systems and technologies in the university, learning on Extended Studies Programme assisted them in getting acquainted with the technologies and learning systems provided by the university.</p>
4. Curriculum	<p>The curriculum – that is what is taught – has the potential to motivate, inspire or demotivate students. Interviews with the Extended Studies students revealed that they actively engaged in the learning process only when they felt that what they were learning was relevant to their studies.</p>

8.5 Transition to mainstream: experiences and adjustment processes

Given the fact that the one year of Extended Studies is meant to provide students with epistemological access to the university, the academic trajectory of such students as they undergo the transition from Extended Studies to the mainstream should be of interest to institutions. Moreover, the experiences of students as they transition to mainstream serves as indicators of the degree of autonomy of the Extended Studies Programme as a sub-field. In other words, we ask questions about the extent to which capital generated on the Extended Studies field can be used in other fields. The Extended Studies Programme, though governed by its own field mechanism, functions within the confines of the broader university. At the same time, its integration into mainstream suggest a level of dependence on mainstream, hence Extended Studies lecturers do not have a curriculum but support the mainstream curriculum. The transition experience, therefore, qualifies the degree of autonomy and dependency. In doing so, it raises questions about the level of integration and implications for the effectiveness of the programme.

As highlighted in Chapter Six, students leave Extended Studies after one year and continue with mainstream without any extra support from Extended Studies. In addition to this, either they continue with mainstream courses from their first year of Extended Studies and a third course or, if the Dean permits them, they take courses from other faculties. Interviews with Extended Studies lecturers revealed that they prepare students for the transition by withdrawing support and pointing them to other support structures in the university (Author's interview with Marian, 2012; Denise, 2012).

Unfortunately, not all students make it into the second year. As will be shown in Chapter Nine, some students are excluded, some just drop out, and some go to other universities. Retention statistics of Extended Studies students reveal that most of the students do make it into the second year of study. Students who failed to come back for second year generally noted that university was a 'big leap' for them and that they generally struggled with the new ways of learning in university. As a result, they were excluded. One student noted that in addition to this, ES restricted him to specific courses and this in a way contributed to why he did not do so well in the courses that were offered on ES:

I came to Rhodes in 2009 and I was doing politics and sociology. I left Rhodes at the end of the year. It was good in terms of assisting us with information on what was expected of us. The workload was quite a challenge in that school does not really prepare you for university. I did not do so well that year as university was a big leap for me, I could not take the

workload. The work covered was also difficult to understand... also when I came to study I had other things in mind, but I had no option but to do Sociology and Politics. But that being said, I did enjoy the courses. I wish I had done what I wanted to do. I then went and did a diploma in hotel management. Now I am also studying at an exercise academy in George. I am enjoying what I am doing (Author's phone interview with Desmond, 2013).

Another student got excluded, got a job and never went back to study:

I got excluded, tried to appeal but it didn't work out and I was told that I wasn't mature enough to go back so I had to do something. When I came to Rhodes, I wanted to study law but I chose sociology and politics. When I left Rhodes I got a job as a waiter, worked my way up and I'm now a manager in a coffee shop. I never went back to school. I would like to go back but now I have to pay back the financial aid loan I got in my first year. I now have a kid as well so I need to consider all that (Author's phone interview with Victor, 2013).

With the exception of a few students, former ES students admitted that they easily adjusted to mainstream, although they missed the support they received on Extended Studies. A few admitted that it was very difficult and they were not coping. When asked to comment on the transition to mainstream, one student who had decided to stay on Extended Studies after an offer to go to mainstream in June indicated that mainstream without support was difficult for her:

Honestly, I am afraid of mainstream, I am so afraid, I just went to my Journalism lecturer, and I told her the same thing. I had this relationship with my ES lecturer, she was like our mother. She used to help us with everything, we would send drafts to her and she would say this is not right put this you know help us here and there. Now I don't send any drafts to anyone, I'm not sure if I'm writing the correct thing, I don't know who to ask for advice, the fact that I have just moved to a new residence is even making it worse (Author's interview with Malibongwe, 2012).

Other students, whilst acknowledging the difficulty in terms of the workload, seemed excited about Extended Studies and indicated that they did not need help as they felt that they could cope on their own. It can be argued that being in mainstream actually resulted in an identity shift for students. As such they adjusted to their idea of a 'mainstream student' – that is being independent and doing everything on their own. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

Moving to mainstream was ok, I feel like I am part of the university not just the Extended Studies people, those kids who are just trying to see how well they can do. I do feel like I now belong. There is a lot more pressure and work but I am managing. We have lots of free time now because last year

we had double lessons, classes for everything. It really took up a lot of time. I never really go anywhere for help. I have to figure everything on my own. It is because now I know my capabilities, I do not have anyone to point me in the right direction; I have to figure everything on my own (Author's interview with Zoleka, 2012).

Ah mainstream is hectic, it is tough. Being on the mainstream forces you to be sharper, to organise yourself, to know what you are going to do, when and what time. It forces you to be independent. It forces you to grow up because in some lectures, they take the register and if you want to pass you have to be there and you have to write the notes. Like last year on the mainstream classes, you could just sit and listen knowing that when you get to the Extended Studies classes, the lecturer would just explain everything. But now there is none of that, you have to do the work yourself and the studying is a lot of work because last year we used to do two subjects and two tutorials a week. Now it's like one extra subject and even the work load is heavy because you have to do everything yourself; the tutorials, the readings, summarising, everything you do yourself and it forces you to work hard. ...Mainstream has no support whatsoever, we used to go to the ES lecturer for anything, like academic wise, and on mainstream, the only support you have is maybe your tutors and classmates. (Author's interview with Jabu, 2012).

Jabu seemed to suggest that Extended Studies made him relax, as he knew that he could get help somewhere else. These sentiments were actually shared by another student who noted that:

One of the things I observed with ES since we got extra help was that it tended to make the students lazy. I found myself getting very lazy, because if you understand the material and you go to the mainstream class where others do not understand you would just go like ah and not listen because you know the stuff. In a way, it helped but at the same time, it slowed me down (Author's interview with Luthando, 2012).

A view that contradicts Jabu's claim that there is no support in mainstream was articulated by another student who argued that although there is support in the mainstream, one has to take the initiative to get help if need be:

There is that extra support but you have to find it yourself, I go to my tutor sometimes. Sometimes I just ask friends who understand the work better. So there is that support nonetheless but you have to acquire it yourself... it's been ok so far like I have taken a lot of advice and obviously I have learnt a lot from the ES courses, so I'm coping... mainstream is different, sometimes I wish that extra help was still around, but I'm sure I will be ok. (Author's interview with Lundi, 2012).

Some students missed the community aspect of Extended Studies – that is the ability to discuss and share knowledge. At the same time, other students continued with the

Extended Studies study groups. In fact, one Extended Studies lecturer argued that she encouraged students to work in groups on Extended Studies for this “modelled what they could do after Extended Studies” (Author’s interview with Denise, 2013). With regard to this, one student noted that:

It was difficult in the first term but you get used to it over time. It felt like a lot of work. Mainstream teaching is fine, and the tutorials really help in that we discuss the material covered in class. For some courses, I still study with people from ES. I try to do my tutorials as early as possible (Author’s interview with Penelope, 2012).

In terms of adjusting, students seemed to rely on the tutorial system and their peers. Additionally, the first year of Extended Studies created such an awareness of the opportunities that were available to students if they stayed in the university. For example, one of the students from a rural background pointed out that:

I had to quickly adjust to mainstream and work even harder; I did not want to go home. I loved the life here. Besides the school work, it was nice so I had to pass and I decided to stay and study hard (Author’s interview with Lundi, 2012).

Lastly, for other students, mainstream was about proving that they too had an academic identity. As one student argued:

When you are coming from ES, you are under so much pressure because many people expect you to fail second year, people just go like oh now that ES is not there, are they going to do well. But you find that a lot of us do pass and a lot do fail as well. Maybe half passes and half leaves. It was not the same because I had to prove to myself that I could do this without ES (Author’s interview with Vhatiswa, 2012).

The reasons students cope or struggle during the transition to mainstream are quite complex as indicated above. As such, the adjustment mechanisms are quite varied. For some students, it is the very background they come from that helps them to adjust to mainstream. So students’ backgrounds do contradictory things. On the one hand, they limit their chances of succeeding in university. On the other hand, they produce in them an aggressiveness that makes them hope and fight for more. Therefore, whilst institutional structures play a big role in assisting students in university, students actually use their backgrounds as a motivation to achieve academically. As noted earlier by Carolyne, since these students “often have no safety nets or father’s business to fall back on”, they are usually more motivated to learn and succeed (Author’s interview with Carolyne, 2012). The following interview excerpts illustrate the impact of various social backgrounds and experiences on motivation.

One student when asked to elaborate on why Extended Studies gave her the drive to achieve noted the following:

I think it goes back to my background, because growing up in a family where it is just females. It felt like we had to work extra hard to be on par with men, and also having a single mother as my pillar, it made me more ambitious, more driven and want more things that I never had (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

Another student indicated that he was a role model in his community since he had managed to make it up to university. For this reason, he had to try hard to complete his studies:

I want to finish my degree; in fact, it will be quite an achievement if I finish my degree. There are so many people where I come from who never even expected me to go to university, who were talking behind my back and also laughing at my struggles even when I was going to university, it was shocking for them so I have been some kind of role model. Most of my friends from Queenstown dropped out of school, maybe grade 9 and maybe people who passed matric in a class of 30 were probably about five of us and people who went to university are maybe two or three. One of my friends went to university and dropped out (Author's interview with Mangi, 2012).

It can therefore be argued that life experiences are actually an agency opportunity. In line with that, Walker (2006:36) argues that “there is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements”. In this sense, what becomes important is the extent to which institutional arrangements create conditions that enable individual agency. For example, given that life experiences are conceptualised as an agency opportunity, the agency outcome (achievement) can be realised if students are recognised. Now recognition is another agency opportunity. The point here is that agency opportunities can be argued to depend on other agency opportunities in determining outcomes. In other words, the impact of agency opportunities provided by teaching approaches on Extended Studies is also dependent on agency opportunities in the broader university – for example teaching and learning on mainstream.

Importantly, as will be noted in the next section, a focus on freedoms in the evaluation of the programme draws our attention to student experiences as indicators of the success of the programme as opposed to merely focusing on retention statics. It is, therefore, not surprising that for most students, perceptions of the impact of the programme were not primarily about improvement in marks or grades. Instead, students' reflections on the

impact of ES were mostly to do with issues such as confidence, motivation and identity, which can be argued affect learning in significant ways that are often unrecognised.

8.6 Perceived impact of Extended Studies Programme

The impact of the Extended Studies Programme was highlighted in previous discussions. This section provides a brief summary of students' perceptions of the benefits of Extended Studies. Interestingly, while first year Extended Studies students mostly raised factors relating to academic and social support provided by Extended Studies, former Extended Studies students in second, third, fourth and postgraduate studies highlighted issues related to their academic and learning identities in addition to academic support factors.

8.6.1 Academic writing, reading skills and mentoring

In terms of academic support, students revealed that Extended Studies introduced them to the ways of knowing, being and doing things in university. They seemed to suggest that mainstream did not prepare them in this regard hence they felt a bit advantaged over other students. Specifically students indicated that Extended Studies helped with academic writing, reading skills, computer literacy and academic literacy. Extra support in these areas helped students to survive and manage work in the mainstream. This is clearly illustrated in the following interview excerpts:

ES helps a lot because in Extended Studies we do things like essay drafting. As much as it seems like a lot of work, it helps us a lot because we have that chance of doing a first draft and getting someone to look at it and then doing the final essay. Unlike other students on mainstream, we have a chance to rework our essays. We have a chance of getting better marks, because we have someone to look at it before we submit. And we have someone to help us understand some of the things we wouldn't understand in mainstream. As I've said sometimes in the mainstream I just get there and leave class without understanding anything. Sometimes mainstream lecturers go at a really fast pace and in addition to that they just read the slides instead of explaining further. When I go to ES, I know the lecturer will go through the lecture again and she will also provide more examples (Author's interview with Onica, 2012).

My friends were on the mainstream and they were complaining about how it was difficult for them, having four courses and some people having six in BCOM so I felt like they gave me a bit of an advantage over other people because now I can handle everything, I mean research is not so far-fetched for me now because I understand what happens with research and how it should be conducted. Everything has to go in a research, it has to be proper not just a rush job. So in that sense, they gave us a whole lot of advantage over other people (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

I was actually lucky to be on ES although it was only for a semester.⁶⁴ When I spoke to a lot of my friends in mainstream, they were really struggling to make the transition from high school to varsity. Where's I had that extra academic help that definitely made a difference, I was actually glad that I was put on ES (Author's interview with Karen, 2012).

ES helped me adapt especially in academia, writing and communication skills especially when presenting. This year we are actually applying the things that we learnt last year (Author's interview with Lundi, 2012).

Another student noted that Extended Studies was an eye-opening experience in the sense that she was able to apply the academic skills she learnt on Extended Studies when she moved to another university:

I'm not really hurt for getting out because I then managed to get a Bachelor of Education with Walter Sisulu University. I went to WSU in 2009 and I was also funded by NSFAS and got a bursary for the third year. So Rhodes taught me a lot. From the academic side, I learnt how to work on assignment and that pressure really helped me. When I went to Walter Sisulu, I was able to get straight As and distinctions. I can say that ES was an eye opening experience. It helped me to work hard. I felt I was home because people were so welcoming at Rhodes, including foreigners. People were able to assist academically and emotionally (Author's phone interview with Nelly, 2013).

Other students indicated that Extended Studies offered a holistic approach to learning by not only focusing on academic support but also other areas of life which helped students to cope academically:

I think when a person is given a chance to come to Extended Studies they should take it, because it helps you cope with university, you might think it's a waste of time but sometimes you find that you wanted the mainstream and you find yourself failing and not being able to cope. Yet in Extended Studies you get all the help you need in all directions to help you blend in and cope with the university ... like you have mentors to talk to about your social life, and for academic life you have tutors to help, like in all directions to shape you, there's a lot of things that you are offered in Extended Studies that you wouldn't get in mainstream. On mainstream, you are not taught how to reference, you have to find that out for yourself, how to write an essay, how to structure an essay. Essays from primary schools and university are different. The small little things that you have to find for yourself in the mainstream, they help with that in Extended Studies (Author's interview with Onica, 2012).

With the exception of just a few students, mentoring was reported to have had a great impact in helping students to cope with university. Part of the reason is that Extended

⁶⁴ This student did exceptionally well in June, so she moved to the mainstream in the second semester.

Studies mentors are former Extended Studies students who can relate to student experiences of Extended Studies and academic experiences as well. Interestingly, although the role of mentors was not to assist students with their academics, in most case students revealed that their mentors helped with tutorials, exam preparation and course selection for second year:

Mentoring helped us adjust a lot. Our mentor showed us around campus. She would send us emails, checking on us, advising us. She went beyond being our mentor, we also talked about life in general (Author's interview with Bongi, 2012).

ES helped me a lot in terms of my academics. Mentoring also helped because I was home sick sometimes. So I would talk to my mentor on Fridays, we talked about everything. She would ask me about my week, my studies and stuff like that. You know at home I go to church, it's nice because I let go, I pray, I sing but here I feel like I don't even have time to go to church because of the workload and on weekends I'm tired. But then when I go to my mentor, we talk and I always find comfort in the fact that other students were also going through the same problems (Author's interview with Siphokazi, 2012).

To sum it all up, one student highlighted that Extended Studies provided a lot more in that whilst it supported them to survive on the mainstream, it also prepared them for further studies:

I can see we got a lot that most people don't have because a lot of people don't know how to present especially those who are doing professional communication they have to present and they used to ask us how to go about it. I know how to do that even in marketing. And I guess they prepared us even for research, we know how to use the library and search for literature in the databases. I have heard people say that I have never used Ebscohost and I'm like you are missing out because there is a lot of information on that website (Author's interview with Vhatiswa, 2012).

One mainstream lecturer who seemed to suggest that research skills are not taught in the mainstream also corroborated this point:

I mean, I'm teaching a post graduate course at the moment and in that post graduate course they have to do a literature review, it's the first time they have done a literature review, so you know you get to masters and your supervisor says review the literature, how does that go? Do you summarize? You do not know how to do a literature review because no one has ever taught you to. That is the kind of thing that I mean, people get to masters they get told to do research but they have never been taught how to do research, so writing is all of those things. How do you go about writing an essay? Do our students know? But we go on and on about how our students

are plagiarizing but we never told them what the alternative is to plagiarizing (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

Although Carolyne indicated that everyone needs the skills that are taught on ES, she seemed to argue that this work could only be effectively carried out by academics in departments and not in separate units like the Extended Studies unit.

