

**LEARNING ORIENTATIONS OF FET STUDENTS: The case of the Applied
Learning Programme in a Western Cape FET college**

by

Liza Hamman



Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Masters of Education,
University of the Western Cape

2011

Supervisor: Prof. Zelda Groener

KEY WORDS

1. Further Education and Training
2. Vocational Education
3. Adult Learning
4. Globalisation
5. Part-time Students
6. Student orientations
7. Learning orientations
8. Motivational orientations
9. National Qualifications Framework
10. Employability



ABSTRACT

This study investigated the reasons why FET part-time students enrolled at a FET college by examining their learning orientations. Guided by the literature, the focus was on the vocational orientation to learning and orientations to learning were further investigated within the vocational orientation based on orientations developed for part-time students found in the literature. In addition, it was investigated whether students' expectations have been met and if they were satisfied with the college experience. Lastly, the study examined the relevance of college learning to the world of work and the contribution it made to the career development of learners in a globalising world.

The research shows that part-time students enrol at FET colleges predominantly for vocational reasons and the majority of the students were enrolled in order to advance their careers and associated with a vocational orientation to learning. However, it emerged that reasons for learning within the vocational orientation to learning are often multi-faceted and complex. The most important findings are 3 new learning orientations for part-time students that were identified: 'education for a qualification', 'education for adults who previously made the wrong choice' and 'education for adults as a model for their children'. Furthermore, the findings indicate that learners were satisfied with the programme they were enrolled in because they believed that the qualification would enable them to achieve their vocational aims which were primarily to find a new job, to be promoted and to increase their income. The findings suggest that the programme that was examined was relevant to the world of work, promoted employability and that it made a significant and important contribution to students' career development in a globalising world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this research paper possible and I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

My late mother, Elizabeth Hamman, who taught me strength and perseverance and without whom none of this would have been possible;

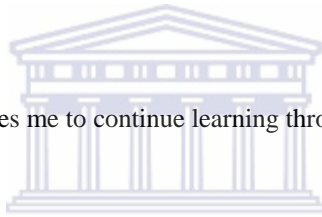
Prof. Zelda Groener, my supervisor, whose expertise, guidance and insight has been invaluable to me. Thank you for your support and opening up new possibilities that were previously unimaginable;

Ronald, for your unfailing support, the sacrifices you made in order to provide me with the space and time to complete this research paper and for always believing in me;

My father, Dr. Kas Hamman, who inspires me to continue learning through his example;

My family and friends, your informal support and encouragement has been indispensable. I would like to particularly thank Bronwyn, for your assistance during the final stages of this study;

The students who agreed to participate in this study. Without their willingness to co-operate this study would not have been possible.



UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

DECLARATION

Herewith I, the undersigned, declare that the work included in this research paper, 'Learning orientations of FET students: The case of the Applied Learning Programme in a Western Cape FET college', is my own original work. To the best of my knowledge this research paper contains no material written by another person except where due reference is made.

This research paper is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Masters in Education and has not been submitted previously, in its entirety or in part, to any university for a degree.

.....
Liza Hamman
20 September 2011



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CHE	Council on Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMP	Employer
FE	Further Education
FET	Further Education and Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IT	Information Technology
NATED	National Department of Education
NC(V)	National Certificate Vocational
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQF L	National Qualifications Framework Level
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
Report 191	National Education Policy, formal Technical Colleges Instructional programmes in the RSA
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDL	Skills Development Levy
SETA	South African Education and Training Authority
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UMALUSI	Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VAT	Value Added Tax
VET	Vocational Education and Training

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
KEY WORDS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DECLARATION	iv
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	v
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Context and Background	1
1.2 Aims of the Research	2
1.3 Rationale	2
SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	5
2.1 Globalisation	5
2.1.1 Conceptions of Globalisation	5
2.1.2 Globalisation and Education	7
2.1.3 Globalisation and Vocational Education	8
2.2 The world of Further Education and Training	10
2.2.1 Conceptions of Further Education and Training	10
2.2.2 FET colleges and the National Qualifications Framework	11
2.2.3 FET colleges and Skills Development in South Africa	14
2.2.4 Employment opportunities for FET graduates in South Africa	16
2.3 Conceptual/Theoretical Framework: Learning Orientations, Vocational Education and Adults' reasons part-time studies at post-school institutions	19
SECTION 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	26
3.1 The Research Question	26
3.2 Research Site	26
3.3 Research Methodology	28

3.4 Research Instrument	30
3.5 Data capturing and storage	31
3.6 Data analysis	31
3.7 Ethical Considerations	33
SECTION 4: DATA ANALYSIS	36
4.1 Description of the students	36
4.2 Satisfaction with the college experience	36
4.3 Learning Orientations	39
SECTION 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	58
5.1 Summary of findings	58
5.2 Recommendations	62
5.2.1 Recommendations to Mountain View College	62
5.2.2 Recommendations to the FET Sector	62
5.2.3 Recommendations to government	63
5.3 Conclusion	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	65
APPENDICES	
1. Consent form	
2. Ethical Clearance	
3. Interview Schedule	
4. Profile of Learners Interviewed	



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Background

Globalisation has altered the education sector and the way that people experience education. In South Africa adult learning occurs within the context of the economic and political transformation of the apartheid system and changing global conditions. The focus is on providing education relevant to the needs of the economy, which will result in a highly skilled, mobile, workforce and therefore international competitiveness, economic growth and employment. In a country where unemployment is a major problem, education and competence development are seen as ways to promote growth and equality and it is central in restructuring the economy.

Globalisation has caused rapid change in society and working life where increased competition has turned the focus to the skills, knowledge and learning capacity of the workforce as a source of competitive success (Bryson, Mallon, Pajo & Ward, 2006; Tynjälä, 2008). Educational institutions are now challenged to develop new ways to ensure that the level of competence in the workforce meet the demands of the new economy. In South Africa the emphasis on skills development has turned the attention to the role of the FET sector in providing the necessary skills to meet the South African development challenge (Akoojee, 2008).

Adults are expected to become lifelong learners in the new knowledge-based economy in order to ensure that their skills stay current and to ensure employability. According to Kember, Armour, Jenkins, Lee, Leung, Li, Chi Ng, Siaw & Yum (2001) the fast pace of technological change means that an increasing proportion of the workforce face the prospect of changing their field of work during their lifetime. Globally it is believed that lifelong learning will ensure a competitive advantage in the highly competitive global world and it has emerged as a strategy to deal with the challenges associated with globalisation and the new knowledge-based economy (Ugglä, 2008).

Educational programmes are designed and developed to incorporate the markets' demand for specific skills and resources are focused on vocational training. FET colleges are expected to become more responsive to development goals and to the labour market in order to adapt to the demands of globalisation. Along with these developments, the literature has shown that there has been an increase in the number of more mature, part-time students enrolling at FET colleges. According to Akoojee, McGrath & Visser (2008: 260) this trend indicates either a wider programme offering by colleges that cater specifically for this age group or an effort by colleges to recruit this specific age group in order to be more responsive to national skills development goals.

1.2 Aims of the Research

The purpose of the research was to describe the learning experiences of adult part-time Further Education and Training (FET) learners who are rarely the focus of research, although the literature has shown that this is a growing sector in South African education. The increasing number of part-time student enrolments drew my attention to the need to investigate the college experience of these students. At the specific FET college where the research was conducted 854 students are enrolled on a full-time basis and 293 students part-time (J. de Villiers, personal communication, May 13, 2011).

For this study I used a case study research method to examine the experience of students who were enrolled at a FET college on a part-time basis and the aim of the research was to discover students' reasons for enrolling in terms of their learning orientations, to investigate whether students' expectations in relation to their own specified aims have been met and lastly to examine the contribution of college learning to the learners' chosen career path in a globalising world.

1.3 Rationale

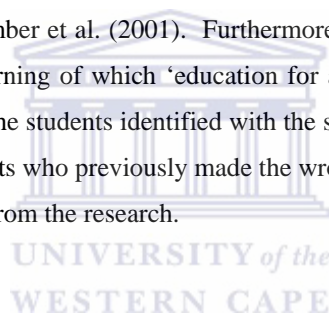
As a lecturer at a FET college, in addition to teaching full-time students during the day I also teach part-time students who attend class in the evening. While teaching and interacting with these students I became interested in the reasons why these usually more mature students enrol in a part-time programme. Cyril Houle notes that:

“...the proper task of adult education should be to give integration, to give richness and meaning, to that experience. Education is a process of helping people to change themselves, of giving them the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge, to deepen their insight and understanding, and to broaden their attitudes and their appreciations” (Houle, 1967: 20).

I was curious to know what the purpose of college learning was for part-time students. Adult learners are defined in the literature as adult part-time learners with full-time adult responsibilities in addition to their studies (Thompson-Davenport, 1996). I was wondering what difference learning was making in the lives of adult students, or what difference they were anticipating it would make? What motivated them to take on the extra responsibility of studying part-time in addition to work, family and other responsibilities? I also became concerned about the significance and usefulness of college learning for these students. Studying part-time is challenging and it means sacrificing valuable free time and other resources and I wanted to know if these students considered the sacrifice worthwhile.

In a globalising world there could be several reasons why adults engage in learning and most people may have more than one reason for learning. However, the literature has shown that the majority of courses are taken for reasons that are job related. Kember et al. (2001) note that most adults are learning new skills for job advancement, to make a career change or to keep up with their present positions. According to Cross (1981: 84) adults are often motivated by the need to use or apply their knowledge and skills. Akoojee & McGrath (2008) found that most students at FET colleges, including part-time students, have an employment dominated rationale for studying.

Based on a review of international literature I determined that from a theoretical standpoint learning orientations provided the insight into the complex set of reasons, purposes, aims, motivations and needs that prompt students to enrol in a programme, which is what I wanted to investigate in relation to part-time FET students. It is mentioned above that FET students and part-time adult learners usually have employment related reasons for studying; therefore I anticipated that most students would be vocationally orientated. Within the vocational orientation, I used the orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001) to further investigate part-time FET college students' reasons for learning and found students frequently associated with the orientation, 're-training for a career shift', as developed by Kember et al. (2001). Furthermore, I identified 3 new learning orientations within the vocational orientation to learning of which 'education for a qualification', was the most prominent because the overwhelming majority of the students identified with the specific orientation. Additionally, 2 other learning orientations 'education for adults who previously made the wrong choice' and 'education for adults as a model for their children' also emerged from the research.



In line with a vocational orientation to learning, South African FET colleges are increasingly expected to offer courses that are relevant to the needs of the South African economy in a global world and to become more vocationally orientated. In an attempt to adhere to the requirements of the labour market, the FET College where I work has introduced the Applied Learning programme which is offered on a part-time basis only. The programme is aimed at providing students with the skills and knowledge required in the workplace and it is also specifically linked to job functions. My concern was that college learning may not be sufficiently integrated with business practice to equip students with the necessary skills for improved proficiency in their current positions, career advancement or to meet the demands of the new, global economy.

In my international literature review I found that many studies investigate reasons for learning in relation to career development but very few have focused on the Further Education and Training sector. In research conducted by Afrassa (2001) the employability of TAFE graduates in Australia was investigated and it revealed that reasons for enrolment often influence employability of graduates. The South African literature relating to FET is according to McGrath (2000) and Wedekind (2008) produced by a small group of researchers, rather underdeveloped and there is a need for further research. However, there is an emerging literature. For example, the link between the market and colleges has been investigated by Badroodien (2006) who looked at ways to

improve the relationship between colleges and the world of work. Cosser (2003) and Kraak (2008) both investigated the employment rate of college graduates and Jacobsz (2004) developed guidelines to ensure market driven FET programmes.

I found that FET students' reasons for enrolment was investigated by Akoojee & McGrath (2008), Cosser (2003) and McGrath (2003b) but there is limited exploration of students' experience of learning specifically in relation to their own specified aims and career development in a globalising world. McGrath (2004: 167) notes that it is vital that colleges know how their graduates are doing and how they are progressing. Therefore, I believe that the research I conducted made a valuable contribution to this field of knowledge.



SECTION 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section reviews the literature in 3 broad areas. First, this study is contextualised in the global world, followed by an overview of the literature relating to FET in South Africa and lastly an examination of the conceptual/theoretical framework of learning orientations.

2.1 Globalisation

The investigation of the learning orientations of FET students enrolled in the Applied Learning programme was conducted at a local level but it is important to recognise how the global context shapes the developments within the education and the vocational education sector in South Africa. The literature, as discussed in this section, reveals that global trends influence the learning orientations of learners and educational institutions and that it encourages a vocational orientation to learning and a closer relationship between education and the world of work.

The following section contextualises education and vocational education in a globalising world. It illustrates how discourses of globalisation changed the face of education and resulted in the view that education should be relevant to the labour market and promote employability, or in other words, have a vocational orientation. These developments turned the focus to vocational education and part-time studies as adults are now expected to become lifelong learners in order for their skills to stay current in the fast changing global environment. Educational institutions, such as colleges, are being reformed to be more vocationally orientated and the expectation is that these institutions should develop skills that are in line with the needs of the economy and promote employability of the students. The challenges that the South African vocational sector face are not only relevant locally, but also globally and in the following section I examine global trends that shape education and vocational education.

2.1.1 Conceptions of Globalisation

When engaging in discussions about globalisation it is necessary to understand what globalisation entails. It is not easy to define globalisation and during the last few decades the global environment have become more intertwined with increased economic integration, global forms of governance and globally inter-linked social and environmental developments all referred to as globalisation (Martens & Raza, 2010). There are different interpretations of globalisation and that it is understood by most as more than interdependence among nations is illustrated by the globalisation literature coming from diverse disciplines such as political science, sociology, anthropology, management and economics (Beekers, 2003). Among the more visible manifestations of globalisation is the increased international movement of goods and services, financial capital, information and

people. There are technological developments, political changes, ecological consequences and international cultural exchanges made possible by free trade, tourism and immigration (Martens & Raza, 2010).

Globalisation is more than an economic phenomenon and it is important to explore the different meanings and definitions of the term. Scholte (2003) identified 5 definitions of globalisation. The first identifies globalisation as internationalisation. This definition states that growing international exchange and interdependence will lead to a globalised economy. The second definition defines globalisation as liberalisation which focuses on the removal of restriction on movement between countries in order to create a more open global economy. Both these definitions envisage that globalisation will lead to a global economy and that national economies will play a less dominant roll. This trend can limit the authority of nation states and as a result politics can become more market driven. In addition, pressure on governments to manage national politics in such a way as to adapt them to global market forces will increase (Smith & Smith, 2002). The third and fourth definitions are both concerned with the spread of certain occurrences worldwide. In the third definition, globalisation is defined as universalisation which leads to the spreading of objects and experiences. In the fourth it is viewed as westernisation or modernisation and it is the social structures of modernity such as capitalism and industrialism that are spread globally. The fifth and last definition explores the transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions because people are no longer limited by their geographical location (Scholte, 2003).

Although there isn't just one accepted definition for globalisation my literature review revealed that globalisation is usually understood as a way to describe the process whereby individuals, groups, companies and countries become increasingly interconnected and interdependent across the world with new information and communication technologies as the driving force behind it (Green, n.d.; Smith & Smith, 2002). Supporters of globalisation argue that it provides opportunities worldwide because it will lead to increased trade, stimulate economic growth and the spread of new technology to countries participating in the global economy (Green, n.d; Dunklin, 2005). Globalisation created wealth and has made the elimination of many diseases possible. Stiglitz (2002, as cited in Dunklin, 2005) points out that advances due to globalisation have made it possible for many people to live longer and have higher standards of living. Another benefit is that issues such as human rights, democracy and gender equality gets more public attention because of wider access to newspapers, radio, television, telephones, computers and the internet.

As discussed above there are many advantages associated with globalisation and although the supporters of globalisation argue that it will create jobs in the developing world, many authors disagree by arguing that the global world is wrought with inequality. These authors call attention to the fact that there is a gaping divide between rich and poor, both within and between countries. While some countries in the developing world, mainly in Asia, have experienced rapid economic growth and poverty reduction most of Africa and Latin America have experienced declining living standards (Dunklin, 2005; Green, n.d; Putzel, 2004; Smith & Smith,

2002). Globalisation has led to increased efforts from organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank to create a global free market for goods and services (Smith & Smith, 2002) but a potential drawback of this trend is that the policies and rules implemented by these organisations are in effect promoting inequality among nations. The result, it seems, is that poor countries are staying poor, or becoming even poorer, since the escalation of globalisation (Dunklin, 2005).

Another factor contributing to the increasing gap between rich and poor countries is the rise of knowledge-based economies. Knowledge-based economies have made technology an important factor in the economy. The developed countries' dominance of technology serves as a tool with which it may exploit poor countries' low wage workers, weaker environmental laws and other factors to maintain their dominance of the global markets (Dunklin 2005; Smith & Smith, 2002). In addition, in order to cater for the fast changing skills requirements of a knowledge-based economy, it is necessary that countries develop their education sector and promote a vocational orientation to learning that supports skills development and a closer link to the world of work. In the following section I contextualise education within a globalising world and discuss how global education trends promote a vocational orientation to learning.

2.1.2 Globalisation and Education

A vocational orientation to education became more important with the rise of globalisation, which altered the education sector and the way that people experience education. Neo-liberal discourses encourage the marketisation of education which has turned the education sector into an arena of commercial activity where goods and services are priced and sold (Smith, 2002; Zeleza, 2002). Educational institutions are adopting business models for organisational and administrative purposes and they are pressured to become more efficient, productive and relevant, or in other words, more vocationally focused and closely linked to the world of work. These requirements may lead to education programmes being restructured in order for products to be standardised and marketed to achieve economies of scale. This focus on profit generation has increased pressure on educational institutions to increase their income by means of part-time and distance learning programmes and to reduce costs. The subsequent increase of students per teacher has led to a decline in the quality of teaching. People have become consumers, not participants, of education and it is seen as a profitable market to be in (Smith, 2002; Zeleza, 2002).

The commercialisation of education has not only led to a more vocationally orientated education sector but also an expansion of the privatisation of education and the increased involvement of private enterprise in the provision of education. There is an increase in vocationally orientated education providers because of the rising demand for education and the changing needs of the knowledge-based economy. It can be argued that the increase of vocationally orientated educational provision encourages student learning orientations with a vocational dimension and a focus on career development. The concern is that these trends towards a vocational

orientation to learning will lead to the disappearance of traditional notions of educational goals such as university autonomy, academic freedom, liberal education and quality. In addition, this market driven approach does not view education as a social or public good or as a human right, but as an economic investment. The more education is regarded as an economic investment, the more costs and returns are calculated according to market principles. State subsidies have been reduced or removed in many countries, and student tuition rates have been raised to reflect the 'real' cost of education (Smith, 2002; Zeleza, 2002).

Economic, social and cultural changes means that many now live in 'knowledge societies' that have strong individualising tendencies and a requirement for lifelong vocationally orientated learning that promotes employability. There is a perception that education should be made available to more people and that there should be increasing collaboration between educational institutions and the market. Educational institutions have to adapt to the vocational orientation to learning and the demands of continuing education for workers in knowledge-based industries by restructuring their courses, especially by increasing the availability of part-time courses, such as the Applied Learning programme. As a result many adults are now participating in organised learning throughout their lives and educational institutions are becoming more diversified in their programmes and student composition with an increasing number of older students participating in educational activities (Smith, 2002; Zeleza, 2002).

The vocational orientation to learning, encouraged by globalisation, has not only changed general education, but it led to the reconceptualisation and restructuring of vocational education to promote relevance to the market and create a stronger link to the world of work. In the following section I contextualise the vocational education sector within a globalising world and demonstrate how global developments contribute to an emphasis on a vocational orientation to learning worldwide.

