

Chapter 2

The Context of FET College Origins and Restructuring: An Historical Analysis

2.1 Introduction

Education reform is political work, and as such can only be understood within an historical and cultural perspective (Levin, 2001:4). Like all other forms of educational change, the reform of the Further Education and Training (FET) sector in South Africa emerged in particular social, economic, political and institutional contexts that affected the way in which the reform strategy was conceptualised, developed and implemented. It follows that the manner in which a reform is conceptualised, developed, defended and implemented will depend to a great extent on previous events, practices, traditions and behaviours (Whitty & Edwards, 1998).

An understanding of the history of the South African technical college sector is a prerequisite for making sense of the recent reforms in the FET college sector. The importance of FET colleges can be attributed to their role in providing people with skills and employment prospects that are not attainable in any other education sector. Accordingly, in this chapter I present the history of the technical college sector, in order to understand the roots of the structural and cultural influences on and constraints to policy implementation that this study tries to elucidate.

In this brief historical account I describe a rich, deep and complex culture that goes back to the earliest days of the South African technical education system. The review tracks the emergence of the technical colleges, and the consolidation and growth of the FET¹³ sector after the Second World War. It then proceeds to outline how the new democratic government resurrected the technical college sector after 1994 and concludes with a summary of the embedded institutional culture.

¹³ See footnote 1.

2.2 The origins and establishment of the technical college sector in South Africa: 1867 – 1994

The history of technical and vocational education in South Africa is bound up with the early development of the South African economy and the discovery of diamonds and gold in the 19th century. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold near the Rand River in the Transvaal¹⁴ between 1867 and 1875 spawned major developments for two reasons. Firstly, the location of these minerals in the remote areas of the country and, secondly, the great depths at which these minerals had to be mined. The development of the railways was essential to cater for the mobilisation of the high population influx to the gold¹⁵ and diamond mining regions,¹⁶ the utilisation of heavy equipment and the development of power supplies which led to the development of new urban areas and to the growth of commercial farming and manufacturing (Abedian & Standish, 1992).

The expansion and growth of the railways and the growth and development of the mining industry created a demand for railway technicians with appropriate technical skills, while in the mining industry engineers were needed (Abedian & Standish, 1992). Based on the need for apprentices with appropriate technical skills, the Natal Government Railways began the first technical education classes for railway apprentices in their railway workshops in Durban in 1884. Similar classes were started in Salt River by the Cape Government Railways in 1890, and by the Central South African Railways in Pretoria in 1902.¹⁷ The typical subjects taught for these courses were machine construction, practical mathematics, carriage building and sketching (Malherbe, 1997). As training developed the De Beers Mining Company made the attendance of

¹⁴ Renamed Gauteng province after the democratic elections in 1994.

¹⁵ The South African gold rush made the natural synergy between White-owned capital and abundant black labour overpowering.

¹⁶ Kimberley and highveld regions.

¹⁷ These early beginnings led to the establishment of the Universities of Cape Town, the Witwatersrand and Natal, as well as the technical institutes on the Witwatersrand in 1903, in Durban and Cape Town in 1907 and thereafter in other urban centres.

apprentices at evening classes at these schools compulsory. This led to the establishment of the School of Mines in Kimberley in 1896.

During the early 1900s interest in technical education started to grow rapidly. A conference of the colonial heads of the four education departments convened by the Education Advisor to the High Commissioner for the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony was held in January 1902. One of the resolutions passed at this conference was that, in order to meet the needs of the colonies, technical schools in conjunction with higher education should be established (Pittendrigh, 1988).

The Transvaal School of Mines was established in Johannesburg in 1904 and the mining students from Kimberley were transferred to this school. This later became known as the Transvaal Technical Institute, thereafter known as the Transvaal University College and then the SA School of Mines and Technology, thereafter the University College Johannesburg and finally the University of the Witwatersrand in 1922 (Malherbe, 1977; Natrass, 1981). During this period a system of evening school examinations evolved. The examinations written by technical education students at all technical institutes operating in South Africa were the forerunner of the National Technical Examination system.

Between 1906 and 1916 a wave of new colleges opened. The Pretoria Polytechnic and Durban Institute opened in 1906 and 1907¹⁸ respectively, whilst the SA College in Cape Town started with part-time classes. By 1910¹⁹ there were day-time technical schools in Pretoria, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and one under construction in Johannesburg (Pittendrigh, 1988; McKerron, 1934).

The Pretoria Trades School that opened in 1909 prepared students for mechanics, woodwork, wagon building, printing, blacksmithing, and for the plumbing and electrical

¹⁸ In 1908 the South African Labour Party (SALP) was formed explicitly to advance the interests of European workers.

¹⁹ The Union of South Africa with four provinces (Transvaal, Natal, Orange Free State and Cape) was founded in 1910. The policy of racial segregation became official and increasingly embedded in South African society under the rule of General Hertzog. Socio- economically more emphasis was placed on the plight of Whites.

trades. The admission requirement was boys with a minimum age of thirteen and a Standard 4 pass (Pittendrigh, 1988; HSRC, 2003). The programme comprised 50 per cent workshop and 50 per cent classroom tuition.

The Durban Technical Institute included a technical high school for boys over the age of thirteen and who had passed Standard 6, and aimed at providing the vocational training necessary to enter technical, commercial or teaching occupations, but did not prepare students for a trade.²⁰

Another development that is pertinent here was the Conference on Technical, Industrial and Commercial Education convened in Pretoria by the Minister of Education in 1911, during at which a total of 67 resolutions were passed. The most significant of these were the need for central control of vocational education, a National Advisory Board on Vocational Education, central syllabi, examinations and certification in technical education.

Provincial administrators were not keen on implementing these proposals as the administrators guarded the rights granted to provinces in terms of the South African Act of 1909 (Pittendrigh, 1988). Despite this a National Advisory Board for Technical Education without executive functions was established in September 1912.²¹ The national syllabi and national technical examinations were introduced only in 1916, with the provision of technical and vocational education still largely in the hands of the four provinces.

The South African Act of 1909 governed technical and vocational education. The provisions of Section 85 of this Act limited the transfer of any form of education not

²⁰ Black workers were fast becoming capable of performing industrial leadership roles in greater numbers at much lower costs than white workers. Driven by the profit motive the employment of black workers seemed far more attractive and the substitution of black for white in skilled and semi-skilled mining jobs increased. White workers feared the large supply of black labour at low cost. Consequently, white tradesmen and government officials, including the police, harassed black workers to discourage them from traveling to the mines and competing for permanent jobs. The notorious Pass Laws were put in place to limit the supply of non-White workers in “white” employment centres.