8.6.2 Extended Studies allowed me to find myself and prove myself

As indicated in Chapter Six, a lot of the work undertaken on Extended Studies covers a lot of identity issues. As students came into new and arguably alienating contexts, they raised a lot of questions about their identity and in some cases those identities shifted in response to stereotypes. In spite of the stereotypes there is evidence to prove that most of the students were able to rise above these stereotypes. This was clearly illustrated by one student who pointed out that:

ES allowed me to actually not to think that I'm the inferior, I have always thought that I'm inferior. So when I got to ES, I was like this is my year, this is actually time to convince people that I don't belong to ES. And it allowed me because I managed to get good marks for Journalism, I did very well and I became one of the good students for the year and I made it for the FJP conference. but I wanted to prove to Rhodes that I'm here because I made it and my points allowed me to come to mainstream and just because of the school I went to, they taught me in Afrikaans, it gave me those low marks and it does not mean that I'm stupid and I'm supposed to or need extra help so I used this experience to gain confidence. So it actually allowed me to progress and I still believe that I am progressing (Author's interview with Malibongwe, 2012).

This is a true indication of education as the practice of freedom - a liberating experience. This can be attributed to the fact that students are given a voice in Extended Studies and, as hooks maintains, "honouring students' voices deconstructs the concept of "privileged" voices (hooks, as cited in Namulundah, 1998:91).

8.6.3 It made me eager to achieve

For some students, Extended Studies provided the motivation to work even harder. As one student noted:

ES made me more hungry to achieve more, because now it felt like we had to work extra harder to prove ourselves but for me it was never about trying to prove to other people, it was more of me trying to prove to myself that 80% is not so farfetched, getting a 70% is not so farfetched or a taboo so for me it made me more ambitious to go for what I want. Because for me mainstream students, the way I perceive them, they are more relaxed especially in humanities. So when I saw that my marks are not that different from other people, this year when I saw how like my sociology marks, they

are just high compared to other people who were getting 40s that made me realise how much I allowed myself to be more open minded and it shows in my arguments and I think it shows in my essays when I write something, it's not just work, it's something that I'm closely linked to so yah for me it has to be 100% in it, if I don't put in 100% then it's not my passion (Author's interview with Mathabo, 2012).

It can be argued that the need to work hard was underpinned by the realisation that Extended Studies was not going to be there forever, hence the need to be independent and work hard. For some, the university experience created awareness in students of what they could possibly achieve and become. The "hunger to achieve" noted by Mathabo is indicative of a hope that says "there is a way out, even from the most dangerous and desperate situations" (hooks, 1994: xv).

8.6.4 Access through ES made me aware of the diversity in South Africa: this was an enlightening experience

The opportunity to come into university contexts like Rhodes is always an enlightening experience for students who come from backgrounds that do not expose them to certain realities. This was clearly illustrated by one former Extended Studies postgraduate student who later got an opportunity to go on an exchange programme to an American university:

Access through ES made me aware of the diversity in South Africa, this was an enlightening experience. When I came to Rhodes it was that culture of shock and a diversity that was much of a shock and I knew that Rhodes was a Historically White University and you know moving from a historical black school to a historical white, it was a shock itself for me, meeting people who would say I come from Australia I was like Oh! Where I come from the only people that you will find that are not Xhosas are the people who come from African countries but mostly classified as black Africans, so there was not much diversity and you will never see them as the other, they were just part of us. So I came here there were Indians, Coloureds, white people from South Africa, Zimbabwe, so I must say coming to university was enlightening for me. I know this is strange when I think about it now, and I used to think that the rest of Africa was Black and it's only South Africans, and then you meet people at res, she's Indian from Zimbabwe and I'm like "are you sure?" and a white person from Zambia and I'm like "oh" because I thought that the rest of the African continent is only blacks, only in South Africa. So coming here in terms of diversity and knowing people from different places I got that diversity itself enlightened me and made me aware of things I didn't know (Author's interview with Zoleka, 2012).

What can be deduced from the above perceptions of the impact of Extended Studies is that students leave Extended Studies with something that they possibly carry for the rest of their academic lives or careers. One can safely argue that through Extended Studies ,

students gain much more than epistemological access to university, they find themselves, they find their passion, and they gain a community of friends which becomes a resource for learning even after ES. This is also noted by one Extended Studies lecturer who stated that:

My work with them is quite human and even if they do not make it at the end of the year or even if they leave, they will have something that they didn't have when they came and what they probably wouldn't have if they had gone straight to mainstream. They get a sense of themselves, they have been able to have fun around learning, debating issues that are really close to them and they have felt recognised and acknowledged as humans...These are life skills that other students from privileged backgrounds, who get 90s may leave without after completing their degrees at Rhodes University (Author's interview with Marian, 2012).

8.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to address the last three research objectives, which were aimed at:

- Investigating the academic and social experiences of Extended Studies students (research objective two);
- Investigating students' perceptions of the impact of the Extended Studies Programme (research objective three);
- Exploring the ways in which students with different kinds of cultural capital fit or do not fit in the education field and how the university as a whole responds to these students. This was achieved by looking at student's transition to mainstream (research objective four).

By integrating the theoretical concepts of Sen, hooks, Bourdieu and Freire, I was able to bring to light the relationship between social structures and individual agency. I began this chapter by presenting students' initial perceptions of the Extended Studies Programme and the ways they were perceived in the university. I then set out to explain how the capabilities approach and hook's conception of education as the practice of freedom provided ways of thinking about student support during the transition into unfamiliar educational spaces.

Based on the experiences of students and challenges faced during the transition to higher education, a list of context-specific freedoms and potential 'unfreedoms' was derived. This was done by including student voices on their experiences and perceptions of teaching and learning in both Extended Studies and mainstream. The chapter then considered the transition to mainstream and the perceived impact of the programme. Overall, students highlighted that ES had a positive impact on their personal and academic lives. Whilst first year Extended

Studies students emphasised mainly academic aspects, former Extended Studies students highlighted the impact of Extended Studies on areas like identity, confidence and other personal attributes that are crucial for one's active engagement in higher education.

When considering the success of educational programmes, there is a tendency to evaluate the programmes in terms of retention statistics. Students' reflections on the impact of Extended Studies directs our attention to new ways of thinking about evaluating equality and success. Although the availability of resources or the increased intake of 'disadvantaged' students is an important indicator of equity, data yielded in this study suggested the need to also consider the freedoms accorded to individuals in order to make the most of available opportunities such as access to higher education.

CHAPTER NINE

EVALUATING THE CONTRIBUTION OF EXTENDED STUDIES PROGRAMMES TO INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the main research question – To what extent is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objectives when viewed from a transformation perspective? In making claims about the extent to which the programme has brought about transformation in the university, attention is drawn to the power relationships between agents in the field – as expressed in the field practices, perceptions of the practices and the impact of those practices on academic outcomes. In addition to this, the chapter considers the shifts that have taken place in foundation provisioning at Rhodes University, particularly with respect to the design, purpose, ownership, and recognition of the programmes in the broader institution. Furthermore, the institution's engagement with a diverse student body – that is students with different kinds of capital – is also interrogated in view of the institutional development phase of academic development work.⁶⁵ I begin by reintroducing the notion of transformation in order to formulate a framework for the evaluation of the programme.

9.2 Conceptualising transformation

While the concept of transformation is open to a variety of interpretations, in this chapter it is conceptualised in light of the access for success debate offered in Chapter Two (See Section 2.4). It was argued that access initiatives had to ensure the success of black students in order to avoid a 'revolving door to failure' – that is the inability of students to successfully complete their studies. The shift from access as participation to access as success was also underpinned by the economic rationale for efficiency and quality.⁶⁶ It was in the context of these debates that the approaches to foundation provision shifted over time as it became apparent that access could not translate to success, given the fact that the higher education field was and remains an uneven field. It was, therefore, imperative for institutions to transform ideologically and structurally in order to cater for a diverse student body.

As such, it is not surprising that in the South African context, transformation entailed a process in which the form, shape, and/or nature of institutions would be completely altered –

⁶⁵ The current phase of AD – Institutional Development – constructs AD work as a resource for institutional efficiency. The achievement of institutional efficiency is perceived as dependent on systematic change – which involves among other things, staff development and curriculum responsiveness to the social and economic needs of the country.

⁶⁶ See Akoojee & Nkomo 2007:394; Boughey 2010.

a “blueprint change” (Makgoba, as cited in Fourie, 1999:277). This change, for many commentators on higher education transformation in South Africa, involved a shift in student and staff demographics, pedagogical approaches, academic outcomes and institutional cultures, to mention a few.⁶⁷

The Deputy Vice Chancellor of Rhodes University – Dr Saleem Badat – in his address at the 10th Annual Vice Chancellor’s Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Lecture, recently noted the view of transformation as a shifting of cultures and ways of doing things. He argued that transformation could not be reduced to simply changing the racial and gender demographics of staff and students. According to Badat (2013), institutional transformation means much more:

It means creating institutional cultures that genuinely respect and appreciate difference and diversity – whether class, gender, national, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, epistemological or methodological in nature. At a fundamental level, transformation is building in the context of the fractures and fissures of our society, new and different kinds of social relationships... It is acting and doing things in new and different ways, being open to making the 'natural' strange, and rethinking and changing how we think about ourselves and others, about conventional wisdoms like quality and academic excellence, about core aspects of university life and about our challenges, possibilities and constraints (Badat, 2013).

The essence of Badat’s conception of transformation is that it is a process of continuous institutional renewal. Implied in this is a learning process, hence we ask the question – Has the university learnt? If so, what has been learnt and what changes have taken place in response to the lessons? The concept of the ‘learning university’⁶⁸ is used as a framework for evaluating both the Extended Studies Programme as an independent field and the institutional field, which serves as the context of transformation. As McKenna (2012:51) argued:

Without an awareness of context, it is possible to think of foundational level work as being politically and ideologically neutral. An understanding of the context allows for a deeper reflection on and critique of our practices and of the programmes within which we work.

Writing with specific reference to the USA, Chris Duke explored the concept of ‘the learning university’ by examining the assumptions about universities, their changing environments,

⁶⁷ See Cross & Carpentier 2009; Sennette et al., 2003; Walker 2006; Warren 2002:88.

⁶⁸ The idea of the ‘learning university’ was adopted from Mungwashu’s concept of ‘A learning State’. See Mungwashu 2011.

and their adaptation to new circumstances. Duke posed a question about the extent to which universities could learn and pointed out that:

Organizations as well as individuals can learn. They can take in and use new information, adapt their identities, purposes and priorities to new environments and circumstances, change and survive – or, perhaps, fail to learn and adapt, atrophy and die... The university is made and remade by new pressures and needs in new times and circumstances, as new societies emerge from the old (Duke, 1992: xi).

When applied to the evaluation of transformation, the idea of the ‘learning university’ suggests that transformation is a process. Therefore, attention is focused on the capacity of the university to learn in the process of the broader AD shifts, as expressed through shifts in foundation provisioning. With this in mind, the degree of learning or, in other words, transformation can be inferred from an analysis of the ES programme provided in Chapter Six as well as students’ experiences of teaching and learning discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight. In addition, the history and shifts in institutional policies, teaching philosophies and practices, also indicate volumes about transformation broadly. While transformation indicators can easily be reduced to quantifiable terms such as graduation rates and participation rates, this study considers both qualitative and quantitative aspects of transformation.

9.3 Broadened access and diversification of the student body as transformation

Notwithstanding the failure of the Extended Studies Programmes to ensure the success of most of the students who enrol on the programme, there is no doubt that the programme has provided access to a significant number of disadvantaged black South African students. Although Dhunpath & Vithal (2012:12) point out that “foundation programmes only account for a very small percentage of total university enrolments”, the claim about broadened participation needs to be evaluated in light of the low participation rates of black South African students, owing to limited finances and poor educational backgrounds which limit their chances of furthering their studies beyond matric. Moreover, the history of the precursors of Extended Studies Programmes – the ASPs, for example – reveal that these programmes provided the only means of access to higher education for black students. Therefore, had it not been for these programmes, the increasing enrolment of black students might have occurred at a much slower pace.

Broadened access to black students also brought about diversity in the student body. Whilst diversity is usually limited to race and gender, in South Africa these dynamics imply much

more. No doubt, inequality in contemporary South Africa has shifted from a racial basis to a class basis. Extended Studies students are deliberately chosen based on their poor educational and social backgrounds, which means that these students lack the dominant cultural capital possessed by other students from well to do backgrounds. A comparison of the changing racial demographics in enrolments between the 1990s and 2000s provides a clearer picture of the diversification of the student body. The trend highlighted below can be attributed to the shifts in admission policies.

Table 9.1 Racial composition of students 1994-1998

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	%
Indian	325	428	425	499	512	10%
African	864	1381	1720	1616	1876	35%
Coloured	132	159	160	202	230	4%
ABC TOTAL	1321	1968	2305	2317	2618	49%
White	2774	2691	2606	2631	2752	51%
TOTAL	4095	4659	4911	4948	5370	100%

Adapted from the Rhodes University Digest of Statistics, Volume 3, 1999

Table 9.2 Racial composition of students 2007- 2011

Racial categories	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	%
Indian	329	303	299	274	279	4%
African	2554	2920	3487	3614	3746	51%
Coloured	233	223	241	255	256	4%
ABC TOTAL	3116	3446	4027	4143	4281	59%
White	2953	2874	2978	302	2993	41%
TOTAL	6069	6320	7005	716	7274	100%

Adapted from the Rhodes University Digest of Statistics, Volume 16, 2012

Although the above statistics are not specific to the Extended Studies Programme, they do reveal that the student population has become more diverse as more black students now have access to Historically White Universities. These numbers can be attributed to the admission criteria of mainstream students, which is arguably flexible when it comes to black students. Although some black students make it into the mainstream, the significant number of black students on financial aid goes to show that not all of them are from wealthy backgrounds. The provision of funding to black students who cannot afford to pay for their studies facilitates transformation by broadening access and diversity of the student body. Implied in this is the realisation of social justice, which, in my view, is a tool for evaluating transformation.⁶⁹

According to the Rhodes University Admissions Policy (2010: 3.8):

Social equity in the context of this policy thus functions as a means of redress. It recognises that because of injustices which have occurred against members

⁶⁹ See Akpovire & Oduaran 2006.

of various groups (based on race, colour, religion, creed, gender, disability, etc.), academic accomplishment cannot serve as the sole criteria for admission to the institution. It is essential that every applicant demonstrates sufficient academic accomplishment to succeed at Rhodes, but additional criteria will be used to determine which applicants merit admission to the university. These criteria will include, but not be limited to, the school attended, geographic origin, race, gender, family income level, home language, civic involvement, special talents and abilities, nationality, hardships overcome (e.g. emotional, psychological, familial or material).

Therefore, the provision of funding and inclusive admissions practices go a long way in preventing Bourdieu's model of educational institutions, which function as "immense cognitive machines", by recognizing and privileging students with the most cultural capital.⁷⁰ Also implied in the above cited policy excerpt is the view that the university is not blind to the history it is trying to address in its transformation aims, hence it recognizes the impact of both educational backgrounds and finances on one's ability to access higher education. This is again clearly expressed elsewhere in the same admissions policy:

The university recognises that there are students with academic merit who are unable to pursue university studies because of financial means. The university will work closely with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and other funding agencies to secure funding for academically talented students who lack financial resources to study at Rhodes University. The university council will also continue to set aside funds to assist financially needy students (Student admission policy, 2010:4).

Given the fact that about 90% of the students that enrol for the Extended Studies Programme receive NSFAS funding, it can be argued that reproduction of inequalities is in a way reversed – assuming that the students do well in university, thereby placing them in a position to change the fate of future generations. Also implied in this is the achievement of social justice, which is "deemed as a necessary condition of democratic life" (Nelson et al., 2012:3).

Notwithstanding the above highlighted achievements, it is perhaps important to evaluate the admissions of Extended Studies students in light of their contribution to the Grahamstown community as a whole since it has been claimed that Rhodes University:

Recognizes that its location in the town of Grahamstown/Rhini in the Eastern Cape Province places on it a special responsibility to provide educational opportunities for students from the town and the province (Rhodes Admissions Policy, 2010:3.7)

⁷⁰ See Bourdieu (1996:52).

For this reason it worth interrogating the extent to which the university is fulfilling its equity mandate through responsiveness to the needs of the community. This is a necessary engagement given the number of disadvantaged schools in the town, with potentially talented students – students who possibly meet the criteria for admission into Extended Studies.

