Human Resource Development Council for South Africa (HRDC)

POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

15 August 2014

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This brief report was compiled by **TVET Colleges Technical Task Team** for the HRDCSA Secretariat, as an input for the work of the HRDCSA Technical Working Group and Council. The assistance of advisory group and/or working group members is gratefully acknowledged.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET - ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CPD - CONTIUNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DHET - DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TRAINING

FET - FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

HET - HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ILO - INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

NEET - NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

OECD - ORGANISATION OF ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

PSET - POST SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TVET - TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

UNESCO - UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Increasing the appeal of TVET has been noted as a significant policy challenge both nationally and globally. Internationally, there are policy documents that suggest that TVET continues to struggle for parity of esteem with other forms of education (UNESCO, 2012). Nationally, enrolment trends suggest that there is need to expand the role of TVET. Based on DHET enrolment statistics for 2011 (DHET, 2013a: 15); total enrolment at FET colleges was approximately a third of Higher Education (HE) enrolments. The total enrolments for FET colleges and HE institutions combined are approximately a third of the total number of NEETs (DHET, 2013b: 3). This indicates the great urgency to increase access to quality TVET for all. The significance of widening TVET provision is further highlighted by the fact that HE institutions do not have the capacity to fully service the country's education and skills needs. This means that a significant portion of the country's skills development needs has to be taken on by TVET institutions. This perhaps begins to capture the complexity of the challenge facing TVET institutions in South Africa; to open up access while maintaining quality provisioning. Moreover there is also a need to interrogate the nature of the engagement between TVET institutions and the communities that surround them. The question therefore is; in a country where the preference of students and parents is HE, how does TVET begin to attract greater numbers? Institutionally each TVET site will have to be more proactive and robust in engaging with the challenges they encounter on the ground. While the TVET system as a whole requires greater cohesion in leadership and strategy.

In this paper the discussion will be centred on the subject of creating positive learning experiences within TVET institutions. The purpose of this discussion is to; (i) identify the current state of TVET in South Africa, (ii) discuss the direction that TVET institutions should be taking moving forward and (iii) propose a set of recommendations that will provide a blueprint to move TVET from its current state towards an ideal state. The discussions in this paper will consider factors within the institutional environment of the TVET institution which play a role in creating positive learning experiences for students. The challenge of facilitating and maintaining positive learning experiences in TVET institutions is by no means an issue unique to South Africa as Winch (2013: 92-94) alludes to the fact that it is also a challenge globally. This results usually in a situation where TVET becomes a secondary option for a majority of the students who eventually enrol in TVET institutions. It is worth noting, however, that the negative sentiments towards TVET do not stem entirely from events that take place within a particular TVET institution; but rather they are rooted in the wider social opinions of vocational work (Winch, 2013: 93). Part of the challenge then for TVET institutions is providing quality vocational programs and instruction that will appeal to a wide range of people across all demographics of society.

The focus of this paper is not to address the public perception of TVET, but rather how TVET institutions can reconfigure themselves into institutions that provide a viable education alternative. The discussions in this paper are framed within the context of the institutional environment and its role in shaping student experiences. The type of learning environment created within a particular institution has the potential to either enhance or limit the learning experience. Various studies exploring institutional environments indicate a strong link between the institutional environment and student achievement. According to these studies elements of the institutional environment such as buildings, governance, resources, student services and culture are central to creating positive learning experiences (Stevenson, 2007; Earthman, 2004: 18; McGregor, 2004).

The approach adopted by this paper focuses on the TVET institutions (FET Colleges) in the South African context and the components which make up their institutional environment. The aim of this paper is to conceptualise the type of learning environments where students can be empowered through their learning experiences and to discuss some of the challenges faced by TVET colleges in the area of positive learning experiences. In this regard the paper discusses the measures necessary for TVET colleges to creating positive learning experiences for students. The study identifies a number of key factors which contribute significantly to how students engage with the learning environment. The key factors identified include:

- Leadership, Governance & Management

- Teaching & Learning

- Lecturer Development

- Student Services and Infrastructure

2.0   LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

At the most fundamental level principles of good institutional governance are key enablers of accountability, transparency and efficiency within an organisation. These principles of good governance are universally applicable to the organisational design for both public and private entities as well as non-profit organisations (Muswaba, 2012; King III, 2009). The function of governance within any organisation is necessary to ensure coordination of processes, to synchronise the operations of different functional units and to eliminate misalignment between strategy and process (Paim & Flexa, 2011). Good governance can also be understood as a function or product of strong leadership. Without strong and principled leadership good institutional governance is difficult to attain (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2007).

In the context of TVET colleges in South Africa it is important to note two significant governance issues. Firstly there is the issue of administration of the TVET system as a whole and secondly the management of individual institutions. The policy and legislative frameworks underpinning the governance structure and the strategy of TVET colleges in South Africa have been in a constant state of change over the last 10 – 15 years (RSA, 2012; 2006; 1998). The changes which have taken place in TVET policy and legislation have had a significant impact on the nature and structure of governance across the TVET college system. As far as administration of the TVET system DHET has recently taken a more central role in directing the developmental trajectory of the sector. The vision cast by the minister of Higher Education and Training in the Green Paper (DHET; 2012) to place the post-school sector under one umbrella has the potential to strengthen governance and oversight of the sector. However the question of the autonomy of individual TVET institutions continues to linger as individual colleges have to respond to issues at the local level. It is also at the level of the institution where the student's experiences are crafted.

2.1.   Governance

"*Governance is the organization of management [structures]. It refers to the goals, principles, [institutional] charts that define who can make what decisions, as well as the policies and rules that define or constrain what managers can do.*" (Tregear, 2009:1)

Fundamentally good governance underpins all processes and functions of any institutional arrangement as well as institutions themselves. Good governance entails establishing and maintaining a system or structure that will ensure quality and efficiency across institutions (Gill, 2013; Paim & Flexa, 2012; Tregear, 2009). At this point it is worth clarifying the distinction between governance and management. Broadly defined governance entails facilitating processes that ensure institutional compliance with legislative and policy frameworks (system

oversight). Management is concerned with quality assurance, efficiency and sustainability during the process of implementing strategy (Muswaba, 2012; Muswaba & Worku, 2012).

In most instances governance and management can be used interchangeably, however they are quite distinct from each other. Paim and Flexa (2011) have constructed a model that provides a clearer description of the two concepts, the difference between the two as well as how they can be understood within the context of institutional arrangements. Within this particular model the role of governance is to establish the relevant institutional mechanisms required to ensure that institutions within the same system are compliant with the regulatory frameworks stipulated. The role of governance is also to ensure that the way in with institutions are organised is relevant to their function. The model goes on to describe the role of management as steering the implementation of processes throughout the institution clarifying what should be done, who should do it and to align those processes to policy and legislative frameworks (Gill, 2013; Paim & Flexa, 2011).

