Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004: Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme

Dean Richard Tyson
Student Number: 812817157

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the Centre for Higher Education Studies, School of Education and Development, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal

November 2010

Abstract

Apartheid education practices have left an indelible mark on Black students in South Africa even after 16 years of democratic rule. For many years tertiary educational institutions have striven to improve throughput and retention rates of Black students who have met the entry requirements for higher education yet seem unable to succeed because of the disadvantaged backgrounds from which they come. Many programmes have been initiated at institutions of higher education throughout South Africa to address this problem; the Humanities Access Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal is one of these.

This study has investigated the impact of the Humanities Access Programme on the institution, by considering throughput and retention rates, and on the student, through their perceptions of the programme and, by combining the results of these two investigations, has tried to suggest an explanation for the results emerging from the data. A mixed methods research approach was used in this study. Quantitative data was collected to conduct a cohort study of student retention and throughput for students in the programme from 2001 to 2004 and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with students from this cohort was used to obtain student perceptions. Using Tinto's *Student Integration Model* tentative explanations of the throughput and retention results were formulated from the students' perceptions.

This study concluded that students from the Humanities Access Programme outperformed their mainstream counterparts and that students perceived the programme in a positive light and felt that the programme contributed to their success. The social and academic integration to university life that the programme provided appears to be a major contributing factor in these students' success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure A   Letter of Information

Annexure B   Acknowledgement of Willingness to Participate

Annexure C   Letter of Consent

Annexure D   Schedule of Interview Questions

Annexure E   Clearance Certificate from Acting Deputy Dean Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences

Annexure F   Ethical Clearance, University of KwaZulu-Natal

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly I would like to thank my family, my wife Kate and children Megan, Dustin and David, for their constant support and encouragement as I embarked on this research project. At times when I wanted to give up, you gave me the courage to continue and your prayers and encouragement enabled me to keep going forward.

No project like this can be undertaken and completed without the support of other academics and colleagues. Working in the Humanities Access Programme has been a great privilege and I thank Prof. Elizabeth de Kadt, Prof. Jenny Clarence-Fincham and Ms Linelle Irvine for this opportunity and for their guidance as I have made the transition from high school teacher to academic. To my colleagues, Penny Niven and Amanda Barratt, thank you for your support, encouragement and guidance through the whole process of writing this thesis. Our discussions over tea were invaluable in enabling me to not only conceptualise this study but also to clarify my thinking on numerous issues related to this research. Penny, without your mentoring and encouragement I do not think I would have ever even embarked on this Masters degree. Also to Mark Rieker, without your help I would not have been able to navigate my way through the statistical analysis. Thank you for the hours you spent going through the data with me and explaining what the figures meant at the end of it all. I would not have been able to do it without you!

Finally I wish to thank Ruth Searle, my supervisor, for her guidance and wisdom in completing this task and also for her support and counsel during a particularly stressful period in my career. Your experience and comments were invaluable in assisting me in formulating this study and writing up this thesis.

DECLARATION

I, Dean Richard Tyson, declare that this Master of Education (Higher Education) dissertation is my own work and that I have acknowledged all sources appropriately. This dissertation has not been submitted to any other institutions as part of an academic qualification.

The research was conducted in Pietermaritzburg at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal under the supervision of Ms Ruth Searle.

Date:

Place: Pietermaritzburg

Name: Dean Richard Tyson

Signature:

ABBREVIATIONS

ACASS   Access Certificate in Arts and Social Sciences

ACS   Academic Communication Studies

ANC   African National Congress

BSS4   Bachelor of Social Sciences - Augmented Curriculum

CADP   Commerce Academic Development Programme

CESM   Classification of Education Subject Matter

CHE   Centre for Higher Education

DMI   Division of Management Information

DoE   Department of Education

DUT   Durban University of Technology

EFYP   Extended First Year Programme

ELH   Exploring Literacies in the Humanities

HAP   Humanities Access Programme

ITS   Integrated Tertiary Software

NCHE   National Commission on Higher Education

NSFAS   National Student Financial Aid Scheme

PBS   Pre-University Bursary Scheme

REAP   Rural Education Access Programme

SECP   Somotology Extended Curriculum Programme

SIM   Student Integration Model

SMS   Student Management System

TEFSA   Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa

TSA   Technikon South Africa

UFP   University Foundation Programme

UKZN   University of KwaZulu-Natal

UN   University of Natal

UNESCO   United Nations

UNIFY   University of the North Foundation Year

UNISA   University of South Africa

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

> *It is generally acknowledged internationally that higher education has a critical role to play in a nation's economy and society through the development of general and specific skills and competencies, and through knowledge production. For South Africa as a developing nation, increasing participation in higher education is a critical strategy for addressing the skills shortage, high unemployment rates and poverty* (Jones *et al,* 2008: 18).

The birth of the new, democratically elected government in 1994 heralded the beginning of widespread transformation in South Africa. Among these changes were radical changes within education both at school and tertiary level. One of the fundamental principles guiding the transformation of higher education was equity and redress (South Africa, 1997). This principle made way for "fair opportunities both to enter higher education programmes and to succeed in them" (South Africa, 1997: 6).

With the changes taking place in education, higher education soon saw an increase in participation rates among African students but it quickly became apparent that many of these students entering higher education were ill-prepared for the challenges of tertiary education (Jansen, 2006; Hay and Marais, 2004). Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007) reported that 29% of first-time entering students dropped out of higher education at the end of their first year and that a mere 30% of students had graduated after five years. This points to the fact that, although there was opportunity for students to enter tertiary education, there was not equal opportunity to succeed. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds still lacked skills and knowledge that were essential for them to succeed in higher education. Language issues were at the forefront of these students' problems and an inability to read and write for academic purposes contributed to the dismal failure and drop-out rate.

Against this backdrop of high attrition rates and low graduation rates, the Humanities

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

Access Programme (HAP) was established on the Pietermaritzburg Campus of the former University of Natal (UN) in 2001. This research will investigate what impact the programme has had on students and the university in order to inform future planning of such initiatives as well as to reform mainstream practices.

1.2   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to provide administrators and educators with information that will assist them in planning future initiatives and in institutionalising aspects of the programme that appear to enable student success. This study comes at a time when throughput at tertiary institutions is of high priority to the Department of Education (DoE) as well as to tertiary institutions as it affects, among other things, their funding (Letseka and Maile, 2008). If programmes such as HAP increase graduation rates, this will further strengthen the priority to fund such initiatives and to inculcate the practices of such programmes into the fabric of higher education institutions. Students' perceptions of what has aided them in succeeding in their studies will further strengthen these initiatives if the voices of students are heard and we are able to get a sense of what students see as important for them to succeed.

As no formal evaluation of the programme has ever been conducted, this research will enable the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences to consider the role the programme is playing and make any adjustments that may appear necessary for it to be more effective in assisting students in their studies.

1.3   Defining Access Programmes

Various initiatives have been developed in South African Higher Education to address the needs of under prepared students. Many terms have been used to describe these initiatives: access; foundation; bridging; augmented; extended. Sometimes different terminology is used by different institutions for the same thing. The conceptual frameworks for these will be discussed in Chapter 3, but at this stage the following definitions can be used to clarify what is meant by each of these:

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

1. **ACCESS/FOUNDATION/BRIDGING PROGRAMMES:** These initiatives were, in most cases, the initial responses to students coming into tertiary institutions being under prepared for degree or diploma studies. Students who were part of these programmes did not meet the entry requirements for mainstream studies and the programmes were designed to fill in the gaps in students' knowledge in an attempt to prepare them for further studies. These bridging programmes often attempted to "fix" the students problems from school and did not articulate well with the qualification that followed. These programmes carried no credits towards a formal qualification and were not funded by the Department of Education (DoE).

2. **AUGMENTED CURRICULUM PROGRAMMES:** Augmented curriculum programmes seek to address students' lack of preparedness by giving students additional academic interventions within the mainstream programme. This is achieved through additional tutorials to supplement and complement the work done in the mainstream modules. In order to do this, students register for half the number of credits each semester which essentially means that they extend their first year over two years. Although these augmented tutorials may have their own formal assessments, they are not credit bearing towards the qualification.

3. **EXTENDED CURRICULUM PROGRAMMES:** An extended curriculum programme is defined by the DoE as follows:

   > *A first undergraduate degree or diploma programme that incorporates a substantial foundational provision that is additional to the coursework prescribed for the regular programme. The foundational provision must be (a) equivalent to one or two semesters of full-time study, (b) designed to articulate effectively with the regular elements of the programme, and (c) formally planned, scheduled and regulated as an integral part of the programme. (DoE, 2006:2)*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

These programmes usually have a mixture of credit bearing modules, which are supported by the usual DoE subsidy, and non-credit bearing, academic development modules which are funded through special funding from the DoE. Students in these programmes extend their period of study by one or two semesters to accommodate the academic development aspects of the programme (de Klerk, *et al* 2005).

1.4   History of the Humanities Access Programme

The Humanities Access Programme was initiated in 2000 when a retired teacher, working as a part-time lecturer in the Science Foundation Programme and teaching an English Language module as well as an Academic Communication Studies (ACS) module in the School of Languages in the Faculty of Humanities, became concerned about the inability of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to cope with the writing tasks in ACS. Being involved with the work being done in the Science Foundation Programme, a proposal was put forward to the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities by the staff in the School of Languages for a similar programme in their faculty. As a result a series of meetings were convened for a group of interested staff, all of whom had also had high school teaching experience, and an intervention programme planned. The programme was conceptualised as a bridging/access programme, where students who successfully completed the programme could enter mainstream studies. For the period 2001 to 2004, the programme was financed with funds from the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences. It was only in 2005 that formal funding was received from the DoE.

Since students who had met the minimum entry requirements could not be discriminated against and placed in a special programme, the programme focussed on students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds who showed academic potential but had not met the minimum entry requirements. This still did not address the problem of students who had met the minimum requirements and were not succeeding. It did, however, open the door for students from disadvantaged backgrounds with potential to succeed to enter the university and receive the assistance needed for them

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

to make the adjustment to the rigours of higher education. The level of educational disadvantage was initially judged using the Personal Profile Questionnaire devised by the university and information provided by prospective students regarding the facilities and class sizes of their previous schools as well as family financial circumstances. In later years the Resource Targeting Ranking system (Government Gazette, 2004) was put in place and this information was used instead. This system was used by government to identify impoverished schools and funding was allocated according to the school's location in this ranking. Two equally weighted factors are used in attaining the ranking: the "physical condition, facilities and crowding of the school" and "the relative poverty of the community around the school" (Government Gazette, 2004: 70 - 71).

In 2001, students with potential who had not met the minimum entry requirements for entry into mainstream studies were invited to an interview. These students were also required to fill in a personal profile questionnaire which sourced biographical information with regard to their schooling, family background and motivation for wanting to study. Using these two sources of information together with the Matric results, a group of 22 students were selected for the programme and registered for the Access Certificate in Arts and Social Sciences (ACASS).

The programme was focussed on providing assistance for students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds in adjusting to the demands of tertiary education. A two pronged approach was used by providing both academic support through literacy intervention (Language, Numeracy and Computers), as well as psycho-social support through group and individual counselling by a registered education/counselling psychologist. At that stage the programme was staffed with short-term contract lecturers, a part-time coordinator and part-time educational psychologist. The curriculum is shown Table 1 below.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

1ST SEMESTER	2ND SEMESTER
Academic Communication Studies 101A	Academic Communication Studies 102A
English 110A - Introduction to Writing A	English 111A - Introduction to Writing B
Africa in the World 110	Africa in the World 120
Basic Numeracy	Information Literacy
Basic Computer Literacy	

TABLE 1: Humanities Access Programme Curriculum 2001 - 2004

In 2002 the Humanities Access Programme was advertised in the university prospectus for the first time and more than 400 prospective students applied for the programme. This meant that it was impossible to interview students and an entrance test was devised to rank students. This tested language proficiency and basic number skills. Selection was based on Matric results, the entrance test and Personal Profile Questionnaire. The criteria for selection will be discussed in the next section.

The programme continued under this model until the beginning of 2005 when the Humanities Access Programme shifted to an extended curriculum model and was re-curriculated. It is for this reason that this study focuses on the 2001 to 2004 cohorts. At this stage the DoE also provided funding for three years for access initiatives at various tertiary institutions which enabled the coordinator, the counsellor and some lecturers to be appointed in a full-time capacity on three year contracts. This placed the programme on a much firmer footing and at the same time the programme was extended to the Howard College campus in Durban. The intake was increased to 200 students, 75 on the Pietermaritzburg campus and 125 on the Howard College campus. Funding was renewed for another three years from 2008 to 2010.

New modules, especially designed for students with the educational and social background the programme was targeting, were developed for the intake of 2005 but the basic structure of the first year remained very similar. Students were now registered for the Bachelor of Social Science - Augmented Curriculum (BSS4) and modules offered in the second semester were credit bearing towards a Bachelor of

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

Social Science degree. Students registered in the programme were able to select a mainstream module as an elective in the second semester from a small range of subjects: Psychology, Sociology, Politics and Drama. Only four modules were offered because of the logistical limitations of being able to fit the rest of the access modules around these mainstream modules. These modules were chosen as they seemed to be popular choices among Humanities students. The revised curriculum is shown in Table 2 below.

1ST SEMESTER	2ND SEMESTER	
Academic Literacy A	Academic Literacy B	16C
English Language Development A	English Language Development B	16C
Africa in the World A	Africa in the World B	16C
Basic Numeracy	Mainstream Elective	16C
Basic Computer Literacy		

TABLE 2: Humanities Access Programme Curriculum 2005 - 2008

With funding from the South Africa-Norway Tertiary Education Development (SANTED) programme, the SANTED University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal Access and Retention (SUKAR) project was initiated to conduct research and provided resources to improve student access and retention. Some of this funding was made available to the HAP in 2006 and a pilot project was established on the Pietermaritzburg campus in 2007 to offer students augmented tutorials in their mainstream electives. Additional materials were presented to students by tutors from the mainstream disciplines and students were given assistance and advice with assignments, tests and examination preparation. This initiative was extended in 2008 to include students from the access programme entering their second year of study. All students from the Humanities Access Programme were required to take at least one augmented module in their second year. The augmented modules initially offered to students were Psychology, Sociology, Politics, Drama & Performance Studies, Ethics and English. After the first offering it was decided to drop Drama & Performance Studies, English and Ethics and in their place offer Legal Studies, Media & Communication Studies and Geography and Environmental Studies as these were more popular choices. This gave students

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

access to assistance in a wide range of Humanities modules without limiting their choice of majors.

The beginning of 2009 saw another minor change in the curriculum of the programme which shifted it towards a fully integrated four-year degree with academic support being offered to access students for the first five semesters of the degree. The access modules, Africa in the World A and B, were removed from the syllabus and replaced with Politics 101 and 102. This meant that students began earning credits towards their degree from their first semester of study and the learning taking place in the access modules was fully integrated with their mainstream studies. The Politics 101 and 102 modules were augmented and students received additional tutorials with these modules in the same way as the electives offered in the second semester. A new academic development module, Exploring Literacies in the Humanities (ELH), replaced English Language Development B and Academic Literacy B in the second semester. The Exploring Literacies in the Humanities module exposes students to the various genres and literacy skills that are commonly encountered in undergraduate studies and seeks not only to teach students how to write but also how to source relevant materials, how to read them and extract relevant information from these materials and then how to paraphrase or quote these materials. The structure of the four-year degree is shown in Table 3 below.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

YEAR	SEMESTER	MODULES	CREDITS
1	1	English Language Development A Academic Literacy A Politics 101 Basic Numeracy Basic Computer Literacy	16C
	2	Exploring Literacies in the Humanities Politics 102 Elective (Chosen from Media & Communication, Psychology or Sociology)	48C
2	1	3 Level 100modules one of which must be chosen from: Sociology, Psychology, Media & Communication, Legal Studies or Geography and Environmental Studies.	48C
	2	3 Level 100modules one of which must be chosen from: Sociology, Psychology, Media & Communication, Legal Studies or Geography and Environmental Studies.	48C
3	1	3 Level 200modules one of which must be chosen from: Politics, Sociology, Psychology, Media & Communication, Legal Studies or Geography and Environmental Studies.	48C
	2	3 Level 200modules one of which must be chosen from: Politics, Sociology, Psychology, Media & Communication, Legal Studies or Geography and Environmental Studies.	48C
4	1	4 Level 300 modules from major subjects.	64C
	2	4 Level 400 modules from major subjects.	64C

TABLE 3: Humanities Extended Curriculum Four-Year Degree Structure

1.5   Entry Requirements for the Programme

The entry requirements for a Humanities degree at the former University of Natal were Matriculation with Endorsement and 32 or more Matric points. For the Access

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

Certificate in Arts and Social Science the entry requirements simply stated "Candidates must show potential to succeed in an Arts or Social Science degree, and will be selected by a committee" (UKZN, 2004: 69). The idea of "academic potential" is difficult to define but as stated earlier, selection was based on an entrance test, the Personal Profile Questionnaire and the Matric results. Consequently students selected for the programme during the period 2001 to 2004 had a variety of qualifications ranging from Matriculation Without Endorsement (Senior Certificate), O Levels for foreign students, and students with Matriculation with endorsement. Students' Matric points ranged from as low as 17 points up to 31 points. The major criteria for selection were the entrance test, which was comprised mainly of an assessment of language ability but also had a small numeracy component, and the personal profile questionnaire. This questionnaire was scored to assess the level of disadvantage and used together with the entrance test and Matric score to rank students.

With the advent of DoE funding in 2005, which did not fund students without Matriculation Endorsement, more rigid selection criteria were put in place. Students entering the programme had to meet the following criteria:

- have Matriculation Endorsement
- between 24 and 31 Matric points
- come from an educationally disadvantaged background based on DoE Resource Targeting Ranking deciles system. Students from schools in deciles 1 - 8 were eligible for selection.
- must be English Second Language learners.

1.6 Rationale for the Study

Despite the many changes that have taken place in the Humanities Access Programme since its inception in 2001, there are several motivating factors behind the rationale to embark on this study. Chief among these factors is that, since its inception, the Humanities Access Programme has never been formally reviewed to determine whether the aims of the programme have been achieved. The value of this kind of

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

reflection is widely documented (Schön, 1983; Bleach, 1999; Tickle, 1989) and much can be gained from these reflective observations. The primary aims of the programme have been to provide access to the university and ensure retention of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds. This study will seek to assess the impact of HAP not only on throughput and retention rates of African students from disadvantaged backgrounds, but also to give students an opportunity to reflect on their experience of the programme and whether or not it impacted on their studies and, if so, in what ways. These observations by students are important even with the changes in the programme into a four-year degree as they can inform the institution about what students see as important to ensure retention and success.

Another important motivation for conducting this research is to ascertain if there are aspects of the programme that can be institutionalised because of the contribution they seem to be making in affecting throughput and retention rates. Graduation rates continue to be low and institutions need to be informed regarding what is required to retain students and assist them in graduating. Funding has recently been made available to institutions for research into the reasons why students drop out of higher education and what is required to retain them. This study will hopefully give some indications of what aspects HAP students have found beneficial in promoting retention and throughput and these findings can be used to effect change within the Faculty of Humanities Development and Social Sciences and the university at large. It is particularly important to begin to institutionalise aspects of initiatives such as HAP that are improving retention and throughput in light of the fact that 2011 to 2013 will be the final round of funding for access initiative and that from 2014 institutions will need to incorporate such programmes into their normal planning.

1.7 Key Research Questions

This study will examine the impact of the Humanities Access Programme by considering two aspects: firstly, throughput and retention and secondly, students' perceptions of the programme's influence on their ability to graduate or not. The study

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

will attempt to answer the following questions:

What impact has the Humanities Access Programme had on the institution and on the students?

1. How do throughput and retention rates of the Humanities Access Programme students compare to mainstream Humanities students of a similar demographic?

2. How did Access students perceive the programme and its different aspects?

3. How do students' perceptions inform the interpretation of the cohort analysis?

1.8 Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter Two of this dissertation contains background and contextual information relevant to this study. It will look at literature relating to disadvantaged students' access to higher education, the history behind their educational disadvantage and attempts to redress the lasting effects of apartheid education. This review of background and contextual issues will also discuss both national and international participation and throughput rates.

Chapter 3 reviews literature related to this study and will consider Tinto's theory of student retention and factors that affect student success, particularly the success of students from disadvantaged social and educational backgrounds. The final part of the literature review will consider the theory and practice behind the different access programmes and some research conducted into access programmes in South Africa.

The methodology used in this study will be discussed in Chapter 4. Both quantitative data, in the form of throughput and retention rates, and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, was collected for this research. This chapter starts with an overview of mixed method research and then discusses the methodology used in collecting the different types of data as well as issues related to ethics, validity and the limitations of the research.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 1: Introduction

The fifth chapter deals with the findings of the research and shows that the HAP has had a very positive effect on the institution by improving throughput and retention rates of African students and that students perceived the programme to have assisted them in their ability to succeed. This is followed, in the final chapter, by the conclusions and recommendations which arise from this study.

CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

2.1   Introduction

> "*Racial relations cannot improve if the wrong type of education is given to Natives. They cannot improve if the result of Native education is the creation of frustrated people who, as a result of the education they received, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled immediately*" (Hendrik Verwoerd, 1953 cited in Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 46)

This statement, made in 1953 by the minister of Native Affairs in the South African parliament, was to set education on a path that would have dire consequences and which still in 2010 affects education negatively after 16 years of democratic rule. The education Africans received as a result of Verwoerd's statement was of a poor quality and was aimed at ensuring that cheap labour was available for the agricultural and mining sectors and for menial work rather than allowing them to enter the modern economy and make a meaningful contribution to the development of the country (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Fleisch, 2002). In post-apartheid South Africa this has resulted in high dropout rates in schools with only 14% of Africans completing either high school or a tertiary education (United States Library of Congress, 1996).

For many years, even prior to 1994, there has been great concern over the number of African students gaining access to tertiary education but then failing to graduate (Scott, Nan & Yeld, 2007). This concern has led to tertiary institutions considering ways in which to deal with this situation and hence the advent of access programmes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In this chapter I will highlight some of the contextual and background issues that are relevant to the study being embarked on before considering the literature related to my study in the next chapter.

A brief history of apartheid education and its legacy which has led to the crisis faced by education in South Africa today will be examined in this chapter together with a discussion of the idea of disadvantage, which is greatly contested. I will also consider

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

the principles of equity of access and outcomes, which are central to the *White Paper 3* which deals with the transformation of higher education (South Africa, 1997), and will compare participation rates in South African higher education with international norms. The concluding part of this chapter will take a closer look at throughput and retention rates both internationally and in South Africa.

2.2 Disadvantaged Students

What defines a *disadvantaged student* is highly contested and debated and can be viewed in many different ways depending on your viewpoint. Before considering the idea of *disadvantage* in the South African context though, it is important to gain an understanding of the history of education in South Africa so that we can gain some perspective of what a disadvantaged student is in relation to this backdrop.

2.2.1 Apartheid Education

With the arrival of the early settlers, more formal schooling was put in place, initially by the Dutch Reform Church; but by the late 1700s and 1800s British mission schools began to emerge in great numbers. With the arrival of many more British settlers, English soon became the language of instruction for all pupils but this was strongly resisted by the Afrikaners. Towards the later part of the 18th century Afrikaans was allowed by the government as a medium of instruction.

