

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**  
**FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

**2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the theoretical and conceptual framework for community colleges is presented. This will include an illumination of some significant concepts pertaining to community colleges as well as an exploration of selected theories impacting on the provision of education in community colleges.

The elucidation of the theory behind the provision of education through community colleges will hopefully shed more light on the role that community colleges are playing or are capable of playing in the provision of vocational-technical education. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:7) define theory as:

**“A set of interrelated constructs and propositions that specify relations among variables to explain and predict phenomena.”**

Similarly, theory is also metaphorically referred to as:

**“A map on which a few points are known and the road between points is inferred.”**

**(Malan, 1999: 22)**

Malan (1999: 22) has also observed that although the concept theory is variously defined, these definitions have in common, the elements of reality and belief. She refers to belief as the way in which theorists see and attempt to explain phenomena. Reality on the other hand, she observes, is the data or behaviour that theorists see and try to explain.

It becomes clear from the above views on theory that its two major uses are to explain a current state of affairs and to predict future occurrences (Best and Kahn, 1993: 10). In addition to the above, theory also has other uses which make it indispensable to a study of this nature. The following are some of its uses as identified by Isaacson and Brown (1993: 20):

- Assisting in the incorporation of data.
- Summarising and generalising a body of information.
- Focusing attention on relevant data.
- Facilitating understanding and explanation of complex phenomena.
- Presenting ways of evaluating previous phenomena.
- Stimulating further research and fact finding.

For it to be able to perform the above functions satisfactorily, theory must satisfy among others, four criteria. Firstly, it must provide a simple explanation of the observed relations pertinent to a particular problem. Secondly, it must be consistent with both the observed relations and an already established body of knowledge. Thirdly, it must provide a means of confirmation and modification. Lastly, it must stimulate further research in areas in need of investigation (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993: 8).

One of the objectives of this study is to evaluate community colleges, i.e., explaining the current state of affairs and to consider the possibility of their establishment in the Eastern Free State as prediction of their future use. Exploration of selected theories impacting on community colleges will go a long way in facilitating the achievement of these and other objectives of this study.

The organisation of this presentation of the theoretical and conceptual framework on community colleges will be influenced to a large extent by the following significant aspects of the nature of this study:

- The study deals with community colleges, which are distinctly an invention of the USA. Consequently, Americans are leaders on the theory and practice of community colleges. For this reason, this theoretical and conceptual framework on community colleges will be based on the American model of the community college.
- The phenomenon of interest of this study underscoring the community college is a relatively new concept in South Africa. This novelty of the concept will be reflected in the theoretical and conceptual framework

for community colleges by the considerable amount of space that will be devoted to the elucidation of the concept of community college.

- One of the objectives of this study, as mentioned earlier, is to evaluate community colleges in order to consider their contribution to continuing education for the vocational-technical sector. In order to do justice to this evaluation, it will be necessary to take a closer look at the concept of vocational education as well as at the theories impacting on it, since these will also have a significant impact on the provision of education in community colleges.

## **2.2 The Concept of Community College**

As aforementioned, community colleges are patently an American invention. According to Witt *et al.* (1995:1), they were born in the American heartland before the turn of the twentieth century and spread rapidly throughout the expanding west and a century later, there is a community college within commuting distance of most Americans. It is therefore obvious that the most developed community colleges will be found in the USA. The following discussion of the concept community college will subsequently be based on the American model and will include the concept community, definition of the community college, circumstances which led to the establishment of community colleges in the USA, the mission and objectives of community colleges.

### 2.2.1 The Concept of Community

A clear understanding of the concept community as used in this study, is of fundamental importance in the discussion on community colleges as providers of vocational-technical education, since it is the lynch pin in the subject of our interest. Lack of understanding of the concept may impair the understanding of the nature and functioning of community colleges, which is of fundamental importance in the achievement of the objectives of this study. Mayo (1994: 48) rightly points out that the concept is notorious for its dubiousness and points out that it has been used differently to push different agendas:

**“Community has been used in different ways over time. And it has been used within the context of alternative sociological approaches and competing political orientations. These fundamental differences are key, it will be argued. It is not just that the term community has been used ambiguously; it has been contested, fought over, and appropriated for different uses and interests to justify different politics, policies and practices.”**

A brief look will be taken into some of the different interpretations of the concept. This will be done with the purpose of expanding our comprehension of who is being served by community colleges.

The Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) (1982: 47) conducted a survey among several universities in different countries, with the purpose of determining the universities' understanding of the concept

community as it applies to them as institutions of learning. An analysis of the results of the survey, revealed the existence of factors of differentiation within any 'community'. The CERI found these factors to be of considerable importance since they can lead to the exclusion of certain groups in the community from any relationship with the institution. These factors include ethnic groups, cultures and sub-cultures, rural or urban society, different degrees of socio-economic development, differing structures of representation; authority powers and responsibilities. This finding coincides with the view of Mayo (1994: 51) of the concept:

**“Community can be defined in terms of people who live in a common geographical area. Or it can be defined in terms of common interests, interests which may be as diverse as ethnic origin, religion, politics, occupation, leisure pursuits or sexual propensity as in the Jewish community ... the occupational community of the police or the gay community.”**

Chekki (1979:6) concurs and adds other factors to be taken into consideration:

**“...the concept 'community' will refer to a relatively limited geographic area of living, identified as such by the residents with reference to common residence and interest, and mutual interaction. In addition to this territorially organised community as our unit of analysis, we have also recognised another important**

**social unit - a group or association, again based on common needs, interests values and functions. Such an understanding of community then accentuates, in addition to territorial definition, such essential constituents as common bond, membership in a group, sharing of common interests and an identity, together with acknowledgement of the rights and responsibilities of all other community members.”**

Chekki(1979:6) also recognises universal dynamism as an essential component of all communities. According to him, change, whether natural or planned, is inevitable if communities are to endure and develop. They therefore must undergo a continuous process of alternation, adjustment, adaptation and re-organisation.

Further analysis of the results of the CERI (1982: 48) survey of universities mentioned above, resulted in the identification of three broad approaches to the concept of community. These are referred to as the structural approach; the geographical, institutional and administrative approach; and, the voluntarists and political approach. The three approaches are briefly described below.

### 2.2.1.1 The Structural Approach

The fundamental criterion underlying the structural approach to the concept of community is that of the real or potential client population served by the institution, which constitutes an important agent in the process of expressing and identifying demands. Associated with this approach are definitions with different emphases and are favoured by institutions sharing the same emphasis with the definition.

- There are those that emphasise all potential or real client individuals including those groups, which are catered for by the permanent education and the continuing education services. Institutions favouring this category of definition are usually those whose objective is to uplift the level of knowledge of the individuals.
- Some emphasise an entity composed of organised groups such as trade unions. Institutions that have a high regard for issues such as worker education defence of the environment and socio-cultural activities favour this definition.
- Others emphasise firms and employers. These are used by institutions concerned with employment related education, continuing education of executives and applied research for the benefit of firms.
- Finally, there are those that emphasise public authorities including geopolitical entities such as territorial and administrative bodies.



### **2.2.1.2 The Geographical, Institutional and Administrative Approach**

The criterion underlying this approach is the use of territorial divisions to show the limits of each type of community. It would not make much sense to assign borders to an institution's area of operation without taking the different functions of the institution into consideration. When the functions are taken into account, the community may be defined in terms of:

- The student recruitment area (corresponding with the teaching function of the institution).
- The area of dissemination of research activities (corresponding with the research function of the institution).
- The area over which services are provided (corresponding with the service function of the institution).

The definition of an institution's community in accordance with this approach, may be a result of external factors such as administrative and budgetary issues decided upon by central authorities, or internal factors within the region itself such as socio-cultural integration and tightening of community links. Whether decided upon externally or internally, the CERI (1982: 51) sees this approach as having three objectives:

- To take into account the existing disparities between regions or areas, in order to ensure better distribution of financial, human and technical resources, whilst endeavouring to introduce more equitable conditions for access to the educational services.
- To bring about a better adaptation of teaching and research activities to the socio-economic and cultural realities of the regional environment.
- To make changes in the structures and decision-making procedures, both in the community and the institution, through an increased participation of each in the other's affairs.

#### **2.2.1.3 The Voluntarists and Political Approach**

The main thrust of the voluntarists and political approach is planning aimed at defining and circumscribing the community, which the institution is to serve. The approach relies heavily on the contribution that the institution can make to regional, economic and industrial development. Some of the activities of the institution are directed towards target populations or specific geographic areas with the intention of either improving them or assisting them in their own efforts at improvement.

The objectives associated with this approach are:

- To develop in the region, a general climate favouring research.
- To give fresh impetus to firms and to other local activities.
- To offer a wider variety of programmes, both for university studies and for occupational training.