The conceptual model consists of four levels; strategy, process governance, process management and cross-processes. At the strategy level objectives are set for the institutions, these objectives are interpreted into plans and implementable goals at the process governance level. The leadership located at the process management level have the responsibility to monitor implementation and ensure the logistical feasibility of strategy. Those located at the level of cross-processes are responsible for the practical component of the strategy. This includes both teaching and non-teaching members of staff at a TVET college. The processes flows in both directions [from the top-down as well as bottom-up]; reality at the ground level informs strategy from the top (Paim & Flexa, 2011; Tregear, 2009).
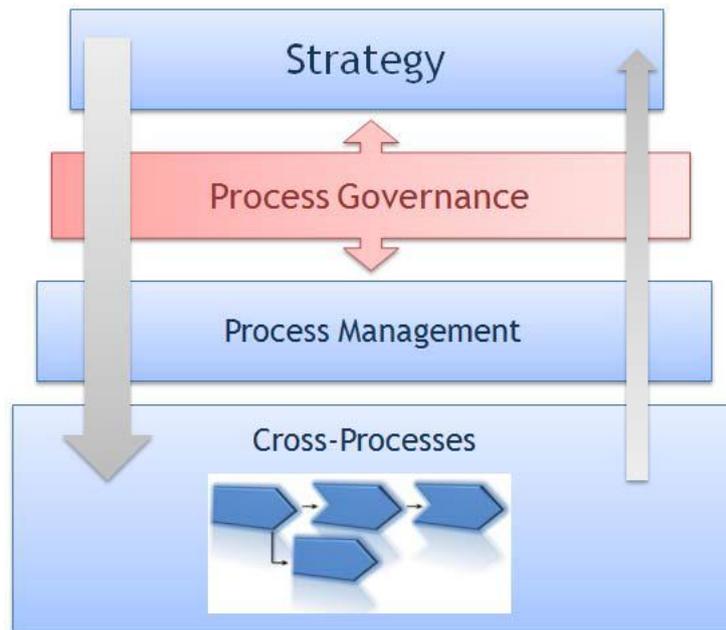
Figure 1 Model for Process Governance (Paim & Flexa, 2011: 2)

Using the above model as a framework one begins to understand the complexities involved in structuring TVET in South Africa. The responsibility of strategic leadership is legally vested in DHET and part of their role entails ensuring cohesion of the sector and providing institutions with the necessary resources and support to meet their strategic mandate. The main challenge in the governance of South Africa's TVET sector is the disjuncture between the strategic and the process management (implementation level) levels. In the Turnaround Strategy for FET Colleges [Turnaround Strategy] (DHET, 2012a), DHET states that;

> "Many college councils and management structures have been dysfunctional and have not provided strategic leadership and guidance in colleges. These conditions create high levels of instability and undermine the effectiveness of the institutions." (DHET, 2012a:3)

This lack of functional institutional leadership has prompted a change in policy, shifting TVET colleges from being a provincial to a national competence. The stance taken by the department is informed by the need to address the inconsistencies in the implementation of strategy at an institutional level as well as to set the tone for the TVET college sector moving forward. From an administrative point of view shifting TVET colleges from provincial to national oversight makes sense. However currently it is not clear whether or not the DHET has the administrative capacity to manage all the colleges in the system. According to the Turnaround Strategy, DHET intends to ensure a system tof accountability for TVET colleges which was lacking in the past (DHET, 2012a: 3 – 8). In order for this system to be created a structure that will provide the point of interface between DHET (Strategic level) and TVET college leadership (process

management level) will have to be established. Alternatively capacity will have to be developed within the DHET to fulfil the role of administration of the TVET system.

2.2. Leadership

It is important for any discussion concerning governance to be foregrounded by articulating the importance of strong leadership. Boin and Christensen (2008) argue that leaders play a significant role in the development of public institutions. They further argue that leadership entails the application of certain strategies and practices that guide institution in its various processes (Boin & Christensen, 2008: 281). Pragmatism is one quality of strong leadership that is highlighted as being crucial for successful leadership. Leaders have the ability to assess the situations they find themselves in and apply the appropriate strategies to move their institutions forward. Leaders operate at all levels; covering the space between policy and implementation. It is the role of the leader to ensure an efficient interface between the two.

Within the context of this particular report the discussion around the leadership role is focused at the level of individual TVET colleges. The leadership role within TVET colleges has been identified by DHET (DHET, 2013c; 2012a) as being essential in the endeavour to make positive learning experiences a reality. When it comes to the subject of institutional leadership two critical questions can be raised. Firstly, is the current leadership structure prescribed for TVET colleges effective in the context of national objectives? Secondly, does the current cohort of TVET college leadership have the capacity to raise the profile of their respective institutions? The FET Amendment Act (RSA, 2012) clearly outlines the structure, responsibilities and the competence areas required of college leadership. The act stipulates seven areas of competence required by members of council, these include; education, business, finance, information technology, law, marketing and human resource development. At the institutional level the leadership role of principals and college councils cannot be underestimated as they are the ones who drive the implementation process. There are a number of case studies cited by Varley (2013) as well as FETI (2013) of the most effective and efficient TVET colleges in the country, these cases highlight the importance of strong leadership within the institutional context.

However, studies that have been conducted over the last few years suggest that not all TVET colleges have strong leadership at their helm. Muswaba and Worku (2012) argue that the division of responsibilities and authority between principals and their councils has a significant impact on the lack of strategy implementation. Their findings suggest that leadership at the institutional level is often "passive" in the decision making process. Arguably college councils are ideally placed to implement progressive interventions, the challenge is to get them to be more proactive in the execution of their roles. A national profile compiled by the HSRC reveals

that competence amongst college council members across South Africa's TVET college system is grouped in four of the seven stipulated competence areas: education, finance, business and law (Cosser et al., 2012). This raises the question of the capacity amongst members of TVET councils; are council members competent enough to provide the type of leadership that will enhance TVET institutions?

2.3.   Recommendations

The role of good governance is often understated but it plays a significant part in ensuring that an institution functions accordingly. The overall leadership of the TVET sector is in the hands of DHET; whose role is to provide strategic leadership and support. It is worth noting that the challenge in governance across the TVET sector lies not with a lack external accountability frameworks (policy, legislation) as these have been clearly established in the relevant Acts and policy documents. The issue however is in the articulation of roles and responsibilities at the various levels of the sector. The challenge rather lies in providing a clear institutional guidelines regarding the structure and function of the various levels of the TVET system. The priority for DHET from a governance point of view is to establish a clear working plan for the sector outlining how the various components of the sector will work together to meet national objectives. The department needs to take a systematic approach that takes into account the long term trajectory of TVET colleges in addressing the persisting challenges in the sector. A quality monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be established for national, provincial and institutional leadership structures. The DHET has the responsibility to provide leadership that empowers TVET colleges on the ground to be more responsive to their various local contexts. Leadership at the college level has to drive innovation, cultivate and sustain partnerships and ensure the well-being of learners. The overarching national strategic and policy objectives must be contextualised within the day to day operations of the college. In order for positive learning experiences to become a reality it is essential for the governance function at TVET colleges to be operating efficiently. In order for this to be achieved the following has to be established;

- The sector needs a guiding framework for governance across all levels. This guiding framework should clearly outline and define implementation roles and responsibilities for all the relevant role players across the different leadership levels. This framework must also provide a clearly articulated organisational structure placing the correct personnel in the correct administrative and leadership roles.

- As the governing authority of the sector DHET need to establish an integrated quality monitoring and evaluation system. This monitoring and evaluation system must take into account the different components and levels of the system and how they feed into

each other. The differing needs of the various colleges have to be considered in the formulation of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the sector.

3.0   LEARNING & LECTURER DEVELOPMENT

"Our understanding of the educational process, and of learning itself, has also changed. We no longer believe that learning is the passive corollary of teaching, or that students do, or should, simply absorb material presented in lectures and textbooks. The new concept of learning recognizes the essential integration of personal development with learning; it reflects the diverse ways through which students may engage, as whole people with multiple dimensions and unique personal histories, with the tasks and content of learning." (NASPA, 2004: 3)

It is vital to note that in order for TVET colleges to be considered as viable education options the standard of teaching and learning must be raised. The discussions in this section concerning teaching and learning are not necessarily aimed at providing remedies for the poor learning outcomes experienced in the TVET sector. The focus is rather on making inputs towards formulating learning environments that are conducive for learners to fully engage with learning processes. This should ultimately contribute to an improvement in learning outcomes over time.

