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**TECHNICAL COLLEGE
RESPONSIVENESS
PROJECT**

**LOCAL LABOUR ENVIRONMENTS
AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND
TRAINING (FET) COLLEGES:
*Three Case Studies***

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Introduction

This Report synthesises various documents and observations that emerge from qualitative fieldwork conducted recently by a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) research team at three FET Colleges in South Africa. The report explores aspects of the interaction of FET colleges within local labour environments. The purpose of the HSRC fieldwork was to understand the causal relationship between technical education institutional provision and the world of work, focusing on very specific aspects of that relationship, namely 'formal partnerships', 'programme flexibility and relevance', 'applicability' and 'marketing strategies'. In this respect, the fieldwork research set out to understand the key institutional challenges in fostering better FET College-industry links which is deemed a vital requirement of the labour environment envisaged in the FET vision of the Department of Education, as outlined in November 2001.

In exploring the transition from technical colleges to work in South Africa, explanations were sought for the supposed lack of synergy between the foci of college programmes and the types of employment available to learners when entering the labour environment. In this regard, identified institutions were profiled for the specific purpose of understanding the existing links between the focus of individual college programmes, local labour environments and the type of skills deemed necessary in individual localities. Strategies are proposed that explore ways of improving the 'responsiveness' of the newly legislated FET colleges.

1.1 Linking Responsiveness, Educational Institutions and Labour Environments

The much-vaunted relationship between technical colleges and the world of work in South Africa is a complex issue given the historical aspects of education and training provision and the various kinds of available institutional programmes. In the past technical colleges had a diverse range of links with industry and work but rarely provided educational programmes that focused acutely on the acquiring of 'gainful employment'. It can be argued that the provision of technical education for 'white' learners is the only context in the past in which firm links between education and the formal labour environment can be easily spoken about.

This disjuncture in the history of technical education provision in South Africa represents significant challenges for the restructuring of the FET sector as it tries to make education and training more relevant to the workplace in the current labour environment. In that regard, Institutional Profiles serve as a mechanism to both explore the present links between FET Colleges, other educational institutions, and local industries or business, and to highlight the various difficulties and challenges that the restructured FET sector will face when pursuing more/greater formal links between education and work in the foreseeable future.

1.2 FET Landscape

Under the new landscape plan, there are presently 50 FET Colleges across nine provinces in South Africa. The overwhelming majority of FET Colleges comprise a merger of about 3-6 previous technical colleges, though there are a few individual technical colleges that have been retained as FET colleges. In some cases the ways in which FET Colleges were designated also reflect attempts to profit from the 'gains' made in recent times by individual technical colleges.

In most cases the merged technical colleges are a mixture of previously advantaged and disadvantaged colleges and the majority are located in close geographical proximity. Furthermore, newly legislated FET Colleges acutely reflect both the influence of industrial sites and the complex ways in which industrial settings meshed with geographical locations to provide particular identities for individual technical colleges in the past. Here it is reminded that technical colleges in South Africa were historically established according to a complex set of criteria and processes, which were also substantially informed by the urban, peri-urban (towns and townships) and rural character of previous technical colleges.

1.3 Research Methodology in choosing FET colleges

The FET colleges comprise a mix of technical colleges that have distinct histories and with particular kinds of links to local labour environments. To this end, three FET colleges were chosen to serve as case studies to illuminate particular and localised

local labour environment challenges. In that regard, a number of basic decisions informed the choice of the three FET colleges¹.

Firstly, the learner response rate to the Tracer Study component of the Technical College Responsiveness Project was used to determine the chosen colleges for the study. In that regard, given the need to triangulate findings across the project's four components, the very low return rates received for the Eastern Cape Province, Northern Province, and Northern Cape led to the decision to exclude colleges from the above three provinces. The case studies were thus limited to Mpumalanga, North West, Free State, Western Cape, Kwazulu Natal, and Gauteng. Also, it was argued that the provinces of Gauteng, Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal are very similar in terms of learner profile and high economic activity and that only one of the three provinces be used as a case study². Finally, it was originally intended to pursue four case studies. When chosen colleges in Mpumalanga failed to respond to project deadlines (some did not want to participate), it was decided to focus only on three provinces. These were the Free State, North West and Kwazulu Natal.³

Learner return-rates then determined which FET colleges were preferred in individual provinces. From the tracer study a list had been compiled of the number of questionnaire returns attached to respective colleges. Learner numbers for individual colleges were subsequently 'clustered' according to designated FET colleges. Prospective FET colleges were chosen according to these total learner numbers. Importantly, colleges were chosen based on both high and low questionnaire return rates.

Secondly, the three case studies had to evince the different economic activities across the provinces. On the one hand, given the proximity of most colleges in South Africa

¹ It is suggested that technical colleges can be typologised according to complex features such as urban/rural location, racial legacy, industrial setting, and types of funding criteria. While this typology is neither developed nor explored in the study, such features did inform the ways in which technical colleges were chosen as case studies.

² High learner response rates were received for all three provinces, with the highest number emerging in the Gauteng Province.

³ Ultimately, the decision to use Kwazulu Natal instead of Gauteng or Western Province was based predominantly on the number of 'previously disadvantaged' technical colleges that comprised the FET College. The Kwazulu Natal FET College includes three colleges. Two were state institutions (previously disadvantaged) in the past while one was a state-aided (white) institution. This separation according to state and state-aided is in itself problematic since the definition was more fluid than is suggested. The terms should be understood in this report solely as a definitional mechanism to identify colleges according to individual legacies/histories.

to some sort of industrial setting, only the Ellisras College in Limpopo and the Richards Bay College in Kwazulu Natal could be termed fully rural. Furthermore, there were many colleges informed by particular industrial urban-type settings that were located in provinces that had decidedly rural populations and whose economies were framed by activity associated with rural areas.

On the other hand, it was also difficult and perhaps misleading to distinguish between urban and peri-urban settings given the historical backgrounds of individual colleges. In many cases learners from respective urban and peri-urban settings interacted in the same local labour environments. (As was the case of town-based colleges where learners from peri-urban and rural settings often interacted in common labour environments.)

Based on this dilemma, the study adopted three points of reference for the chosen FET colleges, namely city/urban, township/periphery and town/rural. Rather than differentiate and become bogged down in articulating the various types of economic activity in given provinces and localities, the idea was to use the three reference points as particular lenses from which to view the respective local labour environments. In that regard the study explores the FET College-industry link in Kwazulu Natal from the perspective of a diversified city location. This city setting was also used for the Free State. However, in the case of Bloemfontein the FET College-industry link was viewed through the lens of the township and a decidedly less urban setting. The third FET College was located around two towns in the North West Province with learners from both urban and rural settings. Importantly, the reference point of town is not by itself a homogenous category in South Africa. Towns as economic sites can be differentiated across the provinces according to their close proximity to different and particular kinds of industrial activities. In the case of the towns of the North West, there are strong economic and labour links with the mining industry.

Finally, based on a question about employment status in the questionnaire, the Tracer Study Component was able to identify the degree of learner employment associated with particular colleges. Learners noted in the questionnaire whether they were employed and in many cases provided details of the employer. These details were crucial for a study exploring college-local labour environment links. They were certainly an important aspect that informed the eventual choice of FET Colleges. At

the same time, it was important to choose FET Colleges with both high and low levels of learner employment to understand local labour environment differences within legislated FET Colleges.

The Three FET colleges chosen for the study were:

	Case Study 1	Case Study 2	Case Study 3
Province	KwaZulu Natal	Free State	North West
Economic base	Services	Agriculture	Mining
Urban / Periphery / Rural	Urban/ City	Township/ Periphery	Town/ Rural
Student Response Rate	14.9%	31.9%	12.3%
Sufficient Response Rate	✓	✓	✓
Make-up of FET College	1. Durban Central Technical College 2. Swinton Road Technical College 3. Umlazi Technical College	1. Bloemfontein Technical College 2. Hillside View Technical College 3. Thaba Nchu Technical College	1. Klerksdorp Technical College 2. Potchefstroom Technical College 3. Jouberton Technical College 4. Tsung College of Education
Suggested or tentative name for FET College	MOTHEO	MOBENI	

Given the research need to respect the anonymity of profiled colleges, this project uses the definition of technical colleges before 1994 as a way of framing their context and the complex relationships and challenges that inform their development in the contemporary environment. It was felt that given the decision to focus on three identified provinces any other typological description would breach agreements of confidentiality. The colleges profiled in the study will thus be referred to simply as state or state-aided colleges within the respective and identified provinces. This tool of college identification is employed specifically to conceal college identities. In all other instances in the report, the legislative description of FET College is used. *(This approach will be formally adopted once the client has perused the report).*

In that regard, as is noted below, the colleges were chosen for the study according to the composition of a FET College. For example, if it was decided to choose the Alexandria College in Gauteng, then all the other colleges that also make up that

particular FET College was included. That is because in order to interrogate the efficacy of FET colleges and their constituents, they had to be contextualised in terms of common labour environments.

1.4 Research focus for Institutional Profiling

The institutional profiling component of the project adopted a qualitative approach to explore the unique challenges and dilemmas that confront individual FET Colleges in South Africa. A detailed discussion of the qualitative method of research, the conceptualisation thereof for the project, and the application in given social localities, can be found in Appendix A.

The adopted research methodology informed the project in a number of critical ways. Importantly, the availability of the recent National Business Initiative (NBI) Situational Analyses of Technical Colleges (individual colleges and their provinces) of 2000 meant that in-depth interviews and empirical gathering were unnecessary. These studies, which included detailed labour environment situational analyses, captured key data and information about individual colleges and can be consulted for individual college and provincial scrutiny. The focus of the Institutional Profiles could thus be focus on particular questions about the individual college sites that make up FET Colleges, specifying the links with industry and the world of work. It was argued that interviews with influential college staff and labour partners would develop understanding of specific aspects of college activity and flesh out certain taken-for-granted assumptions about the college-industry linkage.

Crucially, the provided reports from the individual college sites did not attempt to duplicate and reproduce already available data and perspectives on colleges. Rather, the reports used the available secondary material as the foundational basis from which to ask very specific questions about institutional processes in particular college sites.

The key research questions took the form of a focused questionnaire that individual researchers used to interview respondents in a structured environment. Similar research instruments were developed for the interviewing of college staff (principals and heads of departments), employers and industry role-players, though researchers were encouraged to be flexible and to adapt the provided instrument to given situations and contexts. The 'questionnaire' is provided in Appendix B, and

methodological issues associated with interviews were captured in, and are available from, individual fieldworker reports.

The purpose of the fieldwork conducted at the three FET Colleges in May 2002 was to understand recent college innovations in responding to the changed environment and to interpret the established cultures of individual colleges that either inhibit or facilitate change. By focusing on the college-employer linkage in local labour environments the idea was to chart trends from the kinds of relationships and partnerships developed in individual localities.

Three teams of researchers (two teams comprised of 5 members and the third team 6) visited the designated FET Colleges in the three chosen provinces. All in all, the teams visited ten institutions that constituted technical colleges, colleges of education and manpower centres before 2001. Researchers were briefed to specifically focus on the issue of college-industry partnership as a way of understanding distinct local labour environments. Researchers were provided with 4 overall overarching questions that needed to frame the interviews with college staff and various related employers.

The interviews explored:

- a. Partnerships that exist between the college and industry, business, government and SMMEs
- b. How these partnerships were established and how learner and employer needs were aligned
- c. How the partnerships corresponded with college programmes and their operationalisation
- d. The marketing strategies that individual colleges developed.

Each college visited for the study was also asked about the number and nature of partnerships with employers and industries and the kinds of innovations that were particular to their college. The noted employers were then consulted to not only verify the stated partnerships but also to elaborate on the kinds of issues that informed their relationships with FET colleges. The information and observations collected during the various visits and interviews were then analysed and compared across each FET College. These collective insights were used to frame an understanding of respective local labour environments and the prospective role of FET Colleges in given economic localities.

Chapter Two: Local Labour Environments in South Africa

2.1. Introduction

Alongside the dramatic social changes of the 1990s in South Africa, the world of work while becoming more integrated and inter-linked became significantly more complex and differentiated. In that respect, the many opportunities that emerged in South Africa in that period were substantially counter-balanced not only by the legacies of inequality and non-provision but also by a labour environment that underwent rapid change. At the time the world of knowledge and the systems of skills transfer to learners in South Africa struggled to keep up with labour-related transformation. The technologies of work, work environments, learning methodologies and the nature of work itself were changing to a degree that exerted considerable pressure on learning systems to produce different kinds of learners for the new environment. This placed an onerous burden on educational systems (especially the further education and training sector) already battling with limited resources and an absence of mechanisms to respond effectively to market-driven change.⁴

Importantly, the relationship between the world of work and educational provision is mediated by the 'labour market'⁵. The labour environment does not only regulate the number and kinds of learners that get employed upon exiting for example FET Colleges, but also constantly develop and re-develop the ways in which the education/world of work relationship is mediated in environments of economic and work flux and shifts in educational foci. In that regard, Kraak (1999: 220) defines 'the labour market as that social institution that channels educated and trained agents from

⁴ The South African National Education Department's *White Paper (1998b)*, the *National Strategy for FET (1999)*, and the *New Institutional Landscape for Public Further Education and Training Colleges (2001)* allude to the need to understand labour market needs and participation in enhancing the external efficiency of FET providers. The key focus is on how to ensure that FET learners are appropriately employed.

⁵ This study uses Kraak's notion of the labour market as a concept to explain the levels of political and social interaction in South Africa. Because many people are wary of the notion and term 'market', and due to the ideological sensitivities associated with the term, the study will prefer the term labour 'environments' (once the concept has been adequately explained) when discussing the multi-dimensional interactions and activities that are involved in the process of learning and finding work.

education and training institutions into places of employment'. As such, Kraak suggests that a labour market comprises of:

- Education and Training institutions
- Key government departments, agencies and legislation that influence employment, training and labour regulation
- Key social processes and actors that impact on the interaction between learning and the world of work
- Employer agencies and training policies of employers
- The world of work that determines the availability of employment opportunities in various economic sectors and demographic locations across the country. (Kraak 1999: 220)

Also, because 'labour markets' are social institutions in which various processes, structures and relationships shape the nature of interaction between education and work, they are necessarily localised and shaped by the particular dynamic of given localities and economic and social conditions. These unique influences shape not only the nature of local labour environments, but also determine the kinds of possible relationships between the world of work and related educational institutions in given localities. As is noted in chapter one, the three FET Colleges chosen for this study have very distinct local labour environments that determine the extent to which each FET institution is able to facilitate the employment of learners that exit the respective colleges.

Crucially, by adopting a localised approach the idea is not to dispel the impulse to develop national trends from the study of the interactions between the further education and training sector, the world of work and the various social interactions. Rather, it is argued that the focus on local labour environments provides a framework to neatly separate the various actors and factors in given localities and draw lessons that inform the macro-shape of the FET College/ world of work linkage.

2.2. Understanding Individual Technical Colleges through partnerships with employers and industry

The world of work in South Africa is changing at all levels and in all regions far faster than education and training systems have been able to respond, although work environments in some areas remain locked into labour relationships reminiscent of times well past. In this regard, Kraak has noted that the development of 'greater labour environment interaction between education and training institutions and the world of work' is a critical component of prospective social and economic growth in South Africa (Kraak 1999: 219).

Kraak makes two critical observations, namely that:

1. It would be unwise to follow a 'responsive labour market' approach in which the market mechanism wholly defines and regulates the kinds of programmes that learners engage with at education and training institutions⁶;
2. The local labour environments in which most South African education and training institutions are presently located are mostly dysfunctional. Kraak defines the 'dysfunctional labour market scenario in South Africa' as an environment where:

There is a low correlation between training in specific technical and commercial fields in technical colleges and actual employment opportunities in the external economy; and where there is a low incidence of employer sponsorship of training and, as a consequence, a high incidence of unemployment among graduates of college programmes (Kraak 1999: 222).

With regard to the contemporary context, Kraak has argued that orchestrated state intervention is required to ensure greater articulation between further education and training institutions and the world of work. Furthermore, he observes that far more information and research analysis is required about the nature of present further education provision-industry linkages in order for change to be effected at the local levels (Kraak 1999: 221).

Recently, efforts have been made to develop sustainable approaches to education and skill acquisition in South Africa for this 'new' environment. The policy agendas and

⁶ This is the orthodox economic position articulated most regularly in the business media and within management circles.

outlooks of recent legislation clearly allude to the usefulness of information from labour environments to enhance the external efficiency of further education and training providers. Policy also encourages greater articulation between further education and training institutions and the workplace.

However, it is apparent from the ways in which these policy outlooks are understood at the local levels that colleges (and their sites) have not yet come to terms with the articulated notions of demand, specialisation and inter-linkage. The sense of urgency from government has not yet been matched by a corresponding degree of clarity from individual college facilities about what to do, how to do it and where to get the resources to do it. In any case, few technical education institutions are presently structured in ways that communicate with and respond to the diverse array of 'clients' and social actors that make up local labour environments.

Certainly, the new FET policy framework represents an important beginning in establishing a more regulated labour environment that will serve to balance the 'responsiveness' of educational institutions to labour needs with envisaged infrastructural development and longer-term skill formation (Kraak 1999: 229). This framework will prove a valuable starting point that can inform the re-organisation of local labour environments with regard to previous dominant processes, structures and developed relationships.

Little is known however about the latest kinds of changes and innovations that has occurred within local labour environments. The qualitative study of May 2002 thus sought to understand and explore these various changes and shifts as a way of interpreting the key factors and processes in the current labour environment that explain why some FET Colleges have managed to transform effectively.

The Report adopts two writing styles to document the various data, information and observations that emerged from the research process. On the one hand, the descriptions of local labour environments focus on available quantitative information on local economic environments, employer links and technical college situations. This approach is largely descriptive and briefly scans over the relevant labour environment demographics on particular institutions in given localities and provinces. The requisite information was derived from the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF) Situational

Analyses of FET institutions in the various South African provinces, compiled in the period 1998 to 2000. More specifically, the information was gleaned mostly from the Labour Market Situational Analyses conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)⁷ for the CCF project. Information was also used from the report on the October Household Survey of 1999 (Stats SA 2001) and the recent updates on individual college student numbers and staff profiles.⁸ The idea is to provide the reader with a firm context with which to interpret the findings and trends that emerged from the qualitative study.

On the other hand, the reporting in the parts that emerged from the qualitative study adopts a more discursive and interpretive style and explores the various influences (at the individual technical education institution level) that may or may not frame the ways in which FET Colleges are 'responsive' to employer and community needs. Based on the four questionnaire prompts that framed the various interviews, this discursive/interpretive approach tries to capture the various nuances in the interchange between individual technical education sites and related world of works. Interviews with college staff members and identified employers indicated a number of trends and taken-for-granted assumptions about the FET College-industry linkage and provided particular understandings and interpretations of the roles of FET Colleges within given local labour environments.

The discussion of findings about individual technical education sites in this respect uses the four broad questions asked of interviewees to textually frame salient observations and viewpoints about local labour environments across the three provinces. These observations are further explored in the final chapter that focuses on the general trends that can be gleaned from the study of the three FET Colleges, as well as the implicit policy implications thereof.

2. 3. FET Colleges in South Africa

With regard to FET institutions in South Africa, there are presently 50 FET Colleges which comprise of and include the 160 technical colleges and colleges of education that officially provided for learners until September 2001. These FET Colleges have

⁷ The relevant HSRC researcher that compiled the labour market situational analyses is Johan Erasmus. Henceforth the report is cited as (Erasmus, 2000).

⁸ See the College Collaboration Fund's (CCF) situational analyses for the respective provinces. Data in the various reports have been, and is in the process of being, updated in recent times.

more than 240 delivery sites (the approximate 160 main campus sites and 80 satellite sites) and are widely distributed across the country in most major cities, towns and townships. While the FET Colleges serve rural, peri-urban, urban and metropolitan⁹ communities, the majority of Colleges are located in urban and peri-urban areas.

The noted technical colleges and colleges of education all have varied histories and points from where they evolved. Most colleges also followed quite different paths and responded in different ways to their respective environments and local economies. Undoubtedly, with the merger process that follows from the publication of the *New National Landscape for Public Further Education and Training Colleges of September 2001*, the historical context and development of each individual institution will continue to be revisited and will frame the ways in which the landscapes of the legislated FET Colleges are reproduced.

There is little doubt however that FET Colleges in the new environment have actively and vigorously set about formulating programmes and strategic plans to respond to the new legislative environment. Many have taken up the legislative challenge to develop programmes that ensure learner employment upon exiting respective institutions. Others though have struggled to meet the challenge that the changes have entailed.