2.1.3 Globalisation and Vocational Education

The globalisation of economies and rapid technological change has affected all countries; therefore nations are preparing to meet its challenges. One of these challenges, identified by Mustapha & Abdullah (2001), is the critical preparation of the workforce and vocational education plays an important role in preparing the workforce for the global marketplace. To a large extent, the interest in vocational education and a vocational orientation to learning is motivated by the necessity to address economic challenges and pressures associated with globalisation. Some of these pressures are identified in the literature by Pickersgill (2001) and include: the growth of global markets and the need to maintain international competitiveness through skills development; the emergence of service and knowledge-based industries that are significant for employment; the transformation of geographical and regional employment opportunities; the impact of new information/communication technologies on the community and enterprises in particular; the need to reduce unemployment rates and changes in the role of government from service provider to purchaser of services.

In the light of these challenges associated with globalisation and the emphasis on employability there has been a growing international emphasis on the importance of new learning approaches and skills development for vocational education. Learners are being encouraged to develop skills and attitudes of lifelong learning such as creativity, versatility, innovativeness, critical thinking and problem-solving skills which are deemed essential in today's work environment. Learners must meet the demands of the economy and constantly update their skills in order to stay employable (McGrath, 2004: 170; Tabulawa, 2009) and Gamble (2004: 189) notes that employability is the new educational aim in vocational education. Although the concept of employability has been around for some time, the emphasis on the importance of employability skills is becoming more widespread pertaining to education at all levels. The Kirby Report (2000 as cited in Hager, Holland and Beckett, 2002), states that an individual's employability depends on several factors which involves self-confidence and the ability to secure and retain employment. In addition to this, it also means that an individual will be able to improve his or her productivity and income-earning prospects. Employability skills can be viewed as a means of individual empowerment that necessarily places the individual in a privileged position, while it has also been argued that the labour market itself will determine the level of employability required (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

In addition to the emphasis on employability Tabulawa (2009) points out that technological change has led to uncertainty, unpredictability and constant change in the labour market. As a result, skills cannot be fixed on a particular job and the constant change means that workers are always learning and learning must be vocationally orientated. This trend explains the importance of lifelong learning and vocational education. Furthermore, technological change has major implications for the education sector of a country and Tabulawa (2009) argues that nations with education systems that can adapt to changing environments are the nations that are most likely to survive in the competitive global market. Therefore, education is being reformed in many countries in order to cater for the needs of the economy and become more vocationally orientated.

In addition to education becoming more vocationally orientated, changes in the nature of work have the effect that people think differently about a single job for life and it has changed traditional ideas about careers. Increasingly, labour has to be more flexible and workers need to be able to adopt throughout their working lives. Policy makers worldwide are viewing education and training as central features in long term, global, economic competitiveness (Gamble, 2003: 14). A growing demand to confront the pressures of globalisation has contributed to the renewed interest in vocational education as it is believed that vocational colleges have a more direct relation to the world of work. According to Raby (2001) it is alleged that vocational education ensures opportunities that lead to employment, economic development, prosperity and contribute toward improved social conditions. However, Raby (2001) argues that the ideal that vocational colleges provide opportunities that is a foundation for economic and political reform is questionable.

In Australia the reforms in the vocational education sector has been rationalised as an inevitable response to the above mentioned pressures of globalisation and that it was a necessary response to improve the country's international competitiveness by up skilling the labour force. Australia is not the only country responding to globalisation in this way and internationally, to meet the demands of the new knowledge-based economy, there have been requests for the reform of the vocational education sector (Akoojee, 2008). In South Africa globalisation has led to the reconceptualisation and restructuring of Technical colleges and the establishment of Further Education and Training colleges. In the following section I will provide an analysis of some of the dimensions of vocational education in South Africa.

2.2 The world of Further Education and Training

FET is the most labour market-related element in the education and training system and is aimed at preparing young people and adults for entry into the world of work (Gamble, 2004: 176). Clark-Trow (1966, as cited in Wilder, Midkiff, Dunkerly & Skelton, 1996) determined learning orientations can be used to describe the objectives of institutions and therefore, based on the above mentioned vocational aim of the FET sector, it can be argued that FET institutions have a vocational orientation to learning. In addition, Clark-Trow (1966 as cited in Sedlacek, 1984) concluded that certain institutions are more supportive of certain orientations; therefore the vocational orientation of FET colleges will predominantly attract students with a similar orientation. In line with this reasoning, during their investigation of learning orientations within the German dual system of vocational education, Lewalter & Krapp (2004) focused on the vocational orientation to learning, which was also the focus of my research.

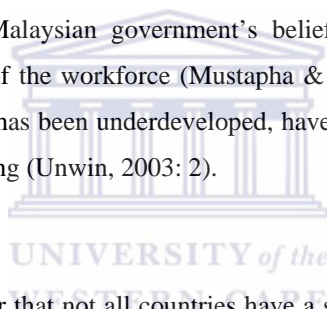
In the following section I discuss the global discourses that shape the South African FET sector and endorse a vocational orientation to learning in order to develop the skills required by the labour market.

2.2.1 Conceptions of Further Education and Training

Globalisation has highlighted the importance of a vocational orientation to learning and a close relationship between education and the world of work worldwide. Internationally, countries have varied strategies in relation to vocational education and Brown (2003) notes that vocational education reflects a country's investment in education and the strategies used to improve the skills development of workers in order to promote employability. As a result the investigation of the vocational orientation to learning in relation to vocational education and career development is an important topic for analysis worldwide. Within the vocational education sector different terms are used in different countries to refer more or less to the same kind of educational provision. These terms include vocational education and training (VET); technical and vocational education and training (TVET); technical and further education (TAFE); further education (FE) and further education and training (FET).

There is a range of international approaches to further education and training and it differs from country to country. In Australia TAFE is the major provider of further education and the focus has shifted to lifelong learning and the need for up skilling those already in employment rather than the traditional focus on pre-employment training (Pickersgill, 2001; Unwin, 2003: 2). In the United States the community college model is intended to confront socio-economic issues of labour and technology training. The rationale is that the low tuition increases access and that colleges provide an alternative route to university (Raby, 2001). In the United Kingdom college students include full- and part-time students but in European countries such as Scandinavia, Germany and the Netherlands, vocational schools are focused on young, full-time students (Unwin, 2003: 2). However, in the Czech Republic the US community college model is used to develop colleges with the aim to increase the percentage of the population that are able to meet university entrance requirements (Raby, 2001).

In the Far East vocational education enjoys high priority. In Japan, technical colleges and secondary vocational schools service full-time students. In Hong Kong, the private sector dominates further education and training although there is some provision for government-funded technical colleges (Unwin, 2003: 2). Malaysia is developing vocational education and training in order to achieve its vision of becoming an industrialised nation by 2020. This is in line with the Malaysian government's beliefs that the future of Malaysia's global competitiveness depends on the skills of the workforce (Mustapha & Abdullah, 2001). Even countries in the Middle East, where vocational training has been underdeveloped, have started to develop the sector in the light of the global emphasis of lifelong learning (Unwin, 2003: 2).



Based on the above discussion it is clear that not all countries have a similar approach to further education and training. For example, although community colleges in the USA are similar to FET colleges in South Africa, these colleges offer both vocational and academic qualifications and community colleges offer programmes that are the equivalent of the first two years of a university degree (American Association of Community Colleges, n.d.). Therefore, it is possible that further education and training could include academic qualifications but in South Africa the focus of FET colleges is on vocational education that is closely linked to the world of work. The NC(V) programme, which is the core component of FET, is the most significant government expression of the vocational focus of FET colleges (Republic of South Africa, 2009). These days, South African FET includes all provision at Levels 2-4 of the NQF and also includes secondary schools. FET colleges are expected to deliver vocationally orientated programmes in Level 2-4, although they also have programmes within the NQF L 5 which is considered post-school and pre-degree (Akoojee & McGrath, 2007; Gamble, 2003: 4; McGrath, 2004: 159).

2.2.2 FET colleges and the National Qualifications Framework

FET colleges operate under the NQF which is a framework that encompasses the principles and guidelines into which training and education standards are registered and it enables the recognition of skills and knowledge on a

national and international level (National Qualifications Framework, n.d.). The *NQF Act 67* that was introduced in 2008 determines that SAQA oversees the development and implementation of the NQF while it also established 3 quality councils which included the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) focusing on NQF Level 1-4, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) for education at Levels 5-10, and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) which include NQF Level 1-10 and focuses on work related training (Jewison, 2008: 28; Stumpf, Papier, Needham & Nel, 2009).

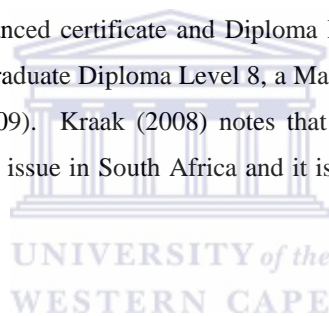
The 3 quality councils manage the 3 sub-frameworks within the NQF which are firstly the General and further education and training sub-framework, including formal education institutions, schools and FET colleges under the guidance of Umalusi. Secondly, the Higher education sub-framework which include universities and universities of technology guided by CHE and lastly the Trades and Occupation sub-framework which focuses on training in the workplace overseen by QCTO. The function of these quality councils are ensuring quality and developing qualifications within their respective frameworks and promoting international comparability of the qualifications (National Qualifications Framework, n.d.).

The NQF is an attempt to empower the individual and in this way it is a tool for social, economic and political reform indelibly linked to FET colleges and the vocational orientation of these colleges. Allais (2007) notes that one of the objectives of the NQF is to provide education that is relevant to the needs of the economy and to provide competent workers, which is indicative of a vocational orientation to learning and a close link to the world of work. National qualification frameworks are an expression of neo-liberal education policies with the aim to promote the development of skills, as well as social equity and inclusion. The approach is intended to take the power away from traditional educational institutions by relying on qualifications to make the educational system more flexible. The generic nature of the qualifications criteria is a strategy to provide fairness and access to broad participation, as well as lifelong learning. The NQF seeks to limit the autonomy of providing institutions, such as colleges and universities (Allais, 2007; European Commission, 2008; ILO, 2008).

The rationale behind this approach is that once an educational system is freed from the institutions through which outcomes are achieved, education systems will be more flexible and qualifications will be more transferable between national economies. Qualifications that are expressed in terms of outcomes are intended to guarantee educational standards and promote comparability. The concern is that international comparability can be difficult to achieve because learning outcomes are interpreted in different ways and not all NQFs use the concept in the same way; for instance, in South Africa outcomes are more narrowly defined than in Australia where the focus is on the qualification. This approach could weaken the role of institutions and work against the stated goals of the NQF by reducing the kinds of knowledge and skills to which the majority of learners have access (ILO, 2008).

The NQF aims to promote equality, economic competitiveness, social inclusion and educational opportunities. The outcomes based system ideally offers recognition and accreditation can be given to informal and work-based learning. In this way it offers access to some who were previously excluded. By allowing the learner to submit their experiences for assessment to receive credit and by providing general access to the attainment of qualification levels, the NQF provides strategies to address inequality. In line with a vocational orientation to learning the NQF also deals with issues of employability as a way to increase the role of the employer by allowing them to be directly involved in the definition of outcomes. Qualifications allow a potential employer to know exactly what skills the individual possesses, which arguably makes the person more employable. Conversely, the focus on qualifications can actually take away from investing in knowledge and skills acquisition to the point that the role of the qualification is weakened in promoting employability (ILO, 2008).

In the South African context, 'intermediate skills' are defined by the NQF as those qualifications below university-acquired degrees but above the entry-level skills and qualifications derived from primary and lower secondary schooling, or in other words above Grade 9. FET colleges in South Africa offers vocational education at Level 2-4 and Higher Education institutions offer education at Level 5 and above. A Higher Certificate is considered Level 5, Advanced certificate and Diploma Level 6, a Bachelor's Degree Level 7, a Bachelor Honours Degree and a Post Graduate Diploma Level 8, a Masters Degree Level 9 and a PhD Level 10 (Stumpf, Papier, Needham, & Nel, 2009). Kraak (2008) notes that the availability of skilled labour at the intermediate level has become a critical issue in South Africa and it is the task of FET colleges to address this deficiency.



The aims of the NQF, as discussed above, made it a particularly attractive strategy for a developing country like South Africa where it was introduced to address post-apartheid educational and economic inequalities. The goal was to provide relevant education, produce competent workers, and to provide access to those who were previously excluded by recognising informal learning. However, this has proven to be a poor strategy of reform for a developing country with limited resources and an already weak educational system because the state's role in building educational structures is undermined and a market of provision is implicitly relied upon. In South Africa the educational provision, delivered against the new outcomes-based qualifications, remains low and severe inequalities remain widespread (Allais, 2007).

The discussion above clearly illustrates that the intention of the NQF is to link education to the world of work, therefore it is important to investigate whether FET college programmes located within the NQF produce graduates with skills that are relevant to the market and promote the employability of students.

2.2.3 FET colleges and Skills Development in South Africa

In recent years, in line with global trends, vocational education in South Africa has come under the spotlight. The South African FET system emerged under the colonial system to cater for the relatively small numbers of skilled workers needed in the formal sector of the economy. At first, it was based on the need for coloured workers to do semi-skilled labour in the Cape region and technical and vocational provision was regarded as only suitable for non-whites. However, after 1910 the focus and racial composition of Technical colleges changed to predominantly white recipients. At that time skilled labour for the South African economy was mostly supplied by European immigrants but during the 20th century the government wanted to include local white people to address the social and educational implications of the mineral revolution and white people losing their farms because of changing agrarian relations in the 1890's (Badroodien, 2004: 22; McGrath, 2004: 159). The Technical colleges followed the British model and were mainly concerned with theoretical provision for apprentices. In the years to follow this sector was shaped by the racialisation thereof and South Africa's particular developmental path (Akoojee, McGrath & Visser, 2008: 254). As a result, when South Africa became a democratic country, there was a need to reform the FET sector.

The transition to democracy has been associated with a transition from a nationalist, racially-exclusive, inward-looking economy to one that is trying to profit from external global relations (Altman & Meyer, 2003 as cited in Akoojee & McGrath, 2004). During the apartheid era South African colleges were protected from international pressures but when this period in South African history ended, in conjunction with the need to address the racialisation of this sector, it was also exposed to international discourse relating to college reform. Therefore, within this context, South African FET colleges are expected to become more responsive to development goals and to the labour market (Gamble, 2003: 1; McGrath & King, 1995 as cited in McGrath, 2003b: 16). In order to become more responsive to the needs of the labour market, it is necessary that FET colleges enhance the vocational orientation of the programmes that they offer and develop a closer link to the world of work.

The FET sector in South Africa has undergone major changes in order to become more vocationally orientated and to develop the necessary skills to face the post-apartheid and globalisation challenges. In South Africa, in line with a vocational orientation to learning, skills development is an emerging and fast developing domain of knowledge and practice. As is the case with other developing countries, skills development initiatives are influenced by a complex historical, socio-economic and legislative context. More than 17 years after the coming of democracy in 1994, the country still grapples with the challenges associated with unemployment and low skills (Córdoba & Farquharson, 2008)¹. It is well known that South Africa has high unemployment rates; therefore the challenge is to promote vocationally orientated learning and to find ways to help individuals prepare for entry into the labour market in conjunction with the economic development that is necessary to expand employment (Unwin, 2004: 244).

¹ Córdoba & Farquharson cite Edwards (2001) & Lewis (2002) to support this argument

In response to this dilemma, the attention was turned to skills development, FET and vocationally orientated learning in South Africa. Although the college sector has not received the same attention as schooling, higher development or skills development the DoE and the DoL have been engaged in a legislative process that resulted in a steady process of policy development in the FET sector. It began in 1996 with the appointment of the National Committee on Further Education to investigate options for overhauling the FET sector. Based on the recommendations of this committee the Green Paper on Further Education and Training was published which was followed by the White Paper on Further Education and Training. In addition, the *Further Education and Training Act* (1998), the *Skills Development Act* (1998) and the *Skills Levies Act* (1999) were drafted. Reforms to be initiated in South Africa's FET sector were stipulated in *A New Institutional landscape for the Public Further Education and Training Colleges* (2001) which established the 50 new FET colleges and set out a vision for their development (Akoojee, McGrath & Visser, 2008: 256; Gamble, 2003: 1).

For public colleges, the above mentioned policy changes brought about the transformation of the previous Technical colleges into large, multi-site and partially independent institutions focused on vocationally orientated learning. The approximately 150 former Technical colleges were reduced to 50 FET colleges with 8 colleges in the Eastern Cape, 4 in the Free State, 3 in the North West, 8 in Gauteng, 3 in Mpumalanga, 9 in KwaZulu-Natal, 7 in Limpopo, 2 in the Northern Cape and 6 in the Western Cape. The expectation is that these institutions will be run in a more business-like manner and that it will be more responsive to the needs of the economy, or in other words, have a closer relationship to the world of work (Akoojee & McGrath, 2007; Stumpf, Papier, Needham & Nel, 2009). McGrath (2004: 161) notes that these developments reflect international trends that embrace globalisation and competitiveness. In line with neo-liberal discourse it is accepted that South Africa must respond to the pressures of globalisation by reforming educational institutions such as FET colleges. The aim of the policy changes is to build responsive public institutions that should address education and skills development goals for both individuals and industry. However, the *FET Act* (1998) does not indicate what specific type of skills the new colleges must deliver. According to Badroodien (2003: 65) the development of the new infrastructure for the FET sector will provide opportunities for lifelong learning and workforce development, or in other words, vocationally orientated learning. At the same time the goal is that colleges will promote key citizenship skills, attitudes, values and knowledge.

Although the FET sector has undergone a process of institutional transformation and transition it is still challenged with becoming more responsive to the needs of the market and the South African government's development vision (Akoojee, McGrath & Visser, 2008: 254; Córdoba & Farquharson, 2008). The transformation of colleges was necessary because for many years Technical colleges in South Africa, now subsumed under the FET colleges, has focused on offering the so called NATED programmes that were developed and examined by the national DoE. These programmes have been criticised for being outdated and not in line with industry needs. In recent years, the focus shifted to non-NATED programmes developed by the SETAs that were aligned with the NQF, more vocationally orientated and closely linked to the world of work.

Most colleges are still trying to find a balance between NATED and non-NATED provision with NATED programmes still being the dominant programme offering (Akoojee, McGrath, & Visser, 2008: 263).

Even though the programmes offered at colleges vary, Badroodien (2006) asserts that colleges generally cater for the needs of 3 groups namely (1) young people that would like to advance to higher education or find employment, (2) adults who need to update their skills or pursue education as a leisure interest and (3) employers who would like to improve the skills of their workers through education and training. In all 3 of these groups Badroodien identified vocational reasons for learning which leads to the conclusion that the vocational orientation to learning seems to be dominant among FET students, especially among adults. In recent years there has been an increase in adults who attend FET colleges which can be an indication of a wider programme offering that cater for the needs of this specific group or it could be an attempt from the colleges to cater for the national skills needs which requires a vocational orientation to learning and a closer link to the needs of the market (Akoojee, McGrath, & Visser, 2008: 260).

There is an unspoken assumption that in order for the sector to make a significant contribution to poverty reduction and economic growth, it needs to be both responsive and relevant. The role of the FET colleges in South Africa is considered vital not only for improving national competitiveness but also inclusiveness. It is accepted that economic development is intimately tied to social equity by ensuring that those excluded in the past are incorporated in the new democratic order. Although there has been evidence of progress, it is clear that there are major problems in the national skills development system. Cooperation between the Departments of Education and Labour has generally been poor; the NQF has not worked as planned; public FET colleges continue to train far fewer graduates than envisaged and the quality of their output remains questionable (Akoojee, 2008; Akoojee & McGrath, 2008). Therefore, the investigation of the learning orientations of FET part-time students and the contribution of college learning to their career development was an important task because based on the findings I was able to make recommendations for future programme development.