3.1.   Learning Environment

Various enrolment statistics (DHET, 2012; Cosser *et* al, 2012, Gewer, 2010) indicate that unlike their counterparts in general education; TVET colleges have to manage a cohort of students that are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, who are at various stages of maturity and differ significantly in terms of life and work experiences. Moreover it has to be taken into consideration that these students bring with them various socioeconomic factors which make learning within an institutional set-up challenging (Baeten et al., 2010: 247). Baeten et al (2010), highlight some contextual factors which affect students' engagement with institutional learning processes. They highlight the importance of the lecturer's ability to manage the following areas:

- Assessment;

- Feedback;

- Teaching approach;

- Interactivity;

- Discipline

The above mentioned areas form part of the core roles and responsibilities of the teaching profession. Didactically the role of a TVET educator is not so much instruction ("teaching") as it is about facilitation and task management (Rauner, 2007). The nature of the TVET curricula

necessitates that the educator understands the processes involved in guiding students from "novice to expert" (Rauner, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The responsibility of the educator is to gauge the level of the students and apply the appropriate strategies to develop the student to the next level. This requires lecturers have to be both adept at various pedagogic approaches as well as have the necessary industry expertise to provide holistic instruction. Learning in the TVET environment requires active knowledge construction, which in context contributes to advanced thinking and learning activities, resulting in high quality knowledge acquisition. TVET Instruction should provide tools and environments that help students to achieve this (Konings et al., 2005). This approach is based on the developmental paradigm of learning makes it possible to arrange the curriculum content according to a specific learning trajectory (Rauner, 2007; Mulder et al., 2006). It is an approach that is arguably suited to the structure of the NCV curriculum as it makes provision for long term student development. The model itself also attempts to structure in a way that aligns academic outcomes with a professional development path. The key within a problem-based teaching approach is for the lecturer to allow the student to develop their competence levels at a pace that is comfortable to them.

The current challenge facing TVET colleges is that not enough lectures have the capacity to take charge of their learning environments to this extent (Mokone, 2011). It is arguably not enough for lecturers to be subject matter experts only, they need to supplement their own knowledge with sound didactic practices. The issue of developing this capacity amongst the college teaching staff is covered in detail in the continuous professional development section.

3.2.   Contextualising Curriculum

Allais (2011: 6) alludes to the fact that vocational education aims to develop competence and identity. Learners are expected to develop a high level of autonomy, an understanding of the entire work process and of the wider industry, and an integration of manual and intellectual tasks (SQA Accreditation, 2008). This corresponds with De Corte (1990) who argues and highlights the importance of developing the learners' aptitude to solve problems. Problem-solving skills are essential for applying oneself in the contemporary workplace. De Corte (1990) proposes three categories of skills required to develop student's problem solving capacity:

- Flexible application of a well-organized domain-specific knowledge base;

- Systematic search strategies for problem analysis and transformation;

- Metacognitive skills. Students should also be able to transfer knowledge and skills they learned at school to new situations.

From the above it can be inferred that students in TVET have to become competent in applying their knowledge from the classroom in their worlds beyond the school walls. Developing this kind of competence inevitably requires a different approach to applying the curriculum. In order to stimulate active knowledge construction and the acquisition of problem solving skills the learning environment should be problem-based and relevant to the learners. Learners need to be engaged in solving real world problems. Learning tasks or problems should be complex, realistic, and challenging in order to elicit an active and constructive learning process in students (Allais, 2011; Rauner, 2007).

Teaching and learning in the TVET context involves the application of technical skills and knowledge. As such learning is rooted in contexts; such as the workplace or communities where livelihoods can be developed. The role of the lecturer is to facilitate learning environments that will develop students holistically (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Partnerships with industry and professional bodies are a key ingredient in creating that link between the classroom and the world of work for students. Lecturer development must develop the capacity of lecturers to facilitate and support student development accordingly. A balance still needs to be struck between teaching and (occupation specific) technical skills (Mokone, 2011). The classroom and workshop environments must reflect professional standards expected of students in a work context. It is also essential for outcomes and inputs to be aligned to ensure that students develop in a holistic manner.

Part of contextualising the curriculum entails that it is accessible to all learners; regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. Waldrep (2012: 1) highlights six aspects of curriculum delivery that should inform the mode of delivery;

- Mobility (of the learner academically & career-wise);

- Flexibility (can it be delivered in a way that suits the individual learner);

- Intended learning outcomes;

- Access (to learning materials & academic support);

- Global appeal;

- Coolness

There are a number of curriculum delivery modes that could be implemented by FET Colleges in order to widen TVET provision and provide education and training programs to learners in a way that is relevant to them. Currently the majority of TVET colleges are faced with the challenge of being highly dependent on face to face contact between lecturers and learners.

This mode of delivery limits provision only to those who are able to attend classes on a full time basis; in most instances this excludes older learners and those who are already in employment. However it must also be pointed out that there is a significant shortage of ICT infrastructure across amongst a majority of TVET colleges in South Africa. The availability of such infrastructure would allow TVET colleges to support learning platforms such e-Learning and virtual classrooms (Isaacs, 2007). ICT infrastructure would also undoubtedly provide easier access to teaching and learning support for both lecturers and learners.

3.3. Recommendations

If the provision of teaching and learning in the TVET sector is to be widened then TVET colleges have to consider themselves as institutions to be different from schools (UNESCO, 2012). TVET curricula is dynamic and the learner profiles more diverse (Gewer, 2010). This implies that there is more room for colleges to be innovative in their methods of curriculum delivery. Ultimately the learning process is about the learner pursuing their own development in a way that is suitable for them thus accessing that learning need not be a cumbersome experience for them.

- TVET colleges must be equipped with the necessary infrastructure to support various teaching and learning platforms simultaneously. This infrastructure must me readily available to both lecturers and learners. TVET colleges need to develop the capacity to support physical as well as virtual learning spaces.

4.0   CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The concept of continuing professional development (CPD) simply defined is the process by which teachers and lecturers (like other professionals) reflect upon their competences, maintain them up to date, and develop them further. CPD is not limited to formal training only but should include on-the-job learning as well. Day's (1999) definition of CPD encompasses all behaviours which are intended to effect change in the classroom:

> *'Professional development consists of all natural learning experience and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute, through these to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives'* (Day, 1999, p. 4)

Continuing Professional Development of college lecturers in the sector is crucial to the success and effectiveness of the sector. Anthony Gewer (2013, p. 6) states "Lecturers are ill-equipped to cope with the academic and social demands of these students, and often bemoan the low education and maturity levels of these students". The South African College Principals Organisation (SACPO) in their Training Needs Assessment (TNA) Study stated that 'Acknowledging the fact that the preparation of lectures is indispensable in delivering effective and efficient vocational education and training programmes, the need for a comprehensive training and development programme cannot be over-emphasised.'

