

The Structural and Cultural Constraints on Policy Implementation:

A Case Study on Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa

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Synopsis

In its first decade of democracy the South African government embarked on radical reforms to the apartheid education system. One such set of reforms concerned the restructuring of the further education and training (FET) college sector. The implementation plan for the restructuring of the FET college sector, entitled *Reform of South Africa's Technical Colleges* (Department of Education, 2001), was released in September 2001. The reorganisation of the FET college sector brought with it the prospect of meeting the objectives of the country's Human Resource Development Strategy (Department of Education, 2001). Colleges would be transformed so that they offered learners the "high-quality, lifelong learning opportunities that are essential to social development and economic competitiveness in a rapidly changing world" (Department of Education, 2001:5).

The study has its origins in a deceptively simple research question: What are the organisational and cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation?

Much has been written about why policies fail to be implemented as planned (McLaughlin 1987; Guiacquinta, 1994). Based on the extensive data generated in this research I found explanatory power in a conceptual framework that uses the dual lenses of *restructuring*, focusing on "changing the use of time, space, roles and relationships to improve learning" (Fink & Stoll, 1998:308); and *reculturing*, which focuses on "the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms" (Fullan, 1996:420). The new government policy for FET colleges proposed a dramatic re-organisation of the sector through mergers in order to position these institutions so as to meet the socio-economic and human resource needs of a transforming society in line with global trends. Yet, an analysis of the sector revealed system-level problems relating to the structure and culture of the FET colleges that would undermine the implementation of the new policy.

The comparative case study method was used to conduct this research on three technical colleges – two state-aided and one state college – as the "cases" under investigation. Data was collected over a one-year period using a wide variety of data collection methods including in-depth interviews (both individual and focus group sessions),

document analysis, the review of minutes of meetings and other communiqués, selected photographs and structured questionnaires.

The first major finding of this study is that the restructuring of the FET colleges through mergers was constrained by structural or the organisational inefficiencies in the system, that is, the lack or absence of the structures required for effective implementation of policy.

The second major finding of this study is that the restructuring process underestimated the depth and resilience of the FET college culture, and that this institutional culture militated against effective implementation. In other words, there was no strategy for reculturing these institutions.

This research further demonstrates the consequences of attempted *restructuring* without *reculturing* and the implications of not taking into account implementation matters involving institutional culture, values, behaviour and working styles. Successful change has more to do with the professional values, beliefs and assumptions held by implementers than with the voluntary adoption of the reform, irrespective of whether it is mandated at the national or provincial levels. Implementers choose practices and changes that fit best with their pre-existing beliefs and which are consistent with the organisation's culture. Furthermore, the insights gained from this study that structure and culture are inextricably linked have both practical and theoretical significance. The study not only offers insight into the reorganisation of the FET colleges in South Africa, but also serves to extend our understanding of the importance of culture and structure as two neglected dimensions of systemic reform.

In this study I highlighted several issues that could serve as a springboard for future research into this neglected sector (FET colleges) of the education and training system:

- longitudinal rather than snapshot studies of institutional cultures and their unfolding effects on college restructuring;
- empirical and conceptual accounts of college cultures that examine the impact of micro-political activity on the change trajectory; and
- studies on how college *systems* change or restructure as opposed to individual colleges.

In sum this research found that there were several structural (capacity, resource, leadership, support, communication, planning and advocacy) and cultural (beliefs, values, assumptions, understanding and practices) factors that constrained policy implementation. The study further argues that restructuring without *reculturing* encourages symbolic rather than substantive change. The thesis concludes that the restructuring (mergers) resulted in a fragmented, rather than a coordinated, FET system.

Key words: organisation, structure, cultural, *restructuring*, *reculturing*, policy implementation, reform, further education and training, educational change, reorganisation

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My colleagues at National Treasury for your support in making it possible for me to take leave to complete this dissertation.

I am sure that I have omitted some important people in this list. For your assistance and support, I thank you.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my daughters

Anushka and Sidhika

The light of my eyes when I needed a vision of the future.

Declaration of Originality

I, Sandra Sanyagitha Sooklal, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted previously for any degrees at any university.

.....
S.S. Sooklal

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Key Acronyms

AFETISA	Association for Further Education and Training Institutions in South Africa
ANC	African National Congress
CCF	Colleges Collaboration Fund
CNE	Christian National Education
COTT	Central Organization for Trade Testing
CTCP	Committee of Technical College Principals (Later renamed AFETISA)
DoE	Department of Education
FET Act	Further Education and Training Act (Act 98 of 1998)
FET	Further Education and Training
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HWI	Historically White Institution
HBI	Historically Black Institution
IMT	Institutional Merger Team
MEC	Member of the Executive Committee
MOTT	Merger Operational Task Team
NCFE	National Committee on Further Education
NLTT	National Landscape Task Team
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PMT	Provincial Merger Team
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Over the last four decades much has been written about policy implementation – its limits and constraints (McLaughlin, 1987, Miles 1978, Giacquinta, 1994). The global experiences of educational change during the 1990s drew attention to the complexity of the change process and, in particular, how school change is introduced and managed within educational organisations. The way in which educational institutions particularly schools, grapple with the new ideas, policies and/or practices needed to bring about change is, indeed, a complex process (McLaughlin, 1987a; 1987b; Fullan, 1991; 1993; Sarason, 1990; Sayed & Jansen 2001; Elmore, 1995; Hargreaves, 1991; 1994). In comparison with the school sector, however, further education remains under-researched (Cantor & Roberts, 1986; Elliott, 1996). According to Elliott (1996), research on further education is limited partly for historic reasons such as lesser priority being accorded to further education compared with school education. It is important to note at this point that there is a lack of research presenting more explanatory, theoretical, comparative and strategic views on further education (Hughes, Taylor & Tight, 1996).

On the other hand, except for more recent qualitative studies in further education (e.g. Bates, 1990; Bloomer, 1997) which have a more explanatory and theoretical focus, there is a dearth of first person accounts of the change process in further education. Further education in South Africa is almost completely un-researched (Gamble McGrath, & Badroodien, 2004). It is within this context that I conducted this reflexive study on FET colleges in South Africa.

In its first decade of democracy, the South African government embarked on radical reforms to the apartheid education system. One such set of reforms involved the

restructuring of the further education and training¹ (FET) college sector. The implementation plan for the restructuring of the FET college sector, entitled *A new institutional landscape for public further education and training colleges: Reform of South Africa's technical colleges* (Department of Education, 2001), was released in September 2001. The reorganisation of the FET colleges sector brought with it the prospect of meeting the objectives of the country's Human Resource Development Strategy (Departments of Education & Labour, 2001). Colleges would be transformed so that they offered learners “high-quality, lifelong learning opportunities that are essential to social development and economic competitiveness in a rapidly changing world” (Department of Education, 2001:5).

At the time of embarking on this study I was in the employ of the Department of Education (DoE) and tasked with institutional development initiatives for the FET college sector. By that time I had already served four years in the Department and had lived through the conception and adoption of many of the new education policies that had been introduced. I was also fortunate in that I was involved in the development of the FET policy and legislative framework. In developing the policy and the first strategy document, the Department of Education consulted widely with all stakeholders. Eventually the Department of Education came to the decision that consultation was no longer necessary when deciding on the implementation trajectory as it felt that the debates had already been concluded. It was on this premise that a task team consisting of senior officials of the Department of Education, two consultants (one local and one

¹ In the international context FET is more commonly referred to as Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In the South African context FET was previously referred to as Vocational Education and Training.

² The country is divided into nine provinces. Each province has its own department of education charged with the implementation of national policy for education at all levels except for higher education which is a national competency.

³ The Business Trust was set up by large business to make funds for social and economic development initiatives available in the country. An amount of R700 million was set aside for the development of the FET colleges. The National Business Initiative (NBI) managed the college funds while implementation was delegated to an agency known as the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF). The head of the CCF was a member of the task team charged with developing the FET college implementation plan. He was also a member of the writing team of the Green and White Papers on FET.

international), two representatives from the provincial departments² of education, and a representative from the business sector³ developed the national implementation plan for the reorganisation of FET colleges. These plans were developed in a closed session with provincial departments which were mandated to develop and present plans for the amalgamation of their technical colleges.⁴

The public's initial introduction to the implementation was at the launch of the Plan in September 2001. I was not part of the planning process but assigned to assist provinces in the implementation of the FET plan. I expressed concern about the timeframes and ambitious goals for implementation in the light of our earlier experiences with policy implementation. Several questions came to mind in thinking through the implementation strategy: How would the merging of the state-aided⁵ and state⁶ colleges, colleges that were based on totally different structural, cultural and political traditions, have the desired effect on the country's human resource development challenges? How does one merge cultural differences? How would the implementers experience and respond to this top-down mandate? What was the understanding at the different levels of implementation since this plan had been developed in the spirit of cooperative governance? Did we have the necessary resources, skills and capacity to initiate this kind of large-scale change? Taking all these factors into consideration, was the

⁴ In a personal discussion with a senior official from the North West Province the official referred to the process as a "farce," as he believed that the DoE had already decided on the number of institutions in each province even before discussion with provincial departments. He referred to an incident when the North West Province presented a plan for the province and the NLTT rejected the plan, requesting that the province reconsider the permutations.