9.3.1. Interrogating the numbers issue – What if the programme catered more for local disadvantaged students?

The statistics regarding the enrolment numbers on the Humanities Extended Studies Programme reveal that over the past seven years, the programme has only managed to admit an average of forty students per year. While the issue of funding and availability of academics to teach in the programmes is claimed to be a determinant of whether the programme will grow or not, it can be argued that the impact of the programme would be more significant if the programme targeted more local students. Although there are claims about the role of the Extended Studies Programme as an attempt to provide access to mostly local students and the Eastern Cape, interviews with Extended Studies lecturers and students revealed that this is actually not the case. The available evidence shows that the programme draws a large number of students from other provinces.

When asked to comment on the efficiency of the Extended Studies Programme in addressing transformation, one Extended Studies lecturer confirmed the claim that the programme draws a small number of students from the Grahamstown community:

There is a deliberate need to reach out to the location. Rhodes knows what the problem is in the schools. What is Rhodes doing in the area of access? It is not really doing well. There is a need to increase the numbers and take more students from the community (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

There is evidence to show that postgraduate students have undertaken some research on teaching and learning in the schools.⁷¹ Therefore, it can be claimed that Rhodes is aware of the problems in the schools, and, perhaps, of what needs to be changed to improve the performance of the pupils in the township schools. At the same time, the extent to which the research findings and recommendations are fed back into or implemented in the schools is unknown. Admittedly, the Rhodes University community engagement department runs a number of projects in the schools. That being noted, however, the efficiency of these

⁷¹ See Ngcoza 1998; Fobe 2010.

initiatives is questionable given the non-ownership of such initiatives by academic departments.

If indeed, Rhodes University has a responsibility to Grahamstown and the Eastern Cape as is claimed in the admissions policy, then it is imperative to establish partnerships with poor and under-resourced schools in the city in order to assist talented students in the local schools. In fact, when the predecessors of Extended Studies Programmes were first introduced, there were specific institutional initiatives that targeted learning in the Grahamstown community. One example is the ‘Ikhonco Academic Skills Programme’, which aimed to assist learners who intended to enrol for higher education with “basic necessary academic skills” (Tisani, 1991:1). The 1991 Ikhonco Report revealed that students appreciated these programmes. It was reported that:

In maths tutorials, the pupils appreciated the opportunity of going over themes they were having problems with. Being introduced to new tactics of solving problems was equally helpful.... Some Ikhonco activities did directly relate to the syllabus (Tisani, 1991).

The benefit of this programme was also reflected in the average pass rate for Ikhonco matriculates in 1991. The pass rate was 63.2% as compared to the national average, which was reported at 39.2%. In addition to extra tutorials, the programme also incorporated a teaching skills programme for local high school teachers. The programme focused on general teaching skills and subject-specific teaching skills. While it remains uncontested that tertiary education and basic education engage with different kinds and approaches to knowledge, it needs to be mentioned that in South Africa the gap between the two is wider than usual, hence the problem of the articulation gap across the board.

There is no doubt that responsibility for this gap is a contested terrain, which in most cases is blamed on the schools. Nevertheless, universities depend on the schooling system for their very existence, and, in fact, their success or continued existence depends on the successes of the schooling system. It therefore makes sense to share the burden; in that way, our claimed responsibility to the community is tangibly realised.

To return to the issue of numbers, Sen’s question ‘equality of what?’ not only prompts an enquiry into the capabilities that can be developed once students are enrolled⁷² but also the active role of higher education institutions in developing the capabilities of students in the local schools in order to facilitate their access to university. Given that some of them fail

⁷² As discussed in Section 8.4.3 in the discussion on ‘other agency opportunities’ or freedoms.’

to meet requirements for admission into ES, these initiatives would go a long way in ensuring that more local students make it into university through the ES programme or through the provision of funding for those who meet the admission requirements for mainstream.

9.4 Access with success – have we achieved real transformation?

Given the shift in AD from equity to efficiency, it can be argued that graduation and retention rates of ES students act as important indicators of transformation. Various commentators on higher education in South Africa emphasised the dual relationship between access and success as key factors in the effective transformation of higher education.⁷³ This was also echoed in the Education White Paper (1997:1.14), which noted that a transformed higher education system would promote both equity of access and equity of success. Although graduation rates are a quantitative measure, they are a reflection of qualitative aspects such as curriculum, teaching and learning practices and institutional cultures as will be discussed in the next section.

Therefore, in the context of Bourdieu's theoretical framework, improved graduation and retention rates for disadvantaged students would be interpreted as a reversal of reproduction. In the capabilities framework similarly, improved graduation rates would be interpreted as an achievement of real social justice, which is dependent on the expansion of capabilities through the availability of agency opportunities that enable students to act productively.⁷⁴ Thinking in terms of capabilities raises a wider range of issues than simply looking at alternative access to university for students who don't normally meet the admission requirements. In the case of the Extended Studies Programme, it is my opinion that the question about whether the university has transformed or not, is not about the numbers enrolled in the programme or even the availability of such an initiative. Instead, such a question can be addressed by considering the outcomes of the programme (Walker, 2006:32). The outcomes can be measured by evaluating undergraduate graduation and retention statistics as well as postgraduate enrolments of former ES students.

9.4.1 Graduation and dropout statistics as transformation indicators

A cohort graduation analysis was undertaken for students registered between 2005 and 2009 as students registered after that were still completing their degrees. Table 9.3 below is a

⁷³ See for example Machingambi 2011; Akoojee & Nkomo 2007; Hill et al., 2012.

⁷⁴ See Wilson-Strydom 2011.

cohort summary of graduation statistics for Extended Studies students registered in the said years.

Table 9.3 Cohort graduation analysis of Humanities ES registered between 2005 and 2009

Cohort year	New registrations	Completed UG Degree	Still busy in 2013	Total- excluded, not complete and not registered in 2013
2005	35	18	0	17
2006	43	25	1	17
2007	48	22	0	26
2008	54	29	0	25
2009	48	30	4	19
2010	47	19	16	12

Statistics provided by the Rhodes University Data Management Unit (DMU)

NOTE: The years after 2010 are excluded because new Extended Studies students registering after 2010 are scheduled to complete their degree at the end of 2014.

One of the most striking facts arising from the data presented above is the low graduation and retention rates of the programme. As indicated above, about 50% of the students either drop out or are excluded. Interviews with ES lecturers revealed that a large number of the students drop out or are excluded after the first year of ES. Whilst some of the reasons for exclusion can easily be reduced to academic issues in terms of preparation for higher education, a follow up of some of the students revealed that they failed due to deliberate poor engagement with the courses that had been chosen for them.⁷⁵ Therefore, some students left not because they were not coping academically, but they went to study in other universities. The departure of these students is therefore not an indication of the failure of the system. A follow up of these statistics is particularly important in evaluating the problem as well as addressing some of the key problems in the programme. For example, the issue of course selection as the Dean of Humanities admitted:

The design of the programme is not ideal; it would be good to have an ES lecturer in each department. It would mean a huge amount in terms of the size of the programme; we would be able to offer a much bigger programme. At the moment it's just 50 students. Although we are relatively small compared to other universities, the programme is small. It would be quite easy to extend it to other departments given the number of applications we receive. There are issues about who is going to pay the lecturers and the students since the students are funded; it is an issue of money (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

There is however an on-going conversation about including other courses. At the same time, the issue is not necessarily a matter of the willingness of departments to own the programme, but rather a financial one (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

⁷⁵ As discussed in Chapter Six, ES students have limited course options.

Returning to the discussion on graduation and retention rates, some students openly admitted that they were excluded because they were not coping with the demands of higher education. Nevertheless, they revealed that the experience of learning on Extended Studies made their transition into other universities much easier.⁷⁶ Given statistics such as these, it is tempting to assume that the programme is a failure or a waste of money. Yet, the above trends actually resemble the graduation and retention rates on the mainstream.

At the same time, claims about the level of transformation as indicated by the graduation rates need to take into consideration, the level of under-preparedness of the Extended Studies students. Hence, the Dean of Humanities noted that:

Because even if one of those students succeeds, then it is worth the trouble, quite a number of them are doing reasonably well. A comparison of ES and mainstream results shows that they are not doing too badly (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

Moreover, the claim that disadvantage lingers for a long time implies that the one year of Extended Studies is not sufficient to undo the disadvantages of the past, hence the need for “systemic curriculum reform in order to match the universities with the reality of the students joining them” (Kioko, Barnsley & Jaganyi, 2013:168).

Table 9.4 below shows a graduation cohort analysis of mainstream vs Extended Studies students in the Humanities Faculty for 2005 – 2009 cohorts. These statistics support the claim that ES students are doing fairly well when compared to other students in the mainstream.

⁷⁶ See Section 8.5.

Table 9.4 Cohort graduation analysis of mainstream vs Extended Studies students registered between 2005 and 2009

		New registrations	Completed a UG degree	Still busy	Not complete and not registered in 2013
2005	BA	461	75.27%	0.22%	24.51%
	BAF	35	51.43%	0.00%	48.57%
	BSS	166	72.29%	0.00%	27.11%
2006	BA	419	76.85%	0.24%	22.91%
	BAF	37	54.05%	2.70%	43.24%
	BSS	159	77.36%	0.63%	22.01%
2007	BA	510	73.53%	0.20%	26.27%
	BAF	48	45.83%	0.00%	54.17%
	BSS	162	82.72%	0.53%	17.28%
2008	BA	519	69.17%	1.35%	29.48%
	BAF	54	53.70%	0.00%	46.30%
	BSS	190	77.37%	0.53%	22.11%
2009	BA	511	65.95%	1.96%	32.29%
	BAF	48	52.08%	8.33%	39.58%
	BSS	238	68.49%	1.68%	29.83%
2010	BA	519	68.40%	10.40%	21.19%
	BAF	47	40.43%	34.04%	25.53%
	BSS	259	71.04%	8.11%	20.85%

Statistics provided by the Rhodes University Data Management Unit (DMU)

NOTE: The years after 2010 are excluded because new Extended Studies students registering after 2010 are scheduled to complete their degree at the end of 2014.

Although the graduation rates for both BA and BSS are significantly higher than Extended Studies graduation rates, the dropout rate portrays a different picture – the BA and BSS dropout rates are equally higher. It can thus be argued that the ES students are not doing too badly even when one considers the significant difference between the Extended Studies class size and mainstream class size. The non-completion percentages for mainstream students are an indication of the general level of under-preparedness in the student body. In support of this claim, the Dean of Humanities pointed out that:

There are far more students that require assistance than we are prepared to acknowledge given the dropouts and exclusion rates as well as the time taken to complete under-graduate degrees (Author’s interview with Hendricks, 2013).

This situation of low undergraduate retention and graduation rates is, however, not unique to Rhodes University; it is a well-known problem in South Africa’s education system. In

fact, the four-year degree proposal is underpinned by the observation that despite the significant increase in enrolment rates in both the schooling and higher education sector, graduate outputs have not kept pace with the increasing enrolments (CHE, 2013:11). As a result, the high attrition and graduation rates were reported to have “largely neutralised the important gains in access” (CHE, 2013:11).

It was against this background that a task team was appointed by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to investigate possible interventions to address the low retention and graduation rates. A new undergraduate curriculum structure in the form of a four-year degree was thus proposed. Proper discussion of this proposal is beyond the scope of this chapter, but what is interesting is that the kinds of teaching practices proposed as part of the four-year degree resemble teaching practices on the Extended Studies Programme.⁷⁷

The fact that Extended Studies teaching practices resemble the proposed curriculum elements of the four-year degree, reveal the transformative aspect of the Extended Studies Programme. Although transformation is arguably difficult to assess, it is widely acknowledged that it involves a shifting of things in terms of teaching philosophies and practices. What the Extended Studies Programme reflect is a shift from the traditional approach to teaching in order to adapt to the changing nature of the student body.⁷⁸ With regard to the role of ES in the implementation of the four-year degree, the Dean of Teaching and Learning— Professor Chrissie Boughey – noted the following:

Here at Rhodes we would actually use ES type models and those ES staff could actually teach us a lot. But there are huge problems – finding people to work in expert ways like ES is hard. Those people are experts. You end up having people who come with very common assumptions and they would have to be developed into expert understanding of what the issues are and what is disadvantage and things like that, so you would have to build that cadre of people. It would require a whole scale of restructuring the curriculum (Author’s interview with Boughey, 2013).

Overall, the four-year degree proposal was well received:

A four-year degree is an exciting opportunity to introduce new directions in disciplines. It is an opportunity to connect courses with the problems of society to ensure a normative connection with your own location and where you stand in the world. That is an important engagement. A four year degree

⁷⁷ See for example the discussion on teaching and learning on ES, offered in Chapter Six, and the explicit teaching practices indicated in the four year degree proposal, see (CHE, 2013: 58, 70, 94-96, 247-248).

⁷⁸ This claim will be discussed further in a different section.

would definitely include some form of ES kind of work (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

The three-year degree in a way puts pressure on students. Instead of making people fail, we could structure the curriculum into a four-year degree. That way people will be able to get through faster, do some more explicit teaching, and have introductions to things. There may be more introductory computer courses and the kind of work we do on ES... This four-year degree would help in terms of not losing people after the first degree. A more staggered introductory into university may mean that you lose a few people after a year. (Author's interview with Denise, 2012).

Although less than 50% of the 2005-2009 Extended Studies cohorts managed to graduate, students' reflections of the ES programme discussed in Chapter Eight suggest that the explicit teaching on ES established some necessary foundations in all the students.⁷⁹

A few things are worth noting in concluding this section. The achievement of access with success for previously disadvantaged students is a complex issue for the simple reason that institutional practices alone cannot compensate for years of disadvantage or poor schooling. One then needs to ask the question about the extent to which the habitus can be ruptured, and perhaps the timing of this rupture. Bourdieu argues that the "habitus is creative, inventive, but within the limits of its structures, which are the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:19).

It needs to be acknowledged that the limits that Bourdieu refers to here are not only institutional limits but also embodied dispositions which create the mismatch between individual habitus and institutional habitus. Indeed, transformative pedagogical practices on both the Extended Studies Programme and mainstream can go a long way in reducing the chances of failure. However, the effectiveness of interventions at the higher education interface is worth interrogating given the problems in South Africa's schooling system. Bourdieu's reproduction thesis can be critiqued in this sense for it fails to address the issue of time – at what point exactly is it possible/ impossible to rupture the habitus? Similarly, the capabilities approach fails to address the issue of time due to its overly optimistic agentic emphasis.

While it is uncontested that the first year of Extended Studies is not sufficient to undo the disadvantages of the past, the same can be argued about transformative pedagogical practices

⁷⁹ The benefits discussed in Section 8.6.1 are products of explicit teaching as suggested in the proposal and also by an ES lecturer (Denise quoted above) in her support of the four year degree proposal.

on the mainstream. This clearly suggests the need to address the problem at an early stage. While this is arguably outside the scope of the work of universities, it does however place a responsibility on the government to address the problems in higher education in a more systematic manner – that is addressing the problem from its roots. Clearly in South Africa, problems of under-prepared students in higher education have their roots in the schooling system. Until problems at this level are thoroughly addressed, access initiatives will only succeed in diversifying the student body yet promoting what Bourdieu referred to as “exclusion from inside” – that is inequalities in educational outcomes (Bourdieu & Champagne cited in Lebaron, 1998:3).

9.4.2 Postgraduate enrolments as transformation indicators

Although the Extended Studies students account for only a small proportion of the student body, their ability to progress through to postgraduate studies is crucial to the transformation agenda. Badat (2010:23) argued “the participation of black and women South Africans at postgraduate level needs to be significantly enhanced so as to give effect to redress and social equity for historically disadvantaged social groups”. Table 9.5 below shows that less than 30% of the 2005-2009 cohorts made it into postgraduate studies. Although it is possible that some of the students will have gone to other universities, the high proportion of students that fail to complete their studies further supports the claim that most of these students fail to enrol in postgraduate studies. Given that all ES students are black South Africans, the low postgraduate enrolment poses a threat to the generation of black South African intellectuals. Table 9.5 below shows the trends in postgraduate enrolments in the 2005- 2009 cohorts.

Table 9.5 Cohort analysis for Extended Studies students who started in said year and completed a postgraduate degree later

	2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	New registrations	Completed PG	New registrations	Completed PG	New registrations	Completed PG	New registrations	Completed PG	New registrations	Completed PG
BA F	35	8 or 23%	43	11 or 25.5%	48	13 or 27%	54	10 or 15%	48	3 or 4%

Statistics provided by the Rhodes University Data Management Unit (DMU)

Given the fact that these students were admitted through alternative access initiatives, the ability of any one of them to enrol for postgraduate studies is a significant achievement. Nevertheless, interviews with Extended Studies lecturers revealed that most of the students only go as far as completing postgraduate diplomas as opposed to a standard

honours degree or masters and PhD. Very few of them make it into masters, let alone PhD. This trend is equally the same in the mainstream where black South African students are concerned.