A Training Needs Assessment study commissioned by SACPO revealed the following:

- A large number of the respondents in the study acknowledged that they are facing challenges in various aspects of teaching and learning

- They are gaps in the capabilities of lectures given the competence required for effective lecturing

- The major priority areas for development are listed as ICT, policy and legislative context; assessment practices, coping with large classes and strategies for remedial teaching and for teaching mixed ability classes

Nazrene Mannie (2013, p. 2) argues that addressing Lecturer Capacity is one of the key factors to be addressed for the TVET sector to become effective. The TNA SACPO study identified the following areas needed in lecturer development:

- Induction and orientation to further education and training programmes

- Deepening lecturers content knowledge in the different subject areas

- Policy and legislation

- Understanding how students learn [instructional guidance and classroom supervision]

- Facilitation strategies and [action] research skills

- Selecting appropriate instructional material

- Using appropriate instructional methods to promote effective learning

- Assessment practices to measure student performance

- ICTs and how to integrate them in the teaching and learning process

- Curriculum management and instructional leadership

The findings of the TNA study 48% of the NC (V) lecturers interviewed had no training of any kind at all in the last two years. A study conducted for the EDTP-SETA (Mokone, 2011) has similar findings to the SACPO study regarding the training needs of lecturers:

- teaching methodologies;

- communication management;

- financial management;

- accounting management;

- conflict management

- project management and office practice

- adult and multicultural learning

- team building

- student and classroom management

- leadership

Justification for the need for CPD is clearly evident; this section focuses the discussion on best practice models of how to implement CPD.

4.1. Models of CPD

There are various models of CPD for the teaching profession and Kennedy (2005) presents 9 models in which CPD is conducted.

- *Training Model* - This model supports a skills-based, technocratic view of teaching where CPD provides teachers with the opportunity to update their skills in order to demonstrate their competence. It is generally 'delivered' to the teacher by an 'expert' with the agenda determined by the deliverer and the participant placed in a passive role. Training is usually delivered off-site and this has led to criticism about its lack of connection to the current classroom context in which participants work.

- *Award Bearing Model* - Usually done in conjunction with a higher education institution and results in accreditation. The external validation can be viewed as a mark of quality assurance, but can be equally viewed as the exercise of control by the validating and/or funding bodies. There is a danger of managers relying too heavily on it as they provide easily auditable evidence of training and development. (mcgraw-hill, 2013)

- *Deficit Model* - CPD designed specifically to address a perceived deficit in lecturer performance. It is linked to the performance management of lecturers which would need a baseline measure of competence to be determined. It is individually tailored but may not be good for confidence and is unsupportive of the development of a collective knowledge base within the college. It has been criticised for attributing poor teacher performance to individual weaknesses and not considering the organisational and management practices that also influence performance.

- *Cascade Model* - This model involves individual teachers attending a 'training event' and then cascading or disseminating the information to colleagues. It can be implemented in situations where resources are limited. Criticism against the model relates to the accuracy of how the learning is cascaded down to the other teachers.

- *Standards Based Model* – this assumes that there is a system of effective teaching, and is not flexible in terms of teacher learning. The model focuses on maintaining standards in the profession.

- *Coaching /Mentoring Model* – The defining characteristic of this model is the importance of the one-to-one relationship, generally between two teachers, which is designed to support CPD. For it to be successful, participants must have well-developed interpersonal communication skills

- *Community of Practice Model* - involves more than two people learning from and teaching each other. Increased potential to work well through combining the knowledge bases of members.

- *Action Research Model* - The teachers themselves are researchers with a view to improve the quality of the actions within the group. Allows teachers to be critical of their own practice and allows a transformative process

- *Transformative Model* - The integration of several different types of the previous models, with a strong awareness and control of whose agenda is being addressed.

Kennedy (2005) described the Training Model, Award Bearing Model, Deficit Model and Cascade Model as essentially being transmission methods, which give little opportunity for teachers to take control over their own learning. Coaching/Mentoring, Community of Practice and the Standards Based model are more transformational and give more capacity for professional autonomy. The last 2 models provide even more professional autonomy as they give teachers more power to determine their own learning pathways.

Direct teaching or training, the traditional perception of CPD, is often perceived as a top-down delivery model of CPD, where information on methods is passed on to teachers for them to implement (Jo Rose, 2007). Rose and Reynolds (2007) argue that awareness of less formal and traditional forms of CPD is slowly growing, and teachers are encouraged to become more creative in approaches to their own professional development, and move away from more traditional transmission-based methods.

According to the TNA study by SACPO although South African lecturers are required to list their professional development needs in their personal development plans (PDPs) which are based on a performance appraisal, there is no evidence that the results were used to plan professional development/growth activities or interventions. The study also found that only 51.4% of managers were using the performance appraisal and PDPs as tools for professional development in their institutions. Mokone (2011) states that according to SADTU 'no lecturer development is presently happening' (Gauteng Provincial FET Summit, 2010). Professional development has generally been practiced by having in-service courses for all lectures and teachers each time there are changes in the curriculum or in the assessment of practices. The TNA study by SACPO found that very few lectures had attended any conferences or seminars with only 21% of NC(V) lectures attending any assessor training.

From the TNA study, we can conclude that CPD in South Africa has tended to lean towards a combination of the Training Model and the Deficit Model which is based on performance appraisal. The poor implementation of both these methods would suggest that the FET sector needs to implement more holistic model that incorporates all the advantages of the different

CPD models. A growing research base suggests that to be most effective, CPD activities should:

- be spread over time
- be collaborative
- use active learning
- be delivered to groups of teachers
- include periods of practice, coaching, and follow-up
- promote reflective practice
- encourage experimentation, and
- respond to teachers' needs.

Rose and Reynolds (2007) argue that a successful CPD model includes a variety of methods. Their recommendations highlight that CPD should no longer be comprised solely of short courses; teachers need opportunities to reflect, engage in professional dialogue, work with students, engage in peer observation, coaching and feedback. The Transformative Model of CPD would therefore be the best model to implement. Leeds City College as further learning and sixth-form college in the UK has adopted the CPD model in the diagram below. E-learning is central to the entire approach of their CPD.

Diagram 1: The Holistic CPD Model: Developing and Supporting Staff

Professional associations play an important role in the implementation of CPD. Currently; FET Lecturers are not required to be registered by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) (South African Council of Educators, 2011). SACE has a Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) hand-book that caters for SACE-registered school-based educators. SACE endorses professional development (PD) activities based on their fitness of purpose and quality, and in doing so it ensures that professional development is purposeful and effective. The recent legislative changes that categorised TVET colleges under DHET resulted in confusion regarding the professional registration of college lecturers. SACE has argued that the professional registration of TVET lecturers should fall under its jurisdiction rather than establishing a new professional body.

Despite the ambiguity regarding the professional registration of TVET lecturer an effective CPD programme should be established. The DHET together with the colleges can ensure that CPD championed by the lecturers themselves is implemented. A review of CPD programmes of various professional bodies indicates that effective CPD programmes employee-driven rather than employer-driven. Findings from a study conducted in FET colleges in the Free State recommended the following (Lieve Leroy, 2012):

- Guidelines and criteria for developing a functional, effective skills development unit at the TVET college be developed. These guidelines will also clarify duties and responsibilities for all people involved in organising staff development.

- Management should be involved in process, in order to set up relevant and focused professional development. Management has to put quality teaching and learning on the agenda and prioritise it.

- Lecturers need to change their perceptions of teaching and move towards being facilitators and guides in the learning process

- Colleges need support in setting up efficient and feasible monitoring of professional development.

- Some lecturers not only lack educational and pedagogical training but also work experience in industry. Workplace based learning opportunities need to be created for all lecturers teaching vocational subjects.

- Needs analysis will have to be conducted at each campus in order to develop customised professional development.