²¹ In 1912 the African National Congress (ANC) was founded.

clearly defined as higher education from provinces to the central government. As the founders of the Union²² had not defined “higher education”, there was no unanimity on the meaning of this term. This resulted in many problems such as the financing of education and its responsibility to Parliament. It became imperative to define the term “higher education”.

The Financial Fourth Extension Act of 1922 (No 5 of 1922) defined “higher education” as used in Section 85 of the SA Act, 1909 as follows:

- Education provided by University and University Colleges incorporated by law
- Education provided by the SA Native College
- Education provided by such technical institutes as the Minister may declare to be places of higher education
- Such part of education provided by other technical institutes (including schools of art, music, commerce, technology, agriculture, mining and domestic science) as the Minister of Education may, after consultation with the provincial administration concerned, declare to be higher education.

The adoption of this definition helped to alleviate many of the problems experienced at the Durban Technical College. College work, other than technical high school work, was defined as higher education. The Durban Technical College changed from a provincial to a state-subsidised institution and received a college grant from 1 April 1922. The name of the college changed to the Natal Technical College, and college work in engineering and commerce was recognised as being of university standard. This was done in conjunction with the Natal University College in Pietermaritzburg (Pittendrigh, 1988; Malherbe, 1977).

In October 1922, the Cape Technical Institute was declared an institution for higher education and became known as the Cape Technical College. The accelerating industrialisation period was accompanied by significant growth in technical college

²²The union of South Africa was made up of the former Boer republics, Natal and the Cape. Louis Botha became the first Prime Minister. With the formation of the new state the black population received no political rights.

enrolments, mainly of white South Africans. Much of the growth was as result of the increase in the number of apprenticeship contracts following the Apprenticeship Act of 1922, which required apprentices to attend technical classes (Abedian & Standish, 1992; Natrass, 1981).

The Higher Education Act, 1923 (No 30 of 1923) incorporated colleges into higher education under the Union rather than under provincial control. Colleges were able to enjoy considerable autonomy (Malherbe, 1977). The Act applied initially only to the Natal Technical College, the Cape Town Technical College and the SA Native College (which later became the University of Fort Hare). However, the financing of education still remained a critical issue. The Education Administration Commission was appointed in 1923 to, *inter alia*, define the limits of compulsory education and assign the burden of costs for such education, to examine and report on existing provisions for industrial or technical education or training, and to advise on how the existing provisions should be altered if necessary.

The recommendations of the Commission were as follows:

- Provincial Administrators should assume immediate control of all educational work in state and state-aided institutions within their respective areas, with the exception of agricultural colleges and institutions of university rank.
- A Union Board of Education should be constituted with authority to coordinate the educational activities of the four Provincial Administrations, both with one another as well as with universities and agricultural colleges.

Based on these recommendations the Minister of Education convened a Conference in Durban in October 1924, where he proposed that, in order to adjust the financial relations between the Central Government and the Provincial Administration, the Department of Education should assume all responsibility for vocational education under provincial control. After protracted negotiations this was accepted and “higher education” was extended to include any other education that the Minister of Education may declare to be “higher education” after obtaining the consent of the Provincial Administration concerned.

Under the Higher Education Act technical colleges were then established in East London, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, Pretoria and Johannesburg, while technical institutes were established in Bloemfontein and Uitenhage. Vigorous development followed with colleges being established and new buildings erected (Malherbe, 1977).

In 1928 the Witwatersrand Technical Institute commenced offering correspondence courses that had previously been offered by the General Post Office for post office and public service messengers. From 1929²³ these courses were extended to include technical and general courses, and the Cape Technical College became responsible for commercial correspondence courses. In 1930 the Witwatersrand Technical Institute became the Witwatersrand Technical College, and by the end of 1933 it had branches in Benoni, Brakpan, Germiston, Springs, Boksburg, Krugersdorp, Witbank and Vereeniging.

Technical colleges became involved in a range of activities from continuation classes to day schools, covering classes from Grade 8 up to post matriculation work. The highest level of work was for membership of institutions such as the Institute of Mechanical, Electrical and Civil Engineers, as well as the Institute of Bankers, Transport, Insurance, Chartered Secretaries and so on, and for preparation for Government Certificates of Competency. The Natal Technical College even offered degree courses in engineering, fine arts and commerce in conjunction with the Natal University College.

Concerns were raised over the duplication of work and the wastage of money. The Minister appointed a special commission known as the Van der Horst Commission to report on the delimitation of duties between technical colleges and university status and other cognate matters. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- A closer linking of colleges with other secondary education institutions and a limitation of their functions in providing a more or less specialised type of secondary education

²³ From 1929 onwards there was an increase in Afrikaner nationalism.

- That outside bodies such as the Institute for Bankers should not be stopped from preparing examinations
- That technical colleges should be placed under the direct control of the Union government
- That technical colleges should be stopped from doing work done by universities (Malherbe, 1977).

Based on these recommendations the university courses of the Natal Technical Colleges were transferred to Natal University. However, the vigorous reaction from the technical college sector halted further action.

In 1939 the outbreak of the Second World War²⁴ plunged the world into a period of crisis and led to further developments with new activities emerging. South Africa was propelled into its first industrial revolution. Technical colleges were required to perform an entirely new function in providing the Union with 20 000 technicians to maintain the necessary production levels within the country, as well as to man the armed services. The Central Organization of Technical Training (COTT) was established to train technicians to service the machinery of “modern” warfare and to determine the syllabi and methods of instruction (Abedian & Standish, 1992; Natrass, 1981; Malherbe, 1977).

The training was based on work done by the Pretoria Technical College since 1937 in training South African Air Force apprentices at its School of Technical Training at the Military College. By June 1940 facilities to train 50 000 persons as fitters, machine tool operators, welders, blacksmiths, tool repairers, electricians and sheet metal workers had been established in all major cities. The course was designed for men between the ages of 18 and 40. The programme lasted 24 weeks and became known as COTT Training. By August 1940 the training of females was also introduced. The intention was to prepare industry for the challenges of international competition, not only from day-to-day, but looking forward and ensuring the country’s independence.

²⁴ Although South Africa (under Jan Smuts) sided with the allied forces during WW11, there was a significant resistance movement (Ossewa Brandwag) that supported national-socialism.