In the early 1900s the enrolment of African students in government schools was practically abolished and these students, in the main, attended mission schools (Molteno, 1984) but, even at this early stage, African students were being prepared primarily for the labour market. Hendrik Verwoerd, however, believed that these mission schools were giving blacks the confidence to make political demands which were unacceptable to the Afrikaner (Maree, 1984). As a result, the Nationalist government of the time converted "the already inequitable education system of the segregation era into a powerful means of maintaining order and socialising various elements of the population into their

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

appropriate roles in society" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The foundations of how this would be achieved were revealed in the *Eiselen Commission Report* of 1951 which were translated into the *Bantu Education Act* in 1953. In essence the act forced mission schools to be handed over to the government. This sparked school boycotts organised by the African National Congress (ANC) but these had little effect and the government effectively gained control over education for blacks (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Maree, 1984; Fleisch, 2002).

This control over education allowed the government to make sweeping changes that would alter the face of education radically, producing effects that are still being felt over five decades after being instituted. Many of the changes introduced were for political purposes and served to separate the different population groups. Different education departments were established for African, Coloured, Indian and White students. One of the major changes that the Nationalist government introduced was their language policy (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Maree, 1984). There was a strong push for mother tongue instruction by the Nationalist Party in a further attempt to segregate the population of South Africa. After the initial eight years of mother-tongue instruction, students were then expected to take half their courses in English and half in Afrikaans. This pressure from the National Party to make Afrikaans compulsory led to the Soweto student uprising in 1976. The consequence of this was young black South Africans leaving schools in protest against the system of apartheid education and them vowing to make South Africa ungovernable. This liberation mentality resulted in unrest, vandalism and burning of schools and attacks on teachers and pupils who tried to attend school.

In addition to language issues, the Nationalist government embarked on a policy of inequitable financial provision for education between different racial

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

groups (Hunt Davis, 1984; Christie & Collins, 1984; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Fiske and Ladd report that "at the height of apartheid, per pupil spending in white schools was ten times that in the African schools." (2004: 3) but by 1994, even though the government had significantly increased spending on black students, they were still spending "more than two and a half times that spent on behalf of black students in the urban townships" (2004: 44). The expenditure on education in the African homelands, established by the government to separate race groups, was even worse. In 2000 the minister of education reported that the aim of inequitable funding for education "was to perpetuate white supremacy by giving whites a better quality education than that given to other races" (Ministry of Education, 2000:6).

Higher education for Africans has a similar history to schools. Initially higher education for Africans was provided mainly by the church, with church seminaries accepting students as early as 1841 (United States Library of Congress, 1996). In 1829 the government established the South African College, later to become the University of Cape Town, which was multiracial, but it was not until 1916 that blacks had real access to higher education when the South African Native College (now the University of Fort Hare) was established (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). The emergence of apartheid saw tertiary institutions also being segregated and, ironically, the *Extension of University Education Act* of 1959 saw Africans being banned from the English universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand and Natal unless special permission was given by the minister of education. Fort Hare was earmarked for Xhosa and South Sotho speaking students, the University of the Western Cape for Coloured students and University of Durban-Westville for Indian students. Between 1959 and 1982 a total of ten new universities were established to cater for non-white students (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Davies, 1984) but, as with schools, these had "inferior facilities, instructors and course offerings" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 47) which resulted in African, Coloured and Indians students still receiving a deficient education.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

2.2.2   The Legacy of Apartheid Education

"The destructive impact of the 'Bantu Education' system wrought damage that will take decades if not generations to repair" (Wilson, 2001: 3). Wilson continues by saying that Bantu Education together with inadequate funding and job-reservation has prevented Africans from being "adequately prepared for the challenges of globalisation in the 21st century" (Wilson, 2001: 3). This has produced a hiatus in terms of skilled labour and a lack of capacity of Africans to function in the modern world. Still today many black students entering higher education have never operated a computer or used the internet. According to Fiske and Ladd (2004) there are four major legacies of education under the Apartheid system: residential segregation, poverty and inequality; poor quality schooling for black children; low educational attainment and achievement; and the lack of a culture of teaching and learning.

Inequalities in provision of facilities remain part of post-apartheid education in South African even today despite the efforts of government to undo this legacy. Motala and Singh (2001: 11) say that "there has not been a significant move towards equity in the schooling system despite its centrality in the struggle for educational reform and, indeed, there is little prospect of the achievement of substantial equity in the foreseeable future". Under apartheid, different race groups were allocated areas in which they were allowed to live and these were generally separated from the former white areas. Since the dismantling of apartheid there has been some movement of the black middle class into these former white areas but, for the majority of South Africans, they have remained in these apartheid designated areas. This means that the students still do not have access to the quality schools established for whites under apartheid education either because of the distance that separates them from these schools or because of the high fees charged by these schools. The majority of African students remain in schools that are under resourced, have poor facilities and are still struggling to reach the levels of the former white schools despite the efforts of government to overcome the deficiencies of the

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

past (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The inequality in financial provision for blacks has resulted in poor quality education because of the lack of proper facilities, books and resources needed for effective teaching to take place. The *Schools Register of Needs Survey* (Department of Education, 1997) reports that at that stage there was a shortage of over 50 000 classrooms needed to educate the number of students enrolled in schools (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Nicolaou, 2001; Harber, 2001) . Together with overcrowding, schools had to cope with large numbers of schools not having electricity, "25% had no access to water within walking distance" (Fiske and Ladd, 2004: 55) and over 10% having no sanitation. In addition to poor facilities, Harber (2001) reports "some 82% of schools in South Africa have no media equipment, two-thirds have no teaching equipment of any kind and textbook provision nationally is evenly divided between 'adequate' and 'inadequate'" (Harber, 2001:58).

Underqualified teachers and the poor training received at teachers' training colleges further heightened the effects on the quality of education received by black students. A teacher was deemed qualified in 1990 if they had a senior certificate plus three years of training but, even with this minimum criterion, almost 25% of teachers were under-qualified for the positions they held (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Coupled with this is poor leadership in schools. Principals are ill-prepared for the leadership roles they have taken on and principals in rural schools in particular lack training and skills which are needed to manage and improve their schools.

The third legacy of apartheid education reported by Fiske and Ladd (2004) is low educational attainment and achievement. They report that the census of 1996 revealed that "19% of South Africans aged twenty years or older have never been to school" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:56), the majority of these being African. Only one in seven Africans had completed high school successfully

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

and one in thirty three had any tertiary education. This has left South Africa with the problem of not only having to deal with improving education in schools but also having to provide adult education for generations affected by the apartheid education system.

Arguably the most debilitating legacy of apartheid education has been the effect it has had on the culture of teaching and learning in schools and tertiary institutions. The "liberation before education" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 49) stance taken by the African National Congress (ANC) resulted in the constant disruption of education in the years following the Soweto student uprising of 1976 (Harber, 2001; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). The lack of a culture of learning is characterised by high absenteeism, indiscipline in schools, violence and the destruction of school property as a sign of defiance. Many schools still show these characteristics today.

Chisholm and Vally (1996) found, in their study into the culture of teaching and learning in Gauteng schools that among teachers there was also evidence of high absenteeism and low morale. The study highlighted poor teaching, the lack of marking of students' work and testing of students was practically non-existent. The report on the President's Education Initiative Research Project (Taylor *et al*, 1999) found that out of 191 possible school days 64 days were lost to meetings, days off on pay day, memorial services and registration of students. This points to the fact that many teachers have no sense of duty or professionalism and it is reported that many conduct private business during school time (Harber, 2001). Against this backdrop it is not surprising that learning is not seen by students as something that is important.

Higher education is also affected by this legacy of apartheid education "including limited resources, financial mismanagement, poor teaching, and low achievement in institutions serving black students" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004: 202). In addition to this, black universities, because of their physical isolation and

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

limited financial resources, have remained on the fringe of academia, have been able to offer only limited curricula and have a much lower academic standard because of the unpreparedness of black students for tertiary education. What has made matters worse for higher education has been the lack of commitment by government to reform these institutions.

The democratically elected government elected in 1994 has faced a daunting task of unravelling over four decades of apartheid education. Many new policies have been put in place in an attempt to undo the harm of the past but, despite this, the legacy of a racially based education system geared toward oppression of blacks continues to linger and affect a new generation of South African students. The many challenges faced in all spheres of South African society have made the transition from a philosophy of "liberation before education" to one of "education for liberation" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:49) a difficult one and which may still take many years to achieve.

2.2.3   Defining Disadvantaged Students

In an attempt to undo the ravages of apartheid education many tertiary institutions have designed special access programmes for *disadvantaged* students. What defines a disadvantaged student, however, has become more and more difficult to define. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1999: 407) defines *disadvantage* as being "in socially or economically deprived circumstances". The system of apartheid in South Africa has resulted in black South Africans indeed being both socially and economically deprived. At the heart of apartheid was the desire to subjugate black people and to keep them inferior to their white counterparts. Apartheid education gave black students an inferior education which relegated them to positions of labourers able only to do menial work. Very few rose above the poor education they received to be able to participate meaningfully in society and, even if they did, were still looked down on. "Internationally, class systems invariably affect minorities and often the poorer sections of the population" (Bass, 2007). Other countries,

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

such as Brazil, the United States of America, United Kingdom and Australia, all report minority groupings receiving a poor standard of education but the biggest difference is that in South Africa it is not a minority group that received sub-standard education, but the largest portion of the population and therefore the impact on the nation is far more significant.

As a result of apartheid and the education system that evolved from it, disadvantage has in the past been seen in terms of race. Black South Africans (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) by virtue of their racial classification have been seen to be disadvantaged. Since democracy in 1994, however, a new middle and upper class has begun to emerge among blacks and so using race as a determination of disadvantage is becoming more inappropriate. Economics has become more of a determining factor. Many black South Africans are no longer disadvantaged because of their financial situation but does this mean that they are not disadvantaged by virtue of their educational background?

Many of the middle and upper class blacks, together with the rest of the population, have received poor education and have deficiencies in their education. Even today, Jansen (2006) says there exist vast differences in the schooling received by students in rural schools compared to urban schools. Rural students still face under-resourced schools with poor facilities and under-qualified teachers. Niven (2010), in her studies into the epistemologies and discourses students bring with them to university, has found that these vary greatly depending on what type of school students attended. Students from better resourced schools with qualified teachers come into the university with epistemologies and discourses that intersect more closely with those that are required by university lecturers compared to those from poorer schools. These students adapt to the requirements of tertiary education much more easily. Their counterparts, from under-resourced schools, often in rural areas, come with discourses and epistemologies that do not fit well with those required at

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

university causing these students to be doubly disadvantaged. They are economically disadvantaged and, in a much greater measure, educationally disadvantaged. Tertiary institutions expect these students to adapt to them rather than the institutions evolving to accommodate the significant changes in the student body that has taken place since the demise of apartheid. Many urban black schools are beginning to rise above their apartheid past and are producing students that are able to adapt to and succeed in tertiary institutions and so disadvantage can no longer be defined only in terms of race and economics.

So, in defining disadvantage when looking at students coming into tertiary institutions, it is necessary to go beyond simple economics and race. The type of school and the standard of education received must also be taken into account as this will give an indication of whether a student is able to gain epistemological access to the institution. Class size, facilities, quality of teaching as well as the economic status of the area surrounding the school all have a role to play in deciding disadvantage. The Resource Targeting Ranking system (Government Gazette, 2004) mentioned in Chapter 1 is a good indicator of the level of socio-economic and educational disadvantage experienced by students and has been used by the Humanities Access programme in determining who is disadvantaged and who is not.

2.3   Equity of Access and Redress

The deficiencies of apartheid education have left major inequalities in both the quality of higher education offered in previously black education institutions and access to higher education among these disadvantaged communities. One of the purposes of higher education is "to address the development needs of society and provide the labour market, in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy" (South Africa, 1997: 3). This means that, because of the shortage of skilled workers as a result of apartheid education practices, increased

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

participation rates in higher education by previously disadvantaged students is essential. The *White Paper* entitled *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (South Africa, 1997) outlined the fundamental principles that would guide this transformation process, the first of these being *Equity and Redress*:

> "*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 the one hand, a critical identification of existing inequalities which are products of policies, structures and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination or disadvantage, and on the other a programme of transformation with a view to redress.*" (South Africa, 1997:6)

The establishment of the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA) in 1991 and the passing of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act (No 56 of 1999), which established the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in 2000, enabled many deserving students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter higher education. Enrolment in higher education by black students increased significantly (as will be seen from the discussion on participation rates in the next section) and greater numbers of students who were previously unable to enter higher education because of lack of funding were able to gain access to these institutions.

The *White Paper* on higher education also highlighted the need not only to ensure equity of access to higher education, but also to ensure equity of outcomes for all population groups in South Africa. In order to achieve this, funding was necessary "to respond comprehensively to the articulation gap between learners' school attainment and the intellectual demands of higher education programmes" (South Africa, 1997: 13). The *White Paper* clearly advocated that this be achieved through bridging and access programmes in Higher Education. "The Ministry recognises the considerable cost differentials involved in teaching learners from inadequate educational backgrounds and teaching learners from advantaged backgrounds. The ministry accepts that academic development, foundation and extended programmes should be

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

incorporated in the funding formula" (South Africa, 1997: 49). Despite this commitment in the *White Paper* to providing funding, it was not until 2004 that this became a reality.

In a letter entitled *Foundation Programme Grants: 2004/05 to 2006/07* the Deputy Director-General of Higher Education, Ms N Badsha, invited institutions to apply for funding with the only criteria being that the funds be used for the purpose of "improving the success and graduation rates of students from disadvantaged backgrounds" (Badsha, 2004: 1). These applications were reviewed by a panel of experts and funding allocated by the minister of education based on their recommendations. At UKZN three programmes were funded: The Science Foundation Programme in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, and the Humanities and Commerce Access Programs in the Faculties of Humanities Development and Social Science and Management studies respectively. Funding was granted for a three year period.

In 2006 and 2009 institutions were again invited to apply for funding for foundational provision but this time the DoE laid out the following criteria for programmes which were seeking funding:

> "- *The primary purpose must be to provide a set of learning activities which are designed to enable students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds to perform successfully in their chosen field of study.*
>
> - *The components of the foundational provision must be intrinsic parts of the curriculum of the extended programme.*
>
> - *The components into which the foundational provision is divided must be formal courses. i.e. courses which count for credits towards the award of the formal qualification. Each of these courses must include specific and identifiable foundational provisions which are relevant to the overall curriculum of the programme.*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

- *The foundational provision must be additional to the coursework prescribed for the relevant regular curriculum. The credit total of foundation courses in the extended programme must be at least 0.5 and not more than 1."*(DoE, 2006: 4 - 5)

While provision has been made for providing equity of outcomes for a small group of students from disadvantaged backgrounds through these bridging/foundation/extended curriculum programmes, there has been little transformation within higher education in general to ensure success of students entering higher education without the advantage of these programmes. Teaching and learning issues in mainstream education are still of great concern as not enough has been done to address the needs of an under-prepared generation of learners. Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007: 40) say that "the educational process in higher education has not changed significantly to take account of the major changes in the student intake". They also say that "since the majority of students entering the sector are not completing their studies, it can reasonably be inferred that the existing system is not effective in contemporary conditions" (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007: 21). Students are still being expected to transform to the functioning of the institution rather than the institution transforming to the needs of the majority of students entering it doors. Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007) point out that undergraduate programme structures at South African tertiary institutions were largely established when students came from similar social and educational backgrounds and when student numbers were relatively small. The assumptions made then about prior learning and the educational capital students bring with them to higher education are no longer valid for the diverse social and educational backgrounds of the new South African student. Until this changes, higher education will continue to fail in producing the quality and numbers of graduates required to fulfil the needs of a growing economy in South Africa.

The next section examines how South Africa compares to other countries in student participation in higher education, retention and throughput of students.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

2.4 Equality of Access and Outcomes

White Paper 3 (South Africa, 1997), which outlines a plan of transformation of higher education, has among its primary purposes the equality of access and outcomes. Access to and participation in higher education has important implications for both the individual and society as a whole. At the individual level, participating in and completing a tertiary education qualification provides knowledge and skills which opens doors of opportunity for employment that otherwise would not be available. This ultimately means an improved standard of living for the individual.

On the other hand, higher education graduates impact society because they "contribute to human capital (including high-level knowledge and skills) that is essential for a well-balanced labour market and the healthy functioning of the economy, civil society and governments" (UNESCO, 2009: 22). *White Paper 3* on the transformation of higher education (South Africa, 1997) outlines four purposes of higher education in South Africa:

1. To develop individual abilities and aptitudes to ensure that the individual can make use of every opportunity for self-fulfilment.

2. To provide competencies and skills required in the labour market to ensure growth and development in the global economy.

3. To promote a society which is enlightened and able to critically reflect on ideas, policies and practices.

4. To contribute to the increase in knowledge through research and intellectual enquiry.

The participation in and availability of higher education to South African students as well as ensuring success is therefore of paramount importance. Participation and success in higher education have the potential to assist in overcoming the inequalities of the apartheid education system and to contribute to the building up of the nation both on an individual basis and as a society.

This section outlines the changes that have taken place in South African higher

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

education as far as participation and throughput is concerned. It compares what is happening in South Africa to what is happening in the rest of the world, enabling critical reflection on South Africa's provision of higher education.

2.4.1 Participation Rates

Participation rates in higher education vary greatly throughout the world. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics calculates participation rates as the total enrolled headcount students as a percentage of the population between the ages of 20 and 24 years. Globally there has been more than a 50% increase in participation rates in higher education between 2000 and 2007 and sub-Saharan Africa has seen the greatest regional growth with participation rates increasing by 10% per annum since 2005 (UNESCO, 2009). Figure 1 below shows the regional participation rates in 2007.
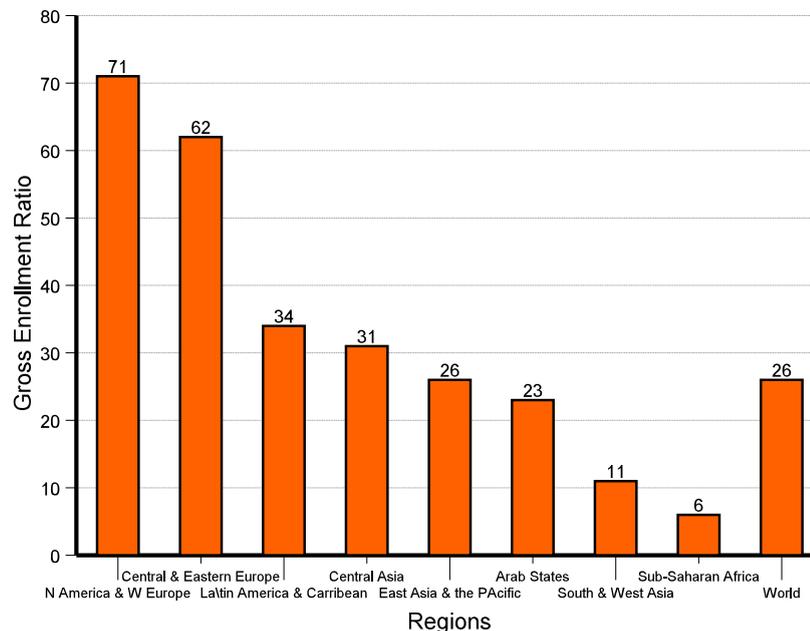
Figure 1: Tertiary Gross Enrolment Ratios by Region for 2007
(UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2009)

From this it can be seen that, despite the great increase in participation in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, the gross participation rate of 6% is

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

still well below that of the rest of the world which averages at 26%. Highest participation rates are found in North America and Western Europe (71%) and Central & Eastern Europe (62%) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2009).

In South Africa enrolments in higher education have fluctuated greatly since 1993. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was confident that their post-1994 massification policies for higher education would result in participation rates of 30% by 2005 (CHE, 2004) but sadly these figures have persistently remained at 16% (CHE, 2009). This is despite government setting a target of 20% in the *White Paper 3* on the transformation of higher education (South Africa, 1997). While this figure of 16% looks good in comparison to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, it is still very low in comparison to the rest of the world.

Between 1993 and 1995 the headcount enrolment of students at Universities and Technikons rose significantly from 473 000 to 569 000 (approximately 20% increase) in just three years. This growth was short lived with only a 3.9% growth to 591 161 students over the next five years. Since 2000 there has been a steady increase in student headcount enrolment from 652 975 in 2001 to 675 128 in 2002 and 744 489 in 2004 to 761 090 in 2007 (CHE, 2004 and CHE, 2009). Despite this increased headcount enrolment, the participation rate as calculated by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, continues to show a decline. This decline is illustrated in Figure 2.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background
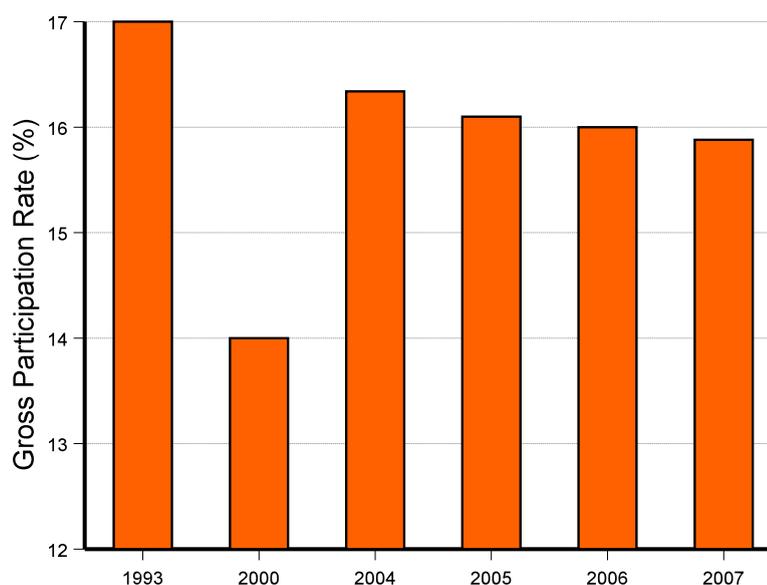
**Figure 2: South African Gross participation Rates 1993 -
2007**
(Fiske & Ladd, 2004 and CHE, 2009)

When disaggregating these enrolment figures by race, we see that the
composition of the higher education student body has changed significantly as
can be seen in Table 4 and Figure 3.

Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White
1993	191 000	28 000	30 000	223 000
1995	287 000	33 000	37 000	214 000
1997	345 500	32 000	39 000	183 000
1999	332 000	31 000	40 000	163 000
2001	395 000	35 000	44 000	177 000
2002	404 000	39 000	49 000	182 000
2004	454 000	46 000	54 000	189 000
2005	447 000	46 000	55 000	186 000
2006	451 000	49 000	55 000	185 000
2007	477 000	49 000	53 000	180 000

**Table 4: Enrolments (Headcount) In Public Higher Education by Race
1993 - 2007(Rounded to the nearest 1000) (Fiske & Ladd, 2004 and CHE
2009)**

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background
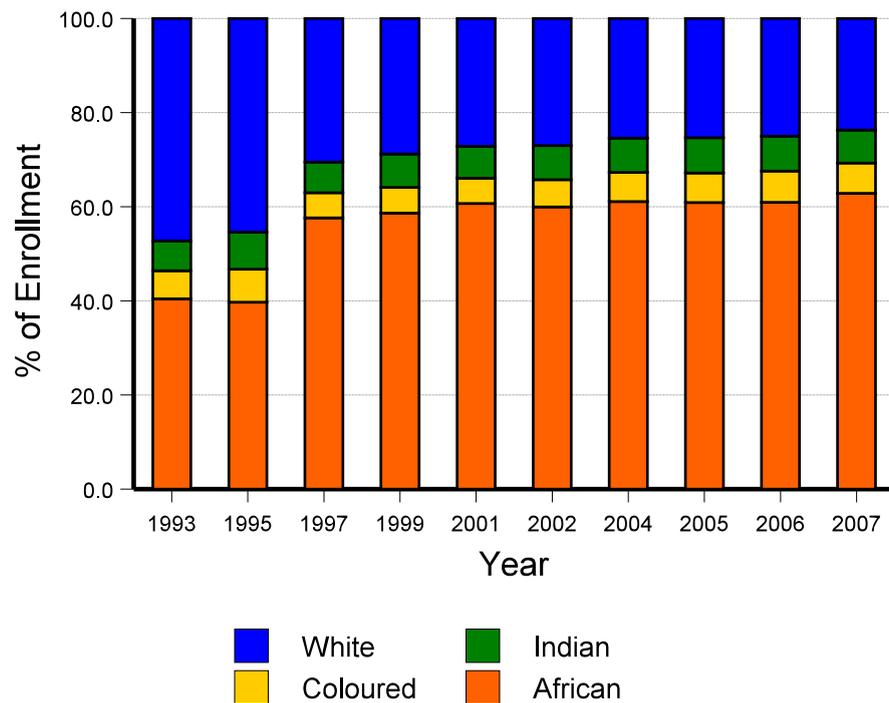
Figure 3: Enrolment in Public Higher Education by Race for 1993 to 2007

This data shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of African students entering higher education each year with the headcount enrolment more than doubling since 1993. When viewing these figures as a proportion of the higher education enrolment, we note that between 1993 and 2001 there was a steady increase in the proportion of African students in higher education but this seems to have settled at about 61% since then. There are a number of factors that could be contributing to this stagnation. Included in these could be the lack of capacity of higher education to enrol students due to lack of facilities and a limited number of NSFAS loans available to enable poor students from disadvantaged backgrounds to afford higher education.

In contrast, the number of White students in higher education has dropped by almost 20% since 1993 and they have gone from making up the major portion of the higher education student body to approximately 25% of students. This is almost half of the pre-democracy figures. The numbers of Coloured and

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

Indian students in higher education have also almost doubled since 1993 but proportionately have remained consistent at between 5% and 7% of the higher education student body.

Despite the advances that these figures seem to indicate, there has been very little change as far as actual participation rates for the different race groups are concerned when compared to the number of 20 - 24 year olds in the country. When the enrolment figures above are compared to the number of 20 to 24 year old, it is clear that, in reality, no real gains have been achieved.

RACE	1993	2000	2005	2007
African	9%	13%	12%	12%
Coloured	13%	9%	12%	12%
Indian	40%	39%	51%	43%
White	70%	47%	60%	54%

Table 5: Participation Rates by Race 1993 to 2007
(Fiske & Lass, 2004; Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2005 and CHE, 2009)

From Table 5 above it can be seen that the participation rates of White students has dropped off considerably since 1993 and that for African students has increased marginally by approximately 3%. The other two race groups have experienced little change. This means that, although the post-apartheid government policies for higher education have tried to address the backlog of an apartheid education system by trying to ensure equality of access, there is still much to be done to ensure that the participation rates among black South African students increase. The reasons for this continued low participation rate are numerous and need further investigation but this is beyond the scope of this study.

2.4.2 Graduation Rates

Coupled with the equity of access is the equity of outcomes. The importance of ensuring equity of access must be balanced with ensuring that students

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

entering higher education succeed in graduating. When considering student throughput in tertiary education, UNESCO uses the Gross Graduation Ratio as a measure of tertiary outputs. They define it as "the number of graduates compared to the population of graduation age" (UNESCO, 2009: 25) which they use as 25 years and older.

The world leaders in producing graduates are Iceland, with a gross graduation ratio of 65.6%, and Australia, with a 60.7% graduation rate. Regions such as Central and Eastern Europe, Northern America and Western Europe, have average outputs of about 30% - 40%, while the Arab States have graduation ratios of under 30% and as low as 0.9% in Djibouti. East Asia and the Pacific have a wide range of graduation ratios from Australia (60.7%), New Zealand (53.5%), Japan (40.1%), to China (11.7%) and Cambodia less than 3% (UNESCO, 2009). Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest graduation ratios with no country having more than 10% of its population graduating from a tertiary institution. The highest in this region is Mauritius (8.8%) followed by Swaziland (6.9%). South Africa has a gross graduation ratio of 5.3% for 2007 (UNESCO, 2009: 25), which is low compared to the rest of the world and Sub-Saharan Africa.

This very low gross graduation rate for South Africa can in part be attributed to the apartheid education system which limited the opportunities of black South Africans to participate in higher education. Not only did apartheid prevent blacks from participating in higher education but the poor quality of education they received prevented them from succeeding even when they did gain access. The section above outlined the increase in headcount enrolment of black students since democracy but the graduation rates of these students points to the fact that the majority of these students were unprepared for the demands of tertiary studies.

Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007) report that the 2000 cohort study shows that,

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

five years after entering higher education, only 30% of students have graduated and only 14% are continuing with their studies. This means that more than half of the students entering higher education are failing to graduate. The breakdown by institutional type is represented by Table 6.

Institutions	Graduated Within 5 Years	Still Registered After 5 Years	Left Without Graduating
Universities excluding UNISA	50%	12%	38%
UNISA	14%	27%	59%
All universities	**38%**	**17%**	**45%**
Technikons excluding TSA	32%	10%	58%
Technikon SA	2%	12%	85%
All technikons	**23%**	**11%**	**66%**
All institutions	30%	14%	56%

Table 6: 2000 Intake Cohort: All First-time Entering Students
(Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007: 12)

Distance education institutions (UNISA and Technikon SA), as would be expected, show the lowest throughput rates while contact universities are the best performing of the tertiary institutions. Even within these institutions though, "the attrition rates after five years ranged widely, from 25% to 64%" (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007: 13). When considering graduation rates for first Bachelor degrees by selected Classification of Education Subject Matter (CESM) we see that these follow the overall trend for contact universities. The Social Sciences have the highest throughput of 53% and Life and Physical Science and Languages the lowest at 47%.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

CESM	Graduation Rate Within 5 Years	Still Registered After 5 Years
04: Business/Management	50%	7%
15: Life & Physical Sciences	47%	13%
16: Mathematical Sciences	51%	9%
22: Social Sciences	53%	6%
12: Languages	47%	7%

Table 7: Graduation Rates for First Time Bachelors Degrees by CESM for Contact Universities
(Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007: 13)

When these figures are disaggregated by race we see that there are large discrepancies in graduation rates between white and black students. In just about every CESM the graduation rates of white students are double that of black students, highlighting the fact that there continue to be inequitable outcomes between the races. The gains that seem to have been made by increased enrolment of black students are negated by the poor graduation rates among these students.

CESM	Graduation Rates After 5 Years		
	Black Students	White Students	Ratio of White/Black
04: Business/Management	33%	72%	2.2
15: Life & Physical Sciences	31%	63%	2.0
16: Mathematical Sciences	35%	63%	1.8
22: Social Sciences	34%	68%	2.0
12: Languages	32%	68%	2.1

Table 8: Graduation Rates for First Time Bachelors Degrees by CESM for Contact Universities by Race
(Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007: 16)

Scott, Yeld and Hendry conclude their analysis of throughput rates for the 2000 cohort as follows:

"*Taking account of the black participation rates, the overall*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 2: Context & Background

*attrition rate of over 50% and the below-average black
completion rates, it can be concluded that the sector is catering
successfully for under 5% of the black (and coloured) age-
group*" (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007: 19)

These concluding remarks in essence mean that the higher education sector is
failing to achieve the four purposes as outlined in *White Paper 3*. Not only are
students' personal aspirations not being met, but the need to provide a skilled
labour force to stimulate economic growth is also lagging behind. More needs
to be done to ensure that students entering higher education are also able to
succeed. It appears that more is required than providing physical access to
tertiary institutions by ensuring that disadvantaged students have funding to
enter higher education.

2.5   Conclusion

With South Africa's unique educational history there are many barriers to
disadvantaged students succeeding in tertiary studies. This chapter has considered
some of the contextual and background issues that affect higher education in South
Africa. It has considered the history of apartheid education and the legacy it has left
as well as measures the government has put in place in an attempt to remedy the effects
of apartheid education. How these measures have affected enrolment and graduation
rates in higher education has also been considered and these have been compared with
international figures.

The literature review follows in the next chapter and will discuss Tinto's theory of
student retention and some of the factors affecting student success. It will also review
how foundation/access/extended curriculum programmes have attempted to ensure not
only equity of access but also equity of success and will examine both quantitative and
qualitative research carried out on these programmes.

CHAPTER 3 - LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

In order to promote student success in higher education, it is important to have an understanding of the factors that affect student success both locally and internationally. This literature review will consider Tinto's *Student Integration Model* (SIM) as a theoretical framework for this study and will also consider the socio-economic, socio-cultural and academic factors that have been found to influence students' ability to succeed in tertiary studies.

The final part of this chapter will take a closer look at access programmes both internationally and in South Africa. The different forms they have taken will be considered and the theoretical frameworks that have informed the progression of these initiatives from a separate access year to fully integrated extended curriculum programmes will be investigated. Producing successful graduates is a complex task because of the many and varied factors that play a role in undermining the education process, particularly in South Africa because of its apartheid history. This chapter will attempt to outline some of these factors.

3.2 Factors Affecting Student Success

The concept of student success is a complicated one and needs consideration before the factors that affect success can be looked at. "Higher education institutions have long operated with the philosophy that only those "fit" for higher education will be successful. Those students who possess the talents and skills cultivated by favourable or advantaged backgrounds will succeed and those who do not, will find something else to do" (Bitzer & Troskie-de Bruin, 2004). This statement illustrates that success has traditionally been viewed as being able to complete a given course of study and this understanding of success has taken little cognisance of the quality of graduates leaving higher education or their ability to make a positive contribution to society. This viewpoint also points towards students having to adapt to and fit in with the tertiary education institutions rather than these adapting to meet the needs of students. In recent years pressure has been placed on these institutions to open up and be more

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

inclusive. As a result greater numbers of students have been admitted and this has meant that the student body is no longer homogenous. Despite the change in the student body, there has been little change by institutions in terms of approach, curriculum, ethos and institutional practices. With South Africa's apartheid history and the legacy left by the school system of that time, success needs to be viewed in terms other than just throughput or completion rates. Jones *et al* (2008: 20) say "success is viewed as a holistic concept, encompassing academic achievement and personal growth. Successful graduates should, therefore, not only be employable, but also well-rounded, responsible citizens who are able to make a positive contribution to society." Even students not completing their qualification should have gained something to enable them to be more productive members of society and succeed.

The previous section looked at throughput rates as a measure of evaluating the success of higher education but does not give any indication of the underlying reasons as to why retention and graduation rates in South African higher education are so low. Tinto's theories (Tinto, 1975; Engle & Tinto, 2008) on student retention can give us some indication of what the causes of these rates are.

3.2.1 Tinto's Student Integration Model

In considering factors that affect students' success, Tinto's *Student Integration Model (SIM)* is widely supported as a model that helps to explain student retention and dropout (Koen, 2007) and has been extensively used in studying this phenomenon. The basic tenet of *SIM* is that a student who integrates well with the institution will succeed and those that do not will leave. Students who are able to access the normative attitudes of their peers and academics integrate well and fit into the institution facilitating their success (Tinto, 1975; Engle & Tinto, 2008).

Tinto's theory identifies five areas that are important for student integration and success (Tinto, 1975):
- the ability of students to form relationships and bonds with other

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

students

- the relationship between academic staff and the students

- students' personal background, goals and motivation

- the ability of the student to meet the academic standards of the institution

- and the ability of students to identify with the beliefs, values and norms within the institution.

The first two he refers to as social integration and the last two as academic integration. The academic and social experience of the student plays a large role in determining the success of the student in higher education institutions. The greater the academic integration, the stronger the desire to succeed, and the greater the social integration, the greater the desire to stay. Koen (2007) says that ultimate student retention is obtained when both of these factors are met but if a student achieves integration in one of these it will also encourage the student to remain in the institution. For example, if a student has strong social links with peers and academics there is a strong likelihood of the student continuing with their studies even if they are not performing academically. Conversely, a student who has strong academic integration but little social integration will also be motivated to remain in the institution. However, when a student fails to achieve either of these, then the student is more likely to drop out.

This model is particularly relevant to the South African context as it does not consider the individual student as the only factor determining success or failure but takes a more holistic viewpoint by considering the student, the institution and the social environment of the student as factors determining whether or not a student succeeds. This is important in the South African context because of the rapid change in the student demographics that higher education institutions have experienced since 1994 and the diversity of student socio-economic, socio-cultural and academic backgrounds that has become a feature

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

of the system. The "one size fits all" approach of the apartheid era no longer works because of the diversity that exists within the student bodies of higher education institutions.

Bitzer and Troskie-de Bruin (2004) and Engle and Tinto (2008) argue that institutions of higher education need to place more emphasis on adapting themselves to the needs of students rather than the other way round. They say that disadvantaged students (those from low socio-economic backgrounds) need more support not only in the academic arena but also in making the adjustment to the social norms and requirements of these institutions. Tinto (2008: 10) says that "it is simply not enough to provide low-income students access to our universities and colleges and claim we are providing opportunity if we do not construct environments that support their efforts to learn and succeed beyond access". South African higher education institutions in particular need to be transforming their methods, their structures and programmes to accommodate a new generation of students and to ensure not only access but success.

The next sections will consider some studies that have explored factors they show affect student success and retention based on the above model. After this some research into access programmes will be reviewed as a background to the study being carried out as part of this thesis.

3.2.2 Socio-economic Factors

It is accepted internationally that finances are an important factor in whether students are retained in institutions of higher education or not (Koen, 2007; Jones *et al*, 2008; Jones & Thomas, 2001; Thomas, 2006). It has become clear that students coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to withdraw from their studies than their counterparts from higher socio-economic backgrounds (Koen, 2007). Researchers (Jones & Thomas, 2001;

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

Thomas, 2006; Thomas, 2002; Jones *et al*, 2008; Thomas, 2006) identify a number of ways in which students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are affected: lack of money; concern about debt; comparative lack in relation to peers; guilt about not contributing to family income; and the need to supplement income through part-time employment.

In the South African context, many students face financial lack to the point where they do not have money for accommodation or food which not only produces anxiety about how they are going to survive, but also makes it difficult for them to concentrate on their studies. Linked with this are the concerns over the debt they are incurring and how they are going to register the following year if they have not paid their fees. Even students on NSFAS funding find it difficult as the additional cost of books and equipment, meals and travel cannot always be met by the allocation they receive from this fund. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds without funding are in an even worse position.

The lack of funds affects students' social integration into higher education as well. The lack of funds to engage in activities with other students and to dress the way others dress can cause social isolation and rejection by peers. This too, according to Tinto (1975) and Engle and Tinto (2008), can have a profound effect on the retention of the student in higher education.

In the South African context, in my experience as coordinator of the Humanities Access Programme, I have found that there is often pressure from the family for students to leave university and enter the work place in order to support the family financially. This produces feelings of guilt for the student, particularly in cases where the student has orphaned brothers and sister that need looking after. It is not uncommon for students on NSFAS funding to send a portion of their allowance home each month to support the family.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

The pressure to support the family together with the need for finances often causes students to take on part-time work. This means they have less time to focus on their studies (Jones & Thomas, 2006). If the lack of finances itself does not cause the student to drop out of higher education, then the anxiety and the social pressures it produces can cause the student to withdraw from their studies.

In their report on the *Rural Education Access Programme* (REAP), Jones *et al* (2008) found that the small grant that students from rural, low socio-economic backgrounds received from Irish Aid in addition to their NSFAS loans helped students in several ways. Firstly, it enabled them to cover several of the additional costs not covered by the NSFAS loan such as books and equipment, travel costs and personal items such as soap, deodorant and clothing which were found to be important for social integration. Secondly, students were required to prepare a budget and had to report on their expenditure as well as plan ahead in requesting their grant payments. This gave students a measure of accountability and responsibility which had positive effects on their studies. Lastly, it was found that the REAP student advisors developed good relationships with staff in the financial aid departments and this smoothed the way for students in the REAP programme when having to deal with these departments. In my experience students often need an advocate in dealing with these departments, someone who can help students navigate the complexities of getting funding. Without this assistance and guidance students would often just abandon their studies as they see no way forward.

In many ways other access programmes in South Africa seem to be providing similar resources to students as the REAP programme by having staff available to assist students in solving their complex financial situations. In my experience staff in access programmes often provide funding and food for needy students as well as emotional and moral support when students are experiencing difficulties. Jones *et al* (2008) say that even this kind of informal

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

support goes a long way in retaining students in higher education. With the face of South Africa's student body having changed so radically since 1994 to include more and more students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, higher education institutions need to provide more support for students, not only financially but also in dealing with their complex financial issues.

3.2.3 Socio-cultural Factors

The issue of the socio-cultural fit of students into higher education institutions is not unique to South Africa. Research done in the United Kingdom and America (Jones & Thomas, 2006; Petersen, Louw & Dumont, 2009; Koen, 2007) reveals that students are more likely to feel excluded from higher education institutions if they do not reflect elements of their background and experience. This is particularly relevant to the South African context because students from disadvantaged, rural backgrounds often enter higher education with different values and socio-cultural systems to students from more privileged backgrounds and so their first experience of tertiary education is very different. As a result there is a greater gap between these disadvantaged students' socio-cultural practices and those of the institution than for more privileged students. "The more marginalised the students are, because of the lack of 'fit', the more alienated they may feel in the institutional environment. Feelings of isolation and loneliness can contribute significantly to a student's decision to withdraw" (Jones *et al*, 2008: 69).

Disadvantaged students from rural backgrounds often come from small villages where everyone knows each other. They are used to large open spaces and being able to move around freely. Their experience at university, however, is vastly different from this. These students arrive at university not knowing anyone, are faced with crowds of students, plus a physical environment which is so different to what they are used to. Adapting to living in the 'concrete jungle' can be very difficult for these rural students and leaves them feeling isolated, socially alienated and homesick. In addition to this Jones *et al* (2008)

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

point out that there are also language issues that come into play as most of these students enter universities where they learn in a second language. To make matters worse, even when students speak the same language there are differences in language usage and dialects between urban and rural students. This again causes students to feel that they do not fit in. Koen (2007) and Jones *et al* (2008) both indicate that disadvantaged students who are accommodated in university residences make the adaption to the new socio-cultural practices far more quickly and easily than their counterparts who have to find accommodation off-campus. Being immersed in the new culture and having the advantage of being inducted into the culture by senior students promotes students' ability to make the transition to university life.

As indicated in the previous section, disadvantaged students also feel alienated because other students perceive them as being poor and rural. Student felt that "they stood out because they did not have money to buy the fashionable clothing that other students could afford" (Jones *et al*, 2008) and were unable to participate in the activities that others were involved in because of a lack of finances. Students who participate in extra-mural activities offered by the universities, such as sports, are more likely to integrate socially than those who do not (Lau, 2003; Lotkowski *et al*, 2004; Jones *et al*, 2008)

According to Tinto's (1975) theory of student integration, if these students continue to feel isolated and are unable to adapt to the new socio-cultural practices of the university, they are more likely to withdraw from the institution. For this reason it is important for institutions to assist students in this process of adaption through effective induction processes (Shobrook, 2003; Yorke & Thomas, 2003) as well as providing psycho-social support through life skills workshops. Students need to be made aware of the resources that are available to them in the form of counselling services and clinics which will assist in their adaption process. Higher education institutions that track and monitor students, particularly at the first year level, lower the risk of

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

students dropping out (Bozalek, 2009).

By taking a holistic view of the students and considering their backgrounds as well as their academic needs, institutions of higher education can make the adaption process for students much easier. Providing support and opportunities for students to understand that they are not alone in this process as well as opportunity for social integration can go a long way in assisting students to make the socio-cultural adaption that is required for them to 'fit in' to the higher education environment.

3.2.4 Academic Factors

Traditionally acceptance into higher education is primarily based on results achieved at school (Lau, 2003; Lotkowski *et al*, 2004) without taking into consideration other factors that could determine a student's ability to succeed. Included in this group of ignored factors that affect success are not only the socio-economic and socio-cultural factors discussed above, but also academic factors. Lotkowski *et al* (2004) found that two of the most important factors that determine a student's retention in higher education are academic self-confidence, their confidence of being successful in the academic environment, and academically related skills such as time management, study skills, note taking skills and using information sources.

For South African students from disadvantaged backgrounds these two factors are of great significance. Although these students enter higher education having achieved the entry requirements for the institution they often lack the academic confidence and skills required to succeed. As outlined earlier, the effects of apartheid have left an indelible mark on education which has resulted in students continuing to be under-prepared. "There is a degree of mismatch between disadvantaged students' backgrounds and experiences and the requirements of higher education that presents specific challenges to students' academic integration" (Jones *et al*, 2008: 41). These students tend to lack

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

academic skills such as note taking and study skills, time management as well as the ability to think independently and work unsupervised because of their educational backgrounds and experience at school. Tinto (1975) refers to these as pre-entry characteristics and says that they can have a profound effect on a student's ability to integrate into the institution both socially and academically.

Coupled with this is the fact that the majority of these students enter tertiary institutions where they are studying in a second or third language in which they are often not confident. This hampers their ability to not only to read and critically engage with academic texts but also to think theoretically and to write sound academic essays and assignments (Jones *et al*, 2008; Bitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2004). Students' poor language abilities may also prevent them from approaching lecturers for assistance as they lack confidence in expressing their problems; and this, together with poor self-esteem, has been identified by Petersen, Louw and Dumont (2009) as factors that contribute to student success.

The majority of students from disadvantaged backgrounds are the first in their families or communities to enter higher education. They often come from homes where there has not been the luxury of having books or magazines, internet, computers or even television. This means that they enter their studies without the intellectual capital that students from a more affluent upbringing have. The exposure they have to westernised, first world knowledge and practices is therefore much more limited than that of their counterparts from advantaged and urban backgrounds. It is also this type of background which is assumed by lecturers. This does not mean that they do not have another world view that is just as valuable. However, a deficit in the understanding of the modern world works to erode students' confidence to succeed in their new academic environment, as immediately they recognise that they do not have the same background knowledge as other students. Often these students also have little support from home as their families cannot understand their need to study

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

and would prefer them to enter the workplace.

Universities often work on a "deficit model" when dealing with students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Jones *et al*, 2008) in which they regard the problem of failure among these students as resting on the student and the deficiencies that they come with. On the other hand, institutions are not prepared for the specific needs of these students and have not adapted themselves to accommodate a new generation of students with vastly differing education backgrounds and needs. A more holistic approach is required when dealing with these students. Highest attrition rates among students exist at the first year level (Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2005) and Jones *et al* (2008), Lotkowski *et al* (2004) and Shobrook (2003) all agree that higher education needs to prioritise its resources at this level to ensure student retention and success. This will be achieved through careful selection processes based not only on school leaving results, but on other factors such as leadership qualities, motivation and behaviour, all of which would need to be explored through other mechanisms. Coupled with this is ensuring that students enter the course of study best suited to their abilities, personality and interests. From my experience, many disadvantaged students enter higher education without any clear goal and have had little if any career counselling. Ensuring they embark on the correct course of study from the beginning would go a long way in ensuring student success.

Student success is a complex interplay of many factors affecting students and is something that needs much more attention from administrators. Higher education authorities need to invest far more time, energy and finances into developing a holistic approach to ensuring students' access and retention in higher education by taking into account the many and varied factors affecting students, especially with the radical change in student demographics that has taken place since 1994.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.3 Foundation/Access Programmes

"Foundation programmes may be defined as special programmes for students whose prior learning has been adversely affected by educational or social inequalities" (Kloot, Case and Marshall, 2008). The major aim of these programmes is to enable students from these disadvantaged backgrounds to develop literacy and study skills that will enable them to succeed in higher education (Smith, 2009). Wood and Lithauer (2005) say that these programmes do not only provide students with academic skills but "provide the students with a broad range of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes outside of the purely academic sphere....while simultaneously fostering development on a social and emotional level" (Wood & Lithauer, 2005: 1002). This links with Tinto's ideas of social and academic integration as a measure of encouraging students to continue in the institution.