Although institutional statistics were not available to substantiate this claim at the time of the study, the Rhodes University Audit report of 2007 seemed to suggest that Rhodes University failed to retain a representative proportion of black South Africans into postgraduate studies. In its recommendation to Rhodes, the HEQC report noted the following:

The HEQC recommends that Rhodes consider the development of a comprehensive strategy to recruit new researchers and increase the number of research outputs. The strategy should take into account the urgent need to change the demographics of research production at the institution... Given the pressing need to improve the equity profile of enrolments, the institution also needs to think of having an enrolment strategy targeted at increasing the number of South African black students at postgraduate level (CHE, 2006:30).

This phenomenon is not peculiar to Rhodes University; a similar observation was made at national level in a report on postgraduate studies in South Africa. A statistical analysis of postgraduate enrolments across the country led to the following conclusion:

The overall picture that emerges from these statistics points to the increasingly important contribution of non-South African students to the pool of South African postgraduate students. In fact, it is clear, that were it not for significant increases in enrolments especially from SADC countries (as well as other African countries), there would be very little growth in our postgraduate enrolment figures (CHE.2009:28).

The trends in postgraduate enrolments at national and institutional levels are products of the low graduation rates and articulation challenges discussed in the previous section. When compared to postgraduate enrolments of black students in the mainstream, statistics reveal that the Extended Studies Programme is not doing too badly. However, there is certainly room for improvement.

One mainstream lecturer attributed inequalities in undergraduate graduation rates and postgraduate enrolment of black South African students to failure of institutions to teach to diversity, as indicated by alienating curriculum structures, institutional cultures, teaching practices and learning systems. The mainstream lecturer seemed to suggest that an improvement of graduation and postgraduate enrolment statistics would also require a shift in the demographics of the teaching staff:

All the lectures must be held accountable for the success of all students; these black students did not succeed, what did you do to address it? Because the demographics are wrong in South Africa, we do not have enough black academics. We sit on selection committees and say there is not anybody applying for the post; now what I'm saying is that where is the accountability for that, that there are not enough black people in academia, the accountability starts on how you treat the first years, so your accountability is your responsibility to say well if there are people who did not have the benefit of say parents with university education, schools where things are taught in a particular way, then what is my responsibility in this country. There has to be accountability for that, calling lectures to account (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

Although it is outside the scope of this study to go into discussions about staff demographics at length, it suffices to say that transformation through AD initiatives was conceptualised as dependent on other institutional factors such as the ability of mainstream academics to teach in diverse contexts. Therefore, the success of these programmes or other transformation-related programmes in the broader university are dependent on other institutional conditions and practices as will be noted in the next section. In view of the claim by Carolyne about the problematic racial demographics of academic staff, the table 9.6 below provides a clearer picture.

Table 9.6 Rank of Rhodes University permanent academic staff by race and gender 2009-2012

YEAR	Academic rank	MALE				FEMALE			
		India n	Africa n	Coloured	White	India n	Africa n	Coloured	White
2009	Professor	2	4	1	52	0	0	0	12
	Associate Professor	1	5	0	33	2	0	2	5
	Senior lecturer	2	4	1	39	0	3	1	35
	Lecturer	3	15	1	46	3	8	2	44
2010	Professor	1	3	1	59	0	0	0	13
	Associate Professor	1	3	0	33	1	0	4	6
	Senior lecturer	2	3	1	36	0	3	0	0
	Lecturer	5	11	1	46	3	8	2	37
2011	Professor	1	2	2	48	0	0	0	9
	Associate Professor	1	4	0	34	1	0	4	7
	Senior lecturer	2	4	2	37	1	3	1	44
	Lecturer	4	12	2	37	6	6	2	35
2012	Professor	1	2	0	41	0	0	0	9
	Associate Professor	0	5	1	37	1	0	4	9
	Senior lecturer	3	5	2	42	1	3	2	45
	lecturer	4	15	4	37	8	10	3	36

Adapted from Digest of Statistics 2010-2013, Volume 14-17

The above statistics reveal that the academic staff is predominantly white, and this is yet another indicator of the claim that South African higher education institutions are failing to produce enough black academics. In 2006, the South African education system was reported to be producing a limited number of black South African doctoral graduates (CHE, 2009:61). As indicated by the racial profile of academic staff at Rhodes University, this arguably “limits the potential for improving the racial profile of academic staff across the system” (CHE, 2009:61).

Badat argued that gender and racial inequalities in academic staff – particularly black and women academics – could in differing ways affect equity of opportunity and outcomes due to alienating institutional cultures that do not appreciate diversity and difference (Badat, 2010:34). In making this point, Badat seemed to suggest that diversity in the teaching staff has the potential to influence institutional practices – that is the ways of doing things – teaching, assessment, and other pedagogy-related practices that influence the learning process. Implied in this is a shift in the structure of the field owing to the introduction of diverse agents, which, in turn, necessitates shifts in other practices within

the institution. The ability of agents (diverse lecturers) to shift the culture and practices is also implicit in Bourdieu's notion of 'game'. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992:99) argue that agents participate in games to increase their capital as well as transform the immanent rules of the game "partially or completely". If seen in this light, diversity in the teaching staff or the student body is not a bad thing. Instead, it has the potential to bring about transformation. It is therefore not surprising that commentators like Moulder (1991) argued that the increase of black students in white institutions would require these institutions to restructure their curriculum in order to cater for a diverse student body. Implied in this is a levelling of the education field, which is arguably underpinned by notions of diversity, recognition and inclusion. However, diversity alone does not transform, but it is the new pressures presented by a diverse student body that result in the change of what Bourdieu calls the rules of the game and consequently the field as well – which is the space of play.

Diversification of the teaching staff – particularly the enrolment of Black academics – is a critical requirement for the Africanisation of the curriculum and knowledge production. Such an engagement is a valued freedom or agency opportunity, which determines the level of motivation and perceived relevance of courses covered in class. Interviews with some students revealed that they enjoyed courses with which they could relate. Moreover, students revealed that they resented mainstream lecturers who used examples that were irrelevant to the South African context (Author's interview with Marcus, 2012 & Jabu, 2012).⁸⁰

Odora Hoppers supported the need for the Africanisation of knowledge production and argued that:

Africanisation should open up new ways of thinking and education should take the lead in this endeavour. It is time to root our thinking in our African traditions and challenge those traditions to help us find the right solutions to problems facing us (Hoppers, 2012).

Although such an engagement is not enabled by simply having black faces in the institution, the availability of black academics is a necessary condition for a drive and commitment to the conversation on Africanisation of knowledge production. Badat made a similar point:

⁸⁰ Interview excerpts quoted in Chapter Eight (See Section 8.4.3.4).

As a consequence of apartheid, knowledge production in South Africa has been predominantly the preserve of white men. The democratisation of knowledge requires special measures to induct previously excluded social groups such as black and women South Africans into the production and dissemination of knowledge (Badat, 2010:24).

The solution to this lies, as Carolyne argued, in the ways in which the university engages a diverse student body, by teaching in ways that ensure success for all students. Whilst it remains uncontested that the university has transformed in terms of providing physical access to black students at undergraduate level, the postgraduate figures reflect a need to pay more attention to issues of success. Until such a time when at least 50% of the Extended Studies students can enrol for postgraduate studies, can we then argue that real transformation has taken place. What would be necessary in the future is to track these students into the labour market system in order to evaluate their employability, which is, of course, based on the quality of their degree among other things. This will be explored further in Chapter Ten.

9.5. Curriculum shifts in foundation provisioning as transformation

A consideration of the history and shifts in foundation provisioning at Rhodes University is yet another indicator of transformation. These shifts, as indicated in Chapter Three, occurred mostly at the level of the curriculum and had corresponding implications on the broader institution. This section evaluates the Extended Studies Programme in view of the general debates on foundation provisioning offered in Chapter Three. A recap of the main criticisms against the precursors of the ES programme is a necessary starting point.

The predecessors of Extended Studies Programmes, ASPs in particular, were criticised for their deficit assumptions about student disadvantage. It was argued that ASPs operated from a decontextualized notion of a disadvantage, which blamed students around the language problem and other deficits. As such, ASPs were underpinned by the need to fix students, while the institutional and structural conditions remained unchanged.⁸¹ Given the persistent inequalities in education outcomes, the efficacy of the programmes was often questioned.⁸²

Therefore, as the field of AD evolved over time, it soon became clear that it was perhaps the higher education institutions that were not prepared for black students. In light of the debate about underprepared institutions, Moulder (1988) actually argued that the peripheral nature of the programmes functioned to avert institutional change. Institutional

⁸¹ See Hunter 1990; Moulder 1991.

⁸² See Mehl 1988.

change in these debates was conceptualised in terms of the adaptation of Historically White Institutions to the increasing number of black students through diversity teaching and ownership of the programmes by the departments.⁸³

As argued in Chapter Six, the current ES programmes are located within the institutional development framework of AD, which is underpinned by the need for systematic change through staff development, and curriculum responsiveness to the social and economic needs of the country (Quinn, 2012:3). The purpose, structure and design as well as the teaching and learning on the programme, as discussed in Chapter Six, draw attention to the shifts in thinking about disadvantage and the corresponding implications on the curriculum. The following section evaluates the level of transformation achieved in the programme by interrogating the curriculum shifts that have taken place in the programme, implications of the shifts and the university's response to the shifts given its location as the context for transformation.

9.5.1 Extended curricula rather than supplementary support?

As discussed in Chapter Six, the main limitation of the ASPs was their failure to integrate skills with content. While ELAP⁸⁴ integrated skills with content, the content was not always discipline-specific, hence the claim that it could be classified as a stand-alone course.⁸⁵ These approaches were based on “commonsensical” views of academic literacy, which needed to be re-thought in order to integrate academic literacy with the curriculum (Knott, 1997:25). The introduction of the Extended Studies Programme at Rhodes University resulted in a shift from supplementary support to holistic, integrated support that integrated skills with discipline specific content/mainstream curriculum. This development was significant in that it signalled a shift from the division of labour between AD professionals and mainstream academics in that the AD staff could now engage with course content.

Although AD staff across the country were initially employed based on their experience as high school teachers, this was not necessarily the case at Rhodes University. Nevertheless, it can still be argued that the introduction of quality assurance mechanisms in 2001 prepared the AD staff for the shift to Extended Programmes – in which they had to engage with course

⁸³ See Lazarus 1987. It is also worth noting that at this stage, these programmes were sponsored by external funders.

⁸⁴The ELAP programme was an immediate predecessor of the ES programme.

⁸⁵ See Section 6.4 or Boughey (2009:3).

content. Boughey conceived of quality assurance as a tool for transformation. This is evidenced in the shift in the role of AD staff because of the quality assurance mechanisms:

Throughout the 90s my colleagues were marginalised and their role was to fix the students whilst departments continued as business as usual. Throughout the 90s there were discourses around the need for quality assurance internationally and this came into South African academic circles. I see quality assurance as a tool for transformation... In the 1998 review of the centre, it emerged that the AD centre could become a resource for quality assurance. The department was given a mandate to become a resource for quality assurance and this was a shift for my colleagues who were minimally qualified. There was only one with a master's degree I think and the rest had honours and bachelor's degrees. And so they had to upgrade their degrees in order to be able to engage with academics. In fact they had to be academics themselves and they also had to shift their area of work. So instead of only working with students, they were also working with organizational forms, curriculum and academic staff on staff development (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013).

Although ES lecturers are academics in that they too are involved in research and also have masters degrees, they are often not perceived in that light by mainstream academics. Hence, their ability to engage with mainstream content is often questioned as will be noted in the discussion on the integration of the programme into the mainstream (See section 9.5.1.1).

To return to the issue of the shift to extended curriculum, there is no doubt that there has been a significant shift in the curriculum of current access programmes. The stand-alone approaches are now seen as outdated and have now been replaced with integrated support aimed at introducing students to the ways of being and “becoming successful participants in an academic practice” – what Morrow refers to as epistemological access (Harley & Rule, 2012:203). For Morrow, students can only gain epistemological access if “the relevant values and discourses are made explicit in teaching, and if a community is created into which students are welcomed” (Mann, as cited in Smit, 2012:375).

Whilst epistemological access is commonly reduced to integration of skills and content, Morrow adds another dimension, which has to do with the context of the practices of epistemological access. Hence, in view of foundation provisioning, McKenna (2012:51) argued “an understanding of the context allows for a deeper reflection on and critique of our practices and of the programmes within which we work”. The work on ES offers a holistic approach to student learning in that it is underpinned by recognition of the socio-

economic and educational backgrounds of students as well as the potentially alienating impact of institutional conditions and practices. Therefore, epistemological access on the Extended Studies Programme is grounded on the link between access and agency opportunities (curriculum and pedagogy, for example) which enhances chances of acquiring epistemological access.

Whilst acknowledging the fact that integration has been achieved at the level of curriculum, the degree or extent of this integration is worth interrogating.

9.5.1.1 Interrogating the level of integration

Although the envisaged alignment of mainstream content and academic skills taught on Extended Studies has been achieved, mainstream academics are not actively involved in the programme; nor are the programmes owned by the departments. In addition to this, the programme is housed in a separate unit, which, like the former ASPs, is perceived by some mainstream academics as peripheral to department structures (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012). Owing to this, Carolyne questioned the extent to which transformation has been achieved through the implementation of programmes like ES:

So what I am saying is that transformation is not something that you put in a unit of poorly paid, junior staff who are not qualified in the subject (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

While the need to involve mainstream academics in the Extended Studies Programme is a valid suggestion, the comment by Carolyne suggests that Extended Studies lecturers are still perceived in just the same way as the teaching staff in their predecessors' programmes.⁸⁶ There is perhaps a need for the validity of not only the programme but also recognition of the Extended Studies teaching staff in terms of what they can bring to the conversation about student learning. This argument does not in any way deny the fact that these programmes would be much more efficient if academics who teach the courses on mainstream were involved in the programme.

When the precursors of the Extended Studies Programmes were launched, their transformative potential was envisaged to lie in their ownership by departments.⁸⁷ Further to that, efforts were made to get departments involved. For example, in 1988 steps were

⁸⁶ Teaching staff in ASPs across the country were mostly former high school teachers. Although it is argued that this was not necessarily the case at Rhodes University, there is evidence to show that these academics felt alienated from the rest of the institution as a result of the peripheral programmes they worked in.

⁸⁷ See Mehl & Gerwel, 1990.

taken at Rhodes University to achieve integration of ASPs with departments by appointing an ASP liaison person, who facilitated communication between departments and the ASP units. Although the programmes were not perfect at the time, relationships between AD staff and mainstream staff facilitated a better understanding of student learning for both parties. The available evidence suggests that in the late 90s, both AD personnel and mainstream academics perceived the partnership between departments and AD staff a crucial aspect of dealing with learning difficulties of students (Dison et al., 1996:28). A 1996 survey amongst academic staff aimed at eliciting opinions regarding the development of language and learning of students revealed that:

An equally large proportion of lecturers suggested that the ADP run staff development seminars and workshops to facilitate methods of addressing the many language and learning problems experienced by students... staff felt uncertain about what exactly constituted the problem and wanted clarification from ADP staff on specific difficulties experienced by students; they also wanted professional input regarding student language problems (Dison et al., 1996: 28).

The level of engagement highlighted above is no longer in place nor is there a relationship between Extended Studies and mainstream lecturers. This in a way shows that although the programme has improved over the years, some of the gains from the shifts in thinking have been lost. There is evidence to show that the level of integration only goes as far as the attendance of mainstream classes by Extended Studies students and their lecturers. Given former initiatives, such as the appointment of a liaison person in departments, one would expect such structures to be available in order to facilitate feedback and better assistance to students. This was clearly articulated by one mainstream lecturer who pointed out that:

There is a lecturer that attends all my lectures, but I do not have any other interactions besides that, we interact when there is a problem. When the ES lecturer calls us and say all of my students failed the exams and we need to talk about that, maybe you marked too harshly, sometimes they do that. It can be a friction because I have got students who find the course and the level of reading laughably simple. I have given 110% before because the essay is so good, better than I could have written it myself. That is one level of ability and then you have people who literally did two pages and did not understand it. You know it is not easy to teach in that kind of abilities and that is with the mainstream abilities. So it is somewhat annoying when you get an ES lecturer who is only dealing with 20 students of your 400 students and she says that your (total ratings) are too hard, too hard by what standard? What do you mean by too hard? Because I have another 200 who says that, they are just right. And another 100 that they are saying it's too easy. So we see a perspective that they do not normally see, and I don't think it's about saying

that your total readings were too hard, it's about saying are the tutorials appropriate, how do we deal with them, how do we get hang of the readings, what skills do we need to be able to approach the readings. If the lecturer is not providing that and the tutorials are not providing that then that is a problem that we need to address as teachers. But to just say 'oh you need simpler readings', that kind of comment is the kind that really irritates lecturers (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

For this reason, the same lecturer still perceived Extended Studies as peripheral and separate from the mainstream. Whilst acknowledging the importance of the programme, she questioned its efficiency:

You see, part of the problem of separating ES from mainstream is the impression given that certain learning issues will only be dealt with by the Extended Studies Programme. But what I'm saying is that I have been employed by the institution to teach the students that are admitted here, so I ought to be responsible for under-prepared students. Therefore, if I am shielded from that and then somebody else who is not employed by this department who has no oversight over this department gets employed to teach these students, someone who does not even have a degree in the subject could be all wrong for all I know. As a lecturer, I am not employing that person, so I never get to say, no that is not how I want the essay to be done. The ES lecturer decides how they want the mainstream essay done, but I am the expert. I think that really is the problem because you can lay down patterns there which end up not serving those people. I think it is much better for lectures to be challenged to teach everybody in their classes, to teach in diversity (Author's interview with Carolyne, 2012).