After the war it was the task of technical colleges to provide for the retraining of ex-service men. The last COTT training programme was terminated in June 1948. The essential aspects of COTT training viz. the provision of trade tests, became an essential aspect of the Apprenticeship Act.

In 1945 the United Party government appointed a Commission of Enquiry into Technical and Vocational Education (De Villiers Commission of Inquiry). The Commission's report was released in 1948²⁵ at the same time as the National Party²⁶ was elected to Parliament. As a result of the change in government the findings of the Commission were not dealt with in any depth, despite the need to reassess and renew the education system in the post-war period. The importance of technical college education declined in importance, partly in the face of an ideological agenda to promote school-based technical and vocational education in predominantly Afrikaans rural areas beyond the reach of urban technical colleges, so as to promote the development of Afrikaans medium colleges. The consequences of this was, for example, that the Witwatersrand Technical College with 35 000 students was broken up into a number of separate English and Afrikaans medium colleges.

To facilitate this agenda, in 1954 the Cabinet decided to take over all technical colleges as full state institutions. The Vocation Education Act, 1955 (No 70 of 1955) gave authority to the Arts and Science Ministry to take over technical colleges, thus reducing the influence of local College Councils and local business committees. This was "probably the main cause" (Malherbe, 1977:209) for the decline of the technical colleges over this period. The state's investment in technical colleges fell sharply when

²⁵ The post-war period saw the rise of Afrikaner nationalism with the National Party coming into power in 1948. The enforcement of the apartheid or separate development policy affected all sectors of society. All forms of black resistance were suppressed. This led to the banning of the ANC and the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela in 1963. The institutionalisation of separate development through the policy of homelands along ethnic lines (Bantustans) was vigorously pursued, strengthening racial segregation throughout the sixties. The ANC went into exile intensifying the struggle against the apartheid government.

²⁶ With the National Party in power by 1948, bilingualism (English and Afrikaans) had become government policy by 1949. Over subsequent years, government further restricted the regulations governing technical colleges. The Vocational Education Act of 1955 placed technical colleges in South Africa in the hands of the state.

compared with what was being invested in higher education at that time. Consequently, technical colleges suffered severe financial constraints, and this laid the foundation for the “inverted triangle” of high university enrolments accompanied by lower technikon and even lower technical college enrolments. In 1956, in consultation with industry and other interested parties, the Department of Education commenced developing courses for training technicians in the three major branches of engineering, namely, chemical, electrical and mechanical. The first technical courses commenced in 1958 at the Witwatersrand Technical College. The Chamber of Mines sponsored these four-year courses (Malherbe, 1977).

This development was the beginning of a healthy expansion of advanced technical courses, and new courses were introduced annually to include courses in Art and Design as well as Secretarial and Commercial Studies.

The report by Professor H O Monnig in 1964 stated that the system of technical colleges and universities did not provide sufficient variety in training facilities to meet the abilities of all students, particularly in the area of technology, in order to meet the rapidly growing needs of commerce and industry (Pittendrigh, 1988). The report concluded that the four most advanced technical education colleges should be converted to technological colleges and function at a level between universities and technical colleges.

The adoption of the Advanced Technical Education Act of 1967 (No 40 of 1967) led to the abolition of urban technical colleges, which were then redefined as Colleges for Advanced Technical Education (CATES). These institutions later became known as technikons, and all students were required to possess at least a senior certificate as an entrance requirement. This was supported by the National Education Policy Act around which the entire white educational school system revolved. On the positive side, the Act granted these senior colleges the status of universities, and the colleges actively set about improving the qualifications of staff members. The four most advanced technical education colleges were converted to Colleges for Advanced Technical Education. Later, as more conversions followed, the name “Colleges for Advanced Technical Education” became too cumbersome and, after prolonged debate, these institutions were

renamed technikons, following the promulgation of the Advanced Technical Education Amendment Act, 1979 (No 43 of 1979).

The 30-year period between 1950 and 1980 was characterised by a relative stagnation of technical colleges, and by racial and ideological engineering. The state, employers and organised labour made several attempts to place skills and technical and vocational education and training more firmly on the national agenda. The state's efforts were characterised by a narrow instrumental concept of "skills" (Report of the De Lange Commission, 1981) and were complicated and compromised by the wider political and economic developments that were taking place at that time. The 1970s and 1980s were characterised by intensifying political conflict and a decline in economic growth, as well as a shift away from interventionist economic policies towards more market-orientated viewpoints (Abedian & Standish, 1992; Gelb, 1991). The country's increasing limited skills base was a major constraint to growth and, at the same time, the acceptance of African urbanisation necessitated new approaches to the training and advancement of African workers (Nattrass, 1981).

The Soweto uprising in 1976 led to education and training being regarded as a significant "site of struggle" (Samuel, 1990). Important changes in state education and training policies were introduced with the Education and Training Act of 1979 which replaced the Bantu Special Education Act of 1964 (Samuel, 1990; Kallaway, 1984; Nasson & Samuel, 1990). The De Lange Commission²⁷ of 1981, together with increased private sector and trade union involvement in education and training, saw the beginning of highly politicised contestation. It was evident that there was a need to provide skills training primarily to persons not subjected to compulsory school attendance on a part-time or full-time basis or even through distance learning. The Technical Colleges Act of 1981 (No 104 of 1981) was promulgated, based on the original form of Act 40 of 1967, and under this Act the 42 technical institutes became technical colleges and, together with the 29 existing technical colleges (white technical colleges), were declared state-

²⁷ The De Lange Commission Report (HSRC 1981) was the key government report during this period, signalling deeply contested shifts in official thinking about the relationship between education and training and the demands of the economy, as well as indicating a strategic response to growing political pressures.

aided institutions. All other technical colleges under Act 104 of 1981 were referred to as state colleges and were controlled and managed by the state.

2.2.1 The political intent

The changes in the economic structure caused by recession and the plummeting gold price in the late 1920s,²⁸ and the rapid growth and industrialisation after the end of the Second World War in the 1940s, laid the foundations for the former white state-aided colleges. During this period the South African economy experienced rapid growth through secondary industrialisation.

State policy during this period was based on the racial division of labour. Unskilled and rural Afrikaans-speaking workers felt threatened by African workers who competed for their jobs. They considered it necessary to protect their interests in the labour market through the racial divisions that divided black (African, Indian and Coloured) and white workers (Department of Education, 2001).