- To improve the supply on the labour market, of university graduates capable of filling responsible posts.

It is clear from the above discussion of the different approaches to the definition of the concept of community that although the approaches seem to be different and sometimes in conflict with one another, there are also many areas of overlap among them. It has also come to light that the understanding that an institution has of the concept, determines the services that the institution offers and that the services that the institution offers also determine who it recognises as its community. It then follows that the definition of the community college will be greatly influenced by how American educationists interpret the concept of community.

### **2.2.2 Definitions of the Community College**

There are several related definitions of the concept of community college. A brief look will be taken at some of them with the purpose of elucidating its meaning. As Hoyt (1994: 18) rightly points out:

**“Definitions do make a difference in describing and delimiting the basic nature and purpose of any concept. While definitions have limited usefulness in helping one understand *how* a programme is to operate, they are of central importance in specifying *what* the concept is intended to accomplish. The words that are used and the ways in which words are joined together, combine to form the basic rationale and justification for the concept itself.”**

An analysis of these definitions will therefore hopefully assist in the understanding of the nature and purpose of community colleges.

Singh(1996: 109), refers to a community college as:

**“Any institution accredited to award the associate degree in arts, science and applied science as its highest qualification, in addition to a vast array of compensatory and community education.”**

Venter (1996: 11) defines a community college as:

**“A public, comprehensive institution offering general education, including academic transfer, technical-vocational education and training, compensatory, remedial and community education. The institution has its foundation in the community (local population, business and industry) and responds to the needs of the community.”**

According to Witt *et al.* (1995: 131) a community college is:

**“An institution designed to serve chiefly local community educational needs. It may have various forms of organisation and may have curricula of various lengths. Its dominant feature is its intimate relations to the life of the community it serves.”**

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1980:638) refers to the community college as a junior college and defines it as:

**“A two-year institution, offering continuing education beyond secondary school but not granting degrees. It is in many respects an extension of the public school system, providing terminal education (vocational and semi-professional training) for many students and the first two years of undergraduate college study for other students who may subsequently attend a standard college or university.”**

Gleazer Jr. (1994: 20) sees it as:

**“A two-year institution of Higher Education, generally public, offering instruction adapted in content, level, and schedule to the needs of the community in which it is located. Offerings usually include a transfer curriculum (credits transferable toward a bachelor’s degree), occupational or terminal curriculums, general education, and adult education.”**

The following features of a community college emerge from these definitions:

- Community colleges are two-year institutions. They are called two-year colleges because they offer the first two years’ work towards a bachelor’s degree, to students who intend transferring to four-year institutions that offer the degree.

- Community colleges award associate degrees as their highest qualification.
- They offer a wide range of educational services to their communities.

These include, *inter alia*:

- ☛ Community education.
  - ☛ Academic transfer.
  - ☛ General education.
  - ☛ Developmental/compensatory/remedial education.
  - ☛ Vocational-technical education.
- Community colleges respond to the needs of their communities resulting in a close relationship between community colleges and such communities. This fact is collaborated by the 1947 President's Commission on Higher Education (Witt *et al.*, 1995: x):

**“The Community College seeks to become a center of learning for the entire community, with or without the restrictions that surround formal course work in traditional institutions of Higher Education. It gears its programs and services to the needs and wishes of the people it serves.”**

- Community colleges are sometimes viewed as an extension of the school system:

**“The colleges of this early period were clearly extensions of high schools. Existing school facilities were used, and**

**teachers continued to teach in very much the same way that they taught high school courses. ...In most communities, the same board served the school and college.”**

**(Tillery and Deegan, 1985: 6)**

- The terms two-year college, junior college and community college are used interchangeably in referring to this type of college. At the second annual meeting of the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) in 1922, the junior college was defined as:

**“An institution offering two years of instruction of strictly collegiate grade.”**

**(Gleazer Jr., 1994: 17)**

This definition implies that the junior college differs from a community college in that the former had only one role, namely, the transfer function while the latter has multiple roles. Three years after the AAJC annual meeting, the definition of the junior college was amplified:

**“The junior college is an institution offering two years of strictly collegiate grade. This curriculum may include those courses usually offered in the first two years of the four-year colleges; in which case these courses must be identical, in**



**scope and thoroughness, with corresponding courses of the standard four-year college. The junior college may, and is likely to, develop a different type of curriculum suited to the larger and ever-changing civic, social, religious, and vocational needs of the entire community in which the college is located. It is understood that in this case, also, the work offered shall be on a level appropriate for high school graduates.”**

**(Gleazer Jr.,1994: 17-18)**

This definition eliminates the difference between the junior and the community college. Thus, the term junior college is hardly used anymore.

Several other names in addition to the above mentioned, have been advanced but none of the others has taken hold. These include “city college”, “peoples’ college”, “democracy’s college” and “anti-university college”. The name “anti-university college” was proposed by those who saw community colleges as negating the principles on which universities had been founded (Cohen and Brawer, 1982: 5).

What comes out clearly from the above analysis of the different definitions of the concept of community college is that how the concept is defined depends on a number of factors. These include the services they offer, people they serve, qualifications offered as well as the duration of training.

As stated earlier, community colleges are a distinctly American invention and are a new concept in South Africa. In order to further broaden our understanding of the community college concept, it would be necessary to find out why these colleges were established.

### 2.2.3 Why Community Colleges Were Established

Scrutiny of the literature on community colleges reveals several circumstances that led to the establishment of community colleges in the USA. Some of them are summarised below:

According to Witt *et al.* (1995: xii) the major reason for the establishment of community colleges, was to extend educational opportunity by broadening opportunity. They state:

**“The present expansion in education is not only vastly increasing the number of students; it is also drawing them from many more diverse social origins. This trend should be encouraged further. We should cast our net wider and wider in order to identify, to catch and to bring within the scope of education all available talent, wherever it may be found.”**

American President, Harry Truman, added to the call for the extension of educational opportunity when, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 1946, he created the

President's Commission on Higher Education. In his letter appointing members to the commission, he wrote:

**“Among the more specific questions with which I hope the Commission will concern itself, are ways and means of expanding educational opportunities for all able young people; the adequacy of curricula, particularly in the fields of international affairs and social understanding; the desirability of establishing a series of intermediate technical institutes; the financial structure of Higher Education with particular reference to the requirements of the rapid expansion of physical facilities.”**

**(Parnell, 1993: 83)**

Seventeen months later, The President's Commission on Higher Education (1947:3) responded to the call of the President by recommending in its report that public education be made available tuition-free, to all Americans able and willing to receive it, regardless of race, creed, colour, sex, or economic and social status. This call gave community colleges a major role in the offering of education to the majority of American citizens.

Monroe (1972: 13) identifies the following four reasons for the establishment of community colleges:

- Demands from a growing number of high school graduates clamouring for a college education. This notion is also supported by Tillery and Deegan (1985: 5) as follows:

**“The primary factor in the increased demand for and expansion of Higher Education was the increase in completion rates from the secondary schools. So as early as the late 1880's, the increasing attendance at and graduation from American high schools, resulted in new demands for Higher Education that could not, or would not, be met by existing colleges and universities.”**

- Growing demands of business and industry for technically trained employees in the middle-level occupation. Related to this is the rapid industrialisation of the USA and the mechanisation of its agriculture, both leading to increasing demands for trained employees (Tillery and Deegan, 1985: 3).
- The existence of local communities that had both sufficient taxable wealth and population and willing to support community colleges.
- Parents and citizens aspiring to have their children enjoy the fulfillment of a dream for college education.

Cohen and Brawer (1982: 5) add to the list state universities, who, apart from their commitment to the goal of equality of educational opportunity, also feared being swamped by students who would prevent them from being devoted to research and graduate training. The establishment of community colleges

enabled these universities to concentrate on upper division and graduate education and to accept only the best students who were able and willing to continue with their education after completing the lower division work. Raby (1996: 3) concurs with this view when he contends that the United States (US) community college, in part, evolved as a feeder institution to provide educational opportunities for students who did not fit the traditional profile; lacked a sufficient academic background for entrance in four-year universities; or could not afford university tuition. He therefore feels that community colleges were established with the purpose of disputing the preconception of Higher Education being a venture intended for only the chosen few.

Government officials have also been identified as being among the strong local drives to found community colleges. These officials include local school superintendents and high school principals who founded community colleges mainly because these brought them professional prestige and gave them access to college-level jobs. For example, Dougherty (1994:22) maintains that by establishing a community college, local principals or superintendents could attract the acclaim of their peers and of the professional elite at the universities. In addition to the above reason, government officials offered an “attractive carrot” as publicly subsidised employment training to business, in order to realise goals of their own such as capital for economic growth which would be welcome by voters and secured the officials their positions as elected officials.