2.2.4 Employment opportunities for FET Graduates in South Africa

Worldwide the expectation is that the FET sector should have a strong vocational orientation, be responsive to the needs of employers, quick to respond to economical changes and thereby providing the vocational learning that will help graduates to do well in a globalising economy (Harwood, 2001 as cited in Badroodien, 2006; Unwin, 2003: 1). The focus of FET colleges is vocational learning and based on Clark-Trow's findings, that the learning orientation of the institution influences the learning orientations of the students that the institution attracts, it can be argued that FET colleges will attract students with a vocational orientation (Clark-Trow, 1966 as cited in Sedlacek, 1984). Based on the argument that the vocational orientation to learning is the dominant learning orientation within the FET sector it is logical to assume that the relationship between vocational education and the employability of FET students is an important topic of investigation on a global level. In line

with the goals associated with a vocational orientation to learning McGrath (2003a: 95) notes that the most basic but also the most powerful indicator of college success is the employment rate of graduates.

In Europe Anderson & Van de Werfhorst (2010) studied the relationship between education and occupational status in fourteen European countries including 23'100 respondents. They found, without exception, that the employment levels of those with a vocational/technical education compared to those with a tertiary education were lower. For instance, in the Czech Republic 36.9% of those with a vocational education were employed compared to 66.3% with a tertiary degree. In Germany the numbers reflected 43.6% compared to 64.3% and in the Netherlands 45.8% in relation to 60.5%. Based on Anderson & Van de Werfhorst's findings it can be argued that university graduates in Europe are more employable than graduates from institutions with a vocational focus.

In Australia Sherman (2006) examined the outcomes of TAFE education for young people aged 15 to 24. She determined that after completion of TAFE training students experienced improvement in occupational levels and wages roughly two and a half years after completion of their training. She established that not all students found employment right away but employment levels improved over time. Afrassa (2001) found that TAFE graduates in Australia who referred to a vocational orientation to learning, students who were employed before starting the course or employed during the course and graduates who received higher qualifications were more likely to find employment. Based on Afrassa's findings it can be argued that a vocational orientation to learning improves FET students' employment prospects.



In South Africa, in line with global trends, one of the main objectives of vocational education is to promote employability and after 1990 colleges focused on becoming institutions that offer a variety of vocational orientated subject choices, which include 'softer' subjects from the financial services, information technology, tourism and others (Kraak, 2008). Cosser (2003: 34) conducted a graduate tracer study which included an analysis of respondents' attitudes regarding their college education. The population to which these findings can be generalised is college graduates who graduated in 1999. Cosser found that only 34% of graduates were employed or self-employed, whether full-time or part-time, 31% were unemployed and 35% were still studying. It is probable that a determinant for further study is an inability to find employment and therefore the picture of the employability of college graduates seem negative. The learners did not view FET as a direct gateway to employment which raises potential challenges for a Further Education and Training Certificate (NQF L 4) as the key exit qualification for colleges. These findings are disturbing in light of the vocational focus of colleges with employability being one of the main goals of vocational education.

However, in light of the low employment rates of college graduates, it is important to note that Cosser (2003: 54) states that there are many factors that can contribute to the high unemployment rate of college graduates

which could include the poor quality of schooling for many South Africans, the relatively inferior image of a college education, the low compensation levels of college graduates, the disparities between the skills outputs of colleges and the skills requirements of industry, the geographical areas where colleges are located and racial and gender discrimination in employment practices. With regards to the relevance of college learning to the world of work Cosser (2003: 50) found that 56% of graduates who were employed used the skills they learned at college at work, 16% used their skills to a small extent while 28% used their skills sometimes or never. Employed graduates also indicated that 55% found jobs that were related to their qualification while the rest were employed in an unrelated field. Cosser (2003: 53) determined that graduates did not perceive a college qualification as a direct route to employment.

More recently, Kraak (2008) confirms that employment prospects for FET graduates remain low and that learners believe that they need to pursue further qualifications in the post-school sector in order to secure employment. However, even this strategy may not necessarily lead to employment. Kraak (2008) argues that many students face unemployment after graduating because there are no longer structured pathways for FET college graduates into employment. Factors identified by Kraak for the low employment rate of college graduates, similar to those identified by Cosser (2003), is a stagnant economy, claims of poor quality and outdated training at FET colleges, the continued racialisation of the labour market and the fact that employers have resorted to the employment of lesser skilled and lower paid workers as a cost saving strategy. Graduates are faced with the problem that structured pathways from FET colleges have broken down and the fact that the qualifications they have acquired are rendered more or less worthless in the labour market. In addition, Jacobsz (2004) notes that programmes offered by FET colleges frequently separate theory from practice causing these programmes to become irrelevant. As a result, the needs of the learners and the demands of economy are not met. In her research conducted among FET students in the Free State, Jacobsz (2004) found that students who found employment easily were those who participated in programmes where there was a balance between practical and theoretical elements. In comparison, students who only received theoretical training without any practical training struggled to find employment.

The low employment rate of FET graduates in South Africa and the perception of poor quality and obsolete training that does not meet the requirements of the economy are reasons for concern within the FET sector with its vocational orientation to learning. However, the findings of Jacobsz (2004) suggest that there are certain programmes where students find employment more easily and it can be argued that those programmes are better equipped to cater for the needs of the market. Therefore, it is important that colleges evaluate their programme offering and identify the programmes that cater for the needs of their students as well as the labour market, as was the intention with my research in relation to the Applied Learning programme. By investigating the learning orientations of part-time FET students I identified whether their orientation to learning was in fact vocational as suggested by the literature, if college learning satisfied their needs and how college learning influenced their career development and employability.

The discussion above illustrates the importance of a vocational orientation to learning in a globalising world. In the following section I examine the conceptual/theoretical framework of learning orientations in relation to adults' reasons for part-time studies at post-school institutions.

2.3 Conceptual/Theoretical Framework: Learning Orientations, Vocational Education and Adults' reasons for part-time studies at post-school institutions

I found that the investigation of learning orientations is quite common in the literature and the approach has been used by many authors to describe different student types in relation to behaviour and motivation. Most of the literature that investigates learning orientations concentrated on higher education institutions with the exception of Lewalter & Krapp (2004) who investigated learning orientations within vocational education. Although I searched extensively there is a lack of literature on learning orientations in relation to vocational education institutions but the literature on learning orientations in higher education and the vocational orientation to learning is relevant to develop a framework for investigating learning orientations in sites of vocational education, such as FET colleges. Darkenwald (1977) argues that the learning orientation which most closely represents the nature and purpose of the educational activity should be emphasised, therefore, when investigating the occupationally orientated programmes within FET colleges, it is appropriate to focus on a vocational orientation to learning. Significantly, a vocational orientation to learning has been identified by most authors as central and the literature has revealed that within a global context the vocational orientation to learning is accentuated. As a result, the vocational orientation to learning was the focus of my investigation.



Part-time students' reasons for learning is an important topic to examine and Darkenwald (1977) argues that adult education programmes should be designed around the needs, interests and learning styles of adults. This reasoning is closely related to motivation for participation and emphasises why adults' reasons for studying is an important topic to investigate. Beaty, Gibbs & Morgan (1984: 75) confirm that the reasons why adults study are of particular importance because of the voluntary nature of adult education. In my search for an appropriate framework for this study a wide literature concerning adults' reasons for learning was consulted. The concept of motivation was explored but because it has been employed in so many studies in so many different ways it was difficult to find a precise definition of the concept. I found that learning orientations incorporate the reasons as well as contextual factors that motivate students to enrol in a course. Therefore, the paradigm of learning orientations was most helpful for the purpose of this research which was to examine how part-time adult FET college students came to participate in a particular course, what their aims and expectations were in undertaking a course of study and how their learning contributed to their career development.

In the available literature the terminology concerning learning orientations is varied and I found that student orientations, motivational orientations and learning orientations are used synonymously by different authors.

For example, Long describes student orientations as follows:

“Student orientations are held to be multidimensional and original in nature. This conception is not only more theoretical tenable, but also facilitates the study of the association between academic orientations and the antecedents of such orientations. Fundamental to this investigation is the assumption that such student academic orientations at the university level provide insight into an understanding of university student behaviour inasmuch as they are systematically related to the motivations, perceptions and learning of university students” (Long, 1977b: 13).

Similarly, Darkenwald (1977) identifies motivational orientations as the reasons that adult learners give for continued education and as a reflection of the needs and interest of the learners. Lewalter & Krapp (2004) describe motivational orientations as the answer to the question ‘why’ a person is willing to engage in education. Taylor, Morgan and Gibbs (1981 as cited in Beaty et al., 1984: 76) argue along the same lines when they define learning orientations as the attitudes and the aims which express the learner’s relationship with a course of study. In addition, many other authors have argued that an understanding of motivation depends on an understanding of the specific goals toward which individuals are orientated (Nolen, 1988)².

My research produced a broad literature describing different learning orientations and various taxonomies have been suggested to classify learning orientations. One of the most significant researchers in respect to learning orientations has been William Clark-Trow. Between 1958 and 1966, using data collected from students at the University of California, Clark-Trow used a two dimensional scheme to classify students according to (1) the degree of students’ involvement with ideas and (2) the extent of students’ involvement with the institution. Based on these two dimensions Clark-Trow classified students in 4 categories namely (a) collegiate, (b) vocational, (c) academic and (d) non-conformist. The collegiate and vocational orientations can be described as non-intellectual in outlook whereas the academic and non-conformist orientations share a common interest and value in ideas and intellect (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2005; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977; Yamamoto & Wiersma, 1971).

- (a) The collegiate orientated student is described as a student who is not involved with ideas and issues over and above what is required to gain a qualification. This student has a strong interest in the social activities, interpersonal relations and the extracurricular activities associated with educational institutions.
- (b) The vocational orientated student is enrolled for career training and development or status enhancement and is frequently working part- or full-time. There is little interest in intellectual materials which cannot be readily related to career development and education is only important in relation to future employment.
- (c) The academic orientated student values intellectual stimulation, opportunities for learning, ideas and academic achievement, wherever this pursuit may lead.

² Nolen cites authors such as Ames, 1984; Asch, 1952; Crutchfield, 1962; Dweck, 1985; Maehr, 1983; Maehr & Braskamp, 1986; Nicholls, 1984 & Spence & Helmreich, 1983

(d) The non-conformist student is concerned with independence and the quest for personal identity. These students are, similar to the academic orientated students, very involved with ideas which they encounter both in the classroom and in wider society. While the preceding 3 types of students pursue fun, a qualification or knowledge, these students pursue an identity and often display contempt for many aspects of organised society.

(Clark-Trow, 1966 as cited in Long, 1977b; Long, 1977a; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977; Wilder et al., 1996; Reichel, Neumann & Pizam, 1981)

According to Clark-Trow (1966 as cited in Sedlacek, 1984) these orientations are present when the student arrives at the college or university. Orientations are largely determined by the life experiences the students have had, and these in turn are shaped by the status they and their direct family have held in larger society. Clark-Trow emphasises that orientation does not presume any state or trait belonging to the student, the focus is on the relationship between the student and the course rather than an inherent quality of the student. The typology developed by Clark-Trow suggests that the concept of learning orientations provides a means of conceptualising holistically what the education experience means to an individual and according to Dollinger, Ross & Preston (2002) has implications for understanding individual student motivations.

The Clark-Trow typology has also been used to describe institutions, either by profiling differences in institutions (Peterson, 1965 as cited in Wilder et al., 1996) or to clarify educational objectives of varying institutions (Clark-Trow, 1966 as cited in Wilder et al., 1996). Clark-Trow determined that certain institutions are more supportive of certain orientations. For example, he found that large state universities in the United States are more supportive of the vocational orientation because they provide less expensive access to the necessary training for entry into the job market whereas smaller, private, liberal arts colleges were more supportive of the academic orientation (Clark-Trow, 1966 as cited in Sedlacek, 1984). FET colleges in South Africa are focused on providing vocational education relevant to the economy, therefore it can be argued that most students who enrol at these institutions would have a vocational orientation to learning, which was the focus of this study.

In 1961 Cyril Houle developed a perspective on learning orientations bearing similarities with the Clark-Trow typology. Houle investigated the reasons why adult learners participate in education and based on in-depth interviews with 22 learners he formulated his own typology. Houle's typology included 3 types of adult learners: goal orientated, activity orientated and learning orientated. The goal orientated learner has very specific aims for their learning and learning is pursued for its usefulness. Houle did not specifically identify vocational goals within this orientation but this orientation has some similarity to the vocational orientation as developed by Clark-Trow because, like in the case of the goal orientated learner, the vocationally orientated learner pursues learning for its usefulness in preparing for a vocational future. The activity orientated learner, like the collegiate orientated student identified by Clark-Trow, enrolls for social reasons and making friends is

considered to be very important. The content of the course is less important to this type of learner. The last type, the learning orientated student, participates for intellectual stimulation and because learning is a desired part of living (Darkenwald, 1977). Unlike Clark-Trow, who identified both the academic orientated and the non-conformist students as students who are concerned with intellectual stimulation, Houle did not further specify orientations within this category.

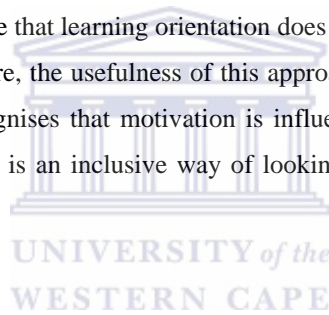
Similar to the Clark-Trow and Houle typologies in 1981 Taylor, Morgan & Gibbs also formulated a vocational learning orientation. They used the concept of learning orientation to describe the aims, expectations and attitudes with which students commence their studies at the United Kingdom Open University. They classified the orientations of the students into vocational, academic and personal and these orientations were further subdivided into extrinsic and intrinsic interests that were not previously classified by other authors. Extrinsic was defined as an instance where a student studies a course as a means to an end whereas intrinsic can be defined as a case where the student is interested in the course for its own sake (Taylor et al. 1981, as cited in Kember, et al., 2001). In 1983, while exploring students' orientations to learning at Surry University, Taylor identified a fourth orientation, the social orientation, with only an extrinsic dimension (Taylor, 1983, as cited in Kember, et al., 2001). Taylor further developed the vocational orientation by identifying extrinsic subgroups that were concerned about career success and obtaining a qualification while the intrinsic subgroup focused on inner fulfilment. The academic orientation, as described by Taylor et al. in 1981, is illustrated by externally recognised achievement or internal intellectual satisfaction or in other words, learning for its own sake. The extrinsic personal orientation subgroup was concerned with good grades and proving their capabilities while the intrinsic subgroup was interested in improving themselves as individuals. The aim of the social orientation is simply to have a good time at university (Kember, et al., 2001; Webber, 2004).

One year later Beaty et al. (1984: 77) employed the learning orientations typology developed by Taylor et al. (1981) as a framework to examine study contracts. In this study the authors assert that learning orientation does not aim to identify and describe students, but rather types of orientations and to show the implications of different types of orientations. They describe learning orientation as a collection of purposes where success and failure is determined by the extent to which students fulfil their own aims. Through their research Beaty et al. demonstrated how learning orientations can be helpful when investigating student satisfaction, as I aspired to do in this study, by determining whether students have fulfilled their own aims. The authors came to the conclusion that learning orientation promotes insight into a student's personal context and that perceptions of the benefits of learning can be related to their learning orientation (Beaty et al. 1984: 86).

During the same time Morgan & Beaty (1984: 217) investigated students' experience of learning in relation to learning orientation in order to understand what a student gains from a course and further developed the notion of vocational orientation. Using a case study research method, Morgan & Beaty interviewed two adult students from the UK Open University. The first student, who was in his early forties and working full-time, displayed a

primary academic extrinsic and secondary vocational intrinsic orientation. He was primarily concerned with academic progress, good grades and wanted to have a degree. He also had a vocational orientation and believed that his increased knowledge would help him in his job but he did not expect that the qualification would help him with employment prospects (Morgan & Beaty, 1984: 218). The second student was a housewife in her mid-thirties who had chosen to study in order to relieve boredom, promote self-development and gain confidence. These goals can be associated with a personal, intrinsic orientation. She vaguely associated with the vocational extrinsic orientation saying that in the future a qualification may be useful to get a job (Morgan & Beaty, 1984: 222).

In 2001 Kember et al. investigated the learning orientations of part-time students in Hong Kong and in 2008 Kember, Hong & Ho examined the motivational orientations of higher education students at 3 universities based in Hong Kong. Kember et al. (2001) found that most of the part-time students provided vocationally related reasons for enrolling which supports Clark-Trow's findings that students who are employed full-time or part-time are often vocationally orientated. Learning orientation represents, according to Kember et al. (2001), all the reasons, purposes, expectations and motivations that cause students to choose a particular course and to study part-time but it is important to note that learning orientation does not presuppose any psychological trait or state belonging to the student. Therefore, the usefulness of this approach lies in the fact that it includes all the possible reasons for studying and recognises that motivation is influenced by context (Kember, Hong & Ho, 2008). As a result learning orientation is an inclusive way of looking at the reasons why students choose to enrol in a specific course.



Based on the discussion above it is clear that the learning orientations typology developed by Clark-Trow is not the only learning orientations typology proposed in the literature. However, it is by far the most frequently encountered typology. The Clark-Trow typology has been well researched and a popular investigation was the assessment of personality trait differences among the 4 groups. The findings of these studies tended to validate the typology because predictions made from the theoretical framework were largely confirmed by the results (Terenzeni & Pascarella, 1977)³. Other studies appear to have been undertaken based on the assumption that the typology is valid and used the typology to compare members of the 4 groups on selected variables such as satisfaction with academic programmes (Morstain, 1977), learning motivation and behaviour (Morstain & Smart, 1977; Nolen, 1988; Webber, 2004), patterns of student interaction (Hutcheson & Chapman, 1979), impact of education (Wilder et al., 1996) and student experience, perceptions and evaluation of the university (Ellis, Parelius, & Parelius, 1971; Long, 1977a). Long (1977a) determined that the 4 Clark-Trow student orientation types perceive different purposes for university, while at the same time relating to the university in different ways. Therefore, they may tend to perceive and evaluate it in different ways. According to Hutcheson & Chapman (1979) the popularity of the Clark-Trow typology can be explained by the fact that the orientations can be related to other dimensions of student behaviour as illustrated by the available literature.

³ Terenzi & Pascarella cite the studies of Brainard & Dollar (1971); Kees & McDougall (1971); Lange, Woodburn & Miller (1974) & Williams (1972) as examples of studies that assessed personality trait differences

Some researchers who based their investigations on the Clark-Trow typology have been more critical of the typology. For example Wilder et al. (1996) describe the Clark-Trow typology as simplistic. However, they do confirm that it accentuates the interplay of dimensions that are often central to student motivation. This tapered perspective of learning orientations constitutes its value as a theory and allows for the exploration of the relationship between variables in educational process and outcomes. For this reason the learning orientations approach was particularly appropriate for my investigation as the intention was to explore different variables such as career development in a globalising world and satisfaction with the FET college experience in relation to the reasons for learning of part-time students.

The research concerning the learning orientations of part-time students that was conducted by Kember et al. (2001) was informative for my research. Kember et al. (2001) found that existing typologies that described learning orientations did not provide an appropriate framework for the data they collected. Kember et al. (2001: 275) note that “In short almost all of our interviewees would have been classified as vocational, which was why this type of classification scheme was not helpful to our study”. In their research the authors determined that most part-time students advanced vocationally related reasons for enrolling in courses and as a result of their findings it was decided that orientations related to practical types of life-long learning needs derived from the interviews were more suitable for examination. These life-long learning needs were implicit in the 7 new orientations that Kember et al. (2001) developed which converge with the vocational orientation to learning. These categories include (1) re-training for a career shift; (2) continuing professional development for those who need to keep up with developments in their line of work; (3) an opportunity for those who did not have the chance; (4) tertiary education for those who did not qualify; (5) an alternative to mainstream education because without the flexibility of part-time enrolment these individuals would have been unable to enrol for the course; (6) education for adults who previously were unable to study because of career, family and other commitments and (7) learning for pleasure throughout the lifetime.