4.2. Policy on Profession Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The DHET gazetted the Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in June 2013. The policy states that:

Lecturers are central to the educational activity in institutions that offer TVET. Sufficient, appropriately qualified and competent lecturer, who understand and have expertise in both the academic and work-related dimensions of TVET, are needed if the institutions that offer TVET programmes are to make the critical contribution expected of them. (DHET, 2013c)

The Policy of Professional Qualifications in TVET makes available a set of professional qualifications designed specifically for TVET lecturers. The policy recognises that lecturers need to be discipline specialist as well as specialist teachers who fully understand the context in which they are working. It takes into account the following:

- A wide range of subjects/fields at different NQF levels are taught in institutions offering TVET, lecturers are needed for all the subjects and lecturers need to be able to teach across the different NQF levels within their subject or field.

- Lecturers who teach TVET courses need to be competent in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the courses that they teach.

- A strong workplace component must be built into lecturer qualification programmes for programmes that prepare lecturers to teach the practical or workshop-based components of programmes, in order that lecturers are able to prepare learners for the demands and requirements of the workplace.

- Curriculum offerings in institutions that offer TVET change as workplace demands change – for example in response to the development of new technologies – and qualification programmes must be able to respond flexibly and dynamically to industry-driven change.

The policy recognises that lecturers need to be discipline specialist as well as specialist teachers who fully understand the context in which they are working. The following post-professional qualifications for TVET lecturers will enable advanced study, role and function specialisation, and research in TVET:

- **Advanced Certificate in Technical and Vocational Educational and Training** – provides TVET lecturers with a sound knowledge base for teaching a particular

vocational subject, as well as the ability to apply their knowledge and skills to lecturing.

- **Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Education and Training** – To strengthen and enhance an existing specialisation in a subject, or to develop a new role or practice to support teaching and learning in an institution offering TVET programmes

- **Postgraduate Diploma in Technical and Vocational Education and Training** – serves to strengthen professional practice in a teaching specialisation, role or practice to the extent that the graduate is positioned to take on a leadership role in the TVET environment

The policy has defined the basic competences required for effective TVET lecturers. All professionally qualified lecturers must have the following minimum set of competences

- Sound knowledge base in terms of their own subject specialisation. Should know how to teach the subject, how to select, sequence and pace content in accordance with both subject and learner needs.

- Sound understanding of the TVET context in SA.

- Must know who their learners are and must use this knowledge to adjust teaching and learning approaches to accommodate learner diversity.

- Possess advanced speaking, reading and writing skills in order to communicate effectively.

- Must be able to manage teaching and learning environments effectively

- Must be able to assess learners in varied and reliable ways and to use the results of assessment both to improve learners' learning through a variety of types of feedback, and to improve their own practice.

- Must be ICT literate.

- Must be knowledgeable about the demands that will be made on their learners in the workplace.

This policy recently published by government will ensure that lecturers in the TVET sector are competent and effective. This has helped establish a foundation to enable CPD to start happening in the sector.

4.3. Recommendations

- A professional body for TVET lecturers should be established, which like SACE determines minimum requirements for professional registration and the minimum professional qualifications. SACE argues (2011) argues that an agency outside of a government department is needed to monitor the professionalisation and ensure that all who teach in the TVET sector have minimum qualifications. SACE could be given this mandate or separate body specifically for the TVET sector could be established. The professional body will ensure that educators engage in endorsed professional development activities.

- A performance appraisal system tailored to the TVET sector that allows Professional Development Plans to be submitted and implemented.

- A holistic CPD model that includes professional qualifications, coaching, mentoring, peer observation and feedback.

5.0 STUDENT SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Part of the vision outlined in the Green Paper for TVET colleges moving forward is increasing enrolments and making TVET colleges viable post-school institutions (DHET, 2012a). This is arguably quite a daunting challenge for TVET colleges considering the dynamics of South Africa's post school sector. From the perspective of the skills development agenda the post-school space is occupied by a variety of institutions and learning pathways. The intersection of these various pathways has the potential to be quite confusing for prospective students. In this section the discussion will focus on the interaction between TVET colleges and their prospective students. The primary question in this regard being; how can TVET colleges become institutions of choice amongst prospective students and parents? Naturally students must find it appealing to enrol for studies at a particular institution not only based on the content of the training programs but also on how their affiliation with the college will position them for careers afterwards. It is therefore essential for TVET colleges to position themselves to make positive links with students even prior to their enrolment. The sectional also reviews the challenges and opportunities of the pre-enrolment engagement between TVET colleges and prospective students. The two factors discussed are; enrolment management and career development.

5.1 Enrolment

If one considers the current profile and background of TVET students, it is noticeable that TVET colleges are attracting students from a wide range of academic backgrounds (DHET, 2013a). Gewer (2010) notes that despite the differing student backgrounds, the trend nationally is that students who enrol in TVET colleges are there because of circumstances they find themselves in. Circumstances such as not being able to obtain their National Senior Certificate (NSC), unable to find a job or unable to carry on to Higher Education (Stumpf & Niebuhr, 2012; Gewer, 2010). Traditionally the format of South Africa's education system has created a high demand for access into higher education institutions. This is one of the factors that have led to the disparity of esteem between higher education institutions and TVET institutions, even at a global level (UNESCO, 2012). Annually there are reports of great numbers of school leavers queuing outside universities and being turned away due to a lack of spaces at universities. Those students who are not fortunate enough to be granted access subsequently end up enrolling at TVET colleges (DHET, 2013a: 2; Gewer, 2010: 13). For many, pursuing a vocational qualification forms part of a contingency plan that will hopefully lead them to employment (Magome et al., 2013). An article which appeared in the Mail & Guardian (Nkosi, 2013) in January 2013 reports on some of the views of parents and school leavers regarding TVET colleges. The general impression is one of scepticism and doubt, with a majority of

respondents citing concerns of TVET qualifications not leading anywhere; especially employment. This raises a number of questions;

- What is the ideal point of entry (NQF level 2 or NQF level 4) for enrolment into TVET colleges?

- How are TVET colleges marketing their programs within their immediate communities or regions?

- Do TVET colleges have measures in place to ensure effective and efficient student identification and placement?

Internationally education institutions employ some form of enrolment management system to interface with students; both current and prospective. Enrolment management is a comprehensive process designed to help achieve and maintain optimum enrolment [recruitment, retention and graduation rates] (Lucido, 2013; Seidman, 1995). In addition an enrolment management is also concerned with the most appropriate method to market college programs, creating the best learning and teaching environment for students and maximising the students' time at the institution.

"Enrolment management begins with first student-client contact. It is a deliberate process that requires time for planning, full implementation and development of the information infrastructure that will sustain the efforts" (Seidman, 1995)

Lucido (2013) highlights the potential for education institutions to achieve parity in environments where there is a disparity in enrolments through the implementation of an effective enrolment management systems. A couple of studies conducted amongst universities and colleges in the US seem to indicate that recruiting students strategically has the potential to be beneficial for both the institution as well as prospective students (Lucido, 2013; Seidman, 1995). As a strategy enrolment management should be incorporated into a college's admissions strategy, focus and align the administrative goals to the strategic objectives set by college leadership. At the core of these processes should be the objective of streamlining the process of enrolling students (Bourbon, 2013).