⁵ State-aided technical colleges have treasury approval for the funding of personnel, rentals, rates and taxes, formula subsidies and ad hoc subsidies.

⁶ State technical colleges, on the other hand do not have treasury approval for the funding of personnel, rental, rates and taxes and institutional budget based on a treasury standard item format.

prescribed timeframe realistic? These were the questions that prompted me to embark on this research.

The literature review describes educational change as a process (McLaughlin, 1987a; Fullan, 1991; 1993). It includes studies of change in developing countries which focus on financial resources (Christie & Crouch, 1997), physical infrastructure (World Bank, 1990), political forces (Chisholm, 1992a; De Clercq, 1997) and teacher attributes (World Bank, 1990) such as motivation, qualification and skills, as key variables in explaining the success or otherwise of policy implementation (Jansen & Christie, 1999; Sayed & Jansen, 2001).

My personal experiences as a policy implementer and as a departmental official directly involved in policymaking aroused my interest in the assertion made by McLaughlin to the effect that:

(p)olicy makers can't mandate what matters most: local capacity and will....Environmental stability, competing centres of authority, contending priorities or pressures and other aspects of the socio-political milieu can influence implementer willingness profoundly....Change is ultimately a problem of the smallest unit (1987:172-173).

Furthermore, as a policymaker in the Department of Education, I had observed the difficulties experienced with the implementation of several new policies. Implementers alluded to poor planning, and a lack of resources, capacity, support and training as causes of poor implementation. There had been no study conducted to investigate the influences of these structural factors on policy implementation in the country. This inquiry was motivated by the lack of empirical work on policy implementation in the South African FET context.

The FET policy was adopted in 1998, yet, by June 2001, there were no visible signs of change in the system. The difficulties could be ascribed to a range of factors: a) the perception by educators that the change would not be sustained because of the complexity involved; b) the sector view based on a fundamental assumption that new resources would have to be provided despite the huge fiscal constraint faced by the education sector as a whole in implementing the numerous new policies; c) the lack of

staff with knowledge and experience in the sector, or any sense of how the colleges would respond to the changes; d) the lack of a clear constituency for change; e) cynicism at the technical colleges that could not be changed; f) the view that the policy was too ambitious, would take too much time to implement, and was impractical when superimposed on the existing technical colleges model.

In addition, there were huge disparities between state and state-aided technical colleges in terms of race, status, programmes, funding and governance. In practice, they functioned as two different types of institution, each with a distinct work ethos and culture. The mergers were intended to amalgamate the state and state-aided technical colleges that had initially been established to support the policies of racial segregation. Apartheid practices had separated races not only in terms of residential areas, but also in all aspects of funding and governance. The changes in South African society after the election of the democratic government compelled the embracing of the different cultures in the country. The dramatic shifts, or so they seemed, in the acceptance of other cultures within the South African community happened virtually overnight. How was this possible when people had been schooled to think differently? The establishment of the FET sector was considered a key lever for the economic emancipation of the masses deprived of job opportunities for decades, yet no study had been done to identify the cultural factors that influenced or impeded policy implementation in the FET college sector. The absence of research on the influence of culture on educational change, particularly in respect of the FET sector in South Africa spurred me on to hypothesise that culture constitutes a key variable in the implementation of policy in the FET colleges.

The ongoing sectoral reorganisation of the FET college sector suggested, therefore, that organisational and cultural barriers could exert an important influence on policy design and implementation, since the complex change considered necessary in terms of the FET policy was being introduced into an environment beset by a lack of resources and capacity, and leadership rooted in deeply conservative institutional cultures. What were the linkages between national educational policy intentions and actions, and the implementation that occurred at the colleges in terms of the staff behaviour and outcomes? What environmental, organisational and individual features of the technical colleges contributed to or constrained change, and more importantly, how did the

implementers interact during the change process? These were the questions that motivated me to embark on this study.

The reform of the FET college sector was structural in nature, and shares with systemic change the significance of change elements such as comprehensiveness, coherence and co-ordination. Structural reform aims at bringing about an alignment in “organisational arrangements, roles, finance and governance, and formal policies” (Fullan, 1991:88). The challenges posed by the structural differences necessitated a major reorganisation of the sector, including mergers to reduce duplication and wastage of limited resources. The FET college sector was described as being highly distorted, characterised by a narrow concern with “skills” and underpinned by the ideology of apartheid (Department of Education, 1998a). Governance, status and finance differed between state and state-aided colleges (see Chapter 2). In addition, the technical college sector was predominantly white and male-dominated. The staff profile was inversely representative of the student population at these colleges. The changing social demands of the post-apartheid South African society called for a greater alignment of the functions and purposes of these institution with the socio-economic needs of the country. The changes envisaged centred on “lifelong learning and the expansion of FET, nation-building and the creation of a new relationship between the state and its citizens” (Department of Education, 1998a:6).

According to Bolman and Deal⁷ (1984), the organisational dimensions of a traditional educational institution and its system relate to the structures, human relations, power and culture. Organisational structures also include the individuals within the organisations, and the way in which these individuals and groups of individuals within the organizational structures relate to one another (collaborations and relationships). Research indicates (Fullan, 1991, Woycott-Kytle & Bogotch, 1997) that changing the structure of the FET college system by merging state and state-aided colleges would not

⁷ Although much of the literature used in this study relates to the school sector, the literature is also applicable to the technical colleges sector. The structural arrangements of technical colleges are similar to those of schools, in that they are hierarchical in nature with a distinct culture, and placed within a specific context.

be sufficient to bring about the desired changes as anticipated through structural reform. It would also be necessary to probe beneath the structure to find out what part the cultural dimensions of the organisation play in policy implementation.

Schein (1991) maintains that organisational culture concerns the patterns of thinking, believing, and behaving, and assumptions that are historically rooted and culturally transmitted. These existing practices are determined by the deep-rooted beliefs, practices and working relationships of the teachers and students that make up the school and its system (Hargreaves, 1994).

1.2 Purpose of this study

Given the complexities of systemic reform, the purpose of this study is to investigate the way in which structural and cultural factors influence and shape policy implementation in the FET college sector. The literature available on FET concerns elements such as resource dependence, financing, private public partnerships, mergers, governance options, integrating academic and vocational education, curriculum development, and managerial skills and capacity (Lumby, 1997; Edling & Loring, 1997; Bodilly, Ramsey, Stasz & Eden, 1993; Catri, 1998; Zehr, 1999). The multi-dimensional nature of systemic change covered in the literature endorses Hargreaves' (1998) view that, "[w]hile the existing knowledge base of educational change is impressive, it is no longer really sufficient to address the unique change problems and challenges that educators face today".

Even though there has, in the last decade, been increasing interest in research in FET, there is still, as has already been mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, a dearth of research on the more explanatory, theoretical, comparative and strategic views on the FET sector. In relating and attempting to understand the personal, political and procedural issues that affected the research process in this study, my intention is to share the experiences that were sometimes difficult for those involved. In doing so I wish to encourage discussion on the extent to which the tension, obstacles and issues that arose may (or may not) be specific to the research process in FET in general. This study will therefore contribute to the body of knowledge on innovation and change in educational settings, particularly in the FET sector. At the same time, although

recognising that the three cases situated in a particular region in the Gauteng province are very unlikely to provide sufficient data to offer an expansive theory on educational change, this study provides crucial insights on the change process. This study deepens our understanding of the complex nature and characteristics of an educational change in institutions immersed in a deeply conservative culture.