Importantly, legislative change will clearly not alone ensure that FET Colleges fulfil their respective roles in the new economic and skills focused environment. The ways in which local labour environments mediate prospective relationships between FET Colleges and the world of work will undoubtedly and ultimately have a huge influence on the levels of 'responsiveness' of individual FET colleges. In that respect, it is asserted that state legislation and intervention needs to find effective ways of communicating key national goals and requirements to the nexus of social institutions, structures and processes in the respective local labour environments if colleges are to fulfil their envisaged role in meeting future skilled labour demands (Kraak 1999: 227).

⁹ These categories are problematised in the methodology section of the Introduction. It is suggested that there is significant fluidity between the categories urban/peri-urban and peri-urban/rural.

2.4 Data that inform the labour environment in South Africa

Statistics SA have estimated that the size of the South African population was 43,3 million in October 1999. Of that figure, 77.8% was estimated to be African, 10.5% white, 8.9% coloured, and 2.6% Indian. Kwazulu Natal has the largest population size in the country¹⁰ consisting of close to 9 million people, followed by Gauteng with 7.8 million and the Eastern Cape with 6.7 million (Stats SA 2001: 13).

Based on the October Household Surveys of 1999, 53.9% of the population is estimated to be living in urban and 46.2% in non-urban areas. These percentages vary by province but there are a number of defining trends across the provinces. Firstly, 63.7% of all urban dwellers are African. Secondly, about 95% of all non-urban dwellers are African. Lastly, 67% of the non-African population of South Africa can be found in urban areas (Stats SA 2001: 24).

With regard to employment, it was estimated in October 1999 that about 10.4 million people were employed of an estimated 26.3 million people considered to be of working age in South Africa. An estimated 12.8 million people were classified as not being economically active (housewives, pensioners, etc), while 3.2 million people said they were unemployed (Stats SA 2001: 45).¹¹ Of the 10.4 million employed people, 26.4% worked in elementary occupations (domestic, tea making in a company, cleaners, planting on commercial farms), 13.3% were in craft and related trades, 10.2% were in technical or semi-professional occupations, 12% were in sales, and 10.4% worked in clerical positions. Only 6.7% worked in managerial positions, while 5.4% were professionals. The rest of the workforce (about 15%) worked in agriculture or the informal sector (Stats SA 2001: 54).¹²

According to the October Household Survey of 1999 only 6.6 million of the 23.3 million people aged 20 years or more in South Africa has passed grade 12 or has post-school qualifications. Also, while it is not specified what is meant by college in the

¹⁰ See Tables in Appendix C

¹¹ Using an expanded unemployment definition, it was noted that up to 6 million people could be unemployed in South Africa (Stats SA 2001: 46). That constitutes an unemployment rate of almost 27%.

¹² Using data from the Labour Force Survey of February 2001, the socio-economic component indicates that 11.8 million people (73% of the economically active) were employed and that about 4.2 million were unemployed. This suggests an economically active population of 16 million people, as opposed to the 13.6 million people estimated in the October Household Survey of 1999.

survey, it was estimated in 1999 that about 232 000 learners were enrolled at colleges. Only about 735 000 people were studying at the post-school level in 1999 (Stats SA 2001: 43).

2.5.1 The Labour Environment of the North West

The North West Province is a mineral-rich province and contains about 21% of South Africa's arable land. As estimated by Stats SA in 1999 the total population of the province is 3,6 million people, which is about 8,3% of all people living in South Africa (Stats SA 2001: 13). About 65% of the inhabitants of North West inhabit non-urban areas and at an average of 29 persons per square kilometre, North West is one of the less densely populated provinces in South Africa (Erasmus 2000: 3).

Africans form the majority of the population (91%). The remaining 9% is made up of whites (6.6%), coloureds (1.4%) and Indians (0.3%). The 1996 October Census indicated that there were roughly about 2 million people available for work in the province. In that regard, Erasmus (2000) has suggested that an estimated 725 287 people (36%) is employed in the province, about 866 552 people (42%) are not economically active (housewives, scholars, students, pensioners, retired and disabled people and others not wishing to work), and the remaining 443 546 people (22%) could not find work. Forty eight (48) percent of the potential labour force was reported to be younger than 30 years of age in 1996. While most were probably at school, it was found that almost 73% of the economically active youth aged 15-19 years of age could not find employment in 1996, and that 64% of those aged 20-24 were unemployed (Erasmus 2000: 4).

Crucially, almost 43% of the labour force in the North West has not attended school or completed at least the primary school phase, and almost 23% of people aged 20 and above in North West have received no education. Also, Erasmus (2000: 5) has noted that about 767 440 (43%) of the North West population aged 20 and above could be considered functionally illiterate (i.e. have not had at least 6 years of formal schooling). Only 13% of the population 20 years and above had obtained grade 12 (std 10) by 1996 and about 4% had post-school qualifications.

These kinds of statistics suggest that innovative measures need to be adopted in the North West Province to increase and enhance the skills and educational base of the labour force. These measures will have to focus on developing and preparing learners to find employment in both the industries that have traditionally provided employment and also in areas that emerge as a result of the changing economic environment. It would seem from the various statistics that a specific focus on educating and enskilling learners presently emerging from school should provide significant dividends for economic growth.

Labour force and industries

Erasmus observed in 2000 that about 32% of the labour force in the North West were employed in production, mining and similar occupations, 31% in elementary occupations, 16% as legislators or senior officials, managerial or professional positions, 16% work as clerks and service or retail workers, and 5% were employed as skilled agriculture and fishery workers (Erasmus 2000: 19).

Industries provide up to 62% of jobs to the economically active in North West. In 1996 there were four industry groups in the province that provided 76.3% of formal employment to the roughly 450 000 workers (Erasmus 2000: 19). The rest of formal employment (23.7%) came from industries such as manufacturing (8.3%); construction (5.9%); transport, storage and communications; finance, insurance, real estate and business services; and the electricity, gas and water sectors.

Industries	Percentage of total formal employment in the province
Mining and quarrying	18.1
Community, social and personal services	32.6
Wholesale and retail trade, catering and accommodation	13.0
Agriculture	12.6
Total percentage	76.3%

With regard to the informal sector, Erasmus observed in 2000 that the majority of all active self-employed people (about 81% of the informal sector) in the North West were in the elementary occupations (67%) or in craft and related trades (13%).

Crucially, the economy of the North West Province is dominated by mining and agriculture, though both are in decline. Erasmus (2000: 17) has also noted that while the community, social and personal services sector contributed a significant proportion to the gross geographic product per capita (GGP) and employed almost 30% of all workers in the province in 1995, it was the sector that would most likely shed the most jobs in the foreseeable future. Manufacturing contributed only 9.6% to the GGP in 1995.

With regard to the FET College under focus in this study, the Southern Region of the North West has the highest proportion (33%) of craft and related trades workers, as well as plant and machine operators and assemblers. Mining (gold) and manufacturing operations in the Southern Region – situated mainly in and around Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom – contribute to most of the employment opportunities for craft and related trades workers, and machine operators and assemblers (Erasmus 2000: 21). A further 14% of the workers in the Southern Region are employed as clerks, as service workers, and as shop and market sales workers, while between 15% are employed in professional, managerial and administrative occupations.

Furthermore, Erasmus has asserted that the southern region of the North West, with Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom as key centres, is by far the dominant economic region in the province and high levels of growth is predicted in those areas (Erasmus 2000: 24). While mining and agriculture remain the dominant activities in the region and therefore the greatest labour supplier, in recent times commercial activities have experienced a boom in Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom and much growth seems imminent in the wholesale, sales, services and banking sectors. On the whole however none of the economic sectors show much growth prospects (Erasmus 2000), even though the North West Province authorities has made considerable progress in formulating new agricultural, industrial and small business policies and in restructuring the agriculture and the public sector to meet anticipated future challenges. A new focus on tourism, a shift in mining focus to platinum, and the

recent increased international interest in gold suggest possible economic growth in the foreseeable future. However, new opportunities will probably predominate in the low-skill occupations and not be sufficient to satisfy the expected supply of labour in that region.

Technical Colleges

Before the restructuring of the South African further education and training landscape in 2001 there were 11 technical colleges in the North West (Department of Education 2001). The table below indicates the distribution of colleges across the province (according to region) and also suggests the percentage of employment in the respective regions (CCF 2000). (Other institutions in the province include two universities, one technikon, 4 nursing colleges, 3 teacher-training institutions and an agricultural college)

In 2000 the 11 technical colleges were spread across five regions, with an estimated 5500 learners:

Region	Population of North West	Formal employment per region	Number of technical colleges	Names of Colleges	Technical college student percentage (full-time) in NW
Far eastern (smallest region)	27%	29,2%	3	Temba Manpower Centre Brits Odi Manpower Centre	11% 4% 16%
Southern	20%	28,1%	3	Klerksdorp Jouberton Potchefstroom	15% 6% 14%
Central	20%	14.4%	3	Lichtenburg Lehrutse College of Education Mafikeng Manpower Centre	5% 3% 7%
Eastern (second smallest region)	17%	20.6%	1	Rustenburg	13%
Western (largest region)	15%	7.7%	1	Taung College of Education	6%
Total			11		5 488 FTEs

Historically, there were three distinct institutional types of further education and training facilities in the North West. Firstly, there were technical colleges that were administered by the education department of the House of Assembly (that oversaw white education provision) prior to 1994. These colleges shared a history of initially being established to meet the needs of the emerging manufacturing sector. Brits Technical College, Klerksdorp Technical College, Potchefstroom Technical College, Lichtenburg Technical College and Rustenburg Technical College all fall into this category.

Secondly, there was the unique feature under the homeland government of Bophuthatswana in the late 1970s of manpower centres that responded specifically to skilled labour shortages in black townships. Initially located in the Department of Labour they were transferred to the Department of Education in 1998. They included the Mmabatho, Odi and Temba manpower centres. In addition, there was Jouberton College situated in the townships of the town of Klerksdorp which was established under the former Department of Education and Training.

Thirdly, there were the teacher education colleges, one established as recently as 1990. In the North West province, Taung College and Lehurutshe College have been restructured and refocused and are in the process of being converted into predominantly further education and training facilities (CCF 2000: 32-33).

According to the national landscape plan of September 2001 the above further education and training institutions of the North West have been merged into three FET Colleges to serve the three main regions in the province, namely the eastern, southern and central region. The Eastern Region comprises of the Rustenburg and Brits technical colleges, Odi Manpower Centre and Temba Manpower Centre; the Central region consists of Lehurutse College of Education, Lichtenburg technical college and Mafikeng Manpower Centre, while the Southern region includes the Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, Jouberton technical colleges and Taung College of Education. The latter region was consulted for the purposes of the project.

2.5.2. THE FET COLLEGE OF NORTH WEST

The FET College in the southern region is firmly located in the labour environments of the towns of Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. The FET College comprises of the Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom and Jouberton colleges and the Taung College of Education. While the former two are situated in the respective towns, Jouberton College can be found on the periphery of the town of Klerksdorp (in the township), while the Taung College of Education is situated roughly 280 kilometres south of Klerksdorp. While it is possible to refer to an established local labour environment with regard to the first three colleges, the Taung institution is situated in a completely rural environment with no labour environment to speak of and very little prospect of employment growth. The Taung institution was previously a college of education before being re-classified in 2001. In the past the college of education provided exclusively for African learners. The Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom colleges previously fell under the House of Assembly (white department), while Jouberton college was a Department of Education and Training (DET) institution for African learners before 1994.

The tables below describe the most recent count of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) learners and staff, staff composition in the FET College, as well as the learner field specialisation per college.

Table 1: Student and staff numbers

FET COLLEGE	Students	Staff
Klerksdorp	775	46
Potchefstroom	760	49
Jouberton	345	22
Taung	313	11
Total	219	128

Table 2: The staff composition of the four institutions

Staff composition (percentage)	White	African	Coloured	Indian
Klerksdorp	100%	0	0	0
Potchefstroom	92%	4%	4	0
Jouberton	77%	23%	0	0
Taung	9%	91%	0	0
Total average	92%	6%	2%	0

Table 3: Breakdown of vocational fields for four institutions

FET College	Klerksdorp	Potchefstroom	Jouberton	Taung	Total
Further Education (N0,N1,N2,N3)					
Arts and Music	0	0	0	0	0
Business Studies	84	232	105	47	468
Engineering	263	108	106	29	506
General Education	0	0	0	0	0
Utility Studies	1	9	0	0	10
Total	347	349	211	76	984
Higher Education (N4, N5, N6)					
Arts and Music	0	0	0	0	0
Business Studies	327	319	115	231	992
Educare and Soc Services	0	23	18	0	41
Engineering	100	50	0	6	156
Utility Industries	1	19	0	0	20
TOTAL	776	760	344	313	2193

The respective colleges each have a different set of relationships and institutional cultures that have informed college development. These distinct sets of processes are dealt with below within the descriptions of individual college activity. However, as a single FET College with a common local labour environment the following observations are significant.

- The majority of staff (almost 80%) in the colleges of Klerksdorp, Jouberton and Potchefstroom is white, and white males represent almost 90% of the management structures of the three colleges. African staff members predominate in administration positions.
- Most of the available staff is qualified at the N6 level and above, though very few have degrees. Very few staff members have experience of working in industry and prefer teaching theory courses.
- The surrounding labour environment is dominated by the mining and service industries. These and other industries and businesses are predominantly owned or managed by white Afrikaner males.
- The population of the area is predominantly Afrikaans-speaking and hence much of business and industry links are conducted through networks and acquaintances that are culturally exclusive. This is a critical issue with regard

to the forming of partnerships between employers and colleges since most of the agreements are verbal and may be sustainable only if the particular personal relationships are maintained. Diploma ceremonies, golf days, and other social activities are but a few of the networking events where staff meet industry, government and business leaders.

- While the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp institutions have established training programmes that focus on engineering and business courses as well as extensive computer training initiatives, Jouberton focuses on essentially survivalist courses.
- Jouberton is the newest college in the region and is situated in the township about 12km outside Klerksdorp, though the majority of the staff is white. Because of its location the college is only able to develop partnerships of a community development nature and is dictated by the needs of their poor and rural clients. Ironically, the institution boasts the best workshop facilities of the four institutions. The Jouberton workshops are significantly underused, while there are no workshop facilities at the Taung campus.
- The Taung institution only introduced further education and training courses in 1998 when it inherited the satellite campus of Jouberton. The FET staff members represent only 25% of the total staff complement that remains focused on teacher training activities.
- The Taung staff is 80% African and mostly well qualified. Further education and training staff have minimally N6 and above, while many teacher trainers have their honours and masters. Given the historical legacy where most African, coloured and Indian learners studying beyond the matriculation year inevitably went into teaching, colleges of education have never needed to environment its courses nor develop industry partnerships.
- The management structures of Taung and Jouberton are not keen or geared to pursue partnerships with industry. They have adopted a wait-and-see approach during the process of merging the four colleges. This is contrary to the approach of the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp institutions that pursue very entrepreneurial pathways. Staff members there actively engage with industry in attempts to encourage learner enrolment. Where demand is recognised and such courses are not available, procedures are put into place to provide them as non-Department of Education programmes. Further examples of this

entrepreneurial activity are the Future Kids computer training franchise located at the Klerksdorp institution and the FedBev entrepreneurial training centre at the Potchefstroom facility.

Importantly, economic activity in the Klerksdorp region has increased in recent times. The region, renowned for its mining and agricultural growth multipliers, has experienced a significant shift to services provision. It has been suggested that with the new licensed casino in the town, the growing medical practitioner fraternity, the large number of law firms that predominate the region, and the increase in large retail manufacturers being based in the area, that the Klerksdorp region will soon emerge as the key servicing centre of the southern region and the province.

The section below focuses on individual institutions and elaborates on the particular lessons that can be derived from the various kinds of relationships, processes and partnerships recently developed in respective localities.

The Klerksdorp Institution

Four staff members were interviewed from the college. Their names and designations are provided in Appendix F, as are the names of employers interviewed with regard to Klerksdorp. It was quite apparent from the interviews that the institution and its staff are very much aware of the kinds of activities required in the changing further education and training environment. All members articulated their concerns and contributions in direct relation to the Skills Development Act and consistently observed that a common approach was needed to address the shift in emphasis of the institution. In this regard, the Klerksdorp institution is one of eighteen colleges in South Africa to be part of a national pilot project to implement learnerships. Furthermore, the vice-principal of Klerksdorp serves as the provincial and Cluster co-ordinator for Learnerships.

Some Background history for the institution

The college was established in 1939 and officially opened in 1941. It was a small branch of the Witwatersrand Technical College. The function of the branch was to

cater for the training of mining apprentices.¹³ In 1956, it became a commercial high school and a technical high school. The two sections/schools were split into two separate institutions in 1964. The commercial high school was closed in 1977 and the apprentice school started to function as a Technical College.

About 85% of students are African, 2% are coloured and 13% white. The minimum requirement of students to be admitted to the college is Grade 9. The languages of instruction are English and Afrikaans. The main catchment areas for the college are the Klerksdorp, Orkney, Stilfontein and Hartebeesfontein neighbourhoods, locally known as KOSH area. Learners also come from other provinces and from Botswana and Lesotho. The college offers courses predominantly in business studies and engineering, though it also provides programmes in computer training, social services, educare hairdressing and sport. The college also offers business subjects that grade twelve learners can take towards their matric.

Partnerships between colleges, industries and business

The Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD) mine is the college's principal partner. The college has recently secured a partnership agreement with the DRD that will see the college hiring the DRD's R20 million fully equipped Training Centre for R100 (one hundred) per month. The reason for the ridiculously low rental is that the college has committed itself to provide certain mine-related programmes not part of the college curriculum. The college has also absorbed five mine training personnel. The partnership offers exciting prospects for growth, borne out by the transfer of a number of college staff to manage and market the centre, and offer a diverse range of training programmes. Presently, the college provides the DRD mine with refresher training courses for the mine's apprentices and labourers. The centre also provides compulsory in-service training for apprentices and private students enrolled as artisans in the electrical, fitting and turning, boiler making and millwright trades. While the bulk of learners based at the Training Centre are mine employees, about 70 private students are privately enrolled. Also, about 250 of the students in the engineering programme undertake practical training at the centre, though not all

¹³ The Apprenticeship Act of 1922 ensured that only white learners could be apprenticed. This practice endured until the 1980s, though in different localities and regions in the period between 1955 and 1985 there were isolated incidences of coloured and Indian learners securing apprenticeships.

comply with fee requirements and are thus excluded. The college is in the process of acquiring accreditation for programmes offered at the centre.

The Training Centre promises to be an exciting venture for the FET College, not only in terms of the training it will be able to offer the respective colleges, but also as an attractive means of developing further private sector partnerships. This repositioning of FET Colleges as centres for practical skills training is well served by the acquisition of the DRD training centre, as it will be by the probable shifting of the engineering studies component of Klerksdorp to Jouberton, as part of the merger process. Jouberton has superior workshops that will offer learners with excellent facilities for practical training.¹⁴ Partnerships with local Technical High Schools in the Klerksdorp area are yet to be formalised, though good relations have predominated before. The key problem in the current environment however is the positioning of the college as a competitor to technical high schools by focusing on further education and training (N1-3). Learners continue to enrol nonetheless for single engineering courses at the college as one of the requisite grade 11 and grade 12 subjects.

Aligning partnerships with learner and employer needs

In the past the training for mining was mostly theoretical. The college has however re-aligned its institutional focus with the acquisition of the DRD Training Centre in 2001. The learnership pilot project that the college is party to also indicates the valuable network support that the college is creating with the relevant SETAs, the Department of Education, the Department of Labour and targeted donors. This will enable the college to successfully develop its skills programmes. The college was awarded two learnerships in 2002. The first is the Engineering Maintenance and Repairing for Underground Hard Rock Breaking Learnership, The second is the Sport, Recreation and Fitness Leader Learnership. Applications have been submitted to the Department of Labour for the accreditation of the college as a skills provider.

Notwithstanding these skills innovations at the college, it was suggested that most companies would still rather 'buy' a skilled artisan than engage a trainee. Colleges are therefore constantly confronted by a situation where industries are more concerned with financial windfalls, constraints and limiting production costs than the training of

¹⁴ One of the conditions of the FET merging process is that there cannot be duplication of programmes from colleges within a twenty-kilometre radius of each other.

employees. In this regard, the programmes offered at the Training Centre have tended to focus predominantly on ways in which industries and businesses can claim back their skills levy. Training programmes thus tend to be framed by the particular needs of local industries (whether they be short term or long term, ABET-level training or artisan training). Companies in turn have started to send their staff to the centre for specific training or have agreed to host learners for practical experience. Examples include the following:

- The college has entered into an arrangement to supply Nestle with millwright artisans
- Bond Industries (manufacturers of hydraulic equipment) and Sherwood Pumps (repairs and maintenance of motor pumps) have expressed an interest in linking up with the college to train particular employees
- Local Panel beating shops and garages have also been approached for possible experiential training arrangements for college learners

Other links also exist with the municipality for electrical, welding and computer skills training. Municipal workers enrol at the college for training in electrical and welding. Seventy-two councillors recently also completed computer skills training through the Future Kids franchise at the college. The partnership with Future Kids means college students and partners receive certification through an internationally recognised institution. The College has also registered as an ABET centre with the Department of Education. Classes are presented on levels 1- 4. Finally, the college offers a business studies matriculation course to high school learners that learners can partake in while still enrolled at local high schools. The business course serves as one of the requisite subjects for school matriculation year.