Morrow (2007) emphasises that it is important for students to gain *epistemological access* and not just physical access to higher education. By this he means students must be able to access "the values and ways of knowledge production which underpin ways of reading, writing and speaking" (Hlalele, 2010: 100). Boughey (2005) agrees with this and warns that this means we cannot continue teaching students in the same ways they were taught at school. Access initiatives are an attempt to bridge the gap between the way disadvantaged students learned at school and what is required by higher education institutions for these students to succeed. In other words, they must not only ensure physical access but also epistemological access.

3.3.1 International Programmes

Bridging or Access Programmes are not unique to South Africa and have been used in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom to widen access to higher education for minority groups (McNamee, 1995; Heath, 1983) as well as in other African countries, such as Botswana, where there was a need to develop students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds (Mabila *et al*, 2006). According to McNamee, the motive behind access programmes internationally is "social justice and access to higher education to the

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

disadvantaged" which is similar to South Africa (McNamee, 1995: 106).

Like South Africa, these access programmes initially took the form of a bridging model as outlined in Chapter 1. Examples of this are the *Preparatory Mathematics Programme* offered by the University of Southern Queensland (McNamee, 1995) and the *Pre-Entry Science Course* offered by the University of Botswana (Mabila *et al*, 2006). Similar programmes existed in the United Kingdom in the 1990's, mainly for minority groups from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but these were not always seen as necessary and there was some resistance to such programmes (Stott, 1994). Internationally there has been a move away from these bridging programmes to an integrated form of academic development in recent years.

3.3.2   South African Programmes

Foundation programmes in South Africa have been through an evolutionary process over the last 30 years. All the models that have emerged are based on the same premise of "more time, more tuition" (Kloot, Case and Marshall, 2008: 256). In the 1980's the first bridging programmes were started as academic support for unprepared black students at white, English-medium universities. These initiatives had very little theoretical basis (Kloot, Case and Marshall, 2008) and merely sought to fill in the gaps in students knowledge.

Subsequent to this, programmes were underpinned by a skills based model. Students were seen as lacking certain skills and their success was dependent on their being taught these skills. McKenna (2003) classified this as the "English Second Language" cycle of Academic Development work. The focus was on grammar and language use but this was taught out of context. The problem with this model, however, is that it quickly became clear that the skills taught did not transfer to the student's mainstream modules and their academic writing skills did not improve.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

The next progression was to the Integrated Skills Model (Kloot, Case and Marshall, 2008). Foundation programme curricula required the identification of skills and processes that students would need to succeed in subsequent years of study and used subject related materials from first year modules to develop these. McKenna (2003) called this the English for Academic Purposes cycle of Academic Development. Theories of deep and surface learning, constructivism, metacognition and Vygotsky's 'Zone of Proximal Development" began to inform academic development initiatives.

The final model that has informed Foundation Programmes has been the Holistic Model (Kloot, Case and Marshall, 2008). To the theories above, the theory of cognitive development as a social/cultural activity (Vygotsky, 1978) was added. This approach integrated the learning fully into the mainstream materials but also took into account the induction of students into the culture of universities through life-skills workshops. McKenna (2003) called this cycle the Academic Literacy cycle which integrated the learning into mainstream modules through overt instruction regarding the norms and expectation of the discipline. By doing this, "real learning" seems to take place and students are able to apply the academic skills in their reading and writing within their areas of study. Studies on the Extended Curriculum Programme in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal have shown that students in this programme out-perform their mainstream counterparts in all modules where this integrated learning is offered (Rieker, 2008).

These progressions have taken foundation programmes from being add on bridging programmes to fully integrated extended curriculum programmes that focus not only on "filling the gaps" but on equipping students for their studies in subsequent years.

In the next section I will consider some of the research that has been done on

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

the various access programmes that are offered in South Africa, and will examine lessons which have been learned and evaluate the success of such initiatives.

3.3.3 Research on Access Programmes

The big question around access programmes is, are they working? Are they achieving what they set out to do? Smith (2009) says that many studies have been done on the effectiveness of remedial courses in developing literacy and numeracy skills and have shown that students doing these courses are able to pass mainstream modules. He adds, however, that relatively few studies have been carried out internationally and in South Africa to establish the effect that these access programmes have on graduation rates. In researching this topic I have found very few studies that consider graduation or throughput rates of access programmes compared to mainstream programmes and in particular of students from a similar demographic. This study is a mixed methods study examining both the throughput and retention of the Humanities Access Programme as well as students' perceptions of the programme. Consequently I will consider some studies on access programmes and graduation rates as well as look at some literature on what students have to say about these initiatives, how they have experienced them and what they have gained from them.

In examining throughput and retention of access programmes, I will consider three programmes in which studies have been undertaken: the *University of the North Science Foundation Year* (UNIFY) (Mabila *et al*, 2006), the *Pre-University Bursary Scheme* (PBS) based in the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Witwatersrand (de Villiers & Rwigema, 1998; Curtis & de Villiers, 1992); and the *Commerce Academic Development Programme* (CADP) at the University of Cape Town (Smith, 2009). All three programmes accommodated students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and low socio-economic status, who had not met the minimum requirements for entry into university.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

Selection criteria varied for each of the programmes. UNIFY students had to have passed the matriculation examination with at least a school leaving certificate with mathematics and one other science subject. They were required to write an entrance test to determine their potential in mathematics and science and were selected based on these test scores. Students entering the PBS were selected by the companies who would sponsor them through the programme and ultimately through a B.Com. degree. This selection was based on the students' potential, assessed through Matric scores, and the needs of the company. The selection criteria for CADP are not clear other than students did not have sufficient points to enter the Commerce Faculty and "...are reckoned to have the potential..." (Smith, 2006: 1012).

All three programmes were a pre-cursor to mainstream studies and were designed to prepare students for a particular degree. The curricula of each programme included modules to develop language, mathematics and literacy skills as well as modules related to the courses that would be studied in mainstream. In addition to this students were also given life skills courses (such as time management and study skills) and career guidance. The UNIFY course also included things like manipulation of equipment, experimental design, laboratory practice and safety, all of which were designed to "foster a positive self-esteem, and to develop an ownership of the learning process" (Mabila, 2006: 300). The curricula used link with Tinto's ideas of academic and social integration and employ a holistic view of the student. Some of the programmes ensured that all students were accommodated in university residences to facilitate their integration into the university.

The results of these programmes are all very positive. Jansen (2004: 44, cited in Mabila, 2006: 303), in his review of the UNIFY programme, says that it is having a very positive role in preparing students for industry and "that UNIFY has without a doubt increased the quantity and improved the quality of science graduates entering higher education and society". The study on the UNIFY

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

programme shows that, even though students entering the programme have significantly lower mathematics, science and biology results, these students outperformed their mainstream counterparts pass rates by between 10% and 20% in their first year modules in the period 1994 to 1997. In the second and third year of their degrees UNIFY students pass rates were only marginally better than those of other students. The research indicates that even though these students did not surpass the direct entry students, they caught up with them. It must also be borne in mind that without the programme none of these students would have obtained a degree.

Curtis and de Villiers (1992), in researching the PBS programme, had similar findings. They found that PBS students had higher pass rates in mainstream modules than other black students from similar backgrounds and were on a par with other mainstream students. They say "the evidence of sustained achievement suggests that, in addition to their academic potential and motivation to succeed, a necessary condition for continuing academic achievement is the acquisition of cognitive skills that enable the students, as learners, to operate autonomously in new problem situations" (Curtis & de Villiers, 1992:456). A further study on the PBS programme by de Villiers and Rwigema (1998) considered graduation rates up to seven years after students entered the programme. Their study found that PBS students graduated at 56% compared to 31% for non-PBS students from a similar demographic. They also found that on average PBS students took 4.92 years to complete their degree as compared to the 5.2 years for non-PBS students. They conclude that the programme "has a marked effect on graduation success of students with an educational disadvantage" and that "the PBS programme was successful in helping students with educational disadvantage to graduate" (de Villiers & Rwigema, 1998: 108).

Even though graduation rates for CAPD students were only 44.1% compared to 77.1% for mainstream students, the results of Smith's study on the CAPD

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

programme indicate that "the first year academic development courses have a positive effect on students' graduation rates relative to a control group drawn from the mainstream" and "is most pronounced for African students" (Smith 2009, 1023). Simply put, this means that without these interventions the graduation rates would have been even worse.

Smith's concluding paragraph sums up the role that these access programmes have played in ensuring the success and graduation of disadvantaged students.

> *Finally, these findings suggest that academic development programmes may have a positive role to play in improving graduation rates of previously disadvantaged students. Tertiary institutions in South Africa may be able to improve the graduation rates of disadvantaged students by introducing first-year courses that give students the opportunity to acquire writing, language, quantitative, learning and study skills, under the umbrella of an academic development programme."*
> (Smith, 2009: 1023).

The quantitative analysis of access programmes seems to indicate that they are improving graduation rates, especially among disadvantaged students, but it is important to consider students' perceptions of these programmes and whether they also concur that they are succeeding and, if so, in what ways.

Many more studies have been done on students' perceptions of access programmes and all of these seem to have similar findings: students perceive these programmes to have helped them adjust to university life; the academic development modules, on the whole, to have prepared them for mainstream studies by imparting the skills they would require to succeed; and these access programmes have aided them in their psycho-social development. In this section I will consider four programmes which highlight these findings: the Dental Technology Extended First Year Programme (EFYP) at Durban

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

University of Technology (DUT) (Bass, 2007); the Somatology Extended Curriculum Programme (SECP) at DUT (Borg, 2009); all the extended curriculum programmes at Stellenbosch University (de Klerk *et al*, 2006); and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Foundation Programme (UFP) (Wood & Lithauer, 2005).

All four programmes provide access for students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds who have not met the entrance requirements for the degree or diploma programme but nevertheless show potential. The EFYP, SECP and extended curriculum programmes at Stellenbosch university all extend the first year of study over two years with additional academic development modules to prepare students for mainstream studies as well as a mentoring programme or life-skills programme to assist students with their adaptation to tertiary studies. The UFP is a foundation year programme and students who successfully complete this year are then able to enter degree studies. The UFP too follows a holistic approach to student induction and has both academic support modules, preparing students for mainstream studies, and life-skills as core subjects.

Without exception, all four studies found that students experienced the access programmes very positively. Although students often did not see the benefit of these programmes initially and felt resentful for being placed in these programmes, in the end they all came to the conclusion that the programme had benefited them. The students' initial reluctance about these access programmes varied. Some felt that they were being financially compromised by having to study for an additional year (Bass, 2007), while for others their resistance was rooted in not understanding why they had been placed in these programmes and feeling stigmatised as other students did not perceive the programme that they were doing as worthwhile (Wood & Lithauer, 2005).

The change in attitude students experienced to the access programmes

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

stemmed from the many benefits they began to see from being in the programme. Primary among these was the way in which these programmes helped them adapt to university life. Students leaving home for the first time to come and study have to learn to balance their studies and social life as well as dealing with feelings of being homesick and in some cases experiencing culture shock. Students felt that the access programmes helped them with this adaption. Firstly they provided opportunity for social interaction (Borg, 2009; de Klerk *et al*, 2006) which helped them make new friends and feel less isolated and alone. Having a lighter workload and being in smaller classes than mainstream students also enabled students to find their feet academically (de Klerk *et al*, 2006; Borg, 2009; Bass, 2007) and gave them opportunity to bridge the gap between what was expected of them in high school and the demands of tertiary studies. Students also reported that having close contact with the lecturers helped them make the transition from high school and adapt to university life. Borg (2009: 67) says "in hindsight they all appreciated the interest staff had invested in them and indicated that this encouraged them to strive for academic success. Therefore, this allowed the students to feel more accepted and comfortable, providing them with the opportunity to focus on their studies."

With the exception of the UFP, students all felt that the academic development modules in the programmes benefited them by developing the skills they required to succeed in their mainstream studies. The UFP students felt that some of the modules they did were irrelevant to their mainstream studies, although they did increase their general knowledge, and also that there was too much repetition of work. Some students complained that they had done the same work three times by the time they had completed first year. As a result of this, module content has been revised to ensure better articulation with mainstream modules and to minimise unnecessary repetition of work. Another criticism that emerged from several of the studies (de Klerk *et al*, 2006; Borg, 2009) was that students felt that the workload in the first year of the

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

programme was too light compared to what they experienced in mainstream and as a result they struggled when faced with the increased workload. Students in these foundation and extended curriculum programmes also reported having benefited greatly from the life-skills/mentoring programmes in which they learned things like time management and study skills. This aspect of the programme built students' self confidence which positively affected their academic performance.

The benefits to students in these access programmes seem to go beyond just academic development. "Students were unanimous in their perceptions that UFP enabled them to grow in areas other than academic" (Wood & Lithauer, 2005:1012). Students report feeling more confident about their abilities to succeed in their studies, having a greater sense of self-worth, having improved communication skills and having formed strong support systems. Even the close relationships students developed with their lecturers gave them confidence to be able to approach their mainstream lecturers for help when they experienced difficulties. Borg (2009) says that students in the SECP socialised with each other and developed strong relationships with one another which lasted throughout their studies. This, together with the feeling of being accepted by their lecturers, is an important aspect of these programmes as, according to Tinto, social integration has a large role to play in ensuring student retention.

These qualitative studies concur with the qualitative studies that access programmes are successful, not only in producing graduates but also in ensuring that students' experiences of tertiary studies are positive. Not only do students benefit academically from these programmes but they also develop in other areas in their lives which has a positive impact on their ability to study and succeed.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered Tinto's *Student Integration Model* as a theoretical framework for this study, and I have looked at factors contributing to the success of students particularly in the South African context. Finally I have examined access programmes internationally and in South Africa, concentrating on both quantitative and qualitative studies undertaken on these programmes at various universities in South Africa. The next chapter will consider the methodology used in the study conducted as part of this thesis.

CHAPTER 4 - METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study has used both quantitative and qualitative data and was conducted in a pragmatist paradigm. The qualitative data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with students who had been part of the Humanities Access Programme (HAP) during the years 2001 to 2004. These interviews were conducted with students who had gone on to graduate from the university and the reasons for this are discussed later in the chapter.

The quantitative data was sourced from records obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Student Management System (SMS), Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS) and Division of Management Information (DMI). Descriptive analysis was done on this data.

This chapter also discusses in detail the research paradigm under which this study was conducted as well as the *Mixed Methods Research* methodology used in this study. It outlines how students were selected for the study as well as data collection methods, analysis techniques, ethical issues relating to the study and limitations of the study. My current position as Director of the Humanities Access Programme makes it important to reflect on my position and the effects it could have on the study.

4.2 Mixed Methods Research

Traditionally it has been accepted that most research falls into either the positivist or interpretative paradigms (Onweugbuzie, 2002) but in recent years there has been strong argument for a move away from this to the pragmatist paradigm (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The positivist paradigm is rooted in reality and positivists argue that "reality exists and that they can predict and control it as objective researchers through testing and verifying questions and hypotheses" (Toma, 1997: 683). Scientific methods dominate this research paradigm and it is traditionally associated with the quantitative research methods of the natural sciences which are "interested in numerical data and analysis" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009: 4). The interpretative

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

tradition, on the other hand, believes that there is not one reality and that reality is constructed (Toma, 1997; Onweugbuzie, 2002; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Together with this goes the understanding that the researcher is part of the research and therefore influences the research. Cohen *et al* (2000) conclude that data does not have any objective meaning of its own but rather that meaning is constructed and context dependent. Scientific methods are not useful in the interpretative paradigm as researchers are more concerned with people's behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions which are not easily measured. Interpretative research is generally associated with qualitative data collection which is "principally interested in narrative data and analysis" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009: 4).

In the last decade, however, a third research paradigm has emerged as a result of the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies: pragmatism. Creswell and Clark (2007: 26) say that pragmatism "draws on many ideas, including employing "what works", using diverse approaches and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge". Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003: 713 cited in Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009: 7) define pragmatism as:

> *"a deconstructive paradigm that debunks concepts such as "truth" and "reality" and focuses instead on "what works" as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation. Pragmatism rejects the either/or choices associated with the paradigm wars, advocates for the use of mixed methods in research, and acknowledges that the values of the researcher play a large role in interpretation of results"*.

Pragmatism allows for both singular and multiple realities and is problem centred. This means that researchers operating in this paradigm will use whatever methods are necessary to answer the question and hence both quantitative and qualitative data are used. Pragmatism has become associated with a research methodology known as *Mixed Methods Research*.

Mixed methods research had its beginnings as far back as the 1950's when researchers first began to show interest in using multiple methods of data collection. All through

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

the years the debate continued as to whether qualitative and quantitative data could be combined because they were based on different assumptions about reality. It was during this period of debate in the 1970's and 1980's that calls were made to use pragmatism as a paradigm for mixed methods research. In the late 1980's and 1990's work was done on formalising methods and procedures, classifications and notations and on the specific mixed method designs. The new millennium saw authors such as Creswell, Teddlie and Tashakkori strongly advocating the recognition of mixed methods research as a design on its own (Creswell & Clark, 2007). In 2003 Tashkkori and Teddlie published their book *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioural Research* and in 2005 Sage Publishers started the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. More recently Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) published their book *Foundation of Mixed Methods Research*. Mixed method research is slowly gaining recognition within the research community and more research interest, funding opportunities and opportunities for publication are becoming available (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Before considering mixed methods research in more detail it is necessary to review quantitative and qualitative methodologies as these are the foundation of this method of research.

4.2.1 Quantitative Research Methods

As indicated already, the quantitative methodology is usually situated in the positivist paradigm. In this type of research, deductive reasoning is used. The researcher starts with a theory from which a hypothesis is formed. Data is gathered to test these hypotheses and will either support or refute it. The data collected is typically numeric in nature using correlational, survey, experimental or quasi-experimental designs (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Welman *et al*, 2005) and can involve collection of data from many participants in many locations. Random sampling is usually associated with quantitative research methods. Data is analysed using statistical methods, either descriptive statistics, which summarise the groups

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

and relationships between variables in the groups, or inferential statistics, which test the difference between group means or the relationship between variables (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). From this analysis the hypothesis is tested and either accepted or rejected thereby confirming or refuting the original theory.

4.2.2 Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research, on the other hand, fits into the interpretive paradigm which has become popular in the last 20 years (Teddlie & Taskakkori, 2009) and uses inductive reasoning. Unlike quantitative research, which is strongly based on theory, qualitative research involves a bottom up approach where the analysed data produces patterns and themes which can be used to formulate tentative hypotheses that can be explored and finally developed into a general conclusion or theory (Creswell & Clarke, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Cohen *et al*, 2000). Data is generally textual in nature but can also take the form of images. Data can be collected from a number of sources: transcripts of interviews, field notes, observations, minutes of meetings, notes from discussion groups, photographs, drawings or video footage. Qualitative research typically collects in-depth data from a few participants who are selected mainly using purposive sampling. The analysis of qualitative data is usually done using thematic content analysis (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 1993) which will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter. Once the themes identified have been categorised, the researcher is then able to look for patterns connecting the themes and make generalisations, which in turn could lead to a theory being formulated.

Since mixed methods research contains elements of both quantitative and qualitative research, it follows that this type of research methodology can address research questions that both confirm existing theory as well as explore new hypotheses relating to existing knowledge. Hence, both deductive and inductive reasoning are evident and form part of the ***inductive-deductive research cycle*** (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

This cycle may start with observation and facts, move through inductive reasoning to generalisations, from these generalisations to further predictions and hypotheses and using deductive reasoning back to observations, facts and evidence.
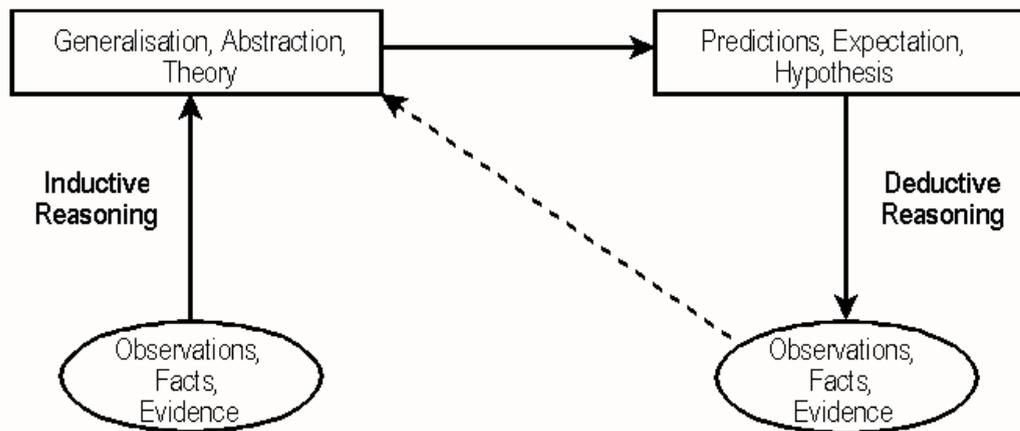
Figure 4: Inductive - Deductive Research Cycle (Teddlie & Tashikari, 2009)

This research cycle can start with either inductive or deductive reasoning and is dependent on the particular question that is being studied. Researchers working within the mixed methods tradition have developed several research designs that are commonly used.

Using mixed methods designs does not merely mean the collection of quantitative and qualitative data but "they need to be "mixed" in some way so that together they form a more complete picture of the problem than they do when standing alone" (Creswell & Clark, 2007: 14). The research I have embarked on consisted of a quantitative and a qualitative study and the difficulty was in linking these two studies to better understand the impact the Humanities Access Programme was having on both the students and the institution. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) and Creswell and Clark (2007) agree that there are two main mixed method designs: parallel mixed designs and sequential mixed designs. However there are several other designs that have been used which will also be discussed.