Community colleges were also established as a result of a commitment to be different from traditional Higher Education. The emphasis was on access, convenience, low-cost and a convenient location of services (Eaton, 1987: 2).

It is clear from the reasons advanced above that community colleges were established to serve the wide ranging educational and vocational-technical interests of several parties. These included students, the community, universities, business and industry, individual government officials and the government in general. The next question to consider now is whether the community college has lived up to the expectations of those who had an interest in its formation. This question can be answered by scrutinising the mission of the community college.

#### **2.2.4 The Mission of Community Colleges**

It would be difficult, if not impossible to describe a community college without focusing on its mission. Bogart (1994: 60) defines the term mission as follows:

**“What the institution will contribute to society, whom it will serve, how it will serve them, and the social benefits that will result.”**

In consonance with this definition, the debate on the mission of the community college centres on questions such as the following: Can and should the community college be all things to all people? After the students have gained access to the community college, what is the goal? What constitutes reasonable progress in a community college? What are community colleges

providing and how are they providing it? Are there some functions that should not be provided and some people who should not be served - at least by a given community college?

From the review of the literature on community colleges, it becomes clear that the mission of community colleges is difficult to articulate. Vaughan (1983: 9) advances the following reasons for this difficulty:

- It is constantly changing and is in a state of flux.
- Each college has its own mission which takes on a local flavour.
- It changes whenever there are changes in local and national leadership.

This view is echoed by Bogart (1994: 61) who indicates that defining the current mission of the American community college is a complex task. He states that:

**“What makes it complex, is that we don’t exactly have fifty versions in fifty states. One needs to take into account the fact that what may be sound mission in one state may only be a part of the mission in another.”**

Further review of the literature on the mission of community colleges also reveals that it has been organised differently by different researchers. Two of the ways in which it has been organised are summarised below.

Cross (1985: 36) organises it into themes or foci referred to as: Comprehensive, vertical, horizontal, integrated and remedial.

#### **2.2.4.1 The Comprehensive Focus**

The comprehensive focus includes the five traditional programmes of the community college propounded by Cohen and Brawer (1989: 229 - 341):

- Career Education: Occupational Entry, Change and Development.
- Compensatory Education: Enhancing Literacy and Basic Skills.
- Community Education: Extending College Services and Training.
- Collegiate Function: Transfer and The Liberal Arts.
- General Education: Knowledge for Personal and Civic Life.

The comprehensive focus has its roots in the historical arguments for equal access to educational opportunity, namely, that all prospective students should be within commuting distance of the type of education that serves their needs (Cross, 1985: 37). Critics of the comprehensive mission argue that it will be difficult if not impossible to pursue excellence simultaneously in all five of the programmes making up the comprehensive community college since it spreads the college's resources too thin (Cross, 1985: 37).

#### **2.2.4.2 The Vertical Focus**

The vertical focus emphasises the transfer function of the comprehensive mission. Its goal is to move students through the traditional education system, namely, from high school through a community college to a four-year tertiary institution. Community colleges opting for the vertical focus, offer the liberal arts courses needed to transfer to four-year institutions, prepare their students



for college-level work, help them to transfer to four-year institutions and conduct follow-up studies of students transferring to four-year institutions to determine how they have performed.

The vertical focus is generally acknowledged as the most prestigious and easily understood model. This is because it places the community college between the high school and four-year colleges as an essential part of the formal education system (Cross, 1985: 380).

#### **2.2.4.3 The Horizontal Focus**

Unlike the vertical focus, which seeks to form linkages within the formal education system, the horizontal focus reaches out to nurture linkages with the community. A college opting for the horizontal mission becomes a major role-player in community development. Such a community college is seen as the hub of all education going on in the community, serving people of all ages throughout their lives and helping the community to solve problems and build a better community through education. Educational partnerships are formed with industry, senior citizens centres, local libraries, local theatres, museums, etc. (Cross, 1985:41).

#### **2.2.4.4 The Integrated Focus**

The integrated focus gives major attention to linkages within the college rather than to external linkages either with the education system or the community. A community college opting for this focus emphasises multi-disciplinary courses, team teaching and curriculum development across college departments. Cohen, the proponent of the integrated focus, believes that a community

college education should contain a sequence of intended learnings. He describes sequence as a pattern of progression that has some rationale, order and deliberate arrangement. Cohen is against the view of the community college serving anything that anyone in the community wants. On the contrary, he believes that it should provide a continuing, liberal arts education for life-long learners of all sorts (Cross, 1985: 43).

#### **2.2.4.5 The Remedial Focus**

The remedially focused community college develops a comprehensive set of services that is needed by young people in order to help them become responsible and useful citizens. This set includes guidance, job preparation, job placement, referral to other community agencies for help, apprenticeship, etc.

Careful analysis of the foci propounded by Cross (1985: 36), discloses a close relationship between the comprehensive focus and the other four, with each of the four foci corresponding with one of the functions comprising the comprehensive focus as follows. The horizontal focus corresponds with community education; the vertical focus with the collegiate function; the integrated focus with general education and the remedial function with compensatory education.

The second organisation of the mission of the community college is proposed by Bogart (1994: 63), who weaves the literature on the mission into six areas.

These are: Governance and Leadership; Student Development; Instruction and Faculty; Curricula/Programmes; Economic Development and Life-long Learning. A brief discussion of these aspects follows.

#### **2.2.4.6 Governance and Leadership**

In this area it is argued that governance and decision-making processes, not only impact on the mission but also help to shape it. The converse is also true, namely, that the mission can also influence governance and decision-making. This means that the community college mission and the decision-making process are inextricably linked. In support of this view, Fryer and Lovas, as referred to by Bogart (1994: 64), state that:

**“The function of leadership in governance is to create the conditions within which people want to decide and want to act in ways that maximise the institution’s achievement of its purposes.”**

#### **2.2.4.7 Student Development**

The mission of the community college from this area of focus is two-fold: Firstly, to help students succeed. This includes a variety of services such as assuring open-door admissions; providing educational, career and personal counselling; supplying financial and academic assistance; supporting a wide range of out of class college and community-based activities. Secondly, the mission could be oriented to serving a diversity of students. This includes reaffirming equality of opportunity as an essential goal; developing an aggressive outreach programme for disadvantaged students; expanding and

improving outreach programmes for adults; encouraging intellectual and social contacts among students of different ages and racial backgrounds.

#### **2.2.4.8 Instruction and Faculty**

The mission becomes linked to instruction when viewing each course being offered in the college as a major component of the mission of the community college. The importance of the faculty in fulfilling the mission of the community college is underscored when the community college commits itself, amongst others, to recruit and retain top quality members of faculty; identifying, employing and nurturing faculty members representing diverse groups; providing for the renewal of faculty staff and establishment of policies that address the concerns and needs of part-time members of faculty.

#### **2.2.4.9 Curricula/Programmes**

The mission of the community college in as far as the curriculum and programmes are concerned, focuses on the five functions of the comprehensive community college, namely, the transfer function, the career preparation function, the developmental education function and the community service function. The mission pays particular attention to the role of the functions, the clients to be served, the various elements that constitute the functions, as well as a guide on how to assess the functions.

#### **2.2.4.10 Economic Development**

Economic development as the mission of an institution is a thrust that the entire community college, rather than only a segment thereof must address.

Although the programme activities associated with economic development flow from career education, they are not bound by it. With its linkages with the community at large, economic development tends to hold a position of greater relevance than career education.

#### **2.2.4.11 Life-long Learning**

The mission statements of community colleges focusing on life-long learning acknowledge and reflect the community college's role in providing life-long learning opportunities. These community colleges have helped many adults in various ways such as improving their work-related skills, offering general education, helping them to read and write, learning new languages and in leisure learning.

In conclusion, the following citation from Cohen and Brawer (1987: 2) aptly captures the overall mission of community colleges:

**“Enter the community college. Aptly labelled ‘democracy’s college’, it sought to provide access to Higher Education to people who might not otherwise attend. It accepted the diverse students and shaped itself to their form. Occupational programs were organized for students seeking job entry. Massive remedial programs were installed for students who could not read. Courses were offered at the students’ convenience, day and night, on campus and off. Past academic sins were forgiven as the community college accepted students who had done poorly in high**

**school or in prior college studies. Course registration was simplified, and students took advantage of policies allowing them to drop in and out again at their whim. Adults seeking personal - interest activities, avocational pursuits, or occupational upgrading were welcomed. It became the college for everyone.”**

Consequently, it becomes patently clear that the community college serves numerous objectives. We need to consider some of these objectives.

#### **2.2.5 Objectives of Community Colleges**

Venter (1996: 11) identifies the following as the criteria to be fulfilled by community colleges, depending on their location and community demands. These criteria may also serve as the objectives to be achieved by community colleges in order to realise their mission as adumbrated above.