The putting down of the Mineworkers Strike in 1922 encouraged these workers to use their voting powers to elect the Pact government that introduced the “civilised labour policy”, a system based on racial job reservation. The Pact Government, composed of Afrikaner nationalists (in the National Party) and white unionists (SALP), adopted an agenda of pro forma socialism also known as the Civilized Labour Policy. After the courts threw out the first Colour Bar Act in 1923, based on a lawsuit by the Chamber of Mines, the Mines and Workers Act of 1926 re-established the Colour Bar which, like the earlier act, used the pretext of “industrial safety” to keep blacks from moving into favourable job classifications. Workers classified as white were employed as artisans and tradesmen, while black workers could access only unskilled or semi-skilled jobs at the lower end of the market. This skills development regime based on racial lines began after 1924 when white unions used their representation on industrial councils to sign collective agreements with employers to exclude black workers from skilled jobs (Pittendrigh, 1988; Cross & Chisholm, 1990; Department of Education, 2001).

²⁸ Highly paid whites in semiskilled occupations were replaced with Africans, resulting in an abundance of managerial, skilled and semiskilled African workers.

The vocational education and training system that evolved between the 1940s and the 1960s also consisted of various elements in support of the civilised labour policy (Christie, 1985; Abedian & Standish, 1992; Natrass, 1981). The state-provided mass education system from 1948 authenticated racial and ethnic differences. Christian National Education provided the ideological framework for the legitimisation of these differences. Skilled work and artisan training were reserved for white workers in terms of the Job Reservation Act of the early 1950s. This was institutionalised through the apprenticeship system that provided on-the-job training, supplemented by theoretical training through a network of public technical colleges and public entities, such as Eskom, Telkom, Transnet and others. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, South Africa experienced another economic boom, and a major skills shortage emerged with job reservation as an obstacle to economic growth. The provision of technical and vocational education to people of colour had always been restricted and distorted under apartheid. Between 1946 and 1970 the enrolment of black students²⁹ rose from 2 015 to 3 625 in the 24 vocational institutions throughout the country, including the Transkei.³⁰ The limited access that coloured students had to the predominantly white Cape Technical College ceased in 1962 (Abedian & Standish, 1992; Natrass, 1981). Five years later there were 5 “coloured” technical colleges with 2 100 students. Indian students on the other hand attended technical classes at the privately established M. L. Sultan Technical College. This college was later incorporated into higher education under the 1923 Higher Education Act.

Between 1950 and 1980 the relative stagnation of technical vocational colleges was a source of great concern amongst employers and organised labour because of the imminent skills shortage and the importance of vocational and technical education. The state’s efforts were characterised by a narrow instrumental concept of “skills” as

²⁹ Bantu education played a crucial role in ensuring the provision of a semi-skilled labour force.

³⁰ A former self-governing “black” territory under the apartheid regime.

understood in the Report of the De Lange Commission³¹ in 1981 (Kallaway, 1990; Davies 1984).

The intensifying political conflict and declining economic growth of the 1970s and 1980s saw a shift away from interventionist economic policies towards a more market-orientated philosophy (Abedian & Standish, 1992; Nattrass, 1981). The skills shortage was a severe constraint to economic growth. During this period the apartheid government was also pursuing its policy of industrial decentralisation by providing employers with incentives to move into the homelands and adjoining border areas. This created a demand for skilled labour in these areas and black workers were recruited to do jobs previously reserved for white workers only. However, the black workers were employed at different job designations, paid at lower rates and had no access to the apprenticeship and vocational education and training systems. Several non-racial trade unions emerged resisting apartheid both in society and at work, signalling the effective end of job reservation practices (Pittendrigh, 1988; Department of Education, 2001).

The pressure mounted and the apartheid government conceded to extending training opportunities to black workers, but at separate institutions that became known as state technical colleges. These colleges were funded and governed separately from state-aided technical colleges. The black technical colleges were located in townships and designated group areas removed from white commerce and industry in cities, and were based on different funding and staffing norms from those of white technical colleges (Chisholm, 1984).

The 1976 Soweto Uprising led to significant changes in education. The Education and Training Act of 1979 replaced the Bantu Special Education Act of 1964 (Samuel, 1990). By 1990 the 123 technical colleges in total comprised 67 white, 3 Indian, 8 coloured and 45 black (22 in the then Republic and 23 in the TVBC³² states) institutions. Enrolments at the black colleges were 0.45 per thousand for the population as compared with 10 per thousand for whites (TVET Sector Review, 1992).

³¹ See footnote 15.

³² The TBVC states were the self-governing “black” territories under the apartheid regime commonly known as the homelands. They consisted of the Transkei, Venda, Bophutatswana and the Ciskei.

Having sketched the origins and evolution of the technical college sector, I proceed in the next section to provide a description of the initiatives and vision of the ANC-led government to restructure the FET college sector in order to address the past inequalities of the sector, and at the same time address the many political, social and economic challenges the country faces.

2.2.2. Restructuring to create a new FET sector

In the early 1990s there was an intense period of policy positioning and policy development with the release of the apartheid government's Education Renewal Strategy (Department of National Education, 1991). At the same time the ANC released its policy position *A Policy Framework for Education and Training* (ANC, 1994a), which formed the basis for the development of subsequent education policies post-1994. *The Reconstruction and Development Program* or RDP provided the policy framework for the development of all policies under the newly elected ANC government under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela (ANC, 1994b). The short-lived RDP was followed by the White Paper on Education and Training in 1995. This policy document provided the core values and vision for the establishment of the new education and training system. In terms of the White Paper on Education and Training (March 15, 1995) the immediate focus of the FET policy development process was to be the establishment of a National Commission on Further Education and Training.

However, by the time the Department of Education was ready to establish the Commission in October 1996, a substantial amount of research on FET had already been completed, indicating that during the apartheid era the provisioning of FET was fragmented and lacked coordination. Based on his experiences with the National Commission on Higher Education³³ the Minister opted for the appointment of a National Committee on Further Education³⁴ (NCFE) instead. The terms of reference for the NCFE were to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of FET, *inter*

³³ This was explained to me in an interview with a senior official of the Department of Education who worked closely with the Commission. The problems that emanated from the commission were based on personality conflicts, life span of the commission and other personal interests. The interview was held on 09/09/02.