In a parallel mixed method design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, each seeking to answer related aspects of the overarching research

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

question. Each set of data is analysed and interpreted before the findings of each strand of research are combined to form an overall interpretation of the research data. The study I have conducted fits into this method design as I have attempted to study the impact on the institution and the student separately and then looked at how the students' perceptions can be used to explain the impact on throughput of these access students.
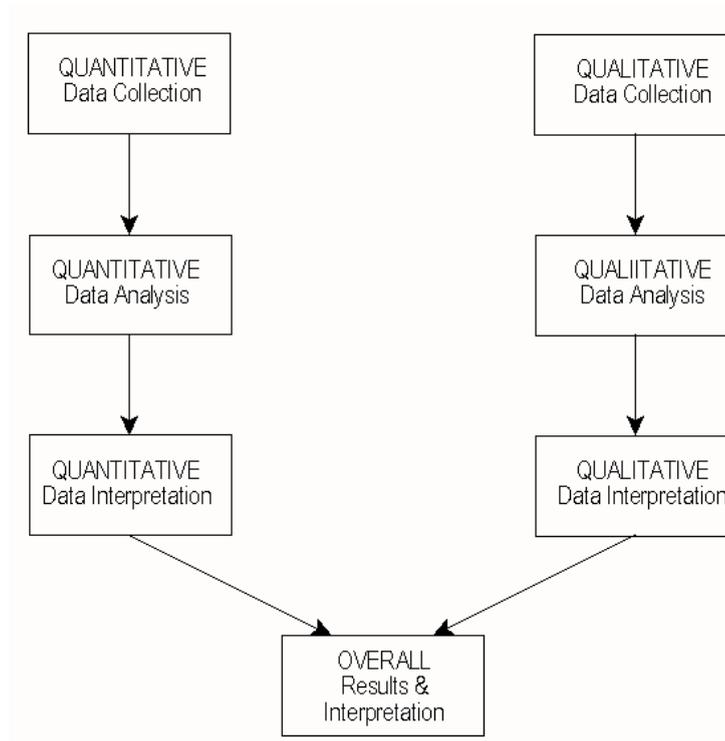
Figure 5: The Parallel Mixed Methods Research Design

The second common mixed methods design is the sequential mixed methods approach in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected sequentially. This process can begin with either type of data and the results obtained from the first strand of the research influence the design of the next stage. Teddlie and Tashakkori say "the second strand of the study is conducted either to confirm or disconfirm inferences from the first strand or to provide further explanation for its finding" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003: 715)

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology
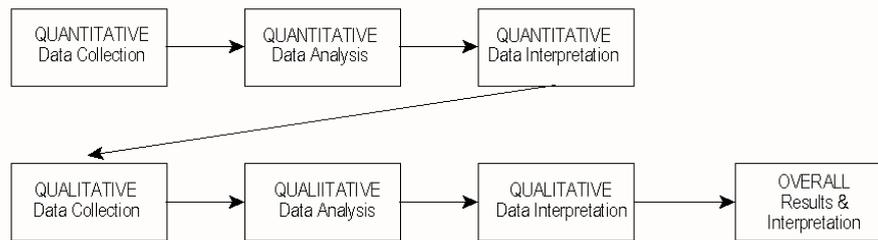
Figure 6: Sequential Mixed Methods Design

This process can continue with several sequential strands of research which build on one another to give a clearer picture. Creswell and Clark (2007: 8) call this "multiple mixed methods research" and have found this type of methodology in large-scale projects in the health sciences.
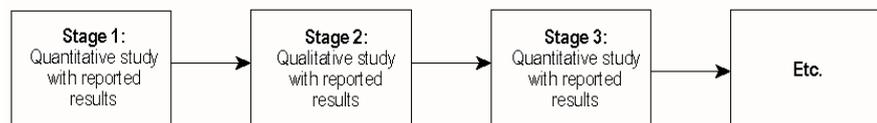
Figure 7: Multiple-Study Mixed Methods Research
(Creswell & Clark, 2007: 8)

Other mixed methods designs include imbedded methods (Creswell & Clarke, 2007), conversion mixed methods and fully integrated mixed methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In the imbedded design, one set of data plays a supportive role to the primary set of data. For example, a researcher will include quantitative data in his research to support the qualitative data. This quantitative data supports the results of the qualitative data and is secondary to the qualitative. The conversion mixed methods design collects qualitative data as the primary set of data which is analysed in the normal way. The same set of data is then used to produce quantitative data by scoring the themes identified in the qualitative analysis on some scale and then analysing it statistically. In this way one set of data is analysed both thematically and statistically and from these results interpretations can be made. As the name implies, the fully integrated design is a parallel design in which one approach (qualitative or quantitative) influences the formulation of the other at each stage of the research design. Figure 8 below illustrates this interdependence and the dynamics of this process.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology
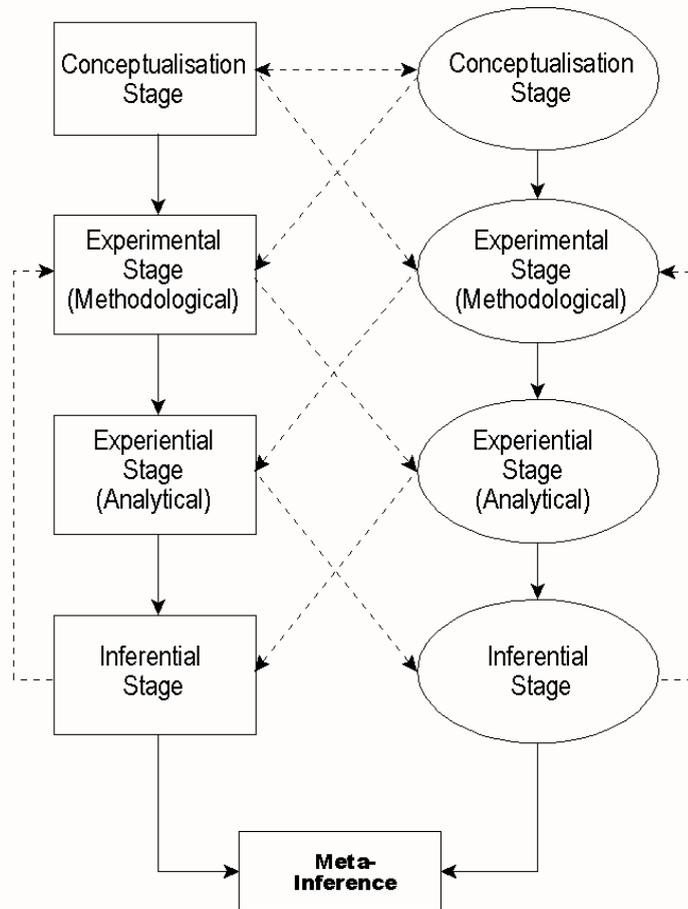
Figure 8: Fully Integrated Mixed Design
(Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009: 157)

Using mixed methods designs have several advantages over quantitative or qualitative designs on their own (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Firstly, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses of each of the individual designs. Quantitative methods do not take context into account, which weakens the study, but qualitative methods are reliant on the researcher's interpretations, which could be biased, and it is difficult to generalise findings because a small sample is used. These weaknesses are overcome with mixed methods approaches. In this study the students' perceptions and understandings of the programme have enabled me to gain greater insight and explanations for the throughput results obtained in the quantitative analysis.

Secondly, mixed methods designs provide a broader range of evidence for the research problem than quantitative or qualitative methods could produce on their own as a result

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

of researchers having more tools available to them. A mixed methods approach to the impact of the HAP has enabled me to obtain evidence from both the institution and the students but even more important has allowed me to gain some understanding as how the impact on the institution and the students are linked. The third advantage is that mixed methods research enables researchers to answer questions that could not be answered by quantitative or qualitative research methods on their own. For example, in this study the qualitative data, the students' perceptions of the programme, have been used to attempt to explain the results of the quantitative data, the cohort analysis.

The emergence of mixed methods research methodologies is allowing researchers greater flexibility in research design as well as enabling them to answer questions that would not have been possible to answer with the traditional quantitative and qualitative methods on their own. These methods are bringing together research ideologies which in the past would not have been seen as compatible and as a result a greater depth of knowledge is emerging from mixed methods studies.

4.3 Positioning this Study in a Research Paradigm

The research conducted in this study is located in the pragmatist research paradigm associated with mixed methods research. This paradigm was chosen for the research because it is problem centred and uses whatever methods are necessary to answer the research question. By using both quantitative and qualitative data it is possible to gain a greater understanding of and insight into the research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

This study was conducted using the parallel mixed methods approach. Quantitative data was collected to answer the first research question and qualitative data for the second question. Both sources were then used to see whether the quantitative data (student throughput and retention rates) and the qualitative data (students' perceptions) could be linked and used to give further insight into the impact of the programme.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.4 Key Research Questions

It is appropriate at this point to once again state the key research questions which were outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis:

What impact has the Humanities Access Programme had on the institution and on the students?

1. How do throughput and retention rates of the Humanities Access Programme students compare to mainstream Humanities students of similar demographic?

2. How did Access students perceive the programme and its different aspects?

3. How do students' perceptions inform the interpretation of the cohort analysis?

4.5 Collection of Data

4.5.1 Collection of Quantitative Data

Descriptive quantitative data was obtained with regard to both students who had been in the Humanities Access Programme and students who had registered for mainstream studies at the former University of Natal for the period 2001 to 2004. This period was chosen as this was the first stage of the HAP and was followed in 2005 by the merger of the former University of Natal and former University of Durban-Westville at which point the curriculum was revised slightly.

This quantitative data was sourced from UKZN records stored in the Student Management System (SMS), the Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS) system and information supplied by the Division of Management Information (DMI). The SMS and ITS systems contain information supplied by students on selection and registration at the institution as well as their academic record of diplomas and degrees they have registered for, dates these were completed and modules they registered for as well as the results obtained in these modules.

For students that had passed through the HAP, detailed biographical and

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

academic records obtained from SMS and ITS were used to track their progress through their time at UKZN. Since there were many more mainstream students to track over this period, information regarding these students' registration and progress through the system was obtained from the DMI. The specific information collected for each group of students included:

a)   Student records

b)   Pass rates

c)   Throughput rates

d)   The number of semesters they were registered for before completing their degree or dropping out

e)   Demographic profile of students

f)   Post graduate registrations at UKZN

This data enabled me to carry out a comprehensive cohort analysis and comparison between Access students and mainstream students of similar demographic.

4.5.2   Collection of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews to gain an understanding of students' perceptions of the programme and how it had impacted them. It is important to examine students' perceptions of the programme as their perceptions of what may be important in ensuring success may differ from what the institution regards as success or as necessary to succeed. Interviews allow for the collection of more in-depth data from respondents than questionnaires (Cohen *et al*, 2000). The interview provides access to what a person is thinking and can be used to explore a person's beliefs and attitudes on any topic (Welman *et al*, 2005). The semi-structured interview was chosen to collect data because it is "flexible and dynamic" (Robinson, 1998: 21) and "allows the interviewer to clear up a vague response or to ask for elaboration of incomplete answers" (Welman *et al*, 2005: 166).

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

The semi-structured interview is based on the understanding that the respondents have been involved in a particular situation. Based on the interviewer's knowledge of this situation, a list of questions and themes are set up to be used in the interview (Welman *et al*, 2005). These questions are used to guide the interview but the interviewer has liberty to change the order of the questions, only use some of the questions or add additional questions to probe for further information. The interviewer plays an active role in the process in eliciting responses from the respondents in order to stimulate a discussion rather than simply asking questions and getting answers (Cohen *et al*, 2000). This means that each interview can be totally different in the way it is conducted but still allow for the interviewer to gain an understanding of the respondent's perceptions and feeling.

Interviewing as a data collection vehicle has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages is that it allows for the collection of in-depth data which is detailed and descriptive (Cohen *et al*, 2005). One of the major disadvantages though, is that the interview is a social interaction between interviewer and interviewee and so power relations can play an important role. If the interviewer is seen to be a powerful person who has influence over the interviewee, this could result in the interviewee not being completely honest regarding their thoughts and feelings (Cohen *et al*, 2000). I was particularly mindful of this in my research as my position as Director of HAP could have influenced the responses given. Various measures were taken, such as interviewing in a neutral location and creating a relaxed atmosphere, to minimise this. Another disadvantage is that the interviewees are reflecting on their own behaviour or beliefs. Cohen, Manion and Morris (2000: 156) warn against "Hawthorne effects" with this type of research where the "participants may wish to avoid, impress, direct, deny, influence the researcher" and hence skew the data.

This research project used a semi-structured interview to collect the qualitative

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

data involving students' perceptions of the HAP. A list of questions was generated and piloted on two current HAP students. These questions were then re-evaluated and some questions changed. Another round of pilot interviews was conducted with two different students from the programme before the list of possible questions was finalised. The questions used to guide the interview process are included as Annexure D.

A total of 7 students were interviewed in this study even though originally I had planned to interview 10. The reason for this was the difficulty in locating past students from the 2001 to 2004 cohorts. Initially a purposive convenience sample was used to select students for the interviews and the intention was to interview students who had completed their degrees, students who had dropped out of university and students who had been academically excluded because of poor results. However, the difficulty in locating students required me to also used snowball sampling as I used students I interviewed to make contact with their peers. Finding students in all the various categories also proved very difficult as the contact details on their student records were very old and out of date and the university Alumni Office only had details of students who had graduated. As a result, the participants in the study came from a group of students who had graduated or were continuing with their studies at UKZN or had recently completed their studies.

A letter (Annexure A) was sent to all past students from 2001 to 2004 informing them of the research project and inviting them to be part of the study. This yielded a small response and, as a follow up, phone calls were made to students recommended by others already interviewed to be part of the project, which yielded the remaining participants. Students who indicated their willingness to participate were asked to sign a letter acknowledging this (Annexure B) and were given a sample of the consent letter they would have to sign (Annexure C) at the time of the interview. The demographic of students who participated in the study is summarised in Table 9 below.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

Year	No. Of Males	No. Of Females	Total
2001	3	1	4
2002	0	0	0
2003	0	1	1
2004	2	0	2
TOTAL	5	2	7

TABLE 9 Demographics of Students Participating in the Study

All participants signed the completed consent forms (Annexure C) and the question of confidentiality was discussed with them. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study at anytime without prejudice.

The purpose of the study was also discussed with students before conducting the interviews. Each interview was recorded using a tape recorder and later transcribed for analysis.

4.6   Analysis of Data

4.6.1   Analysis of Quantitative Data

The quantitative data was analysed using frequency distributions and statistical comparison using the χ^2 test.

4.6.2   Analysis of Qualitative Data

Interpretive analysis was used to make sense of the transcribed data for this study. There are many "analytic traditions that come under the umbrella of interpretive analysis" (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelley, 2006: 322) but in this study data was analysed using thematic content analysis. This involves "identifying patterns and themes which emerge from the data" (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). Four steps for identifying themes were used:

1.   The transcripts were read as a whole to get a general sense of the responses;

2.   Themes were identified that emerge from the data. Notes of these

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

themes were made in the margins;

3.   A list of themes was generated and categorised;

4.   Finally, this provisional classification system was applied to all the data (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993).

This enabled the data to be organised around unifying topics which enabled conclusions to be drawn from the students' responses. The next chapter will consider the themes and conclusions that can be drawn from the qualitative data obtained from the interviews with students.

4.7   Ethical Issues

Three major ethical issues emerge when doing interviews: informed consent; confidentiality; and the consequences of the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Borg and Gall, 1983). In response to these issues all respondents were fully informed of the reason for the research and what the research hoped to achieve. This was done by giving each participant a letter outlining the research before the interview and a consent form whereby they indicated they understood the research and that they were willing to be part of the research. They were also assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. Respondents were informed that they were able to withdraw from the interview at any time, even after the interviews were completed. Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethics committee of UKZN (Annexure F).

4.8   Limitations of the Research

The following limitations were noted in conducting this research:

1.   My current position as Director of the Humanities Access Programme and the fact that I have lectured in the programme since its inception could affect responses given by students in the interview process. Responses could have been affected in two possible ways. Firstly, my position as head of the programme could have caused participants to be reserved in their interaction

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

during the interviews and secondly, out of respect for my position, students may have given responses that they thought I might want to hear rather than what they personally believe.

2. Since data was only able to be collected from students that had graduated, this could affect the conclusions reached from the study as it is only looking at the perceptions of successful students. Students who were academically excluded because of poor results and students who dropped out of university studies may have perceived the HAP very differently to the students interviewed.

3. Being so close to the programme and the research, I may have inadvertently focussed on what is familiar and which I view as important and, in the process, neglected other important aspects. I have tried to avoid this by studying examples in other cultures and in similar situations in other countries.

4.9   Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two important issues to be considered when conducting research of any kind. Vithal and Jansen (2004: 32) say it is important to determine "whether the meaning and interpretation of an event is sound or whether a particular measure is an accurate reflection of what you intend to find out" as well as how consistent the research is.

In any research "validity represents claims to the trustworthiness or credibility of quantitative or qualitative data gathered for the purposes of making decisions or drawing inferences" (Collins & O'Brien, 2003: 371). No research can ever be considered to be completely trustworthy and reliable, but it is always important to keep these two issues in mind in order to produce data and conclusions that are sound and valid.

In quantitative research validity refers to whether the means of data collection is accurate and whether it is measuring what it says it is measuring (Golafshani, 2003).

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

This type of validity can be ensured "through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatment of data" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005: 105). In this study validity was obtained by ensuring that, when comparing access and mainstream students, students of similar backgrounds were compared.

On the other hand, the definition of validity for qualitative research is more elusive and some researchers have argued that validity has no place in qualitative research. It is agreed though, that there is a need for some kind of qualifying check for research. Most researchers regard validity in qualitative research as the trustworthiness of the research and this can be enhanced in a number of ways (Golafshani, 2003). Recording the interviews on a tape recorder and later transcribing them rather than simply taking notes in the interview was one way in which the validity of this research was enhanced. Another factor affecting validity is the bias of the researcher. In my case, being the head of the access programme caused concern that this might affect the responses of those being interviewed. To minimise this I stressed at all times that participants must be honest and that there were no consequences to the responses that were given. All interviewees seemed relaxed and willing to answer the questions honestly and some expressed criticisms of the programme.

Research is seen to be reliable if similar results are obtained from a similar group of respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). In other words, the research must be able to be reproduced. This is not as easy to achieve in qualitative research as it is in quantitative research. The issues of reliability in this study were addressed by carefully formulating the questions used in the interviews, by piloting them first and by paying attention to the interview environment to ensure that participants were comfortable and at ease. In most cases a neutral venue was chosen for the interview in an attempt to minimise any power relationship between myself and the interviewee.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 4: Methodology

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the methodology of *Mixed Methods Research* together with the differences between quantitative and qualitative research and how they can complement one another and thereby give more complete answers to research questions.

I have discussed the methodology used in collecting both the quantitative data from students' records and qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 7 past students and how this data was analysed. In addition I have outlined the limitations of the research and the possible effects it could have on the results as well as the ethical issues relating to the study and how these were dealt with. Finally, I have dealt with validity and reliability issues related to my research.

The next chapter will discuss the findings that emerge from the data collection and analysis outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5 - FINDINGS

5.1   Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the methodology for this research study. This chapter will consider the findings of the research. In attempting to answer the research question "*What impact has the Humanities Access Programme had on the institution and on the students?*", the findings of the cohort analysis conducted using the quantitative data will be discussed in order to compare throughput and retention rates of HAP students and mainstream students of similar demographic. Secondly, the interviews conducted with past students are analysed to identify themes that emerge from this qualitative data in order to establish the students' perceptions of the programme. Finally, possible links between what students identify as promoting success and how this could explain the results of the cohort analysis are examined.

The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions and significance testing, namely the Pearson Chi Square test, while thematic content analysis was used when working with the qualitative data. With both sets of data related literature is used in discussing the findings that emerge from the data.

5.2   Analysis of Quantitative Data - Cohort Analysis

The analysis of the quantitative data will be considered under three headings: *Access Students' Throughput and Retention*; *Access Students' Throughput and Retention Compared to Mainstream Students*; and *Access Students' Throughput and Retention Compared to Mainstream Students by Race*. In each case student graduation rates, continuation rates, drop-out rates and exclusion rates will be considered.

5.2.1   Access Students' Throughput and Retention

Table 10 below summarises the percentage of students for the 2001 to 2004 cohorts who have graduated, still continue with their degrees, have dropped out of university, have been academically excluded during their degree and have been excluded academically either during or at the end of the Access

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

Programme.

Year / Category	2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
No of Students	22		30		43		35		130	
Degree Complete	15	68.2%	23	76.7%	30	69.8%	23	65.7%	91	70.0%
Continuing	0	0%	0	0%	3	7.0%	0	0%	3	2.3%
Dropped Out	4	18.2%	6	20.0%	3	7.0%	8	22.9%	21	16.2%
Excluded Degree	0	0%	1	3.3%	5	11.6%	2	5.7%	8	6.2%
Excluded Access	3	13.6%	0	0%	2	4.6%	2	5.7%	7	5.3%

TABLE 10: Throughput & Retention of Access Students 2001 - 2004

From this it can be seen that, on average over the four years, 70.0% of students who started the HAP have completed their degrees, although, as will be shown later, not always in minimum time. Another 2.3% of HAP students continue with their studies, 16.2% dropped out of their studies and 6.2% were excluded because of poor academic performance once they had started on their degrees. The remaining 5.3% were excluded at the end of the first or second semester of the access year because they failed to meet the requirement to enter into degree studies (not passing the required number of modules). Table 11 shows these graduation and retention rates when considering only students who entered into degree studies.

Year / Category	2001		2002		2003		2004		Total	
No of Students	19		30		41		33		123	
Degree Complete	15	79.0%	23	76.7%	31	75.6%	23	69.7%	92	74.8%
Continuing	0	0%	0	0%	2	4.9%	0	0%	2	1.6%
Dropped Out	4	21.1%	6	20.0%	3	7.3%	8	24.2%	21	17.1%
Excluded	0	0%	1	3.3%	5	12.2%	2	6.1%	8	6.5%
Post Grad Registration	10	52.6%	14	46.7%	17	41.5%	7	21.2%	48	39.0%

TABLE 11: Throughput & Retention of Access Students Entering Degree Studies 2001 - 2004

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

This table shows that, of the 123 students who have successfully come through the Access Certificate in Arts and Social Sciences offered by the HAP in the four years since 2001, 74.8% have already graduated and another 1.6% are near to completing their degrees. In addition, of the students coming through the programme, 48 have gone on to post graduate studies. This represents 39.0% of the cohort and 52.7% of the students who have graduated. Of the 48 students registering for post-graduate studies, one registered for a PhD, 10 for Masters degrees, 27 for Honours degree, 17 for Post Graduate Diplomas in Applied Social Sciences and Finance and Banking and 6 for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

When considering the 17.1% of students that dropped out of university studies it is seen that, on average, these students completed 160 credits towards their degree. This means that the majority of these students dropped out at a second year level. The reasons for the students dropping out are unknown but many of the students' records indicate that they have been handed over for debt collection. This perhaps leads to the conclusion that finances are a large contributing factor to student drop out and, with some financial assistance, these students could achieve a tertiary qualification. This would open up job opportunities for these students enabling them to break the cycle of poverty which exists in the families and communities from which they come. From my experience some students also drop out because of poor health or family circumstances that require them to return home to support siblings and/or ailing parents.

One of the purposes of higher education is "to address the development needs of society and provide the labour market, in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy" (South Africa, 1997: 3). A traditional view of measuring the success of higher

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

education in achieving this has been to consider the graduation rates produced by these higher education institutions. Programmes such as the HAP were initiated in response to poor throughput and retention rates among black students which were negating the developmental agenda of government behind promoting access and success in higher education. The HAP was designed to address the educational, social and emotional needs of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds in an attempt to overcome the difficulties that these students faced in higher education and enable them to succeed in their tertiary studies. This would then enable them to contribute positively to society and the labour market.

The next section considers these figures in relation to students entering directly into mainstream studies.