A concluding reminder perhaps is that most college learners enrol at technical education institutions (now FET Colleges) because it provides them with an informal study environment, the opportunity to repeat subjects they had failed previously, or an option of taking a business or engineering subject in place of a school subject like bible studies.

How college programmes are operationalised

Thus far there have been no formal assessment of the kind of skills required by the local labour environment. Most colleges in the province strictly follow the prescribed

courses utilising old, outdated formats (1980 syllabus). This presents colleges with significant dilemmas when teaching learners. While many colleges seek to discontinue certain prescribed courses, they have found that a legislative loophole prohibits them from readily providing courses that 'respond' to particular skills needs in the 'marketplace'. That is so because for employers to claim back skills levies they have to enrol employees through accredited skills providers. Because colleges are state funded they are still waiting to be accredited or perhaps are unlikely to be accredited. This situation has been described as 'double-dipping' and is an issue that is currently under consideration. Already the Klerksdorp institution has begun to prepare for a situation where it provides state courses as well as accredited skills programmes. The college is also set to discontinue some of the more theoretical N-programmes and replace these with unit standard skills-based programmes with experiential components.

The college has also sought to re-align programmes according to changes in occupational activity. One example is the proposed revamping of the current N4 secretarial programme by including switchboard training, with a practical component. In this regard, it was noted in an interview with the employer of a recent placement at Metroplan that while the employee's typing and knowledge of office management were adequate, she lacked practical experience in telephone skills, client liaison and working with computers. This comment by an employer led to the college revisiting the course and suggesting ways of adapting it to suit both employer and learner needs.

Without an overall formal tracking system of college 'graduates' however, colleges will remain unable to assess the success of their programmes. There is simply no basis to pursue programme pathways if the programmes themselves cannot be assessed according to the employment placement rate of that programme training. While it is critical that the college adapt programmes according to employment demand, it would be equally silly to pursue programmes based on inadequate surveys of employment demand. In that respect, the college would benefit greatly if it could secure better representation of targeted employers (like the mining and agricultural industries as well as from the municipality) and active and involved community members to serve in the college governing structure.

Marketing strategies of colleges

While the locally distributed college newspaper serves as an effective marketing tool, virtually no other marketing is attempted. It has been said that the absorption of the DRD training centre has significantly depleted available staff and that nobody is available to focus on marketing the college. Importantly, the college does have a public relations officer whose job entails developing industry partnerships and securing possible enrolments. This public relations person will probably become part of public relations team once the CEO of the FET College is appointed (each college ostensibly will have one PR representative). Marketing strategies tend to focus too much though on increasing learner numbers and too little on the college's programme content.

Crucially, as the list below of partnership agreements with outside organisations as noted by college indicate, very little is known about the kinds of relationships that existed in the past, that have been formulated recently or that colleges suggest will occur prospectively. Very little is known about the type and extent of partnerships, nor the numbers of learners involved. By only differentiating between written agreement and verbal partnership agreements and not providing greater detail about the levels of partnerships, very little can be read into the noted partnerships. In fact, upon further prompting it was found that only one or two learners were involved in a number of the stated partnerships. When a college has a full-time equivalent count of almost 5 500 learners, it would be misleading to read too much from the 16 stated partnerships of which the majority involve one or two learners. Also, as was indicated in the interview with Anglo-Gold, in many cases where partnerships existed the interchange was framed around the placement of company employees at the college for study in particular technical education programmes. The majority of partnerships inevitably did not include placement at local industries for the practical training of college learners.

Nonetheless, the recent partnership with and the acquisition of the training centre of Durban Roodepoort Deep Mine, bodes well for the growth of the college and suggests a shift that will ultimately both facilitate greater interaction between the North West (Southern) FET College and industry needs in the area, and connect the college with

the envisaged practical training focus noted in the national further education and training plan.

Name of organisation	Description of contractual agreement	Area of specialisation	Site/campus
Durban Roodepoort Deep Mine	Written Agreement	Training of various kinds	Klerksdorp
Future Kids	Written Agreement	Computer training	Klerksdorp
Anglo Gold (John Carr)	Written Agreement	Mining training	Klerksdorp
Wesvalia Hoerskool	Written Agreement	Computer training	Klerksdorp
Klerksdorp Hoerskool	Verbal agreement	Computer training	Klerksdorp
Klerksdorp technical High School	Verbal agreement	Engineering science	Klerksdorp
Potchefstroom University	Verbal agreement	Telematic learning systems	Klerksdorp
Klerksdorp municipality	Verbal agreement	Computer and practical	Klerksdorp
Anglo Gold	Verbal agreement	Theoretical training	Klerksdorp
Escom	Verbal agreement	Theoretical training	Klerksdorp
Nestle- Harrismith	Verbal agreement	Practical training	Klerksdorp
Alpha Cement	Verbal agreement	Practical training	Klerksdorp
Clover	Verbal agreement	Practical training	Klerksdorp
Boxmore Plastics	Verbal agreement	Practical training	Klerksdorp
Naschem	Verbal agreement	Practical training	Klerksdorp
Chubby Chick	Verbal agreement	Practical training	Klerksdorp

Jouberton college

The three staff members that were interviewed reflected significantly different perspectives of the institution. All were white and very disillusioned with recent shifts in policy. However, informal discussions with other staff members indicated a greater level of enthusiasm and commitment to creatively respond to the challenges faced by the institution. All the interviews were short and staff members seemed distant when discussing the key concerns that informed the running of the facility. This lack of enthusiasm seemed to prevail in the whole locality. On the one hand, the township site played a significant role in dissuading 'outside' learners from coming there. The impoverished neighbourhood offered no accommodation for prospective learners who needed to live elsewhere if they intended to attend the institution. On the other hand, learners that lived close by were not excited about attending the institution. Many preferred to enrol at Klerksdorp and travel daily to the town centre. The high

unemployment rates and the strained and anxious atmosphere in the township virtually prevented college enrolment numbers from increasing.

Background

The Jouberton college started out as the Tlhabologo Technical Centre in 1983 and catered exclusively for African learners. As the centre's numbers grew and programmes increased, the college gradually grew to its full potential. It became a state institution in 1998 with levels of provision from N1-6. Given that the institution has always been located in an impoverished area, the college has always struggled to place learners that obtained certificates at the institution. There are virtually no job opportunities around Jouberton except for a few small businesses and most of the employed population of the township (98%) work in the services sector, banks, hospitals, transportation and provincial departments in the Klerksdorp town centre. Unlike for Klerksdorp, the mining industry absorbs a very small percentage of the employable Jouberton community and college leavers, even though the two colleges are less than 12 km apart.

Partnerships between colleges, industries and business

The notion of partnerships is often understood as very formal and lucrative relationships between two parties both set to reap substantial reward. Certainly, initial prompting of the Jouberton staff seemed to suggest such an understanding of the term. They were virtually unanimous then that the college had no formal linkages or partnerships with industries or businesses. Further enquiry revealed however that the college had working relationships with the local Excelsior Nursing College, the Pelindaba Skills Institution and a local high school.

It would seem that the college did not deem these institutions as proper industry or business partners because the noted partners were themselves caught in a web of impoverishment and despair. Nonetheless, in a number of other respects the college seemed to ignore its required participation in securing partnerships and tended to separate the reality of the college from its locality. This was probably linked to the belief that the local labour environment was dysfunctional and seemingly irredeemable. From interviews with relevant staff members it was noted that the college was completely dependent on the intervention of the Department of Education. Staff members indicated that the new learnership programme would

probably provide salvation for the college and act as a panacea for the development of sustainable partnerships with relevant stakeholders. This idealised notion of the change process is a worrying trend in many previously disadvantaged institutions.

Where college staff did indicate programmes that responded to community needs such as sewing classes, vegetable growing, and leather work and pottery, it was found that such activities resembled small businesses being run on the grounds of institutions. For example, the community member involved in sewing activity on the college campus was actually running a small business that made clothes and other items. The concerned individual offered no sewing classes or any other kind of learning support to fellow community members or learners.

Sustaining partnerships and marketing disillusionment

The principal of the college indicated that the institution fully followed the prescribed syllabus of the Department of Education and did not offer any further programmes. This indicated an unwillingness to even survey labour and skills demands in the labour environment, as well as an inability to respond flexibly to a situation of dwindling numbers and community disinterest. This disinterest was reflected also by the way in which staff members stuck rigidly to the institutional hours of 08h00 to 14h00. Unlike Klerksdorp where adult learners attended classes till late in the evening, no further programmes were offered after 14h00 each day. The only activity of note seemed to be the sport learnership that was a joint venture with the Klerksdorp institution. Hopefully, this situation of only working for six institutional hours will change once the engineering section of Klerksdorp start using Jouberton's workshops and once the sport learnership programme of the Klersdorp college becomes operationalised.

Finally, while the college was aware of the need to market itself and capture increased learner interest, marketing was limited to road shows, college open days for neighbouring schools and sporadic visits to individual schools to advertise the benefits of vocational training. The table below highlights the limited nature of partnerships between the institution and employers. Importantly, the table reflects partnerships as noted by the institution.

Name of organisation	Description of contractual agreement	Area of specialisation	Site/campus
Jouberton Community	Community needle work project	Needle work	Jouberton
Jouberton Community	Agricultural project	Agricultural	Jouberton
Jouberton Community	Coffin manufacturing/woodwork	Woodwork	Jouberton
Multivision Youth Development Project	Developing survivalist skills and training	SMME training	Jouberton
Pelindaba Skills Institution	Unknown	unknown	Jouberton

Taung College of Education

One researcher drove down to Taung and interviewed all the relevant stakeholders in one day. The researcher remarked that the exercise was not a challenging one since 'nothing happens in that area'. This bleak characterisation of the locality around the Taung institution indicates a sense of despair not only with the surroundings but also with the institutional culture of the institution. While the institution has historically served as a teacher training facility, a shift in institutional programme was initiated in 1998 that sought to increase further education and training courses at the college. In 2001 the college was re-classified as a FET facility. Given this legacy of training teachers, the college does not have the capacity or the skill to develop a different institutional culture. The college continues to concentrate on teacher training and teacher upgrading.

Also, given that the college has only been a FET facility for three years the college has understandably struggled to develop partnerships with local industries. That may also be influenced by the fact that there are no industries of note in the area. Taung is located in a remote rural environment where the only industrial activities are reportedly run by 'one man businesses'. The key economic activity of the area is agriculture. Some have suggested that the college focus on agricultural employment links. Others remind that there is an agricultural college nearby that responds to such economic and employment opportunities.

Background

The college originally began as a college of education in 1979 in Pampierstad, in the then Bophuthatswana. It moved to its present rural location in 1983. The college is a large campus with numerous classrooms and space for further development. The area has very little electricity supply and the college itself also has minimal lighting available. Most staff lives on the campus.

The college inherited the satellite campus of Jouberton technical college in 1998. The Taung institution also established a satellite campus in Vryburg in 1999 that offered technical courses in engineering and business. The Japanese government funds the latter initiative through the Kagiso Trust.

Partnerships

The college has links with both tertiary and non-governmental organisations, though most are of the type where outside institutions use the college premises or facilities.

- Potchefstroom University uses the college premises to train nurses in the Diploma of Nursing.
- The Open Learning Group uses the college facilities and lecturers to teach their Further Diploma in Education.
- The Potchefstroom technical college uses Taung's premises for the writing of examinations.
- Mbana College of Art uses the premises for examination purposes and to teach a number of theory component courses
- The Foundation for Economic and Business Development runs courses at Taung.
- College interacts with schools for teaching practice for preset learners.
- Sports groups use the college hall and sports facilities
- Schools use the science laboratory of the college

The Taung institution has no partnerships with any employers, nor has management prioritised such partnerships. The college continues to focus on teacher training. Indeed, the environment in which the college is situated does not lend itself to encourage the industry liaisons critical for further education and training growth. While the college was keen to offer further education and training programmes as a

far of ensuring the college existence, the college has not tried to survey the kinds of employment opportunities available in the area.

Marketing the college and developing further education and training programmes

In the past, outside of college programmes the college only foresaw increasing its activities in the upgrading of teacher qualifications through distance education. Given its 75% higher education staff complement, staff members have been reluctant or unable to plan for the development of further education and training programmes. Nonetheless, there have been of responding to learner needs and where possible the college has introduced programmes based on learner demand (e.g. human resource management).

It was asserted in staff interviews that the surrounding communities support the college because of:

1. The low fees
2. The safe environment
3. The availability of hostel accommodation
4. The fact that it is the only college in a radius of 60-100kms that offers technical subjects.

While the latter assertion may seem contradictory given an earlier suggestion that the college was not interested in developing further education and training courses, importantly the introduction of new courses require a minimum quota of roughly 30 learners. Thus, even though the college has managed to introduce some new courses such as human resource management, marketing and computer practice, the introduction of further demand-led courses seems unlikely. The lack of available FET-qualified staff, the lack of facilities to provide practical training for learners and the essentially theory-based training focus suggests that the college will struggle to survive in the new FET environment.

Potchefstroom College

The Potchefstroom facility is a former state-aided technical college that was originally established for white learners. Both the learner population and the staff complement have not changed substantially since 1994; the staff complement remains about 92% white and Afrikaans speaking. About 66% of further education and training learners at

the Potchefstroom technical institution are enrolled in 'business studies'. Interviewed college staff members assert that Potchefstroom is the best college in the province and that with an average pass rate of 82% that their success and retention levels are quite high.

In its given locality however, the Potchefstroom technical college is regarded as the 'poor' link in a network of further and higher Potchefstroom education and training institutions and facilities that interrelate daily on an informal basis. The technical college shares resources in some way or other with:

- Potchefstroom University
- Potchefstroom Boys High School
- Potchefstroom Technikon
- Ventersdorp High School
- Botsogo High School
- Island North College

These relationships serve the technical college in a number of ways. For example, it was suggested in an interview that the employment surveys conducted by the Potchefstroom University, the local municipality and the local Department of Labour helped the college identify key 'target markets', and so prepare courses according to learner demand. It was suggested that the college was spared valuable expense, time and effort given this inter-change between education and training institutions. Furthermore, the good relations between institutions also allowed for greater programme co-ordination and structure when responding to the economic and labour needs of the given locality.

From the study however it also became abundantly clear that the complex web of relationships between institutions served to uphold a status quo informed primarily by past discourses of 'excellence', 'professional expertise', and a belief in direct 'responsiveness' to employment needs (though the college did not seem to take the latter notion very seriously). While these are admirable goals for the institutions, addressed outside of the socio-economic context and legacy of unequal interchange between communities, they have come to serve as exclusionary mechanisms and ways of maintaining past status quos.

Partnerships

The institution reportedly has a number of formal and informal partnerships with local industries. Some of the key industries that were identified were Naschem (a fertiliser firm), Special Protein products, Kynoch, Chubby Chick, the local municipality and some non-governmental organisation sectors. The list below may seem substantial, but further investigation revealed that many of the partnerships were tentative and involved very few learners. Interviewees reported that the college had an informal arrangement with some industries to provide 'training on request', where courses are designed according to the requirements of particular industries. In that regard, the small numbers of learners may result from other processes like the slow process of accreditation linked to skills development, the last stage of formalisation of the merger process, and the ongoing construction of college workshops that will facilitate the practical training focus of FET Colleges.

This starting-up phase for the FET Colleges is best described by the fact that at Potchefstroom the head of department for engineering serves as the only person responsible for preparing courses for accreditation.

Name of organisation	Description of contractual agreement	Area of specialisation	Site/campus
Hoer Techniese Skool Potch	Partnerships and linkages	Computer training	Hoer Techniese Skool Potch
Potchefstroom Boys High School	Partnerships and linkages	Computer training	Potchefstroom Boys High School
Boitshoko High School Ikageng	Partnerships and linkages	Computer training	Potch college
Ventersdorp Hoerskool	Partnerships and linkages	Computer training	Ventersdorp Hoerskool
CVO Skool Ventersdorp	Partnerships and linkages	Computer training	CVO Skool Ventersdorp
Potchefstroom University	Partnerships and linkages	Bridging course	Potchefstroom
PUK Rugbyinstituut	Partnerships and linkages	Engineering and business training	Potchefstroom
WJ Engineering	Partnerships and linkages	Engineering and business training	Potchefstroom
Ferdinand Postma Hoerskool	Partnerships and linkages	Aids awareness training	Potchefstroom
FEDBEV	Partnerships and linkages	Training of trainers	Potchefstroom

	linkages		
COD	Partnerships and linkages	Enterprise development	Potchefstroom
Chubby Chick	Partnerships and linkages	Theory training and ABET classes	Potchefstroom
Sipumelele	Partnerships and linkages	Literacy Projects	Potchefstroom
Naschem	Partnerships and linkages	Welding and trade training	Potchefstroom
Special Protein Products	Partnerships and linkages	Stock control training	Potchefstroom
Kynoch	Partnerships and linkages	Industry-related training	Potchefstroom
Potchefstroom municipality	Partnerships and linkages	Computer training	Potchefstroom

Marketing the college and developing further education and training programmes

It is evident though that the Potchefstroom institution has begun to interact with local industries in very pro-active ways. A key criticism remains the tendency to provide industry-demand training on request and that many programmes are not directly related to technical education programmes and could be 'purchased' or accessed elsewhere. This college dilemma is probably a short-term issue. Colleges presently simultaneously focus on developing skills programmes informed by market demand while adhering to national-framed technical education programmes. This tension will probably be resolved by the appointed governance structures of the newly legislated FET Colleges. There is little doubt however that the fact that programmes are framed at the national level does impact on the effectiveness of individual colleges since local labour environment and regional issues become almost insignificant in such a situation (where formal college programmes are determined elsewhere).

There is also little doubt that the manifold nature of the present non-formal linkages between the college and employers suggest a range of possible growth alternatives for the institution. For example, the Potchefstroom institution (and thus the FET College in North West) presently provides local government employees with training in computer skills, literacy and adult basic education; it provides tailor-made training programmes like stock control training to Special Protein Products, and welding courses to Chubby Chick; and it also provides training of trainers programmes to entrepreneurial centres like Fedbev. Interviewees also noted that the college was formulating new non-formal courses for agricultural technicians, chef skills and

tourism communication skills. Furthermore, formal training courses that have recently been introduced include electrical, electronics, motor mechanics, basic welding, and fitting and turning.

Matters of concern remain the enduring stigma that technical colleges provide low quality training, the limited perception of the system of apprenticeships, and the shortage of practical training facilities at the institution. Interviewees reported that the balance between theory and practice was 60% theory and 40% practical. It was unclear though where the practical training occurred given that there were no college workshops. This claim should perhaps be understood in the light of a further assertion that informal learnerships were taking place in the tourism industry (table laying in restaurants, computer training for enquiry-desk positions, and employment during the town's arts festivals). These activities were understood as 'internships'.

Interviewees noted the breakdown of learners enrolled at the college in the following way:

Learner background	Percentage
School drop-out that enrol at college	30%
Matriculants	49%
Employed/working learners	20%
Adult learners	1%

Interviewed staff members also suggested that learners enrolled at the institution for the following reasons:

- Availability and safe environment of hostel facilities
- Reasonably low fee structures
- The 'responsiveness' of the institution to 'client' needs
- Highly qualified staff members
- Demand-driven courses
- Perceived high quality of technical education

Clearly, it is very difficult to report substantial developments taking place in the present changing environment. While the institution is actively formulating new ways

of developing and forming partnerships with businesses and communities, there is as yet very little evidence of enduring relationships between colleges and local industries and businesses. The institution still tends to depend on old networks with the Potchefstroom University and other education institutions in the area, to not only provide learners and structural assistance but also to inform about growth areas and potential networking and marketing links. A new development for the institution is the focus on 'employed learners' or 'in-service trainees'. In this respect, learners are already employed, training programmes are relevant to industry needs and employers have structured opportunities to interact with the institution about programme content and thrust. Two examples of recent partnerships are described below.

In the first example, learners that work at hotels or are enrolled in tourism, hotel management or secretarial courses and so are placed at hotels in the town are provided with training that seeks to develop particular skills. The learners are subjected to particular activities at hotels such as

- Acting as receptionists
- Booking in and attending to guests
- Waitressing
- Doing public relation work

The benefit for the college is the in-service nature of the training, while the employer benefits from both the available training programmes and having the opportunity to input on the content of courses.