Similarly, the Dean of Teaching and Learning indicated that the full integration of the Extended Studies Programme into department structures had not been adequately achieved:

Integration is as much as I can argue, beg and persuade from academics. I had a huge on-going battle to convince departments to take responsibility for the courses. They award the credit; we have no status to award academic credit. What I think should happen is that the whole programme, the bits that ES lecturers teach, should be part of the DP but the departments will not do that. Ideally, mainstream and ES lecturers should work together. It also depends on the extent to which the ES lecturers can manage to forge a relationship with the department and some departments are more open than others. And that depends on the culture of the department and its hard (Author's interview with Boughey, 2013).

The degree of integration is perhaps an issue of departmental culture given the fact that some departments, though not obliged, contribute to the programme and work hand in hand with Extended Studies lecturers. Whilst some lecturers indicated that they did not have a relationship with certain departments, some had different experiences. One of the

lecturers noted that she was well integrated into one of the departments. As such, she was on the board for a first year course, which met to discuss the module or exams. She also noted that in some cases, some mainstream lecturers in the same department would ask for her input on tutorial questions before they were given to students (Author's interview with Denise, 2013). The lecturer indicated that such a relationship worked really well in terms of assisting students:

I think the system in XX department works quite well since there is a space for us because we are a resource. We know what students go through in terms of their understanding of the course. Therefore, lecturers can use us as resource in terms of changing things in the curriculum. But you know academics are independent so you can't force them. I mean it's nice that I have some input in XX department. XXX is different and I believe that a lot happens in the tea room (informal settings) so if you are not there when things are being discussed you can't really contribute anything. It was tricky at first because I didn't know what was coming but in my first year I attended tutor meetings and so that was useful in terms of seeing how lecturers were talking to tutors about tutorials (Author's interview with Denise, 2013).

The involvement of departments in the Extended Studies Programme is particularly important given that students leave the Extended Studies Programme after the first year of study. The Dean of Humanities noted that disadvantage "lingers for a long time", hence his claim that the first year of Extended Studies is not sufficient to prepare students for the rigors of higher education. It then becomes essential to ask two related questions – i) What promise of support does the university hold out to these students as they leave the programme? And ii) Where does responsibility for under-prepared students lie and what stands in the way of such a commitment?

Part of the answer lies in the White Paper (1997), which clearly articulated the responsibility of higher education institutions in developing the country by increasing access to higher education and also ensuring quality – that is success of students who gained access to university. This places a responsibility on the institution, particularly mainstream lecturers, to teach to the range of diversity. One of the key principles in the implementation of Extended Studies Programmes was that students had to be integrated into the mainstream. This following section interrogates whether this has been achieved by focusing on the ways in which the university engages or claims to be engaging a diverse student body.

9.5.2 Integration of ES students into the mainstream: teaching and engaging a diverse student body

A fundamental principle underlying the Extended Studies Programme is the integration of students into mainstream. The integration of support structures into mainstream as discussed in Section 9.4.1 was part of a broader process of institutional development. But beyond that, this process was also underpinned by the pressure on institutions to adapt to a diverse student body, through an adaptation of institutional structures, policies and teaching practices to the realities of the diverse educational backgrounds of students. In the Rhodes University Extended Studies Programme, integration was achieved at curriculum level through the alignment of content and skills. This also meant that students had to attend mainstream lectures and tutorials. As such, students experienced mainstream lecturing and tutorials from the beginning. Although students indicated that they felt alienated from other first year students, attending mainstream lectures provided them the opportunity to interact with mainstream students.

This is particularly important given that by the time students transitioned to mainstream, they were already familiar with teaching and learning in the mainstream. This claim can be substantiated by students' experiences of the transition to mainstream as discussed in Chapter Eight.⁸⁸ It was argued that although students generally struggled due to the withdrawal of extra support from Extended Studies, they nevertheless coped with mainstream work. This can be attributed to the fact that students were introduced to the mainstream way of learning from the beginning.

Given the history of former programmes and their failure in ensuring the ultimate success of the students, owing to the quick fix solution in the form of stand-alone courses at first year level, it becomes important to evaluate the sufficiency of the one year of Extended Studies in preparing students for the rigours of higher education. The Dean of Humanities clearly stated that the one year of Extended Studies is not sufficient to address the articulation gap caused by poor schooling. Therefore, he highlighted the importance of academic staff development as a means of improving teaching in the university (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013). Regarding staff development at Rhodes University, Quinn noted that:

Since the late 1990s there has been a strong focus on academic staff development and institutional development at Rhodes University,

⁸⁸See Section 8.5.

underpinned by a belief that these are the most effective focus points for student development – a belief that it is through academic staff development that the transformation and social justice agenda will best be served, as this will allow the majority of students the opportunity to access the knowledge of the disciplines and thereby succeed in higher education. ‘Academic staff development’ is viewed here as working *with* academic staff to develop teaching and learning. As alluded to earlier, we would argue that these are issues being grappled with in higher education, not only in South Africa, but internationally (Quinn, 2012:6).

Therefore, the integration of students into the mainstream cannot be reduced to simply aligning the Extended Studies curriculum with mainstream curriculum. Given the fact that students leave the Extended Studies Programme after the first year of study, this integration could be interpreted as the adaptability of mainstream practices to students coming from the Extended Studies Programme. It is not within the scope of this study to attempt any comprehensive analysis of teaching on the mainstream, but some general points can be made based on student reflections on their experiences on the Extended Studies Programme and mainstream. In addition to this, inferences can be drawn from institutional policies, which are possible indicators of the institutional culture.

Kuhn and Whitt (cited in Kioko et al., 2012:166) defined institutional culture as “the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education, and thus provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus”. While claims about the degree to which institutional policies are effectively implemented require further investigation, in this chapter I argue that the existence of equity policies is an indication of transformation.

Implied in the integration of Extended Studies into mainstream, is the expectation of mainstream academics to teach to diversity. This for Bourdieu can be achieved through the recognition of the capital that students bring to the university or the development of students’ unique capabilities, as expressed in the capabilities framework. Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Limpopo, Professor Moja, highlighted the institutional responsibility to a diverse student body. She noted the following during a public lecture on ‘Diversity Oriented Transformation for Teaching and Learning’:

Promoting and ensuring that there is diversity within an institution is just but one of the components for transformation. The other is making sure that the commitment to equity and diversity translates into quality teaching and

learning through student experiences designed by the institutions... Institutions that are paying attention to diversity in their transformation process do not only recognize the existence of a diverse student population on their campuses but also organizes their student experiences in such a way that diversity promotes excellence in teaching and learning. If transformation is diversity oriented then institutions will acknowledge the complexity of a changing or changed campus and will therefore transform learning experiences by creating learning environments that are not diverse for diversity sake but learning environments that promote effective learning for the production of a diverse human resource (Moja, 2010:1).

As indicated above, the policy framework of the university is used as a basis for determining the commitment to diversity practices in the broader university. There is a noticeable shift at policy level with regard to equity practices. Like other education institutions in South Africa, the first tranche of policies were structural and aimed at increasing diversity in the student body by opening the gates of learning to student demographics previously denied access. However, beyond this, the university also implemented policies to ensure that black students who were admitted into the university did not feel alienated through the institutional cultures and practices. In light of the institution's response to the diverse student body, one Extended Studies lecturer noted the following:

For old academic staff, there is a need to understand the shift that has taken place. The classroom is not the same as it used to be in the 1980s, the student population has changed hence the need to adapt our approaches to the diverse student body (Author's interview with Mangaliso, 2013).

Although there are various diversity and equity policies in place, this section focuses on policies that relate to the agency opportunities and 'unfreedoms' deduced from student experiences of the programme and the university broadly.⁸⁹ To recap, curriculum relevance, pedagogical approaches, and multilingualism were identified as agency opportunities. Implied by these agency opportunities is the need to recognize who Rhodes University's students are and then structuring institutional practices in ways that acknowledge and affirm diversity within the student body. The need to recognize and affirm diversity is summed up in Section 3.1.13 of the Rhodes University equity policy:

To ensure the effective implementation of the policy, change in the culture, values and practices of the university are necessary. Such change recognises that certain inequities do exist within the university as a result of apartheid practices and that these have contributed to a culture that is experienced by some staff and students as alienating. Rhodes should ensure that equity initiatives develop and support a culture where all staff and students feel

⁸⁹ See Section 8.4.2

welcome and valued. This includes vehemently rejecting any absolute barriers to the inclusion, development and exclusion of certain groups of students as well as the employment, promotion or development opportunities of certain groups of staff (Rhodes University Equity Policy, 2004: 2.1.1.3).

While the evidence from student interviews suggest that the institutional culture of the university is fairly inclusive in view of the above mentioned agency opportunities – curriculum and pedagogical approaches – the issue of multilingualism is worth discussing at length, as it appeared to impact on student engagement with learning in higher education. Similarly, some students who complained about their prior Afrikaans educational backgrounds also highlighted the need for a multilingual engagement at the level of the schooling system. As one student complained:

We did everything in Afrikaans, and I had to study all my subjects in Afrikaans when I didn't even know Afrikaans. I felt that this was so unfair. The only time that I would experience English was when we were writing an English paper. So it was kind of difficult for me to understand things because they explained things in Afrikaans but the books were in English. So it was kind of hectic for me that's why my marks and everything else went down (Author's interview with Malibongwe, 2012).

9.5.2.1 Interrogating the language policy/possibilities for a multilingual classroom?

In Chapter Eight, it was noted that students valued interacting in their first language. This facilitated learning and made it easier for students to engage with the course content. There is no doubt that language (a conversion factor in Sen's terms) may function to exclude certain students from developing to their full academic potential, leading to inequalities in academic outcomes. According to the capabilities approach, differences in people (language, in this case) do not inherently imply inequality but may turn into inequality when they affect one's capability – “a person's ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being” (Sen, 1992:30).

Thinking of language proficiency in terms of 'freedoms' is particularly important in revealing the ways in which language (a conversion factor in Bourdieu's terms) may delay the process of learning or the conversion of one's cultural capital to educational credentials. While there are limits to the extent to which multilingual education can improve the learning experiences and performance of certain students, the implementation of bilingual programmes remains a crucial need in any education system undergoing transformation. Failure to do so – as admission policies on English language proficiency

reveal – will result in the continuous exclusion of certain members of society from participating in higher education.

Although Rhodes University does not offer any multilingual programmes, there is an explicit commitment at policy level which recognises the impact of language on the capabilities of students:

The language of teaching and learning at Rhodes University is English. However, the university supports the national commitment to ensuring that language should not act as a barrier to equity of access and success. The University further recognises the multilingual nature of the University community and the country, and aims to adopt a wide range of strategies which will create a higher education institution whose identity is multilingual and proudly South African (Rhodes University Language Policy, 2006:2).

Interviews with Extended Studies students actually revealed that language as the main medium of instruction acts as a barrier to learning. Chapter Eight abounds with examples of multilingual prior learning practices and the corresponding impact on students as they went through the transition to higher education. This suggests the need for multilingual education spaces as was clearly articulated in student interviews.⁹⁰

Given the increasing numbers of black students in Historically White Universities, it makes sense for institutions to commit to multilingual teaching and learning practices. This is admittedly a challenge and difficult task given the number of South African languages. Although Extended Studies provides a transformative learning space through multilingual engagement in class discussions,⁹¹ there is a need to critically rethink and introduce multilingual pedagogies that promote inclusivity and active participation of all students. Looked at from the perspective of meaningful access to university, it can be argued that a mere accommodation of language deficiencies in assessment, for example, is not a sufficient condition for the achievement of equity. There is, therefore, a need to structure the language policies and practices in ways that are responsive to the freedoms of students – what they value doing – and that is the ability to learn in their mother tongue.

9.6 Conclusion

As noted in the introductory section of this chapter, transformation is conceptualised as a shifting of practices, philosophies or ways of thinking, underpinned by a learning process.

⁹⁰ Interview with Sakhe, 2012. Sakhe argued that learning in his first language would enable him to engage confidently in academic discussions.

⁹¹ See Section 8.4.3.3.

Since such a conceptualisation of transformation suggests that transformation is a gradual process as opposed to an absolute state, my contention in this chapter is that claims about the realisation of transformation lie in evidence of the diversification of the student body in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments, curriculum reform, shifts at policy level, institutional practices and cultures. Notwithstanding the importance of graduation and retention statistics, these statistics are arguably not the best criteria for evaluating transformation or the efficiency of Extended Studies Programmes. For this reason, they were interrogated in view of the under-preparedness of the students enrolled in the programme as well as the equally poor retention rates of mainstream students illustrated in Section 9.4.

To turn back to the main research question – To what extent is the Extended Studies Programme achieving its objectives when viewed from a transformation perspective? – this chapter concludes by arguing that, despite the weaknesses posed by the design of the programmes, there is a growing awareness of what needs to be done at curriculum level to minimise the limitations in the programme. Beyond this, the experience in the Extended Studies Programmes has created an awareness of the relevance of Extended Studies work for mainstream curriculum, hence the university's positive response towards the four-year degree proposal. The university's positive response to the four-year degree proposal suggests further shifts in institutional responsiveness to student problems through the narrowing of the boundary between foundation provisioning and mainstream offering as suggested by McKenna (2012:59):

The work of foundational provision needs to be understood as intricately bound up with the work of undergraduate education generally. The boundaries between 'foundational' and 'mainstream' need to be at least smudged and possibly erased. Divisions between 'foundational' and 'mainstream' in terms of who teaches on each and how teaching, learning and assessment happen in each need to be entirely reconsidered if we are to move from an apolitical understanding of the university which privileges the status quo as neutral to an ideological understanding where knowledge construction processes are made available to all. I have argued that our curriculum structures need to be adapted such that this work of 'foundational provision' becomes part of the work of the university, the faculty and all academics within these structures.

Ultimately, it deserves emphasising that the transformative potential of Extended Studies Programmes lies in their potential to contribute, shift and advance not only institutional practices but also the conversation about the responsibility for the general under-preparedness across the student body. Whilst the speed at which the shifts have taken place is a potential

transformation indicator, it is impossible to make any valid claims in the absence of data from individual institutional case studies. Overall, the diversification of the student body, curriculum shifts on the Extended Studies Programme and inclusive policy frameworks are proof that the university has undergone some degree of transformation. Indeed, Rhodes University is not the space it used to be. It was not within the scope of this research to address in detail institutional factors that affect the provision of Extended Studies. For this reason, recommendations and directions for future research are provided in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Introduction: summarising the logic of the study

This thesis set out to evaluate the extent to which the Extended Studies Programme is achieving its objectives from a transformation perspective. Given the access and foundation provision debates offered in Chapters Two and Three, transformation was broadly conceptualised in terms of i) the provision of both access and opportunities for success in higher education, ii) shifts in thinking about educational disadvantage, iii) shifts in institutional policies and teaching practices in order to adapt to a diverse student body and iv) corresponding efforts to move foundation provision from the periphery to the centre of departmental activities or the mainstream. Central to this process is a removal of the boundaries between foundational and mainstream provision in order to cater for a larger under-prepared student body as suggested by McKenna (2012:59).

My starting point in setting the context for foundation provision was the observation (argued in Chapters One and Two) that the South African education field is still uneven, hence the poor academic performance of talented students coming from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. Chapter Two provided a schematic historical background of the South African education system. It focused primarily on the issues of access to higher education, the different conceptualisations of access discernible in South African higher education, how they evolved over time and the implications of the various conceptions. This discussion rightly highlighted the ineffectiveness of access strategies that pay less attention to the success of students or their academic outcomes.

Given the observation in Chapter Two that widened access to higher education did not translate to widened success in educational outcomes, Chapter Three discussed the various access initiatives that were put in place at different stages to address the under-preparedness of black students in particular. I argued that owing to the shifting conceptions of 'access' and educational disadvantage, foundation provision shifted from peripheral to more integrated curriculum forms respectively.