- To provide the first two years of college education for those students who plan to continue studies towards a bachelor’s degree.
- To provide students with developmental education and services which will assist them in making personal academic and career decisions.
- To provide educational opportunities to community members of all ages including those not seeking degrees, or who are uncertain of their educational goals, to acquaint themselves with broad areas of learning.
- To provide educationally oriented programmes for those students who wish to pursue work in a vocational, technical and business sphere.

- To provide programmes for those people in business, industry or in the professions who wish to study for advancement in a current occupation or to enter a new area of employment.
- To provide programmes for basic and adult education leading to a high school diploma or equivalent qualification.
- To provide programmes and activities, which address significant community problems, e.g., environmental and governmental concerns, health, safety, child-rearing and education, consumer economics and human relations, etc.
- To provide a cultural and social environment to enable students to further develop their social competence, interests and talents.
- To promote economic development by forming educational partnerships with business and industry.
- To provide remedial programmes.
- To provide occupational training facilities for adults on a part-time basis.
- To provide open-door access to persons from the communities to attend courses for self-improvement.
- To provide flexible attendance schedules to employed adults.
- To provide an outlet for leisure learning.

It is clear from the above that with so many objectives, the community college is suited to serve the needs of diverse students. The next issue to consider is whether everyone is content with the functions community colleges are performing.

### 2.2.6 Criticism of the Community College

Although the advocates of community colleges had good intentions for their existence, there are some who are strong critics of these colleges. The following are some of the criticisms that have been levelled against community colleges:

- The community college provides business, at public expense with trained workers who will smoothly fit into the capitalist enterprise. Pincus (1983:4) states:

**“Community colleges are part of an education system that produces social inequality... The leaders of private industry get workers who are trained at public expense. The more privileged sectors of society are less likely to be challenged since the aspirations of working class and minority students are lowered (cooled out) by community colleges.”**

- The community college maintains class inequality over the generations by ensuring that working-class children inherit their parents' social class position. Zwerling (1976: xix) observes:

**“Not only is maintaining the social hierarchy a primary function of the community college, but the community college is also remarkably effective at the job. It takes students whose parents are characterized primarily by low income and educational achievement and slots them into the lower ranks of the industrial and commercial hierarchy. The community college is in fact a**



**social defence mechanism that resists changes in the social structure.”**

- The community college protects selective admissions at the Higher Education institutions. Nasaw (1979: 228) clearly articulates this view:

**“For the education system to function properly, two-year students must somehow be diverted from the four-year schools. The scarcity of the bachelor’s degree must be protected ... The diversionary role of the two-year college is, again, not accidental, but an intended, intrinsic function of these schools within state systems.”**

### **2.2.7 Summation**

The above discussion on the concept of community college has hopefully clarified what the community college is, why it was established and the services it is rendering to its clients. Although some people have different views, the definition of the community college, its mission and objectives, bear testimony to the contention that the community college is indeed “the college for everyone”. A statement which is also confirmed by the following observation by Witt *et al.* (1995: xv) pertaining to the diverse nature of the community college and its determination to serve everyone:

**“The open-door, close-to-home, low-cost, community-responsive policies of the community college have resulted in a diversity of**

**learners beyond the breadth of any other educational institution. Added to the variety of a typical high school population are differences in age, ethnicity neighbourhood, and income. In some cities the first genuine interaction among racial and cultural groups takes place when the student reaches the community college.**

**As these colleges opened their doors all across America, the population that responded was unprecedented in terms of race, lifestyle, economic means, psychological and emotional needs, and educational preparation. By any measure, in terms of previous institutional experience, community colleges were dealing not only with ‘regular’ students but with those that would have to be described as unconventional and non-traditional.”**

Finally, one can also see a clear correlation between the objectives, the mission and the demands that led to the establishment of community colleges. There is therefore no doubt that community colleges have brought public education within reach of every American citizen in accordance with the wishes of the 1947 President’s Commission on Higher Education.

It has emerged from the above description of the community college that one of its major roles is to prepare its students for the world of work. The next focus of our discussion will therefore be on the concept of vocational education as it relates to this function of the community college.

## **2.3 Vocational Education**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

It is evident from the above discussion of the concept of community college that provision of vocational education, is one of the major functions of the community college. Since the community college as a provider of vocational-technical education is the subject of interest of this study, we now need to take a closer look at the concept of vocational education. This analysis of the concept will include its definition and that of related terms, its nature; as well as its objectives.

### **2.3.2 Definitions of Vocational Education and Related Terms**

Different authors have defined vocational education from different perspectives. It has been defined in terms of programme utility, the people who enroll, the level at which it is offered, the economic needs of a social system and manpower needs of the nation (Thompson, 1973: 116). As Thompson (1973: 105; see also, Hoyt, 1994: 16) points out, these definitions are a major factor in influencing vocational education in terms of social and philosophical foundations, giving it meaning and substance as well as in specifying what the concept is intended to accomplish. Some of these definitions are given below, followed by a comparison with definitions of related terms such as career education, general education, technical education and practical arts.

Wenrich and Wenrich (1974: 16) define vocational education as:

**“Specialised education which is organised to prepare the learner for entrance into a particular occupation or family of occupations or to upgrade employed workers.”**

These authors refer to vocational education as specialised education, implying that it differs from general education or what may be referred to as common learning. Scrutiny of literature on the concept reveals that it is indeed different from general education in that it deals with educational experiences designed for individuals who have a particular interest in a specific field and wish to pursue study in that field beyond the level of common learning or general education. Courses or programmes are elected by those individuals who have a special interest in preparing for a particular occupation or a set of occupations. It is that part of the total process of education aimed at developing the competencies needed to function effectively in an occupation or group of occupations (Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974: 6&9). The authors differentiate vocational education from general education in that the latter concerns all educational activities, which are not planned specifically to develop vocational competence. According to them, general education is referred to as such because it is needed by everyone and is concerned with the total personality and seeks to meet the common needs of youth for competence as a person and as a citizen. They further assert that although vocational education differs from general education, the difference does not lie in the content of the two, rather in what use is made of the content. As an example, if Science is taught to learners for the purpose of exposing them to scientific principles for use in their daily lives, that becomes general education,

but if the same Science is taught to them as it relates to a particular trade or technical occupation, it becomes vocational education.

The above definition is in consonance with that of Evans (1971: 53) who sees vocational education as:

**“Education, which makes a person more competent in one group of occupations than in another.”**

Criticism levelled at these definitions is based on their emphasis on social utility. There is an opinion that individuals receiving education in accordance with these definitions are channelled into a pattern of similarity by a narrow training programme instead of being assisted in exploring a career. This criticism arises as a result of the use of phrases such as “one group of occupations” and “particular occupation” (Thompson, 1973: 112).

The Smith-Hughs Act of 1917 (Thompson, 1973: 107) refers to vocational education as:

**“Education which is under public supervision or control: that the controlling purpose of such education shall be to fit for useful employment; that such education shall be of less than college grade and that such education be designed to meet the needs of persons over fourteen years of age who have entered or who are preparing to enter work.”**

Similarly the Vocational Association defines vocational education as:

**“Education designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciations needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis.”**

**(Thompson, 1973: 111)**

The central theme of these definitions is fitting human beings for work. According to Thompson (1973: 105), they were influenced by the accident theory, which was at its peak of popularity when the Smith-Hughes Act was passed in 1917. According to this theory, one has little control over one's environment and must mould his/her life to what exists rather than attempt to adjust, modify, or rationally consider his/her surroundings. The theory places great emphasis on environmental forces, which are external to the individual and place less emphasis on the individual. It makes the environment the active variable and reduces the individual into a passive variable. In line with this theory, people needed to be fitted or matched to jobs. It was argued that the work to be done determined who was to perform it and not *vice versa*. It is because of this argument that the words “fit” and “work” are used in the above definitions. Definitions based on the accident theory have often been criticised for giving primary emphasis on skills and work and secondary emphasis to the learner.

As seen from the foregoing discussion, though the definitions are clear in as far as delineating what vocational education intends to accomplish, they are not without criticism. It is precisely for this reason that Evans (1971: 53) states that no definition of vocational education is entirely satisfactory.

Other concepts related to vocational education are technical education, career education and the practical arts education. These concepts will be considered in order to underpin the similarities and differences between them and vocational education. This is necessary because the terms are sometimes erroneously used synonymously with vocational education.

The term **technical education** as seen by Singh (1996: 24) refers to preparation for work in scientific and industrial fields. It encompasses general education and the study of technologies and related sciences as well as the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge. Its broad objectives differentiate it from vocational education, which is directed at developing the particular skills and knowledge needed for a specific occupation or group of occupations.