The study has two significant features. Firstly, the dominant literature on educational change has focused on school-centred change efforts, and helped educators and leaders cope better with changes initiated and imposed from elsewhere (Fullan, 1991; 1993; McLaughlin, 1990; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994; Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Louis and Miles, 1990; Sarason, 1990; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Within the South African context, *restructuring* of the FET sector is aimed at dismantling the apartheid educational structures that served the needs of a white minority, and establishing new structures for governance, management, and the introduction of a new curriculum and funding system. The objective is to pursue equity, redress and access through *restructuring*, while at the same time ensuring the effectiveness of the system. On the other hand, the *restructuring* of the FET sector is accompanied by the deep-rooted cultural challenges posed by the history of technical colleges as white, male-dominated technical institutions. It has been found that school⁸ improvement initiatives that focus on organisational changes alone have a limited strategy for successful change (Fullan & Miles, 1991). For deep change to take place efforts should be directed towards changing cultural perceptions, beliefs, behaviour, and practices concerning teaching and learning (Fullan & Miles, 1991; Wyncott-Kytle & Bogotch, 1997; Gilley, 2000). Several researchers maintain that change efforts fail because of the inability of policymakers to recognise the interdependent factors within the institution's social system (Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand & Flowers, 1997; Hallinger & Hausman 1994). According to Felner et al.: "We must understand that schools are complex, integrated systems, therefore we must address the full set of operational norms, regularities, and behaviours that may impact or undermine efforts of change" (1997:65).

⁸ In this case study school is used to refer to a FET college

Secondly, the conceptual framework that I will use to investigate the cultural and organisational influences and constraints on policy implementation brings into dialogue two complementary approaches for understanding the problem of educational change. The conceptual framework for this study will explain systemic reform in terms of “*restructuring*”, which focuses on “changing the use of time, space, roles and relationships to improve learning” (Fink & Stoll, 1998:308); and “*reculturing*”, which focuses on “the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms” (Fullan, 1996:420).

Accordingly, two research questions have been specifically framed to help gain insight into the two factors identified that could have influenced policy implementation in the *restructuring* of the South African FET college sector. Firstly, what are the organisational influences and constraints on policy implementation? Secondly, what are the cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation?

1.3 Policy context for the reform of the FET college sector

Soon after the inauguration of the new democratic and non-racial government in 1994, a new education system was envisaged. The education system was restructured through the adoption of a new qualification framework. In terms of the National Qualifications Framework,⁹ Further Education and Training was to be positioned between basic education and training (that is post-grade 9 education or level 1 on the National Qualifications Framework) and higher education (levels 5 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework). FET is therefore located on levels 2 to 4 of the NQF.

The adoption of the NQF was followed by a proliferation of education policies for each of the bands on the NQF, with the primary aim of redressing the historical disparities resulting from apartheid rule. The government’s objective was to put in place all the fundamental aspects of policies and legislation for each of the bands on the NQF before

⁹ The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which was approved by the Minister of Education as the framework for the registration of national standards, and qualifications in the education and training system. The NQF provides the organising framework for the development of a new integrated FET system. The structures for the development of the FET qualifications, programmes and curricula are located at the national, provincial and institutional levels.

the end of the first term of office of the newly elected democratic government under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela. A policy for the General Education and Training (GET) band, or level 1 on the NQF, providing for compulsory education was the first to be developed. This was followed by White Paper 3, which addresses Higher Education or levels 5 to 8 on the NQF. After much debate agreement was reached, almost at the end of the first term of political office for the new government, on the definition, purpose and meaning of FET when Education White Paper 4 (1998), which deals with FET, was released.

The FET policy caters for a large and diverse section of the education and training system. FET in the South African context is provided by senior secondary schools, technical colleges, higher education institutions, private providers, and various other governmental divisions such as the Departments of Agriculture, and Health, and Security Services, that do not fall under the control of the Department of Education. The complexity of the sector lies in the fact that public further education and training is provided by the technical colleges¹⁰ and senior secondary schools. Historically, however, senior secondary schools and technical colleges evolved under separate pieces of legislation. This arrangement led to the decision by the Department of Education that the FET Act would apply exclusively to the FET college sector, and that the FET colleges would be dealt with separately to senior secondary schools. Senior secondary schools would be funded and governed under the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996). For the purposes of this study I focus on the FET (technical) college sector and the reorganisation thereof.

The Further Education and Training Act¹¹ (Act 98 of 1998) provides the legislative framework for systemic reform in the FET sector. The FET policy¹² states that the coordinated FET system will be achieved through the *restructuring* of the FET landscape, with the key objective of establishing an integrated education and training

¹⁰ 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 Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI) and Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAI). The differences in these institutions centre on governance and funding arrangements.

¹¹ Acts refer to rules (enacted by Parliament) that contain sanctions.

¹² Policies refer to a course or principles of action adopted or proposed by government.

system that responds to the Human Resource Strategy. Reorganisation would take the form of “a new governance framework, a new framework for programmes and qualifications, a new quality improvement and assurance institution, and a new funding system” (Department of Education, 1998b:18).

1.4 The Further Education and Training College Sector: The envisaged trajectory of the policy implementation process

The key proposals for implementing the FET policy present the long-term vision of a coordinated FET system that is responsive to the socio-economic needs of South African society. The policy also acknowledges the limited resources and capacity of government to implement the numerous new policies, and proposes an incremental approach to reorganise the FET college sector.

The short-term goals (first 2-5 years after the adoption of the policy) could be applied to the “establishment phase”, during which the weaknesses of the inherited system would be addressed. During this time there would be intensive capacity building in the system, the establishment of new governance and funding frameworks, the establishment of the National Board for FET, and the managing of the change process. The underlying assumption was that the Department of Education would provide the provincial departments of education with support to develop effective institutional management information systems.

Other changes included the curriculum reforms and the reorganisation of the FET sector in terms of bringing all colleges into the new funding, governance and planning framework. It was explicitly stated in the policy that the role of the Department of Education would be to develop a new funding methodology, initiate a capacity-building programme, and establish a national advisory structure. The responsibility of the provincial departments of education would be to reorganise their FET college systems, play a fundamental role in building institutional capacity, and manage the introduction of the new FET system.

In terms of the policy, all new initiatives would first be piloted in a few selected colleges before being formally introduced to the sector as a major change initiative. The

objective of the pilot studies would be to introduce new interventions, identify problems associated with implementation, and then refine the implementation strategy before system-wide introduction. The policy also identified the piloting of programme-based funding and systematic change through the declaration of FET institutions, based on a set of criteria for the institutional systems and capacities that would need to be in place before an institution could be declared an FET institution.

The role of the new College Councils that would be appointed after the enactment of the FET Act would be to oversee the process leading up to the declaration of FET institutions, develop college missions, draft institutional strategic plans, and be responsible for the overall governance of the colleges. Other changes to the sector would include the development of partnerships and consortia, and clustering or mergers to optimise the use of resources, and to achieve economies of scale.

The objective of the FET policy was to bring about systemic change by reorganising the sector. In terms of the policy, reorganisation would be through the declaration of FET institutions, partnerships, consortia, new governance and management structures, and mergers. The questions that now arise are the following: How does *restructuring* lead to systemic change? What does international literature say about systemic change in terms of *restructuring*?

According to Conley (1993), systemic change involves changes at many levels (national, provincial and institutional), but changes at the institutional level are the most important and most difficult to achieve. The FET college sector had, over the years, been associated with a myriad of negative connotations. These included a curriculum underpinned by the ideology of apartheid, and a predominantly white male-dominated sector with colleges having differing governance status, finance systems, and staffing structures. The racial profile of staff was directly opposite to that of the student population at these colleges. In this context *restructuring* was seen as a means to redistribute power, resources and control from the apartheid “privileged” minority group to the historically disadvantaged majority of the South African population. The principles underpinning the policy were those of redress, equity and access. The following questions arose: How has *restructuring* worked in the international context to achieve systemic change? Will *restructuring* achieve the desired results? How will

people within the organisation respond to the top-down mandate of merging to restructure the sector?

1.5 Significance of the research

As already indicated, much of the international literature on educational development and change focuses on the school sector (Fullan, 1991; 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987; Gilley, 2000). Changes in the global context have placed more emphasis on FET, yet little attention has been paid to the research on policy implementation and reform efforts that have sought to alter significantly the way in which these policy changes are identified, adopted and implemented, particularly in developing countries facing a multiplicity of social and economic challenges. This study argues that governments often operate under circumstances that are far from optimal due to pressures of time, lack of information, and multiple competing issues. At the same time institutional structures have a powerful effect on the political process, constrain the available political choices, and also shape the way in which political decisions are put into effect. The result is that the policies are often not necessarily consistent with the intentions of their originators, with the policy focusing on elements that cannot produce the kinds of changes that are really wanted – the reform focusing on what can be done, instead of on what could really make a difference. In proposing a new conceptual framework for change in the FET sector, I attempt to add new scholarly understandings of and insights into the policy practice dilemma within this complex setting. The study considers the ways in which implementation can be structured and supported as important ingredients for change.