³⁴ The NCFE was a committee of experts on FET, the reference group comprising stakeholders in FET and a Secretariat provided by the Department of Education.

alia, the human resource implications, a funding model for the sector, gender imbalances, the development of an information database, the development of counselling services, governance structures, curriculum related matters, and the conducting of an audit of the sector. The NCFE was originally given five months from October 1996 to complete its task. The Minister could, however, after consultation with the Director-General of Education and the Chairperson of the Committee, extend or shorten the Committee's term of office. In February 1997 the Minister extended the NCFE's term of office for a further six months to August 1997. The NCFE Report served as a basis for the development of the Green Paper on Further Education and Training (Department of Education, 1998a), which in turn informed the official policy framework for the Education *White Paper 4: A Programme for the Transformation of Further Education and Training*, released in August 1998.

The definition of FET as provided in the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) is somewhat different from the international definition in that it includes secondary schooling, education and training in colleges, and a range of other training programmes. In most international settings a distinction is made between schooling, and further education and training (Department of Education, 1997b). However, in line with international trends education and training are recognised as essential elements of human resource development (Department of Education, 1995). It was recognised in the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) that the development of an integrated³⁵ approach to education and training is an underlying concept for human resource development. In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa³⁶ the functions of education and training are allocated to both the Ministries of Education and Labour respectively. Furthermore, an integrated approach to education and training would be realised through a National

³⁵ The integration of education and training refers to the human resource development policy that rejects rigid division between “academic” and “applied”, between “theory” and “practice”, between “knowledge” and “skills”.

³⁶ Education at all levels, excluding tertiary education, as listed in Schedule 4 of *The Constitution*, is a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence. The intention of the Constitution is to empower provincial departments of education with executive responsibility for education within their provinces, except for tertiary education, subject to the national government's responsibility to protect essential national interests.

Qualifications Framework (NQF). Because of the complementary allocation of functions between the two Ministries, a dual process of legislation emanated from the Departments of Education (FET Act)³⁷ and Labour (Skills Development Act, Act No 97 of 1998)³⁸ simultaneously.

The challenges posed by the division of the responsibilities for education and training between two separate Ministries required a high level of collaboration between these two departments. Collaboration by the two Ministries is evidenced in the establishment of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and consultation on their respective implementation strategies viz. *National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999–2001: Preparing for the Twenty-first Century through Education, Training and Work* and *Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa: A Nation at Work for a Better Life for All* (Department of Education, 1999). The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that the functions of education are allocated under Schedule 4 of the Constitution,³⁹ while those of training are not. This arrangement creates significant policy and administrative complications (Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2001).

In addition to this, the Constitution allocates the function of education, other than higher education, as a concurrent national and provincial competence, and divides control of

³⁷ The FET Act provides a broad framework within which provincial departments of education are to establish further education and training sectors in their provinces. The FET Act provides guidelines with regard to the governance and funding of public further education and training institutions, and makes provision for the registration of private further education and training institutions.

³⁸ The Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998. (SDA) deals with skills training. It introduces a strategic approach to link education and training with the demands of the world of work. The Skills Development Act makes provision for the establishment of a National Skills Fund that is funded through money paid by employers towards the improvement of the quality and quantity of skills in the country. The Skills Development Fund is regulated in terms of the *Skills Development Levy Act, 1999* in an effort to support higher skills development. These funds will be used for training through the twenty-five Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established in terms of the SDA. The functions of the SETAs include the development and implementation of a sector skills plan, registering and promoting learnerships, and applying to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for accreditation as an Education and Training Quality Assurance Body (ETQA) for qualifications in its sector.

³⁹ Schedule 4 of the Constitution allocates functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence.

FET between the Ministry of Education and the provincial education authorities. Accordingly, the Minister of Education is responsible for national policy and the norms and standards for FET, while provincial governments are responsible for the budget and the delivery of education. The implementation problem that could arise is that national goals, policies and norms and standards that are determined by the national Ministry are not adequately funded by the provincial budgets. The Constitution also defines the role of the Ministry in leading the *restructuring* and transformation of the education system (Department of Education, 1998c).⁴⁰

The underlying principles for the reorganisation of the FET sector are in line with those of the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) viz. access, quality, redress of past inequalities and equity. The reorganisation of the FET sector through *restructuring* is seen as a vehicle for achieving these objectives. The *National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999–2001: Preparing for the Twenty-first Century through Education, Training and Work* (Department of Education, 1999) outlines the objectives and expected outcomes of the implementation of the new FET system.

During the ANC-led government's second term of office, Professor Kader Asmal was appointed as Minister of Education in June 1999. He immediately set out to review the performance of the education system since the appointment of the ANC-led government in April 1994. The conclusion drawn was that the education system was “largely dysfunctional”⁴¹ (Asmal, 1999). Based on this premise he developed his own *Call to Action*, which was released in July 1999. The plan is known as “Tirisano” which is a Sotho word meaning “working together”. The Tirisano Programme defined nine priorities that were divided into five programme areas for the transformation of the

⁴⁰ Education White Paper 4 (1998).

⁴¹ The education system was described as “largely dysfunctional” by Prof Asmal in his speech entitled “Call to Action: Mobilising Citizens to build a South African Education and Training System for the 21st Century, 27 July 1999”. This was his first speech to the nation after assuming responsibility as Minister of Education in June 1999.

education and training system (Department of Education 2000a). Tirisano is in line with international trends in education reform with its focus on outputs and outcomes, efficiency and performance.

Programme 4 of the five-part Tirisano programme emphasises the creation of “a vibrant further education and training system to equip youth and adults to meet the social and economic needs of the 21st century”. Project one of Programme 4 focuses on the *restructuring* (reorganisation) of the further education and training sector so that it is “responsive to national and provincial goals and priorities, including human resource development needs”.

“The purpose and mission of FET are to respond to the human resource needs of our country for personal, civic and economic development” (Department of Education, 1998a).⁴² The proposed implementation strategy to achieve this is through the integration of education and training and opportunities for enhanced learner mobility and progression. Learning programmes offered in FET are to be registered on the NQF so that learners will be able to access high-quality education and training. In addition to this, a wide range of learning options will be made available to a diverse range of learners, school-going young people, out-of-school youth, young adults and the broader adult population (ANC, 1994b; Department of Education, 1998c).⁴³

The FET system is described as a large, diverse part of the education and training system. There are approximately 8 000 providers, excluding private companies, and almost 3 million learners. Approximately R10 billion from public and private funds is spent on FET annually (Department of Education, 1998c). In South Africa FET, as it was reclassified in terms of the NQF (education and training on levels 2 to 4 of the NQF), is provided through senior secondary schools, technical colleges, higher education institutions and private providers. Besides the providers mentioned, various other ministerial divisions also provide FET (e.g. Departments of Agriculture, Health

⁴² Green Paper on FET.