Since the people whom I targeted in my study were part-time students, the 7 orientations identified by Kember et al. (2001) were appropriate for this study. Kember et al. (2001) found that the interpretation of research questions were aided by framing answers in terms of orientations for enrolment and that it was helpful in interpreting a multi-faceted phenomenon such as reasons for learning. Although the orientations of original studies did not fit the data they gathered, they found that the construct of orientation was crucial for analysing the data. In 2004 Lewalter & Krapp added a new dimension by investigating learning orientations within the German dual system of vocational education focusing only on vocational reasons for learning. They identified the interest orientation which referred to an interest in vocation related reasons for studying and the achievement orientation that referred to the achievement of external goals like for example good grades. These orientations bare similarities to the extrinsic and intrinsic subgroups within the vocational orientation to learning as described by Taylor et al. (1981, as cited in Webber, 2004). According to Lewalter & Krapp (2004) learning orientations revealed why students enrolled for a specific course and how their environment influenced these reasons. Based on the literature I anticipated that most learners would fall within the vocational orientation, and

that I would have had to investigate their orientations within this category derived from the theory developed by Kember et al. (2001). This approach provided me with an organised and systematic method for my investigation. By using learning orientations as my conceptual/theoretical framework to investigate part-time FET college students I was able to gain valuable insight into their reasons for learning, their satisfaction with college learning and the contribution of college learning to their career development.



SECTION 3 - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Research Question

What are the learning orientations of part-time FET students?

Sub-questions:

What are the learning orientations of students enrolled in the Applied Learning programme offered by a FET college?

Have students' vocational expectations been met and are they satisfied with the college experience in terms of realising their own vocational aims?

What is the contribution of the Applied Learning programme to the students' career development in a globalising world?



3.2 Research site

Mountain View College was identified as an appropriate site to investigate the purpose of learning for part-time adult learners enrolled at a FET college. This site was identified because this campus is the only one that offers the Applied Learning programme on a part-time basis and it has the largest part-time division for adult learners in the district. The college is an accredited training provider for an internationally certified training institute and I interviewed 10 adult learners who were first registered in 2010 and are currently enrolled for their second year in the Applied Learning programme. There were 22 learners enrolled for their second year and I obtained their contact details from the administration department at the college. All the students had phone numbers listed but only a few had included an email address in their contact details. As a result, I contacted them by phone because that gave each student an equal opportunity to participate in the study. However, I had some difficulties getting hold of the students and in the end I phoned all the students and interviewed the first 10 that responded. The research was conducted among these learners and interviews were held with them in order to answer the research questions.

The Applied Learning programme was introduced in 2009 and is therefore a relatively new programme that caters for the needs of a small group of part-time students. It is a unique programme that is offered by the college on a part-time basis and the majority of the part-time students are enrolled in the NATED programmes which are also offered by the college on a part-time basis. The Applied Learning programme is not offered on a full-time basis and learners who want to obtain the Applied Learning qualification have to enrol in the part-time course. The NC(V) programme, that is considered to be the future of the FET sector, is not offered on a part-

time basis. It is important to note that the Applied Learning programme is not representative of the general programme offering at the college and compared to the NC(V) and NATED programmes, which represents the bulk of the programme offering at the college, it is a unique programme which is also significantly more expensive than the other programmes offered by the college on a part- and full-time basis. The fees for a part-time NATED programme is R365.75 per subject compared to the R2900.00 per subject for the Applied Learning programme (A. Nel, personal communication, July 18, 2011).

In general, lecturers who are employed by the college on a full-time basis teach the programme and when necessary experts from outside the college are recruited to teach certain subjects. Classes are held in the evenings, twice a week and typically last 2-3 hours. The pre-qualification requirement for this programme is Grade 10 or equivalent and the duration of the programme is two years but learners can exit after only 1 year with a qualification which is the equivalent of a NQF L3 qualification. If learners choose to exit the programme after 18 months they will have a qualification equivalent to a NQF L4 and if learners complete both years the qualification they obtain is the equivalent of a NQF L5. Learners can continue with this programme at a different institution in order to attain a NQF L6 qualification but this qualification is not currently offered by Mountain View College (The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2011).

At completion of the programme students will be able to capture business and financial transactions manually as well as on computerised systems. They will have a comprehensive understanding of payroll, personal finance, business reconciliation and the preparation, analysis and interpretation of financial statements. Furthermore, students will learn about business literacy, accounting control and cash flow analysis. During the first year (NQF L3) subjects or learning areas include Business Literacy, Bookkeeping to Trial Balance, Payroll & Monthly Tax Returns and Computerised Bookkeeping. Once they have completed the first year students will be able to complete the monthly books of a business up to the trial balance and reconcile supplier statements, inventory systems and bank statements. Furthermore they should be able to calculate PAYE, SDL and UIF remuneration, monthly EMP deductions, annual tax documents as well as VAT 201 returns. At this point students are qualified as Certified Junior Bookkeepers and will be able to apply for a position as an accounts clerk, debtors clerk, creditors clerk or payroll clerk (The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2010; The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2011).

After successful completion of the first semester of the second year students will be Certified Senior Bookkeepers and they will be able to apply for a junior accountant or assistant accountant position. Subjects or learning areas during the first 6 months of the second year of their studies include Financial statements and Cost and Management accounting. After completion of these two subjects students will be able to execute all monthly and annual bookkeeping functions, they will have the skills to handle depreciable asset disposal, year-end adjustments and analyse the financial statements of sole proprietorships, partnerships, close corporations and companies. Students will also have a thorough understanding of cash flow and have a working knowledge

of cost accounting, financial management and business ethics (The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2010; The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2011).

Students who choose to continue their studies at NQF L5 during the second semester will qualify as Certified Technical Financial Accountants. In order to qualify at NQF L5 students have to successfully complete two subjects, Income Tax Returns and Business Law & Accounting control. At this level students will be able to perform the job functions of Accounting Technicians or Certified Tax Technicians. They will have a comprehensive knowledge of bookkeeping, financial accounting, management accounting, business law and accounting control. Students will also have a comprehensive knowledge of taxable income for both businesses and individuals and be able to provide advice to clients. In addition, they will have a working knowledge of the audit function of accounting which deals with business law and accounting control. Should students choose to continue to a NQF L6 at a different institution they will qualify as Certified Financial Accountants (The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2010; The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2011).

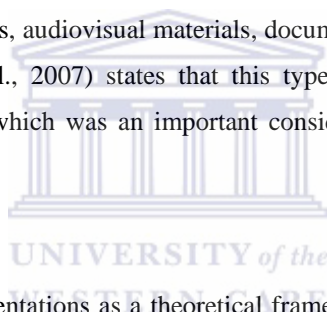
As illustrated by the discussion above the aim of the Applied Learning programme is to standardise the skills and knowledge required in the workplace and reduce existing employer/employee confusion regarding expectations and skills. This specific qualification is linked to job functions and the aim is that learners should not only have theoretical knowledge but also be able to perform the practical function. On successful completion of the programme, learners will receive an internationally recognised qualification; therefore the assumption can be made that this programme should enable students to compete in the global labour market (The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2010; The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers, 2011).

3.3 Research Methodology

In my research I supported an interpretive epistemological approach that emphasised the subjective meaning and understanding of human behaviour (Bryman, 2001: 13). In addition, the study was conducted from a constructivist ontological standpoint which asserts that social meaning and reality is constructed by individuals (Bryman, 2001: 18). I used a qualitative research method in order to capture students' learning experiences in an attempt, as Tsheko (2007) calls it, to make sense of the world from the perspectives of the participants. This collaborates with Mouton & Marais's (1996: 221) view that an important notion of the qualitative paradigm is to understand how a participant interprets the situation. In addition, Bryman (2001: 277) notes that qualitative research typically examines meaning, therefore it was an approach that supported the aim of my investigation which was to understand how part-time college students experience learning and the meaning they pertain to the experience.

I selected the case study research method because according to Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark & Morales (2007) this method provides insight into the issue that is being researched and the case is selected in order to understand the issue. According to Bryman (2001: 47) and Welman & Kruger (2001: 21) case study research directs us towards understanding the uniqueness of a particular case in all its complexity and it is aimed at the intense examination of a single case. A case can be referred to as a limited number of units of analysis such as an individual, a group or an institution that is studied (Merriam, 1998: 27; Welman & Kruger, 2001: 183). According to the literature that I consulted the part-time adult learners enrolled in the Applied Learning programme that I interviewed constitutes a case study.

Miles and Huberman (1994, as cited in Merriam, 1998: 27) describe a case as a phenomenon that occurs within a bounded context and if the phenomenon being researched is not intrinsically bounded, it is not a case. If there is no end, actually or theoretically, to the number of people who could be interviewed, the phenomenon is not bounded enough to qualify as a case. Examples of such bounded systems are single individuals, an institution or a programme such as the Applied Learning programme. The case study is a research approach where the researcher explores a case through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information like for example observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents and reports (Cresswell et al., 2007). Yin (2003, as cited in Cresswell et al., 2007) states that this type of research promotes an in-depth and contextual understanding of the case, which was an important consideration for this study where contextual conditions were relevant to my research.



In previous research, using learning orientations as a theoretical framework, researchers used varying methods to collect data. Ellis et al. (1971), Long (1977a), Morstain (1977), Morstain & Smart (1977), Nolen (1988) and Terenzini & Pascarella (1977) collected data from a large number of students who were asked to complete a written questionnaire. Kember et al. (2001), Kember et al. (2008), Long (1977b), Reichel et al. (1981) and Webber (2004) used face-to-face interviews to collect data from students. Lewalter & Krapp (2004), who investigated the learning orientations of students in the vocational education sector, used questionnaires to collect data. In light of my research questions and the specific case study that I selected, I came to the conclusion that a semi-structured, face-to-face interview was the most appropriate research instrument because I was able to clarify and explain questions when necessary. Participants were either Afrikaans or English speaking and they were free to choose the language used for the interviews. If participants chose Afrikaans as their preferred language the interviews were translated into English after transcription.

According to Welman and Kruger (2001: 159) personal interviews enable the researcher to ensure that all the questions are answered and that someone else does not provide the answers. The researcher is able to clarify responses that are vague or incomplete as well as explain any questions that may be unclear. As a result, responses obtained in a personal interview are of a high quality. As suggested by Welman & Kruger (2001: 189) I explained the purpose of the research to the participants at the beginning of the interview, I answered any

questions they may have had, obtained their co-operation and gave an indication of how long the interview would take. The disadvantage of personal interviews were that it was time consuming, taking into consideration not only the time it took to conduct the interviews but also the time it took to arrange appointments that suited both me and the respondent. Yet, personal interviews remained the best choice for collecting data for this study.

In this study, I wanted to investigate the learning orientations of FET college students, in particular in the context of their everyday lives and work environment. In order to do this I selected a sample of 10 students to investigate because I wanted to develop an in-depth understanding of each student's experiences, thoughts and feelings about learning at a FET college. If I had selected more than 10 students I would not have been able to develop sufficient detail from each student although I am aware that by selecting a small sample I was unable to generalise my findings to a larger population. However, Bryman (2001: 283) states that qualitative research is not intended to be representative of a population and that this type of research strategy is more concerned with generalising the findings to theory, which was the aim of my research. Another limitation of this study was that the limited scope did not allow me to compare the Applied Learning programme in terms of my research questions to other programmes offered at the college on a part-time basis.

3.4 Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed through a thorough literature review and review of questionnaires tested in previous studies. It consisted of demographic variables such as gender, marital status, age and 3 sections with different sets of questions including (1) reasons for studying, (2) career development in a globalising world and (3) satisfaction with college learning in terms of personal aims. Kember et al. (2001) note that questions about why students have enrolled in a course, in particular adult students, should be asked in an open way because the answers can be complex and multi-faceted. The study they conducted suggests that learning orientations in particular can be multi-faceted and therefore questions with a limited range of answers do not reveal the full picture. In the light of their findings, all the questions that were asked during the interviews were open ended.

In the first section concerning reasons for learning, learners were asked to explain why they chose to study part-time as well as other questions addressing learning orientations derived from the literature. They were specifically asked these questions in order to determine their learning orientations. It was anticipated that most students would indicate a vocational orientation to learning because a previous study by Kember et al. (2001) has indicated that this is the dominant orientation in part-time adult students. Similarly, Badroodien (2006) identified vocational reasons for learning as the dominant reason for learning among part-time FET students. In light of the findings of the above mentioned authors, the participants were asked to answer questions specifically related to the 7 orientations of practical lifelong learning needs that Kember et al. (2001)

developed. These 7 orientations converge with the vocational orientation and Kember et al. (2001) found that these orientations were helpful for interpreting students' reasons for learning.

In the second section, in order to examine career development in a globalising world, most of the questions were centred on learning in relation to work. The questions included whether students were currently employed in a related field or hoping to find new employment after they have completed the programme. Learners were asked to discuss their expectations in relation to career development after completion of the course and to discuss their future plans. Students were specifically asked about the global aspects of the programme and how they located themselves in terms of career development in a global world.

In conclusion, the focus of the last section was on student satisfaction with the college experience. In literature by Beaty et al. (1984: 77) the learning orientations approach measures satisfaction in terms of the achievement of personal aims. Therefore, students were asked about their personal aims and whether college learning enabled them to achieve their aims. Based on the literature it can be argued that students who achieved their aims were satisfied with the college experience.

3.5 Data capturing and storage



The data were collected by audio recording learners during interviews which were then transcribed and interviewees were asked to check transcripts for accuracy. The recordings as well as the transcripts were stored on a computer hard drive and hard copies of the transcripts are kept in a safe place. The data will be stored for 3 years after which it will be destroyed.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis was based on the examination of raw data collected during the interview process and the interpretation of it into useful information that informed the research topic. Data analysis can be described as “a systematic search for meaning” (Hatch, 2002: 148 as cited in Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007) and Basit (2003) describes it as an attempt by researchers to develop a better understanding of what they have studied and to refine their interpretations. The overall intent of my data collection was to develop an in-depth understanding of the learning orientations of part-time adult students, their satisfaction with the college experience in terms of realising their own aims and the contribution of college learning to their career development in a globalising world. I organised the data according to the themes that occurred in the literature review, research questions and interview schedule.

I took an iterative approach when I collected the data which according to Bryman (2001: 389) implies that data analysis will commence after some data have been collected and that the results of the analysis will then shape further data collection. In this way, I was able to adjust the interview schedule if necessary and I was able to determine if I needed to add or adjust any questions. By using this method I wanted to avoid discovering after collecting the raw data that I should have asked more or different questions.

The object of analysing qualitative data is to develop categories and relationships that inform the topic of research (Basil, 2003). My analytic strategy incorporated features of grounded theory which I used to analyse the data I collected. According to Bryman (2001: 397) grounded theory represents the most influential strategy for analysing qualitative data but the extent to which the tools associated with this strategy are used varies between studies. One of the tools of the grounded theory approach identified by Bryman (2001: 391) is coding, which leads to categorisation and constant comparison analysis (Bailey & Jackson, 2003). Coding entails breaking down the raw data into component parts which are given names and used to interpret the data. It is a process that allows the researcher to ask questions, compare data, create and change categories with the aim to find commonalities, differences, patterns and relations between various pieces of data (Basil, 2003; Seidel & Kelle, 1995 as cited in Basil, 2003; Thorne, 2000). The process of comparing data continues until the data collected from each interview have been compared with all the other sets of data (Thorne, 2000).

Coding is central in data analysis and codes can be described as links between the raw data and sets of concepts or ideas, or categories, which will enable the researcher to interpret the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996 as cited in Basil, 2003). Miles & Huberman (1994 as cited in Basil, 2003) and Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2007) argue that categories used in data analysis can be formulated before the commencement of fieldwork, a method which corresponds with a deductive approach. These categories could be based on the conceptual/theoretical framework that informed the research as well as the research question. In my analysis I favoured a deductive approach and I used the literature and my research questions to develop my interview questions. I commenced the coding process with a provisional list of categories which I searched for in the data. However, in line with a more inductive approach to data analysis, I remained open to the possibility of new codes and categories emerging during the coding process.

Bryman (2001: 398) suggests coding data as soon as possible after collection, effectively coding as you collect the data. The reason for this is that it will sharpen the researcher's understanding of the data and also avoid the researcher becoming overwhelmed by the magnitude of the data collected. Bryman (2001: 398) also suggests that if data collection involves audio recording interviews, the researcher starts transcription as soon as possible. Critique of the coding approach cautions that it could present a possible problem of losing context as it takes text out of the context in which it appears and it could also result in the fragmentation of data (Bryman, 2001: 400). However, Bryman (2001: 402) notes that coding is a prominent method for qualitative data analysis

because it is widely accepted in the research community and it is associated with grounded theory which is a very influential framework.

After I collected the data by audio recording personal interviews with participants, I transcribed the interviews and if necessary translated it to English. I manually coded the data in order to identify concepts and categories and indicated what each participant said by writing their name next to their response. If another participant had a similar response I added their name to the statement. This allowed me to establish how many times a particular response was repeated and by whom. In addition, similarities and differences in the opinions of the participants were highlighted by comparing the categories. After identifying the trends and patterns that emerged from the data I interpreted my findings by comparing the results to the conceptual/theoretical framework I discussed in my literature review as well as my research questions. The data analysis process discussed above enabled me to analyse the data and develop new insights relating to the FET sector.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

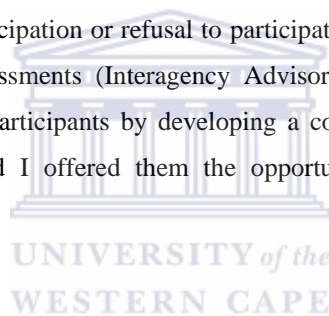
Research involves ethical dimensions and the ethical issues that I consider were issues of power, obtaining informed consent from the participants, confidentiality, cultural diversity and possible bias.

The issue of power is an important aspect that I considered prior to conducting the research. Within the college environment it may be perceived by participants that as a lecturer who teaches at this specific college, I am in a position of power. Farhana (2007) notes that it is vital to address issues of reflexivity, positionality and power relations in order to carry out ethical research. She continues to argue that when there are power differences researchers need to be especially aware of ethics when conducting research in the field and that reflexivity plays a significant role in conducting ethical research. Kobayashi (2003, as cited in Farhana, 2007) believes that reflexivity is about awareness of power relations and how that influences how a researcher relates to participants. However, awareness of unequal power relations and positionality does not mean that a researcher should abandon fieldwork; in effect it should strengthen the researcher's commitment to conducting respectful and ethical research (Peuke & Trotz, 1999: 37 as cited in Farhana, 2007).

I acknowledged that there was a power imbalance that existed between me, in my dual role as a lecturer and researcher, and the students who participated in this study. In order to address this problem I disassociated my role as researcher from my role as a lecturer during the recruitment and interview process as suggested by the Canadian Panel on Research Ethics (Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2006). In order to achieve this I clearly indicated to participants that I interviewed them in my capacity as a master's student collecting data for a research paper and not as a representative of the college. To further equalise the balance of power it is suggested by the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Board from the University of Western Ontario that

teachers who are also researchers should not study their own students (Faculty of Education Research Ethics Board, n.d.). The Applied Learning programme falls outside my area of expertise, therefore I have never taught any subjects related to this programme and I will not be involved in any future endeavours related to the programme. While collecting the data I did not encounter any students whom I have taught in the past or who were enrolled in one of my classes. To further address unequal power relations I indicated to students that I will not be involved with the assessment of their work now or any time in the future. Guided by the literature, I strived to conduct my research in an ethical and respectful manner.