1.6 Research design and limitations

I used the case study methodology in conducting this inquiry. One of the advantages of this methodology for conducting research is that it allows the researcher access to the particular phenomenon in its natural setting. Given the complexity and dynamics of the *restructuring* of the FET college sector, I chose the case study approach as it would allow for an in-depth, multi-method account of change in this bounded system – the FET college sector.

I used a variety of data collection and data analysis techniques, such as in-depth interviews (both individual and focus group sessions), document analysis, minutes of meetings, other communiqués, photographs and structured questionnaires. The case study draws on both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

The study identifies a number of limitations of the research approach and the methods used, which I will now discuss.

As the researcher in this case study I was the primary instrument for the collection and analysis of data. One of the limitations of this is the possibility that researcher bias could have been introduced into the research study. Since this related to issues such as ethics, reliability, lack of rigor and validity concerns, I made use of a variety of strategies, such as using multiple sources of data collection to establish chains of evidence through which triangulation of data could be obtained, taking the data and interpretations back to the interviewees in order to confirm the credibility of the information and the narrative account, allowing all participants to establish validity, making use of peer review, and providing clear documentation of all research decisions and activities

Case studies provide little basis for making scientific generalisations and can therefore not be used to make broad generalisations. By explicitly stating the purpose of the research study, namely structural and cultural factors, the FET policy could be used to explore how these factors influence and constrain policy implementation in a particular context of investigation. According to Yin (1994:10) the study may be “generalizable to theoretical propositions” but not to all FET colleges.

In addition, the research study resulted in a huge volume of data that needed to be managed and suitably secured. The loss or omission of information could result in a lack of continuity or in incoherence in the study. It was therefore important to create a logical case study database for each set of data collected. Both electronic and manual databases were created and stored in various places for easy reference.

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter One presents the research problem, and identifies the organisational and cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation. It also provides the rationale, the conceptual framework and the methodology used in the study. The chapter explains the measures taken to establish validity in the research process, identifies the limitations in the study, and how these are addressed.

Chapter Two provides a critical description of the history of the South African technical education system dating back to its origins in 1867, and the development of the sector over the last one hundred and thirty five years. The chapter offers insights into the political basis for the inherited vocational education and training system, and outlines the intentions of the new FET policy for transforming the sector.

Chapter Three presents the broader theoretical framework in which the frames of *restructuring* and *reculturing* are used to examine policy implementation for sustainable change. The chapter identifies the strengths and weaknesses of *restructuring* and *reculturing* as approaches to change, and advances a conceptual framework that identifies *restructuring* and *reculturing* as key variables for sustainable change. The conceptual framework guides the various phases of this inquiry.

Chapter Four describes the research design and methodology selected to explore the two critical questions in the study. A qualitative, descriptive and exploratory case study method was used. The sample is made up of three technical colleges in the Tshwane North region of the Gauteng province. The three technical colleges comprise one state and two state-aided colleges. A variety of methods and tools were used to collect data for the study. The methodology resulted in the compilation of case study reports on each of the three technical colleges.

Chapter Five describes the historical and social contexts of the three case study colleges. I trace the history of each of the three colleges from the time they were established, and provide a detailed description of the developments within each of the colleges until the time of data collection (September 2002). The narratives are supplemented with photographs where they seem relevant.

In **Chapter Six**, – the first section of the chapter provides an analysis of FET policy as text and as policy in action, and describes the policy process. The second section of the chapter analyses the policymaking and implementation intentions as articulated by the policymakers and union members. The objective is to gain an insight into the policy trajectory. The third section of the chapter records and analyses the experiences of the officials at the Gauteng Department of Education in the implementation of the FET policy.

Chapter Seven describes the policy implementation process in each of the three case study colleges. I report on each case, recording the incidents that illustrated the structural and cultural influences on policy implementation. In the second part of the chapter I conduct a cross-case analysis by comparing the structural and cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation which were common or specific to each of the technical colleges in the research study. I also raise some fundamental conceptual questions in relation to the structure and culture of the three cases – questions that I take up in Chapter Eight of the study.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter of the study, seeks to explain the structural and cultural factors that influenced and constrained policy implementation in the three case study colleges. The argument of the study and its implications for further research or enquiry are presented against the rationale for the study described in Chapter One, and the literature review and the conceptual framework provided in Chapter Three. In exploring the critical questions I conclude that there are several structural and cultural influences and constraints, over and above those identified in the conceptual framework, that impacted on policy implementation. I suggest that implementation should be structured and supported through collaboration, communication, advocacy, and defined plans with contingency arrangements especially aimed at building vision, trust and confidence. I argue that policymakers need to construct policies underpinned by a strong theory of educational change that does not ignore the human elements of change.

1.8 Summary

In this section I present the background to this study and gave my rationale for undertaking the research. This background is important for understanding the

complexities associated with change in the FET sector in South Africa. I also explain the process of identifying the research focus for this study. The research focuses on the structural and cultural factors that influenced and constrained policy implementation in the FET sector. The section also makes explicit the limitations of the study and the overall organisation of the thesis.

In the following chapter I provide a critical narrative on the history of technical colleges since 1987, as well as the political motif of the apartheid regime for the vocational education and training sector, and the policy and planning ideals of the new government as it seeks to dismantle and reconstruct the FET sector in a democratic South Africa.

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.

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Chapter 3

The Knowledge Base on Educational Change: Restructuring and Reculturing

Every change involves choice: between a path to be taken and others to be passed by. Understanding the context, process and consequences of change helps us clarify and question these choices. Which choices we make will ultimately depend on the depth of that understanding but also on the creativity of our strategies, the courage of our convictions, and the direction of our values. ... For if we can come to understand the possible futures of change, we may be more able to take charge of such change in the future (Hargreaves, 1994:19).

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this review of literature on educational change is to provide a critical assessment of the literature on policy implementation with the intention of: i) establishing what is already known about educational change in the context of *restructuring* and *reculturing* perspectives on this problem; ii) identifying gaps in the existing literature and; iii) then identifying the original contribution of my research to this extensive knowledge base on educational change.

I used my two research questions directed at the structural and cultural factors that influence policy implementation as the focal point when reviewing the available literature. This chapter is divided into three sections. In **Section One** I define what policy is and the policy process with particular emphasis on top-down mandates as in the case of *restructuring*. I then explore the intentions and implications of the South African FET policy reforms within the context of globalisation.

Section Two provides a synthesis of *restructuring* and *reculturing* as approaches to change. I have identified several elements that constitute structure and culture, and which have been found to influence policy implementation. In this section I explain *restructuring* and *reculturing* as approaches to educational change. I conclude the section by indicating that both *restructuring* and *reculturing* should be considered as mutually exclusive in order for long-term sustainable reform to take place.

Finally, in **Section Three** I draw from the literature reviewed and present a conceptual framework for analysing policy implementation within the FET context of the South African education system. The conceptual framework presented here served as the basis for the rest of the research process for this case study.

Section One

3.1.1 Defining policy and implementation

Various definitions have been given for policy. According to Fowler (2000:9), “[p]ublic policy is the dynamic and value-laden process through which a political system handles a public problem. It includes a government’s expressed intentions and official enactment as well as its consistent patterns of activity or inactivity”. Policy can be considered as rational activities directed towards resolving group conflict over the allocation of resources and values in order to restore the cohesiveness, order and functionality of society (Harman, 1984). Ball defines policy as “clearly a matter of the authoritative allocation of values ... [A policy] project[s] images of an ideal society” (Ball,1990:3). He sees policies as exercises of power and control, and authoritative allocation between social groups.

Accordingly, policies vary in their purpose, complexity, target groups, distribution costs and benefits, and location of their impact. A distinction can be made between the various public policies. Substantive policies reflect what government should do, procedural policies indicate who is going to take action and through which mechanisms, material policies provide real resources or rights among the social groups, while symbolic policies remain more rhetoric about the necessary changes. In the South African context since the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, most education policies have been symbolic, substantive and redistributive (Jansen, 2001; De Clercq, 1997). Since the election of the ANC-led government in 1994 change has been urgently needed and the government compelled to deliver on its promises. The result was a multiplicity of new policies in the education arena with virtually no attention given to implementation or the concerns of implementers.⁵⁹ International literature indicates

⁵⁹ In this case study implementers refer to the provincial department of education officials, college rectors, lecturing and administrative staff, College Councils and students.

research interests in the relationship between policy formulation and implementation (Fowler, 2000; Sarason, 1990), and policy and practice (Hargreaves, Lieberman. Fullan & Hopkins, 1998; Fullan, 1993; McLaughlin, 1987). Policy has been perceived as a process consisting of four distinct stages that follow a logical sequential order: policy initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation. The activities of policy formulation and implementation are often considered to be two distinct and separate actions. According to Ganapathy (1985) this is particularly relevant in developing countries where policymaking is seen as more prestigious than policy implementation. Policy formulation is usually the responsibility of the politicians and undertaken by those near the top of the political system, while implementation, on the other hand, is put into practice close to the grass roots level and perceived to be a rational, technical, administrative activity. Within this context my observation is that policymakers generally assume that decisions to bring about change automatically result in changed institutional behaviour.