The second example involves the local municipality. The municipality 'employs' the institution to provide special computer courses for public servant staff and provides temporary work for tourism learners at the town's tourist information centre. The municipality in both cases determined the kinds of courses provided and the relevant content.

However, other than the learners already employed, both examples indicated that no college learner placed in industry has managed to find employment at their 'internship site' upon completing their courses.

2.6.1 The Labour Environment of Kwazulu Natal

There were in 1999 roughly 9 million people in Kwazulu Natal. This represents about 20.8% of all the people living in South Africa. About 57% of the province's inhabitants are resident in non-urban areas. The province is the most densely populated in South Africa with an average 91 persons per square kilometre (Stats SA 2001).

The majority of people living in the province are African (82,4%). The rest of the population is made up of 9.5% Indians, 6.7% whites, and 1.4% coloureds. According to the October Household Survey of 1996, it was estimated that there were about 4.9 million people in the province above the age of 20 (Erasmus 2000: 6-8). About 3.3 million were regarded as dependent – namely those that fell in the age category 0-14 years old (36%) and those older than 64 years (5%).

Labour and industry

The potential labour force (those about 20 years) can be broken up into the economically active and the economically inactive. In 1996 it was estimated that about 2.3 million people could be considered not to be economically active (housewives/homemakers, scholars/full-time students, pensioners/retired people, disabled persons and people not wishing to work), while 1.6 million people were employed and 1 million could not find work- were unemployed (Erasmus 2000).

The 1996 demographic profile of the potential labour force in Kwazulu Natal revealed a young population of which more than 44% were younger than 30 years old. Furthermore, this number was expected to increase given that a third of the overall population in 1996 was estimated to be younger than 15 years (Erasmus 2000).

Unemployment is high among the youth. At the time of Census '96, an estimated 639 889 economically active young people between 15 and 29 years were unemployed. This accounted for almost 64% of all unemployed people in Kwazulu Natal. Almost three-quarters (74%) of the economically active youth age 15-19 years could not find a job. Almost two-thirds (61%) of those in the age group 20-24 years were unemployed, while almost half (49%) of those aged 25-29 could not find a job.

Almost half (40.8%) of the labour force in Kwazulu Natal has not attended school or completed at least the primary school phase, and almost a quarter (22.9%) of people aged 20 years or older have received no education (Stats SA 1998). About 1.7 million (40.8%) of the KwaZulu-Natal population aged 20 years or older was considered functionally illiterate at the time of the population census in 1996. Only 15.9% of the Kwazulu population who were 20 years and older in 1996 had obtained Standard 10, while only 4.8% had a post-school qualification (Erasmus 2000).

With regard to the predominant industries in Kwazulu Natal, almost a third (30%) of the workforce is employed in elementary occupations. A further 26% is employed in production, mining and similar occupations, while 23% are employed as legislators or senior officials, in managerial and professional occupations or as technical and associate professionals. About 19% work as clerks, service workers, and shop and market sales workers, and 4% of workers in Kwazulu-Natal are employed as skilled agriculture and fishery workers (Erasmus 2000: 10).

KwaZulu-Natal contributes substantially to the total wealth created in South Africa (second most) and employs about 17% of all the workers in the country. Industries in Kwazulu Natal provide jobs for an estimated 1.6 million workers. This amounts to about 61% of the economically active population. Three economic sectors provide more than two-thirds (67,3%) of the total formal employment in the province, namely:

- Community, social and personal services (33,5%)
- Manufacturing (20,6%)
- Wholesale and retail trade, and catering and accommodation services (13,2%)

Agriculture (9,3%); finance, insurance, real estate and business services (7,7%); transport, storage and communications (6,7%); construction (6,6%); mining and quarrying (1,2%) and the electricity, gas and water sector (1,1%) provide employment to the rest of the workforce in the KwaZulu-Natal (Erasmus 2000: 11).

The community, social and personal services sector is the major contributor to self-employment in the informal sector of Kwazulu-Natal. Other industry groups

providing opportunities for self-employment are the wholesale and retail trade sector, manufacturing and agriculture.

The majority of all self-employed people active in the informal sector are in elementary occupations (61%). Several people are able to create employment opportunities for themselves as craft and related trades workers (14%), legislators, senior officials or managers (6%), and as service, shop and market sales workers (6%) and as skilled agricultural workers (5%).

The Durban/Pietermaritzburg area currently drives the growth of the province's economy. According to Erasmus (2000: 29), KwaZulu-Natal is fast becoming one of the most popular domestic and international tourist destinations in South Africa, with Durban as the key nodal point. This will undoubtedly create further scope for tourist-related growth in the commercial sector. He further notes that the Port Natal-Ebhadwe region, of which Durban is a part, produces 62% of the province's GGP.

Almost a third (32%) of the workers in the region are employed in the community, social and personal services sector (Erasmus 2000: 24). The manufacturing sector is the largest private sector employer in the Port Natal region, involving 24% of the 849 680 formally employed workers in the region. The trade sector is the second largest private sector employer (14%), with the finance sector coming third, employing 9,5% of the workers in Port Natal.

Undoubtedly, Durban dominates the production structure in Port Natal. About 26% of the workers in the region are employed as craft and related trade workers, and as plant and machine operators and assemblers, while 20% are in clerical, sales and service occupations. A further 25% of the workers are employed as professional, managerial and administrative workers.¹⁵

About 47% of workers in the Port Natal region has completed at least primary education and have some secondary education. Furthermore, the Port Natal region also has the largest proportion of people with higher levels of education -- 22% of the labour force in the region has passed Grade 12 and a further 7% have a post-school qualification.

¹⁵ Including legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals, and technicians and associated professionals.

With regard to prospective growth in the region, Erasmus (2000: 29) has noted that there will probably be an increased demand for clerical/sales/service workers and artisans in the region in the future. He warned however that growth in some occupations would impact on other occupations. For example, while the employment of artisans associated with the maintenance of machinery (e.g. fitters and turners, electricians and mechanics) was likely to increase, there would probably be a decrease in the number of artisans employed in printing activities (e.g. compositing, typesetting, process engraving, machine minding). Erasmus (2000: 30) observed that in general the demand for artisans in Kwazulu Natal would grow more slowly than the demand for professionals. Of the former group, as a result of the moderate growth expected in the related industries the highest growth rates were expected for artisans in the jewellery trade, food-processing trades, motor vehicle industry, building trade and other trade-related occupations. Growth was also expected in the manufacturing and tourism sectors.

Technical Colleges

There are 24 technical colleges in Kwazulu Natal, spread across six regions. Other institutions in the province include four universities, three Technikons, eight nursing colleges, 17 teacher-training institutions, and one agricultural college (Erasmus 2000).

KwaZulu-Natal is divided into six regions reflecting the population per region. The breakdown of population to formal employment per region is captured in the table below.

Region	Population	Formal employment
Zululand	23,9%	13,6%
Thukela	14,2%	10,7%
Natal Midlands	18,1%	15,2%
Port Natal-Ebhodwe	36,2%	54,1%
Southern Natal	7%	5,6%
East Griqualand	0,5%	0,9%

The 24 technical colleges in KwaZulu-Natal are distributed across the province with nine in the Port Natal-Ebhodwe region, the largest population in the province. The Zululand region with the second largest population has three technical colleges, the Natal Midlands (the 3rd largest population) and the Thukela regions have five technical colleges each. There are two technical colleges in the Southern Natal region.

2.6.2. THE FET COLLEGE OF KWAZULU NATAL

The chosen Kwazulu Natal FET College incorporates three technical colleges, namely Swinton Road Technical College; Umlazi College and the Durban Technical College. The FET College is tentatively called the MOBENI Further Education and Training Institute and is situated in the Port Natal-Ebhodwe region. All the colleges are in close proximity to the industrial suburbs of the city of Durban.

Swinton Road Technical College is situated in Mobeni, Umlazi Technical College is located in the African township of Umlazi, and Durban Technical College is situated in the suburb of Congella. The former two colleges can be described as formerly disadvantaged colleges, while Durban College was originally established to provide for white learners. The FET College is situated close to large businesses such as South African Breweries (SAB), Toyota SA, Mondi Paper, Nampak, Lever Ponds and others.

In terms of programme offerings, Umlazi offers 'secretarial' and 'utility industries' studies only, whilst the Swinton Road institution offer courses in 'social services and educare' and 'utility industries', as well as 'engineering courses. The Swinton Road College is the predominant provider of the 'business studies' course in the Port Natal-Ebhodwe region. Durban Technical College offers courses in 'engineering'; 'social services and educare', and 'utility industries'. All the technical colleges offer courses in the further education and training (N0, N1, N2 or N3) and the higher (N4, N5 or N6) education national qualifications framework (NQF) bands.

The tables below describe the most recent count of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) learners and staff, staff composition in the FET College, as well as the learner field specialisation per college.

Table 1: Student and staff numbers

Kwazulu Natal FET COLLEGE	Students	Staff
Durban	1089	53
Swinton Road	1102	66
Umlazi	894	60
Total	3085	179

Table 2: The staff composition of the four institutions

Staff composition (percentage)	White	African	Coloured	Indian
Durban	79%	4%	7%	10%
Swinton Road	71%	11%	13%	5%
Umlazi	23%	73%	2%	2%
Total average	75%	13%	8%	4%

Table 3: Breakdown of vocational fields for four institutions

FET College	Durban	Swinton Road	Umlazi	Total
Further Education (N0,N1,N2,N3)				
Arts and Music	0	0	0	0
Business Studies	0	342	51	393
Engineering	699	587	584	1870
General Education	0	16	0	16
Utility Studies	10	68	0	78
Total	709	1013	635	2357
Higher Education (N4, N5, N6)				
Arts and Music	0	0	0	0
Business Studies	0	0	120	120
Educare and Soc Services	52	0	0	52
Engineering	328	89	139	556
Utility Industries	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1089	1102	894	3085

The respective colleges each have a different set of relationships and institutional cultures that have informed college development. These distinct sets of processes are dealt with below within the descriptions of individual college activity. However, as a single FET College with a common local labour environment the following observations are significant.

- About 75% of staff members in the MOBENI FET College are white, while roughly 13% are African. Only four percent of staff members in the province are Indian.
- Most of the courses offered at the three institutions are theory-based, though Swinton Road does have a number of workshops and thus provides practical training.
- The urban and industrial environment of Durban dominates the kinds of employment that college learners acquire upon leaving the various institutions. Most of the surrounding industries are large multi-national or local companies that employ learners with divergent industrial and trade skills and backgrounds.
- The areas surrounding the Umlazi and Swinton Road institutions were reportedly unsafe, which apparently discouraged learners from enrolling there. Learners were supposedly hesitant to attend Swinton Road even though the facility boasted the more practical orientation of the three institutions. The abiding legacy of race should not be underestimated in this regard. In the South African context issues of quality, merit and value for money remain framed by what is understood about education and training provisions of the past. Thus in many instances learners tend to enrol at previously white institutions like Durban Central for reasons that have nothing to do with particular college programmes or provisions.
- The Swinton Road institution has very well resourced workshops for engineering and large kitchens for home cooking courses and large scale catering. It was reported that local industry and business had donated much of these resources.

Swinton Road College

The Swinton Road facility is situated in Mobeni, an industrial suburb close to the city of Durban. The college is surrounded by industrial activity and is located in the vicinity of the Chatsworth (defined under apartheid as an Indian township), Umlazi and Lamontville townships (evolved under apartheid as African townships) from which the college draws most of their learners.

The institution was originally opened by the Department of Education and Training in 1975 and was known as Lamontville Technical Centre. It was originally conceived as an orientation school to provide practical training and tuition in certain technical subjects to African learners from surrounding areas. This conception shifted in 1981 when the college began to offer a full-time Intensive Commercial course for African women with a Standard Eight qualification, and enrolled a small group of male students for Technical N1 courses. At that time the Department of Education and Training also offered both practical and theoretical training in Mechanical, Civil and Electrical Engineering. Tertiary programmes in Engineering were introduced in 1984 and the institution enrolled their first N6 graduates in 1986. Given the large increase in the number of enrolled students, it was decided in 1989 to expand the institution. This led to the official opening of the new Swinton Road Technical College in 1991. The Swinton Road institution boasts well-resourced workshops that will greatly assist the MOBENI FET College. Also, the facility is the only institution in the cluster that has links and collaborations with the Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency around the provision of small business entrepreneurial courses.

The facility attracts predominately African students (about 89%) largely due to its geographical location. Also, male learners comprise the majority of the institutional population. Although engineering studies courses are predominated by male learners, this trend has begun to shift with 205 female students (16% of engineering learners) in engineering in 2000. Nonetheless, females comprise the majority of learners in business study programmes, and Educare courses have only female enrolments. The average age of the institution's learner population is between 20-22 years. While there are a few adult learners in engineering studies as a result of industry partnerships, adult participation in college programmes is virtually non-existent. Notably, the staff complement of the institution remains predominantly (71%) white.

The institution has appointed a senior staff member as the Skills Development Facilitator responsible for the implementation of SAQA and SETA requirements for all practical training. This person not only plays a vital role in the formulation of formal and informal linkages/partnerships with business but also performs the key function in marketing the institution to business and industry. Crucially, the chosen Swinton Road appointee has traditionally performed this role for the institution and

has served in the past as the main link between the technical college and industry partners.

The programmes provided by the institution presently include:

a. Engineering Studies

- Technical Courses N1 – N3 in Electrical; Fitting & Machining; Motor Mechanics; Boilermaking; Bricklaying, Carpentry & Plumbing
- Tertiary Technical Courses N4 – N6 (Mechanical; Electrical; Civil)
- Industry Accredited Modular Workshop Training in Motor Mechanics Fitting and Turning; Electrical Engineering; Welding; Bricklaying, Carpentry & Plumbing

b. Business Studies

- N2 – N3 Business Studies Programmes;
- N2 – N3 Educare Programmes;
- N2 – N3 Food Services Programmes;
- Industry-accredited modular Hair-Care Programme;
- Computer Training (International Computer Driving License (ICDL); Computer Literacy for Beginners; Microsoft Office 2000)
- Garment Making Programme

c. Start-up and entrepreneurial courses

- A Business Start-up Programme and a Business Improvement Programme. These programmes are aimed at assisting small business development and are provided collaboratively with the Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency. This programme is known as SwinIndustry.

d. Short courses

- Practical programmes are offered as short courses on Saturday mornings. The college uses the workshops and equipment sponsored by companies such as Toyota and South African Breweries to provide short practical courses to members of surrounding communities.

Of the three institutions that comprise the MOBENI FET College, only the Swinton Road facility has formulated a formally recognised learnership. This learnership involves the training of twelve alarm installation technicians over an eighteen month period. The involved parties include the Swinton Road institution, ADT Alarms, POLSETA and the Department of Labour.

Understanding Swinton Road Partnerships

Swinton Road Technical College has a number of formal and informal linkages with industries/businesses and local government. Most links are informal and demand-based. Given the surrounding industrial environment, the institution has formed links with businesses such as South African Breweries (SAB), Toyota SA, Mondi Paper,

Lever Pond's, Nampak Tissue and Divpac Natal. In the partnerships that do exist businesses provide locations for internships while the technical college facility provides particular kinds of training for industries.

- In many instances companies have their own in-house training facilities, in which case the college provides the professional expertise i.e. lecturers. In such cases (for example Lever Ponds), lecturers teach company-specific material. In this regard, the Phezulu Project of Lever Ponds provides a key partnership opportunity. In the quest of Lever Ponds to develop an initiative called World Class Manufacturing, Lever Ponds will radically change the existing structures of their three plants. Via the Phezulu Project, Lever Ponds seeks to develop the skills of existing staff at ABET level 1 and level 2. While the company will provide all the teaching material in the project for the next three years, the Swinton Road facility is expected to provide the lecturers. The college is expected to employ specialist persons for the purposes of the programmes should such individuals not be available on the present staff;
- Another form of collaboration (for example with Mondi Paper) is when companies require their staff to undergo programmes offered by the college (N1 to N3) but need it to be performed in-house to provide minimal disruption to company production;
- Companies like Toyota also provide in-service training for engineering learners, whilst food services learners undergo in-service training at St Augustines Hospital, Oribi Gorge Hotel and Blue Strawberry Catering;
- The Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency, in collaboration with the college, has developed programmes that seek to initiate small business entrepreneurs. Learners enrol directly at the college. There is also a money lending business called Quattro situated on the premises of nearby retailer Makro that recommends learners to the college. When Makro discovers a potential entrepreneur, they refer them to Quattro for financial assistance. Quattro finances entrepreneurs on condition that they partake in the Swinindustry programme. Quattro insists on this condition in an effort to protect the loan and in the process empower the lender with skills to run a successful business;

- The institution has a long-standing though informal link since 1996 with South African Breweries. The company has sponsored the erection of a number of workshops and the purchase of equipment. This has enabled the facility to provide specialist kinds of training for staff members of SA Breweries. Crucially, the SA Breweries plant is not a labour-intensive facility and requires specialist labour. While the company does employ technical college graduates, it does not encourage internships nor does it employ young learners exiting the college. The company prefers employing college graduates only once they have gained a number of years work experience;
- The institution recently provided a course for ADT Security that led to 12 learners being trained and placed at the company. The duration of the course was four months. The course is regarded as a useful template to train staff members of other security firms;
- Companies like Durban Metro Electrical and Mondi Paper indicated that although they have placed and employed graduates from Swinton Road, they prefer Technikon learners who gain higher levels of training and experience;
- Given that Swinton Road does not provide engineering courses at the N4-6 levels, the institution has an agreement with the Durban Central facility to refer all such prospective learners to that institution
- Importantly, employers such as Mondi Paper, Lever Ponds and SA Breweries indicated that they all make use of the Appelby Assessment Test to establish the competency levels of their employees and their applicability across the labour market. Colleges may want to adopt or adapt this test into their programmes to ensure greater learner compatibility with perceived employment needs.

Aligning/adjusting partnerships with learner and employment needs

A critical issue that was observed in interviews with both industry partners and college staff members was how the issue of marketability and programme alignment was addressed. With regard to the latter¹⁶, staff members noted that many attempts

¹⁶ The issue of marketability is addressed in the next section.

had been made recently to channel learners into courses that would lead to 'probable' employment positions upon exiting the institution. The institution had thus not only reformulated their programmes to include non-department curriculum courses (informed by industry demand), but had also sought to diversify department curriculum courses or focused on particular programme pathways deemed necessary for institutional success.

For example, it was noted in interviews with college staff that many attempts were being made to divert learners from electrical engineering courses at the institution. Apparently almost 90% of the engineering learners specialised in electrical engineering. Staff members argued that this oversupply of electrical engineering college graduates would mean that most would probably not secure employment on exiting the college.

It was noted in an interview with a representative from Durban Metro however that there was an increasing demand for electrical engineering learners and that the company employed up to 24 apprentices per year drawn mostly from technical colleges. The representative explained that other than industries, homeowners (unlike in trades like plumbing) inevitably could not see to their own electrical needs, and that learners with this trade would always be able to find work¹⁷. Staff members noted that they had been unsuccessful in diverting learners from the electrical engineering trade because learners had their 'own beliefs and assumptions' about the types of employment available in the marketplace.

It is suggested in this regard that learners probably adopt a dual approach to choosing their specialisation by taking a course that could lead to either formal or informal employment. It would also explain colleges' inability to promote full entrepreneurship programmes. It appears that notwithstanding the prevailing assertion that learners will increasingly find prospective employment in the informal sector, learners seem to still

¹⁷ It is notable in this regard that industry partners and college staff members took divergent views on the increasing return to the 'basic trades' of old, namely bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, tailors, boilermakers, upholsterers, and mechanics.

prefer formal employment positions and are reluctant to specialise in ways that exclude them from formal employment pathways¹⁸.

It was also notable that colleges were increasingly adopting on-the-job approaches within the college set-up and administration. In one example, the college encouraged learners to complete practical tasks after hours under the supervision of a specialist lecturer for which learners were remunerated. Swinton Road staff members suggested that both the college and learners gained from the interaction. The college gained through addressing its basic maintenance requirements, while learners achieved hands-on experience of their respective trades.

Staff members asserted that about 15-18% of college learners secured employment upon exiting the institution. In contrast to industry viewpoints that this low employment percentage was wholly due to inappropriate college programmes, staff members suggested that low employment rates should rather be attributed to the inability of the formal economy to provide enough or adequate employment opportunities. While staff members conceded that colleges were not doing enough to align programmes to employment trends, they argued that employers were equally not committed enough to the needs of the new environment. They asserted that employers were not concerned about issues that focused on learner inadequacies and the enduring legacies of respective colleges. Instead, industries were retreating from previous long-standing partnerships between colleges and businesses on the grounds that learners were 'not adequate not only in terms of technical skills but also with regard to communication abilities and social skills'.