The greatest challenge faced by TVET colleges is how to position themselves and their programs as viable education options. Currently there are limited accounts or reports of what is taking place in individual TVET colleges regarding the colleges' interaction with prospective students. This makes it difficult to gain any significant insight into the challenges and obstacles faced by specific TVET colleges on the ground as well as the TVET college system as a whole. Some examples include instances where TVET colleges provide guidance, screening and placement for students (Maluti FET College, 2012; Ekurhuleni East College, 2012). There is

also the case of the MOT program implemented by FETI in TVET colleges within the Western Cape (FETI, 2013). The MOT program endeavours to develop the student holistically; including life skills, self-awareness and personal affirmation. On a wider enrolment scale Gewer (2010) cites an example of the Western Cape and how colleges in that province are opening themselves up to prospective learners:

"The Western Cape seems to have adopted a deliberate strategy to attract these learners through coordinated and targeted marketing. The colleges would collaborate, under the leadership of the Provincial Department of Education to drive this strategy. A similar approach could work in other regions, but would require the colleges to proactively take the lead, particularly as the functions of the provincial Departments of Education get transferred to the national DHET." (Gewer, 2010: 14)

What the above example indicates is that some TVET colleges have identified the need to be proactive in establishing a link between themselves and their surrounding communities. This corresponds with the vision set out by the minister in the Green Paper (DHET, 2012a) of extending the reach of TVET colleges. Purposeful recruitment is beneficial from the college's perspective as it enables the college to:

- Prioritise specific programs

- Target students with the required aptitude

- Manage the course load for lecturers

- Allocate resources accordingly

- Align themselves with national objectives

5.1.1 Recommendations

The critical issue as far as enrolments are concerned is how to make FET Colleges the institutions of choice for students. Part of the task includes increasing public awareness of what TVET colleges have to offer as well as the potential development opportunities open to students upon completion. Short-term DHET needs to engage with the various TVET colleges to get a better sense of what interventions are being implemented. The department would then have to strengthen existing programs or develop the capacity in cases where there are no interventions in place. TVET college across the national system will have to start engaging with schools to increase their visibility to students and position themselves as feasible education alternatives.

- It is important for TVET colleges to be able track students from application to graduation. In this regard it is essential for TVET colleges to develop their own systems

to be able to identify the aptitude of prospective student's aptitude early and place them in a training program where they will excel.

- Mid to long term a centralised application system for TVET colleges will have to be developed by DHET. This system would work in a similar way to that of the centralised system of universities. This would allow the department to monitor and control the spread of students across the system. The feedback of data from the system could also inform how TVET colleges market themselves.

4.2.   Career Development

Career advice services play a significant role in shaping the decisions one makes about their career prospects. Within the context of TVET it is much more of an imperative due to the nature of the curriculum (Zelloth 2010). Career guidance services are about providing students with the most up to date careers information. The career advice services offered to a student must be tailored to the development path (both educational and career) chosen by that particular student (Paulsen, 2012).The consensus across international studies sees the move away from once-off career presentations towards continuous career mapping (Zelloth 2010; Hoxte 2002; Borgen & Hiebert, 2002). Career development is defined as; "services that are intended to assist individuals of any age, at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training, occupational choices and to manage their careers" (OECD, 2004: 19). Career development is seen as part of a Lifelong Learning (LLL) framework and is crucial for helping the individuals (especially youth) manage the transitions between learning environments and working environments. It must also be noted that globally TVET is located at a crucial intersection point of economic and education activity. An efficient and effective career guidance service is one that according to Borgen & Hiebert (2002):

Provides a comprehensive account of learning and career opportunities;
- Assist students achieve their full education and vocation potential;

- Assistance and guidance must be specific to the individual student;

- Ensure that the student is actively engaging with learning processes;

- Helps students make meaningful contributions to their communities;

- Fully market opportunities open to students within the TVET sector

These services are meant to empower the student to make positive decisions regarding their training as well as their potential careers. According to Zelloth (2010) and Hoxte (2002) efficient career guidance services are an essential for TVET colleges for the reduction of waste in the following areas:

- Allocation of training resources;

- Human Capital;

- Time spent in training (for both the learner and the teacher)

"Effective counselling, guidance and advisory services can often help to maximize the return on investment of money spent on TVET programmes. For example, in some countries, money is wasted because students lack commitment to the programme being offered: they drop out of the programme before they finish or having finished it they then seek employment in an unrelated field" (Hiebert & Borgen 2002: 134).

There is an emerging trend across the EU where the notion of career guidance is conceptualised as a means of assisting individuals manage the transitions between various economic activities. Students enrol onto TVET programs with the intention of moving from one mode of economic activity to another; for example from school to employment or unemployment to employment (Paulsen, 2012; Zelloth, 2010). The changing nature of work has also prompted a shift away from a formal labour market to a more informal one. All these changes necessitate dynamic career development services within TVET colleges that continuously engage students on their prospective career paths and manage the various transitions that students make during their study tenure (Zelloth, 2010: 5 – 6). The diagram below shows the various categories of students moving through the TVET system. It is vital for career guidance services to cater to the specific category the student may be in, managing the transition accordingly. This particular model of career development speaks to the function of TVET Colleges in the South African context. TVET colleges are tasked with providing a post-school solution to the challenge of NEETs, training school leavers as well as facilitating occupational development.
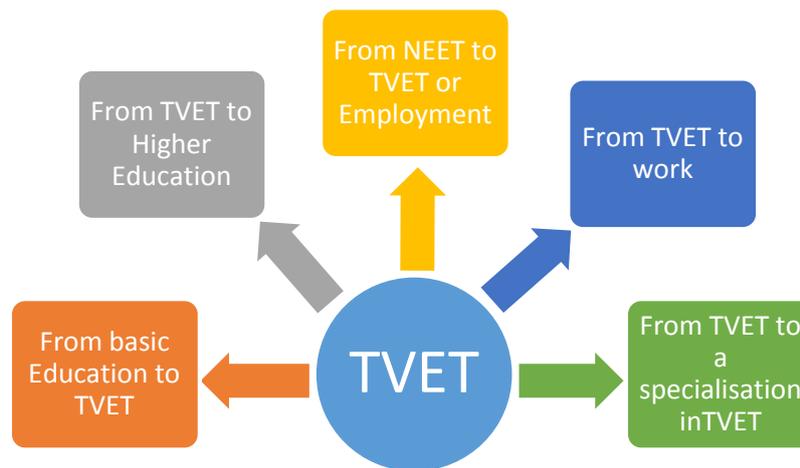
Figure 2: Career Development Model; "managing" the transitions. (Zelloth, 2010: 7)

Arguably the current situation that TVET colleges find themselves in makes engaging with students before they enrol critical. Some TVET Colleges have recognised the importance of pre-enrolment career guidance and there is move towards more collaboration with industry players to ensure its effectiveness. The following case study illustrates this point.

Case Study

FET College Open Days

Four of the public FET Colleges in the Western Cape shared a joint Open Day on 19 and 20 April 2013 to provide the youth with valuable information related to following their career dreams through studies at an FET College. Continuously responding to the call to make public FET Colleges institutions of first choice, College of Cape Town again joined forces with their sister institutions Boland College, False Bay College and Northlink College to promote the quality of education and related services offered by our Colleges.

A very wide, active marketing campaign across print media, radio stations and via direct marketing to schools and our communities saw thousands of interested school learners and Life Orientation educators, unemployed youth, parents and guardians flocking to Crawford Campus for this fun event. Visitors were able to discuss academic issues with staff, whilst also having the opportunity to engage with current students about the experiences of life as a College student.