Chapter Four provided a discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of the study and Chapter Five discussed the corresponding methodological implications and design of the study. Chapter Six, Seven and Eight set the context for evaluating the transformative potential of the

Extended Studies Programme, particularly in relation to the broadening of higher education access to disadvantaged students. Chapter Six constructed the field of Extended Studies at Rhodes University by, firstly, defining the purpose of the field or the reasons for its existence. This was followed by an identification of the capital required to gain access into the field as well as the agents that operate in the field. An investigation of the field characteristics led to the conclusion that the Extended Studies field is unique in terms of the practices governing it, the agents that operate in the field as well as the capital that constitutes the games in the field. It was, however, observed that in spite of its autonomy, the Extended Studies Programme operates within the confines of the broader university – which serves as the context of transformation in this study.

The analysis of students' educational backgrounds, experiences during the transition to higher education as well as experiences and perceptions of teaching and learning on the Extended Studies Programme was offered in Chapters Seven and Eight respectively. These chapters were particularly crucial to the evaluation of the programme offered in Chapter Nine. Based on the discussion and findings in Chapters Seven and Eight, Chapter Nine addressed the main research question – To what extent is the Extended Studies programmes achieving its objectives when viewed from a transformation perspective?

This chapter provides a synthesis of the study, which is based on the research questions and objectives. The chapter has several aims. The first aim of the chapter is to provide an overview of the key findings of the study. This will also include a discussion of the main contributions of the study as well as implications of the study for educational theory and practice. The third aim is to highlight the limitations of the study. This is followed by the fourth and last aim, which is to provide recommendations for the programme and further research on foundation provision.

10.2 Key findings of the study and emergent themes

The key findings are summarised according to the research objectives.

10.2.1 The structure and assumptions underpinning the development and implementation of the Extended Studies Programme (See Chapter Six for full details)

In order to understand the development and philosophies underpinning the Rhodes University Extended Studies Programme, it was imperative to trace the history of its predecessor programmes – Academic Support Programmes (ASPs) and Academic Development Programmes (ADPs). The current Extended Studies Programmes evolved from the ASPs and

ADPs respectively. It was noted that the provision of funding and growing commitments to adapt institutions to the realities of students from disadvantaged backgrounds necessitated the implementation of the Extended Studies Programme. An important aspect of the shift to Extended Studies Programmes is their integration with the mainstream courses. This integration is underpinned by the need to introduce students to epistemological access to the university and its disciplines. As such, the programme is closely articulated to the mainstream curriculum and not remedial as was the case with its predecessor programmes.

10.2.2 The impact of the social and educational backgrounds of Extended Studies students on their academic and social experiences (See Chapters Seven and Eight for full details)

It was revealed that the Extended Studies students come from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. With the exception of a few students, most students interviewed in the study came from predominantly working class backgrounds. As such, about 90% percent of the students reported that they were either on partial or full NSFAS funding. An interesting dimension of the social backgrounds of the students was that most of them reported to have been raised by single mothers or other relatives. Concerning their educational backgrounds, most students reported to have gone through public schooling. Although some students came from private schools, they had undergone public schooling prior to private schooling. Students' descriptions of teaching practices in these schools resembled Freire's banking system of education, which is characterised by rote learning.

Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis provided ways of understanding why specific students met the requirements for enrolment into the programme. In particular, the enrolment of students from Model C and private schools further confirmed Bourdieu's (1977:82) claim that the habitus represents a "past which survives in the present". Although the data suggests that students from Model C and private schools adapted to the university much faster than their counterparts did from public schools, they equally faced some academic challenges, which can be attributed to prior schooling in public schools. This again confirmed the Dean's claim "disadvantage lingers for a long time" (Author's interview with Hendricks, 2013).

While Bourdieu's concept of habitus suggests that inequalities from prior learning are reproduced given the gap between the institutional habitus of public schools and institutions like Rhodes University, evaluating the programme within the lens of the capabilities approach proved that reproduction could be averted by expanding the diverse capabilities of students through pedagogic and institutional practices. This was evidenced by a shift in

attitude towards Extended Studies as well as students' reflections of teaching and learning on ES as well as the perceived impact of the programme.

10.2.3 Addressing the main research question: To what extent is the programme achieving its objectives? (See Chapter Nine for full details)

Transformation was conceptualised as a progressive learning process. Thus, both the successes and failures of the programme were identified. I argued that the provision of access through Extended Studied enabled access for under-privileged students who would otherwise not be able to enrol for university studies. Implied in this is the achievement of social justice, which takes into account both physical access and opportunities for success in a potentially alienating academic context. Moreover, broadened access to black students resulted in the diversification of the student body in terms of race and class. This is a crucial aspect of the transformation agenda in higher education.

Curriculum shifts in foundation provision were also recognised as indicators of transformation. Whilst this is indisputably a huge achievement in foundation provision broadly, it can be argued that full integration of the programme into department structures is yet to be realised. No doubt for such a move there is a need for validity of the programme in the wider university and more importantly the ownership of the programme by departments and the involvement of mainstream academics in teaching on the programme.

While the above factors are significant transformation indicators, I argued that graduation and postgraduate enrolment rates of Extended Studies students need to be taken into consideration. The low under-graduate retention rates as well as low postgraduate enrolment of former Extended Studies students pose a problem for the generation of black academics. As such, given the predominantly white academic staff in the university, it was suggested that diversification of the staff would provide students with role models. Given the unavailability of data on Extended Studies students who did not pursue postgraduate studies after their undergraduate degrees, it was concluded that these students were not necessarily an indication of the failure of the system.

Overall, the availability of funding was identified as a major obstacle to the full integration of the Extended Studies Programme with the mainstream. It was also observed that under-preparedness was not peculiar to the Extended Studies students. Instead, a comparison of mainstream and Extended Studies statistics revealed that under-preparedness is experienced across the student body. As such, the recent four-year degree proposal was indicated as a

possible mechanism for smudging the boundaries between foundation and mainstream provision, as this would require mainstream academics to take responsibility for the general under-preparedness in the wider student body.

Notwithstanding the low retention and postgraduate retention rates, the Extended Studies Programme can be appraised for not only providing physical access to higher education but also laying the necessary foundations needed to survive and adapt to the requirements of mainstream. Given that the programme draws just a small number of the overall student population, I argued that the benefits of the programme would be more visible if the programme targeted more local students. It was also noted that partnerships between the university and the local schools would go a long way in facilitating access for local students in terms of meeting the admission criteria. Lastly, student experiences of mainstream teaching and engagement with the wider university suggest that the success of the programme as a transformation initiative is dependent on other institutional factors such as the culture of the university, assessment in mainstream, language policies and teaching practices in mainstream, to mention a few.

10.3 Significance of the study and key contributions

This thesis makes three contributions to academia, namely i) contributions to understanding educational inequalities, ii) contributions to researching foundation provision and iii) contributions to evaluating access or equity-based educational initiatives.

i) Contributions to understanding educational inequalities

This thesis adopted a holistic approach to understanding educational inequalities by interrogating the socio-economic and educational trajectories of students in order to understand how these trajectories influenced learning in higher education. Therefore, while there is evidence to show that rote learning in public schools limits the chances of succeeding in higher education, generalisations are often made about the nature of rote learning in different contexts. The term 'rote' is quite broad and therefore needed to be conceptualised according to the specific experiences and educational backgrounds of the students in the study. In doing so, the specific nature of the perceived gap between higher education and high school was exposed. This made it possible to interpret students' experiences of both the programme and the broader university. It also made it possible to evaluate the programme against the learning needs and the observed articulation gap in the students.

Beyond that, inequalities were not perceived to emerge only from students' socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Instead, an interrogation of students' experiences revealed institutional conditions that potentially produce or reproduce inequalities in educational outcomes – for example, learning systems and the language of instruction. The integration of Bourdieu and Sen's theoretical tools provided a link between the historical conditions in which inequalities emerge and present institutional conditions, which either reproduce or modify inequalities. The results of the study suggest the importance of establishing such a link in the South African education system.

Given the enduring effects of the apartheid legacy in higher education, access or equity practices should not only seek to address surface manifestations of inequalities (poor educational outcomes, for example). Instead, this should be done in view of underlying factors – that is a consideration of the whole student; their social and academic trajectories, who they are, where they come from, what they bring, what they value and how they see the world. Bourdieu's thinking tools were particularly useful in this regard, in that they enabled access into the social and academic trajectories of students, which are often taken for granted when addressing problems related to educational inequalities. At the same time, Bourdieu averts the reductionism inherent in other educational theories by focusing on the impact of social arrangements. Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' illuminates the relationship between the institutional habitus and the individual habitus, and how the mismatch between the two creates conditions that result in unequal educational outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students.

Failure to pay attention to institutional conditions may reduce transformation initiatives to a "window dressing" process, which look appealing on the surface, yet results in other forms of injustices and deprivations. Therefore, in evaluating the Extended Studies Programmes, the focus was not on merely detailing the practices on the programme or the academic outcomes of students. Instead, the focus was on the process of learning, student experiences of learning on the programme and, more importantly, the extent to which the programme catered to the actual and not perceived learning needs of the students.

Although applying Sen and Bourdieu's concepts was useful in understanding the ways in which inequalities are reproduced in higher education, they both failed to address the issue of time. As such, it was difficult to make claims about the point at which reproduction occurs or the point at which it can be averted. Bourdieu's assumptions about the role of cultural capital

(acquired in the schooling system and the home) in determining success or failure in higher education fails to account for other possibilities. For example, the reasons why students from good educational backgrounds fail to succeed in higher education despite the possession of relevant capital. Although he acknowledges the importance of knowing the 'academic discourse' – "the ability to manipulate the abstract language of ideas (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979:14), he fails to show that academic discourse is foreign to all first time university students. As a result, he reduces student failure to cultural capital possessed by students and dispositions acquired as a result of access to certain forms of capital.

Sen's concept of functionings is useful in countering the weakness in Bourdieu's analysis in that it directs our attention to the things that students value, and the role of structural/institutional arrangements in enabling/ disabling students from achieving what they value (in other words the ability of students to exercise agency and act in productive ways). Not all students are motivated to learn. Therefore possessing the right cultural capital does not translate to an automatic conversion of that capital into good educational credentials. Motivation is an important aspect of the learning process. What can be deduced from Bourdieu's concept of capital is the need to break it down in order to determine the influence of specific manifestations of cultural capital, how they are interrelated and how they influence student engagement in higher education.

The capabilities approach is also without its own weaknesses. The notion of agency is very useful in countering Bourdieu's emphasis on reproduction. That being noted however, theorists who have applied the capabilities approach to education seem to over emphasize the influence of pedagogical practices on student agency and ultimate development of capabilities. Developing student capabilities (what people are able to be) alone is not sufficient. One needs to ask the question, 'are the valued capabilities important for the achievement of educational outcomes?' Failure to take this into consideration may result in the mismatch between student capabilities and valued capabilities in the disciplines.

Combining insights from Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis and Sen's capabilities approach helped in revealing other factors that influence student learning and engagement in higher education. Importantly, their union enabled a more holistic evaluation of the programme.

ii) Contributions to researching foundation provision

As indicated in Chapter Two (See Section 1.5), most research on foundation provision has mainly focused on factors that impact on the successes of the programmes as well as the academic outcomes of students. While students' voices on the impact of the programmes are visible in these studies, there is little information on the actual learning process. Beyond eliciting information on students' experiences and perceptions of the programme, this research placed emphasis on the process of learning. As such, classroom observation was undertaken in order to help the researcher to make sense of student experiences of teaching and learning in the programme. This also provided insight into the teaching practices in the programme.

Focusing on the teaching and learning process also brought to light other important voices such as the Extended Studies lecturers, mainstream lecturers and teaching assistants. The voices of Extended Studies lecturers were particularly important in that they revealed the taken for granted philosophies that inform teaching practices and pedagogical relationships. Insight into teaching philosophies of Extended Studies lecturers made it possible to establish the link between student learning experiences, shifting perceptions of the Extended Studies programme and reflections on mainstream teaching. The point to be made here is that student experiences – which are crucial to the evaluation of the programme, are not always what they appear to be on the surface. Instead, they are made up of multiple realities, which need to be interrogated in order to provide a holistic picture and interpretation of those experiences.

In this research, the use of multiple qualitative methods as well as the integration of theories provided access into both hidden and surface realities that impact on student experiences. For example, the conceptualisation of the Extended Studies Programme as a sub-field within a broader university field, revealed other hidden realities that influenced the functions of the programme as well as the experiences of agents involved in the programme.

Researching foundation provisioning in ways explained above led to the important observation that transformation is a broad, systematic process of interdependent factors. Hence, the transformative potential of the Extended Studies Programme is not only dependent on what happens on the programme, but also the institutional context – for example, shifts in institutional cultures, staff racial and gender demographics, and language policies, to mention a few. In view of the impact of other institutional factors, the other significant contribution of this work is that it did not only focus on first year students.

Instead, it explored the experiences of former students and this was important in highlighting other institutional factors that influenced students as they progressed through mainstream studies.

iii) Contributions to evaluating access initiatives

The above-cited contributions also influenced the ways of evaluating access initiatives or equity initiatives. The use of Sen's capabilities approach is of significant importance in this respect in that it directs our attention to human agency and freedoms as opposed to a mere presence of equity initiatives such as the Extended Studies Programmes. At the same time, it directs our attention to the process of learning and how individuals exercise their agency in the learning process as opposed to a focus on mere educational outcomes, which are arguably a reflection of the learning process.

This does not in any way suggest the irrelevance of academic outcomes or retention statistics in evaluating the programme. Given the low graduation rates on the Extended Studies Programme, it becomes important to understand the gap between the positive learning experiences of students and the actual academic outcomes. For example, students generally claimed that teaching on Extended Studies made them understand the course material better. At the same time, this was not reflected in the academic outcomes. Implied in this is a gap between what students claim to be learning and the actual course requirements and expectations. While this is a potential research issue that needs to be investigated, the results of this study point towards the ownership of the programme by departments as a possible solution for narrowing the gap between what students perceive to be learning and what they are expected to learn.

What can be deduced from the application of the capabilities approach in evaluating access initiatives is the view that access programmes should aim to provide opportunities for individual agency – that is the drive for individuals to act in productive ways. Moreover, access initiatives should address the realities confronting students.

10.4 Limitations of the study

This study had two major limitations, which are the exclusive use of one institutional case study and the absence of data on students who dropped out. Notwithstanding the financial restrictions, a comparison of two universities – an HWU and an HBU – would have shed more light on institutional factors that contribute to the successes or challenges in Extended Studies Programmes. Given the main research question aimed at evaluating the programme from a transformation perspective, an evaluation of the pace of transformation is crucial. As

such, a comparison of Historically White and Historically Black Universities has the potential to reveal factors that affect the pace of transformation in the broader university context.

Lastly, the absence of data on students who dropped out or left the university after the first year of Extended Studies made it difficult to make claims about the failures of the programme to retain such students or the success of the programme in preparing such students for studies in other universities. Although a few students were tracked, the number of students was not significant enough to make absolute claims about what happens to Extended Studies dropouts.

10.5 Recommendations

The key findings in the evaluation of the Extended Studies Programme discussed in Chapter Nine point towards some key issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the programme. The following recommendations are offered as possible ways of improving the programme:

- i) Ownership of the programme by departments, which should entail the teaching of the courses by academics in the departments.
- ii) Expanding the programme to include other courses in the Humanities faculty.
- iii) Investing more in the tutorial system by perfecting it since students reported that they relied on tutorial support as they progressed with their studies after the first year of Extended Studies.
- iv) The programme could also draw more students from the local schools in order to contribute towards the development of the city.
- v) In addition to this, there is a need to form partnerships with schools in the city in order to help the schools prepare students for higher education studies.

10.6 Opportunities for future research

As mentioned in Section 1.2, this study was motivated by concern over the effectiveness of the Extended Studies Programme in addressing the articulation gap. While this study has contributed to knowledge about understanding educational inequalities and researching and evaluating equity initiatives, the study also revealed key knowledge gaps that exist in research on foundation provision in the institution. In view of the research findings and limitations discussed above, I recommend further studies in the following areas:

- i) A study that specifically tracks former Extended Studies students when they leave the university. As shown in this study, nothing is known about why some students leave the university after Extended Studies and whether they enrol in other universities or

not. Tracking these students would also assist in making conclusions about the employability of these students and the quality of their degrees, as well as their probability of pursuing postgraduate studies

- ii) A study that offers a comparison of two Extended Studies Programmes in different institutional contexts – for example HWUs and HBUs. This is important in understanding the institutional factors that contribute to the successes or challenges faced in Extended Studies Programmes.
- iii) A study that focuses on programmes in all the faculties. Such a comparison may reveal discipline specific issues that may need to be addressed to improve the programmes offered by different faculties in the broader university.
- iv) A study on the gap between Extended Studies teaching and mainstream teaching. While students claimed that they benefited a lot from Extended Studies, this was not shown in the retention and graduation output. This raises questions about what students claim to be benefiting and the extent to which the Extended Studies Programme prepares students for engagement in the mainstream.
- v) Lastly, given the reliance of students on tutorial support during the year of Extended Studies and after, research is necessary on the effectiveness of the tutorial system in helping students cope with their course requirements.