5.2.2 Access Students' Throughput and Retention Compared to Mainstream Students

In comparing Access students with their mainstream counterparts, each Access cohort is compared with the mainstream cohort of the year they began their degree studies with. For example, the 2001 Access cohort will be compared to the 2002 mainstream cohort as this is the year in which both groups began their degrees. Table 12 and Graph 1 compare the graduation, continuing, drop-out and exclusions of Access students entering degree studies with those of mainstream students. It must be noted that these figures exclude students who transferred to another faculty.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

Year / Category	2001 Access	2002 Main	2002 Access	2003 Main	2003 Access	2004 Main	2004 Access	2005 Main	Total Access	Total Main
No of Students	19	1421	30	1771	41	1932	33	1333	123	6457
Degree Complete	79.0%	69.3%	76.7%	63.0%	75.6%	61.6%	69.7%	62.4%	74.8%	63.8%
Continuing	0%	0.2%	0%	0.3%	4.9%	1.2%	0%	2.5%	1.6%	1.0%
Dropped Out	21.0%	22.5%	20.0%	28.2%	7.3%	27.5%	24.2%	25.5%	17.1%	26.2%
Excluded Degree	0%	8.0%	3.3%	8.4%	12.2%	9.7%	6.1%	9.6%	6.5%	9.0%

TABLE 12: Throughput & Retention of Access Students Compared to Mainstream Students
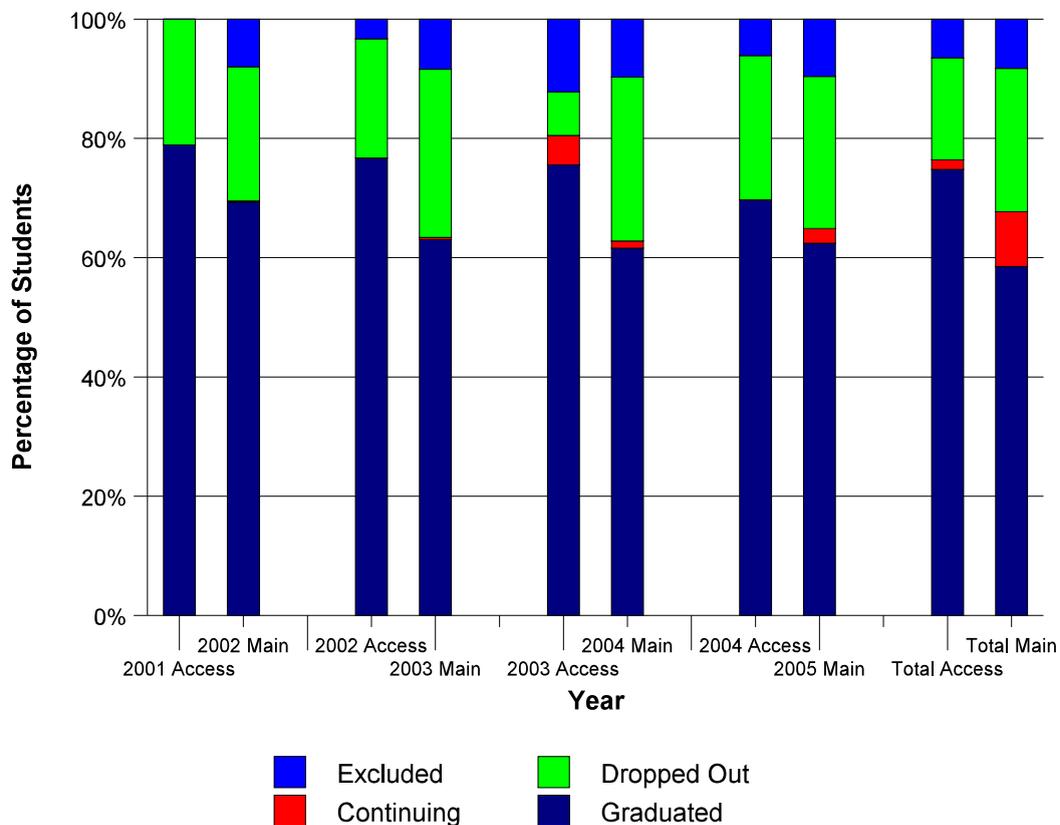

Figure 9: Throughput & Retention of Access Students Compared to Mainstream Students

These figures show that there is a statistically significant difference between the graduation rates of access students versus mainstream students (χ^2 (1, N = 58) = 5.525, p = 0.019). The graduation rate for access students is over 10% higher

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

than mainstream students and academic exclusions almost half that of mainstream. On the whole, with the exception of 2003, the drop-out rates are similar for access and mainstream students but on average the drop-out rate is about 7% lower for access students as a result of the low drop-out rate for the 2003 access cohort.

Table 13 shows a comparison of the time taken for students to complete their degrees. The figures show the percentage of students who have graduated under minimum time (which is 3 years), in minimum time and longer. Students who graduate in under minimum time have taken additional credits each year to complete their degrees early.

Year / Category	2001 Access	2002 Main	2002 Access	2003 Main	2003 Access	2004 Main	2004 Access	2005 Main	Total Access	Total Main
No of Students	15	984	23	1116	31	1190	23	832	92	4122
Under 3 Years	6.7%	13.4%	4.3%	9.1%	3.3%	9.8%	4.3%	19.9%	4.4%	11.5%
3 Years	53.3%	54.4%	43.5%	48.0%	53.4%	53.8%	52.2%	50.3%	50.5%	52.6%
4 Years	40%	22.0%	30.5%	32.0%	33.3%	27.0%	30.5%	29.8%	33.0%	27.6%
5 Years		7.8%	21.7%	8.3%	10%	9.6%	13%		12.1%	7%
More than 5Yrs		2.4%		2.6%						1.3%

TABLE 13: Comparison of Time to Completion Between Access & Mainstream Students

The data indicates that a higher percentage of mainstream students graduate in under minimum time (11.5% versus 4.4%) and that mainstream student graduations are still 10% ahead after three years. It must be noted, however, that 50.5% of access students and 52.6% of mainstream students graduated after three years of study which means that both groups are comparable once the "high flyers" are taken out of the equation. This is also true when looking at the percentage of students that graduate after four years of study (33% for access students and 27.6% for mainstream). In conclusion then, there do not seem to be major differences in completion time for access and mainstream students. This means that students coming through the access programme are staying in the system in much the same way as their mainstream counterparts. Being in

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

the access programme has not accelerated their progress through their degrees. It must be noted again, however, that a greater percentage of students coming through the access programme graduate compared to their mainstream counterparts.

So, even though HAP students are taking similar time to complete their degrees, the yield of graduates is greater than mainstream students at the end of the day. This higher graduation rate is in line with what government intended to achieve with its policies for transformation and redress discussed in Chapter 2. It would appear from these figures that achieving redress from the apartheid education system does require more than simply providing access to higher education. Combined with opportunity to access higher education must come meaningful intervention to address the multitude of deficiencies in students' educational background. It would appear that the HAP is achieving this in some measure. The HAP has provided both opportunity for both equity of access and success which are central to governments policies for higher education in South Africa. South Africa is not alone in this drive as internationally there is a move towards increasing participation in higher education together with ensuring success.

The next section will compare HAP students to mainstream students based on racial classification.

5.2.3 Students' Throughput and Retention Compared to Mainstream Students by Race.

Since students coming through the HAP are African students from disadvantaged backgrounds it is necessary to compare them with students from a similar demographic to further investigate the impact the programme is having on student throughput and retention. The table below compares access students with African mainstream students in the same way as was done in the previous section.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

Year / Category	2001 Access	2002 Main	2002 Access	2003 Main	2003 Access	2004 Main	2004 Access	2005 Main	Total Access	Total Main
No of Students	19	543	30	810	41	894	33	582	123	2829
Degree Complete	79.0%	61.5%	76.7%	58.2%	75.6%	59.8%	69.7%	56.7%	74.8%	59.7%
Continuing	0%	0.6%	0%	0.3%	4.9%	1.6%	0%	2.9%	1.6%	1.3%
Dropped Out	21.1%	28.0%	20.0%	32.5%	7.3%	26.6%	24.2%	27.7%	17.1%	28.8%
Excluded Degree	0%	9.9%	3.3%	9.0%	12.2%	12.0%	6.1%	12.7%	6.5%	10.9%

TABLE 14: Throughput & Retention of Access Students Compared to African Mainstream Students

Table 14 reveals that there are large differences in graduation, continuing and exclusion rates of students when comparing access and African mainstream students. There is about 15% difference in graduation rates between the two groups of students and more than 10% difference in drop-out rates. The number of continuing students is about the same for both groups of students and access student exclusions are about half those of mainstream African students. It must be borne in mind at this stage that the disaggregation of African students has not differentiated between African students who did English as a second language and those that attended schools where English was taken as a first language. This is important as students entering the HAP are all English second language students. African students taking English as a first language have probably attended schools which have been better resourced and as a result they would have received a better standard of education. This means that the data could be skewed in favour of the African mainstream students and, if we compared access students with English second language students only, we could find an even greater difference between the two groups.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings
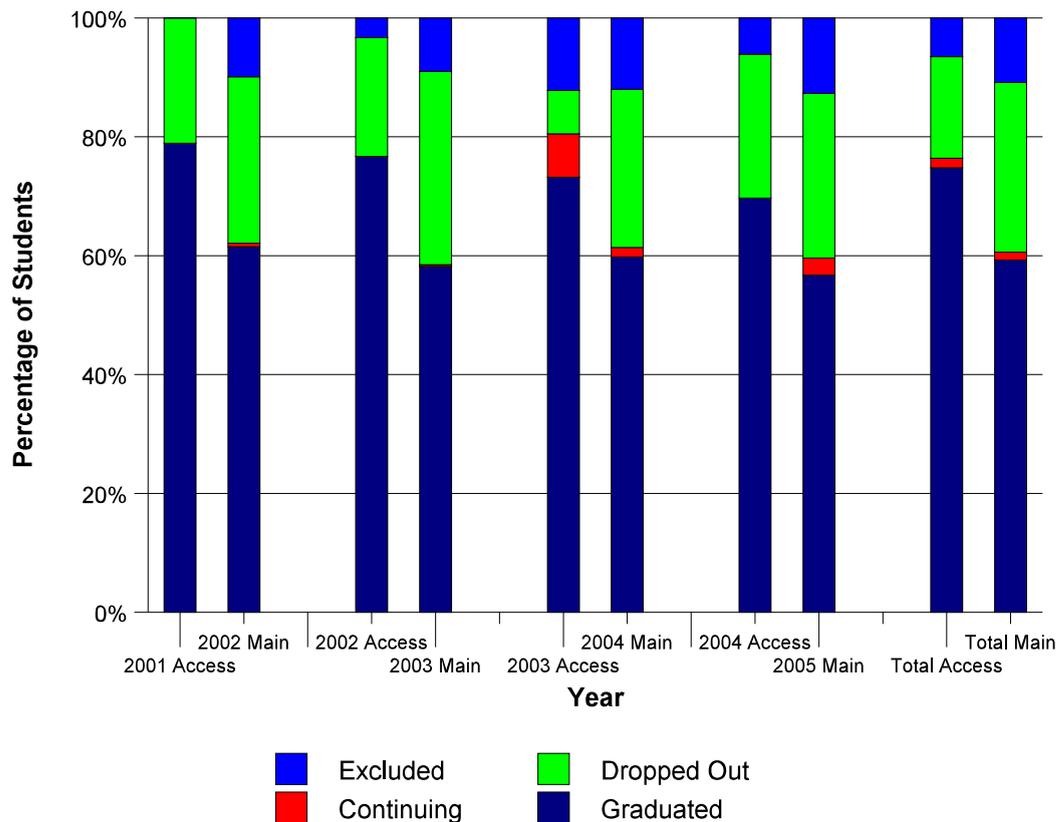
Figure 10: Throughput & Retention of Access Students Compared to Mainstream African Students

Table 15 below gives a breakdown of graduation, exclusion, drop-out and retention rates for all race groups for the period 2001 to 2004.

Group	Graduated		Excluded		Dropped-Out		Continuing	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Access	92	74.8%	8	6.5%	21	17.1%	2	1.6%
African	1671	59.1%	308	10.9%	814	28.8%	36	1.3%
Coloured	129	57.9%	28	12.6%	62	27.8%	4	1.8%
Indian	1195	62.3%	203	10.6%	503	26.2%	18	2.7%
White	1124	75.9%	40	2.7%	310	20.9%	7	0.9%

Table 15: Throughput & Retention of Access Students Compared to Other Races

Several interesting comparisons can be made using this set of results. Firstly, it is clear that HAP students are performing at a level equivalent to their white

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

counterparts who have had the benefit of a privileged, well resourced education. The graduation rate for HAP students is less than 2% below that of white students while drop-out rates are 3% less. This is further evidence that access programmes such as HAP are in fact having the desired effect of redress and transformation and improving graduation rates among African students. The HAP appears to not only have improved graduation rates among black students but in fact to have brought them on par with students from a privileged educational background.

Secondly, the figures for the other race groups indicate that it is not only African students that need academic interventions. There are only slight differences in graduation, exclusion, drop-out and retention rates among the African, Coloured and Indian groups with the Coloureds performing the worst of all in terms of graduation. All black students have suffered under the ravages of apartheid education and these results seem to indicate that all black students, and not just African students, are disadvantaged when entering higher education and are in need of interventions such as the HAP.

Scott, Yeld and Hendry's (2007) study on the 2000 student cohort found that in the social sciences 53% of students graduated within five years with a further 6% still being registered after the five years. The analysis of the 2002 to 2005 mainstream cohorts, as seen in Table 14 above, yields similar results with 59.7% of students graduating and 1.3% continuing. When disaggregating their results by race, Scott *et al* (2007) found that in the Social Sciences graduation rates for black students were half that of white students. While Table 15 above reveals a much better graduation rate between black and white students in the Social Sciences at UKZN, there is still a vast difference. What these values do indicate though, is that this differential graduation rate is almost eliminated when African students enter the university via the HAP.

Table 16 considers the time taken for access and African mainstream students

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

to complete their degrees. As with the comparison with all mainstream students in the previous section, we see that there is very little difference between access students and African mainstream students when making this comparison.

Year / Category	2001 Access	2002 Main	2002 Access	2003 Main	2003 Access	2004 Main	2004 Access	2005 Main	Total Access	Total Main
No of Students	15	333	23	466	30	524	23	286	91	1609
Under 3 Years	6.7%	10.5%	4.3%	7.5%	3.3%	8.2%	4.3%	15.2%	4.4%	10.6%
3 Years	53.3%	47.8%	43.5%	42.7%	53.4%	48.9%	52.2%	49.1%	50.4%	46.0%
4 Years	40%	27.6%	30.5%	37.1%	33.3%	31.1%	30.5%	35.7%	33.0%	33.0%
5 Years		9.9%	21.7%	10.6%	10%	11.8%	13%		12.1%	8.9%
More than 5Yrs		4.2%		2.1%						1.5%

TABLE 16: Comparison of Time to Completion Between Access & African Mainstream Students

There are still a greater percentage of students graduating in under minimum time (3 years) but only a small difference from there onwards. The analysis shows that 50.5% of access students completed their degrees in three years compared to 46% of African mainstream students and 33% completed in four years for both groups. Again we conclude that students going through HAP do not move through the system any quicker than their counterparts in mainstream studies but that a higher percentage graduate.

5.2.4   Conclusion

The results, as outlined above, indicate that there are differences between the two cohorts of students. Access students seem to produce a higher percentage of graduates, lower drop-out and exclusions rates and fewer students continuing their studies for extended periods than the mainstream students and, in particular, the mainstream African students. The Access students' graduation rate is on par with that of white students and considerably better than any of the other race groups. The extra year spent in the HAP, however, has not significantly changed the pattern of how long students take to graduate. When

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

compared to all mainstream students and black mainstream students, we see that access students' time to graduation does not differ from either group of students.

The next section will investigate access students' perceptions of the programme and in the final section I will use these to try and establish if their perceptions give any insight into the differences noted above.

5.3   Analysis of Qualitative Data - Students' Perceptions

5.3.1   Biographical Background of Students

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven students from the 2001 to 2004 cohorts, five males and two females. Of these one is registered for a PhD, two have completed a Masters degree (one of whom is a registered Psychologist and the other a University lecturer), two are registered for Masters degrees, one has completed an Honours degree and plans to do a Masters degree while he continues to work for a government department and one student is completing a Post Graduate Diploma in Finance and Banking.

All the students interviewed came from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities and experienced poor quality schooling.

> *It was one of those disadvantaged schools ...we went to school*
> *during the times of uncertainty and crime and we had been*
> *affected by political violence and so on. The level of education*
> *wasn't good.*   [Student 1]

Students reported that their schools had poor facilities and that a culture of teaching and learning was severely lacking.

> *It is, well what was termed a disadvantaged school so we didn't*
> *have most of the equipment like laboratories or computers, what*
> *not.*   [Student 2]

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

I would just say that the facilities we had were teachers and

books. [Student 5]

O we were crowded! Very crowded! From that school
environment I must say it's not the environment that is, that can
produce quality students because I remember that environment
is like when you, how can I say umm...Sometimes the teachers
wouldn't come to class and then you had to go to the staffroom
and fetch the teacher or else you would just sit there and chat
and talk and play and do everything. [Student 3]

Obstacles students faced in coming to university included lack of finances, lack of parental and community support in some cases, lack of information about the university (how to apply, what the minimum requirements were and what was available to them) and lack of career guidance in choosing a course appropriate to their interests and abilities. All the students interviewed had shown persistence in trying to overcome these obstacles and several of them had taken a year or more of visiting tertiary institutions before being accepted into HAP. By the time students entered the HAP it was too late to do anything about many of these factors and the lack of funding has precluded the programme from addressing them in any significant way. Past students have acted as carriers of information to their schools and have acted as ambassadors for the programme and for the university at large.

5.3.2   Analysis of Findings

The table that follows summarises the four major themes that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with students. Each of these themes is then discussed in greater detail.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

THEME	SUB-THEMES
Theme 1 HAP contributed positively to the Students' Success	1.1 Students recognised the value of the programme in hindsight. 1.2 Access programmes should continue.
Theme 2 Students benefited from the Foundation modules.	2.1 Academic reading and writing skills were developed. 2.2 Students were able to argue and debate. 2.3 They developed presentation skills.
Theme 3 HAP helped with adaptation to university life.	HAP Articulated the gap through: 3.1 Supportive and caring staff. 3.2 Induction into the new environment. 3.3 Helping students make friends and develop a support structure. 3.4 Acclimatisation to the teaching and learning environment.
Theme 4 Students experienced personal growth.	4.1 Improved confidence and self-esteem. 4.2 Stronger interpersonal skills. 4.3 Greater self awareness and direction for life.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

5.3.3 Theme 1: HAP Contributed Positively to Students' Success

Initially the majority of students interviewed came into the HAP not knowing what it was about or what they would be doing. They did, however, understand that they had not met the minimum requirements for university entrance and so accepted their position in the programme. Some students felt that they were being compromised by being placed in the programme. There were two main reasons. Firstly, some students felt that they were stigmatised by other students.

> *They were undermining the Social Science students especially those that were in the Access Programme. As a student who could not think critically we could not do much at all.* [Student 7]

> *...cos you were seen as, you know, like maybe you are not clever enough to go to your first year. It was just for dumb people, yea.* [Student 3]

Essack and Quayle (2007) have identified stigmatisation of students in access programmes as one of the unintended negative consequences of such programmes and that they can have "a powerful impact on participants' perceptions of the AP [Access Programme]" (Essack & Quayle, 2007: 14). Despite these feelings of being stigmatised, students were still positive about being in the programme because they were seeing the benefits. One student says:

> *At first I thought we were undermined but when the programme was flowing and we were doing English with the LLB students and we find that some of us were performing better than the LLB students, that is when we feel that being in those classes is valuable.*
>
> [Student 6]

Other students felt that HAP gave them the confidence to be able to stand up to their critics and inform them about the benefits of the programme and used it as a motivator to work hard and make a success of their opportunity.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

I have to study hard because I know I have some shortcomings,

that is why I am in this programme. So I was able to work hard

for it.   [Student 2]

The second area where students felt they were being compromised was taking extra time at university.

This would keep me staying longer at university than one who

could just get into mainstream and do this first year and

complete in time. In terms of time, ja, it was causing me time,

ja.   [Student 7]

Another student expressed concern about the financial implications of the extra time.

But I ummm... you know anxious about finances, the financial

implications of it. That my mother was thinking she is paying

for the first year and then there is going to be two more years

to come but then now it wasn't my first year, so there was huge

financial implications for them.   [Student 2]

Theme1.1   Students Recognised the Value of the Programme in Hindsight

Despite their initial apprehensions about the programme and not being in mainstream studies, all students interviewed recognised the value of the programme and were positive about their experiences. For some this happened quite quickly and they saw the value while they were still in the programme, while for others this only happened once they started mainstream studies. One student says that his feelings about being placed in the access programme changed during the second semester.

...the reason they changed was because I was also seeing a

change in me and I was also seeing my other friends who were

also in mainstream and interacting with them and I couldn't

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

believe that there were certain things that they could not do,
which we believed, that we thought that they could do, but we
were able to do those things for example. And simple things
such as building up confidence. Ja, it changed in the second
semester. [Student 4]

Another student felt frustrated during the first semester because she could not see where the programme was taking her. She says:

I felt it was a waste of time but then as the term continued I
realised, well this programme is helping me to write academic
stuff because ACS taught us how to write an academic essay, a
good academic transcript....you really are gaining something [Student 3]

Others only really recognised what they had gained once they started their degree studies and then felt more positive about HAP.

Especially after the programme when I got to do my first year
because then I saw how much the access programme had
actually helped me...so it was afterwards and even now I see the
benefits of the access programme... It gave me direction. It
gave me a good foundation of what university is about and I can
think. [Student 2]

In looking at the contribution HAP has made to students' academic success, Student 4 says the following:

Like I said, I don't think I would be doing Masters. Basically it
acted like, you know when a car needs a push, a kick start. Ja,
a beautiful kick start, ja. [Student 4]

Another student echoes these sentiments.

Ja, in terms of my academic achievement, ja, it did help me and
it will continue helping me.... Ja, ja , ja, ja, it was gave me

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

confidence. I know that I will not fail because of the skills of

this access programme....Ja, these skills will help me a lot.[Student 7]

These statements lead to the conclusion that, although students initially had negative feelings towards the programme, they ultimately experienced the programme in a positive light and felt that it had contributed to their academic success.

Theme 1.2   Access Programmes Should Continue

Participants felt that the programme helped students adapt to the university environment both socially and academically (this will be discussed in greater detail later). Without exception, all the students interviewed felt that access programmes should continue, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Student 6 says:

They form a very good basic tool to prepare those students who

are not that well equipped to start their academic journey.[Student 6]

Another student says that as long as our schooling system continues to experience problems there will be a need to continue with access programmes.

Until such time as we know that we are getting absolutely

brilliant students based on a very brilliant system at high school

level, then we can perhaps think of doing away with it.   [Student 1]

He goes on to say that even then maybe the programmes need to be revised to meet the changing needs of the students as there will always be students needing support, even if the schooling system is good.

Theme 1 Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded from the evidence presented above that, without exception, all participants in these interviews recognised the benefit of the HAP and the contribution to their academic success. Despite their initial feelings of

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

scepticism about the programme and the stigmatisation they experienced, all students were positive about the programme and how it had helped them adjust to university life. The participants were unanimous that access programmes should continue for disadvantaged students because the schooling system in South Africa was still unable to provide a solid educational foundation for these students.

5.3.4 Theme 2: Students Benefited from the Foundation Modules

Students in the HAP were required to do a number of Foundation modules in academic writing, English, numeracy, computer literacy and a module called Africa in the World, which was a general module covering topics from several of the social science disciplines. The motivation behind these modules is two fold: to strengthen students academically in areas in which they have had poor teaching and have gaps in their knowledge; and to expose students to the discourses of higher education with academic support and scaffolding. With the exception of Africa in the World, students found the foundation modules beneficial in adapting to the academic requirements of university. Africa in the World received mixed reviews. Some students found it very useful and gained not only from the content but also from the way it was presented and the exposure they received to the various disciplines within the social sciences. Other students found this module irrelevant and could not see any benefit in doing it in preparation for mainstream studies.

Theme 2.1: Academic Reading and Writing Skills were Developed

Students were unanimous in saying that their reading and writing skills were developed through the English and Academic Communication Studies (ACS) modules. They saw ACS as one of the most valuable courses because it taught them how to write academic essays.

> *I can say its ACS, I think it's very important part in this access programme because you use those skills throughout the year or throughout the time you are at university, from the first year up*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

to Masters degree......Now I am pursuing Masters degree with

these skills because I can write the paper. [Student 7]

Another student expressed similar sentiments about the ACS module.