According to Wenrich and Wenrich (1974: 8) the term **career education** refers to:

**“The total process of helping children, youth and adults discover and develop their potential for work. It is a broad term which includes virtually everything the schools do from kindergarten**

**through adult education, to help people understand, prepare for, and succeed in the world of work. This total process can be divided into two phases- career development and career preparation (vocational education).”**

Thus, according to the above description of career education, vocational education is a component of career education. This fact is supported by Hoyt (1994:20), who, after analysing a series of definitions of career education, came to the conclusion that none of them specifically excluded vocational education. However, he was quick to add that none of the definitions he had analysed make vocational education synonymous with career education. Career education is therefore closely related to, but definitely not synonymous with vocational education.

The phrase **practical arts** refers to the phases of general education dealing with the organisation, tools, materials, processes and products of agriculture, business, industry and the home and with the contributions of workers engaged in these fields. It is a type of functional education with a profound emphasis on activities and is taught on a non-vocational basis (Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974: 13).

The content of practical education differs from that of vocational education in that it is derived from the world of work in terms of what everyone should know about agriculture, business industry and the home in order to appreciate and use the products and services of these areas of activity, while that of vocational



education is drawn from the world of work through the analysis of the skills, understanding, values and attitudes of successful workers in a particular field.

### **2.3.3 The Nature of Vocational Education**

#### **2.3.3.1 Vocational Education Prepares Individuals for Work**

Vocational education is one phase of the process of education for work.

Thompson (1973: 111) refers to it as:

**“Education for work- any kind of work which the individual finds congenial and for which society has a need.”**

Work as referred to in the above citation is viewed as a physical or mental effort directed towards some end or purpose. The end or purpose towards which work is directed, serves as motivation to work. The main reason for people to engage in work is for earning an income. Research has, however, shown that most people would continue working even if they had already earned enough money to live comfortable lives. Thus, other reasons for working are that people need activity, self-respect, social contacts and participation (Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974: 28).

#### **2.3.3.2 Vocational Education is as Broad as the World of Work**

Vocational education includes preparation for employment in any vocation where specialised education is required, for which there is societal need and which can be most appropriately done in schools. It is concerned with a whole

hierarchy of occupations from those requiring a short time of preparation to those requiring longer periods of preparation.

#### **2.3.3.3 Vocational Education Includes More than Manipulative Skills**

Vocational education involves more than mere acquisition of skills for competence in one or a set of occupations. Skills are important in vocational education and will continue to be important for sometime to come, but their acquisition is not all there is to vocational education. It is concerned not only with the manual skills involved in an occupation but with all of the competencies needed to function effectively in employment. This includes the cognitive and psychomotor skills without which proper functioning may not be possible. It is also concerned with the attitudes and values of the worker, i.e., the affective domain.

Vocational educationists should therefore avoid sole emphasis on building a specific set of skills. They must teach subjects in such a way as to develop analytical problem-solving and skills vital in a group situation, as well as the ability to adapt to change (Thompson, 1973: 216; see also, Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974: 8).

#### **2.3.3.4 Effectiveness of Vocational Education**

The success of vocational education is measured by the degree to which it results in employment, which is satisfying to the employee and acceptable to the employer. As explained earlier, there is, however, more to vocational education than job training.

#### **2.3.3.5 Vocational Education is Humanistic**

Appropriately arranged vocational education has the capability of offering a broad and comprehensive curriculum to youth, both at high school level and beyond. Making a wide range of vocational education programmes available to youth will help them realise their capabilities and potential for success in the world of work and thereby serve to liberate them from the boredom of an educational programme, which lacks relevance for them.

The nature of vocational education is such that it makes it appropriate to serve numerous objectives related to the world of work. Three of these objectives are considered below.

#### **2.3.4 Objectives of Vocational Education**

Evans (1971: 9) contends that providing a mechanism for meeting the human power needs of the local community, is the oldest and most widely accepted objective of vocational education. He further points out that the needs of the nation and those of society are equally or more important, because all institutions of society, such as industry, the church and the schools need trained people to run them. It is because of this observation that Evans, in his chronological listing of three objectives of vocational education, ranks meeting the human power needs of society first. The other two are, in order of importance, increasing individual options and lending intelligibility to general education. A brief discussion of these three objectives follows.

#### **2.3.4.1 Meeting the Human Power Needs of Society**

Although the provision of trained human power has long been recognised as an important objective of vocational education, providing such personnel has been hampered by the acceleration of the rate of change in human power needs. Wenrich and Wenrich (1974: 39) therefore suggest that in order to ease the impact of this problem, planners of vocational education should pay special attention to two important issues, which are human power needs within the service area of their schools and the migratory patterns of people in the area. Vocational education planners should, during their planning, be aware of human power trends such as:

- The sharp reduction in the number of unskilled workers in the labour force. Mechanisation is the reason behind this trend. It has been easy during the nineteenth century to replace unskilled human power with power from sources such as coal, petroleum and atomic energy (Evans, 1971: 15).
- The shift from goods producing to service-producing occupations. This is also because of mechanisation, which resulted in a continued decrease in the proportion of the labour force involved in producing goods.
- The increase of women in the labour force.

In addition to understanding the above trends which are of a national nature, education planners should also take into cognisance local trends and conditions with the view to a more accurate human power forecasting and better planning to avoid an over or under supply of human power. Many vocational education theorists (see Evans, 1971; Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974;

and Young *et al.*, 1972) agree that for vocational education to serve the human power needs of society, a system of long-term human power forecasting is needed. Young *et al.* (1972:25) identify four basic techniques that are commonly used in human power forecasting.

- **Employer Surveys**  
This is a technique that identifies some 50-150 occupations, which have reasonably high levels of employment in a given area. A scientific survey is made of employers in the area to determine their current and future human power needs in the identified occupations. The technique is easy to use and is relatively inexpensive. Its reliability and validity can, however, not be guaranteed.
- **Extrapolation**  
This technique bases its forecast of future needs on past trends. The technique may be used locally, regionally and nationally and is easy to administer and also relatively inexpensive. Its reliability diminishes with its further extension into the future.
- **Econometric Techniques**  
The technique yields a national ten-year demand analysis based on projections of population, labour force, productivity, consumption and overall output. It has its limitations of accuracy and would be difficult to implement without an extensive knowledge of labour economics and statistics. It is best suited for regional and not local use.
- **Job Vacancy Occupational Outlook Approach**  
The fourth and last technique attempts to build local input into a modification of the econometric model. It takes data obtained through the econometric technique and combines it with local employment data to produce a priority listing of job vacancies that can be used by the education planner. The technique is inexpensive and easy to implement.

#### **2.3.4.2 Increasing Individual Options**

Some individuals as they progress through life, have more opportunities for choice than others. The options for choice may among others, be with regard to places of residence and ways of spending substantial amounts of one's income and occupation. Persons with less choice options have fewer opportunities, they may for example be restricted to renting a humble place of residence; may be forced to spend a substantial part of their income on basic necessities like food, clothes and health; and, they may be compelled to accept whatever employment that becomes available. It follows then that persons with more options for choice are in a better position than those with less.

There are several factors which increase or decrease individual options. Some of these factors are under the control of the individual or groups of individuals, while others are not. Bringing most of these options under the control of the individual or society should be a major goal of society. Wenrich and Wenrich (1974: 40) and Evans (1971: 29) identify the following as the factors which increase individual options:

- Properly conceived education. Educational theorists often see the combination of general and occupational education as being superior in this regard .
- Availability of a large variety of specialised vocational education programmes from which an individual can choose.
- Provision of vocational education by public schools as opposed to that provided by employers. This argument is strengthened by the finding that when individual firms provided instruction in reading and writing,

their employees were often taught to read only the symbols and calculations required by their present jobs. Although this may have been in the interest of the firms, it was definitely not in the interest of the employees (Evans, 1971: 34).

- The broadening of high school programmes to enable the youth to receive training in a family of occupations, thereby giving them greater suppleness in the labour market.
- Availability of adult education programmes for the upgrading and re-training of employed individuals.
- When schools in their endeavour to assist youth in finding suitable employment, provide job placement services. Schools which operate placement offices for their students have been found to have better vocational education programmes than schools which do not offer such a service. The most probable reason for this is that the placement office serves as a feedback mechanism for amendment in the content and methods of the vocational programme to meet local labour market needs.
- Development of additional career ladders in the job place to enable any person who enters an occupation at any entry point to progress towards occupations which provide increased responsibilities and challenges

It is patently clear that education, especially vocational education, has an important role to play in each of the factors listed above. Vocational educators, educational planners and administrators who accept increasing individual



options as an objective of vocational education, can take steps to maximise the role of the above factors in increasing individual options.