⁴³ Education White Paper 4 (1998).

and Security Services) that does not fall under the control of the Department of Education.

As in most parts of the world, here in South Africa we find education and training being made available through both private and public providers. Public further education and training in South Africa is provided mainly through the 152 technical colleges and approximately 5500 senior secondary schools (Department of Education, 1998a). Of the 152 technical colleges approximately 46 percent are state-aided and 54 percent are state colleges. The division between state and state-aided colleges reflects the differences between historically black institutions⁴⁴ (HBI) and historically white institutions⁴⁵ (HWI). Vocational education and training or FET under apartheid was characterised by unequal access with respect to the quality of programmes and the infrastructure based on race, the unequal funding of historically white technical colleges and historically black technical colleges, as well as the division between theory and practice. “Black technical colleges lacked meaningful linkages with industry and were largely disconnected from the local economy” (Department of Education, 1998a).⁴⁶

The differences in the state-aided and state institutions centre on governance and funding arrangements, as illustrated below:

Table 2.1 The differences between state and state-aided colleges.

STATE-AIDED COLLEGE (White)	STATE COLLEGE (Black)
Governance and legal status	Governance and legal status
1. Governed by a College Council	1. Governed by a governing body/council/executive education department
2. College Council has decision-making powers	2. College body/council has mainly advisory powers
3. College is a legal entity, usually required to register with an education authority	3. College is not a legal entity
4. College has proprietary capacity	4. College has no proprietary capacity
5. College can own/sell/lease its property	5. State has property rights

⁴⁴ Black or state colleges.

⁴⁵ White or state-aided colleges.

⁴⁶ Green Paper on FET

Financing and financial management	Financing and financial management
1. College funded by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy according to FTEs towards operating costs based on the difference between income and approved expenditure • Ad hoc subsidies to lease accommodation/ erect new or additional buildings • Ad hoc subsidies to buy equipment for additional accommodation • Tuition fees determined by council • Donations and other funds raised by college 	State: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pays all operating costs • Provides all accommodation • Provides all equipment • Prescribed tuition fees paid into State Revenue Fund • Donations and other funds paid into State Revenue Fund
2. College has autonomy over budget, expenditure and investments	2. State controls budget, expenditure and investments
3. College operates own bank account	3. College manages trust funds only
4. Rector is accounting officer	4. Head of Education is accounting officer
5. Council is responsible for all maintenance	5. State undertakes all maintenance
6. Financial records audited by external auditors	6. Financial records audited by Auditor-General
7. Council formulates financial policy	7. Financial policy is prescribed
Personnel administration	Personnel administration
1. Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoints staff in the service of the college • Promotes staff subject to ministerial approval • Can appoint non-subsidised staff and determine the salaries • Is responsible for all applicable relocation costs • May transfer/second staff to other services with concurrence of the Minister • Advertises posts 	1. The Minister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoints staff in the service of the state • Promotes staff on council recommendation • Appoints all staff on subsidy basis • The state is responsible for all applicable relocation costs • The Minister may transfer/second staff • The Department advertises posts

Source: Department of Education (1994:10-11)

The social and economic divisions of the past are still highly visible across all levels of the South African education system (Department of Education, 1998c). The historically white technical colleges were classified as state-aided⁴⁷ institutions, while the historically black technical colleges were classed as state colleges.⁴⁸ This is reflected

⁴⁷ State-aided technical colleges have treasury approval for the funding of personnel, rentals, rates and taxes, formula subsidies and ad hoc subsidies.

⁴⁸ State technical colleges, on the other hand, have treasury approval for the funding of personnel, rental, rates and taxes and institutional budget based on a treasury standard item format.

⁴⁹ Green Paper on FET.

⁵⁰ Education White Paper 4 (1998).

⁵¹ Green Paper on FET.

in the programmes offered, the staff and student profiles, the size of institutions and their current racial and gender profiles (Department of Education, 2000b).

Senior secondary schools have been found to serve a distinctive role in that they provide mainly academic programmes for the pre-employed youth (Department of Education, 1998a,⁴⁹ 1998c).⁵⁰ “Senior secondary schools are designed for mono-functional learning provision and largely serve as feeder institutions for universities and technikons. Few were created with vocational education in mind” (Department of Education, 1997a:21). Consequently, schools occupy a distinctive place in the minds of parents, learners and educators. The perception is that technical colleges and technical high schools offer a second-rate, poor quality education (Kraak & Hall, 1999).

This negative perception is based on the premise that the technical college sector is made up of small institutions that are neither effective nor responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. The programmes and qualifications offered at these institutions are irrelevant and outdated, making it difficult for learners to access higher levels of learning viz. entrance into higher education (Department of Education, 1998a).⁵¹ It has also been found that the programmes offered at different technical colleges differed widely in terms of quality, standards of provision, outcomes and curriculum (Kraak & Hall, 1999). Learners who leave the technical college at the end of their studies and enter the labour market do not have the necessary knowledge and skills. The reason for this is that in most instances the equipment is antiquated and tuition is of poor overall quality (Department of Education, 1998a).⁵² This restricts opportunities for employment for these graduates. For those who do not have formal jobs their hopes of making a

⁵² Green Paper on FET.

⁵³ Education White Paper 4 (1998).

living lie in the informal sector and in small and medium enterprises. However, in reality, these needs are not catered for.

The management of the technical colleges has also been found to be deficient in many aspects. There is a lack of managerial skills and capacities, and differences in institutional culture and ethos, in governance, management and staffing, programmes and curricula between colleges and schools (Kraak, 1999; Department of Education, 1997; Powell & Hall, 2000).

2.3 The resurrection of FET colleges

The objective of the FET policy under the new government is to redress apartheid disparities and to establish a coordinated FET system that integrates education and training (Department of Education, 1998c).⁵³ This is to be achieved through the reorganisation of the FET landscape so as to establish an integrated education and training system. The reorganisation of the sector will entail the establishment of several new management and governance structures, relationships and roles.

The governance framework is based on the principles of cooperative governance with advisory structures at the national and provincial levels. College Councils will be responsible for governance at the institutional level. Other structural changes are the declaration⁵⁴ of public FET institutions, the merging⁵⁵ of public FET institutions, and the registration of private FET institutions. The declaration of technical colleges as FET institutions in terms of the FET Act is seen as a step towards the eradication of the legal, financial and other differences between the former state-aided and state technical colleges. For merging to take place, institutions (technical colleges) have first to be declared as public FET institutions. The rationalisation of public FET institutions

⁵⁴ Declaration entails the acquisition of public FET institution status once an institution has satisfied the prescribed national criteria – this serves as a quality control mechanism.