In this regard, it is suggested that a critical breakdown has emerged in the interactions between learners, colleges and employers. More importantly, neither college programmes nor industry positions are addressing or responding to the strengths and weaknesses of individual learners. With regard to college understandings of learner needs it was observed that often the college only identified learner inadequacies after they were engaged in enrolled courses. For example, lecturers in many cases only identified the difficulties of learners to master English when it hampered their

¹⁸ Learners also seemed to persist with business studies courses that could possibly secure them secretarial and other administrative positions in formal employment.

progress in respective courses. It was suggested that such problems were derived from an inadequate career guidance system at the Swinton Road facility (This inadequacy was observed in most of the other colleges engaged in the project). On the other hand, industries were not responding in constructive ways to an employee population struggling to acclimatise to the changing contemporary employment environment.

With respect to the above, it was found that the college had recently discontinued a course called 'Headway' on the grounds that it was discriminatory and stereotyped learners. Many staff members however felt that the programme provided critical socialising skills that could empower learners in the present labour environment. The programme was apparently discontinued because it appeared to be a 'civilising course' for females (business and general studies course at N2 level), teaching them skills like how to use cutlery in formal settings and also involved taking them to the theatre and cinema to understand the kinds of social skills required in particular contexts. This leaning towards championing the benefits of past programmes that focused on inducting learners to the world of work and society by 'civilising them' remains an unspoken aspect of teaching and institutional cultures of colleges. Along with the predominance of theory over practical in institutional programmes, teaching and institutional cultures in particular contexts remain tied to past teacher learner interactions. It is suggested that the move to include a bigger proportion of skills programmes in college offerings will further confuse the ways in which past institutional cultures are reshaped.

Certainly, the shift to learnerships will provide a significant challenge to colleges. In the present legislative environment colleges struggle to make the necessary shifts not only because of college inadequacies but also because of legislative inconsistency. In this respect, Swinton Road recently tendered to secure a low-cost housing learnership for the college. The tender was rejected on the grounds that the college couldn't access funding from two different government sources (referred to as 'double dipping'). It was noted that because the Department of Education funded the institution and so subsidised individual learners, the college could not get further subsidies from the Department of Labour for the same learner. This inconsistency will inevitably be resolved by policy makers, but will hinder institutional change and shifts in the meantime.

Notwithstanding the above concerns, members of staff at Swinton Road suggested during interviews conducted in May 2002 that learners remained keen to enrol at the institution because of its reputation for focusing on individual learner needs and securing employment for exiting learners. No evidence was available to corroborate this claim. It is argued that there are probably more complex reasons that explain learner choices with regard to the institution. Certainly, while college staff indicated that students opted to study at Swinton Road College because of its reputable employment rates, interviews with local business suggested that very few learners are employed because of the specific college they attended or because individual colleges arranged employment for them.

In interviews with representatives from engineering related industries, interviewees almost overwhelmingly indicated that they would rather opt to recruit graduates with Technikon qualifications not only because technikon learners held higher qualifications (N6 as opposed to N3) than those from colleges but also because of their greater practical experience and social interaction skills. Employers noted that they sought college learners with skills that could be utilised in specific plants or operations in contexts of high automation and specialisation. In such situations learners were required to both have specialised technical skills as well as key communication and interactive abilities. Employers suggested that college learners did not sufficiently meet these requirements. Industry interviewees indicated that they in any case were constrained by organisational requirements to first skill their own workforces before employing individuals from outside their plants. This prevented the development of formal internship programmes and constrained the ability of industrial partners to provide college learners access to formal employment.

Operationalising college programmes

Respondents noted that although the Swinton Road institution did offer courses framed by industry, the predominant courses provided at the institution were prescribed by the Department of Education. In interviews with staff members they indicated that companies like Toyota, SA Breweries and Lever Ponds, by providing funds for the establishment of workshops, frequently requested colleges to provide particular programmes specific to their needs. These programmes however were very

few and limited and did not significantly impact on official college programmes. Interviewees observed in this respect that colleges needed to 'respond better' to programmes needed by industry and that most Department of Education courses were outdated and inadequate to empower learners to find employment.

This point emerged frequently during the study and demonstrated a clear disjuncture between what was deemed Department of education technical education courses and skills programmes engendered and framed by industry demand. In that regard, the SwinIndustry programme at Swinton Road was a good example of recent innovation in the official college programme that saw 15 learners being provided support and monitoring to open up their own businesses. Given the design towards encouraging self-employment, skills facilitators at the college provided on-site support to learners by visiting individual businesses. In interviews with staff members they conceded however that the costly nature of the innovation would significantly restrict the programme's expansion. They also noted that while the college was increasingly developing skills programmes based on industry and business demand, the short duration of courses and the lack of available learner internships or direct employment opportunities upon exiting the college tended to discourage learners from opting for such programmes. Interviewed staff members indicated that learners still tended to opt for formal trade training and remained sceptical about the benefits and possibilities of both self-employment and non trade based programmes. They suggested that traditional formal employment remained the desired employment pathway.

College Marketing Strategies

A key observation that emerged from interviews with college and industry participants was the different ways in which the various partners understood and addressed the issue of marketability. For colleges it was noted that as long as learners continued to enrol for particular courses there was no need to either market the college or its programmes. Staff members from the Swinton Road institution suggested that high enrolment numbers indicated high demand for particular subjects and that by providing such courses the college was effectively marketing itself. Marketability for the college sector thus referred solely to the college successfully securing learners for their courses.

Marketability for employers however referred to the ability of learners to successfully market themselves (upon exiting the college sector) through having the requisite skills gleaned from college programmes to secure them employment. Interviewees from various industries argued that colleges were successful in quests at marketability when they provided learners with skills that made them employable and so endeared college programmes to industry partners. In this regard, industry interviewees noted that technikon graduates were preferred to college learners based on the kinds of skills and foci that such graduates provided. They asserted that the legacies and teaching cultures within individual technical colleges inevitably prevented colleges like Swinton Road from addressing the concerns of industry and business partners.

The Umlazi College

Umlazi College is situated in the Umlazi township of Durban. It is the largest township in the province and the second largest township in the country. The Umlazi college was previously defined as a state college which meant that it was heavily subsidised by the national purse and had virtually no partnerships with industry or business. The institution began as a technical school in the 1970s. Following the student protests of 1976 the technical school was converted into a Technical College. Notwithstanding its meagre beginnings and limited infrastructure and equipment, the college boasts a proud history of achievements.

The vast majority of Umlazi learners are African and come mainly from the surrounding township. Also, while the majority of learners are enrolled for courses in engineering studies, courses are also offered in business studies and entrepreneurial development (business and technical skills).

Understanding the notion of partnerships

At different times in its history and to varying degrees Umlazi College has engaged with business/industry, the SMME sector and local government in "partnerships" that involved either the placement of learners in work-experience programmes or graduates in employment. This engagement has however been very limited and the college has over the years played a very small part in learners finding or securing employment. While staff members of the college suggested that this inadequacy was

attributable to the rigid and diminishing labour market in Kwazulu Natal and South Africa, some conceded that the college provided very limited contributions in assisting learners to find employment, either through placement or contacts or through programmes that equipped learners with the necessary skills to secure jobs.

In this regard, it was evident from interviews with staff members that the notion of partnerships had very limited appeal to them. They noted that learners invariably secured employment without their assistance and that the idea of formally forming agreements with business and industry to place or intern learners was virtually impossible in the current technical college and labour environment. Interviewees appeared to accept that partnerships were a necessary aspect of the new FET landscape, but noted that they would respond to that challenge once the FET Colleges were formally constituted and CEOs were appointed for individual FET Colleges. In this regard, the umlazi institution has engaged with relevant SETAs about accrediting some of its courses and workshops and has already been awarded two contracts with local governments to provide learnership programmes (one in Estcourt and one in Durban).

In any case, with regard to the partnerships cited by the college many employers questioned whether these interactions with the college constituted a partnership. Employers noted that they engaged with colleges only when it suited their individual business interests and they only accepted learners on work-experience exercises or employed ex-college learners when it was in accordance with their business needs. None of the employer respondents identified the college sector as an essential source of skilled labour. Respondents suggested instead that businesses could equally be employing employees from other educational institutions or even directly from the community. This indicated that businesses were not necessarily responding to the programmes of colleges or the kinds of skills that were provided there when they employed college learners.

With respect to the ways in which the Umlazi college interacts with surrounding communities and markets the institution, the facility

- Provides access to local schools whereby school pupils have access to the college's computer laboratory for the purposes for computer literacy training.

The college regards this interaction as a key way of encouraging 'local learners' to attend the college either as part of their school programmes or upon leaving school.

- Interacts with the Mangosuthu Technikon (also located in Umlazi Township) to articulate the courses provided at the two facilities and to develop forms of co-operation between them.
- Places college learners with community projects like the Umgeni Water Training Centre. Learners were exposed to specialised components of training at the centre as part of their engineering studies and at the same time were able to contextualise the importance of their studies vis-a-vis community issues.
- Interacts with local employers such as NMI who send apprentices to the college for training on things that would not normally form part of the company's employment practices. The idea is that companies would not waste unnecessary expense on developing training programmes for expertise that they would not normally require. This training spared companies' considerable expense and inconvenience and endeared the college to the local business communities.
- Has developed entrepreneurial courses in conjunction with the Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency that entails the provision of a 13-week course with no formal entrance requirements in which members of the community acquire a basic technical skill (e.g. sewing) combined with basic micro-business knowledge for self-employment. In an effort to develop programmes directly relevant to the perceived needs of the local community, Umlazi college has gained accreditation as a Local Business Service Centre (LBSC) and works in conjunction with Ntsika to assist with micro-financing potential entrepreneurs.

Aligning/adjusting partnerships between colleges and employers

The Umlazi College does not engage in formal career guidance counselling for learners. Rather, to guide learner career choices staff members rely on their experiences in interacting with employers socially and with regard to work issues. Also, staff members do not interact with learners before registration about prospective and desirable career pathways. They assume that learners have a fair idea of what

careers they want to pursue and merely advise learners on the best pathways to follow (and the constraints) in the careers they have chosen. Even here, staff members know too little about the actual labour environment to advise learners appropriately. In identifying the types of employment available in the labour 'marketplace', staff members tended to rely on 'career days' where they invariably invited business and industry representatives to provide the key frameworks for these 'employment talks'.

According to staff members the average age of college learners is 22-25 years and the majority resided in the Umlazi area. The following reasons were offered for probable attendance at the college, namely:

- Measured in relation to other colleges, fees were comparatively low;
- Travelling costs were low or erased when local learners studied at the 'township college';
- Conditions had stabilised at the college in recent years (this previously influenced learners to study elsewhere).

While staff members displayed little interest in linking college programmes to issues of employment relevance and applicability, there was evidence of college programmes that sought to unpack the social relevance of college offerings. For example, the college collaborated with the Umgeni Water Training Centre that produced a specialised component of training for local community members. The programme was run as a non-formal curriculum course that offered basic skills training to interested (and mostly unemployed) members of the community. It combined technical (hard) skills with micro-business (entrepreneurial) skills to promote self-employment as a means to income-generation. As part of the college's link to the Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency this programme offers support and micro-financing to those who start-up micro-businesses.

This was an innovative partnership that was not linked to formal curriculum college programmes and sought to provide a specific skill in the local context of the college. Importantly though, college programmes were overwhelmingly focused on nationally established technical education criteria. Interviewed staff members indicated a clear reluctance to pursue skills programmes that did not form part of the nationally constituted college curriculum.

Nonetheless, some departmental heads are involved with sector education and training authorities (SETAs). Efforts are being made at having the training and teaching facilities at the institution accredited, but these exertions are still in their initial stages. The principal indicated that he was negotiating with the Toyota motor vehicle manufacturer to develop prospective learnership partnerships for learners. In that regard, a number of the interviewed employers noted that they absorbed interns from the college, though in most cases such internships emerged from the initiative of individual learners and not as a result of formal college endeavours.

Most employers indicated though that college learners entered the workplace with training skills that were outdated or irrelevant, and often needed to be retrained according to the requirements of the respective industries. They noted that this incompatibility greatly influenced the ways in which industries interacted with colleges. For example, one respondent observed that technology in the motor industry had developed to a point where almost all motor vehicles were computerised. Most colleges however used car models and training techniques that led to ill-equipped learners/tradespersons when they worked in the motor industry. The industry respondent noted that his company was discussing the possibility of providing colleges with more current motor vehicle engines for instructional purposes.

The number of company in-house training programmes remain however a key obstacle in the forming of more partnerships between industries and colleges. Makro for example has a training programme that trains employees for middle-management positions, while NMI has its own training regime that apprentices for the trade test examination required for them to qualify as mechanics and auto-electricians. Industry respondents indicated that these programmes were unlikely to be discontinued. They noted that as long as the skill levels of college programmes remained low employers would continue to draw on the existing and readily available pool of unemployed persons (often skilled and experienced), especially when the high travelling costs involved in employing college learners did not justify the investment.

Operationalising college programmes

College staff members acknowledged the need to frame institutional programmes according to their workplace relevance and opportunity to secure employment for learners. Staff members were thus encouraged to form local partnerships with businesses and communities. In this regard, the college had recently secured contracts with two local government authorities, namely a housing project in Escourt and a proportion of the Durban Harbour upgrade construction project called the Shaka Project. Staff members asserted however that such endeavours had been made possible by the recent legislative shifts¹⁹ and that further partnerships were only possible once the colleges had been fully merged and a CEO appointed.

Furthermore, respondents indicated that as long as the college's enrolment figures remained high, the college could use the Department of Education subsidy to subsidise expensive practical training. While staff members acknowledged that the Department of Education were prepared to assist the college financially (to upgrade facilities and train staff) in the period that the college aligned their programmes to meet marketplace needs, they were uneasy about embarking on such initiatives in the present environment, especially without formal sponsorships and industry partnerships. Staff respondents were hopeful that the completion of the merger process would resolve this impasse and encourage greater sponsorship and partnership initiatives and a better alignment of college programmes with workplace needs. They suggested though that it was premature to embark on this process presently.

This cautious approach might be justified considering the lack of employer engagement in identifying the kinds of skills required in the marketplace. While many employers noted that they would welcome an improved college sector given that in-house training had become very costly and that expensive training was a wasted investment when trained employees 'were lost' to other companies (who did not train), none indicated any active employer or industry participation in the reformulation of college programmes and structures. During interviews one innovative employer did outline a proposal whereby he would provide structured

¹⁹ The key factors that were seen to inform the development of the programmes were the changes in legislation in education generally (SAQA; NQF) and within the college sector in particular (the mergers, as well as other legislation in labour such as the Employment Equity Act, the Skills Development Levy, and the establishment of SETAs).

advice and an industry link for the college's computer/IT skills programmes. The respondent noted that in such a relationship the entire upgrade and service management of the merged FET College (Mobeni) would be outsourced to his company and in return he would sit on the FET College's Academic Board and offer input on the college's computer training programmes. He asserted that his participation would provide vital links for the college with regard to partnerships for work-experience placements and/or employment.

In most other cases though employers simply noted that colleges would need to significantly improve their training programmes and start offering levels that prepared learners for trade and proficiency tests if industries were to be coerced to send learners there or to finance them.

College marketing strategies

For the last eight years Umlazi College has seconded one of its educator staff to the specific post of college public relations officer. The designated educator is charged with the responsibilities of marketing the college to business/industry, local government and local communities (schools, other learning institutions). According to college staff, the Department of Education has consistently refused to create such a post at the college and thus the institution had resorted to seconding a member of staff to play this role. It was also noted that given the lack of formal public relations experience, the designated educator invariably had to draw on personal contacts and previously established partnerships to develop further industry links. This implied that the designated educator had to have a well-grounded and fully developed network of contacts with industry leaders in the localised context. Such chosen individuals were invariably established white older and male members of staff, given the staffing legacies of colleges like Umlazi.

The Umlazi institution mostly markets itself through advertising college programmes in newspapers and encouraging site visits of both college facilities and prospective employment sites. The latter initiative is a new innovation and part of the merger process. In this regard, because the college has never had much difficulty in recruiting learners, it has never had to market its job securing potential.

This shift in mindset invoked by the merger process has had mixed responses within the Umlazi institution. While some staff members continued to speak about massified access for learners (as many learner enrolments as possible) others favoured an approach that focused on developing 'quality programmes' that could be marketed in industry circles, indicating the potential of the college to meet sector demands. Notwithstanding these confused responses, all role players seemed to acknowledge the need to focus on graduate employability and job placement.

In this regard, interviews with employers and industry players provided some revealing insights, namely that:

- Most (of the interviewed) employers were aware of the technical college sector and the kinds of programmes they offered;
- Industries preferred employing graduates from technikons given their perceived higher levels of training;
- Employers hesitated to form partnerships with colleges due to negative past experiences with learner capacity;
- Most partnerships are formed purely based on familiarity with the nominated public relations college person. Invariably, learners were placed based on the opinions of 'respected' staff personnel;
- Colleges were not regarded as a viable institutions to train industry employees;
- Colleges had not only failed in marketing themselves properly, but had also managed to project an image of 'failure' through the lack of marketing strategies. Colleges thus were required to market more than just individual college programmes but also the potential benefits of a rejuvenated further education and training sector.

The Durban Central College

The Durban technical college previously provided for white learners (state-aided college) in the Kwazulu Natal Province. The institution has a reputation for good quality training, high levels of discipline and strong management structures. This reputation of provision has served its all-white learner population very well in the past and undoubtedly has had a significant influence on the decision by high numbers of African learners to enrol at the institution. The learner profile of the institution in

2001 was 80% African. In fact, enrolment demand is so great that the institution has a waiting list of prospective learners and has recently employed a large contingent of additional staff to cope with high learner numbers.

Given the gender breakdown of the province provided below, it is notable that the student body is predominantly male (80%) and that 80% of the teaching complement is white and male.

The population of Durban, according to the Demarcation Board, is as follows:

Category of Population	Number	Percentage
Male	1 339 881	49%
Female	1 409 929	51%
Total Population in Durban	2 751 193	100.00%

The profile of the province according to race is:

Category of Population	Number	Percentage
African	1 737 955	63%
Coloured	73 619	3%
Indian	599 155	22%
White	316 332	12%
Other	24 132	
Total Population within Durban	2 751 193	100.00%

The Durban technical college is situated within 5 km of the Durban city centre in a suburb called Congella. Small industrial and wholesale companies characterise this local labour environment. The institution is also located close to the LC Johnson technical college. This poses competition not only over learners but also industry partnerships given that the LC Johnson institution is part of a different FET College.

The Durban technical college have no practical training workshops. College programmes focus completely on theory. In that respect, as partners in the MOBENI

FET College, the workshops of the Swinton Road and Umlazi institutions will strongly complement the theory focus of the Durban institution.

However, it is important to note that most college learners come from participating companies and thus do not in many cases need practical training. They can return to their employment bases for such training. This arrangement was confirmed in interviews with representatives from Toyota (South Durban), Durban Metro (Springfield – North Durban) and Whirlpool in Mandini²⁰. The college provides demonstration rooms rather than practical workshops and relies heavily on employers to provide the experiential learning required.

Understanding the Notion of Partnerships

Interviewed staff members indicated that the institution had many long-standing though *informal* links with larger businesses in the area. The partnerships had been formed through social interactions and agreements over many years with companies like Whirlpool (at Isithebe); Beacon Sweets, Toyota and Mondi Paper.

College respondents indicated that the purely theoretical focus of the institution did not encourage the forming of industry partnerships, internships or practical experiential interaction, though there was evidence of one formal partnership between the institution and Nampak. Apparently Nampak allocates R120 000 per annum to the development of the local community. Through agreed training programmes formulated by the college, training programmes are provided for community learners. These programmes are viewed as the key mechanism whereby the Nampak funds are disbursed effectively.

College respondents further raised a number of key concerns that they felt would undermine the current merger process. Many observed that while a fundamental objective of the present merger process was to spread learners across the three sites that made up the FET College, employers and learner bursars often insisted that their nominated learners attend particular designated sites. In this regard, many employers and industries were seen to prefer Durban Central even though Swinton Road

²⁰ Whirlpool is located in Isithebe (just next to Mandini), which is about 150km east of Durban.

provided more practical-based training. It was asserted that while only about 50% of college learners were drawn from the immediate vicinity of the Durban Metropolitan and its surroundings, 71% of the learner population came from industries and businesses²¹. Another 24% came from government positions for training and the remainder comprised those without any formal links or associations. The close proximity of the college to the city centre was also cited as a key reason for learners preferring the Durban Central institution. Employer respondents noted that learners presumed that they needed to keep close links with their employer bursars for their return upon completion of training, or even for securing later alternative employment in the city.