#### **2.3.4.3 Lending Intelligibility to General Education**

Vocational education can serve as a motivating factor to enhance all types of learning in one or more of the following ways:

- Employment-bound youth in high schools are challenged to learn by the occupation of their choice and the job entry requirements (Wenrich and Wenrich, 1974: 40).
- It provides a reason for learning basic academic skills by making students aware of the importance of these skills in life and in the achievement of their occupations (Evans, 1971: 56).
- It helps to keep students in school. Research has shown that when factors such as student intelligence and socio-economic class are held constant, vocational education appears to have the lowest dropout rate of any high school curriculum (Evans, 1971: 56).
- As a direct method of teaching, vocational education provides a vehicle for teaching general education content and for teaching it in a far more effective way than can be accomplished in a standard classroom. Its effectiveness in this regard depends on factors such as teachers who are genuinely interested in the success of students, goals which appear relevant to students, an atmosphere of responsible freedom rather than

regimentation and content that is viewed as a means to an end, not an end in itself.

- As an indirect method of instruction, vocational education enables students to learn more in vocational education classes. This becomes possible because occupational success depends on students learning many things that are taught in general education such as reading, writing and basic computational skills. Many students do not see the value of learning these skills until they enter vocational education classrooms where they see their importance (Evans, 1971: 55).

The achievement of the above objectives, the success of vocational education and that of community college education in general, depends to a large extent on the successful implementation of education programmes designed for the community college. These in turn, are influenced by the understanding, correct interpretation and successful execution of the theories that are behind the provision of education to the type of student found in community colleges. A brief look will now be taken at some of these theories and their influence on community colleges.

## **2.4 Theories that Impact on Community Colleges**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

It has earlier been mentioned that one of the uses of theory is to facilitate understanding and explanation of complex phenomena. Consequently, consideration of some of the theories behind education in community colleges

will enhance our understanding of the character and functioning of community colleges.

Martorana and Kuhns (1988: 238) see the community college as ideally suited to serving as the nexus among agencies dedicated to community development. Strydom *et al.* (1995: 7) on the other hand, are of the opinion that the hub of the mission of community colleges is career preparation and that these educational institutions have a long history of providing occupational and technical training in fields that reflect the needs of their local economies. These authors have also noted that community colleges have extensive and successful experience in life-long learning for adult students.

In the light of the above observations, three theories, namely, the community development theory, career development theory and the theory of adult learning (andragogy) are thought to have had an influence on the formation, development and current state of community colleges as described above. For this reason they have been chosen for consideration in this section. In addition to these, systems theory has also been selected. This has been done because of its potential in offering a connection between the various stakeholders and events that eventually led to the establishment of community colleges.

#### **2.4.2 The Community Development Theory**

Martorana and Kuhns (1988: 230) define community development as:

**“The advancement of the ‘good health’ of a locality or region in all respects - economic, cultural, social, political - and the contribution to a better ‘quality of life’ for the citizens who reside in it.”**

Chekki (1979: 13) views community development as a four-fold entity comprising: process, method, programme and movement. These four components are elaborated upon below:

- Community Development as a Process

Implicitly emphasised in community development as a process, is change proceeding in stages aimed at community self-determination. Community members define their common needs, expound and administer application of plans that will guarantee the satisfaction of those needs. Community development is first and foremost an “education-for-action process” whereby members are able to attain the skills necessary for local autonomy. This implies that education is an important feature of community development as a process.

It may also be said that community development as a process is a systematic approach to change in which each of the phases may be defined and measured in accordance with specific criteria. For instance, change in factors such as cooperation and participation among community members and the extent of community decision-making may, to a certain degree, be operationalised and quantified.

- Community Development as a Method

Inherent in this panorama of community development as a method, are the methods appropriate to achieving specific goals. Education, which has been identified as an essential component of community development as a process, may also be part and parcel of community development as a method as dictated by the articulation of some desired goal. There is therefore no dichotomy between community development as a process and community development as a method. Further, obscuring the differentiation between community development as a process and community development as a method, is the apparent aim of the community development process, which is economic and social development. This aim renders the process itself a means or method.

However, Chekki (1979: 15) notes that those who favour community development as a method usually apply centrally advised programmes which are not always attentive to the needs of the region concerned. This may be contrasted with community development as a process, which heralds the ideal of community self-determination and consequently, assumes a more flexible approach adaptable to the needs of each unique community.

- Community Development as a Programme

Community development as a programme, presupposes that in community development, a programme of activities is formulated and followed whether formally or informally. The planned programmes may

extend across a wide range of community concerns such as agriculture, industry, health, nutrition, housing, education and social welfare. They may vary from neighbourhood efforts to national efforts or in the number of specialised personnel required to initiate and guide the programme. As Chekki (1979: 15) observes, community development as a programme cannot be detached from community development as a process and a method in that:

**“When one adds to the method, which is a set of procedures, some content, such - as a list of activities - one moves towards a community development programme. By carrying out the procedures, the activities are supposedly accomplished.”**

- Community Development as a Movement

The notion of community development as a movement infers that community development is an ideology, which celebrates the principle of progress. The interpretation of the concept progress will differ according to factors such as the socio-political sentiments within the community.

There is no doubt that community colleges engage in community development as propounded by Chekki (1979: 13). Community development as a process is manifested in one of the prominent features of the community college, which is its responsiveness to the needs of the community it serves. Community members define their common needs and plans which guarantee the satisfaction of those needs are expounded and administered through the community college. This process then leads to change, which proceeds in stages aimed at community self-determination.

Community development as a method and a programme, is discernible in the comprehensive mission of the community college discussed earlier. The comprehensive mission of the community college includes the five traditional programmes of the community college, which are career education, compensatory education, community education, the collegiate function and general education. The method community colleges use to implement these programmes is education.

Finally, the community college is indeed a movement, which came into existence after a century of discussions. Its birthplace was the University of

Chicago and its founder was William Rainey Harper the university's first President. This movement caused a revolution in the traditional world of Higher Education by opening college classrooms to millions of Americans who otherwise would have been denied Higher Education (Witt *et al.*, 1995: 13).

Martorana and Kuhns (1988: 232) identify four conditions, which give community colleges special advantages in serving as resources for local and regional development. They are:

- The number and geographic spread of these institutions  
There is an associate degree granting institution in every congressional district in the USA. This aggregation of institutions is only vanquished in number and structure by the common schools (grade K-12). If a need arises in the nation to help local and regional development, the means for a systematic way to disseminate the concept is the community college.
- Their dedication to community service and development  
Analysis of the emergence of junior colleges and their metamorphosis into community colleges has revealed that commitment to community service was the distinguishing feature of these institutions. Community colleges identified the improvement of the community of location as one of their twenty officially stated goals (Martorana and Kuhns, 1988: 233).
- The comprehensiveness of their programmes  
Community colleges are operating from a broad base of programmes thus justifying their claims to be contributing effectively to all aspects of local/regional development. Community colleges attempt to provide



enhancement of social, cultural, economic and political features of the locality thus strengthening their potential for effective community betterment.

- The grassroots nature of the constituencies who support them

A vast array of evidence indicates that community colleges are appreciated by the constituencies they serve. They are well attended, are consistently supported financially by their localities and there is usually an expression of pride towards the college by the communities served by the institutions.

### **2.4.3 Career Development Theories**

As mentioned earlier, provision of vocational education is one of the tasks of community colleges. Theories which impact on vocational education will therefore obviously have an influence on community colleges. Again, it has been mentioned earlier that vocational education is a major component of career education. Therefore career development theories, which are sometimes referred to as theoretical approaches to vocational behaviour (Herr and Swails, 1973: 51), will also have an effect on vocational education. Four of these theories, which are propounded by Norris *et al.* (1979: 105, see also, Herr and Swails, 1973: 52) as being among the major ones are selected as representatives of this category of theories and are summarised in this section, followed by a brief consideration of their influence on community college education. They are the Ginzberg Theory, Roe's Theory, Super's Theory and Holland's Theory.

#### 2.4.3.1 Ginzberg Theory

The Ginzberg theory of vocational choice as indicated by Norris *et al.* (1979: 107) consists of three major phases. They are the fantasy, tentative and realistic phases.

The **fantasy phase** is the stage in early childhood when children fantasise about what they want to be when they grow up. The games that children usually play like cops and robbers; doctor and patient and fire fighters are all fantasised role-playing, trying on an adult role that includes a vocational component. The choices in this period are arbitrary and reflect idealised and fictionalised vocational choices.

The **tentative phase** comprises four stages namely, interest, which is the time when the person determines that some things are of more interest than others; capacity, which concerns the focus on the actual or potential capacity to perform various functions or activities; value, involving the differentiation of those things that either have intrinsic or extrinsic value and relates them to vocational decision-making and transition, being about integration of the vocationally relevant data that have resulted from the other three stages of the tentative phase.