Well two stand out. One being the academic communication

studies. That one was just clear. We needed the skills which we

just don't have. If you had to tell me to write an essay before

we did ACS I would have written you a high school

essay..umm.. And then we were assisted. This is how you write

a university level essay, how to read material, how to... ummm...

make references, how to do the research, the basic research.

We were also integrated into information studies and computer

literacy as well. So it was a broad programme. [Student 1]

Student 6 recognises that the ACS and English modules enabled him to communicate effectively through his writing and to see the difference between written and oral communication.

I found that when you ... there's a difference between spoken

and written communication. So when you communicate, you

communicating through writing so you have to know who is

your audience and you have to express yourself precisely rather

than when we are talking if you do not get me clearly you have

to ask a question for me and then I give you a feedback. But

when you writing you know the person is not having a chance

to ask you a question back and then you give him a response.

So I learnt how to express yourself precisely and make sure that

the meaning of the communication is not lost between you and

the audience. Ja, ja. [Student 6]

He also felt that his writing was improved because he was able to make a sound argument and do so without spelling and grammatical errors.

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

In English I learned that how to punctuate, how to make your argument sound. Ja, not making those spelling and grammatic mistakes so we learned all those skills which are still valuable.

[Student 6]

I believe that the students' perception that they are using the English language correctly and are able to write well structured academic essays is an important part of their success as they no longer see themselves as disadvantaged but instead see themselves as being good students, especially when they see students in mainstream struggling with aspects of academic writing that they have mastered. This is evident through Student 4 expressing surprise that mainstream students were unable to do some of the things that he could do and Student 6 recognising the value of the programme because access students were outperforming LLB students in the English module.

Bass (2007) says that students do not know the norms of academic writing and that lecturers seldom make these clear to students. Some students, especially those from privileged education backgrounds, seem to be able to grasp these norms easily for themselves, but the majority of students struggle to recognise what is required of them and take much longer to grasp these norms. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds especially fall into this second category because of their poor educational background (Niven, 2010).

It can be concluded then that students felt that the overt teaching of reading and writing skills as part of the access programme helped them when entering mainstream studies as they had already internalised the epistemologies of academia and were then able to concentrate on the content aspects of their modules.

Theme 2.2: Students Were Able to Argue and Debate

Another aspect of the foundation modules that students perceived to have

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

helped them was in the area of developing the ability to argue and debate a point. Students were involved with debates in both English and Africa in the World as preludes to writing tasks related to the topic of the debate. Students from an African background are raised to respect their elders and not to question what they say so the ideas of arguing and debating an issue are often foreign to them. One student says:

> *Ja, for the first time we were told you can argue with the lecturer and we did that to the best of our ability, without much information but we did it because we felt like it. That is what I think was useful, very very useful.* [Student 1]

Another student expresses a similar viewpoint.

> *Cos like our lecturers were like now and again you know, preaching this to us. You have to be able to communicate with other people you know. Don't be afraid to say what you feel. Don't be afraid to oppose a person when you feel that what they are saying is against your belief or whatever.* [Student 3]

The ability to argue a point and present the evidence for your argument is central to the social sciences. Students felt that the foundation modules taught them how to do this and added to their academic achievement.

> *Ja, in terms of my academic achievement, ja, it did help me and I think it will continue helping me. I'm saying this because the social sciences is demanding someone who can argue....I can argue now. I can see both sides. I can argue.* [Student 7]

Theme 2.3: Students Developed Presentation Skills

Working in small groups gave students the confidence to speak in front of fellow students and lecturers. Students were required to give feedback on their discussions and do presentations of work that they had been preparing. Many of them incorporated their computer literacy skills and used PowerPoint

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

presentations. Students saw this as a benefit from doing these foundation modules.

> *They are looking for someone who can write, ja, write and in terms of speaking, speaking or presenting something. Ja, in terms of speaking, now I can stand in front of the people to talk even though I am on Honours level, but I can talk and that talking skill is from this access programme.* [Student 7]

Another student concurs with this and says:

> *From the programme, as we were working in groups most of the time, so it helped you to develop even those presentation skills cos you would be in groups discussing stuff and then you will voice your ideas and it kind of created that, you know, self esteem. Even now I would be able to stand in front of the class and present.* [Student 3]

Theme 2: Conclusion

In looking at the foundation modules, students felt that these modules had benefited them in several ways in helping them to achieve academically. They perceived that these modules had improved their ability to read and write in an academically acceptable manner and to be able to construct academic arguments and communicate their ideas clearly using proper grammar. The small group environments also developed their ability to speak and to debate issues and then to present their ideas to the rest of the class. This gave them confidence to continue to speak out once entering mainstream studies.

5.3.5 Theme 3: HAP Helped With the Adaptation to University Life

The adaption to university life is one that just about all students find difficult. For disadvantaged students this can be even more difficult, especially for those from rural areas. Jones *et al* (2008) found that many students experienced

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

culture shock when arriving at university, felt lonely, isolated and homesick and struggled with the new academic environment. The HAP students also found this adaption difficult but were unanimous in their agreement that the access programme had assisted them with this adaption. Student 7 says:

> *It was a challenge for me to adapt to the university environment, to the new environments.* [Student 7]

Another student says:

> *I think this whole system to this whole university, learning about a computer, learning about everything, it was all new and it was hard to adjust to some of those things but because we had small lectures, so it helped in a way to sort of adjust but there were huge things that were happening but ja, like I was able to adjust.*

In analysing students' perceptions of the ways in which the access programme helped with the adjustment, four themes emerge from the data. These are discussed below.

Theme 3.1: Supportive and Caring Staff

All the participants in this research acknowledged the role the staff in the access programme played in their adaption to university life. Without exception, they felt that the staff were caring and concerned for the students' well being.

> *I think I received quite a lot of assistance from my counsellors, my lecturers and from the staff of the Humanities Access Programme. I thought they were just caring so much. Whatever problem I had, I just had to go to them and they always gave me an ear and hope to say that you can do it because sometimes you may think that you might not be able to do something, not because you can't, but because nobody encouraged you, nobody making you feel you have the potential*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

*in that. So they actually picked up my spirit and that is why I
am where I am today. They were behind me. They were there
basically just to guide me, to follow me wherever I go.* [Student 4]

Students felt that the staff were looking after them and that they had support
when they were finding adaption to university difficult. One student says:

*You adapt easier than if you had been a first year because no-
one is there to look after you. Whereas the staff here is looking
into, looking after you.* [Student 1]

Another says:

*People do take an interest in you, so that was just one thing that
was good and from then on I had people constantly in my life
that were in the access programme.* [Student 2]

Students received assistance from the access staff in many different areas.
Some reported receiving assistance with personal problems and family issues,
some with financial issues and the lack of food while others expressed the view
that the access staff were friendly and approachable and that they felt they were
accepted by the staff and that they took on a parental role for many of them.
The staff's involvement with students did not end at the end of the access year
and several students reported continuing to see the staff after they were in
mainstream. The relationships they had developed with the staff during the
access year enabled students to return for help either with their studies or
personal problems.

*I think one of the things was, you know, the support you got
from the lecturers, some of them. Like I was able to on my first
year, when I had an essay to write for whatever, I was able you
know the contact we kept, we kept with them, I was able to ask
for one of them to read through like ja, proof read and
whatever. That was just like huge. I did very well in my first
year because I had that support.* [Student 2]

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

Another student says that she too saw a particular staff member regularly after entering mainstream studies for help with essays and also personal issues. When asked if she felt this connection she had developed was important she responded:

> *Yes I felt it was important because sometimes I think it's to advantage the student to get closer to your lecturers so that maybe if you have a problem with your academic work then your lecturer will understand that maybe because its of this and this and this. So that maybe she will be able to help you, even though it is not something that is financially based, she can give you advice on what to do. Stuff like that.*

[Student 3]

Wood and Lithauer (2005) acknowledge the role the lecturers in the UFP have on student adaptation and the advantages of the student-centred approach in terms of academic and emotional development. They recommend that "foundational level academics be carefully selected for their student-centred teaching and learning practices in order to foster the type of caring learning environment which is necessary for academic, social and emotional wellness of the student" (Wood & Lithauer, 2005: 1016). The comments of the students in the HAP reiterate the important role that staff play in this adaptation process and confirm Wood and Lithauer's viewpoint. On the other hand, Essack and Quayle (2007) warn against students becoming over dependent as a negative consequence of such an approach and emphasise the need for students not to become too reliant on the lecturing staff.

Theme 3.2: Induction into the New Environment

The participants in this research felt that the access programme had helped them to understand the university, its structures, and the facilities and that this helped them in their settling in process.

> *The orientation that the access programme gives you allows you*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

to survive on your own when you are now in the mainstream properly. When other students are still struggling to find the library and use the library, the student counselling and all those things, we already knew all that. [Student 1]

Another student reiterates these sentiments and emphasises the importance of this orientation to how the university functions.

It is key that you understand, particularly for students who do not have a background in terms of career guidance and how universities functions. I know that some schools that are better off do have university visits where students are introduced, orientated as to how the university functions. Most of our students don't go through that and access programme does that very well. [Student 4]

Another important aspect in helping to orientate students to the university is being accommodated in residence. Koen (2007) states that disadvantaged students who are accommodated in university residences adapt far easier to the new social cultural environment than students who live off campus. One student who was interviewed makes this statement:

Ja, if I wasn't staying in the residence maybe I was going to experience some problems but staying in the residence makes you familiar with the environments.

[Student 6]

This outlines how important it is for students to feel comfortable with their surroundings in order to make the adaptation to university life.

Theme 3.3: Helping Students Make Friends and Develop a Support Structure

All the students interviewed said that the access programme had helped them to make friends and that this had helped them to settle at university. Most of

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

them reported that these friendships lasted throughout their studies and even into post-graduate studies. Student 1 reported that he still has contact and is friends with some of the people he started the access programme with even though he is finished at university and is working. Another says:

> *I had friends during this access programme. Ja, there were a number. Ja, we graduated together and did Honours in Political Science...and this is the reason I made new friends* [Student 7]

Making social contact is an important part of the adaption to university life and the structure of the HAP appears to have encouraged these social interactions and the development of friendships.

Theme 3.4: Acclimatisation to the Teaching and Learning Environment

One of the legacies of Apartheid education is the effect it has had on the culture of teaching and learning. Many schools, particularly in disadvantaged areas, are still characterised by high absenteeism, lack of professionalism by teachers, frequent days off and poor teaching (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Students in the access programme reported coming from backgrounds where teachers would be absent from class and learners would either teach themselves or simply spend the time socialising. When getting to university they found it difficult to adapt to a new culture of teaching and learning.

> *Yea, well the difficulties were in terms of the workload. It was for me useful, especially the programme. Cos from, as I said, my high school you know it is upon yourself to make sure that you study and do all the work. The teacher did not care that much.* [Student 3]

This is confirmed by another student who says:

> *Well I must say adaption is the hardest thing to do at university which is why they say the first year at university is the most difficult. The style of teaching and learning was completely*

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

*different, particularly if you come from a disadvantaged school,
where I come from, where teachers don't take their job
seriously. Ummm and now here, not only did they take their
responsibility seriously, you also had to take your responsibility
seriously. No-one is going to chase after you.* [Student 1]

Students initially found the style of teaching very different to what they were
used to and the quantity of work covered in a given period of time was much
greater than they were used to. They found the access programme useful in
making the transition from high school. Student 1 describes how he feels the
access programme helped students.

*The nature of the information delivery is also there. It's not as
intensive as you would find in a first year class, mainstream, but
also not as laid back as high school. So it really is a bridge.
That is what you are going to do and you are prepared for your
first year. For most of us who actually did the bridging course,
the access programme, we found first year not to be as difficult
because we were already there.* [Student 1]

Student 3 has a similar experience of the programme.

*So access is preparing you so that you will know that you know
here everything is up to you. The lecturer will just tell you that
this is what you should do and I expect you to deliver on this
date. There is nobody going to follow you and say are you
doing what I asked you to do....So yes, I think there has to be a
retraining from high school.* [Student 3]

Students recognised the differences between what is required of them at school
and that which is required at university. They found the structure and discipline
of the access programme helped them make the transition from poor teaching
and learning practices at high school to the more demanding requirements of

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

higher education.

Theme 3: Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this research support the findings of other research and illustrate that the HAP has helped students adapt to university life. This has been achieved by providing opportunities to make friends, having a caring and supportive staff, familiarising students with university structures, procedures and facilities and through a structured induction to the new teaching and learning environment.

5.3.6 Theme 4: Students Experienced Personal Growth

The final theme deals with the personal growth that students experienced as a result of being in the HAP. All the students interviewed reported growth and change in their personal lives and attribute this in some way to their involvement in the access programme.

> *So in my view we .... what the access programme does, maybe it's my limited thinking, it brings out potential in a person, okay. It does not create a person, it just brings out the potential that otherwise would not be clear if the person had to be thrown into mainstream studies. That to me is the key to access programme.*

> [Student 1]

Three areas of personal growth emerged from the data: HAP improved confidence and self-esteem; it developed interpersonal skills; and it developed self-awareness and direction for their lives.

Theme 4.1: Improved Confidence and Self-Esteem

Students reported that the access programme helped to improve their confidence not only in their ability to achieve academically but also in their

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

interactions with staff and peers.

> *It was gave me confidence. I know that I will not fail because*
>
> *of the skills of this access programme.*   [Student 7]

> *It gives you confidence and prepares you for mainstream.* [Student 4]

> *...and confidence to sort of stand up for yourself and voice your*
>
> *ideas.*   [Student 3]

> *What it did was in trying to help us in making sure that we were*
>
> *not what we were and to improve our self-esteem.*   [Student 5]

One student gave an example of how he was given an opportunity to address a large group of students, including second and third year students. Another student tells of how she was selected by the access programme coordinator to address the university hierarchy and funders. In both instances the students express how the lecturer's confidence in them to do this boosted their self-confidence and made them believe in their abilities. From my experience as Director of the programme, I have found that many of the access students take on leadership roles when they enter mainstream studies. A number of them have been elected class representatives and Student Representative Council (SRC) members. Three past access students have served as SRC President on the Pietermaritzburg campus and one as Central SRC President. This reveals how the access programme is aiding students in developing confidence in their abilities and improving self-esteem to the extent that they are able to take on leadership roles.

Theme 4.2: Stronger Interpersonal Skills

Students also felt that the programme had aided in developing their interpersonal skills. The counselling programme dealt with various issues, such as prejudice and conflict resolution, and this, together with the small group interactions, helped students develop the ability to communicate effectively and

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

learn how to deal with various kinds of situation.

> *Ja, I think what we could have done probably, I realised mostly*
> *what really helped me the whole acquiring of interpersonal*
> *skills, communication, all that.*   [Student 4]

Another student comments specifically of the life skills programme and what he gained from that.

> *Ja, I found it useful in that there were some basic life skills like*
> *not to prejudge other people and things like that. I found them*
> *they were valuable in students life because you know before*
> *coming to here you may have done the mistake of looking at the*
> *problem and prejudging, prejudge the person and say maybe so*
> *and so is like this but when you are being taught that you know*
> *that you have to respect that person the same as you want to be*
> *respected.*   [Student 6]

Students felt that the skills that they had learned in relating and communicating with others had aided them in their time at university.

Theme 4.3: Greater Self Awareness and Direction for Life

Many of the students that were interviewed said that they saw themselves differently after being in the programme and that aspects of the programme helped them to redefine what they wanted from life and what they wanted to do. One student sums it up with the following statement:

> *Lastly I think you get to realise that where you come from is not*
> *where you are heading.*   [Student 5]

Students reported experiencing a change in career direction as a result of receiving career counselling and being helped with their degree plans. Some students came from schools with a particular focus on where they were going but this was often based only on what they had experienced at school. With proper counselling and the exposure the programme gave students to other

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

avenues of study, these students were able to find a new course. One student attributes the high failure rate to students not knowing what they want to do.

> *So they drop and pick up modules to try and actually see where*
> *they fit in and that is a high school problem actually. And*
> *sometimes the success and failure of students at university is*
> *purely based solely on that.*

[Student 1]

The Access students' experience was different and they received help in finding the right path for their careers.

> *We got attention, you know, from the lecturers and structures*
> *and career counselling afterwards and all those things and from*
> *then I was able to plan my progress at varsity. Then that's what*
> *I did, from there I was able to plan it and see how to get where*
> *I am now.* [Student 2]

Besides just the career counselling, students reported changes in their self-image, confidence and motivation which enabled them to look forward to their future.

> *Well I think the access programme had equipped me so much so*
> *that I now began to realise that I can be myself and try to*
> *motivate myself to achieve whatever and I can't go back.* [Student 4]

Through the HAP helping students to become more self-aware they were able to select modules that they enjoyed and were able to plan a degree that would set them on a specific career path. This has assisted students in being successful as it has enabled them to match their abilities and interests with their chosen career.

Theme 4: Conclusion

In conclusion, students felt that the access programme had helped them to experience personal growth in addition to the academic growth that they

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

experienced. This growth took the form of improved confidence and self-esteem, development of interpersonal skills and greater self awareness which resulted in students being able to recognise more easily careers that were most suitable for them. These findings concur with the research findings of Wood and Lithauer (2005) who found that students "benefited from the foundation programme in more ways than just academically. They attributed their personal development to the input they received in the foundation programme, and this personal development in turn was perceived to contribute greatly to their academic success" (Wood & Lithauer, 2005: 1017). The access programme appears to contribute holistically to student development and not just academically and this appears to have the effect of producing students that are able to succeed.

5.4   Investigating the Relationship Between Student Success and Student Perceptions of HAP

In trying to answer the third research question, *How do students' perceptions inform the cohort analysis?*, the final part of this chapter will investigate possible relationships between students' perceptions of the HAP and the results of the cohort analysis. Tinto's *Student Integration Model* (1975) will be used as a theoretical basis to try and establish and explain these possible relationships.

The cohort analysis revealed that HAP students produced a statistically significant higher percentage of graduates and lower drop-out and exclusion rates. In considering students' perceptions of the programme there are several possible links that could be made between the success students achieved and the way they experienced the programme. Firstly, students experienced social integration into the university. Through the access programme, students felt that they made friends, developed good relationships with their lecturers, had an understanding of the university structures and were well orientated to the university environments and facilities. In essence students developed a sense of belonging and found themselves in a safe and supportive place to

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

learn. According to Tinto's *SIM,* these are all components to students being socially integrated into the institution and which promote student retention and success. As students identify with the institution and feel that they belong they also begin to feel that they can succeed (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). The perceptions expressed by HAP students indicate that the learning environment in which they found themselves helped them to make the adaptation to university life and that this had contributed to their success. The support systems students developed with fellow students and staff members could possibly explain the lower drop-out rates compared to mainstream students. The smaller groups enabled bonds to form between peers and between students and lecturers that are difficult to cultivate in mainstream studies. Mainstream courses generally have much larger class groups than access groups (which were limited to 25 students) and so it is more difficult for them to get to know other students or to be given individual attention by the lecturer. Access students had the benefit of these relationships and so when encountering difficulties they had someone, either a fellow student or a staff member, who they could refer to for assistance.

Secondly, access students' success could be attributed to the personal growth students experienced in the programme. Psychologically, access students benefited from the programme as they reported feeling more confident and their self-esteem improving as a result of their experience in the programme. Wood and Lithauer (2005) assert that a good self-image is an essential foundation for academic success and Bass (2007), in his review of the Dental Technology Extended Year Programme at DUT, reported that students felt that the programme had improved their confidence and that this had contributed to their success. In addition HAP students reported having a greater sense of direction for their studies which, according to Tinto's *SIM*, also assists in student retention and success in their studies. Students with low goal commitment are more likely to drop-out of the institution but students with clear goals that have been carefully planned to suit their abilities and interests experience greater commitment to the institution and their goals (Tinto, 1975). From this it can be concluded that the socio-cultural adaptation that students experience through the HAP could be a contributing factor to their success and improved graduation and retention rates

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

compared to mainstream students.

The third link that can be made to possibly explain the improved success of HAP students is the academic integration experienced by these students. According to Tinto's model of student integration, there are two aspects to academic integration: meeting the standards of the institution and the students' ability to identify with the beliefs, values and norms of the academic system. In considering the first of these, HAP students expressed the view that the foundation courses that were part of the programme had helped them to learn to read and write academically which was a vast improvement in comparison to how they wrote at school. When comparing themselves to mainstream students they felt that they were better equipped and had skills that their mainstream counterparts lacked. According to Tinto, "it is not enough to be competent in class; students also have to *believe* in their competence" (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008: 49). It is evident from the access students' comments that they did believe that they were competent and well prepared for their studies, including post-graduate studies, and that they had achieved academic success after the programme. This academic achievement and perception of competency adds greatly to students' academic integration.

The second aspect of achieving academic integration is the students' ability to identify with the beliefs values and norms of the academic system. It is evident from students' comments that they had internalised these norms and values and understood what was required of them. They knew that as social science students they needed to be able to discuss and argue issues and provide evidence both for and against the arguments presented. Students had developed cognitively and were able to think on a theoretical level rather than just at a practical level. According to Tinto (1975), as they experience this intellectual development and begin to see themselves as competent academics, this further enhances their academic integration which in turn promotes retention and success.

In conclusion, the success that HAP students have achieved does appear to be linked

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 5: Findings

to what they have experienced in the programme. The social, psychological and academic integration they experienced has worked holistically in preparing students for the rigours of mainstream studies. Students appear to have identified strongly with the institution goals, values and norms and this has promoted retention and success.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the quantitative and qualitative data used in this study. The cohort analysis has reported on the quantitative data and has shown that HAP students surpassed their mainstream counterparts in graduation and retention rates. The qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews revealed four main themes of students' perceptions of the programme with several sub-themes for each of these. The qualitative and quantitative findings were then compared to see if the students' perceptions could in any way inform the success the HAP students had experienced. This yielded several possible relationships which aligned with Tinto's *Student Integration Model*.

The results obtained in this study serve to confirm Tinto's assertion that "institutions have to believe that all students, not just some, have the ability to succeed under the right set of conditions - and that is their responsibility to construct those conditions" (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008: 50). This has major implications for tertiary institutions and requires them to re-examine their curricula and teaching methods. Programmes such as the HAP show that if students, who have not met entry requirements to tertiary institutions, can succeed because of the methods employed then institutions can improve their throughput and retention by adjusting their approach to teaching and learning. This requires them to establish the right kinds of conditions for students. While the cost of running programmes such as the HAP prohibits every student from having the intense integration process access students experience, there are lessons to be learned that can be used with mainstream students which will promote success. In the Conclusion chapter I highlight several recommendations which emerge from this research both for the future of the HAP and for implementation in mainstream studies.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

6.1   Introduction

This study has undertaken to examine the impact of the Humanities Access Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on the institution and on the students. This was done by conducting mixed method research in which both quantitative and qualitative data is considered. In order to assess the impact on the institution a cohort study of students from the 2001 to 2004 was carried out while semi-structured interviews with a sample of students from these cohorts were carried out to examine the impact on students. In this chapter I will briefly review the methodology used in this study and the findings that have emerged before offering some recommendations for access programmes and for the faculty in order to continue improving throughput and retention of students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

6.2   Review of Methodology and Findings

This mixed method research study aimed to answer the following research questions: What Impact has the Humanities Access Programme had on the institution and on the students?

1.   How do throughput and retention rates of the Humanities Access Programme students compare to mainstream Humanities students of similar demographic?