Aligning /Adjusting Partnerships with Learner and Employment Needs

There is no formal career guidance provided at the institution. There are no persons assigned to either this activity or the marketing of the institution. It was notable that lecturers did informally provide learners with a wealth of information about careers and prospective employment. Interviewers were unable to ascertain why these initiatives had not been formalised for the entire learner population.

College respondents noted that the institution has never had to review its recruitment policies nor how it interacted with industries and employers. This assumption was based on the institution annually turning away prospective learners and the regular visits to the college by prospective employers like SA Breweries, Durban Metro, and the Air Force. These visits inevitably led to learners being recommended for employment²².

Also, the college had many formal agreements with industries to provide lectures to employees after hours. In this regard, it was interesting that many college learners were formally apprenticed by industries before enrolment at the college. In interviews with Whirlpool it was found the company only trained its own employees at Durban Central and were not interested in employing privately funded college learners. The

²¹ Most learners were drawn from employers that also sponsored them.

²² The institution facilitated the employment of learners by providing employers with lists of the top learners in the respective fields. College respondents noted that the institution would recommend those who were academically successful, as well as those that displayed adequate levels of discipline with regard to class attendance. Also, it is notable that learners were recruited by employers at all levels of college programmes, not only those at the higher exit levels.

employer respondent noted that they only employed private-funded learners with tertiary qualifications (mostly technikon graduates).

Interviews with Nampak (Divpak) also revealed that the Durban institution often took their linkages with industry for granted. Employer respondents noted that the college often did not renew partnerships and assumed that employers were happy with their arrangement. One cited example was the provision by Divpak to allow learners to work on-site in the form of unofficial internships to give them exposure to the working environment. This activity has apparently ceased due to college disinterest.

Interviews with both college staff members and employers and industry role-players indicated that precious little research was being undertaken regarding the kinds of required workplace needs. In this regard, it was noted that the institution mostly only found out about the inadequacy or inappropriateness of courses when learner numbers decreased. Also, courses were often discontinued based on an assumption that technological advancement has overtaken the types of knowledge provided in such courses. It was suggested that this intervention was often based on intuition and was not backed up by any background research.

Operationalising College Programmes

Surprisingly, the Durban Central college provided very little alternative skills programmes other than those recommended by the national Department of Education. It was surprising because most colleges that stuck rigidly to old programmes were often the minor partners in FET colleges. Such colleges were often deemed dysfunctional and unable to respond to the current needs of employers and economic activities. In the case of the Durban institution, it would seem that relevancy to labour environments and employability were not overriding factors in learner enrolment.

Other than providing the few requested industry courses, the college also promotes programmes that focus on community health. In this regard, the college works closely with community organisations to develop local skills programmes that serve community needs. This concern with refocusing on community or local needs is also visible in the proposed basic electronics course that the institution will embark upon once the merger process is complete. The course represents an attempt to engage with

the skill needs of the immediate vicinity and the training of learners for employment in such skill areas. It has also developed in response to the emergence of small companies, and allows for the practical training of theoretically trained learners to enable them to write and pass the requisite trade examination. Respondents noted that the college had to find ways to overcome its non-provision of workshops for those learners that were not funded by or based in formal employment relationships.

College Marketing Strategies

The key attributes of the Durban Central institution were identified as:

- (a) The high pass rate;
- (b) The high employment rates of graduates;
- (c) The high levels of retention rates and learners returning to complete career pathways; and
- (d) The overall success levels of learners that studied at the college.

Given these 'successes', respondents noted that was no real need for a public relations officer. It was argued that individual lecturers provide adequate marketing of the college when they attend various forums. Nonetheless, the institution does have an annual marketing and advertisement budget of R100 000 and disburses the funds in the following ways:

- (a) By placing adverts in newspapers;
- (b) Through printing fliers and distributing them at taxi ranks;
- (c) By providing presentations at college exhibitions;
- (d) By inviting and ensuring the participation of key departmental officials and providing decent lunches and activities;
- (e) By presenting college programmes and innovations at the Annual Engen Show.

It was suggested in interviews that the institution could generate significantly more funds to maintain and upgrade their facilities by making institutional courses more relevant and attractive to the needs of the community at large. Such interchange between college programmes and industry and community needs was also regarded as an important way to compete with the private-funded operating colleges. On the

whole respondents regarded the marketing strategies of the Durban Central facility as inappropriate in the current labour environment and conditions and suggested that the college approach was informed by:

- The historical success of the college, and
- The fact that learners continued to enrol at the college for reasons other than employability and programme relevance.

2.7.1. The Labour Environment of the Free State

The population of the Free State Province was estimated as 2.8 million people in 1999. This represents 6.5% of South Africa's population (Stats SA 2001: 16). The majority of the population are spread out across the predominant rural environment, with population density in some areas as low as two people per square kilometre. There are areas with very high densities like Botshabelo, with 1300 people per square kilometre.

Africans constitute the majority (84%) of the Free State population. About 12% of the population of the Free State is white, 3% is coloured and 0.1% is Indian. At the time of the October 1996 census the number of people potentially available for work in the Free State was 1.7 million. This constituted about 64% of the total population. The census suggested that about 938 919 people were dependent in the Free State in 1996. This latter population comprised of 820 276 people²³ that fell in the age category 0-14 years and 118 643 people that were older than 64 years.²⁴

The census also indicated that of the potential 1.7 million workers in Free State an estimated 586 864 people (35.5%) were not economically active in 1996 (housewives/homemakers, scholars/full-time students, pensioners/retired people, disabled persons and people not wishing to work). This means that the economically active population consisted of just over one million people, of which 715 632 were employed (67%) and 348 836 (33%) that could not find employment²⁵.

Labour force employment

According to the household survey of 1996, about 45% (158 291) of the age group 15-29 in the Free State were unemployed, and 60% of those between 15-19 could not find a job. Unemployment in the Free State as a whole has risen from 5,6% to 26% between 1985 and 1995. At the same time, the percentage to enter the informal market has risen from 6,6% to 21% of the labour force.

²³ This constituted about 32% and 5% respectively of the total population

²⁴ Two sets of data is used here, namely the 1999 October Household Survey and the 1996 October Household Survey.

²⁵ The total *employed* constitutes 26% of the total provincial population. About 46% of those deemed unemployed are youth below the age of 30.

Very low education levels aggravate the problem. More than a third (38%) of the population have either not attended school or is still in primary school. About 39% of the Free State population (a total of 564 224 people) over the age of 20 was estimated to be functionally illiterate in 1996. Of the 20 years and above category, only 13.6% had obtained Grade 12 and only 5.2% had a post-school qualification (Erasmus 2000).

Prospective employment growth is expected mostly in the manufacturing and services sector in the Free State and in the professional and managerial categories. The economy is expected to become more investment driven and less dependent upon mining and agriculture.

Erasmus (2000: 11) has noted that four major industry groups in the economy of the Free State provided 71% of all the employment opportunities in the province. They were:

- Community, social and personal services (29%)
- Mining and quarrying (17%)
- Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing (15%)
- Wholesale and retail, trade and catering and accommodation services (9%)

The remaining 28% employment to workers was provided by manufacturing, construction, transport, storage, communication, financial, insurance, real estate and business services. The electricity, gas and water supply sector provided about 1% of all jobs in the Free State. With regard to the informal sector in the Free State, elementary occupations (89%) provided the main employment opportunities, while craft and related trades provided employment to only 4% of the informal sector's self-employed population.

The Free State province is a major maize- and wheat-producing area in South Africa and produces almost 80% of South Africa's sorghum, half the national wheat crop, a third of the national maize and potato crop, and one fifth of South Africa's beef, wool and milk. These products constitute the most important basic foodstuffs for a large proportion of the population. Agriculture is certainly a key income and employment-creating sector in the province, though it does not provide more employment to the labour force than the mining sector.

Erasmus (2000: 23) has noted that the Free State has a factor-based economy, and is strongly dependent on mining and agriculture. This is confirmed by the fact that mining is the main contributor to the GGP (20%), while the agriculture sector employs 26% of all workers in the Free State. In recent times, the province's share in the GDP has declined as a result of a drop in the price of gold. Mining remains the dominant GGP sector for the province however and employs almost 47% of the working population. The dependence on mining does however place the workers in the region at risk given the decline in the sector in recent years.

Erasmus further observes that the economy in the Free State is becoming more diversified as the dependence on mining and agriculture declines. He argues that the relative contribution of manufacturing and trade is on an upward trend (Erasmus 2000: 24). Certainly, following the Free State's strategy to promote investment and exports and to develop the manufacturing sector, new economic opportunities have been identified:

- Expansion of the farming equipment manufacturing and assembling industry.
- Establishment of tanneries for the processing of hides into wet blues and finished leather products for domestic and foreign markets.
- Manufacture of gold jewellery products.
- Promotion of downstream processing of a range of petrochemical products (e.g. solvents, waxes and olefins).
- Development of hotels, resorts, casinos and eco-tourism.

With regard to the FET College in the Free State, the Bloemfontein area employs almost 201 729 workers²⁶. About 45% are in government and related community services, while a further 13% are employed in trade and 10% in agriculture. The Bloemfontein region is the only region that has shown an increase in employment opportunities in the period 1991 to 1996. The region is growing as a result of many innovative ventures such as the promotion of the manufacture and assembly of farm machinery, equipment, tractors and harvesters. The area, which includes Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, has high concentrations of manufacturing

²⁶ The Bloemfontein area contains about 27% of the Free State population and provides 28% of formal employment.

activities and incorporates the largest suburban residential areas in the province (Erasmus 2000: 26).

Technical Colleges

The FET sector in the Free State comprises 11 technical colleges, one agricultural college, 4 colleges of education or teacher training institutes, and 38 technical, comprehensive, vocational and agricultural high schools spread across the four regions of the province. Other institutions include one university, one technikon, and four nursing colleges (Erasmus 2000: 23). The fifteen colleges are spread across the Eastern Free State, the Bloemfontein region, the Goldfields region and the Northern Free State region. Most of the technical colleges appear to provide courses relevant to the main economic activities in the particular region. The Free State province has a range of rural, urban and peri-urban localities.²⁷ Thus, in the past many colleges developed satellite campuses to support learners closer to where they lived. The satellite operations were not fully-fledged operations and served rather as outreach attempts to create greater access and wider provision.

One of the inherent legacies of the apartheid past is the close proximity of Free State colleges in given localities. That was because colleges were established in the past to serve different communities. Colleges were also separated according to the previous homeland system. These historical and political contexts inform the way in which each institution operates and provide different challenges to the process of transformation.

Provided below is a table that describes the colleges in the Free State, the date of establishment and the department under which initially established.

College	Year established	Previous authority
<i>Bloemfontein</i>	1929	House of Assembly (white learners)
<i>Kroonstad</i>	1934	House of Assembly
<i>Welkom</i>	1951	House of Assembly
<i>Sasolburg</i>	1966	House of Assembly

²⁷ Sasolburg College, for instance, is located in the highly industrialised area of Sasolburg. The geographic location of the college in an industrial area dominated by the chemical and oil industries, has led over the years to a significant partnership between college and industry. On the other hand, the Kwetlisong College in the Eastern Free State is situated in the un-industrialised area of Phuthaditjhaba and struggles to develop industrial partnerships.

- Word of mouth whereby ex-worker of for example Kia Motors is employed by the institution to market the programmes of the college at Kia Motors;
- Open days where the public and the local industries and businesses are invited
- Mobile outdoor advertising (stickers on taxis, fliers, etc)

Most employers that strike up informal agreements are also involved in the framing of training programmes focusing on specific industry needs. Interviews with respondents revealed a number of employers in this regard:

- The TEMPE School of Armour of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF): This school has a special training unit for its learners. The Hillside View institution offers management and information technology courses on the premises of the 'School of Armour'. The agreement is that the college uses the venue (classrooms as well as IT laboratory) free of charge. Learners pay their fees out of their own pockets but may apply for financial assistance from the SANDF. Furthermore, the Hillside View facility has an agreement with the SANDF to also train employees in a number of accredited trades that require trade-testing examinations.
- TRANSWERK: Transwerk annually sends employees that belong to their bursary scheme to study at a college of their choice for a tri-semester. Transwerk apparently had a close link with Hillside View and often recruited N2-N4 learners from the institution. In such instances, learners were placed on their bursary scheme and enrolled at the college.
- Medi-Klinik: Hillside View has an agreement with Medi Klinik to train all their maintenance staff.
- ESKOM: Eskom has a training unit that trains learners/potential employees in electrical-related careers. This Eskom facility is provided on a national basis to employees. While Eskom does not recruit learners from local colleges given the widespread appeal of the training unit, the company has a special link with Hillside View through an Eskom representative employed on a part time basis at the institution. The Eskom employee provides courses after hours at Hillside View. Both the college and Eskom encourage such a partnership as it serves to keep college courses updated and relevant to the needs of the industry.

Aligning college programmes

The Hillside View facility has sought to develop its programmes in ways that constructively interacts with local social structures. Churches use the venue for Sunday services and the general public are able to use institutional halls for wedding functions. The University of Free State also uses the institution's facilities to run bridging courses for pre-first year learners and for career guidance programmes.

Furthermore, Hillside View shares some accredited workshops with local industries. In return the institution receives gifts from local industries. For example, for the use of institutional workshops a local company called ABS (they supply paint to the automobile industry) has said that it will permanently supply the institution with state of the art spray paints and provide access to relevant machines.

Such links with industries has had a significant impact on college programmes. In a recent example, the institution made adjustments to its engineering courses after consulting industry partners. There had been a perception among learners that by enrolling in light-current courses they were increasing their chances of employment. In discussions with Eskom and Telkom it was found however that they had an abundance of light-current engineers. College staff members subsequently made efforts to divert learners to heavy-duty-current, mechanical and civil engineering related careers.

Also, with regard to the ways in which college programmes have recently been aligned two examples predominate:

- **Learnerships:** Hillside View has developed a number of healthy relationships with sector education and training authorities (SETAs). Already a number of institutional workshops have been accredited by MERSETA. This allows the facility to conduct trade tests essential to the needs of local industries. Hillside View is also in discussions with THETA to introduce a learnerships on furniture making. The college hopes to instigate a partnership with the local furniture industry in this regard. Staff respondents indicated that local industries had not yet begun to understand the benefits of such agreements/learnerships with colleges and that local industry participation was poor. Notwithstanding the various suggested learnerships, no formal learnerships are thus far in place.

- **After-College:** Hillside View is in the process of developing a tracking system to understand the kinds of employment of learners upon exiting the college. The overall concern is that local industries have a limit on the numbers of people they can employ and that colleges often produce too many potential workers. The institution seeks to understand how it can align programmes that more neatly fit employment patterns. Again, this initiative is not presently in place and remains a speculative institutional idea.

Operationalizing College Programmes and marketing issues

Staff respondents indicated that while the institution prioritised the modification of learning programmes to facilitate employability the current national curriculum had not shifted sufficiently to accommodate such modifications. They suggested that industries become more involved in the framing of programmes and with standards generating bodies (SGBs) in developing new unit standards for specific trades.

Furthermore, it was found that Hillside View seemed to prefer practical training programmes to theory-based. Many respondents felt that this was not a healthy shift and that the institution needed to find a greater level of complementarity. In this regard, respondents noted that the facility needed to continue focusing on specialised courses (rather than provide the suggested generalised skills courses). They indicated that a number of factors prevailed that required such a continued focus, namely that:

- It would be too expensive to open up workshops to all learners
- There was too little time for learners to complete a level if they did not specialise
- There was a need for the portability of courses for learners who needed to leave the college prior to completing N6.

The Thaba 'Nchu Institution

The Thaba 'Nchu institution was established in 1991 by the then Bophutatswana government as a manpower centre. It was taken over by the Department of Labour in 1995 and transferred to the control of the Free State Provincial Government in 1998. The institution is situated about 65km east of the Bloemfontein city centre and about 100km from Maseru. The facility is located very close to the most densely populated area of the Free State, namely the Botshabelo district.

Interviewed respondents indicated that the majority of learners³⁸ who enrolled at the institution were drop-outs elsewhere and had to be relocated at a lower N-level to facilitate their prospects of proceeding further. The most recent headcount of the college in 2001 was 355 full-time equivalent learners and about 1235 overall learners. The full details are provided below:

Thaba 'Nchu Technical college	
Head count	1235
FTEs	355
Total admin staff	13
Total support staff	30
CS educators	29
CS vacancies	9.

Furthermore, courses offered at the Thaba Nchu Technical College comprise of:

BUSINESS STUDIES:	ENGINEERING STUDIES*
1. N2-6 Clothing Production	1. N1-2 Motor Mechanic (DoE)
2. N4-5 Marketing Management	2. N1-2 Electrical (DoE)
3. N4-5 Business Management	3. N2 Civil (DoE)
4. N6 Financial Management	4. Electrical Workshop (non - DoE)
5. Home Deco (non DNE)	5. Bricklaying Workshop (non - DoE)
6. Computer Literacy Programme (non DNE)	6. Welding Workshop (non - DoE)
7. Secretarial (non DNE)	7. Carpentry Workshop (non - DoE)
8. Accounting Admin (non DNE)	8. Motor Mechanic Workshop (non - DoE)
	9. Motor Body Repair Workshop (non - DoE)
	10. Plumbing Workshop (non - DoE)
	* Engineering studies also have a core/ elective construction, e.g. Motor Mechanic: Maths, Science, Drawing + Trade.

Current partnership agreements include:

- > The Thintana Project: Thintana contributed R30 million to the National Department of Education that has targeted 200 schools and 18 science and technology centres. The Thaba'Nchu institution is meant to house one of the 18 science and technology centres. The idea is that Thintana will provide hardware and programmes, Telkom will provide internet connection and

³⁸ The college population was entirely African.

Thaba 'Nchu lecturers will train school educators on how to use the internet in the teaching of specialised subjects such as mathematics and science³⁹.

- The Lenyora La Thuto Senior Secondary School and Sehlabeng Senior Secondary School Project: Based on a ruling by the Department of National Education that the Thaba'Nchu institution needs to serve community needs, Thaba 'Nchu lecturers will provide computer studies training to grade 12 learners at the two schools noted above. The college provides two lecturers to tutor 140 grade 12 learners at Sehlabeng and 40 grade 12 learners at Lenyora Ia Thuto. Classes are provided at the respective schools and cost learners R490 per annum for a one-hour tutorial after school each day of the school week⁴⁰. Furthermore, the computer centres at the respective schools are open to community members after 1800h each day, though jobless people are also provided the opportunity to attend classes each day between 1000h and 1100h.

The Thaba 'Nchu college anticipates learnerships in the following areas:

- Agriculture
- Clothing manufacturing
- Tourism

Social Management Courses include:

- Care of the aged, handicapped and AIDS patients

ABET courses include:

- Level 1 with skills and entrepreneurship
- Cooking, sewing
- Bricklaying

Understanding the notion of partnerships

From interviews with college respondents it was found that there are no formal or informal links with industries or businesses with regard to the employment of college learners. The institution also does not have a formal learner placement or internship

³⁹ The Thintana MST Project will introduce educators and learners in grades 10, 11 and 12 to various topics in mathematics, science and technology. Community institutions like churches have also been invited to participate. Initially, 50 educators will be trained over a period in which 18 modules are taught comprising each of 3.5 hours.

⁴⁰ Sehlabeng Senior Secondary is about 68km from Thaba 'Nchu college.

programme. The institution adheres strictly to the department of national education curriculum and does not provide many non-DNE courses.

In the latter regard, respondents asserted that some subject syllabi were almost 20 years old and that they no longer served the needs of learners. Interviewed staff members also indicated that the institution had recently introduced language proficiency courses, computer literacy and entrepreneurship courses but that these courses were not yet well attended. Some noted that in the past industry leaders were able to influence college programmes and so influence the relevancy of college programmes. This influence had greatly diminished in the past decade and it was hoped that the SETA pathway would re-introduce this dimension to college education and training provision.

The Thaba "Nchu facility has also sought to initiate small-business related courses that can lead to learners either engaging in independent home-based enterprises or starting up small businesses. The institution offers a variety of courses in such areas though none are regarded as examples of successful implementation. Respondents noted that the college provided courses in clothing production and in home decoration that had been instigated by college learner needs, the needs of housewives as well as by needs identified by the Mmabana Cultural Centre. The idea was to generate notions of independence amongst learners and also provide ways of encouraging their personal development especially after they had completed the N6 course in clothing production. Although the courses are accredited according to Department of National Education requirements, respondents felt that the courses do not simulate real factory conditions and that learners are not adequately equipped to respond to real and practical clothing manufacturing work situations.