The **realistic phase** consists of three stages namely, exploration, crystallisation and specification. During this phase the individual begins realistically exploring

the data of the tentative phase with the view to crystallising it into a specific area of job families.

Vocational counsellors can use this theory to follow the course of decisions that their students make. They should, however, be careful not to force young students to reach decisions pre-maturely. Counsellors should identify the student's present period and stage and proceed from that point.

One shortcoming of this theory is that it is not quite clear about what the stages are specifically, when they occur and their ordering. The theory also assumes that vocational development ceases after the initial implementation of a career choice. It has, however, been widely acknowledged that vocational development occurs throughout one's life.

#### **2.4.3.2 Roe's Theory**

According to Roe's theory, as described by Norris *et al.* (1979: 111), vocational choice is a matter of interaction between genetic and environmental factors that become part of the total life pattern. The home atmosphere influences the sort of vocational activities, while the genetic structure influences the occupational level reached by the worker.

Much of Roe's work stresses the influence of early parent-child interactions and the emotional climate of the home or the development of a need structure which she contends is a key determinant of occupational choice. According to her, people enter one of eight occupational fields as a result of their value

structure, interest pattern and orientation towards or away from people. These occupational fields are service, business, contact, organisations, technology, outdoor, Science, general and culture and art/ entertainment. Roe goes on to put forward three types of family atmospheres that deal with the way parents interact with the child. The first one is branded by either the over-protective or the over-demanding parent. Both these orientations will result in adult orientations to occupations in the service or arts and entertainment group. The second type of family atmosphere is the neglecting or rejecting parent. This type of interaction, will, in harmony with Roe's argument, influence the child towards occupations involving little contact with people. The last type of family atmosphere is that of acceptance which will drive the child towards occupations in the cultural areas.

The problem with Roe's theory is that it says little about procedures that can be useful for vocational counselling. These can only be inferred from her theoretical position. The counsellor can help the client by exploring the need structure since the individuals need structure acts as a guiding force in channelling energies into a specific life pattern.

#### **2.4.3.3 Super's Theory**

According to Super's theory, as pointed out by Norris *et al.* (1979: 114), vocational development is ongoing, continuous and in the main irreversible. It is a process of compromise and synthesis within which the development and implementation of the self-concept operates. Basically what it means is that individuals choose an occupation whose characteristics will provide them with a

role that is coherent with their self-concept, and that the latter conception is a function of their developmental history.

Super has divided the vocational development process into the following five stages: the:

- Growth stage - birth to 14 years
- Exploration stage - 15 to 24 years
- Establishment stage - 25 to 44 years
- Maintenance stage - 45 to 65 years
- The decline stage - 65 years to death.

The vocationally oriented tasks of each stage suggest a framework upon which to build themes for career development at each educational level. As an example the following themes are suggested for each of the given educational levels:

- Elementary level- Formulation of self-concept.
- Junior high school-Translation of self-concept into vocational terms.
- Senior high school- Formulating plans to execute implementation of self -concept and generalised preference

(Herr and Swails, 1973: 59).

The implications of Super's theory for education and vocational counselling is that in order to define suitable educational or counselling goals for individuals, their life stages must be appraised and their degree of vocational maturity must be assessed. Procedures to be used by the counsellor include non-directive

counselling, vocational appraisal and encouragement of collecting occupational information from the community (Norris *et al.*, 1979: 117).

#### **2.4.3.4 Holland's Theory**

Holland's theory, as articulated by Norris *et al.* (1979: 119), can be enunciated in four propositions:

- Most individuals can be classified into one of six types - realistic, investigative, social, conventional, enterprising and artistic.
- Six kinds of occupational environments parallel the six kinds of individuals.
- People search for environments and vocations that will allow them to exercise their skills and talents and to take on enjoyable problems and roles and to avoid unpleasant ones.
- A person's behaviour can be explained by the interface of one's personality pattern and one's environment.

Also integrated in Holland's theory, are two additional dimensions of vocational choice. Firstly, the direction of choice, that is, the selection of one of the six occupational environments as a primary direction, is a function of the dominant characteristic of one's personality pattern. Secondly, the level of vocational choice and eventual vocational achievement.

The usefulness of Holland's theory to vocational counsellors is the considerable amount of information obtained from the determination of an individual's

personality orientation. This information is helpful for giving the student a better set of vocational choices (Norris *et al.*, 1979: 122).

The above explication of career development theories shows that the occupational development of a person is a continuing process that continues for the better part of one's life. These theories will therefore continue to have an influence on community college students the majority of whom are adults.

#### **2.4.4 Andragogy**

The majority of students in community colleges are adults, i.e., they are 18 years and older. In 1985, only 30% of students in American community colleges were 19 years and younger (El-Khawas *et al.*, 1988: 7). During the 1996/1997 academic year, the average age of the community college student was found to be 29 years (AACC, 2002(b): 1). This information is vital for planners of community college education. It means that they should not only be familiar with ways of teaching children successfully, but also with ways of teaching and developing adults effectively. A theory of adult learning, called andragogy, will therefore have tremendous effect on the proper functioning of community colleges.

The term andragogy, meaning the art and science of teaching adults, was coined by a German school teacher named Alexander Kapp in 1833, as he discussed the educational theories of Plato (McPherson and Lorenz, 1985: 57). It is taken from Greek words meaning "leading man". The theory of andragogy has been developed in contrast to the theory of pedagogy, which is the art and

science of teaching children. The term pedagogy is also derived from Greek words meaning “leading children”. According to McPherson and Lorenz (1985: 58) four major assumptions, which distinguish the pedagogical approach to teaching from the andragogical approach to teaching, relate to self-concept, experience, readiness to learn and time perspective. They are summarised below:

- Self-Concept

According to this assumption, the self-concept of a child differs from that of an adult. The child is basically dependent, only beginning the life-long process of establishing independence. The adult on the other hand, values independence, protects it and wants more of it. It is for this reason that Knowles (1984: 9) describes an adult as one who has arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for one’s own life, of being self-directing. It can therefore be deduced from this difference in self-concept that a child as a learner, is a dependent learner while an adult is a self-directing learner. Consequently, when adult learners are provided with chances to be responsible for their own learning programmes, they are inspired to participate fully in such programmes and to extend them over longer periods of time.

- Experience

Adults have more experience and knowledge than children. This is so because as people age, they gain knowledge and experience. It is also true that adults have different kinds of experiences as a result of the different roles they play in life, such as parent, worker, spouse, etc. Thus, adults expect their knowledge and experience to be respected and



they hope these attributes will form the foundation of their individualised learning.

- Readiness to learn

As individuals mature, their readiness to learn is decreasingly the product of their biological development and academic pressure and is increasingly the product of the developmental tasks required of them for the performance of their evolving social roles. Therefore adults, unlike youngsters, are less interested in the solution of problems they do not have and want the demands of their particular work situation and the practical problems they face to be the focal point of their continuing professional education.

- Time perspective

The final assumption of andragogical theory concerns time perspective, which is considered to be one of the most powerful distinctions between adults and children. Here, andragogical theory believes that the youngster's education is education for the future, while the education of the adult is education for the present. This means that a youngster acquires knowledge today and stores it for the day it can be used, while the adult learner wants to apply immediately or in the very near future what is learned today.

In addition to the characteristics differentiating andragogy and pedagogy, consideration should also be given to career stages as shown in Table 2.1. below. As much as educators recognise the effect the psychological and

emotional state of a child can have on learning, they should also realise that similar principles hold for adults (Thompson, 1992: 29).

**Table 2.1: Career Stages**

<b>Age-Group</b>	<b>Career Stage</b>	<b>Career Tasks</b>	<b>Psychological issues</b>
15 -22	1. Pre-career: Exploration	1.Finding the right career. 2. Obtaining the appropriate education.	1. Discovering one’s own needs and interests. 2. Developing a realistic self-assessment of one’s abilities.
22 - 30	1. Early Career: Trial	1. Obtaining a viable first job. 2. Adjusting to daily work routines and supervisors.	1. Overcoming the insecurity of inexperience; developing self-confidence. 2. Learning to get along with others in a work setting.
30 - 38	1. Middle Career: Establishment	1. Choosing a special area of competence. 2. Becoming an independent contributor to the organisation.	1. Deciding on level of professional and organisational development. 2. Dealing with feelings of failure of first independent projects or challenges.
38 -45	1.Middle Career: Transition	1. Reassessing one’s true career abilities, talents and interests. 2. Withdrawing from one’s own mentor and preparing to become mentor to others.	1. Reassessing one’s progress relative to one’s ambitions. 2. Resolving work-life personal-life conflicts.