⁵⁵ Mergers will take place with the view to rationalising institutions with the objective of increasing efficiency and effectiveness

through the merger will result in large multi-site FET institutions that are responsive to local and national needs and offer a wider range of programmes through different modes of delivery. The sector will comprise specialised niche and multi-purpose institutions.

New structures such as an Education Management Information System (EMIS) and a FET Quality Authority (FETQA) will be established. Changes in practice will include increased co-operation between the Ministries of Education and Labour and professional collaboration between these two Ministries on the implementation of joint activities. In line with international cultures, the introduction of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), access to and flexibility in learning and teaching using different modes of delivery, and articulation between programmes and levels are the envisaged changes in teaching and learning practices. Programmes and qualifications will be benchmarked internationally, and their relevance will be subjected to external monitoring, moderation and validation.

Other structural changes encompass the development of an enabling environment that is conducive to partnership arrangements, not only between schools and colleges, but with other social partners as well. This will help facilitate the access of a wider range of learners to learning opportunities. The objective is to bring about equity in the sector to both the teaching and student population by making them more representative of the demographics of the communities they serve. At the same time, management capacity for the FET sector at the national and provincial levels will be such that college leaders will be in a position to deal with the challenges posed by the new FET sector. Professional development is emphasised in this reform of FET colleges so as to change teaching and learning practices and bring about the desired changes to the sector. This implies dismantling the deep-seated institutional culture inherent in technical colleges.

2.4 Institutional Cultures of Technical Colleges

There is a small but growing literature that describes the underlying culture of the Afrikaner state (O'Meara, 1997; Badroodien, 2004). In the context of higher education institutions, Bunting (2002:65-99) describes Afrikaner institutions in terms of subservience to the state, authoritarian ways of governance, domination by a narrow

instrumentalism, and characterised by the lack of critical thought. In the context of FET institutions a major study reported that:

Within FET in South Africa, there are organisational cultures, and a work ethos, which reflect the legacy of the apartheid era. These take a variety of forms, including continuing patterns of racist and sexist behaviour, intolerance, authoritarianism and abuse of power. The results are poor motivation of staff and learners, the absence of a learning culture, and poor work ethic. Organisational cultures are often inward-looking and conservative, and inimical to the development of participatory management styles, team-work, race and gender equity, raising quality, and forging new relationships and partnerships between provider and their clients (Department of Education, 1997c:38).

The history of the FET context has been shaped by the nature and extent of provisioning for different social classes and groups across the country (Badroodien, 2004). The cultural roots of technical colleges, as with all other education in South Africa are found in the principles of Christian National Education (CNE), which underpinned apartheid education. The Christian National Education Policy stated, amongst other things, that white children should

...receive a separate education from black children to prepare them for their respective superior and inferior positions in South African social and economic life, and all education should be based on Christian National principles (Christie, 1991).

CNE was seen as the way to solidify a racially exclusive ethnic identity among the different races in which the use of language, culture, symbols and history played a constitutive role (Engelbrecht, 1982; Esterhuyse, 1982). White education was based on a racially defined ideological framework aimed at sustaining white racial superiority and privilege. Consequently, the provisioning of

vocational education in this country has always been preoccupied with issues related to indigence, social and educational inferiority and mental backwardness (Badroodien, 2004:21).

In line with the National Party government's beliefs technical colleges were characterised by a system that was fragmented by a legacy of racism, dogmatism and outmoded teaching practices (Christie, 1991). From the 1920s right up to 1970 issues

relating to indigence and inferiority were meshed in terms of class, race and quality in defining technical and vocational programmes. Vocational education and training served as a “salvation” for the working class, and for poor and indigent children in urban areas. The intention was, on the one hand, to help regulate and socialise the increasing numbers of “poor white”, African and coloured urban workers, and on the other hand, to ensure that impoverished learners in rural areas develop the skills and knowledge to prosper so that they do not migrate into the cities. Technical training for black children

...needed to focus very simply on teaching them how to work (Badroodien, 2004:38).

The stigma attached to technical and vocational education as being inferior and for the less intelligent holds strong even today.

FET provision reflects rigid and outmoded distinctions between 'academic' education and 'vocational' training. Consequently, technical and vocational education lacks parity of esteem with traditional schooling (Department of Education, 1998a:7).

The inherited legacy of past authority prevails and is based on racial, gender and cultural denomination (Badroodien, 2004). The perceptions about these institutions are is further exacerbated in that:

...provision was provided for the respective groups in quite different ways according to the respective social contexts and different legislative provision (Badroodien, 2004:42).

And

Different FET programmes and qualifications are poorly articulated, inhibiting student mobility and leading to high levels of inefficiency. Programmes differ widely with respect to quality, standards of provision, outcomes and curriculum. (Department of Education, 1998a:7).

Access to black learners was restricted to state colleges while both state and state-aided colleges catered for white learners. Black learners that exited technical colleges had no opportunities to further their education. Learners who were unable to find employment often continued with the N4 programmes with the hope of bettering their chances to

find employment.

State colleges were not, until the 1990s, permitted to provide programmes that did not form part of the official directory of programme offerings (Nated programmes). State-aided college, on the other hand, had a reasonable amount of freedom in opting to provide non-Nated programmes. However,

Employers argue that many of the programmes offered by technical colleges are...inadequate or outdated. Equipment is antiquated and tuition is poor (Department of Education, 1998a:7).

Staff development takes low precedence and does not form part of the work environment. Although the staff may be overall qualified for the required levels of skills, staff development initiatives are limited by the prevailing work patterns and institutional culture (Department of Education, 1997b:38). The institutional culture of technical colleges could be described as consisting of

Adverse working conditions and a breakdown in the culture of learning, teaching and service are reflected in poor morale, a poor work ethic and low professional self-esteem amongst many educators. An authoritarian management culture still pervades many institutions, which accentuates race and gender inequality within the sector (Department of Education, 1998a:7).

As a result there is poor representativity in terms of race and gender, a low service culture, poor staff utilisation and demotivation. The deep-seated patriarchal and sexist traditions inherent in the South African culture have combined with these inequalities to deny girls and women access to education advancement and management positions (Department of Education, 1997c:143).