Activities allowing visitors to experience elements of their future careers were on offer at every academic department's display and ranged from icing cupcakes (Hospitality) to taking blood pressure (Primary Health), inspecting the inner workings of the motor vehicle (Mechanical Engineering) and the simplicity of building an electric fencing system (Electrical Engineering),

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to name but a few. The Hair care and Beauty Therapy students provided very popular hairdressing and nail therapy treatments free of charge to visitors, whilst a group of our very youngest students, the toddlers from the Gardens Campus Day-care Centre, enjoyed their lessons and daily activities as part of the Education & Training display. MerSETA representatives provided career information to future engineering artisans, whilst a variety of industry partners provided the same. Students could also obtain information on counselling, sports and other support activities from the Student Support Services display (Grobelaar, 2013: 8).

Career development is integral to the leaning process within TVET and there are two distinct points where the intervention can be implemented (Watts, 2009):

- Prior to enrolling onto a training program

- During the training program

Both approaches have their advantages and could be quite useful for TVET colleges in their endeavour to provide cutting edge career mapping. Colleges need to develop effective career development approaches which integrate pre-enrolment career guidance as well as post-enrolment (once registered) career development. It is vital to provide students with the necessary inputs before they decide on the courses they need to follow their desired career route. It might be less practiced but it is critical to continuously engage with students as they proceed through their studies.

4.2.1. Recommendations

Prior to students entering into specific vocational courses it would be beneficial for a college to offer a course or a program dealing with various career issues. These programs could either be a stand-alone or integrated into specific courses. The most relevant South African example would be to utilise Life Orientation (mandatory subject for Grades R-9) more strategically. TVET Colleges could either capacitate current teaching staff to provide up-to-date career guidance services or they could hire specialist career advisors. In this regard an argument could be made for the latter option. Teaching personnel at the TVET college need to focus on teaching and learning. The role of career guidance counsellors could be given to retired professionals who may still have enough capability to pass on their professional knowledge. These retired professionals bring with them knowledge that they have gained through years of experience on the job. This means that they will be able to provide students with a clear view of their whole career trajectory. They will also be able to play a mentoring role with the students as they will not be encumbered with teaching responsibilities.

Once students have enrolled onto a course the focus of career development shifts from one of orientation to that of guidance. One must also consider the fact that there will be students who have an employment background who have to be taken into account. It is therefore important for career development services to emphasise the potential career paths open to the students. This could include opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship. Some of this can be integrated into the mainstream programme; some might be provided as a separate element within the programme (Watts, 2009: 7).

4.3. STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELFARE

FET colleges have been plagued by low pass rates, poor retention and throughput of learners. An effective student support service would help increase the graduation and college retention rates. The Framework for the Student Support Services TVET colleges (SSS Framework) states that *"Students are likely to achieve academically when they are supported by colleges to make the correct programme choices, properly oriented to the college, supported academically and provided with opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities* (DoE, 2008)

Student Support Services should be able to provide students with pre-entry, on course and exit level support. The following diagram illustrates the model proposed in the SSS Framework.
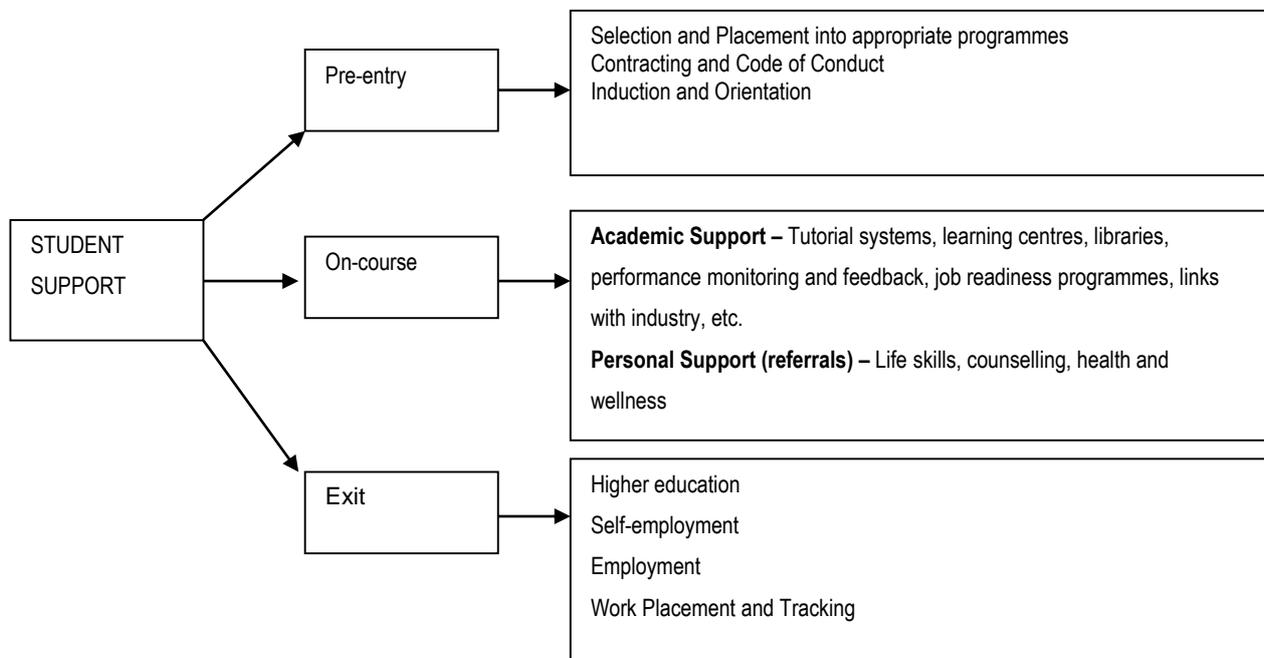

Figure 3: Student Support Framework

Source: Student Support Services Framework, DoE 2008

A well coordinated Student Support Service unit is essential to creating a positive learning environment. As noted by Cooper (2010) effective support services have an integrated network of academic, social and financial support. The Turnaround Strategy for TVET colleges (DHET, n.d) states that each college should have a fully functional career guidance and development centre.

Although the SSS Framework exists, aspects of it haven't been properly implemented at the TVET colleges. *"The development of such support services has been uneven across the 50 FET Colleges and has not been prioritised. If colleges are to be truly 'student-centred', Student Support Services (SSS) should not be treated as a 'nice to have' but should be integral to the FET College teaching and learning system"* (DoE, 2008). According to Gewer (2013) the limited capacity of to accommodate the large number of youth wanting to enrol at the start of the academic year has lead to delays in the registration process, weak communication, limited career guidance and advice and poor administration of the NSFAS bursary.

The ETDP SETA places 200 Career Development Officers to assist learners with career and vocational guidance in October 2013. Each of the 50 TVET colleges has four Officers to strengthen the Student Support Services department.

4.3.1. Academic Guidance and Advising

It has been noted that FET colleges are not the institutions of first choice for the majority of students there. The low throughput rates and high dropout rates are largely due to the under-preparedness of students for college education (Ceza, p. 2) "*Student Academic Development Programmes which are support services for learners should thus be an integral part of every institution if there has to be high retention and throughput rates*"

The academic guidance provided should evaluate and assess individual students prior to enrolment to ensure provision of bridging courses if required. Lessons can be learnt from the strategy employed by Walter Sisulu University (WSU) to provide academic support to its entrants. The WSU Throughput Strategy: Access, Retention and Success (Ceza) is anchored on the following:

- **Standardised Assessment Test for Access and Placement (SATAPS) –** performed after admission but before registration. '*The test serve to identify weaknesses, which can then be addressed by adapting curricula to specific needs*'

- **Orientation -** to help student overcome problems with course selection
- **Supplemental Instruction (SI) -** is intended for high-risk courses and not high-risk students. High-risk courses are courses with a consistent high failure rate. Senior students who had performed well in those particular courses are recruited and hired by the institution to assist the junior level students
- **Mentorship –** a one-on-one support mechanism
- **Life Skills -** WSU offers Life Skills as an academic support course. Its modules equip the students for meaningful and successful living and the ability to cope with university demands.
- **Academic Literacy –** is offered as academic support course which is meant for students at risk of English as a medium of instruction.
- **Writing and Reading Centres –** are computer laboratories which are installed with Language software so as to help students to learn English through interactive games and exercises. The centres are meant to improve the language competences of the learners and address any deficiencies.