When I obtained consent from participants I was aware of concerns regarding the potential of coercion as described by Brydon-Miller (2007). According to Brydon-Miller (2007) when teachers conduct research at their own institutions, students may feel obliged to participate. Therefore strategies to ensure transparency regarding all aspects of the research should be developed to address this issue. In order to achieve transparency I explained the purpose of the study to students and prior to giving their consent I disclosed information about the research to ensure that they understood the purpose of the research and had the opportunity to clarify any uncertainties. I emphasised that participation was voluntary and that I respected their right to participate or not to participate. I clearly stated that participation or refusal to participate will not have any future consequences, especially with regards to future assessments (Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2006). I obtained permission to interview the participants by developing a consent form which I asked them to sign before commencing the interview and I offered them the opportunity to withdraw at any time without consequence or fear of retaliation.



The data were collected by audio recording the interviews which were then transcribed and if necessary translated. The interviews were audio recorded to uphold accuracy and in addition the interviewees were asked to check transcripts for correctness. The interviewees were also asked to comment on the interpretation of the data in order to avoid any discrepancies. According to Jones (2010) asking respondents for feedback is a way of addressing power issues, particularly the power of interpretation. The recordings as well as the transcripts were stored on a computer hard drive which is stored in a safe place. Furthermore, hard copies of the transcripts were kept. The recordings will be deleted and the hard copies destroyed 3 years after the completion of the research. These procedures were clearly stated in the consent form to ensure that all participants were aware of this arrangement.

Bryman (2001: 480) notes that in order to prevent any harm to the participants care should be taken to protect the confidentiality of records as well as the identity of participating individuals. In my research I maintained the confidentiality of all records, the college where the research was conducted as well as the identity of the individuals interviewed. In order to ensure the anonymity of the participants, I used pseudonyms when writing up and analysing the results and as recommended by Bibby (1997) all identifying descriptors were removed from the data.

It is important to note that South Africans are culturally diverse and that we have a history of racial discrimination. As a privileged white woman, I interviewed participants that were previously disadvantaged during the apartheid regime and had a cultural background that differed from my own. While conducting my research, I strived to be sensitive to any matters related to the above mentioned issues. In conclusion I endeavoured to avoid any bias in my research design, data analysis, interpretation and any other aspect of the research where objectivity was required. I strived to adhere to all the research ethics obligations as defined by the University of the Western Cape, to come to an honest conclusion and for sensitivity with regards to the affect that my research may have had on others.



SECTION 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Description of the students

The learners I interviewed were part-time students between the ages of 19 and 47. At age 19, Jacolene was the youngest participant in the research while at 47, Nikita was the oldest. The racial composition of the group included white and coloured students but the sample did not include any black students because there were no black students enrolled in the programme. However, there were black students enrolled in other part-time courses offered by the college, therefore this sample was not representative of all the part-time students enrolled at Mountain View College.

In my sample 4 students, Nikita, Karen, Melany and Ananda were married with children, Marli was married with no children and Chaleen was the only single parent in the sample. The rest of the participants were single with no dependents. The minimum requirement for entry to the Applied Learning programme is Grade 10 but all the students that I interviewed had completed Grade 12. It was revealed that 4 students, Chaleen, Ethan, Marli and Melany had post-school qualifications which were unrelated to accounting. Chaleen had a N4 Marketing certificate, Ethan had an IT certificate, Marli had an Office Administration diploma and Melany had an ECD diploma. Only 1 student, Nikita, had a B.A. degree. A total of 9 out of the 10 participants were employed with the exception of Jacolene. Jacolene did not match the definition developed by Thompson-Davenport (1996) which defines adult learners as part-time learners with full-time adult responsibilities in addition to their studies. Jacolene was unemployed by choice and lived with her parents. She did not want to study full-time and preferred the slower pace of a part-time programme. The other students were mostly employed in a related field with the exception of Johan, a computer technician and Ethan, who was a technical consultant at a well-known bank. Appendix 4 provides a profile of the students interviewed by gender, age, race, marital status, number of dependents, highest level of education and job title.

In the following sections I analyse the responses of the learners whom I interviewed during my investigation.

4.2 Satisfaction with the college experience

Data were collected from questions specifically addressing the vocational aims that students wanted to achieve when they enrolled in the Applied Learning programme. Beaty et al. (1984: 77) describe learning orientations as a collection of purposes where success and failure is determined by the extent to which students fulfil their own aims. Students were asked whether they were able to achieve these aims and if they were satisfied with the college experience in terms of achieving their stated aims. Karen's aims were to get a qualification and have a better understanding of her job while Nikita valued the Applied Learning qualification because it would increase her self-confidence when applying for work, she said:

“I wanted to qualify myself so that I don’t have to stand back for anybody else. When they advertise a position I can apply without feeling inferior to anybody else because I have the qualification” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

Ananda, Melany and Ethan identified the fact that they wanted to become accountants as their vocational aim. Furthermore, Ananda and Ethan also referred to the importance of a higher paid position when asked about their vocational aims:

“I you complete the entire course then you are an accountant. So I would like to get there, that is my goal and that will put me in a higher salary bracket” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“I would like to become an accountant, a position that pays well. I don’t want to be in this position forever but I think in the next four years, within the next four years, I should make a move” (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

Like Ethan, Johan’s aim was also to find a new job in the accounting sector:

“My goal is to leave the IT industry and focus on the accounting sector” (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).



In addition, Jacolene, Chaleen and Marli referred to similar goals, as illustrated by their answers below:

“To find a good job” (Jacolene, interview, 11 May, 2011).

“I would like to be promoted or apply for a new job and very importantly I would like to increase my income” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

“To get promoted, to earn a bigger salary and possibly a new job” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

I found that the most frequently mentioned vocational aims were to get a new job, to be promoted and to earn a higher salary. Anton was the only student who did not refer to any of the above mentioned vocational aims that the other students valued. For him, the Applied Learning programme was necessary to ensure future employability but he actually wanted to pursue a career in the entertainment industry, he said:

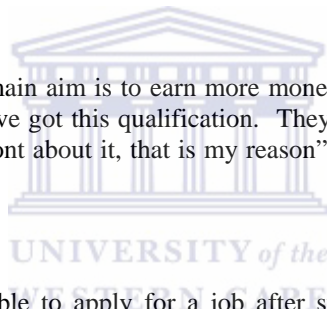
“Well, this is my second choice. I don’t know. I guess I will work in this industry for a while but then I want to move to what I actually want to do” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

When asked whether they were satisfied with the college experience in terms of achieving their own aims, students’ answers were consistently positive. Melany had already found a new job as a creditors clerk since enrolling in the Applied Learning programme and although she wasn’t an accountant yet it was a step in the right direction. She stated:

“For me, this was very good. When I started this course I didn’t even have a job in accounting and this course helped me” (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

Marli reported that her employer told her that her salary would increase after successful completion of the programme:

“Yes, in all honesty my main aim is to earn more money and I know my employer will pay me more once I’ve got this qualification. They told me so. That is why I am doing this. I am upfront about it, that is my reason” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).



Jacolene believed that she would be able to apply for a job after successful completion of the programme because she now had a better understanding of accounting:

“Yes, because I hated accounting at school. I actually wanted to drop out at one stage. I didn’t want to do it anymore. But then I continued because my dad said I will be able to find a job and then when I started here everything started falling into place. I understand it now. Everything clicked. Now I will be able to do it” (Jacolene, interview, 11 May, 2011).

Ethan, Karen and Johan simply answered that the college enabled them to achieve their aims:

“Yes, I will be able to achieve what I set out to achieve” (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

“I think so, yes. I am almost finished and I definitely think that the college has enabled me to achieve my goals” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“I believe this course will enable me to achieve these goals” (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).

The research shows that most students had vocational aims that were very important to them, believed that they would be able to achieve those aims and that they were satisfied with the college experience in terms of achieving their own stated aims. In the following section I discuss the learning orientations of the students enrolled in the Applied Learning programme.

4.3 Learning Orientations

I investigated the reasons why students decided to enrol in the Applied Learning programme on a part-time basis in order to identify the learning orientation they associated with. Without fail, students expressed career related reasons for enrolling in the programme and there was limited interest in education and training that was not career related. Education was considered important in relation to future employment which was indicative of a vocational orientation to learning. Based on the literature that I consulted, such as Akoojee & McGrath (2008), Badroodien (2006) and Kember et al. (2001) it was not surprising that the FET part-time students that participated in this study associated primarily with the vocational orientation to learning as identified in my literature review. For instance, Nikita was a freelance bookkeeper who used to be a teacher. When her husband started his own business, she did the accounts for him. As she became more experienced, she started doing the accounts of other small businesses on a freelance basis. Although Nikita has been working as a freelance bookkeeper for more than fifteen years, she was not a qualified bookkeeper, as she confirmed:

“I have never formally qualified as a bookkeeper which is quite ironic because I am a bookkeeper. I look for work, I have the experience, but I do not have the papers. When I walk into a job interview I have the experience but they ask me for a qualification. I felt that it was time that I get the documentation to prove that I can do the job and that I know what I am doing. You know, the qualification that employers look for. Although I know I can do what is required, I can understand why people need to see that proof, a qualification” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

Similar to Nikita, Karen had been working as a bookkeeper for 24 years although she did not have an appropriate qualification. She enrolled because she was concerned about job security and believed that she needed a qualification to ensure her future employability, she said:

“I got to a stage, certain things happened. One of my friends lost her job and like me she has been in the industry for a very long time. She had to start looking for a new job all of the sudden but she couldn't find a job because she doesn't have a qualification. You need a qualification to get a job. That was my main motivation to do this course because it doesn't matter how many years of experience you have,

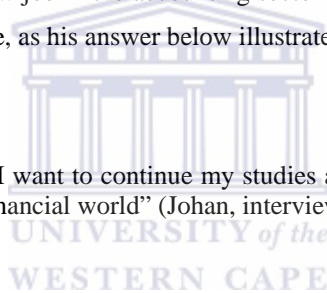
they look for a qualification and if you don't have it you won't get the job" (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

Ethan had similar concerns and wanted to get a qualification to ensure future employability. Although Ethan was employed as a technical consultant he expressed the wish to move into the financial field as soon as the opportunity came up and stated that:

"It was to educate myself, to get a diploma, or something like that. If something should happen then I've got the qualification because at the moment the diploma I have is mediocre. I mean if you look at the past two years, if you look at the recession and stuff, if I do get retrenched then I've got something to fall back on" (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

Although Johan was not concerned about job security like Ethan, he also wanted to make a career shift and said that it was important to him to continue his education and get a degree. He believed that the Applied Learning programme would help him to find a new job in the accounting sector but after completing it he wanted to enrol at a university in order to obtain a degree, as his answer below illustrates:

"I want to get a new job, I want to continue my studies and get a degree and I want to know more about the financial world" (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).



A student who had already made a career shift was Melany, who was a grade R teacher when she enrolled in the course because she wanted to become an accountant. It emerged that 4 months after she commenced her studies she was approached by a company who offered her a job and she has been employed as a creditors clerk for more than a year now. She said:

"You know, because...I just said that I always wanted to do accounting and that is why I chose this programme. I would like to get the highest qualification that you can and it takes a long time to get a qualification but I would like to have a qualification" (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

Not only did students want to make a career shift, there were others, like Chaleen, who was already employed in a related field but wanted to be promoted. Chaleen was a payroll clerk that enrolled in order to advance her career and she believed that the Applied Learning qualification would enable her to do that, as she confirmed:

"I will be able to get a promotion based on this qualification. The subjects are important and I want to learn how to do certain things like the bank reconciliation.

My boss does the bank reconciliation at the moment and I want to be where he is” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

Other students, like Ananda and Marli, who were both employed in a related field, enrolled in the programme because they wanted to earn a higher salary, they said:

“That is my main goal; I would like to earn more” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“I’m taking this course to earn a better salary” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

The younger students in the sample, like Anton who was 20 years old and Jacolene who was 19, both mentioned that they enrolled in the course because their parents thought it would help them to find a job. Anton was employed as a junior bookkeeper while Jacolene was unemployed but both of them were still living with their parents and their fathers were paying for their studies. They stated:

“I wanted to study something else but according to my parents there isn’t really a lot of work in that field so I am studying this” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

“My dad works in payroll so he will be able to help me find work. Once I’m finished and I have a qualification I will look for work and he will be able to help me” (Jacolene, interview, 11 May, 2011).

My findings were in line with the research of Badroodien (2006) who also identified vocational reasons for enrolment as the dominant reason for enrolment among FET students. He determined that FET colleges cater for the needs of 3 groups namely (1) young people that would like to advance to higher education or find employment (2) adults who need to update their skills or pursue education as a leisure interest and (3) employers who would like to improve the skills of their workers through education and training. I found that only 1 of the students that I interviewed, Jacolene, could be classified within the first group. The second group represented the majority of the sample and I found that the rest of the students in my study matched the profile of the second group. Although 4 students, Karen, Chaleen, Marli and Melany, were subsidised by their employers it was evident from the data that the students themselves were the driving force behind their continued education and training, not their employers. For instance, Karen and Chaleen both had bursaries from their employers, however they took the initiative that made it happen, as their answers revealed:

“My employer pays for me and then we claim it back through the skills development programme. So actually it is the government that pays for my studies. That’s nice. I don’t think my employer would have paid for my studies otherwise. I organise everything myself, so my employer doesn’t even have to do that” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“I applied at my work, at the Human Resource Department because financially it didn’t always go that well. To pay for this myself is a bit hectic but they gave me permission and now they are paying for my studies. Previously I couldn’t afford to study” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

Marli mentioned that she would not have continued her education if her employer did not sponsor her studies:

“I can’t pay for this myself. If I had to pay for this myself I never would have continued my studies” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

When Melany enrolled for the Applied Learning programme she was paying for her education herself, but when she joined a new company her new employer offered to pay for it, as she confirmed:

“My employer pays for it. I paid for it myself but since I started the new job my employer pays for it. It makes things much easier because it’s a very expensive course” (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

It emerged that a lack of funds has always been an obstacle that Melany has had to overcome in order to continue her studies. She paid for her ECD qualification herself, but she had to work in a factory first in order to save money to pay for it. She said:

“I didn’t study after school. I went to work in a factory but you don’t want to stay there your whole life. I always said to myself I want to do something better. I then started working at the school and I started looking for a course in that. They offered a course at this college and I also did that course part-time. I got my qualification and after that there was a quiet period. But then, I decided to do this because I always wanted to do this. The money was always a problem, it is a big sacrifice to study. My mother passed away when I was 12 years old and I grew up with my aunt. Then you don’t want to ask for money, so I got myself a job. I didn’t really have a choice” (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

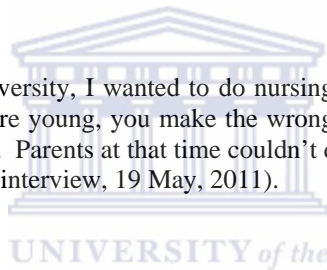
According to the literature, students like Melany, who specified financial difficulties as the reason why they did not previously have the opportunity to study, falls in the learning orientation, ‘an opportunity for those who did not have a chance’, as identified by Kember et al. (2001). For students who relate to this orientation, a

part-time programme is an opportunity to continue their education because they previously did not have the chance because of economical factors or a lack of educational provision. I found that 4 other students also identified economical factors as the reason why they struggled to continue their studies at an earlier stage but nobody identified a lack of educational provision as the reason why they previously did not have the opportunity. Marli said that she would not have been able to pay for her studies herself and when asked why they did not previously have the opportunity to study Ananda, Chaleen and Karen answered:

“You know, I don’t think I knew what I wanted to do. It was work, work and work. I had to get an income. I first had to do some self-reflection to see if this is what I really wanted to do” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“I made the wrong choice when I was young; I did not know what to choose so I just chose the first thing that looked interesting. Years earlier I studied marketing at this college but I had to work first to save money. After my studies I couldn’t find work, I even worked for four months without payment” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

“I was enrolled at the university, I wanted to do nursing but it turned out it wasn’t really my passion. You are young, you make the wrong choices. Also, I think the money wasn’t really there. Parents at that time couldn’t do for their kids what we do for our kids now” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).



Economical factors, as discussed above, are among the reasons identified by Kember et al. (2001) why adults do not continue their studies. It is significant that 4 out of the 5 students who mentioned economic factors as a reason for not continuing their education earlier were subsidised by their employers. Additionally, it emerged from the data that 5 students felt that they did not have an opportunity to study before because they made the wrong decisions when they were younger, a reason not previously identified by Kember et al. (2001). Although I never specifically asked students whether they made the wrong choice at an earlier stage in their lives Ananda, Karen, Marli, Chaleen and Johan all specifically referred to it as the reason why they never had the opportunity to continue their studies. This prompted the identification of a new learning orientation ‘education for adults who previously made the wrong choice’. When asked if they were studying because they previously did not have the opportunity, Marli and Johan answered:

“I made the wrong decision when I finished school and my previous employer did not give me the opportunity to study. Also, at that stage I didn’t know that I wanted to do what I do now. This is the first opportunity for me to study and do what I want to do” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“I would say that, yes. I wasn’t interested in the accounting field. I was interested in IT” (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).

From the data collected it was evident that 4 students Ananda, Marli, Karen and Chaleen contributed their lack of opportunity to both economical factors as well as making the wrong decision at an earlier stage. Furthermore, there were 2 students, Nikita and Chaleen, who were unable to study at an earlier stage because of family commitments which indicated that they associated with the learning orientation, 'education for adults', as identified by Kember et al. (2001) which referred to students who were previously unable to study because of career, family and other commitments. Nikita was enrolled for a BCom degree at a university but she could not complete it because she became the mother of an autistic son, she stated:

"I did my BCom degree half way at [...] ⁴but I could not complete it. My autistic son came into the picture so I had to drop out to take care of him. My responsibilities increased. Now he is a bit older and he needs less care. I can now leave him with his dad in the evenings when I come to class" (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

Chaleen fell pregnant during her studies and as a result she couldn't continue her education. Chaleen was the only student that identified three reasons why she previously did not have the opportunity to continue her studies, namely economical factors, choosing the wrong course when she was younger and falling pregnant. She said:

"When I started studying years ago I fell pregnant and then I had to drop out, so that is another reason why I did not have the opportunity to study" (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

It is interesting to note that both the students who identified family commitments as a reason why they did not continue their studies earlier were women. I found that none of the students referred to the need to continue their education to keep up with developments within their original line of work as described in the learning orientation, 'continuing professional development', developed by Kember et al. (2001). Students that worked in a related field, like Ananda and Melany who were creditors clerks, Chaleen who was a payroll clerk, Marli, an accountant, and Karen who was a bookkeeper, did not believe that it was necessary to continue learning on an ongoing basis. Similarly, Jacolene, who was unemployed and Ethan who worked as a technical consultant, did not deem it to be essential. However, Johan, who worked as a computer technician said that in the IT industry he had to update his knowledge and skills on a regular basis, but he was not enrolled in the Applied Learning programme for that reason. When asked whether they need to take continuing professional development throughout their career both Nikita and Anton answered that they would have to attend tax workshops in the future to keep up with changing tax laws:

⁴ The student referred to a specific university, for the purposes of this research paper I have removed all identifying descriptors from the data

“Income tax laws change all the time so you have to stay up to date. You will have to attend tax workshops just to stay up to date with those laws” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

“Tax changes all the time but the rest stays the same” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

However, although they expressed the importance of continuing professional development, neither Anton nor Nikita were enrolled in the Applied Learning Programme in order to stay up to date with developments within their current line of work. Therefore, they did not match this orientation. Another distinction from the orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001) was that none of the students identified with the learning orientation, ‘tertiary education for those who did not qualify’. Johan and Ethan were both interested in pursuing a degree in the future, but they did not identify not qualifying for entry to a university as a reason why they enrolled in the Applied Learning programme. A probable explanation for the lack of association with this orientation is that Kember et al. (2001) investigated part-time students who were enrolled at a university while the students in my study were enrolled at a FET college where the minimum requirement for entry was much lower. To qualify for entry to the Applied Learning programme you need a minimum Grade 10 qualification and all the students in my study had completed Grade 12. There was no evidence in the data that students were unable to qualify for college or university entry at an earlier stage.