The South African FET policy process, although having been the subject of extensive and vibrant consultations at different levels, was drafted by senior bureaucrats with strong political affiliations to the ruling ANC government. Considering the immature state of the new democracy at the time of drafting the policy, and the enthusiasm of the policymakers who were still very much part of the anti-apartheid struggle, the intention was to set the stage for a highly political agenda with little consideration of the implementation realities. Implementation was something that was going to happen at a later stage, elsewhere and be carried out by someone else, and as such, the policymakers did not view it as their major immediate concern. Their immediate priority was to have a policy in place so that there would be some indication that the newly elected government was serious about addressing the inequalities of the past.

Constitutionally, provincial departments are responsible for implementing the policy by translating it into such action as they, as implementers, consider best within their unique contexts. On the other hand, policymakers, being oblivious to the tensions and contradictions in implementers' contexts, assume that change will happen as prescribed.

Instead, my experience indicates that time should be spent on planning the implementation stages that follow on from the policy decision to the initiation of change. According to Khan, in developing countries “implementation is assumed to be a series of mundane decisions and interactions that are not worthy of any scholarly attention” (1989:851).

The question arises as to what are the implications of viewing policy and implementation as two distinct activities. The assumption following upon the perspective that policy and implementation are distinct actions is that the translation of policy into practice is an unproblematic, linear process that requires strong control to ensure that the implementers carry out their directives as stipulated by the policymakers. However, McLaughlin (1998) reminds us in the Rand Case Agent Study of the complexities associated with implementation.

It is exceedingly difficult for policy to change practice, especially across levels of government. Contrary to the one- to-one relationship assumed to exist between policy and practice, the nature, amount and pace of change at school level is a product of local factors and are largely beyond the control of higher-level policymakers (McLaughlin, 1998:12).

If one considers the intergovernmental nature of the South African FET system, implementation occurs at both the provincial and institutional levels while policy, norms and standards are set at the national level. If this is the case, then to what extent could policies and plans developed centrally at the national level be implemented as intended across the levels of government? To compound the problem even further the FET implementation plan was developed with no consultation with those who would be most affected by the imminent changes – the FET college staff.

It is important to bear in mind that implementers cannot be perceived as robots that mechanically carry out the instructions as issued from above. Unlike policymakers, they face the reality, diversity and complexity of their contexts, and are in most instances capable of making appropriate decisions in specific social and cultural contexts which they, as implementers, understand better than any policymaker or politician. It would be naive to think of implementation as an automatic transmission rather than as a process of bargaining and negotiation between the various role players. Implementers

(departmental officials and technical college staff) always apply their own meaning and interpretation to the intended policies and, in the process, use their power or discretion to subvert or alter the original goals of the policymakers. Policies are therefore always mediated through minor or major adjustments within the context in which they are implemented, and are changed in the process (Fowler, 2000). Having recognised the power of implementers it would be appropriate for policymakers to anticipate implementation problems in order to strategise so as to minimise or influence the agents of the implementation process (Gunn & Hogwood, 1982; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979).

A top-down approach to policy implementation, such as *restructuring*, which is based on the Weberian notions of bureaucratic rationality has been widely criticised because of the inability of policymakers to acknowledge the unique contextual differences, or to have control over the organisational, social and political processes that affect implementation. The distinct natures of policymaking and implementation guarantee that policymakers can never be sufficiently close to the dynamics on the ground to produce anything but vague and ambiguous proposals that are usually in conflict with one another. The assumption that implementation is rational and hierarchical ignores the complex and unique properties of institutional cultures, and the realities that implementers face in terms of the influence of context, micro-politics, institutional culture, the emotions of implementers and leadership styles. Top-down mandates are highly insensitive to the fact that people respond differently to change initiatives and that planned change is seldom achieved as anticipated. According to Ball (1994:20) “policy as texts enter rather than simply change power relations. The complexity exists between the relationship of policy intentions, texts interpretations and reactions”. I want to argue that it is important to pay attention to what has been said so far in appreciating that change is more than just a mandate – it involves the complexities and subtleties of the change process (Tyack & Tobin, 1994; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Stoll & Fink, 1996) and also how implementers interpret the change. This means that both the context and process of change need to be addressed simultaneously (Sergiovanni, 2000).

If the role of implementers is to translate policies into action, then policy needs to be defined more broadly as something that starts with the policymakers and continues throughout the implementation phase “a movement back and forth between policy

formation and implementation” (Barrett & Fudge, 1981). According to Fullan (1989) implementation is a process of policy clarification and is less about putting predefined policy into practice than about making further policy. Hjern (1982) argues that policy is not so much the result of government decisions and controlling actions as the outcomes of the activities of all the different stakeholders (implementers and target groups).

The policy perspective of accentuating the role of the various actors’ goals, strategies and struggles in respect of the FET policy is useful in order to understand the interaction of the various stakeholders (implementers) in the FET college sector in South Africa. Ball defines policy first “as discourse” that places policy within the big picture of possibilities and constraints, and secondly “as text” in which a range of policy options is available (1993:13). It is within these perspectives that this analysis of the FET policy in South Africa is based. This is particularly relevant when one considers the degree of uncertainty that prevailed with the adoption of the FET policy. On the other hand one would argue that a substantive and symbolic policy such as the FET policy was not meant to engage with implementation issues.

3.1.2 FET policies in the global context

The reforms in skills training and FET stem from the analysis of the *restructuring* that has taken place in the world economy over the last quarter of a century. These changes are based firstly on the spread of new electronic technologies leading to new forms of work organisation and new managerial philosophies that require workers to be “multi-skilled” and “flexible” (Mathews, 1994; Story, 1994). Secondly, the growing internationalism of world production, investment and trade has made local markets more dependent on international markets and investments to the extent that nation-states need to train and equip their workforce to international standards (Ashton & Green, 1996; Brown & Lauder, 1996). New employees are required to demonstrate flexibility, creativity, problem-solving skills, confidence with information technology, and be able to co-operate in the workplace.

In addition to the above, what is also prevalent in the South African context and which raises concern is the growing numbers of youth unemployment, welfare dependency and social marginalisation of the historically disadvantaged masses. In South Africa where

economic considerations are deemed important there is a growing need for FET to meet the vocational demands faced by the country, as FET is seen as the crossroad of adolescents lives and a “gateway” to economic advantage. Reform of the FET college sector is intended to improve the quality of education in order to effectively combat educational alienation, so that the youth is able to make a contribution to society. The policies put in place to reform the FET college sector require an overhaul of the inherited apartheid vocational education and training system that will bring about economies of scale, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and redress past inequalities. The question that arises is whether the intended *restructuring* of the FET college sector will bring about the desired changes through the mergers.

3.2 The paradox of either restructuring or reculturing as policy options is no option

There are several lessons to be learnt from the work on the dimensions of change (McLaughlin, 1998; Fullan, 1991; 1993; 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 1999; 2000; Lieberman, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990; Elmore, 1990, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994; 1995a; 1995b). Findings indicate that both top-down and bottom-up approaches to innovations often do not succeed to bring about the desired changes for several reasons (see Reynolds, Hopkins & Stoll, 1993). Cuban (1988) distinguishes between innovations that are “first-order” changes and those that are “second-order” changes. First-order changes are those that seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation without disturbing existing organisational *structures*, or substantially altering the roles of students or lecturers. Second-order changes involve fundamental modifications within the organisation, which could involve reviewing organisational structures and roles.

The reform of the FET sector in South Africa seeks to bring about second-order change. The demographics of the student population in FET colleges have been undergoing change over the past decade. Cultural diversity has become the hallmark of South African education institutions. Work practices have altered significantly and there is a need to develop instructional practices that are in line with global trends in developing a self-directed, life-long learner. The policy framework promises greater development, effectiveness, equity, participation and redress. In addition, the unprecedented volume of information available both nationally and internationally requires complex analytical

skills in order to access this information in an efficient and meaningful way. The policy framework for FET identifies *restructuring* as the implementation framework in order for the sector to respond to these social, cultural, and economic needs.