In this respect, the college interacts with the Mmabana Cultural Centre in a number of ways that seek primarily to collaborate around the training of community members. The Mmabana Centre trains about 30 people every three months in sewing and quilting skills and engages college lecturers to train and design accredited programmes for interested community learners. The centre has six industrial sewing machines and two overlockers, which is used to train learners in industrial and domestic sewing. The idea of the collaboration is to develop programmes that lead to

people forming their own businesses around fashion designing or homemade clothing production. An interviewed person attached to the centre indicated however that most learners presently undergoing training at the centre were not enrolled in formal accredited programmes provided by college lecturers and focused on basic skills training courses. The respondent also suggested that the current courses needed to develop entrepreneurial literacy among learners in more systematic ways.

Indeed the Thaba 'Nchu institution does not have any real partnerships with industries or businesses. In interviews with staff members in 2002 they indicated ties to a number of large corporations, none of whom confirmed such links. Many noted that the supposed ties were linked to past associations and were no longer effective. Respondents identified the Transwerk Training Centre, Eskom, and various clothing factories, mechanical enterprises and building construction companies as present or potential partners.

Aligning adjusting partnerships with learner and employment needs

As noted earlier the college has no formal agreement with any employers, nor does it provide any direct services to employers. Given this lack of direct contact with employers researchers nevertheless interviewed a number of employers in the hope that their views could shed light on the lack of partnerships.

The interviewed representative of the Transwerk Training Centre noted that the training centre had been established to serve the various units attached to South African Railways. These units had been delinked from SA Railways to form 17 autonomous businesses. Located about 60 km from the Thaba 'Nchu institution, the training centre sponsors a number of learners that attend various colleges in the Free State, including the Thaba 'Nchu facility. The training centre develops contracts with individual learners (attached to a variety of colleges) and binds itself to sponsoring the learner with between R800-R1000 per trimester. The contract does not guarantee employment by Transwerk but does require learners to complete their enrolled courses or they would have to repay their bursaries. Also, the training centre has a three year employment prerogative on all sponsored learners, which effectively means that while learners can find alternative employment should no vacancies exist at Transwerk, they could be recalled when such vacancies did emerge.

Nationally, Transwerk sponsors learners to study at colleges but expects all prospective employees to pass a trade test at the training centre premises. In that respect, the centre focuses on training in ten trades, six of which are offered in Bloemfontein and four in Johannesburg. The six Bloemfontein trades are sheet metalwork, welding, millwrights, wagonfitters, toolmakers, and turner and machinists. The four Johannesburg trades are patternmakers, moulders, vehicle builders, and fitters.

While the Transwerk training centre does provide some artisanal training (using available equipment and skilled experts), this training had largely been discouraged due to the huge associated costs. In that regard, the centre had emerged from SA Railways infrastructures that had about 480 craftsmen in training in the 1970s and which subsequently downscaled to reduce the costs of training. Transwerk respondents indicated that while the centre was generally satisfied with courses provided by colleges, they believed the lack of practical training (especially at the Bloemfontein and Thaba 'Nchu institutions which did not have workshops) significantly diminished the ability of learners to pass subsequent trade tests. Respondents also felt that the current practice of enrolling learners through correspondence could not lead to artisan status.

It was found that the college's key link with Eskom was to the company's bursary scheme. Eskom annually sponsors about 50 candidates to the tune of about R50 000 for training as artisans. Before candidates are chosen however they have to undergo substantial testing and scanning. They are subjected to psychometric tests, biokinetics tests and career guidance exercises to determine whether they are worthy recipients of company funds and whether they would fulfil the needs of their prospective employments. The Eskom respondent explained that the company only offered bursaries to college learners and neither trained or sought to employ them. That was because the company had its own training centres that focused on developing and training employees.

Furthermore, interviews with one respondent in the building construction industry and another at a clothing factory indicated that the Thaba 'Nchu institution did not provide

adequately qualified artisans for employment. The clothing factory respondent lamented the inadequate basic sewing skills of learners for employment in the factory context, and noted that factories required machine fixers, industrial sewers, trained clothing cutters and manufacturers and decent quality assurers. The respondent asserted that colleges provided inadequate training to the extent that factories were considering setting up their own training centres.

Operationalising and marketing college programmes

While the institution regarded marketing as the most important aspect of the college set-up, it was notable that most strategies had not brought fruitful or profitable results. The Thaba 'Nchu institution has a dedicated public relations person that visits local schools, industries and businesses regularly and also provides career exhibitions through roadshows. The dedicated college employee arranges open days that parents and prospective learners attend. It was found however that because of low learner headcounts, the college tends to focus exclusively of learner enrolments and does not market itself with prospective employer and business partners. It was further asserted in interviews that learners do not enrol at the college because of its manpower centre legacy and the belief that the college continues to provide training ill-suited to industry and formal employment.

College staff and management have recently sought to respond to the need to attract learners by phasing out certain courses and introducing others. It was found however that such interventions were not based on investigative surveying but rather through decisions made by senior staff members framed by intuitive notions of learner needs. One respondent observed that staff members read about certain industrial trends and needs and then management would simply decide to follow such advice. With regard to the provision of computer courses, respondents noted that it is a known fact that communities require urgent training in computer skills and that short courses had been introduced at the institution to develop communal confidence and skills.

Respondents further warned about the loss of revenue that the phasing out of N4-6 courses would bring. They noted that the Thaba 'Nchu institution was beginning to experience considerable financial difficulty given the lack of industrial partnerships, sponsorships and the decreasing number of interested college learners.

Chapter 3: Conclusion

The success of the further education and training (FET) college system in South Africa hinges on the attainment of two processes, namely:

- Strong collaborative links between the various partners within FET College settings
- The ability of FET Colleges, in facilitating the transition from school to work, to build up the crucial intermediate skill levels of the country.

The key question remains how to achieve these goals in environments where legacies of the past and impoverishment clearly work against success. Indeed, the kinds and number of partnerships that presently exist between colleges, industries and local businesses paint a very worrying picture. Where partnerships do exist, they involve very few learners and are also mostly concentrated around low skills training programmes. Encouragingly, institutions that have taken initiative (whether state or state-aided colleges) have been rewarded by both employer and learner interest. This suggests key pathways for the growth of the FET colleges. It was particularly surprising that the popular or better-funded colleges of the past have not shifted their approaches substantially and are presently struggling to sustain their existence. Colleges with theory-based biases are also struggling to attract employer and industry interest and will have to shift their approaches considerably if they are to remain sustainable.

A key concern remains the dominance of white educators in the college sector. While the learner demographics have changed substantially, almost no change has occurred with regard to educator ratios. The move to protect staff positions is placing significant obstacles to further change in the sector, given that this energy and time needs to be focused on how to radically shift the focus of programmes and approaches.

Summary Sheet for the 3 Colleges

Colleges	White College Staff members	African staff	Coloured staff	Indian staff
Umlazi	44	14	1	1
Swinton Road	47	7	9	3
Durban Central	42	2	4	5
Klerksdorp	46	0	0	0
Potchefstroom	45	2	2	0
Jouberton	17	5	0	0
Taung	10	1	0	0
Hillside View	73	45	0	0
Bloemfontein	86	8	1	0
Thaba' NChu	5	20	0	0
TOTAL	416	104	17	8
Percentage	76%	19%	3.5%	1.5%

Appendix A

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE COMPONENT OF THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE RESPONSIVENESS PROJECT

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. RESEARCH DESIGN

a. Theoretical framework

A *qualitative* design shaped the research for the Institutional Profile component of the Technical College Responsiveness project. Qualitative research refers to a research design that is largely in contrast with quantitative research designs focusing on statistical information. The focus in qualitative research designs is mainly on textual information and less control is exercised in order to stay true to the context of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Such designs raise obvious issues regarding objectivity, and it is therefore necessary to at least illustrate the theoretical framework behind the decision to use a qualitative design for the research on institutions.

In the Institutional Profile component, we were challenged with the task of researching institutions including technical colleges, employers of students from these colleges, and specifically, the linkages and partnerships between technical colleges and employers in the context of college responsiveness. Such linkages, we assumed, exist within a specific time-space continuum, and are the products of the meanings and interpretations, which colleges and employers attach to linkages and partnerships or, the lack of linkages and partnerships between them. This assumption of reality, is directly related to the *Symbolic Interactionist* perspective in qualitative research, and is described by Blumer (1969:5 cited in Berg, 1998:8-9) as follows:

Symbolic interactionism... does not regard meaning as emanating from the intrinsic makeup of the thing, nor does it see meaning as arising through psychological elements between people. The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for the person; thus, symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products formed through activities of people interacting.

In the light of the Symbolic Interactionist perspective, we also assumed that the reality of linkages and partnerships are constructed as narratives in the minds of college staff and employers – a perspective known as *phenomenology* (See Leedy, 1997:161). Therefore, the overall research design was shaped to capture and analyse such ‘narratives’. It was clear that only a semi-structured qualitative design would allow

this and also capture the context and nuance surrounding linkages and partnerships between colleges and employers.

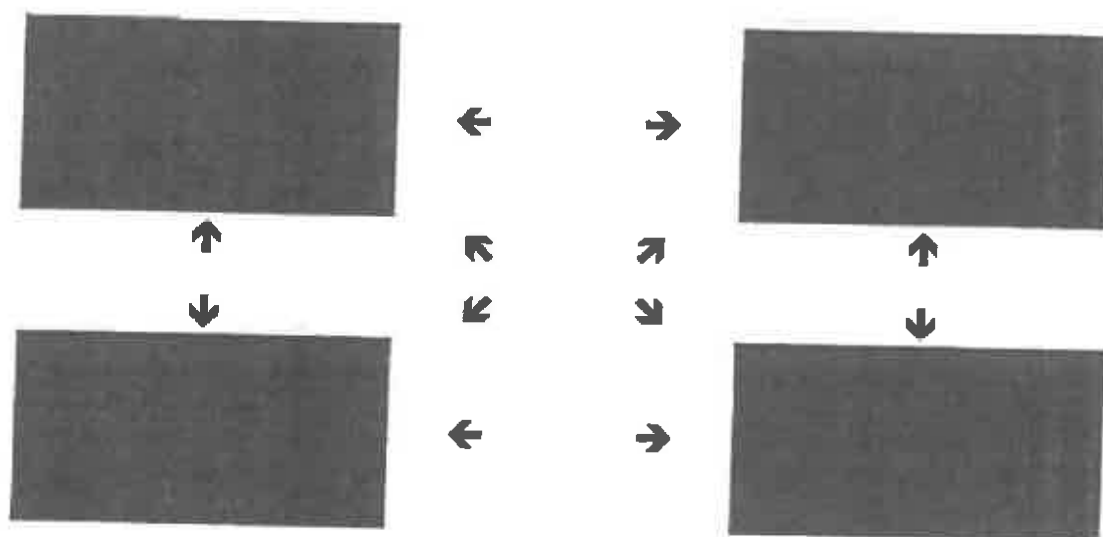
b. Triangulation

Triangulation is a metaphorical term used in the social sciences to refer to multiple ways of researching the same reality. It serves the purpose of cross-referencing data sources, findings, interpretations etc., especially when the reality under investigation is difficult to operationalise, such as the notion of technical college 'responsiveness' and specifically, 'linkages' and 'partnerships' between colleges and employers. Triangulation has therefore been a key research strategy in the overall technical college responsiveness study and the Institutional Profile component. Its role in the Institutional Profile component has been four fold.

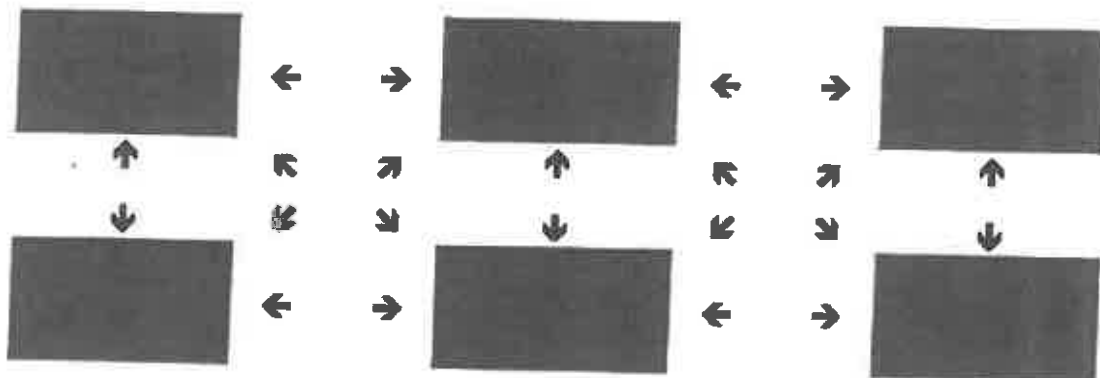
Firstly, *data triangulation* was used by researching two data sources, namely college staff members and employers from the labour environment – two normatively contrasting views of linkages and partnerships. Secondly, *investigator triangulation* was used by utilising HSRC researchers and contract researchers in mixed teams for different settings (refer to role of researchers). Researchers complemented each other's skills and approaches. Thirdly, *within-method triangulation* was used by collecting primary and secondary data (refer to data collection), and finally, *between-method triangulation* by cross referencing the results from this component with results from other more quantitative components such as the college student and employer satisfaction surveys.

The triangulation strategy in the research design of the Technical Colleges Responsiveness project and Institutional Profile component is diagrammatically shown below.

TECHNICAL COLLEGES RESPONSIVENESS PROJECT



INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE COMPONENT



c. Case study designs

The research into institutional profiles, linkages and partnerships were designed as case studies, also referred to as *clusters*. This design was used, as it presented a logical entity to group clusters of colleges with its surrounding labour environment and key employers and research them as a single entity. Therefore, clusters of colleges and its surrounding labour environment with key employers constitute the units of analyses, which are reported on in this component. On a lower aggregation, single colleges within clusters and its key employers of students, also constitute units of analyses in order to compare colleges within and between clusters. In practical terms, the case study designs also allowed flexibility in terms of logistics, timeframes and data collection from multiple sources. The qualitative case study designs were therefore chosen as it presented the most feasible design with which to address the foci and aims of the research, namely to research an un-operationalised construct by means of triangulation.

The methodological steps of the case study designs are subsequently spelled out.

2. METHODOLOGY

a. Selection and description of case studies

All FET colleges in South Africa have been merged into clusters of colleges. As stated, these clusters and its surrounding labour environments constituted units for case studies. The research team were faced with the task of developing criteria with which to *conveniently sample* case studies that could yield comprehensive and representative results for the study. During a methodology workshop, the research team developed the following criteria for the selection of case studies.

- Province
- Economic base
- Urban, periphery and rural divides
- The questionnaire response rate from the student satisfaction component within the province (% of *all* completing NSC, N1, N2 and N3 colleges students in 1999)

It was agreed that three case studies should be chosen. Firstly, all three should adhere to the last criteria namely; a sufficient questionnaire response rate in order to triangulate results from case studies with aggregated results on college level from the student satisfaction survey. Secondly, the first three criteria should be different across the three chosen case studies to ensure greater representivity in terms of the criteria, i.e. the three case studies should be different in terms of province, economic base and urban / rural location. Considering these criteria, the following three case studies were chosen.

	Free State	KwaZulu Natal	North West
	Agriculture	Services	Mining
	Periphery	Urban	Rural
	31.9%	14.9%	12.3%
	✓	✓	✓
	Bloemfontein Hillside View Thaba Nchu	Durban Central Umlazi Swinton Road	Jouberton Klerksdorp Potchefstroom Tung College of Education

b. Role of researchers

Teams of researchers were commissioned to each research a college and specific employers of students from that college. In most cases, teams consisted of two researchers, one from the HSRC and one consultant researcher. All researchers were recruited by the HSRC and received briefing and training during a formal training session at the HSRC. Where possible, consultant researchers were chosen with FET experience and who were familiar with the local area. During training, each researcher received a reader that contained important information on the cluster, such as employment statistics within the local economy and HRD statistics within colleges. Researchers were requested to familiarise themselves with the reader prior to fieldwork.

c. Data collection

HSRC staff administered the logistical aspects of the research from the HSRC offices in Pretoria. Meetings were arranged between researchers and staff from colleges, including the principal and heads of certain departments. In addition, meetings were also arranged between researchers and selected employers of students from the specific college. These employers were selected based on responses from the student satisfaction survey as well as references to partnerships or linkages with employers based on responses from college staff.

⁴¹ The learner response rates for specific colleges within the cluster were also considered during selection of these colleges.

The primary method of data collection during meetings was *semi-structured face-to-face interviews*. Standardised interview instruments, that was included in the reader handed to researchers during training, covered important themes and questions for the interview. Separate instruments were drafted for college principals, heads of departments and employers while certain themes and questions remained standard. Despite this, interviews were also allowed to flow spontaneously (refer to theoretical framework). The standard procedure was for one researcher to do most of the interviewing and another to do most of the note taking. Teams were, however, also provided with tape recorders to record all interviews (with consent from interviewees). HSRC researchers, with professional research experience, kept interviews in line with standard interview protocol, such as, avoiding leading questions, clarifying and summarising responses as well as briefing and debriefing of the respondent.

The fieldwork and interviews for all three case studies were completed within approximately one week and researchers had to stay within the local area for most of the week. Researchers spent evenings writing-up interviews and confirming meetings.

d. Data analyses

Data for the Institutional Profile study primarily consist of textual notes from interviews as well as some secondary sources from colleges and employers such as information brochures and partnership agreements. The process with which data was analysed and reported on can best be described as *inductive generalisation*. According to this process, findings are basically derived from individual case study data and generalised to a larger setting of which the particular case study is characteristic. The method of interpretation is *descriptive* and *explorative*, rather than explanatory, and further hypotheses and questions are developed rather than attempting to answer existing hypotheses and questions. This method of data analysis is in fact standard procedure for qualitative studies.

e. Data presentation

Although interviews are mainly reflected upon by interpretation within the text of the report, selected interview pieces are also *quoted* directly to give a more descriptive and nuanced account of particular situations. Data from secondary sources, on the other hand, are mainly summarised into unique paragraphs or tables within the report.

f. Methods for trustworthiness

Some final notes are necessary to describe several ways in which reliability and validity of the research were accounted for. Methods⁴² to increase the accuracy of the research included the following:

- **Triangulation:** The multiple forms of triangulation, which were described, ultimately served to cross-reference methods, data and findings.

⁴² See Mouton & Marais (1996:91-96)

- **Ensuring anonymity:** All interviewees were ensured of anonymity, although data were collected on interviewee demographics for purposes of interpreting interview comments.
- **Establishing rapport:** All interviews were preceded by networking and informal conversations between researchers and respondents to brief respondents on the purpose and importance of the study. Particular care was taken when elaborating on the research topic, namely college responsiveness, as it could easily have been interpreted as a quality audit.
- **Training:** As stated, all researchers received formal training before fieldwork commenced.
- **Selection of researchers:** Researchers were selected on grounds of FET knowledge and overall research experience.
- **Reliability of interview instrument:** Our understanding of linkages and partnerships was clearly communicated in interview instruments by means of multiple phases and questions.
- **Constructive replication:** The research was designed and executed in such a way that it can be replicated for different case studies or future research.

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Appendix B

Questionnaires

Questionnaire instruments for:

- a) Principal of college**
- b) Head of departments**
- c) Employers and industry role players**

A. PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This is a semi-structured interview schedule. The questions are strong guides for areas you need to cover. You should use the Section headings to overally structure the interview. For instance, you might say, "I am going to begin with a set of questions about Umlazi in relation to the links between the college and the local labour environment". And later you might say: "Now I am going to move on to a set of questions about the marketing strategy of the college with regard to getting employment for learners".

You do not need to use the specific questions word for word, nor do you have to stick strictly to the order in which they are asked. Rather, you need to interact with the principal and follow his/her lead in the response to each question. So, you may want to further probe a comment, or move directly to a related question in another section. Sometimes the response to one question will include a response to a later question, in which case you will not need to repeat it. Sometimes a question may not apply to your specific case. You may also add questions specific to your case that are not on the schedule but that will provide you with greater insight.

One good trick will be to use the name of the institution often, substituting where the question has the more generic term "your/the institution". For example, "how would you describe the ways in which Umlazi's programmes articulate with employment needs around Umlazi".

What is important is that you understand the significance of each Section of questions, and that you cover the areas identified in the questions. Remember that these interviews will be the only fieldwork at the institution and are the only means of understanding the institutional logic.

You should also make notes on the profile of each interviewee, in terms of age, race, gender, qualifications level and experience, and also gain a sense of the size and structure of the management team.

For every interview you do, please record the name, position of the person and the date.

You should take your own notes of key points made in the interview, and write up fuller notes as soon after the interview as possible, for analysis the following week.