Another orientation developed by Kember et al. (2001) that students frequently identified with was the learning orientation, ‘an alternative to mainstream education’, which referred to students who would have been unable to enrol for the programme without the flexibility of part-time education. The frequency of association with this orientation among students who participated in this study substantiates the research conducted by Kember et al. (2001). Ananda, Karen, Marli, Johan and Nikita all mentioned that they could not afford to study full-time and therefore their only option was to study part-time, as their answers illustrate:

“I would love to do this course full-time, really I would, but that’s just not possible with a family. You have financial responsibilities” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“I think in this economy you can’t just stop working, you have to have an income so I can’t afford to study full-time. This is the easiest way for me to do it because I still have an income but I will also get a qualification” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

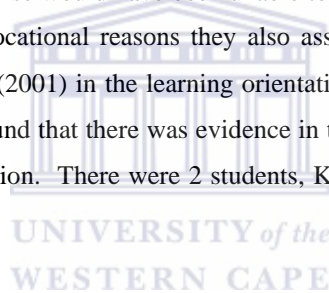
“I can’t do it full-time because I cannot afford not to get a salary. I have to do it part-time because I cannot survive without my salary” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“I have to work and study at the same time because I have to pay for my studies myself” (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).

Nikita preferred the flexibility of a part-time course not only because she couldn't afford to study full-time but also because she wanted to spend time with her children in the afternoon. She had an autistic son who required extra attention and although her husband had an income they needed her income to pay for her son's therapy. She said:

“I have three children and I would like to spend time with them in the afternoon. One of my children is mentally retarded and he is autistic. So he has two labels. He needs attention and care. I have to work because he has to get therapy and we need the extra income. So it isn't possible for me to study full-time and not earn an income. I have to work and study part-time” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

It was clear from the data collected that the flexibility of part-time education enabled these students to continue their studies, something that they otherwise would have been unable to do. It is interesting to note that although students were enrolled primarily for vocational reasons they also associated with non-vocational reasons for learning as identified by Kember et al. (2001) in the learning orientation, 'learning for pleasure throughout the lifetime'. During my investigation I found that there was evidence in the data that 4 students were studying for interest, enjoyment or personal satisfaction. There were 2 students, Karen and Ethan, that mentioned studying for enjoyment and self-development:



“I think I actually started with a computer course. When I finished that, well I enjoyed it so much I just wanted to continue learning. I enjoyed that so I decided I am going to continue and I am going to get myself a qualification. It's nice to improve yourself” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“Self-development is important and if the opportunity comes up then I will go into the financial accounting field” (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

For Nikita and Ananda the personal satisfaction they derived from their studies was important:

“I'm the oldest in the class so I cannot allow the younger people to upstage me. That is a goal. I want to be first in the class. It gives me a boost that I still have what it takes” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

“I want to proof to myself that I can do it” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

Although this specific reason for learning was not identified by Kember et al. (2001) I found that it was very important to Melany, Chaleen and Karen to show their kids what can be accomplished, which prompted the identification of a new learning orientation 'education for adults as a model for their children'. They stated:

"Your children look up to you and you can encourage your kids in this way. And they will, maybe not now but one day, they will think: 'Wow, my mommy was great to do that at that age'" (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

"I want to be successful and I would like to show my kids that your background doesn't mean that you have to be like that. Things have changed, it's not like it used to be. There are lots of opportunities out there and if you get one you have to take it. I want to show them that you can make a success of your life. All you have to do is sacrifice a little and you have to try" (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

"I have young students in the house. My daughter is a third year student and sometimes I feel like I just want to show her. I work and I'm studying and my marks are better than hers" (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

The research shows that although all the students were vocationally orientated, I found, similar to the findings of Kember et al. (2001), that more than half of the students also valued non-vocational reasons for learning. I established that the learning orientation, 're-training for a career shift', that focused on students that wanted to make a career shift or be promoted, was the most frequently identified learning orientation developed by Kember et al. (2001) because 7 students identified with this orientation. As noted earlier, 2 students, Johan and Ethan, were working in an unrelated field and were training in order to make a career shift. In addition to wanting to make a career shift, Ethan also expressed the desire to start his own business and believed the skills he was learning in the Applied Learning programme could be useful in the future. Ethan said:

"The thing is, maybe I will start my own business and then I've got the background, or the, you know, something to assist me. Because you can't start a business and not have any knowledge of a financial nature" (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

Melany enrolled in the course with the aim to make a career shift which happened 4 months after enrolment. After finding a new job, her ambitions evolved and she now wants to find a better job within the accounting sector. When asked whether she was upgrading her knowledge and skills for a different future job she answered:

"Definitely, I would like to get a better job in finance" (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

Others also mentioned aspirations to be promoted or to find a new job. Marli wanted to find a better job, Ananda wanted to become an accountant while Chaleen mentioned that she would be able to apply for a promotion once qualified, as these statements illustrate:

“I want get a better job” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“At the end of the day, that I...this may sound funny, I don’t want to be a creditors clerk anymore. I want to be an accountant” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“At my company there are positions that become available in the debtors and creditors departments on a regular basis. I would like to apply for those positions but I don’t have the qualification to do it. Once I have a qualification I will be able to apply for those positions” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

Anton also associated with this orientation although it was not his primary reason for enrolment. Anton was studying because he needed a qualification that would make him employable because he believed that he would struggle to find work if he pursued his real interests, which were drama and dance. He wanted the qualification in order to have something to fall back on should his plans to work in the entertainment industry not work out. When asked whether he was upgrading his knowledge and skills for a different future job he answered:



“Well, that is not really my main objective for this course, but I hope so. Well, I guess it is important to everybody. It will be positive thinking to hope that you will get a promotion and earn a better salary but I just want to get this qualification behind me and then I want to study drama and dance” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

A total of 3 students, Karen, Nikita and Jacolene, did not associate with this learning orientation. Neither Karen nor Nikita had aspirations to be promoted or to make a career shift while Jacolene could not be classified within this orientation because she has never been employed. When I examined the data for evidence of the learning orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001) I found that 9 out of the 10 students associated with at least 1 of the learning orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001) with the exception of Jacolene. Jacolene associated with a vocational orientation to learning but she did not match any of the orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001). A probable explanation is that the orientations were developed based on part-time students who were employed on a full-time basis and Jacolene did not match that profile. In accordance with the study by Kember et al. (2001), which found that students often had multiple orientations to learning, I found that most of the students had 2 or more learning orientations within the vocational orientation to learning with the exception of Anton, who only associated with the learning orientation, ‘re-training for a career shift’. This illustrates the usefulness of the orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001) because it highlights how multi-faceted

reasons for learning can be within the vocational orientation. The predominantly vocational orientation of part-time FET students highlights how important it is that FET college learning prepares students to compete in the labour market.

I found that most students in this study believed that the Applied Learning qualification would improve their ability to compete in the labour market. As discussed in my literature review, globalisation accentuates the importance of a close relationship between vocational education and the world of work and the intention of the Applied Learning programme is to produce graduates with skills that are relevant to the market and to promote the employability of students. The research shows that employability and career development were important reasons why students enrolled in the programme. According to Karen, if the programme did not achieve those goals her studies would have been pointless. When asked whether she thought the programme would enable her to compete in the labour market she answered:

“I hope so, otherwise there is no reason for my studies. Personally, I’ve been out of the job market for 24 years so it is difficult for me to know what’s happening but I do believe that this course will help me to get a job” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

Ananda and Nikita valued the contribution of college learning to their careers because of the new work-related skills that they had acquired. Ananda said that her new skills would enable her to find a job while Nikita felt that she was able to perform better at her job, as they confirmed:

“You can have a look. Everybody uses Pastel. You can look at the advertisements for work in the newspapers, they all want that. It will help me to get a job” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“For example, previously I did not know how to print the notes for financial statements in Pastel and I did it without it. Now, I can do that because I learned how to do it and I can print it for my clients. So my presentation is much better” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

Anton said that the Applied Learning qualification would help him advance his career and similarly Chaleen and Marli both believed that they would be able to earn more and apply for better positions after successful completion of the programme. They said:

“I think this course will help me to get further in the future. I started working directly after school and although experience counts for something, this course will help me do more. To achieve more” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

“I am tied to a contract at my company. I had to sign a contract and I can only apply for a job a year after I received my qualification except if I apply for a new position within the company. After that I will definitely not stay there. I will be able to apply for better positions and to earn more” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

“If you know more you can get a promotion” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

Johan, Ethan and Jacolene wanted to finish the Applied Learning programme before applying for a new job. Jacolene noted the importance of having the “basic knowledge” (Jacolene, interview, 11 May, 2011) that she needed to apply for a job. She complained about not understanding accounting at school but now she had a good grasp of the subject, therefore she believed that she would be able to find a job in the future. Similarly, Johan wanted to have a thorough understanding of the accounting sector before taking a new job and stated:

“I would like to apply for a junior bookkeeper position to see how things work in practice. After that I will work my way up to a more senior position. I am already a junior bookkeeper but I would like to complete this year before I start looking for a new position. I think that you will be able to use some of the aspects of senior bookkeeping even if you are a junior bookkeeper. I will definitely start at the bottom. I don’t want to start without sufficient knowledge because this is a new field for me” (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).

Ethan wanted to complete the programme first because he believed that it would be easier to find a job once he had a NQF L5 qualification. He said:

“I haven’t actually applied yet. I just did my bookkeeping now but I don’t know. I’ve seen an advertisement for a vacancy but that was for a financial manager and they required a very high qualification. Because this is a low qualification I don’t expect to be able to apply for those jobs. I think once I’ve completed my Certified Technical Accountant then I will start applying” (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

It was clear that the students expected to benefit from the programme in terms of employability and career development and Melany was the best example of somebody who had already benefited from the programme. When she enrolled for the Applied Learning programme she was employed as a grade R teacher and the programme enabled her to acquire a job in the accounting sector even before she had completed it. As discussed above, the research shows that students believed that the Applied Learning programme would improve their employability. Gamble (2004: 189) claims that employability is the new educational aim in vocational education and that it also means that an individual will improve his or her income-earning prospects. I found that most students believed that the Applied Learning qualification would improve their income-earning prospects. Melany’s income had already increased when she found a new job and some students like Marli and

Nikita had definite prospects of increasing their income. As mentioned earlier, Marli's main reason for continuing her education was to earn a higher salary and she had an agreement with her employer that she will be paid more once she has completed the qualification. Furthermore, Nikita said that she will be able to charge more for her services as a freelance bookkeeper once qualified.

Johan, who worked in the IT industry, said that he will earn more once he found a new job and he believed that in the long term his income would increase. Similarly, Chaleen, Ananda, Ethan and Karen unanimously believed that their income would increase if they were promoted or found a new job but they doubted whether their current employers would pay them more. They said:

“At this company where I am at the moment I don't know. But if I should walk out I know that I will earn more. Time will tell. But that is my goal” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

“Not for my current job. Although I will motivate for it, I will put it forward, but I don't think it will. If I apply for another job I will obviously go for something more. Obviously I won't go and do the accounting job for the same money I earn now” (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

“I hope the boss will notice it and give me an increase but there isn't really room for promotion at my work. Most likely, if I want to make more money I'll have to find another job” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

Jacolene was unemployed but said that she would be able to earn more in the future because she will have a qualification. Anton also believed that the qualification would help him to get a promotion and earn a better salary but he wasn't really interested in pursuing it, as he confirmed:

“Once I'm finished I'm going to study dance and drama, which is what I actually want to do” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

Anton wanted to continue his studies, but not in the same field of knowledge that he was currently pursuing. The rest of the students, with the exception of Jacolene, Ananda and Karen wanted to continue their studies in the financial sector. Cosser (2003: 34) and Kraak (2008) found in their research that FET students believed that they need to pursue further qualifications in the post-school sector in order to secure employment. My research indicates a different perspective which is that none of the students in this study that wanted to continue their studies felt that they needed to do so in order to secure employment. Marli was only interested

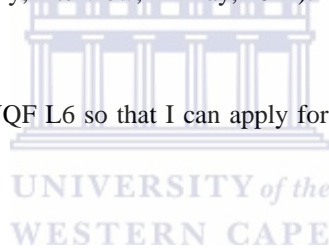
in continuing her education if she would be able to earn more but she was not convinced that a higher qualification would improve her income earning prospects. She stated:

“I would study further if it would add value. I would want to know that I can earn more before I continue my studies” (Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

The rest of the students that wanted to continue their studies believed that they would be able to achieve more with a better qualification. Johan wanted to get a degree because he believed that it would further advance his career while Ethan contemplated either enrolling for a BCom degree or continuing to a NQF L6. He believed that he needed a higher qualification to apply for certain positions. Furthermore, Melany and Chaleen also felt that a higher qualification would make them more competitive in the labour market. When asked whether they would like to continue their studies they answered:

“Yes, because younger people come in with their degrees and their qualifications and you have been in that position for many years and they just go past you because they are qualified.” (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

“I would like to have a NQF L6 so that I can apply for better positions” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).



Nikita wanted to continue her studies in order to have a better understanding of accounting and she wanted to be able to sign off financial statements, which a NQF L6 qualification would enable her to do. She also valued the prestige that a qualification would give her, as illustrated below:

“It puts me at a higher level and then I can sign off financial statements. At the moment I have to get an auditor to sign off the financial statements that I do. Also, I will make fewer mistakes and there will be fewer corrections. It will also give me more prestige because I will be able to sign off financial statements” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

With regards to a qualification, Afrassa (2001) found that TAFE students in Australia who received higher qualifications were more likely to find employment, which validates the conviction of the 5 students in my sample that it would be worthwhile to continue their studies beyond NQF L5 because it would help them compete in the labour market. Jacobsz (2004) determined that FET students who found employment easily were those who participated in programmes where there was a balance between the theoretical and practical elements. Consequently, I asked students whether they were able to apply college learning at work. The answers were affirmative. A total of 7 students were employed in a related field and reported that they were

able to link college learning to their current positions. Melany and Chaleen said that they now had a better understanding of why they did certain things at work:

“Yes, there is a very strong link. I am learning things now that I am not dealing with at work, for example year end, but it helps me to understand how things work. My job makes more sense now. Often you learn things but it doesn’t really apply to your job, but with this course it’s different, it’s quite practical” (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

“Like I said before, I now understand where everything fits in, I know now. Previously, I did not know. When I notice that it’s time to do the cash books at the end of the month I understand why, previously I did not understand any of these things” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

Ananda described the Applied Learning programme as a course which included everything that she needed to know in practice while Anton, Karen, Marli and Nikita said that they could apply college learning at work. They mentioned the usefulness of learning about computerised accounting systems like Pastel, which they used at work. Marli said that she worked with Pastel every day while Nikita said that she previously did not know how to print notes with financial statements in Pastel, but she learned how to do that at the college. Similarly, Karen and Anton could also apply their college learning at work. They said:

“There were certain things like cost and management that I don’t use but it was actually interesting to learn about that. I do think that the standard aspects of the programme like Pastel and Payroll were good because I could apply that” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011).

“Pastel is useful, I use Pastel at work and it makes things easier. It saves a lot of time” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

Allais (2007) argues that one of the objectives of the NQF is to provide education that is relevant to the needs of the market and the data suggest that students found the course practical and relevant to the world of work. Furthermore, according to Jacobsz (2004), a FET programme that includes practical elements will promote employability. My findings support this argument because my research shows that the Applied Learning programme has a close link to the world of work and students believed that the qualification would help them compete in the labour market. With regards to competitiveness in the labour market, Afrassa (2001) found that TAFE graduates in Australia were more likely to find employment if they had a vocational orientation to learning and were employed before starting the course or during the course. All of the students in my sample had a vocational orientation to learning and most were already employed, which leads to the conclusion that these students were better prepared to compete in the labour market than the predominantly full-time FET

students that Cosser (2003) and Kraak (2008) investigated. It is also important to note that I investigated a unique programme that is not representative of the general programme offerings in the FET sector as investigated by Cosser (2003) and Kraak (2008). Studies by Cosser (2003: 34) & Kraak (2008) found that the employability of college graduates in South Africa is low and that they do not view FET as a direct gateway to employment. My data indicates a different perspective which is that students in this study viewed FET college learning as a direct gateway to employment. The students believed that the qualification would improve their ability to compete in the labour market. In addition, they did not deem it necessary to continue their education in order to secure employment. However, some students were eager to continue their studies because they believed that a higher qualification would make them more competitive in the labour market.

The importance of a qualification was mentioned several times throughout the interviews by students without being asked about it directly. I found that the overwhelming majority of the students in my sample emphasised the value of a qualification which prompted the identification of a new learning orientation within the South African context, 'education for a qualification', which 9 students, with the exception of Johan, associated with. Qualifications registered under the NQF supposedly deals with issues of employability, enabling the employer to know exactly what skills the individual possesses which makes the person more employable (ILO, 2008). The research shows that participants believed that a qualification would contribute positively to their employability and most of the participants referred to the importance of having a qualification at some point in the interview. Karen, Nikita, Melany, Chaleen and Ethan all said that obtaining a qualification was an important reason why they enrolled, although the reasons why they valued a qualification were different. Melany said that she would like to get the best qualification possible and that she believed that a qualification would help her compete in the labour market:

"I would like to get the highest qualification that you can and it takes a long time to get a qualification but I would like to have a qualification" (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

"...younger people come in with their degrees and their qualifications and you have been in that position for many years and they just go past you because they are qualified. That is one of my most important reasons" (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

Nikita referred to the importance of a qualification several times during the interview, she said that a qualification would give her more prestige, that it would increase her self-confidence as well as her employability as illustrated by the quotes below:

“I wanted to qualify myself so that I don’t have to stand back for anybody else. When they advertise a position I can apply without feeling inferior to anybody else because I have the qualification” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

“I felt that it was time that I get the documentation to prove that I can do the job and that I know what I am doing. You know, the qualification that employers look for” (Nikita, interview, 17 May, 2011).

Karen and Ethan were concerned about job security and similar to Nikita valued future employability:

“That was my main motivation to do this course because it doesn’t matter how many years of experience you have, they look for a qualification and if you don’t have it you won’t get the job” (Karen, interview, 19 May, 2011)

“It was to educate myself, to get a diploma, or something like that. If something should happen then I’ve got the qualification because at the moment the diploma I have is mediocre. I mean if you look at the past two years, if you look at the recession and stuff, if I do get retrenched then I’ve got something to fall back on” (Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

Chaleen wanted a qualification because it would enable her to apply for a promotion. She stated:

“I will be able to get a promotion based on this qualification” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

Furthermore, Jacolene and Anton believed that a qualification would help them compete in the labour market, they said:

“Once I’m finished and I have a qualification I will be able to look for a job” (Jacolene, interview, 11 May, 2011).

“They look at the qualification you have so if they have three candidates for a position and two doesn’t have a qualification then obviously they will choose the person who has a qualification. I think any qualification will help you to get a better job” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

Marli valued a qualification because she had assurance from her employer that her salary would increase once she was qualified:

“My employers said that they will pay me more once I have this qualification”
(Marli, interview, 19 May, 2011).