The impetus for changing structures (*restructuring*) as an approach to educational change can be seen in certain influential reports such as *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school (1985)*, *A place called school: Prospects for the future (Goodlad, 1984)* *A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* conducted by the Carnegie Forum on Education, and the Economy Task Force on *Teaching as a profession, (1996)* and *Restructuring the education system: Agenda for the '90s* (Cohen, 1987). Changing structures was seen as way to improve learner performance. The changing of education structures to bring about significant changes has resulted in widespread change efforts in countries such as Canada, England, New Zealand, Sweden, Australia and the United States. *Restructuring* is often used to describe a pattern of events and activities of mandated changes through “top-down” directives that generally operate at two levels: first, within the classroom, and second, within the larger context of the institution (college or school), the district and its larger jurisdiction (the province). In educational settings *restructuring* initiatives have focused more and more on the use of time and space, grouping of staff and students, staff roles, organisational curriculum and the use of technology (Harradine, 1996 cited in Hattam, Mcinerney, Lawson & Smyth, 1999) to effect changes.

Why has *restructuring* been so popular? There are several reasons for the choice of *restructuring* as an approach to educational reform (Elmore, 1995). Firstly, structural changes have been proven to have high symbolic value in that they are highly visible and send out a signal that something important is happening. Structures are important, and disrupting patterns communicates that change and reform is being taken seriously. *Restructuring* in the FET context through merging and setting up new governance structures sends out a strong message that the government is serious about making the changes promised in the FET policy (Department of Education, 2001:25). The public impression created is that a new system is in place and promises the South African society greater responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness. Secondly, structures are easier to change than most other proponents for change. Staff employed in the South African FET college system, as in most other school systems, are usually subjected to

legislative prescripts relating to their conditions of service. To replace the staff would be a long and costly procedure and would involve much resistance and protest. The same would apply if a decision were taken to close down a particular college. Therefore, the most effective option would be to change through *restructuring*. Thirdly, lecturers are of the opinion that structures exercise a strong influence over their teaching, and that structure constrains their ability to do what they believe is beneficial for their students. Fourthly, it is consistent with deeply held beliefs among reformers and practitioners about what people think is wrong with schools or colleges.

Metaphorically, *restructuring* conveys the image of discarding the old and starting anew – moving from the old order to inventing an order based on new assumptions, values and vision. The *restructuring* of the South African FET colleges is associated with discarding the stigma attached to these institutions from the apartheid era, and creating new vibrant FET colleges that are responsive to the social, political and economic needs of the society. In the FET sector the concern among many nations around the world, in the last 20 years, has been about the growing number of students who are unsuccessful in making the transition to working life, and this in turn poses the threat of long-term unemployment, long-term social dependency and social marginalisation. Concerns over the last three decades have led to the *restructuring* of the FET sector in many countries in order to address the specific issues of academic failure, school dropouts, student alienation and the need to equip students to contribute to an increasingly complex society. The changes are perceived to be in line with the *restructuring* of the global economy and the endeavour to create a skilful workforce that could lead to greater economic development and contribute to a more advanced, competitive society (Convey, 1991).

The major limitation upon which *restructuring* is based is the assumption that individual contextual factors are not considered important. *Restructuring*, like all other top-down mandates, is based on the premise that all institutions, staff and students are the same, have the same interests and the same needs, and that the scientific rules of reform supersede the professional judgement of the implementers (Elmore, 1995, 2000; Fullan, 2001a). In reality we know that each institution, like individuals, possesses unique characteristics and is located within a particular contextual setting. Any change process, no matter how small, is not an isolated process, but occurs within some specific

context (Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1990). The FET colleges should not be seen as merely buildings, but considered in terms of the people inside making them complex organisms. The context of the South African FET colleges is characterised by the ideological intentions of apartheid education. Changes in the FET college sector over the last two decades have led to increases in the enrolment of black students at these colleges, while the staff component remains to a large extent unchanged and predominantly white.

The organisational context has been found to influence change initiatives in several ways (Deal, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1987; Sarason, 1990). At the same time top-down planned change, efforts have also been made to discover what constitutes barriers to change, of which there are several. Firstly, the structure (physical arrangement) of an organisation (FET college) in terms of its patterns of scheduling, physical layout and size can minimise opportunities for interaction among the members of the staff. When there is limited or no interaction among staff members, we find decreased self-efficacy, an avoidance of controversy and the assumption that individuals do not share the same views (Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1982). This is typical of the South African college culture. Staff operate in their own little “boxes,” oblivious to the need for change. Instead, they perceive change to be something that disrupts their activities, wastes limited resources (time and money) and has no effect on their jobs as lecturers in benefiting students.

When top-down mandates like *restructuring* are imposed, the general impression created is that those who initiate these changes are not concerned about those upon whom the changes are imposed. Top-down change initiatives are considered to be authoritarian and dictatorial in nature, ignoring the principles underlying a democratic society in which participation is fundamental for the effectiveness or efficiency of the change process. Fullan maintains, “change in education depends upon what teachers do and think – it’s as simple and complex as that” (1999:117). In order to be able to get staff to engage more, it may be necessary to change the structural organisation to foster interaction and collaboration.

Changing the structure may not be sufficient on its own because secondly, the policies and regulations required to achieve substantial change may also be inhibiting factors

(Levine, 1991). Policies that facilitate change are those related to providing greater autonomy at the organisational level, fostering collaboration among staff and providing adequate channels for communication and staff development (Carnegie Foundation 1998). Collaboration, discussion and disagreement lead to a sense of ownership and understanding of the change agenda. For the reform agenda to achieve success it is important that implementers embrace change, and that the change decisions are arrived at collaboratively (Fullan, 1991; Lieberman, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990). Not only does collaboration help to overcome resistance, but it also has positive effects in that it leads to better change ideas, group consensus and greater commitment from all involved in implementing the change agenda. *Restructuring* initiatives are seldom reached through collaboration, as they are generally mandates that need to be executed within relatively short spaces of time. However, in some instances consultation and collaboration may not be appropriate, or perhaps be restricted to certain levels, as too much consultation may result in implementation delays, particularly when there is a strong political motive for change.

One may argue that in a country like South Africa where change is a fundamental part of the redress agenda and policies were developed through a vigorous consultation process the intents of the policies are fairly clear. Stakeholders are aware of what changes mean and imply even if they do plead ignorance. What may be unclear though is how the policies would be implemented.

Thirdly, the availability of resources in terms of both time and money greatly influences change initiatives (Louis & Miles, 1990). Time is required for implementing activities and without this time implementation has been found to fall flat (Sarason, 1982; Simpson, 1990), while a lack of money could limit the type of improvement and materials available for successful change (Louis & Miles, 1990). Typically *restructuring* is about altering the “rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships” (Hargreaves, 1994:242). In order for implementers to change their roles there needs to be clarity as well as receptivity about their new goals and role expectations, their ability to enact the new roles, sufficient resources and an enabling or compatible environment to implement the change agenda.

In addition there needs to be adequate time allocated for the role changes to take place, and the necessary coordination, support and encouragement to reinforce the changes as desired. Role change requires a deliberate process of “role re-socialisation” (Giacquinta, 1994). In the Cambire Study (pseudonym) Gross et al. (1971) identified several reasons for implementation failure, among which the lack of clarity among implementers and resistance among rank and file who have to carry out the changes have been identified as barriers to implementation. Not only do implementers need to be clear about their new roles, but they also need the necessary capacity, skills and knowledge to carry out their new roles. It is when the coalescing and maintenance of the broadly conceived “desiderata are missing” that incomplete implementation occurs (Giacquinta in Hargreaves et al., 1998).

The complexity of the changes envisaged for the South African FET sector required new knowledge, skills and understanding all of which require time. In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the colleges staff need to upgrade their qualifications, be re-trained to develop partnerships with business and industry, and to exercise more flexibility and innovation in their teaching practices. This premise is based on life-long learning while the existing culture of the FET colleges does not promote this kind of development among staff.

Fourthly, leadership and support are essential from all levels (provincial and institutional) in order to foster relationships and institutionalise change by creating opportunities for shared decision-making, developing a shared meaning and understanding, alleviating fears and addressing resistance to change. According to Berman & McLaughlin (1978), it is important to establish whether there is sufficient support for the policy among the major stakeholders. In terms of the technical college mergers there was a need to ascertain whether the Rector and staff, who were required to implement the policy, were ready to accept the change. Without acceptance and buy-in there is bound to be resistance. The role of leadership at both the provincial and institutional levels is vital to steer and guide the change agenda. Without a leader in place the plan is left to “run on its own,” with implementation taking place in an ad hoc manner. In cases where there is more than one level of governance affected by the policy, it is the role of the leadership at the highest level of the hierarchy to gain the trust and confidence of the rest of the staff in order for the reform to be implemented

successfully. In the case of the FET sector this entails the Gauteng Department of Education officials, Rectors and College Council members. On the other hand, the support of the lecturing staff is not as important as that of the Rector or provincial department officials, as staff at lower levels often conform to a Rector once they are convinced of the value of the change. This, however, does not preclude the fact that lecturers may initially resist the reform even though their Rector may support it. Considering the “closed” institutional culture of the FET colleges, change initiated from outside would almost certainly be approached with scepticism. The role of the leader in the Gauteng Department of Education should be to develop trust and confidence in the new system and in the changes.