SECTION A: UNDERSTANDING THE NOTION OF PARTNERSHIPS

1. Does the college have formal/informal links with:

(a) Local industries/businesses;

YES	
NO	

(b) SMMEs or informal employers

YES	
NO	

(c) Local government as an employer

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

Explore different kinds of employment links and partnerships that colleges have with surrounding communities and businesses. Each researcher is expected to follow up employers in each of these sub-sectors, so try as much as possible to probe the various kinds of links whether they be formal or informal. If there are none that the principal can speak about, probe why that is so. It may well be intimately linked to socio-economic issues, so probe that.

2. Relate what linkages/links work well for the college and explain why. If there are no links, explain some of the difficulties involved in making links with employers, be they informal or formal.

Prompt:

What are some of the difficulties? What are the benefits or demerits of such links?
Are they seen as desirable?

3. Does the College have student placement programmes (internships)?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

This may be formal internships or informal partnerships where the college secures holiday or temporary work for learners in whatever kind of employment.

4. Does the college have formal/informal links with industry/business for graduate employment?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

This is different to internships in that it incorporates fulltime employment and is associated more with learners who find employment in their study areas. It

may well be that learners upon graduation find employment in industries based on other criteria. Explore and improvise if needed.

5. Does the college provide career guidance for learners?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

Explore the kinds of professional assistance that the college provide to learners. Does the college for instance have professional or relevant staff for such a purpose?

6. Does the college have public relations people that market the college at neighbouring schools and within the local labour environment?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

Explore the amount of money and organisation sets aside for marketing of the college with regard to personnel hired specifically or trained to perform this activity.

7. Does the College try to develop specific programmes that seek to inform the types of employment students can acquire in immediate vicinities?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

Explore the notion that colleges don't necessarily know the kinds of employment available for learners. Prompt the principal to speak more about the kinds of jobs learners secure upon entering the marketplace.

8. Does the College use any testing procedures (examples provided below) to find out what kinds of programmes it needs to provide?

Testing procedures	YES	NO
Market Research		
Employer surveys		
Community surveys		
Doing training needs studies in relevant areas		
Planning with stakeholders		
Using stakeholder input on college bodies		
Other		

Prompt:

Explore the different kinds of testing procedures that the college does have and the procedures whereby colleges formulate their programmes. Use various approaches to explore this question.

9. Indicate key participants that provide information to the college about what programmes to provide?

<i>Links</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>NO</i>
Local businesses		
Local industries		
Small business development initiatives		
Formal college-industry partnerships		
Contracts for youth training		
Learnership programmes		

Prompt:

The idea is to understand the interaction between the college and outside parties and how much organisation and credit is accorded such relationships. While the principal is not meant to fill in the allocated blocks, can researchers please ask about them individually and fill them in. They will allow for some triangulation across interviews and across colleges.

10. Indicate the contribution of outside bodies to programmes of college:

	YES	NO
Professional institutes		
Training institutions		
SETAs		
Department of Labour		
Department of Education		
Overseas institutions/bodies		
Individual companies		

Prompt:

Explore the impact of formal state bodies and legislation on the kinds of programmes provided at the college. What kinds of interaction takes place and how much assistance is provided to the college to operationalise these policies and requirements?

11. Does the institution share its resources with any other institution?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

We are trying to find out the connectivity between the college and 'the outside', whether that is communities, other educational institutions or employment agencies/employers.

12. Does the College co-operate with any colleges in nearby vicinity to provide specific kinds of institutional programmes?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

Test the level of co-operation between college and other technical educational institutions.

13. What links, if any, exist between the college and technical high schools or adult training centres in the vicinity?

	YES	NO
Technical High schools		
Adult training centres		
Others		

Prompt:

What are the links between the college and other institutions that also provide technical training? How do these links (or lack of links) inform the activities of the college?

14. Comment on Academic achievement at College:

	High	Low
Pass rate in national examinations		
Graduate employment rates		
Retention levels		
Overall success levels		

Prompt:

Try to link up the organisational problems (pass rates, retention levels, other success levels) of the institution with the kinds of programmes it provides and the ability of learners to find employment.

15. Does the institution do annual strategic planning?

YES	
NO	

Prompt:

This question seeks to understand the amount and level of time and effort set aside for programme planning in the college. Explore the various kinds of strategic planning that does take place and try to link it up to education and work relationships. Probe also the content of such plans (if they exist) and how they inform the business of the college. Explore the available mechanisms that operationalise these plans.

16. How are institutional policies monitored and implemented?

Prompt:

The idea is to follow up on those individuals involved in monitoring institutional processes. Hopefully they would be the heads of departments. By identifying the key people involved in strategic planning, probe perhaps the level of buy-in in linking strategic planning and the needs of local labour environments.

SECTION B:

ALIGNING/ADJUSTING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LEARNER AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

1. Who are the learners of the college?
Prompt:
Explore the kinds of learners that register with the college and their backgrounds. This information can be gleaned from other reports, but the idea is to further explore management notions of the learner population.
2. Why do you think learners study at the college?
Prompt:
Explore perceptions of learner reasons for registering, as well as how this perception is informed by perhaps something special the college is doing. Explore what they are.
3. What is the envisaged relationship between the programmes that the college provide and learner choice?
Prompt:
Explore the degree of interaction between the expressed needs of learners and the services that the college provides. Probe how much effort is put into understanding learner concerns and needs.
4. Is the college involved in any learnerships? How many?
Prompt:
Learnerships are a new development. Probe how the college understands this new policy and how it can be operationalised by the college. Do any exist? Explore in more detail.
5. Are there any other kinds of training programmes that the college is involved in? Learnerships are very formal and bound up in agreements. Are they any apprenticeships for instance or other training partnerships?
Prompt:
Explore the move away from apprenticeships to learnerships and the difficulties in the new process. Probe the ways in which colleges resolve not getting formal employer buy-in, and why that is so.
6. How many formal agreements exist with employers?
Prompt:
This is a further elaboration of the types of agreements entered into with employers, and how they may sometimes differ from learnership agreements.
7. Does the college provide any kinds of services to employers?
Prompt:
Explore whether the college provide employers for example with holiday workers, or whether the college provides employers with after hours training services (for identified employees).

8. Does the college have any training links with specific industries, or with informal or part-time labour partners?

Prompt:

Explore whether colleges provide collaborative training programmes or services that service both learners and the employees of particular industries or informal sectors.

9. What does the college do when no formal links exist between the college and employers (formal and informal)?

Prompt:

Explore the types of interventions that college engage in environments where potential employment partners are reluctant or uncooperative.

10. Does the College keep track of the kinds of employment their learners acquire upon leaving the institution?

Prompt:

The notion of tracing old graduates is new in South Africa. However, some staff and institutions do keep track of where their learners are finding employment. Probe.

SECTION C: OPERATIONALISING COLLEGE PROGRAMMES

1. Is relevance and employability important in the framing of college programmes?

Prompt:

Explore whether the college develops programmes based on the kinds of possible employment of learners

2. Has the college (or does it) conducted any surveys of local employer needs?

Prompt:

Explore the mechanisms that the college uses to inform the framing of college programmes.

3. Does the college receive any input from local businesspeople through appointment on college Council or college bodies?

Prompt:

How much support does the college receive from employers through active participation in the running of the institution?

4. Describe any significant changes in learning programmes in past 5 years.

Prompt

Given the new policy and much more focused emphasis on 'relevance', to what degree have programmes changed over that period. For example, what programmes have been discontinued or which courses are given more backing?

5. What key factors presently influence the development of college programmes?

Prompt:

Probe the kinds of issues that frame the development of courses and programmes.

6. What is the balance between general and specialised skill programmes?

Prompt:

Probe the demand for either kind of training.

7. What is the mix of theoretical and practical work?

Prompt

Is there a relation between available resources and learner access to practical training?

8. How viable is it to expose learners to expensive practical training when they are not sponsored by an employer or linked to possible employment?

Prompt:

Discuss the commitment to engaging in expensive training when learners are not guaranteed of employment

9. How much is known about the applicability of college programmes to the market place?

Prompt:

Is there any information available to shed light on this question?

11. Discuss national issues such as the differences in getting men employed as opposed to women, and the types of employment secured by previously disadvantaged learners?

Prompt:

Has the inequities of the past changed in any substantial way and how is it reflected in the interaction between colleges and employers presently?

SECTION D: COLLEGE MARKETING STRATEGIES

1. How does the college market itself with?

- (a) Industries
- (b) Local businesses
- (c) Potential learners
- (d) Communities

Prompt:

Probe the different kinds of strategies that the college uses to market itself. If the college does not try to market itself, explore the reasons for this approach.

2. Does the college view marketing as a priority?

Prompt:

Given the competition for funding and learner enrolment, how seriously does the college regard good marketing strategies?

3. Are funds specially set aside for marketing?

Prompt:

Probe how much funds is set aside for marketing and whether formal processes or groups are in place to deal with such matters.

7. What is understood as marketing strategies?

Prompt:

Having offered viewpoints on marketing, explore and compare definitions and understanding of what constitutes marketing.

8. If marketing strategies exist, for how long and have there been any tangible results?

Prompt:

The idea is to probe what constitutes good college practice in articulating what the colleges provide with what is needed from local labour markets, and to identify the key factors the make certain colleges successful.

B. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**(Same or similar questionnaire to one used
with principal)**

This is also a semi-structured interview schedule. The very same type of questions used to interview the principal can be used to interview heads of departments. In the individual cases of heads of departments however, focus on the specific roles and views of individuals. Each researcher is expected to draw out the key questions from questionnaire/interview guideline below for the dynamics of a specific interview and head of department. Improvise and be as versatile as possible please. Focus on areas of the questionnaire that were not covered in the interview with the principal and explore the particular teaching area of the individual head of department.

Again, the questions are strong guides for areas you need to cover. You do not need to use the specific questions word for word, nor do you have to stick strictly to the order in which they are asked. Rather, you need to interact with the interviewee and probe as much as possible the ways in which comments relate to questions in another section. Sometimes the response to one question will include a response to a later question, in which case you will not need to repeat it. Sometimes a question may not apply to your specific case. You may also add questions specific to your case that are not on the schedule but that will provide you with greater insight.

What is important is that you understand the significance of each Section of questions, and that you cover the areas identified in the questions. Remember that these interviews will be the only fieldwork at the institution and are the only means of understanding the institutional logic.

You should also make notes on the profile of each interviewee, in terms of age, race, gender, qualifications level and experience, and also gain a sense of the size and structure of the management team.

For every interview you do, please record the name, position of the person and the date.

You should take your own notes of key points made in the interview, and write up fuller notes as soon after the interview as possible, for analysis the following week.

C. EMPLOYER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This is a semi-structured interview schedule. The questions are strong guides for areas you need to cover. You should use the Section headings to overally structure the interview. For instance, you might say, "I am going to begin with a set of questions about the links between employers and technical colleges, and the kinds of training that they provide for local labour markets". And later you might say: "Now I am going to move on to a set of questions about the impact of marketing strategies of technical colleges with regard to learners getting employment."

You do not need to use the specific questions word for word, nor do you have to stick strictly to the order in which they are asked. Rather, you need to interact with the employer and either further probe comments or move directly to related questions in another section. You may also want to add questions specific to the case of particular employers that will provide you with greater insight.

What is important is that you understand the significance of each Section of questions, and that you cover the areas identified in the questions. Remember that these interviews will be the only fieldwork /contact with employers and are the only means of understanding the employment and local labour market logic.

You should also make notes on the profile of each interviewee, in terms of age, race, gender, qualifications level and experience, and also gain a sense of the size and structure of the management team.

For every interview you do, please record the name, position of the person and the date.

You should take your own notes of key points made in the interview, and write up fuller notes as soon after the interview as possible, for analysis the following week.

SECTION A: UNDERSTANDING THE NOTION OF PARTNERSHIPS

17. Does your business/industry/employment have any formal/informal links with technical colleges?

Prompt:

Explore different kinds of employment links and partnerships that formal or informal employers have with colleges. Probe specific college links.

18. How successful are such links with colleges?

Prompt:

Probe the nature of links with colleges and how they were set up.

19. If no links exist, explain what kinds of issues would inform such reluctance?

Prompt:

Develop some kind of explanation for the lack of college-industry/employment partnerships.

20. Does the employer have any interns in their employ?

Prompt:

This may be formal internships or informal partnerships where college learners secure holiday or temporary work in whatever kind of employment.

21. Does the employer have any formal/informal links with specific colleges to employ their graduates?

Prompt:

This is different to internships in that it incorporates fulltime employment and is associated more with learners who find employment in their study areas. It may well be that learners upon graduation find employment in industries based on other criteria. Explore and improvise if needed.

22. Does the employer visit colleges and offer information of possible careers or employment opportunity?

Prompt:

Explore the kinds of interventions that employers provide in getting learners into their employ.

23. Have any colleges marketed themselves with the employer and how effective was such marketing?

Prompt:

Explore the level of marketing success of a college

24. Does the employer/industry attempt to inform the types of programmes that colleges provide?

Prompt:

Explore the notion that colleges don't necessarily know the kinds of employment available for learners. Prompt the employer/industry to speak

more about the kinds of jobs learners can secure upon entering the marketplace and the role of colleges in providing relevant training.

25. Does the employer/industry have any particular strategies with regard to employing college learners? What yardsticks do they use to ascertain applicability and relevance to the workplace?

Prompt:

Explore the different kinds of yardsticks and criteria that employers have in employing college learners. Probe this with viewpoints on the types of programmes that certain colleges provide..

26. Does the employer interact in any way with outside bodies in attempting to influence the programmes of colleges:

Prompt:

Explore the perception among employers of formal state bodies and legislation and their impact on the kinds of programmes provided at technical colleges. Discuss the role of the Department of Labour, SETAs and training institutions in developing conducive employment environments.

SECTION B: ALIGNING/ADJUSTING PARTNERSHIPS WITH LEARNER REQUIREMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

27. Who are the learners that employers/industry seek to recruit?

Prompt:

Explore the kinds of learners that employers seek to recruit and their envisaged backgrounds. This information can be gleaned from other reports, but the idea is to further explore employer notions of the learner population and employer buy-in to addressing nationally prioritised employment issues.

28. Discuss the types of learners that study at technical colleges?

Prompt:

Explore perceptions of learners that enrol at colleges, as well as how this perception is informed by perhaps something special colleges are doing. Explore what these special interventions are.

29. What are the reasons for employing or not employing college learners? How is this related to the programmes that technical colleges provide?

Prompt:

Explore the perception of the key strengths or weaknesses of college learners.

30. Is the employer involved in any learnerships? How many?

Prompt:

Learnerships are a new development. Probe how the employer understands this new policy and how it can be operationalised in the workplace. Explore in more detail.

31. Are there any other kinds of training programmes that colleges are involved with employers? Learnerships are very formal and bound up in agreements. Are there any apprenticeships for instance or other training partnerships?

Prompt:

Explore the move away from apprenticeships to learnerships and the difficulties in the new process. Probe the ways in which employers interact with colleges and training providers and what employers regard as their responsibility.

32. Do any formal agreements exist between the employer and the college?

Prompt:

This is a further elaboration of the types of agreements entered into with employers, and how they may sometimes differ from learnership agreements.

33. Does the employer receive any other kind of service from a technical college?

Prompt:

Explore whether the employer receives college assistance in securing holiday workers, or whether the college provides employers with after hours training services (for identified employees).

34. Do employers have particular ways or methods of assessing college learners and their reliability and applicability across the labour market?

Prompt:

The notion of uniform assessment across the labour sector is gaining ground. How effective or pragmatic are such developments?

SECTION C: ASSESSING COLLEGE PROGRAMMES

35. What skills do employers look for in college learners?

Prompt:

Explore how employers develop notions of particular kinds of required skills.

36. Has the industry or local labour market done any surveys to find out the kinds of skills needed and available?

Prompt:

Explore the mechanisms that employers use to inform the policies on employing college learners.

37. Does the local businessperson or industry provide any input through appointment on college Council or college bodies?

Prompt:

How much support does the employer give a college through active participation in the running of the institution?

38. What is the balance between general and specialised skill programmes and what preference is made in the workplace?
Prompt:
Probe the demand for either kind of training
39. What is the required mix of theoretical and practical work?
Prompt
Is there a relation between new technologies and skills requirements and learner access to further practical training?
40. Do you sponsor any student to study at a college?
Prompt:
Discuss the commitment to engaging in expensive training when learners are not guaranteed of employment
41. How much is known about the applicability of college programmes to the market place?
Prompt:
Is there any information available to shed light on this question?
42. Discuss national issues such as the differences in employing men as opposed to women, and the types of employment secured by previously disadvantaged learners?
Prompt:
Has the inequities of the past changed in any substantial way and how is it reflected in the interaction between employers and employed presently?
43. How effective are college marketing strategies?
Prompt:
Probe the different kinds of strategies that colleges use to market themselves, Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of such strategies.
44. Should colleges market themselves more?
Prompt:
Given the large numbers of learners entering the marketplace from various educational sites, how important is marketing?
-

Appendix C

Key Tables that inform the project

1.1 Population of South Africa, October 1999 (Stats SA 2001)

Province	Population in millions
North West	3.6
Kwazulu Natal	9.0
Free State	2.8
Eastern Cape	6.7
Gauteng	7.8
Limpopo/ Northern Province	5.3
Mpumalanga	3.0
Northern Cape	0.9
Western Cape	4.1
<i>South Africa</i>	<i>43.3</i>

APPENDIX D

LIST AND DETAILS OF EMPLOYERS INTERVIEWED

1. NORTH WEST

EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS

<i>PERSON</i>	<i>TEL NUMBER</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>COLLEGE</i>
Mr Lucas Kolby Manager WJ Engineering Wed, 11:00 – 12:00	018 294 3395	Jeppie Street Potchefstroom	Klerksdorp
Mr Stefan Steyn Engineering Manager SASCO Wed, 14:00 – 15:00	018 464 0655	SASCO Klerksdorp	Klerksdorp
Mr S Yaldwin Training manager Anglo Gold Thurs, 08:15 – 09:15	018 478 2860	Klerksdorp [As you drive towards Orkney, turn right at the robot, right at the circle, left at the next robot, right at Vaal Reefs Monument, right at the next circle, 1 st road to your left after taxi ranks, over railway, right at the gate of the Training Centre, just ask for Mr Yaldwin]	Klerksdorp & Potch
Mr Jacques Claassen Manager Kroon Gistery Wed, 12:00 – 13:00	082 829 83 25 056 215 2075	Telephonic interview	Klerksdorp
Ms Emily Slabbert Specialised Protein Products Wed, 14:00-15:00	018 293 3222	24 Jeppie Street [Big white factory, between WJ Engineering and the Abatoir]	Potch

Mr Gert Brummer Small Business Advisory Bureau Thurs, 10:30 – 11:30	018 299 1002	On PU Campus, in Economic Sciences Building, next to Meyer Street Bridge [Will fax map, must contact in advance so that he can arrange parking for you]	Klerksdorp
Mr Johan Landman Chubby Chick Thurs, 11:00 – 12:00	018 293 0202	Luitingh Street Industrial Area [Same road as the Fire Department]	Potch
Mr Johan Engelbrecht Engineering Manager Clover Mon, 08:00 – 09:00	015 924 0661	Telephone interview (Ladybrandt)	Klerksdorp
Ms Lizl Steynberg Head: Education & Training SSACS Mon, 12:00	018 299 1806 083 964 4861	Sport Centre at Tukkies [Will wait for you at the reception area] [has long dark hair and black rimmed glasses]	Klerksdorp
Mr Danie Hugo Public Sector Banker ABSA	018 293 8700		Potch

Appendix E

Persons that contributed to the College study

Administrative contributions:

Matselane Tshukudu
Ansie Carstens
Badiri Moila

Researchers

HSRC Team:

Azeem Badroodien	(in team allocated to North West FET College)
Salim Akoojee	(in team allocated to KZN FET College)
Jacques Du Toit	(in team allocated to Free State FET College)
Tom Magau	(in team allocated to KZN FET College)

Eleven FET researchers were contracted and allocated to particular provinces:

1. Kwazulu Natal

Ellen Strydom
Mervyn Mitchell
Richard Rangiah
Joseph Maseko

2. North West

Rebecca Thamaga
Nathan Molusi
Vicky Malefo
Davis Moropane

3. Free State

Piet Cronje
Nolitha Tsengiwe
Nobantu Mpotulo
Elizabeth Mavhunga

Hillside View College Interviews

The Principal	Mr Lamprecht	White Male
Vice Principal	Mr Roselt	White Male
Heads of Department (Engineering Studies)	Mr van Rensburg Mr Klinck	White Males
Heads of Department (Business Studies)	Ms Swanepoel Mr Senoko	White Female Black Male