Similar to Nikita, Ananda thought that a qualification would give her more prestige:

“In the end, everything is about the qualification. Especially at my previous job where I worked as a temp. But that inspired me to study further. The thing is, people look at you differently when you have a qualification. That is just the way it is. That piece of paper does mean something” (Ananda, interview, 9 May, 2011).

Students valued a qualification because they expected to benefit from it and believed that it will promote employability and contribute to their career development. These findings highlighted the importance of education that is related to future employment and the belief among FET part-time students that a qualification is the ticket to employability, a better job, a higher income and more prestige. The importance of obtaining a qualification for South African FET students is understandable in light of the emphasis on a qualification in terms of the South African NQF. My literature review shows that one of the objectives of the NQF is that qualifications will be more transferable between national economies (ILO, 2008). It emerged from the data that students also valued the Applied Learning qualification because it is internationally recognised. Both Melany and Ethan said that they would like to go overseas should the opportunity come up:

“These days it is very possible that you get transferred to another country. You want to know that you have the background and the knowledge that you need to go wherever you have to” (Melany, interview, 11 May, 2011).

“If the opportunity is there and it is a good opportunity then I will take the job”
(Ethan, interview, 10 May, 2011).

Other students like Chaleen, Johan and Anton had a strong desire to work and live abroad and referred to it several times during the interviews, as illustrated below:

“I would be eager to take any international opportunities. At the company where I am now there are international opportunities but that is to Swaziland, which is not far, and then you stay there for three years and then you have to come back. It isn't a permanent option. So there aren't really international opportunities at my

company. I would like to go overseas for a year or two. Then, if I am happy there and I like the lifestyle and the people and I enjoy the work that I do there, then I would consider staying there. I would like to be exposed to other people, you can see things, you can learn new things and hopefully I will earn more. If I get the opportunity to work overseas I will grab it with both hands” (Chaleen, interview, 12 May, 2011).

“...I would like to go overseas and the qualification is recognised globally. This is a global qualification” (Johan, interview, 20 May, 2011).

“I would like to move to another country and have a qualification that I can use there” (Anton, interview, 20 May, 2011).

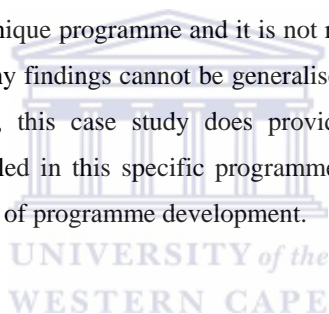
Jacolene was also interested in working overseas but said that she would probably not go because she would miss her family too much. Nikita felt that she was too old and she didn't want to uproot her family, however if she was younger she would have liked the opportunity to work abroad. Karen said that she would move overseas if her children decided to immigrate. Only 2 students, Marli and Ananda, did not indicate any interest in working in another country. The interest students displayed in working overseas demonstrated that the global dimension of the programme was very important to them and that in a globalising world part-time FET students valued a qualification that would give them the opportunity to work in another country. Furthermore, the emphasis on employability and education that is relevant to the labour market that emerged from the data is an indication of how globalisation discourses influence vocational education and that part-time FET students valued a qualification that would ensure that they can compete in a global environment.

SECTION 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The FET sector is evolving and various policies are in the process of being discussed and gazetted and these will have an impact on the way in which learning orientations can be factored into the new college learning landscape. Some policy developments have occurred during the course of my investigation such as the establishment of the Department of Higher Education and Training and its assumption of responsibility for the FET sector. As my discussion will show, these policy developments provide new insights into the potential significance and utility of my findings.

The aims of this research paper was to establish the learning orientations of part-time FET students enrolled in the Applied Learning programme, to determine whether their expectations have been met and if they were satisfied with the college experience and furthermore, I investigated the contribution of college learning to the students' career development in a globalising world. As noted previously, a limitation of this study was that the Applied Learning programme is a unique programme and it is not representative of the general programme offerings at FET colleges. Therefore, my findings cannot be generalised to the Mountain View College or the larger FET college sector. However, this case study does provide valuable information regarding the experiences of part-time students enrolled in this specific programme and can be useful to Mountain View College and other FET colleges in terms of programme development.



Satisfaction with the college experience

With regards to satisfaction with the college experience in terms of achieving their own stated aims, the research shows that students had very specific vocational aims when they enrolled for the Applied Learning programme which primarily was to find a new job, to be promoted and to increase their income. It was evident that they were satisfied with college learning because they believed that the Applied Learning qualification would enable them to achieve their vocational aims in the future. It was encouraging to note that 1 student had already found new employment since enrolling in the programme and that others had definite prospects of increasing their income and being promoted.

Learning Orientations

Pertaining to the learning orientations of part-time FET students enrolled in the Applied Learning programme, it came as no surprise that most learners were vocationally orientated. Kember et al. (2001) identified 7 learning orientations within the vocational orientation, (1) re-training for a career shift; (2) continuing professional development; (3) an opportunity for those who did not have the chance; (4) tertiary education for those who did

not qualify; (5) an alternative to mainstream education; (6) education for adults; and (7) learning for pleasure throughout the lifetime. The investigation confirmed 5 learning orientations and prompted the identification of 3 new orientations, 'education for a qualification', 'education for adults who previously made the wrong choice' and 'education for adults as a model for their children'. In respect of the learning orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001) 5 were applicable with the exception of the learning orientations, 'continuing professional development', and 'tertiary education for those who did not qualify'. I found that none of the students in my sample associated with the latter 2 orientations to learning. Only 2 students associated with the learning orientation, 'education for adults', and both these students were women who had to take care of their children. I did not anticipate that although respondents were primarily vocationally orientated, I found that 4 students also valued non-vocational reasons for learning, indicating an association with the learning orientation, 'learning for pleasure throughout the lifetime'.

Evidence of the learning orientation, 'an opportunity for those who did not have a chance', was found repeatedly in the investigation. In line with the findings of Kember et al. (2001) 5 students mentioned economic factors as the reason why they previously did not have the chance to study, however, nobody identified a lack of educational provision as a reason why they previously did not have the opportunity to continue their studies. Most students associated with the learning orientation, 'an alternative to mainstream education', and 5 students indicated that without the flexibility of part-time education which enabled them to work and study at the same time, they would have been unable to continue their education. Therefore, the research highlights the importance of part-time courses in order to provide educational opportunities for people whom otherwise would have been unable to further their education. The majority of the students associated with the learning orientation, 're-training for a career shift', 7 students indicated that they were studying for job advancement or to make a career shift. The research shows that within the South African context, out of the 7 orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001), 're-training for a career shift', was the most frequently identified orientation.

Elements of new knowledge that I found were captured in 3 new orientations mentioned earlier. The most important new learning orientation that was prompted by the specificity of the South African context was a learning orientation which I refer to as 'education for a qualification'. A total of 9 students referred to the importance of a qualification at some point during the interview making it the most frequently identified orientation within the vocational orientation to learning. Students believed that a qualification was the route to employability, a better job, a higher income and more prestige. A possible explanation for the perceived value of a qualification is that it could be a reflection of the impact of the South African NQF which is used to emphasise education in order to obtain a qualification and promote employability. Based on my findings, I would suggest that if a researcher wishes to explore learning orientations within the South African context in the future, it would be beneficial to their research if they add this orientation to the 7 orientations developed by Kember et al. (2001).

The second new learning orientation that I inferred from the data was the orientation, 'education for adults who previously made the wrong choice'. When I asked students whether they were studying because they previously did not have the opportunity, 5 students said that they were studying now because they made the wrong choices when they were younger, indicating that adults continue their education at a later stage in life when they are more certain about the studies which they would like to pursue. The third new learning orientation that I inferred from the data, I refer to as 'education for adults as a model for their children'. I found that 3 students believed that their children would respect them more because they continued their education. Although this was not the main reason for enrolment, it emerged from the data that adults valued education because they could show their children that it was possible to obtain a qualification and rise above their circumstances.

The research suggests, in line with the findings of Kember et al. (2001), that most students have multiple orientations to learning within the vocational orientation which demonstrates that the reasons why adults engage in part-time education are often multi-faceted. However, all the students identified with the vocational orientation to learning which highlights how important it is to part-time FET students that college learning is relevant to the world of work and promotes career development. Therefore, if the Mountain View College would like to satisfy the needs of their part-time students, it is important that they offer programmes that are closely linked to the world of work.

Career development and employability

I found that college learning made a significant and important contribution to students' career development in respect of a globalising world which supports the view of Mustapha & Abdullah (2001) that vocational education plays an important role in preparing the workforce for the global labour market. Furthermore, it converges with government's mission to develop educated and skilled citizens who can compete in the global economy (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011b). It became apparent that students believed that the qualification would promote employability and make them more competitive in the labour market. Half of the respondents were interested in working overseas and the global dimension of the qualification was important to them because they believed it would enable them to take advantage of opportunities in the global labour market. These findings suggest that it is important to FET students that vocational education prepares them to compete in the global market place and that it assists them to deal with the pressures associated with globalisation such as the geographical and regional transformation of employment opportunities as identified in the literature by Pickersgill (2001).

Another feature identified in the literature on globalisation is that education should promote employability and be relevant to the world of work. The South African government supports this trend by identifying the development of responsive vocational education programmes as a strategic objective for FET colleges (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011b). The research shows that the Applied Learning

programme is practical and that there is a close link to the world of work, which explains why it is perceived to promote career advancement. My findings suggest that the programme promotes employability, which resonates with Gamble (2004: 189) who argues that employability is the new educational aim of vocational education. McGrath (2003a: 95) argues that the employability rate of college graduates is the most basic but also the most powerful indicator of college success. Following on and based on my research findings, I argue that the Applied Learning programme is successful because it develops the employment capacities of students which lead to the achievement of the aim of vocational education as identified by Gamble (2004: 189) and the government (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011b). Research by authors such as Cosser (2003: 34) and Kraak (2008) suggest that in general the employability of FET college graduates is low. Conversely, this study shows that the Applied Learning programme promotes employability and career development and by inference could contribute towards reducing South Africa's high unemployment rates. However, due to the uniqueness of this programme, the findings cannot be generalised.

Furthermore, relating to career development, the research shows that students were interested in continuing their education after completion of the NQF L5 qualification in order to obtain a higher qualification. They believed that if they were better qualified it would make a positive contribution to their career development and help them to compete in the labour market. Currently, Mountain View College does not offer students the opportunity to continue their studies in order to obtain a NQF L6 qualification, which is the highest qualification within the Applied Learning programme. The literature on FET colleges reveals that presently the NC(V) programme at NQF L2-4 is the most significant government directed focus of FET colleges, although these colleges also offer programmes at NQF L5 (Akoojee & McGrath, 2007; McGrath, 2004: 159; Republic of South Africa, 2009; Stumpf, Papier, Needham, & Nel, 2009). The intention of government is to grow the NC(V) programmes at NQF L2-4 "in response to the economic and labour market needs of the country" (The Republic of South Africa, 2009: 10) and to develop vocational programmes with "high level conceptual knowledge linked to practical application" (The Republic of South Africa, 2009: 11). However, programmes beyond NQF L4 are not included in the development plan. My research suggests that the Applied Learning programme combines theoretical and practical knowledge and caters for the needs of the labour market and as a result corresponds with government requirements for vocational education. Furthermore, participants indicated that they would like to continue their studies beyond NQF L5. Therefore the FET colleges' 'government directed' focus on programmes at NQF L2-4 seems inadequate and should be broadened to include programmes at levels 5 and 6.

Finally, the study highlights that economic factors are often the reason why adult students do not continue their education. Students in this sample indicated that without financial support from their employers they would have been unable to continue their education. The Applied Learning programme is an expensive programme, in comparison with other programmes offered at the college, but my research suggests that it promotes employability and career development which makes it a desirable programme in the FET colleges' programme offerings. The government's revised strategic plan for 2010 - 2015 proposes that funding to increase access to vocational education will be made available. However, at present, this funding is restricted to students who are

enrolled in or intending to enrol in the NC(V) or Report 191 programmes (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011b; Republic of South Africa, 2011). Therefore, students who enrol in programmes like the Applied Learning programme, which are not included in FET colleges' general programme offerings, do not qualify for financial aid.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Recommendations to Mountain View College

The Mountain View College should investigate the possibilities of extending their programme offerings to include other programmes that are similar to the Applied Learning programme, in order to provide larger numbers of people with opportunities for continuing education.

Currently the Mountain View College offers the Applied Learning programme on a part-time basis only. Based on my research, which shows a close relationship between the programme and the world of work, it would be beneficial for FET students if the college include the Applied Learning programme in full-time programme offerings.

The Mountain View College should explore the feasibility of expanding the Applied Learning programme as an NQF L6 qualification in order to expand opportunities for continuing education.

The Mountain View College should develop partnerships with companies in the surrounding area, as the latter and their employees can benefit from the Applied Learning programme. Legislation, such as the *Skills Levy Act* (1999), encourages employers to train and develop the skills of their workers which create opportunities for the college to establish partnerships with companies in the surrounding area. Although I was unable to address this specific issue in my research due to the limited scope, future research could investigate opportunities to develop a relationship of mutual collaboration between FET colleges and employers.

5.2.2 Recommendations to the FET Sector

FET colleges should embed learning orientations focused on career development and employability in the curricula of the FET programmes.

FET colleges should consider the importance of knowing, understanding and shaping the learning orientations of their students to make the relevance of their learning experience more explicit and to add value to their learning experience.

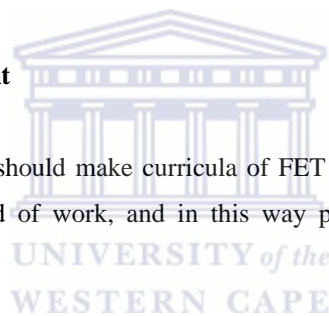
FET colleges should evaluate the curricula of their FET programmes to establish its relevance to the world of work, and develop their curricula in a similar way as the Applied Learning programme which fosters career development and employability of FET graduates.

FET colleges should conduct research to identify other programmes similar to the Applied Learning programme that could make a positive contribution to the career development and employability of FET graduates.

FET colleges should include programmes at NQF L5-6 in their programme offerings.

5.2.3 Recommendations to government

Government departments of education should make curricula of FET programmes such as NC(V) and Report 191 programmes relevant to the world of work, and in this way promote employability and address high unemployment rates.



Government departments should broaden the focus of FET programme development to include NQF L5 and NQF L6 programmes.

Student financial aid should be made available to part-time, mature students who wish to continue their studies to support career development and future employability. Financial aid for students enrolled in or intending to enrol in the NC(V) or Report 191 programmes (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011a) should be extended to other general FET programme offerings. By broadening the criteria for financial aid, government will increase access to vocational education for a wider potential student population.

5.3 Conclusion

I embarked on this research to investigate the learning orientations of FET part-time students, to determine whether college learning enabled them to achieve their own stated aims, that they were motivated by their learning orientations, and if these oriented their career paths in a globalising world. My research shows that the

participants were driven by their learning orientations, were satisfied with college learning in terms of achieving their own stated aims embedded in their learning orientations and they believed that college learning contributed positively to their career development and employability both locally and on a global level.

Finally and most importantly, my research confirmed that the learning orientations identified in the literature prevailed among the participants and also prompted the identification of 3 new learning orientations specific to part-time students and the specificity of the South African context. The elements of this new knowledge create possibilities for further research.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Afrassa, T. M. (2001). Student Level Factors That Influence Employability of TAFE Graduates over Time: A Partial Least-Squares Analysis. *Research to Reality: Putting VET Research to Work*. Adelaide, Australia: ERIC document reproduction service No. ED 456 253.

Akoojee, S. (2008). FET College Lecturers: The devolving link in the South African Skills Development Equation. *Journal of vocational education & training*, 60 (3), 297-313.

Akoojee, S., & McGrath, S. (2004). Assessing the impact of globalization on South African education and training: a review of the evidence so far. *Globalisation, Sciences and Education*, 2 (1), 25-45.

Akoojee, S., & McGrath, S. (2008). Engaging the Regulatory Environment for Individual and National Development: The Role of Private Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges in South Africa. *Conference 2008: The Regulatory Environment and its Impact on the Nature and Level of Economic Growth and Development in South Africa*, (pp. 1-24).

Akoojee, S., & McGrath, S. (2007). Public and private Further Education and Training in South Africa: a comparative analysis of the quantitative evidence. *South African Journal of Education*, 72 (2), 209-222.

Akoojee, S., McGrath, S., & Visser, M. (2008). Further education and training colleges. In A. Kraak, & K. Press, *Human Resources Development Review* (pp. 254-277). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Allais, S. (2007). Why the South African NQF failed: lessons for countries wanting to introduce national qualifications frameworks. *European Journal of Education*, 42 (4), 523-547.

American Association of Community Colleges. (n.d.). Retrieved April 2, 2011, from American Association of Community Colleges: <http://communitycollegeusa.com>

Andersen, R., & Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2010). Education and occupational status in 14 countries: the role of educational institutions and labour market coordination. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 61 (2), 336-355.

Badroodien, A. (2003). Local Labour Environments and FET Colleges: Three Case Studies. In M. Cosser, S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, & B. Maja, *Technical College Responsiveness* (pp. 65-83). Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.

Badroodien, A. (2004). Technical and vocational education provision in South Africa from 1920 to 1970. In S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, A. Kraak, & L. Unwin, *Shifting Understanding of Skills in South Africa* (pp. 20-45). Cape Town: HSRC.

Badroodien, A. (2006). *The role of Linkages and Programme Units in building better relationships between FET Colleges and the world of work*. Commissioned by the Department of Education. HSRC.

Bailey, D. M., & Jackson, J. M. (2003). Qualitative Data Analysis: Challenges and Dilemmas Related to Theory and Method. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 57-65.

- Basit, T. N. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*, 45 (2), 143-154.
- Beaty, L., Gibbs, G., & Morgan, A. (1984). Learning Orientations and Study Contracts. In F. Marton, D. Hansell, & N. Entwistle, *The Experience of Learning: Implications for teaching and studying in Higher Education* (pp. 72-86). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Beekers, E. (2003). Globalisation and Higher Education Research. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 7 (2), 128-148.
- Bibby, M. (1997). *Ethics and education research*. Coldstream, Vic: Australian Association for Research in Education.
- Bisschoff, T., & Govender, C. (2004). A management framework for training providers to improve skills development in the workplace. *South African Journal of Education*, 24 (1), 70-79.
- Brown, B. L. (2003). International Models of Career-Technical Education. Trends and Issues Alert. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education. Retrieved August 6, 2010, from Education Resources Information Centre: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED475097.pdf>
- Brown, T. (2009). The desire for something better: Learning and organising in the new world of work. In L. Cooper, & S. Walters, *Learning/Work: Turning work and lifelong learning inside out* (pp. 270-283). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Brydon-Miller, M. (2007). The Teacher's Covenant: Reframing our Notions of Ethics in Educational Action Research. *Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*. University of London.
- Bryman, A. (2001). *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Bryson, J., Mallon, M., Pajo, K., & Ward, R. (2006). Learning at work: organisational affordances and individual engagement. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 18 (5), 279-297.
- Chisholm, L. (2009). Global Trends and TVET: The Case of South Africa. *International Expert Consultation Meeting on Technical and Vocational Education UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre*, (pp. 1-10). Bonn.
- Chu, H., Hsieh, M., & Chang, S. (2007). A study of Career Development, Learning Motivation, and Learning Satisfaction of Adult Learners in Unconventional Scheduling Graduate Programs. *Paper presented at the Academy of Human Resource Development International Research Conference*. Indianapolis.
- Córdoba, J., & Farquharson, F. (2008). Enquiring into Skills Development with SSM: A South African Experience. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 25, 81-91.
- Cosser, M. (2003). Graduate Tracer Study. In M. Cosser, S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, & B. Maja, *Technical College Responsiveness* (pp. 27-57). Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.

Creswell, J., Hanson, W., Plano Clark, V., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35 (2), 236-264.