Community colleges in the United States of America have an approach similar to the strategy adopted by WSU. According to Cooper (2010, p. 23) *"Improving academic services at community colleges is crucial because most entering students arrive with academic deficiencies that limit their ability to engage effectively in college-level courses"* They have implemented 'student success courses' which prepare students for college life, teaching time management skills, basic skills, study skills and critical thinking strategies.

Given the low pass rates that have characterised the TVET sector, it is critical that Academic Guidance and Support units be established at each TVET college. Studies on student retention suggest that early warning programs designed to identify students at risk of dropping out can also be effective tools to improve persistence and graduation rates (Beck & Davidson, 2001; Reisberg, 1999). The early warning system is based on mid-term results and students identified with two or more fails are viewed as more likely to drop-out. The early warning system implemented together with the strategies employed by WSU such as Supplementary Instruction and Mentorship could ensure lower dropout rate.

Career guidance should be done in cooperation with General Education and Training (GET) and various concerned agencies in the public and private sectors. The United Kingdom has a National Career Service, operated by qualified career guidance counsellors with the latest

labour market information. The National Career Services provides online career guidance and one-to-one telephone helpline service for adults in England over 16 years (British Council, UK Trade & Investment, 2012). It is important that students in South Africa have the correct information at hand to make correct educational and career choices, and for this information to be made readily available. In October 2012 a Framework for Cooperation in the provision of Career Development Services in South Africa was released by the DHET and SAQA (DHET, SAQA, 2012). The vision encompassed by the framework is to ensure that all people, of all ages, have access to quality career information and career service throughout their lives by establishing a Career Development Service.

4.3.2. Counselling and Social Networks

Students face academic and non-academic challenges which can hinder the successful completion of studies. Cooper (2010, p. 23) states that *'Regardless of how academically prepared students are for college, even well-constructed educational plans can be significantly altered by both unexpected life events and ongoing personal problem.'* Personal guidance and counselling will assist students confront non-academic challenges.

A study by the FET Institute in 2012 observed that some FET college students were not self-motivated, were demoralised and had low self-esteem (FETI, p. 3). This strengthens the argument for a well established and adequately equipped Student Support Services centre. Community colleges in the USA having acknowledged that 30% of their students are parents, have begun to involve the family network in counselling and other support programs. The Family Education Model (FEM) – commonly used at the community colleges addresses the need for family based interventions. Student Support Services should help the social challenges faced by the students in their community. The MOT SA initiative has worked with FET colleges in the Western Cape to help equip students with life-skills and has helped increase drop-out rates.

4.4. Infrastructure and Extra-curricular activities

Technical and vocational education involves acquisition of practical skills related to various sectors of the economy. The institutions providing TVET should therefore be adequately equipped to provide such practical skills. Gewer (2013:7) states that many TVET colleges are facing infrastructural and resource challenges associated with the delivery of practical skills in the workshops. A study by the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity development in Higher

Education (NICHE) for TVET institutions in developing countries including South Africa stated the following:

> *'Where present, the equipment in workshops and laboratories is often outdated, bearing little resemblance to the technologies currently used by industry. Insufficient training equipment leads to trainee overcrowding during practical demonstrations, with most of the students only observing the demonstration and not having the opportunity to get some hands-on practice. Due to the fact that the institutions are poorly resourced, the education and training remains theoretical and the graduates are not considered more skilled than their academic counterparts by the labour market'* (NICHE, p. 5)

The findings by NICHE concur with the views of Gewer (2013, p. 8) *'NC(V) students do not have sufficient time to practice the application of the theory they have acquired. This is confirmed by feedback from some industries that, while the theoretical knowledge of NCV graduates is fairly sound, these graduates are seriously lacking in practical skills.'* The low employability, due to the inadequate practical skills, of TVET graduates leads to a poor image in society and this reduces its attractiveness to potential students.

The DHET announced plans to refurbish infrastructure through the FET College Campus Refurbishment Programme based on an infrastructure audit in 2012 (Nzimande D. B., 2012). A study by Booyens (2012) showed that some students are advised to enrol for courses on the basis of availability. The college in the study had limited resources for practical courses and those limited resources determined the number of students who are able to enrol for such a course. Students with an interest and aptitude for certain fields should not be forced to study other courses due to infrastructure limitations.

1.1.1. Extra-curricular Activities

FET Colleges have evolved from being dominated by Nated programmes (which required students to spend less time at the institutions) to providing the NCV programmes which are 3 year-full-time programmes. Students are now spending more time at the FET colleges than they did previously and additional infrastructure for extra-curricular activities is needed.

In order for TVET colleges to develop well-rounded individuals', colleges need to be equipped and have the infrastructure in place to provide extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities are beneficial at an individual student level, institutional level and the broader community level. The numerous experiences from extracurricular have a positive impact on the students' emotional, intellectual, social, and inter-personal development. By working

together with other individuals, students learn to negotiate, communicate, manage conflict, and lead others. Taking part in these out-of-the-classroom activities helps students to understand the importance of critical thinking skills, time management, and academic and intellectual competence and thereby preparing them for the world of work. Students need organised sport and cultural activities to engage them and foster a college identity.

The ideal TVET college will be able effectively deliver on technical and vocational skills in an environment that allows personal development.

1.2. NSFAS

Inadequate student accommodation has been cited as one of the challenges facing TVET colleges (2013). Student life has to be made more comfortable and provide conditions more conducive to study. The focus on increasing the enrolment figures at TVET colleges should be done concurrently with increasing the capacity of the TVET colleges to accommodate the students. To improve student retention and accelerate completion of studies, four financial aid strategies to consider include (Cooper, 2010):

- Providing more intensive financial aid counselling to ensure that students apply for and receive all the aid to which they are entitled,
- Offering financial literacy programmes to help students better understand the role of finances in life's decisions,
- Offering financial incentives to students to complete key academic milestones or earn good grades, and
- Offering emergency aid or vouchers.

Currently NSFAS bursaries cover the tuition, transport allowance and accommodation fees for students from low-income families. To improve the administration of these bursaries we recommend the following:

- Limit the amount of cash given to students. The voucher system likely to be more efficient and easier to monitor and not prone to abuse by students. The project to implement the voucher system was announced in October 2013 and will be implemented over a three-year period starting from 2014. Prior, the NSFAS funds were given to the college/university to distribute to the students. From 2014 a new model will be in place in terms of which NSFAS will start distributing funds directly to students. Tuition and residence fees will still be paid directly to the university and FET college (Fengu, 2013). The new system would mean students liaise and communicate directly with NSFAS and it eliminates the colleges as middleman.

- Strict enforcement of the '80% attendance policy' at FET Colleges. The policy states that NSFAS payments for tuition, travel and accommodation will only be made if students have a minimum of 80% attendance. Poor attendance and consistent lateness will also have an impact on examinations and funding. A student will be allowed to write examinations for every subject for which he or she has attained a minimum of 80% attendance. The DHET will introduce the policy from 2014 academic year (2013, p. 3).

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Date	18 November 2013