The demographic profile of FET colleges fails to reflect the South African reality. The majority of the staff are white with a high level of white male domination, especially at management levels (Department of Education, 1997b; 2002). In addition a large number of women are hired on a part-time basis. On the other hand there have been increasing enrolments of black students at these institutions reflecting a converse image when compared to the staff profile (Department of Education, 2000b).

The human relations amongst staff and between staff and students are shaped by such conditions. The increasing numbers of black students, in what are known as historically white or state-aided institutions, poses the challenges of multi-culturalism. The problem is further exacerbated by insufficient numbers of black and female role models within the sector. The absence of adequate staff support and counselling to ensure equal opportunities, equal support and career pathing with regard to race and gender are factors that are characteristic of the FET colleges (Department of Education, 1997b:144; 2000b).

In addition the legislative provision for state controlled institutions has contributed to a high level of dependence on government in terms of the governance and management of the FET colleges. The culture of dependency by the state or historically black colleges has undermined staff capacity for sustainable self-management. The curriculum development, funding administration and governance of these colleges are handled centrally similar to that of schools and adult education centres (Department of Education, 1997b:39). The historic imposition of top-down relationships and practices has resulted in a sense of low of trust and protectionism among staff. The organisational culture of the FET colleges is therefore found to disregard

...participatory governance and management, team work, gender equity and quality promotion (Department of Education, 1997b:142).

These practices have been found to limit ownership, cooperation, innovation, sustainable commitment and flexibility (Department of Education, 1997b:143) all of which are characteristic of learning organisations (Senge, 1991). The elements of these cultural connotations can be found within both state and state-aided technical colleges.

There is no doubt that technical colleges have served a fundamental purpose in fulfilling the socio-economic and political needs during a specific period in the history of South Africa.

...the Southern African system of vocational training provision has always been characterised by a weak and fragmented education-led, college system and an almost non-existent employer-led work-based system.the issues of economic growth and the development of high level skills have always been absent features in the history of technical and industrial education provision in South Africa (Badroodien, 2004:44)

To make these colleges responsive to the socio-economic needs and challenges of the country would require much more than merely changing the structure of these institutions. It would require fundamental mind shifts on the part of the people within these institutions and those working for the institutions.

The history of the colleges reveal that these institutions owe their existence to political rather than economic reasons. As long as political reasons or culturally inherited perceptions remain important elements in local and regional power struggles, change will be problematic. Change will require a high order of managerial and leadership capacities, funding commitment, a deeper understanding of the moral purpose of the sector, and new beliefs and values.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter I briefly sketched the historical and political contexts in which the development of the technical college sector unfolded, with the intention of demonstrating the roots of the structural and cultural constraints that this study seeks to understand. This historical record not only unravels the intentions and agendas of successive apartheid governments, but also underlines the challenges faced by the newly elected democratic government in 1994 in dismantling a divided and unequal system embedded in a deep institutional culture and then in rebuilding a new FET sector.

The development of white urban areas, townships and urban areas as a result of the apartheid system has meant that the technical college sector remains typified by a diversity of institutional histories, realities and potentials. These radical differences are illustrated by the size, location and leadership of these institutions. The evolution of the technical colleges has resulted in institutions with diverse structural and cultural legacies. State and state-aided colleges are, by and large, governed, financed and administered differently, with state-aided colleges enjoying greater autonomy in the

provision of programme offerings, funding and student fee structures, governance and capacity.

The state-aided technical colleges were designed to provide theoretical training for an apprenticeship system, while the state colleges were established to provide sub-artisanal training for a defunct homeland system (Chisholm, 1992b). Most of the historically black colleges were situated far from major industrial centres, thereby restricting student access to placements in industry for work experience.

On the other hand, there are also institutions that have emerged within close proximity to one another because of apartheid land zoning and segregation of facilities within urban areas. Technical colleges have traditionally operated within a centralised curriculum, which requires permission from the Department of Education to offer new programmes of subjects, even though these subjects are already part of a central catalogue.⁵⁶ A decision by the Department of Education is required to change the content of these subjects, and this normally takes between twelve and eighteen months.

Funding is also determined centrally and is based on full time equivalents⁵⁷ (FTEs) rather than output. One of the chief inhibiting factors, particularly in the case of state colleges, is that the colleges are funded solely for programmes that are registered with the Department of Education and which appear on the Nated list. State-aided or historically white colleges, on the other hand, are able to offer a wider range of programmes based on their ability to set their own student fees and hire additional staff without state intervention.

The physical resources at both the state and state-aided colleges vary in quality, and can be described as being “state of the art” resources at some colleges to antiquated resources in others. At the same time, many colleges have not made much effort to change the programmes they offer, or to make them more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the country. This is mainly due to either a lack of capacity within the

⁵⁶ Reference is made to the Nated programmes offered at technical colleges. These programmes are accredited and examined by the DoE. See Chapter 5 for further elaboration on programme offerings.

⁵⁷ One FTE is the equivalent of one full-time student for one year or two students for half a year each.

institutions to do so, or to the difficulties associated with raising additional resources and support for new programme offerings.

By and large technical colleges may be characterised as being a range of historically segregated institutions, often with overlapping catchments areas, excessive bureaucratic control particularly in regard to the curriculum and administration, and a record of low achievement⁵⁸ in the placement of students in employment.

Over the recent past much attention has been paid to the high failure and repetition rate of learners in the sector and the increasing number of learners who are unable to find meaningful employment once they exit the N3 programmes. Many learners have been found to continue with the N4 to N6 programmes offered at technical colleges with the hope of finding employment thereafter. The issue however, is not the level of qualifications offered by technical colleges, but relates more to the quality and responsiveness of the programmes offered.

The disparities in the sector are further exacerbated by a lack of the managerial capacity and skills needed to address the current socio-economic challenges the sector faces in providing the necessary skills. To get the sector to deliver in terms of the policy mandate will require dismantling the deeply seated conservative institutional culture, and building a culture guided by the principles of a democratic society.

In the next chapter I offer a critical synthesis of the policy implementation literature, using the twin lenses of *restructuring* and *reculturing* as my conceptual frames for explaining change and constancy in the FET college *restructuring* reforms.

⁵⁸ Over the recent past a lot of attention has been paid to the high failure and repetition rate of learners in the sector and the increasing number of learners who are unable to find meaningful employment once they exit the N3 programmes. Many learners have been found to continue with the N4 to N6 programmes offered at technical colleges with the hope of finding employment thereafter. The issue however, is not the level of qualifications offered by technical colleges, but relates more to the quality and responsiveness of the programmes offered.