Cross, K. (1981). *Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Cruikshank, J. Lifelong learning or re-training for life: Scapegoating the worker. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 34 (2), 140-155.

Darkenwald, G. G. (1977). Why Adults Participate in Education: Some Implications for Program Development of Research on Motivational Orientations. *Presentation to the faculty of the University Extension Division, Rutgers University*. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 135992.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2011a). *Guidelines for the Administration and Management of the DHET FET Colleges Bursary Scheme*. Pretoria: Author.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2011b). *Revised Strategic Plan for 2010-2015*. Retrieved August 24, 2011, from Department of Higher Education and Training: <http://www.dhet.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=XfAHmalvQjw%3d&tabid=352&mid=1174>

Dollinger, S. J., Ross, V. J., & Preston, L. (2002). Intellect and Individuality. *Creativity Research Journal*, 14 (2), 213-226.

Dunklin, A. L. (2005). *Globalization: A Portrait of Exploitation, Inequality, and Limits*. Retrieved from <http://globalisation.icaap.org/content/v5.2/dunklin.html>

Ellis, R. A., Parelius, R. J., & Parelius, A. P. (1971). The Collegiate Scholar: Education for Elite Status. *Sociology of Education*, 44, 27-58.

Endresen, K., & Von Kotze, A. (2005). Living while being alive: Education and learning in the Treatment Action Campaign. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 24 (5), 431-441.

European Commission. (2008). *Explaining the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning*. Retrieved February 10, 2010, from http://ec.europa.eu/education_culture.

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Board. (n.d.). *Ethics Considerations for Teachers' Research With Students in Their Own Classroom*. Retrieved April 20, 2011, from The University of Western Ontario: Faculty of Education: <http://www.edu.uwc.ca/research/downloads/guidelineteachersresearchwithownstudents.pdf>

Farhana, S. (2007). Reflexivity, Positionality and Participatory Ethics: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas in International Research. *ACME Editorial Collective*, 6 (3), 374-385.

Gamble, J. (2004). A future curriculum mandate for Further Education and Training colleges: recognising intermediate knowledge and skill. In S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, A. Kraak, & L. Unwin, *Shifting understandings of skills in South Africa: Overcoming the historical imprint of a low skills regime* (pp. 175-193). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Gamble, J. (2003). *Curriculum Responsiveness in FET Colleges*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Green, D. (n.d.). *The rough guide to globalisation*. Retrieved August 15, 2009, from Cafod: <http://www.cafod.org.uk/var/storage/original/application/phpcZcXr6.pdf>

Hager, P., Holland, S., & Becket, D. (2002). *Enhancing the learning and employability of graduates: the role of generic skills*. Retrieved February 10, 2010, from Business/Higher Education Round Table: <http://www.bhert.com/publications/position-papers/B-HERTPositionPaper09.pdf>

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Herzog, H. (2005). On Home Turf: Interview Location and Its Social Meaning. *Qualitative Sociology*, 28 (1), 25-47.

Houle, C. O. (1967). Striking a balance. In C. O. Houle, G. W. Blackwell, H. M. Kallen, & E. J. McGrath, *Purposes of the Evening College: Reflections in 1953* (pp. 20-27). Centre for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults: ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED010864.

Hutcheson, S. M., & Chapman, D. W. (1979). Patterns of Student Interaction in Clark-Trow Subgroups. *Research in Higher Education*, 11 (3), 233-247.

Hutcheson, S. M., & Chapman, D. W. (1979). Patterns of Student Interaction in Clark-Trow Subgroups. *Research in Higher Education*, 11 (3), 233-247.

ILO. (2008). *Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment, growth and development*. Retrieved February 10, 2010, from International Labour Organisation: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/.../wcms_092054.pdf.

Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics. (2006). *Use of Student Subject/Participant Pools in Research*. Retrieved April 20, 2011, from Panel on Research Ethics: http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/archives/tcps-epctc/interpretations/docs/Use_of_Student_Subject-Participant_Pools_in_Research_July_2006.pdf

Jacobsz, G. (2004). Guidelines to ensure market-driven Further Education and Training Programmes in the Free State. M.A. in Higher Education: University of the Free State.

Jewison, R. (2008). *The National Qualifications Framework*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Centre for Education Policy Development.

Jones, B. (2010). Research Design and Introduction to Research Methods. PET workshop series, University of the Western Cape.

Keating, J. (2009). Australian perspective on the European qualifications framework. *Paper presented at conference "The European Qualifications framework linking to a globalized world"*. Brussels.

Kelly, M. (1998). Writing a research proposal. In C. Seale, *Researching and Society and Culture* (pp. 111-122). London: SAGE Publications Inc.

- Kember, D., Armour, R., Jenkins, W., Lee, K., Leung, D., Li, N., Chi Ng, K., Siaw, I., & Yum, J. (2001). Orientations to Enrolment of Part-time Students: A classification system based upon students' perceived lifelong learning needs. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 20 (3), 265-280.
- Kember, D., Hong, C., & Ho, A. (2008). Characterizing the motivational orientation of students in higher education: A naturalistic study in three Hong Kong universities. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78, 313-329.
- Kraak, A. (2008). Incoherence in the South African labour market for intermediate skills. *Journal of Education and Work*, 21 (3), 197-215.
- Kraak, A. (2004). The National Skills Development Strategy: a new institutional regime for skills formation in post-apartheid South Africa. In S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, A. Kraak, & L. Unwin, *Shifting understandings of skills in South Africa* (pp. 116-139). Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2007). An Array of Qualitative Data Analysis Tools: A Call for Data Analysis Triangulation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 22 (4), 557-584.
- Lewalter, D., & Krapp, A. (2004). The Role of Contextual Conditions of Vocational Education for Motivational Orientations and Emotional Experiences. *European Psychologist*, 9 (4), 210-221.
- Long, S. (1977a). Student Types and the Evaluation of the University. *Higher Education*, 6 (4), 417-436.
- Long, S. (1977b). Students' orientations toward the university: An Investigation fo the Clark-Trow Typology. *Research in Higher Education*, 7, 13-28.
- Luo, J., & Jamieson-Drake, D. (2005). Linking Student Precollege Characteristics to College Development Outcomes: The Search for a Meaningful Way to Inform Institutional Practic and Policy. *IR Applications*, 7, 1-18.
- Martens, P., & Raza, M. (2010). Is Globalisation Sustainable? *Sustainability*, 2, 280-293.
- Marton, F., & Saljo, R. (2005). Approaches to Learning. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell, & N. Entwistle, *The Experience of Learning: Implications for teaching and studying in higher education* (3rd (Internet) ed., pp. 39-58). Edinburgh: University of Edinburg, Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment.
- McGrath, S. (2003a). Building College Responsiveness in South Africa. In M. Cosser, S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, & B. Maja, *Technical College Responsiveness* (pp. 93-102). Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.
- McGrath, S. (2000). Coming in from the Cold? Further education and trianing in South Africa. *Compare*, 30 (1), 67-84.
- McGrath, S. (2003b). Researching Responsiveness. In M. Cosser, S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, & B. Maja, *Technical College Responsiveness* (pp. 13-26). Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.

McGrath, S. (2004). The state of the South African Further Education and Training college sector. In S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, A. Kraak, & L. Unwin, *Shifting understandings of skills in South Africa: Overcoming the historical imprint of a low skills regime* (pp. 158-174). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Moreau, M., & Leathwood, C. (2006). Graduates' employment and the discourse of employability: a critical analysis. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19 (4), 305-324.

Morgan, A., & Beaty, L. (1984). The world of the Learner. In F. Marton, D. Hansell, & N. Entwistle, *The Experience of Learning: Implications for teaching and studying in Higher Education* (pp. 217-237). Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.

Morstain, B. R. (1977). An Analysis of Students' Satisfaction with Their Academic Program. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 48 (1), 1-16.

Morstain, B. R., & Kraft, R. E. (1979). Educational Orientations of College Students: A Typological Analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, 10 (3), 237-251.

Morstain, B. R., & Smart, J. C. (1977). A Motivational Typology of Adult Learners. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 48 (6), 665-679.

Motivation for learning and performance. Symposium 3. (2000). *Concurrent symposium session at AHRD annual conference 2000*, (pp. 2-9).

Mouton, J., & Marais, H. (1996). *Basic Concepts in the methodology of the social sciences*. Pretoria: HSRC Printers.

Mustapha, R., & Abdullah, A. (2001). Globalization and Its Impact on Technical-Vocational Education and Training in Malaysia. *Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Career and Technical Education*, (pp. 1-14). New Orleans.

National Qualifications Framework. (n.d.). *Make quality education your first stop in your future career pathway [Brochure]*. Pretoria: Author.

Nolen, S. B. (1988). Reasons for Studying: Motivational Orientations and Study Strategies. *Cognition and Instruction*, 5 (4), 269-287.

Oosterheert, I. E., Vermunt, J. D., & Denessen, E. (2002). Assessing orientations to learning to teach. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 72, 41-64.

Pickersgill, R. (2001). Skill Formation in Australia Beyond 2000: 'Flexibility' and Vocational Education and Training Policy. *International Journal of Employment Studies*, 9 (1).

- Pisarik, C. T. (2009). Motivational orientations and burnout among undergraduate college students. *College Student Journal*, 43 (4), 1238-1252.
- Putzel, J. (2004). *The political impact of globalisation and liberalisation: evidence from crisis states research*. Retrieved August 30, 2009, from LSE Research Online: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000843>
- Raby, R. L. (2001). *Community College Model Characteristics*. Retrieved August 6, 2010, from Education Resource Information Centre: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED458893.pdf>
- Reichel, A., Neumann, Y., & Pizam, A. (1981). The work values and motivational profiles of Vocational, Collegiate, Nonconformist, and Academic students. *Research in Higher Education*, 14 (3), 187-199.
- Republic of South Africa. (2009). *The Draft National Policy Framework for Lecturer Qualifications and Development in FET Colleges in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Publisher.
- Scholte, J. A. (2003). What is globalization? The definitional issue - again. *An unpublished paper submitted to "The Symposium on Globalization: Past and Future"*.
- Sedlacek, W. E. (1984). Differences between Counseling Clients and Non-Clients on Clark-Trow Subcultures. *Research report no. 1-84*.
- Sherman, R. (2006). Down the track: TAFE outcomes for young people two years on. *National Centre for Vocational Education Research*. Adelaide: ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 493958.
- Silverman, D. (1998). Research and Social theory. In C. Seale, *Researching Society and Culture* (pp. 48-57). London: SAGE Publications.
- Smith, M. K. (2002). *Globalisation and the incorporation of education*. Retrieved August 30, 2010, from The Encyclopaedia of informal education: http://www.infed.org/biblio/globalization_and_education.htm
- Smith, M. K., & Smith, M. (2002). *Globalisation*. Retrieved September 15, 2009, from The Encyclopaedia of informal education: <http://www.infed.org/biblio/globalization.htm>
- Steel, P., & König, J. (2006). Integrating Theories of Motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 31 (4), 889-913.
- Stevenson, J. (2007). Technical and Further Education Reforms: Theoretical Issues. *The Australian Education Researchers*, 34 (3).
- Stumpf, R., Papier, J., Needham, S., & Nel, H. (2009). *Increasing educational opportunities for post NQF Level 4 learners in South Africa through the Further Education and Training College Sector*. Pretoria: Centre for Higher Education Transformation & Further Education and Training Institute.
- Tabulawa, R. T. (2009). Education reform in Botswana: reflections on policy contradictions and paradoxes. *Comparative Education*, 45 (1), 87-107.

Terenzini, P. T., & Pascarella, E. T. (1977). An Assessment of the Construct Validity of the Clark-Trow Typology of College Student Subcultures. *American Educational Research Journal*, 14 (3), 225-248.

The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers. (n.d.). Retrieved August 6, 2010, from <http://www.icb.org.za/>

The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers . (2011). *Prospectus [Brochure]*. Cape Town: Author.

The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers. (2010). *Prospecturs [Brochure]*. Cape Town: Author.

Thompson-Davenport, M. (1996). *Attitudes of Adult Learners toward the Board of Governors Bachelor of Arts Degree Program in Chicago State University*.

Thorne, S. (2000). Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 3, 68-70.

Tsheko, G. (2007). *Qualitative research report on orphans and vulnerable children in Palapye, Botswana*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Tynjälä, P. (2008). Perspectives into learning at the workplace. *Educational Research Review*, 3, 130-154.

Ugglä, B. K. (2008). Who is the Lifelong Learner? Globalization, Lifelong Learning and Hermeneutics. *Stud Philos Educ*, 27, 211-226.

Unwin, L. (2003). Being Responsive: Colleges, Communities and 'Stakeholders'. In M. Cosser, S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, & B. Maja, *Technical College Responsiveness* (pp. 1-12). Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.

Unwin, L. (2004). Towards economic prosperity and social justice: can South Africa show the way for policy-making on skills? In S. McGrath, A. Badroodien, A. Kraak, & L. Unwin, *Shifting Understandings of Skills in South Africa: Overcoming the historical imprint of a low skills regime* (pp. 238-252). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Vincent, C., & Warren, S. (2001). "This won't take long...": interviewing, ethics and diversity. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14 (1), 39-53.

Von Kotze, A. (2002). Producing Knowledge for Living! *Studies in Continuing Education*, 24 (2), 233-246.

Webber, T. (2004). Orientations to learning in mid-career management students. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29 (2), 259-277.

Wedekind, V. (2008). *England-Africa partnerships in Higher Education*. Report on the Research on Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in South Africa: University of Kwazulu-Natal.

Welman, J., & Kruger, S. (2001). *Research Methodology*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Wenger, E. (n.d.). Communities of practice: where learning happens.

Wilder, D. H., Midkiff, R. M., Dunkerly, R. E., & Skelton, R. C. (1996). Higher Educational Impact on Student Objectives: Longitudinal Change in Clark-Trow 'Educational Philosophies'. *Research in Higher Education*, 37 (3), 279-298.

Yamamoto, K., & Wiersma, J. (1971). Typology and College-Related Perceptions in Education Students. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 65 (3), 113-118.

Zezeza, P. T. (2002). African Universities and Globalisation. *Feminist Africa*, 1 (1), 64-85.



APPENDIX 1

CONSENT FORM

Research title:

Learning orientations of FET students: The case of the Applied Learning Programme in a Western Cape FET college

Researcher:

Ms Liza Hamman
lizah@bolandcollege.com
072 990 8590

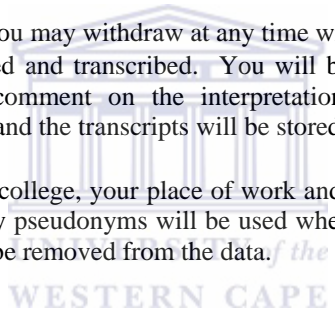
Supervisor:

Prof. Zelda Groener
zgroener@uwc.ac.za
021-9592801

The purpose of the research is to investigate the learning orientations of part-time FET students. It is important to note that my attention with this research will not be to judge or evaluate the perspectives and opinions of participants but to know and understand their personal perceptions and experiences.

Please note that:

- Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without prejudice
- The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. You will be asked to check the transcript of your interview for accuracy and comment on the interpretation of the data in order to avoid any discrepancies. The recordings and the transcripts will be stored in a safe place for 3 years after which it will be destroyed.
- Your identity, the name of the college, your place of work and all records will be strictly confidential. In order to protect your identity pseudonyms will be used when writing up and analysing the data and all identifying descriptors will be removed from the data.



Statement of Consent

I have reviewed the above mentioned terms and any questions that I had about the research have been answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby agree to participate in an interview with Ms Liza Hamman and I give her permission to use the information for this study on the condition that the above mentioned stipulations are honoured.

Signed:

Date:

Place:

Time:

I thank you for your participation

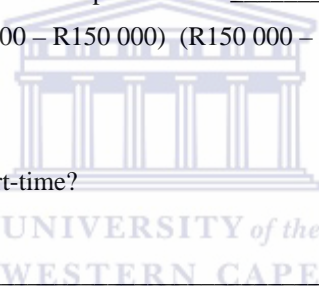
APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PROFILE

1. Name _____
2. Age _____
3. Race _____
4. Gender _____
5. Address _____
6. Highest level of education _____
7. Marital status _____
8. Dependents _____
9. Are you currently employed? _____
10. If yes, what is your job title? _____
11. What are your responsibilities? _____
12. How long have you been in your current position? _____
13. Income (0-R100 000) (R100 000 – R150 000) (R150 000 – R250 000) (R250 000 +)

REASONS FOR STUDYING

1. Why did you decide to study part-time?


2. Why did you choose to study at this particular college?


3. Why did you choose to study this particular course?

4. Are you taking this course to upgrade your knowledge or skills for your current job?

5. Are you taking this course for legal or professional requirements?

6. Are you upgrading your knowledge and skills for a different future job?

7. Are you taking this course to advance your position at work?



8. Are you taking this course to acquire a formal qualification because you previously did not have the opportunity to do so?

9. If you answered yes to question 9, why did you not have an opportunity?

10. Did the fact that this is an internationally recognised qualification influence your decision to enrol for this programme?

11. Once you have successfully completed your qualification you will be eligible to apply for membership to international accounting bodies such as the IFA (Institute of Financial Accounting), IAB (International Association of Bookkeepers) and ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) – will you apply? Please explain.

12. Who is paying for your studies?



CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBALISING WORLD

1. What are your expectations of this course and its contribution to your career development?

2. Are you employed in a related field?

3. Are you able to adapt and link college learning to you current position?

4. Do you need to take continues professional development throughout your career?

5. What are your plans or goals for the future, or in other words, what will this course enable you to do?

6. Would you like to be promoted or find new employment once you have completed this programme?



7. Do you think your prospective income will improve after completion of this programme?

8. Do you plan to study further? If yes, why would you study further?

9. Would you like to work in another country once you have completed this programme?

10. If yes, why would you like to work in another country?

11. Do you think this qualification will help you find employment in another country?

12. There are many global companies who operate in the South African market, for example, AIG and Price Waterhouse Coopers. Do you think this qualification will better equip you to find employment at one of these companies?



13. Do you think learning about international payroll practices and international accounting computer programmes is useful to you? Please explain.

14. Do you think that the theoretical and practical knowledge that you've gained in this course will enable you to compete in the local job market?

15. Do you think that the theoretical and practical knowledge that you've gained in this course will enable you to compete in the global job market?

16. Does this course draw on your work experience?

17. Is there anything else that you would like to comment with regards to your career development?

SATISFACTION WITH THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

1. What were the aims, in terms of current or future employment, that you wanted to achieve when you enrolled for this course?



2. What were the personal aims that you wanted to achieve when you enrolled for this course?

3. Were you able to achieve these aims? Please explain

4. Are you satisfied with the college experience in terms of achieving your own stated aims?

APPENDIX 4

PROFILE OF STUDENTS INTERVIEWED

No	Name of Learner	Gender	Age	Race	Marital Status	Dependents	Highest Level of Education	Job Title
1	Ananda	F	38	White	M	2	Grade 12	Creditors Clerk
2	Anton	M	20	White	S	0	Grade 12	Junior Bookkeeper
3	Chaleen	F	33	Coloured	S	2	N4 Marketing	Payroll Clerk
4	Ethan	M	32	Coloured	S	0	IT Certificate	Technical Consultant
5	Jacolene	F	19	White	S	0	Grade 12	Unemployed
6	Johan	M	27	White	S	0	Grade 12	Computer Technician
7	Karen	F	44	White	M	2	Grade 12	Bookkeeper
8	Marli	F	27	White	M	0	N6 Administration	Accountant
9	Melany	F	40	Coloured	M	1	ECD Diploma	Creditors Clerk
10	Nikita	F	46	Coloured	M	3	BA degree	Freelance Bookkeeper