10.7 Conclusion

This research has argued that in spite of the low graduation rates and challenges of integrating the Extended Studies Programme with the mainstream, the programme has had a positive impact on talented students enrolled in the programme. While the unavailability of sufficient funding poses a threat to the realisation of the full integration of the Extended Studies Programme with mainstream, there remains a need for mainstream teaching and curriculum to adapt more to the realities of disadvantaged and under-prepared students in the wider university. There is no doubt that the Extended Studies Programme has facilitated the process of transformation by diversifying the student body in terms of race and class. While such diversity posed problems in the past, it is no longer viewed as such. Instead, the presence of disadvantaged students initiated conversations about ways of managing diversity and taking responsibility for educational disadvantage. Implied in this is a learning process that gradually leads to transformation. In conclusion, I return to the quote by Badat in which he states:

At a fundamental level, transformation is building in the context of the fractures and fissures of our society, new and different kinds of social relationships...(Badat, 2013).

Key here is the ability to build “in the context of the fractures and fissures of our society” – that is building in the realities of our higher education system, which draws a larger number of under-prepared students. Implied in this is the need for transformation at the level of the lecture theatre, which inevitably places a huge responsibility on educators/lecturers. Hence, Nussbaum, Walker and hooks’ work on pedagogical practices suggest that lecturers can be agents of change. However, given that pedagogical practices are constrained by structural conditions, change is also required at the level of the entire institution – for example, inclusive institutional cultures and restructuring the curriculum in order to adapt it to an under-prepared student body.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Documents exploring the shifts in AD work, the background of foundation provision at Rhodes University, its evaluation over the years and the experiences of those involved

Document	Year	Source	Reason (s) for reviewing the document
Academic Support Progress Reports	1982-1988	Rhodes University	Documents provide institutional information on Academic Support Programmes (ASPs) which are precursors of the current Extended Studies programme. As the name suggests, the reports also detail the structure of the early AD initiatives, their progress and departmental evaluations.
Discourse Journal of the Rhodes University Academic Development Programme Volume 1-10	1990-1999	Rhodes University library	Also provides background information on the structures and purposes of early AD programmes. The journals published articles on developments in Academic Development work in South Africa and abroad, and more specifically what was happening at Rhodes University
Evaluation report of the team charged by senate to evaluate the Academic Development Programme	April, 1996	Rhodes University	This report provides an evaluation of the Academic Development Programme at Rhodes University
Extend: An introduction to Rhodes University by the Extended Studies Journalism class	2006-2009	Journalism Department, Rhodes University	Details the experiences of former Extended Studies students and provides insight into their experiences of the university and university support structures during their transition to higher education and after.
Humanities Extended Studies course guide	2012	Extended Studies unit	Course guide provides a description of the courses offered on the humanities Extended Studies programme
Extended Studies self-evaluation reports	2007-2009	Rhodes university	Details the structure and purpose of the current Extended Studies Programme. The document also provides information on the design of the programmes, funding, staffing, success of the programme, admission criteria and how it fits into the university.

Appendix 2 - Excerpts from classroom observation notes

Class room observation (Week 1) : Politics Extended Studies class, 14 February 2012

The learning environment was very relaxed allowing students to interact and engage with the lecturer. What was particularly interesting was the lecturer student relationship. It is not your typical lecturer student relationship. Both parties were more at ease with each other given the fact that it was only the second day of class. Corinne takes this class for both politics and anthropology Extended Studies. In these classes, she goes through course material covered in the mainstream lecture. In the Extended Studies class, the lecturer goes over some of the material covered in the mainstream classes, shedding more light on the readings, defining difficult words were necessary and addressing general questions that the students may have. Likewise, students engage with the lecturer and are very comfortable to contribute to the discussion or ask questions. Because of the size of the class, it is difficult to hide. Most of the students are well spoken and very fluent in English. This for me raises many questions about the criteria for Extended Studies, the educational backgrounds of these students and the actual basis of their disadvantage given the fact that the extended studies programme is designed for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Students also had an opportunity to engage in a short group exercise towards the end of the lecture.

Questions emerging from the observation session.

1. What are the assumptions underpinning the teaching methods used in Extended Studies classes. To be more specific, why are Extended Studies lecturers more at ease with their students compared to lecturer/ student relationships on the mainstream?
2. What are the learning philosophies underpinning teaching in Extended Studies?
3. What is the main purpose of Extended Studies classes, what material is covered in class and how does this impact on the learning outcomes of students.
4. What criteria are used when selecting students for Extended Studies and how does this fit in with institutional transformation or the broader higher education transformation agenda?
- 5.

23 February – Journalism Extended Studies

Compared to the anthropology class students are well engaged in both class and group discussion with just a few- one or two hiding. I made one interesting observation today, the class seems to be female dominated and there is one Coloured girl in the class with the rest being black South Africans. She is very well spoken, well engaged with the course material. For me this raised questions about the criteria for Extended Studies, who is it open to, is it just black South Africans. The fact that some of the students come from good schools raises questions about the criteria for Extended Studies and its link to addressing transformation. Another question that comes to mind is transformation for whom?

The tutorial for the week was discussed in class and the lecturer broke it down for the students and gave them an indication of what they had to focus on in answering the tutorial question. The students are required to do a personal narrative around health issues and they will be required to work with students from the location. They are also free to do the profile in their mother tongue to help start the writing process. Interestingly, when students were discussing health issues in class, other social issues came up like residence life and the living conditions in res.

Appendix 3 – Questions for the written reflections

Date	Purpose of reflection	Questions asked	Number of reflections completed
February 2012	To gain insight into students' social background thereby helping the lecturer to get to know the students better.	Sociologists think of society in terms of mutual dependency. Describe your life in these terms. Who are the most important people in your life, in the past and now, and what are the connections that link you to them. The purpose of this exercise is for me to get to know you better, and also for you to begin to view your life from a sociological perspective	36
April 2013	To understand students' experiences and perceptions of their transition to higher education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, for example, where you are from, school attended and subjects taken in Matric. 2. Why did you decide to come to Rhodes? 3.What expectations did you have when you came to university 4. Are these expectations being met? 5. How does the Rhodes University learning environment compare to your previous school? 6. Did anyone (high school teachers or family members) prepare you for university? If so what did this preparation entail? 7. Have you encountered any difficulties? If so, what support structures are in place to support you? 8. Have those challenges been resolved? Why or why not? 9. What are your views on the teaching modes and learning support offered by the university? 	28
May 2013	To understand students' experiences of essay writing in an academic way	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1What did you think and how did you feel when you heard you had to write an essay? To what extent did the XX lectures with XX prepare you for your essay writing? To what extent did the XX tutorials help you with your essay preparation? To what extent did ES lectures with CK help you with your essay preparation? Did you hand in your draft essay to CK? If yes, explain in detail if/ how this helped. If you didn't hand in a draft, why not? Did you give your draft to someone else to read? If so, who did you give it to, and how did it help? Now that your essay is handed in, what have you learnt about writing essays..... etc 	30

Appendix 3.1 – Sample excerpt of a written reflection (transition to higher education)

TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION REFLECTION

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, for example, where you are from, school attended and subjects taken in matric?

My name is [redacted]
I'm from Dube Village: Soweto. I attended school at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. I took Visual Arts, History, Business Studies and the other compulsory subjects excluding Math. I took Math Literacy.

2. Why did you choose to study at Rhodes University?

I chose to study at Rhodes because it is a nice and small university that would allow me adjust better to university. I was appealed by the idea that lecturers make time for their students and that Rhodes is one of the best institutions to study humanities. I also simply chose Rhodes because it is peaceful and not hectic and just as Joburg (as I had noticed last year when I came to the school festival)

3. What expectations did you have when you came to University?

I expected that I would be so overwhelmed and swamped with work. I thought I would be very very sick and maybe a bit depressed because of the workload. I had expected that I would fail in the first term because I was adapting to the way things are done in university. However through it all, I was expecting quality education.

4. Are these expectations being met, if not why?

Only one of these expectations were met. I am receiving a quality education however I am very happy, under pressure but not enormous pressure that is unbearable. I am doing well in my classes and getting good grades - better than expected by me. There is work, but its not too much

Appendix 4 - Sample consent form

Sociology Department

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

My name is Precious Tanyanyiwa and I am a PhD student in the Sociology Department. I am doing research, which explores the provision of Extended Studies in the Humanities Faculty of Rhodes University.

I would like to interview you to learn about your experiences in Extended Studies. During our interview, I will ask questions about your educational background your experiences in Extended Studies so far and your perceptions of the programme. If there are any questions that I ask that you would prefer not to answer, please feel free to tell me and we will move on to another question. If you would like to stop the interview at any time, please tell me and we will end our interview immediately.

With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study. However, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. There are no risks to you in this study; you may choose to go by your real name or by a false name in this study. I will ask you again at the end of the interview if you would like to use your real name or a false name.

Thank you for your consideration. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you. If you agree to participate in this research project, please sign below.

I am over 18 and eligible in this study. [Circle one]	Yes	No
I agree to be interviewed for this project [circle one]	Yes	No
I agree to be audio taped during this interview [circle one]	Yes	No

Participant's signature

Researcher's signature

Participants name printed

Researchers name printed

Date:

Appendix 5 - Extract from an Interview Journal

Interview with XXX-

The interview with XXX was mainly on his background. He did not have much to say about his experience in Extended Studies. I had a problem drawing the line between being an interviewer and at the same time being an empathetic listener. Some of the questions opened up old wounds for instance his past, the stuff he had been through and possibly crimes committed. It was a bit difficult to stop him from talking at the same time, once a wound is opened you as an interviewer cannot just leave after getting all the information required. To make him feel better, I offered to help with his academics, since he mentioned that he was having problems with his Sociology proposal. Again, my age as well as the fact that I am a female senior student might have played a role in making him comfortable to open up about his experiences and personal details of his life. I often had to ask him if he wanted to continue with the interview every time he revealed intense personal details. At some point, I had to stop recording the interview so I could briefly address what he had gone through by first listening then advising him to go to the career centre. Allowing him to drift off from the main focus of the interview actually helped because it shed more light on his commitment to his work, part of which is making up for lost time and again trying to be a better person. This is interesting because whilst sometimes we attribute academic achievement to institutional resources and level of intelligence, sometimes people's backgrounds and personal motivations play a much bigger role. This for me raised questions about the relationship between the impact of support provided by the ES programmes and the social backgrounds of the students in ES and how they influence their drive to achieve academically.

Appendix 6 - Interview respondents

6.1 Academic staff

Name of respondent/ Pseudonym	Title	Date interviewed
Marian	Extended Studies lecturer	4 February 2013
Denise	Extended Studies lecturer	15 April 2013
Mangaliso	Extended Studies lecturer - Computer Literacy	18 April 2013
Chrissie Boughey	Dean of Teaching and Learning and Director of the Centre for Higher Education, Teaching and Learning	23 July 2013
Professor Hendricks	Dean of Humanities	18 September 2013
Carolyne	Mainstream lecturer	16 October 2012
Lorraine	Mainstream lecturer	16 October 2012
Geraldine	Teaching assistant	24 July 2013
Noeline	Teaching assistant	19 August 2013

6.2 Students

2012 First year Extended Studies Students		
1. Aaron	First year ES student	23 August
2. Anale	First year ES student	29 August 2012
3. Bokang	First year ES student	20 August 2012
4. Bongi	First year ES student	22 August 2012
5. Bandile	First year ES student	13 August 2012
6. Deliwe	First year ES student	15 August 2012
7. Grace	First year ES student	30 July 2012
8. Karen	First year ES student	24 August 2012
9. Matthew	First year ES student	22 August 2012
10. Marcus	First year ES student	31 July 2012
12. Malusi	First year ES student	20 August 2012
13. Nokuthula	First year ES student	16 August 2012

14.Mandisa	First year ES student	30 July 2012
15. Onica	First year ES student	13 August 2012
16.Agatha	First year ES student	01 August 2012
17.Skumbuzo	First year ES student	20 august 2012
18.Siphokazi	First year ES student	22 August 2012
19. Sandile	First year ES student	16 August 2012
20. Thelma	First year ES student	02 August 2012
21. Zahara	First year ES student	30 August 2012
22.Khanyisa	First year ES student	30 August 2012
23. Lunga	First year ES student	17 October 2012
2012 First year mainstream students		
24.Bongani	First year mainstream student	18 October 2012
25. Lindeka	First year mainstream student	18 October 2012
26.Zodwa	First year mainstream student	5 October 2012
27. Nomawethu	First year mainstream student	5 October 2012
28. Diana	First year mainstream student	11 October 2012
29. Apelele	First year mainstream student	13 October 2012
Former ES students registered for a 2nd, 3rd and fourth year BA degree in 2012		
30.Jabu	Former ES student	15 May 2012
31.Mangi	Former ES student	19 May 2012
32.Mathabo	Former ES student	23 May 2012
33. Luthando	Former ES student	14 May 2012
34.Lundi	Former ES student	9 May 2012
35.Malibongwe	Former ES student	26 September 2012
36.Buhle	Former ES student-	30 August 2012
37. Penlope	Former ES student	25 July 2012
38. Zinzile	Former ES student	30 August 2012
39. Lindiwe	Former ES student	28 August 2012
40. Ayanda	Former ES student	30 August 2012
41.Vhatiswa	Former ES student	12 September 2012
Former Extended Studies students enrolled for postgraduate studies in 2012		
42. Anelisa	Former ES Postgrad	26 April 2012
43. Zoleka	Former ES Postgrad	26 April 2012
44. Sipho	Former ES Postgrad	31 August 2012
Students who got excluded or dropped out (phone interviews)		
45.Desmond	ES dropout	18 September 2013
46. Nelly	ES Dropout	30 August 2013
47 Vusi	Excluded ES student	18 September 2013
48 Ziyanda	ES dropout	30 August 2013
49. Noluvuyo	ES dropout	3 October 2013

Appendix 7: Interview Questions

Appendix 7.1 Interviews with first year Extended Studies students

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, for example, where you are from, school attended and subjects taken in matric?
2. Why did you choose to study at Rhodes University?
3. Did anyone (high school teachers or family members) prepare you for university? If so what did this preparation entail?
4. Why you were not admitted to the mainstream from the beginning?
5. How do you feel about others knowing that you are on Extended Studies?
6. How does the Rhodes University learning environment compare to your previous school?
7. What are your thoughts on the volume of work you have to deal with here?
8. What are your views on the teaching modes and learning support offered by the University?
9. What form of support do you get from Extended Studies?
10. What are your experiences of the Extended Studies Programme so far?
11. Have you encountered any difficulties and what systems are in place to support you?
12. Would you recommend the Extended Studies Programme to other students? If so, why?

Appendix 7.2 Interviews with former Extended Studies students

1. Can you tell me a little bit more about yourself, for example, where you come from, school attended, subjects taken in matric.
2. Tell me about your previous school -where you did matriculate?
3. Why did you choose to study at Rhodes University?
4. Did anyone (high school teachers or family members) prepare you for university? If so, what did this preparation entail?
5. Apart from you, who else in your family is in university or has a university degree?
6. What expectations did you have when you came to university?
7. How does the Rhodes University learning environment compare with your former school?
8. Can you comment on your first year experience of university- both social and academic?
9. What was your experience of Extended Studies, eg:
 - i) Workload compared to the mainstream?
 - ii) Relations with students on the mainstream?
 - iii) Life in res?
 - iv) Support systems of the university?
10. Did you encounter any difficulties during your first year at university? If so, how did you manage to resolve them?
11. What has been your experience on the mainstream? Are you coping with the change from ES to the mainstream? If not, Why?
12. What are your views on the learning support on the mainstream compared to ES?