2.   How did Access students perceive the programme and its different aspects?

3.   How do students' perceptions inform the interpretation of the cohort analysis?

In answering the first question, a cohort analysis of the 2001 to 2004 HAP students was carried out by examining the graduation rates, drop-outs, exclusions and students continuing with their studies. The time to completion was also examined. The results obtained were then compared to those of their mainstream counterparts in order to establish if the access programme had in any way affected the institutional throughput and retention. This comparison yielded some very positive results showing that HAP students had significantly higher graduation rates than mainstream students and lower

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 6 Conclusion

drop-out rates and exclusions. An even greater difference emerged when these results were disaggregated by race. HAP students outperformed African, Coloured and Indian students in terms of graduation rates and were on par with White students. When considering the time taken to complete their degrees however, there appeared to be no difference between the access students and mainstream students. A similar pattern of completion times emerged for both groups. This research effectively means that the year access students spent in the HAP increased their potential to graduate to that of students coming from advantaged and well resourced educational backgrounds. This study concludes that the HAP is having a very positive impact on the institution by producing students who have the potential to graduate.

The second research question examined the impact the HAP had on students by considering their perceptions of the programme. This was done using a semi-structured interview with seven students from the 2001 to 2004 cohorts. These interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic content analysis. Four major themes emerged from the data with several sub-themes for each. The first theme dealt with students' perceptions of the HAP helping students to succeed. Students felt that the programme had helped them and they were all positive about the programme despite some initial reservation and concerns about the programme. Students were unanimous in their opinion that access programmes such as HAP should continue, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The second theme to emerge from the data revealed how students felt about the foundation modules offered in the HAP. Generally students were happy with the modules offered in the programme. The only one that received mixed reviews was Africa in the World which some students found very useful, while others found it irrelevant. Students were very positive about the English and Academic Communication Studies modules and felt that these modules had prepared them well for mainstream studies, had taught them how to write essays and how to present an argument. Some students also felt that these modules had enabled them to develop their presentation skills. Overall students' perceptions of these foundation modules

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 6 Conclusion

were positive and they felt that they had contributed to their academic success.

As a third theme, students expressed how the HAP had helped them adapt to university life. They believed that the small groups enabled them to get to know the staff well and they perceived them to be caring and supportive. Students felt that the staff helped them with the adaptation and supported them even when they were in mainstream. Another way in which the HAP strengthened students' support systems was by providing opportunities to make friends. Many of the students interviewed reported having made friends in the access programme and that these friendships continued after they left the programme. Students also felt that the programme had helped them to adapt to the teaching and learning environment which they found much more demanding than at school as well as helping them to adapt to the new environment and culture of university life.

The final theme dealt with the personal growth that students reported. Students perceived that what they had gained went beyond just the academic arena. Students reported feeling more confident and having better self-esteem as well as developing interpersonal and communication skills. They said that the programme had helped them find direction for their lives and had aided them in choosing the right career path and modules for their degrees.

This leads to the conclusion that the HAP has had a positive impact on students in a holistic way. They felt that they had not only benefited academically but also socially and psychologically and that this had enabled them to perform better in their studies than if they had not been part of the programme.

In attempting to answer the third research question regarding the ways in which students' perceptions could explain the results of the cohort analysis, Tinto's *Student Integration Model* was used as a framework to find tentative relationships. Three relationships were discussed. Firstly, social integration through students being orientated to the university structures and facilities, a caring staff and making friends

Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to 2004:
Throughput Rates and Students' Perceptions of the Programme
Chapter 6 Conclusion

improves student retention and success. Secondly, psychological growth in terms of improved confidence and self-esteem and a sense of well-being enables students to succeed. Finally, academic integration through students' academic achievement and intellectual growth promotes success and retention. These three tentative links between students' perceptions and the success achieved by access students could assist in understanding what students perceive as necessary to succeed in tertiary education.

6.3   Recommendations

Part of the purpose of conducting this research was to provide administrators and educators with information that will assist them in planning future initiatives and in institutionalising aspects of the programme that appear to enable student success. I therefore offer the following recommendations:

1.   The university needs to find more effective ways of disseminating information to rural schools regarding entrance requirements, courses on offer and application procedures. Information disseminated through the Central Application Office and Open Days seems only to reach students in the peri-urban areas.

2.   Foundation lecturers should be carefully selected for their student-centred teaching and learning practices in order to promote an environment in which students can develop academically, emotionally and socially.

3.   Level one lecturers should be made aware of the teaching and learning issues facing students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and be assisted in structuring their materials, assignments, tests and examinations in such a way as to scaffold students' learning rather than assuming a level of competency that does not exist.

4.   A mentoring programme should be set up where students have opportunity to develop relationships with staff members or post graduate students and have a

forum where they can discuss problems and issues they are facing.

5. The university/faculty needs to develop a holistic approach to student education and needs to provide opportunities for social and emotional development as well as academic development. This could be done through the introduction of life skills workshops for all students and encouraging this approach in the teaching of all modules.

6. The Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences needs to make a firm commitment to stabilise the programme by providing funds for expansion and to retain qualified and experience staff by offering them long-term or permanent contracts. The appointment of Academic Development Officers within the faculty would greatly enhance the promotion of good teaching and learning practices throughout the faculty and not just in the access programme.

6.4   Conclusion

This study has concluded that the HAP is having a positive impact on both the university and the students and has identified several possible ways in which this has been achieved. The biggest obstacle to the continued success of the HAP and other such initiatives is the lack of support from the institution. I fully support Engstrom and Tinto's sentiments regarding institutions' responses to these academic development programmes.

> *Institutions need to avoid the tendency to place developmental-education programs and the academically under-prepared students they serve at the margins of institutional life. They have to stop taking an "add-on" approach to institutional innovation that marginalises successful efforts, constrains their ability to expand, and limits their effectiveness. Until institutions take these steps, they will continue to struggle to translate increased access into real opportunity.* (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008: 50)

REFERENCES

Badsha, N. (2004). Letter to Prof. Makhoba, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 16 February.

Bass, G. (2007). *An investigation of the perceptions of learners and staff in respect of the Dental Technology Extended Curriculum Programme.* University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Bitzer, E., & Troskie-De Bruin, C. (2004). The effect of factors related to prior schooling on student persistence in higher education. *South African Journal of Education, 24*(2), 119.

Bitzer, E. (2009). Journeying with higher education studies and research: a personal perspective. In E. Bitzer (Ed) *Higher education in South Africa: a scholarly look behind the scenes*. Stellenbosch: Sun Media.

Bleach, K. 1999. *The Introduction and Mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers: A New Deal For Teachers.* London: David Fulton.

Borg, W., & Gall, M. (1983). *Educational Research: An Introduction* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Borg, D. (2009). *The effects of the extended curriculum programme on the social identity of students.* Unpublished master's thesis University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Boughey, C. (2007). Marrying Equity and Efficiency: The Need for Third Generation Academic Development. *Perspectives in Education, 25*(3), 12.

Boughey, C. (2005). 'Epistemological' access to the university: an alternative perspective. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 19*(3), 230-242.

Bourn, J. (2002). *Improving student achievement in English higher education*. London: National Audit Office.

Bozalek, V. (2009). Factors affecting student learning at UWC. Unpublished research paper, University of Western Cape, Cape Town.

Bryman, A. (1988). *Quantity and quality in social research*. London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.

CHE (2004). *South African higher education in the first decade of democracy*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

CHE (2009). *The state of higher education in South Africa*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education .

Chisholm, L., & Vally, S. (1996). The culture of learning and teaching in Gauteng schools. *Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit*.

Christie, P., & Collins, C. (1984). Bantu Education: Apartheid Ideology or Labour Reproduction? In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *Apartheid and Education: The education of black South Africans*. Johannesburg: Ravan.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison K. 2005. *Research Methods in Education.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Collins, J. W. & O'Brien, N. P. 2003. *The Greenwood Dictionary of Education.* Westport: Greenwood Press.

Collins, J. W. & O'Brien, N. P. 2003. *The Greenwood Dictionary of Education.* Westport: Greenwood Press.

Cooper, D., & Subotzky, G. (2001). *The skewed revolution: Trends in South African higher education, 1988-1998*: Education Policy Unit, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London: Sage Publishers.

Curtis, P. & de Villiers, J. (1992). The academic effectiveness of a bridging year for commerce undergraduates. *Development Southern Africa,* 9(4): 457 - 470.

Davies, J. (1984). Capital, state and educational reform in South Africa. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *Apartheid and education: the education of Black South Africans. Johannesburg:* Ravan Press.

De Villiers, J., & Rwigema, H. (1998). The Effect of a Bridging Year on the Graduation Success of Educationally Disadvantaged Commerce Students. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 12*(1), 103-108.

De Klerk, E., Schoeman, A., van Denventer, I., & van Schalkwyk, S. (2006). The Extended Degree Programme at Stellenbosch University (1995–2004): An Impact Study. Unpublished research paper, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch.

Department of Education. (1997). *Schools register of Needs Survey.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education (DoE). (2006). *Funding for Foundational Provision in Formally Approved Programmes: 2007/8 to 2009/10.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Engle, J., & Tinto, V. (2008). Moving Beyond Access: College Success for Low-Income, First-Generation Students. *Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education*, 38.

Engstrom, C., & Tinto, V. (2008). Access without support is not opportunity. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 40*(1), 46-50.

Essack, Z., & Quayle, M. (2007). Students' perceptions of a university access (bridging) programme for social science, commerce and humanities: research article. *Perspectives in Education, 25*(1), 71-84.

Fiske, E. B., & Ladd, H. F. (2004). *Elusive equity: Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Fleisch, B. (2002). State formation and the origins of Bantu Education. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *The history of education under Apartheid 1948 - 1994*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

Freeman, K. (1997). Increasing African Americans' participation in higher education: African American high-school students' perspectives. *Journal of Higher Education, 68*(5), 523-550.

Freeman, K. (1997). Increasing African Americans' participation in higher education: African American high-school students' perspectives. *Journal of Higher Education, 68*(5), 523-550.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 8*(4), 597-607.

Harber, C. (2001). *State of Transition: Post-Apartheid Educational Reform in South Africa.* Oxford: Symposium Books.

Hay, H., & Marais, F. (2004). Bridging Programmes: Gain, Pain or All in Vain: perspectives of Higher Education. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 18*(2), 59 - 75.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*: Cambridge University Press.

Hlalele, D. (2010). Do learning skills acquired in the university access programme enhance participation in academic practice? *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 24(1): 98 - 110.

Holtman, L., & Marshall, D. 5. Foundational Provisions in the UWC Science Faculty: Widening Access and Promoting Success. *Edited by Lorna Holtman, Cyril Julie, Øyvind Mikalsen*, 73.

Hunt Davis, R. (1984). The administration and financing of African education in South Africa 1910-1953. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *Apartheid and Education*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Jama, M. P., Mapesela, M. L. E., & Beylefeld, A. A. (2009). Theoretical perspectives on factors affecting the academic performance of students. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 22*(5), 992-1005.

Jansen, J. (2006, 31 December). We have settled for a dual school system that nurtures pupils' vain hopes. *Sunday Independent,* p. 8,

Jansen, J., Herman, C., Matentjie, T., Morake, R., Pillay, V., Sehoole, C., et al. (2007). Tracing and explaining change in higher education: The South African case. *Review of Higher Education in South Africa. Selected Themes.* Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Jones, B., Coetzee, G., Bailey, T., & Wickham, S. (2008). *Factors that facilitate success for disadvantaged higher education students*. Document Number)
Jones, R., & Thomas, E. (2001). Not 'just passing through': making retention work for present and future learners. *Journal of Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 3*(2), 2–3.

Kloot, B., Case, J., & Marshall, D. (2008). A critical review of the educational philosophies underpinning Science and Engineering foundation programmes. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 22*(4), 799-816.

Koen, C. (2007). *Postgraduate student retention and success: A South African case study*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Lau, L. K. (2003). Institutional Factors Affecting Student Retention. *Education, 124*(1), 126-137.

Lauer, C. (2002). Participation in higher education. *International Journal of Manpower, 23*(5), 443-457.

Leslie, D., & Drinkwater, S. (1999). Staying on in full-time education: Reasons for higher participation rates among ethnic minority males and females. *Economica, 66*(261), 63-77.

Lotkowski, V. A., Robbins, S. B., & Noeth, R. J. (2004). The role of academic and non-academic factors in improving college retention. *ACT Policy Report*, 20-24.

Mabila, T., Malatje, S., Addo-Bediako, A., Kazeni, M., & Mathabatha, S. (2006). The role of foundation programmes in science education: The UNIFY programme at the University of Limpopo, South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development, 26*(3), 295-304.

Maree, L. (1984). The hearts and minds of the people. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *Apartheid and education: The education of black South Africans*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Marks, G. N., Fleming, N., Long, M., & McMillan, J. (2000). Patterns of participation in Year 12 and higher education in Australia: Trends and issues. *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth Research Report, 17*.

McKenna, S. (2003). Changing discourses of academic development at a South African technikon 1991 to 2002. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 17*(2), 60 - 67.

McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (1993). *Research in Education. A conceptual Introduction* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

McNamee, P. J. (1995). Bridging Gaps: An Analysis of Access Programmes for Persons of Disadvantaged Backgrounds. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 32*(2), 106-111.

Mingle, J. R. (1987). Focus on Minorities: Trends in Higher Education Participation and Success.

Ministry of Education. (2000). *Education for all: The South African assessment report.* Pretoria. Document Number)

Molteno, F. (1984). The historical foundations of the schooling of Black South Africans. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *Apartheid and Education: The education of black South Africans.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Morrow, W. (2007). *Learning to teach in South Africa.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Motala, E., & Singh, M. (2001). Introduction. In E. Motala & J. Pampallis (Eds.), *Education and equity: the impact of state policies on South African education.* Cape Town: Heinemann Publishers.

Mouton, J. (1996). *Understanding social research.* Pretoria: van Schaik.

Nicolaou, K. (2001). The link between macroeconomic policies, education policies and the education budget. In E. Motala & J. Pampallis (Eds.), *Education and equity: the impact of state policies on South African education.* Cape Town: Heinemann.

Niven, P. (2010). Epistemologies as 'farms': Novice Students in a Political Science module, *Teaching in Higher Education*

Ntshoe, I., & de Villiers, P. (2008). Steering the South African higher education sector towards transformation. *Perspectives in Education, 26*(4), 17 - 27.

Onweugbuzie, A. J. 2002. Why Can't We All Get Along? Towards A Framework For Unifying Research Paradigms. *Education*, **122**(4): 518-530.

Petersen, I., Louw, J., & Dumont, K. (2009). Adjustment to university and academic performance among disadvantaged students in South Africa. *Educational Psychology, 29*(1), 99 - 115.

Psacharopoulos, G. (1985). Returns to education: a further international update and implications. *Journal of Human Resources, 20*(4), 583-604.

Rieker, M. (2008) *Echoes From the Coalface: The Pedagogy and Practice of Augmented Teaching of Access Students*. Presented at First year Experience Conference, Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch University.

Robinson, G. (1998). *Methods and Techniques in Human Geography*. Chichester: John Wiley.

Schön, D. 1983. *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books

Scott, D., & Usher, R. (1996). *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge.

Scott, I., Yeld, N., & Hendry, J. (2007). *Higher Education Monitor: A Case for Improving Teaching and Learning in South African Higher Education.* Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Sedibe, K. (1998). Dismantling Apartheid Education: An Overview of Change. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 28*(3), 269-282.

Shobrook, S. (2003). The role of pre-entry practices and induction strategies in relation to student retention. *Strategy Guide resource of the PROGRESS project, University of Hull*.

Smith, L. (2009). Measuring the success of an academic development programme: A statistical analysis. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 23(5): 1009 - 1025.

South Africa (2004). National norms and standards for school funding in terms of the South African Schools Act 1996 (Act No. 84, 1996) *Government Gazette* 1357, 19 November 2004 (Regulation Gazette No. 27014).

South Africa (1997). *A programme for the transformation of Higher Education (Education Draft White Paper 3)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Stott, C. 1994. Securing Wider Access. *Journal of Access Studies*, **9**:124-130.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*: Sage Publications, Inc.

Taylor, N., Vinjevold, P., & Trust, J. E. (1999). *Getting learning right: report of the President's Education Initiative Research Project*: Joint Education Trust.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. London: Sage Publications.

Terre Blanche, M. Durrheim, K. & Kelly, K. 2006. First Steps in Qualitative Data Analysis. *In*: Terre Blanche, M. & Durrheim, K. (eds.) *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences.* Cape Town: Cape Town University Press.

Thomas, L. (2006). The impact of first generation entry on access and success in higher education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, 8*(3), 1-6.

Thomas, L. (2002). *Building social capital to improve student success.* Paper presented at the BERA Conference, University of Exeter.

Tickle, L. 1989. On Probation: Preparation for Professionalism. *Cambridge Journal of Education,* **19**(3): 277-85.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of educational research, 45*(1), 89.

Toma, J. D. 1997. Alternative Inquiry Paradigms, Faculty Cultures, and the Definition of Academic Lives. *Journal of Higher Education,* **68**(6): 679-705.

UNESCO (2009). *Global Education Digest 2009: Comparing Educational Statistics Across the World*, Montreal: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

United States Library of Congress (1996). Education Under Apartheid. Retrieved 3 March, 2010, from http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field (DOCID+za0066)

University of KwaZulu-Natal (2004). *Faculty of Human and Management Sciences: Pietermaritzburg Campus*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Vithal, R., & Jansen, J. (2004). Designing your first Research Proposal: A Manual for Beginning Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences: Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*: Harvard University Press.

Welman, J. C., Kruger, S. J., & Mitchell, B. (2005). *Research methodology* (3rd ed.). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, F. (2001). *Employment, education and the economy*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations. Document Number)

Wood, L. A., & Lithauer, P. (2005). The 'added value' of a foundation programme. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 19*(5), 1002-1019.

Yorke, M., & Thomas, L. (2003). Improving the retention of students from lower socio-economic groups. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 25*(1), 63-74.

Annexures

Annexure A: Letter of Information

Letter of Information Regarding Humanities Access
Programme Research Project

I am presently registered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for a Masters in Education. I am conducting research on the Humanities Access Programme with students from the 2001 to 2004 cohorts. The title of my research project is "*Examining the Humanities Access Programme from 2001 to 2004: Investigating Throughput Rates and Students Perceptions of the Programme.*" In doing this research I am hoping to gain understanding into what enables student success so that these practises can be built on in the Humanities Access Programme as well as in the university in general.

I am seeking past Humanities Access programme students who are willing to be part of this research project by participating in a one-off interview that will take between 30 minutes and an hour. This interview would be recorded and the recording transcribed for further analysis. This recording and transcription will be stored in an safe environment and t the end of the research project will be disposed of. At no time will you be identified in the research and all responses will be treated in confidence and used only for research purposes.

Should you agree to be part of the research project but later decide that you wish to withdraw, you may do so at any time. If the interview has already been conducted, the data gather will be discarded and destroyed.

If you agree to be part of the project, I will contact you to set up a time for the interview that is mutually agreed on. As I will be interviewing not more than 10 past students, I may have to select a sample at random but will inform you whether you have been selected or not. Whether you are selected or not I want to express my appreciation for your willingness to be interviewed and to be part of this project.

If you would like any further information regarding this research project you can contact me at University of KwaZulu-Natal, telephone 033 260 5977, or my supervisor, Mrs Ruth Searle, University of KwaZulu-Natal, telephone 033 260 6250.

If you are willing to participate in the research project please complete the attached response form.

Yours sincerely
Dean Tyson

Annexure B: Acknowledgement of Willingness To Participate

Humanities Access Programme Research Project

Please complete the information below and return it to Mr Dean Tyson as indicated.

I am willing to be part of Mr Dean Tyson's research project into the Humanities Access Programme. I understand that final participants will be selected by the researcher on a random sample basis.

Name: _____

Contact No.: _____

Signature :_____

Date: _____

If you are contacted to do the interview you will be asked to sign the attached letter of consent on the day of the interview.

Please return to:

Mr Dean Tyson
Humanities Access Programme
Room 8 B
Old Main Building
Private Bag X01
SCOTTSVILLE
3209

Telephone: 033 260 5977
Fax :   033 260 5836
email: tysond@ukzn.ac.za

Annexure C: Letter of Consent

Humanities Access Programme Research Project
Letter of Consent to Participate In Research Project
and to the Publication of the Results

1. I understand that Mr Dean Tyson is conducting research on the Humanities Access Programme and that he will be interviewing past students.

2. I have volunteered to be part of this research project. I understand that I will be interviewed by Mr dean Tyson and that the interview will be taped.

3. I accept that the results of this research project will be used towards a Masters degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and that the results may be used for writing papers for presentation at conferences or publication in academic journals.

4. I understand that my name will **not** be used in any report describing the research project but.

5. I agree to participate in the research study but I understand that I can withdraw my agreement to participate at any time, even if the interview has already been conducted.

Name: _____

Contact No.: _____

Signature :_____

Date: _____

Annexure D: Schedule of Interview Questions

Humanities Access Programme Research Project
Interview Schedule for Past Students

1.   What, if anything did you know about the Humanities Access Programme before being accepted into the programme?

2.   Did you understand why you were placed in the programme?

3.   Did anyone explain to you what the programme was?

4.   How did you feel initially about being in the programme?

5.   Did these feelings change at some point? If so when and how did they change?

6.   What aspect of the programme stands out for you as being most helpful in adjusting to studying at university?

7.   Are there other aspects of the programme that you felt were useful?

8.   What part of the programme did you feel did not benefit you in any way?

9.   From an academic point of view, was there any particular module(s) that you felt prepared you for mainstream studies? In what ways did it/they help you?

10.   Is there any aspect of the programme that you think needs to be changed to make it more effective?

11.   Is there any aspect of the programme that you fell should be dropped from the programme to make it more effective?

12.   Do you think that the Humanities Access programme helped in your academic achievement? How?

13.   Were there any difficulties that you experienced as a new student on campus? Did the Access programme help you in any way in overcoming those problems?

14.   Did you use the programme or its staff in anyway after you year in the access programme?

15.   Do you believe that programmes such as the Humanities Access programme should be continued? Why?

16.   If you can, give three ways in which the Humanities Access Programme has benefited you.

Annexure E: Clearance Certificate from Acting Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Dear Dr. Dempster

This serves to confirm that Mr Dean Tyson, Co-ordinator of the Access Programme in HDSS Pietermaritzburg, may access information from the ITS of students who were registered for the Humanities Access Programme in 2001 – 2004, for the purposes of conducting research toward a Masters degree in Education.

Mr Tyson will also be conducting interviews with a selection of students from the said programme.

Regards,

Terence King (Prof emeritus)
Acting Deputy Dean

Annexure F: Ethical Clearance University of KwaZulu-Natal
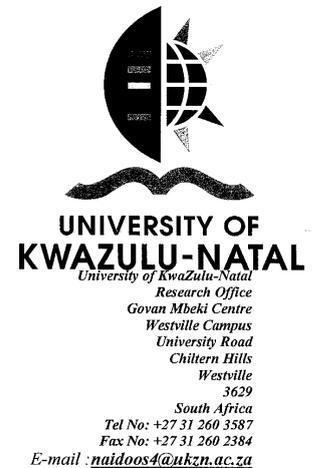
09 July 2010

Mr D R Tyson
School of Adult and Higher Education
Faculty of Education
PIETERMARITZBURG CAMPUS

Dear Mr Tyson

PROTOCOL: Examining the Impact of the Humanities Access Programme 2001 to2004: Throughput Rates and Students Perceptions of the Programme
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0441/2010 M: Faculty of Education and Development

In response to your application dated 07 June 2010, Student Number: **812817157** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL.**

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Ms. R Searle (Supervisor)
cc: Ms. T Khumalo