45 - 55	1. Middle Career: Growth	1. Being a mentor. 2. Taking on more responsibilities of general management.	1. Dealing with the competitiveness and aggression of younger persons on the fast track up the organisation.
55 - 62	1. Late Career: Maintenance	1. Making strategic decisions about the future of the business. 2. Becoming concerned with the broader role of the organisation in civic and political arenas.	1. Becoming primarily concerned with the organisation's welfare rather than one's own career.
62 -70	1. Late Career: Withdrawal	1. Selecting and developing key subordinates for future leadership roles. 2. Accepting reduced levels of power and responsibilities.	1. Finding new sources of life satisfaction outside the job. 2. Maintaining a sense of self-worth without a job.

Source: Pfeiffer (1987: 11)

McPherson and Lorenz (1985: 59) stress that the following principles are also vital to effective adult learning.

- Feedback is important in any educational programme, but is critically important for adult learning. Adults need to see the direct results of their efforts and to have continual comment about their progress.
- Adult learners reject learning situations they perceive as attacks on their competence. Consequently, proposing prescriptions for adult learners should be avoided. The educator of adults should act as facilitator, a resource person whom the learner respects and trusts.

In conclusion, the theory of andragogy will be of much value to the planners and recipients of community college education if they could heed what McPherson and Lorenz (1985: 59) refer to as the message to pedagogical practitioners who want to add an andragogical dimension:

**“Start with the needs of the adults you are teaching, not yours or those of the organization (although some negotiation is not out of the question). Focus on the individual and the process of learning rather than the content, so that in the end the best content will be selected. If you do not know and understand the relevant experience of the adult learner, you will be an inadequate teacher. Independent adult learners prefer guided inquiry to lecture and regurgitation.”**

#### **2.4.5 Systems Theory**

As mentioned earlier, several events led to the establishment of community colleges in the US. In short, it could be said that community colleges were

formed as a result of an interaction between the American education system and its larger environment. The education system received demands, requests, suggestions and support from parents, students, business and industry, school administrators and government officials. The education system acted on these and came up with a product, which is the community college. These institutions made a serious attempt at addressing the pressure put on them. This process could be better understood if analysed with the aid of an analytical framework called the systems theory.

According to Bjork and Senkhane (1992: 63), systems theory is not a theory in the traditional sense. It is not directed towards explanation and prediction, rather it is descriptive, being used to classify events and clarify relationships between and among them in terms of an “input-process-output” relationship. The theory visualises a system composed of the environment, stresses, inputs, through-puts, outputs and feedback which relate as follows:

The **environment** can be divided into three components. The first is the international world the “suprasystem”, which is composed of all nations. It comprises the social, cultural, economic and political systems of the world. The second component of the environment is the nation to which the educational institution belongs (e.g., South Africa, USA, etc.). The last component is the community being served by the institution.

**Stresses** arise in response to some type of disturbance or event in the environment that changes existing relationships among organisations. The

disturbance may, for example, be an international event which impinges on the national environment and the local community.

**Inputs** from the environment may come in two shapes, “demands” and “supports”. Demands refer to expressions of dissatisfaction and calls for improvement, while supports refer to contributions such as financial assistance and willingness to participate in programmes.

**Through-puts** is a term used to refer to the process of translating demands placed on the system into some kind of a product that satisfies the demand. This process involves people in the educational institution as well as people from the community and proceeds through deliberations; consensus building and responses to conflict that are necessary for deciding on a course of action.

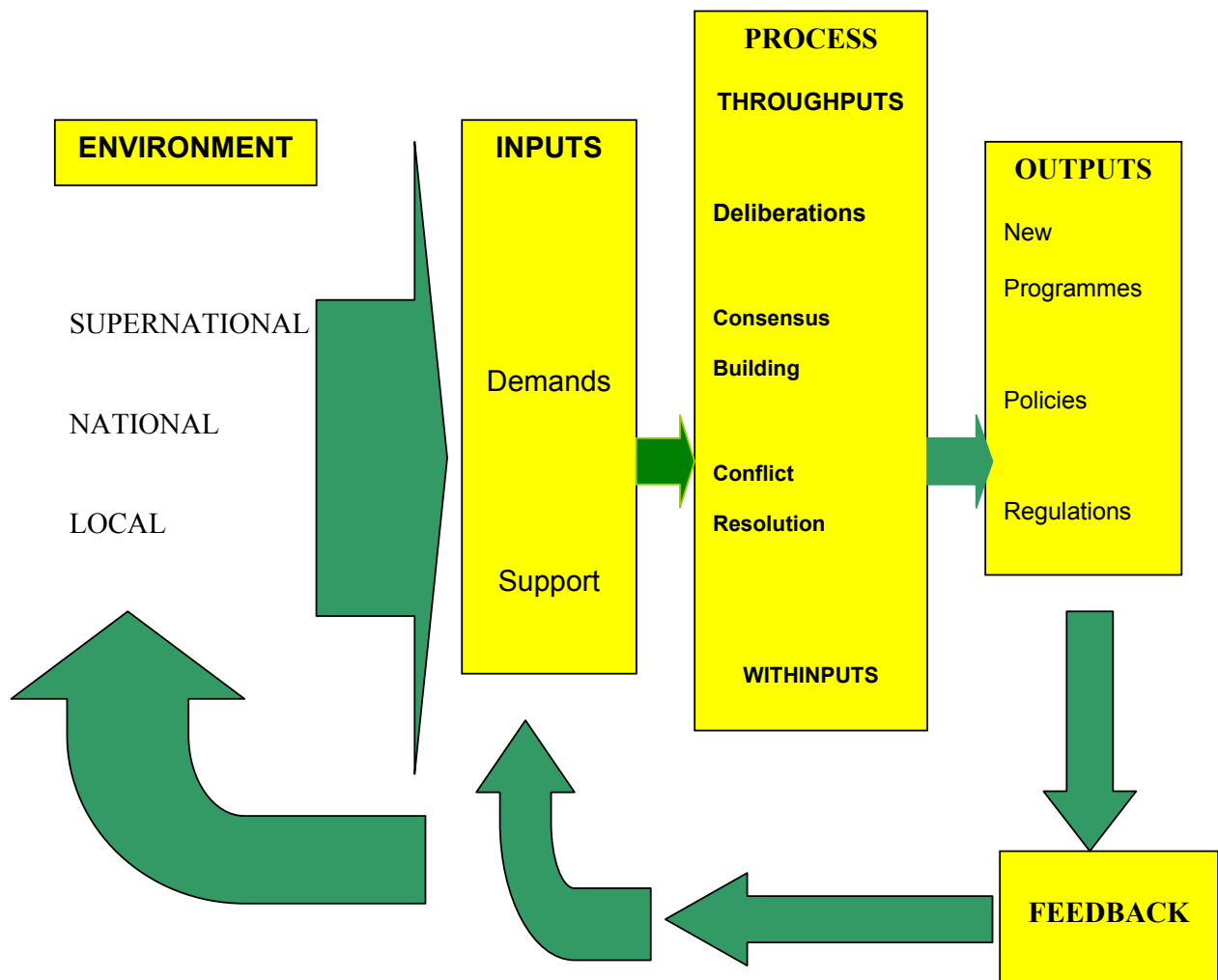
**Outputs** refer to the outcomes of the process described under through-puts. These may be in the form of new programmes, changes to regulations or new policies that address the original demand placed on the educational system.

**Feedback** informs the system about the relative success or failure of the output in satisfying the original demand. It may therefore become a new input into the system that needs to be satisfied. Feedback can be classified into two types: formative and summative. Formative feedback is given during the process of implementation of the output and may lead to modification or improvement of the implementation process. Summative feedback is given at the end of the

implementation process and relates to the impact of the implementation process in meeting the demands placed on the system.

The Systems Theory as explained above is schematically represented in Figure 2.1 below:

**Figure 2.1: Schematic Representation of Systems Theory**



## 2.5 Conclusion

This theoretical and conceptual framework for community colleges has touched on the following aspects, which will be extremely helpful in this study:

- The importance of theory in explaining complex concepts such as community colleges and vocational education.
- The concepts of community and community colleges, indicating how the definition of the concept of community influences services that educational institutions offer to those they perceive as their communities and *vice versa*.
- The relationship that exists between the demands that the American communities made regarding their educational needs and the mission objectives and services being offered by American community colleges.
- Different theories that have an impact on the provision of education by community colleges, namely, the community development theory, which impacts on the community college as a result of the role that the latter plays in the betterment of the lives of those it serves; career development theories impacting on the community college because of its role in the preparation of its students for the world of work; andragogy, which influences the community college because of the clients of the latter who are all adults and need educational approaches different from those used with non-adults; and, the systems theory impacting on the community college because of the influence that the latter has on the communities it serves and *vice versa* .

The next chapter will now focus on the American community college. This will include the nature and day-to-day functioning thereof. In order to deepen our



understanding of the American community college, the chapter will also include a report on the case study of one American community college, which was conducted in 2001.