It has been reiterated several times that there is no doubt that change is a highly complex processes (Fullan, 1993; Deal & Peterson, 1994; Mintzberg, 1994). It was assumed that *restructuring* the FET sector through the merging of the FET colleges would bring about greater flexibility, responsiveness and life-long learning opportunities through an overhaul of the inherited apartheid FET system. Merging in this context would involve the uniting of two or more FET institutions to form a larger institution, the thrust of which I have already discussed in Chapter 2. However, the multifaceted nature of the change intervention in the form of *restructuring* requires a parallel and perhaps more important approach to improving the internal interactions and relationships. Tyack & Tobin (1994) refer to this as the “grammar of schooling” which remains unchanged through *restructuring*. Elmore argues that the relationship of structure and practice is mediated by “relatively powerful forces such as shared norms, knowledge and skills” and that these non-structural aspects need to be considered when implementing change innovations (1995:26). These tangible and intangible cultural elements are referred to as the “doors” (Joyce, 1991) for sustainable reform.

The challenge for the FET sector is to bring about cultural or second-order changes. Several authors have made reference to balancing *restructuring* with *reculturing* (Hargreaves, 1994; Fullan, 1996) in order to bring about sustainable change. Fullan and Miles (1991) found that change initiatives that focused on structural and organisational changes alone constituted a very limited strategy for sustainability. They maintain that there is a need to look more closely at the culture of the organisation.

Organisational theorists suggest that educational institutions are associated with a particular type of culture (Deal, 1983). Several definitions of “culture” have been suggested. Akin (1991:3) defines culture as the “social organisations of the ... staff which represent shared beliefs, customs, attitudes and expectations”. Deal and Kennedy (1983:140) refer to culture as “the way we do things around here”. Akin’s more formal definition sees culture in terms of a social dimension and regards culture as the social and phenomenological uniqueness of a particular community or institution, which comprises of intangible and symbolic elements such as values, beliefs, ideologies and also tangible elements such as behavioural and visual expressions (Beare, Cladwell & Milikan, 1989). Schein (1985) argues that culture is based on implicit and silent assumptions, which cannot change unless brought to the surface and confronted. If necessary, culture can serve as a mechanism for change on condition that the cultural assumptions are openly examined, as all of the institution’s cultures may not need to change in order to bring about the desired sustainable reform (Schein, 1985).

While there are several dimensions to culture, the most relevant to this research study is in fact that change does have some impact on an organisation’s culture. The FET institutions will need to respond to the pressures of globalisation, and the political and socio-economic challenges of South Africa that require a deeper thinking about the threat to the institutions’ traditional habits, norms, values, beliefs and assumptions, all of which are based on the philosophy of CNE. In addition the staff is predominantly white while the majority of the students are black. There are also disparities in terms of gender, work ethos and management styles. The challenge in transforming the FET sector would be to change the way staff think, work, and relate to their purpose through *reculturing*.

What would *reculturing* entail? Fullan (1996:420) refers to *reculturing* as “the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms”. *Reculturing* is seen as shifting the “hearts and minds” of implementers so that they do not merely accept but are committed to the changes. The intention is to change the shared beliefs, customs, attitudes and expectations of the implementers “the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms” (Fullan, 1996:420) so as to find ecological connections between the purpose of education, the organisational values of the institution, as well as its structures, cultures and leadership, and the work and lives of staff through (Hargreaves et al., 1998). In

other words both the internal and external contexts of change should be considered. In terms of the South African FET college sector this implies questioning the traditional, deep-seated beliefs, values, norms and assumptions of the institutional culture.

The perception is that change will be successful when implementation is successful. However, Fullan (1993:21-22) argues that change cannot be mandated. The complex nature of the changes envisaged through the implementation of the FET policy requires high levels of understanding of what is meant by the change agenda. Considering that FET is a new concept introduced in the South African education system capacity and skills are needed to communicate the vision and mission of the sector. This requires time, support, adequate structures and leadership in order to create a common vision.

Leadership needs to be aware that change, because of its unfamiliar contents is bound to be resisted and challenged by those affected by the change agenda. The mergers in the FET sector entail a complex and difficult process. Several studies on educational change focus on implementation and the way in which change happens, including barriers to change and the role of the change agent(s), but with little consideration of the decisions, events or action that precede the implementation phase. In this regard Fullan raises the question:

What do we know about successful initiation; that is what do we know about startups that have a better chance of mobilizing people and resources towards implementation of desired change? (1991:62).

The important adoption stage has been identified as “what happens by way of mobilisation, and preparing for change” (Fullan, 1991). This was also identified earlier by Miles (1978). Preparing for change lends itself to earlier theories of planning which emphasised the need to plan for change. This is perhaps what influences Fullan’s (1992; 1993) notion that vision and strategic planning come later in the change process. For successful change it is important that the vision be created and communicated, that there is commitment to it and that people align their work with it (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992). The vision for the FET sector is articulated in the policy. The policy development process entailed rigorous consultation and debate among stakeholders. This commenced with the establishment of the NCFE in 1996. Considering the gradual

impetus to initiate change in the FET colleges sector it would have been appropriate to create an awareness of the role the sector should play and how changes in the sector could be brought about. This could have taken the form of national advocacy campaigns directed toward the human resources needs of the country and the role that colleges could play in meeting the skills needs of industry and commerce.

Changing beliefs, values, norms and assumptions requires understanding and commitment from those involved. Time for reflection is needed before a plausible vision can emerge and it is important that the vision precedes any implementation actions. Furthermore success presupposes that the vision be shared (Fullan, 1992). The notion of a shared vision through *reculturing* conveys the idea of ownership and commitment which is achieved through a complex array of communication processes that are essential to question fundamental values, beliefs and behaviours (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). In complex changes cognisance needs to be taken of the time lapse between policymaking and implementation.

In the case of the FET colleges a great deal of time (two years) had elapsed between the two processes. In this case, despite the rigorous consultation during the policymaking process, and the numerous workshops conducted by the CCF and AFETISA, it was necessary to create a shared meaning of the change at the institutional level so that implementers could understand their role within the bigger picture of systemic change. Provincial departments have a significant role to play in changing the preconceived beliefs, values, norms and assumptions prevalent in the FET college sector. It would have been appropriate for the provincial department to hold meetings with colleges individually and collectively to impart information about the envisaged change (merger) and ensure support from the Rector, Council and college management for the merger. This would have ensured trust, built commitment and motivated colleges to participate in the restructuring activities.

Senge (1991) developed the concept of personal mastery, shared vision, and team learning as the necessary proponents of what he calls the “fifth discipline” or “systems thinking” through the establishment of “learning organisations”. The concept of “learning organisations” has been endorsed as a way to *restructure* organisations (Kerka, 1995) through “fundamental change(s) in an enterprise’s (school’s) culture and

core competencies, both of which require substantial time and interventions” (Miles, 1999).

It should also be borne in mind that the results and effects of the change innovation take even longer to be noticeable (King, 1995). Most people do not discover new understandings until they have delved into something (Fullan, 1992) and experienced change as a process and not an event (Hall & Loucks, 1978; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

One of the challenges that the South African FET sector faces is the provision of workforce preparation and *restructuring* through closer integration of the vocational education and human resource development fields. This involves changing the roles and responsibilities of all involved – a new way of doing things by working together. Integration of education and training represents a partnership of the two fields that is pertinent to workforce preparation through close alignment of the roles and responsibilities of the two sister national departments – the Departments of Education and Labour. It is important to create a shared vision even between these two departments. This requires adequate time frames to bring about the appropriate mind-shifts. Partnerships also entail closer linkages with business and industry (Cheek, 1990; Doty, 1990). Traditionally, changes of this nature have been brought about through the establishment of new governance structures with representatives from business and industry on these structures (Strong, 1990). The FET policy indicates the establishment of new governance structures with representation from business and industry. This arrangement requires new skills and the capacity to perform the new roles and responsibilities necessary for successful change. If the change is to be in line with global practices then there is a need for deeper changes or second-order changes (Cuban, 1998). This requires changing attitudes, perceptions, behaviour, relationships, and the way people collaborate and communicate.