Appendix 7.3 Interviews with mainstream lecturers

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching background?
2. Based on your experience, when first year students enrol for politics 1/Journalism 1, what difficulties do they experience?
3. How have you attempted to address these problems in your classes?
4. To what extent does student diversity influence your teaching approach or methods?
5. In general, what kind of academic support services or considerations are in place to support struggling mainstream students (in other words, those who are not part of Extended Studies)?
6. Have you worked with Extended Studies students, apart from lecturing them in mainstream lectures? If so what are your perceptions of these students compared to mainstream students?
7. In your opinion, what do you think is the purpose of the Humanities Extended Studies Programme?
8. Have you referred any mainstream student for Extended Studies? If yes, why? If no, why not?
9. What do you think are the most critical teaching and learning issues that need to be dealt with for 'under-prepared students enrolling in Extended Studies?
10. As far as you are aware, is there a link between what Extended Studies lecturers do in their classes and what mainstream lecturers do in their classes?
11. As a first year lecturer, do you work hand in hand with the Extended Studies lecturers? If so, what is the nature of your interaction?
12. Do you think the Extended Studies Programme is achieving its purpose?
13. What role - if any - do you think mainstream lecturers should play in academic development in their mainstream classes?
14. How do you think academic development can be integrated into mainstream teaching?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding the provision of Extended Studies?

Appendix 7.4 Interviews with teaching assistants

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching background, when you came to Rhodes, the level at which you teach and how often you teach first year politics students.
2. What are your perceptions of your first year students in terms of general preparedness for learning in higher education?
3. When first time entering students enrol for politics 1/Journalism 1, what difficulties do they experience?
4. In general, what kind of academic support services are in place to support struggling students on mainstream?
5. How do you address these problems in your classes?
6. Have you worked with Extended Studies students before, apart from lecturing them on mainstream? If so, what are your perceptions of these students compared to mainstream students?
7. In your opinion, what do you think is the purpose of the Humanities Extended Studies Programme?
8. Have you referred any mainstream student for Extended Studies? If yes, why?
9. What role-if any-should lecturers play in academic development in their mainstream classes?
10. How do you think academic development can be integrated into mainstream teaching- from a curriculum perspective?

11. Do you think there is a link between what Extended Studies lecturers do in their classes and what mainstream lecturers do in their classes?
12. As a first year politics lecturer, do you work hand in hand with the Extended Studies lecturer? If so, what is the nature of your interaction?
13. What do you think are some of the teaching and learning issues that we need to deal with in relation to these classes?
14. Do you think this programme is achieving its objectives? Why? Why not?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding the provision of Extended Studies?

Appendix 7.5 Interviews with Extended Studies lecturers

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching background?
2. What is the purpose of the Humanities Extended Studies Programme? What role does it fill?
3. Briefly explain the diversity of your class in terms of computer literacy. How do you manage this diversity in your teaching approach?
4. When students enrol for your course, what difficulties do they encounter?
5. How does the course address these problems?
6. In your opinion, is the first year of ES sufficient to prepare students for the mainstream?
7. What promise of support and success does the university hold out to ES students as they transition to mainstream?
8. Given the social history of foundation programmes, what potential do they hold for transformation of the higher education sector?
9. What in your opinion has been the contribution of Extended Studies Programme to transformation?
10. In your opinion, do you think the ES programme will continue or eventually disappear?
11. Do you think this Programme is achieving its objectives? Why? Why not?
12. What in your opinion should be done by the university or the ES unit to improve the efficiency of the Programme?

7.6 Interview with the Dean of Humanities

1. What role do you play as the Dean in the provision of ES?
2. What are the criteria for enrolment in ES? Given that ES was introduced to increase access for black students, what is 'black' in relation to transformation? What is 'disadvantage' in relation to transformation?
3. Given the shifts that have occurred in foundation provisioning, can you comment on the design of the current extended programmes? What was the reason behind their implementation?
4. What are the implications of an integrated support programme? How is it supposed to work? In your opinion, is the Humanities ES Programme fully integrated into the mainstream? Provide a reason for your answer.
5. How would you measure the effectiveness of the Programme? Do you think this programme is achieving its objectives? Why? Why not?
6. In your opinion, is the first year of ES sufficient to prepare students for the rigours of higher education?
7. What promise of support and success does the university hold out to ES students as they transition to mainstream?
8. What is the future of the ES programme? When the precursors of these programmes were introduced, there was a general argument that these programmes would eventually disappear as teachers would concentrate on good teaching and not only good teaching but teaching a diverse range of students. Is there a space for ES practices in the mainstream?
9. Given that some students in mainstream could potentially benefit from ES related work since about

only 34% manage to graduate within three years, what are your views on the four-year degree proposal?

7.7 Interview with the Dean of Teaching and Learning

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your work background, when you came to Rhodes and your involvement in AD work?
2. Can you tell me your version of the history of AD, and how this history relates to Rhodes University?
3. Can you comment on the design of the current extended programmes. What was the reason behind their implementation?
4. In your opinion, is the Humanities ES Programme fully integrated into the mainstream? Provide a reason for your answer.
5. What is the criteria for admission into ES?
6. In your opinion, is the first year of ES sufficient to prepare students for the rigours of higher education?
7. What promise of support does the university hold out to ES students as they transition to the mainstream?
8. Do you think this Programme is achieving its objectives? Why? Why not?
9. What is the future of the ES Programme? Will it eventually disappear or continue to grow?
10. Ian Scott proposed a four-year degree for all students; could this be a possible alternative to ES given that most students struggle in their transition to higher education?

Appendix 8 - Sample excerpt of a spontaneous course related writing exercise - personal reflection

Name: _____ Student number: _____

Sociologists think of society in terms of a web of mutual dependency. Describe your life in these terms. Who are the important people in your life, in the past and now, and what are the connections that link you to them. The purpose of this exercise is for me to get to know you better, and also for you to begin to view your life from a sociological perspective.

I'm a daughter, a sister, a cousin, a granddaughter a friend and a student at Rhodes University

I'm the first born of 3 children, I have a little brother and a little sister, who both depend on me in more ways than one: being a first born at home comes with many expectations and roles to play, not only to my siblings but to my parents as well. I also have the privilege of being the first of 11 grandchildren on to my Grandparents on my mother's side. I have to see that good example because all my siblings look up to me. No pressure right?

On the other hand I look up to my mother, my rock, my comfort and strength. She too is the first born back at home, so I'm watching her really closely how she deals with things especially when it comes to her siblings, she is 1010km away from home (Cape Town) however she is the first person they call when there is a problem. My mother is a strong, strict woman. I want to be like her.

I'm a friend, a crazy one, many would say because of my outgoing, loud and ambitious personality. When it comes down to it I'm a great listener (got that from Mom), speak wisdom when necessary and that wisdom comes from being at church. T.P.T.

Appendix 9 - Excerpts from a lecturer's teaching evaluation

6. Did you hand in an essay draft to CK? *yes.*

7. If yes, explain in detail if/how this helped? If you didn't hand in a draft, why not?

It helped me in that I was able to see
** where I had given general statements without evidence*
** where I explained concepts/ideologies incorrectly and needed to re-write.*
** where I had used information that was unnecessary and could be dropped out*
** where I had used information of another source and had not referenced it.*
So her help really made a difference in the way I had to

Appendix 10 Writing sample with feedback

Topic: Why is the myth that wars are fought to protect women and children problematic from a feminist perspective, and what contribution does feminism make to our thinking about security?

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I will begin by explaining the terms feminism and feminist perspective. Feminism is an academic discipline that dates back to the 1960s and 1970s; it is dedicated to achieving political, social and economic equality for women. (Tickner, 2008: 264). Feminist perspectives date back to the end of the 1980's (about the same time as the cold war). This is said to have not been a coincidence, because after the cold war, a lot of attention was given to issues such as the economy, ethno-national conflicts and the high number of civilians killed and not too much attention was focused on the problems women face during a war. There are 5 different feminist theories, they include liberal, Marxist, socialist, post-colonial and post-modern theories. Liberal feminists believe that 'removing legal obstacles can overcome women's subordination'. (Tickner, 2008:264). Marxist and socialist feminists look for explanations of why women are subordinated in the labour market, looks at issues of why men are most likely to get greater rewards and prestige than women for paid work in the public sphere then for unpaid work in the household. (Tickner, 2008:264). Post-colonial and post-modern feminists argue that 'we cannot generalize about all women'. (Tickner, 2008:264). They argue that women are at different levels in different societies. (Tickner, 2008:265). In my next paragraph I will begin explaining what the feminist definition of security is and I will also explain the myth of protection and how it is problematic from a feminist perspective. Feminists define security to be broad, in a way that it is seen as something that diminishes a lot of forms of violence, including physical, economic and ecological; and that security should be thought of bottom-up instead of top-down, meaning that we should start with the security of individual rather than the international system. (Tickner, 2008:270). The fact that we should start with individual security enables us to 'examine critically the role of states as adequate security providers', (Tickner, 2008:270). We do that because 'the more the government is preoccupied with national security, the less its citizens, especially women, experience physical security'. (Tickner, 2008:270). Security can also be defined in political/military terms, that it is, "the protection of the boundaries and integrity of the state and its values against the dangers of a hostile international

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Comment [c1]: how is this relevant to the topic, Babalwa – you have described feminism, but your essay is NOT about feminism. It is about the myth that wars are fought to protect women, and also what feminism has to say about security. So unless you link all of the ideas in this paragraph to the topic, it is not relevant.

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Comment [c2]: what are you saying here? That feminism diminishes violence? How?

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Comment [c3]: this is a good and important point, but you are mostly using quotes to make it. Use your own words too to expand on what the quotes say. Quotes must ADD to your point, they must not BE the whole point. Does this make sense? So, for instance, you could say: Individual security often is the responsibility of women – whose task it is to feed and nurture her family, during times of war as well as during peace. Individual security is put at risk during war. For this reason, feminists suggest that we need to broaden how we think about security so that we take individual security into account – and if the state is only concerned with national security, it will end up causing its citizens, especially women, to be made even more vulnerable than they already are.

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Appendix 11 –Brief educational and family biographies of Extended Studies students

Interview participant	Year of study in at the time of the interview	Type of Schooling	Hometown	Parents and siblings educational background	Financial aid
Aaron	First year	Private schooling/	-Foreigner -Comes from a non-English speaking country	-Parents are academics -Had to learn English when he arrived in South Africa	Not on financial aid
Anale	First year ES student	Public schooling	Rural Kwa Zulu Natal	Both parents are unemployed. Father is now a pensioner. One brother works as a pastor. The older sister is working in the US.	Full financial aid- NSFAS
Bokang	First year ES student	Public school - Mary Waters	Grahamstown	-Parents are employed but do not have tertiary education -Student is the first to come to university	NSFAS plus a monthly contribution
Bongi	First year ES student	Public school-	Limpopo	-Raised by a single parent -Parent completed and graduated from university and is employed	NSFAS and a monthly contribution
Bandile	First year ES student	Public school	Western cape	The first to go to university. Parents and siblings are unemployed	Full NSFAS funding
Deliwe	First year ES student	-Private schooling -Matriculated in 2008, enrolled in another university in 2009 and dropped out in the same year. - Worked part -time for three years and came to Rhodes in 2012	Limpopo	Siblings completed tertiary education at other universities in SA.	Not on financial aid
Grace	First year ES student	-Primary schooling in a public school -Secondary schooling at a private school following a scholarship from the Oprah Academy for Girls	Johannesburg	The first to go to university	Full NSFAS funding
Karen	First year ES student	-Private schooling- Woodridge - Promoted to mainstream in second semester	Port Elizabeth	Parents employed and two siblings in other universities	Not on financial aid
Matthew	First year ES student	-Public schooling -Matriculated in	Grahamstown	Parents employed but no tertiary education	Full financial aid –NSFAS

		2006 -Was in college for a year and dropped out -Did part time work prior to enrolment in HE - and enrolled for first year in 2012			
Marcus	First year ES student	Public school	Grahamstown	Parents unemployed	Full financial aid – NSFAS
Malusi	First year ES student	Rural schooling	Polokwane	Raised by a single parent, one parent is late.	Full financial aid –NSFAS
Nokuthula	First year ES student	-Public school	Queenstown	-Parents working but don't have tertiary education -Siblings have matric but working already	Full financial aid –NSFAS
Mandisa	First year ES student	Public school- Nombulelo	Grahamstown	-Parents employed but do not have tertiary education. One sibling dropped out of university and sitting at home	NSFAS and staff discount since one of the parents works for the university
Onica	First year ES student	Public school	Mpumalanga	-Raised by a single mom in the rural areas	Full funding- NSFAS
	First year ES student	Public school- Mary Waters	Grahamstown	-Raised by a single parent -Matriculated in 2009 and upgraded in 2010 - went to another university in 2011 and came to Rhodes in 2012	Full NSFAS funding
Agatha	First year ES student	Private schooling	East London	-Both parents have passed on raised by uncles who are educated	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Skumbuzo	First year ES student	Public schooling	Port Alfred	Raised by a single parent who works in a supermarket	Full NSFAS funding
Siphokazi	First year ES student	Public school	Port Elizabeth	Raised by a single mom, who is employed but does not have tertiary education	Full NSFAS funding
Thelma	First year ES student	Public school- Molelwa	Mpumalanga	-Parents employed but do not have tertiary education	NSFAS Financial aid with monthly contributions
Siandile	First year ES student	-Public school- Mary Waters -Matriculated in 2010 but upgraded in 2011 Enrolled for	Grahamstown	-Raised by a single parent who is unemployed and has no tertiary education -Siblings in primary schools and another	NSFAS full funding

		university in 2012		dropped out in grade 9 and does part time jobs	
Zahara	First year ES student	Private schooling	Rustenberg	Parents employed but do not have tertiary qualifications	Not on financial aid
Khanyisa	First year ES student	Private schooling	Port Elizabeth	Parents employed and two siblings currently studying at Historically White Universities	Not on financial aid
Lunga	First year ES student	-Matriculated in 2010 at a public school. -took a gap year and worked for a year before coming to university	King Williams Town	Parents unemployed	Full NSFAS funding
Jabu	Former ES student	Public school-South Coast Academy	KZN	The first to go to university	Full NSFAS funding
Mangi	Former ES student	Public school-Afrikaans medium of instruction	Queenstown	-Two siblings in other universities and being funded on NSFAS -Both parents are not employed	Full NSFAS funding
Mathabo	Former ES student	Model B school-Retief High school, Afrikaans medium of instruction	Keston	-Siblings have university degrees -Raised by a single parent	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Luthando	Former ES student	Private schooling-Graeme College	Grahamstown	-Parents employed - one sibling has a university degree	Not on financial aid
Lundi	Former ES student	Public schooling	Alexandra	-The first to go to university	Full NSFAS funding
Malibongwe	Former ES student	Public schooling prior to two year enrolment in a private school for grade 11 and 12	KZN	Raised by a single mother who recently completed a first degree through distance learning. One sibling also studies at Rhodes	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Buhle	Former ES student-	Model C schooling	Cape Town	One sibling studying at a Technikon	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Penlope	Former ES student	Model C school-	Grahamstown	One sibling has a university degree	NSFAS
Zinzile	Former ES student	Public schooling prior to Model C schooling-(Victoria Girls) from grade 9 to grade 12	Grahamstown	Parents are employed	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Lindiwe	Former ES student	Afrikaans government School	Port Elizabeth	Raised by a single parent who works as a teacher	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Ayanda	Former ES student	Public school-Hector Peterson	King Williams Town	Raised by a single parent who works in a	Full NSFAS funding

				retail shop	
Vhatiswa	Former ES student	-Model B school- Kululani commercial high school -Already had a diploma and work experience before coming to university	East London	-Parents employed but do not have tertiary education qualifications	Full NSFAS funding
Anelisa	Former ES student- Honours student	Public school- Nathaniel Nyaluza	Grahamstown	The first to finish matric and go to university	Full NSFAS funding
Zoleka	Former ES student- postgrad	Public school	Umtata	One parent is employed and the other is a pensioner	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Sipho	Former ES student- Masters student	Rural schooling- Qumbu	Maclear	Parents employed	Financial aid (NSFAS) for undergraduate studies -NRF postgraduate studies
Excluded ES students (phone interviews)					
Desmond	ES dropout	-Came to Rhodes in 2009 and was excluded at the end of 2009. - later completed a diploma in Hotel Management	-	The first to go to university	Full NSFAS funding
Nelly	ES Dropout	-Public school Came to Rhodes in 2007 and left in 2009 for another university. -Graduated with a bachelor of education in 2012. Now working as a teacher	Bizana	The first to go to university	Full NSFAS funding
Vuyo	ES dropout	-Public schooling -Came to Rhodes in 2009 and was excluded at the end of 2009 -went and worked as a waiter and got promoted and is currently working as a coffee shop manager	Grahams town	The first to go to university. Siblings and parents failed grade 12	Full NSFAS funding
Ziyanda	ES dropout	Came to Rhodes in 2007 and was excluded that same year. Now working	Grahams town	The first to go to university	NSFAS and monthly contribution
Noluvuyo	ES dropout	Came to Rhodes in 2006 and was excluded on academic grounds. She did not go back to university. Instead she completed a Diploma in management, and is now working at a clothing store.	East London	She is the first to go to university. Both parents were unemployed and are still unemployed.	NSFAS and monthly contribution