Communication lies at the heart of any change process and is essential in order to engage the mind shift that enables us to rethink the purpose and nature of the change. The role of communication in ensuring an understanding and shared meaning of the change innovation so as to establish trust and understanding cannot be underestimated. Rogers refers to "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” as diffusion (1995:5).

Communication is important in that it not only informs those who are directly involved in the key events and activities, but also serves to increase the attention and enthusiasm of implementers. Shared meaning and understanding can make significant change a reality (Rosenholtz, 1989; Joyce & Showers, 1988).

In addition, organisations do not exist in isolation and it is important to acknowledge the internal and external environmental influences. It is also important to bear in mind that, irrespective of whether change is imposed or sought, the meaning of change is seldom understood. On the other hand, by nature people do not change unless they share a compelling reason for doing so (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Schwahn & Spady, 1998; McNaught et al., 1999; Bates, 2000). In order to be responsive stakeholders need to understand the influences of the internal as well as the external environment on the effectiveness and responsiveness of the institution. The effects of globalisation increase the need for the institutions to review their values, beliefs and assumptions on a continuous basis.

Hargreaves (1994) argues that it is important to establish and maintain the socio-cultural conditions needed for collaborative professional development. By this he means that it is necessary to consider on-going learning and development as a professional responsibility. However, the traditional culture of the FET colleges in South Africa can be characterised as an individualistic, balkanised culture, which isolates staff and thereby creating very few opportunities for collaboration and professional interaction (Dobbins, 1997; Hargreaves, 1992). This is a culture that does not support learning, a shared vision and collaboration. Instead the organisational culture is characterised by what individuals are expected to know, how they are to behave, the meaning of the institution's sagas and stories, and what new individuals have to learn in order to function effectively. For successful change new shared goals have to be established, and the challenge is to build the culture of the restructured organisation. Participants (implementers) at all levels of the system are part of a system, and how they relate to one another partially explains how they attribute meaning and do or do not comply in ways that translate mandates into building level changes (Fullan, 1996).

By and large culture is learned, often because people within institutions develop attachments, particularly to the tangible elements of the culture, which are then

reinforced and entrenched through interaction and daily routine. As a result, “when change alters or breaks the attachment, meaning is questioned” (Deal, 1987:6). Since the cultural and structural features of a FET college are inextricably linked (Hargreaves, 1994:256) “the purpose of *restructuring* becomes one of changing organisations so that good ideas and strategies born in practice can flourish and not be stymied by existing bureaucratic forces” (Grimmett, 1995:210).

Culture is not just restricted to a classroom or college, but extends beyond the college into the district where there are distinct cultural norms. Even if two colleges appear to be similar from the outside, closer examinations of the organisations will reveal that their cultures are reflective of the individual and group relationships. For any planned change to be successful, it is important to recognise that the school’s need and directions of change are a product of its uniqueness – in a holistic, ecological way. The decisions taken by policymakers on implementation and reform should be such that there is coherence and connections, and such that the implementers or “street bureaucrats” are able to see the interrelationship between and interconnections of the many things happening to bring about the desired changes. In terms of the FET colleges this demands a review of the inherited conservative institutional culture.

In this section I identified a number of factors that play an integral role in the process of organisational change. Culture in its widest aspect has potential and power within organisations (Beare et al., 1989). My experience as a practitioner indicates that it is important to examine the cultural factors, and to strengthen those elements of culture that fit the college improvement effort, in order to create a context that supports change taking into account the reciprocal, and not static or linear relationship, that exists between structural⁶⁰ and cultural⁶¹ changes. An understanding of the importance of the power of culture and the importance of staff collegiality to influence change has been emphasised several times (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Hargreaves, 1994; Stoll & Fink, 1996).

⁶⁰ Refers to the physical environment, organisational arrangements, roles, finance, governance curriculum and training.

⁶¹ Refers to norms, habits, skills and beliefs.

This relationship is much more powerful when teachers and administrators begin to work in new ways only to discover school structures are ill fitted to the new orientation and must be altered. This is a more productive sequence than the reverse when rapidly implemented new structures create confusion, ambiguity, and conflict (Fullan, 1993).

By looking “at change through (the) multiple frames or lenses” (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Fink, 2000) of *restructuring* and *reculturing*, we are able to see the college in a holistic manner, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the reform agenda. In the next section I present a conceptual framework for my “case” derived from the review of the literature presented in this section.

3.2.1 Applicability of the concepts of restructuring and reculturing to FET

FET is a collective term to identify curriculum programmes designed to prepare students to acquire an education and job skills that enable them to enter employment immediately upon the completion of high school (Lynch, 2000:1-2). In the South African context this translates to level 4 on the NQF. At the same time the FET offered through schools and FET colleges is supposedly required to prepare individuals for the place of work. On the other hand global policy discourses have not only effected changes in FET, but have introduced major changes in all aspects of the education system. The changes brought about in the education systems worldwide include *restructuring*, decentralisation, curriculum standardisation, partnerships, new governance and funding models.

Although a major proportion of the literature reviewed for this study involves school change, the concepts of *restructuring* and *reculturing* are also applicable to changes within the FET college sector for example, the principles of changing rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships underpinning the structural changes through mergers in the South African context. The *restructuring* of the FET sector seeks to remove the duplications in programme offerings and service provision; promote the joint development and delivery of programmes between schools and colleges; enhance responsiveness to local, national and regional needs, and to refocus and reshape the institutional cultures and missions of institutions as South African FET institutions.

At the same time the cultural domains of FET colleges are hierarchical. The FET policy provides limited autonomy⁶² to the FET colleges. The greater authority granted to FET colleges pre-empts the building of capacity and professional development to equip college staff to take on added responsibilities over time – medium to long term objective (Department of Education, 2001:17). *Reculturing* therefore implies changing beliefs, attitudes, norms and values through professional development, and the creation of learning organisations as defined by Senge (1991).

3.3 Conceptual framework

I now present a tentative conceptual framework for my case investigation. Fullan's (1999) reconceptualisation of change as *reculturing* is persuasive in that research has shown that schools that simply *restructure* (change the curriculum, add new roles and relationships, reorganise) bring about little difference in teaching and learning. On the other hand, schools that *reculture* and *restructure* simultaneously make a difference if they focus on student learning, link the knowledge of the student learning to changes in instructional practices, and work together to assess teachers and leadership in order to make the necessary changes (Fullan 1998c). However, there is a need to describe this construct in practice, particularly in the South African FET context in which the emphasis is on *restructuring*.

I used the concepts of *restructuring* and *reculturing* as the organising tools for my case study. I looked for evidence of *reculturing* in the data collected at the national, provincial and institutional levels in their attempt to *restructure* the technical colleges. The comparative analysis of the three cases enabled me to see how *restructuring* and *reculturing* work, and to identify the constructs in terms of their most predominant descriptive characteristics. The objective was to identify codes, categories and embodied elements of the theories, and to generalise findings to these “theories” of educational change in respect of the three cases.

⁶² The term accorded to colleges is “greater authority” which by definition translates to mean the devolution of a number of day-to day decision making functions to the FET colleges (Department of Education, 2001:17).

3.3.1 Dimensions of change

Trying to change the behaviour and functions of an existing organisation is one of the most difficult reforms to accomplish. This is particularly true when more than one level of government is involved, when fundamentally different behaviours are required, when the functions and behaviours are those of a large and diverse group, and when the actors have varying incentives for change (Mazamania & Sabatier, 1989).

The implementation of the design developed by an external agent (design team) within an organisation (school or FET colleges) involves multilevel (national, provincial and institutional) implementers (practitioners). The adoption and implementation of *restructuring* in the FET sector involves college Rectors, and provincial and national department officials.

International literature on implementing school reforms has highlighted local capacity and will as the two most important factors for successful implementation (McLaughlin, 1987, 1990). In practice, implementers often interpret policies as they see fit in their specific contexts, and make minor adjustments during implementation. McLaughlin refers to this as “mutual adaptation” and cautions policymakers that it would be naive to expect a plan to be implemented as designed, considering the differing capacity, skills and contexts of the implementers and that “local variability is the rule; uniformity is the exception” (1990:3). Despite the adaptations made there is no assurance that the original policy will be enhanced, or better outcomes achieved. This is as a result of unanticipated consequences, policy disappearance, policy erosion, policy dilution, policy drift, or perhaps poor or slow implementation (Cuban, 1984; Mazamania & Sabatier, 1989; Yin 1979; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Daft, 1995; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977).

It is often found that the cause of these less desirable outcomes is that policymakers do not put in place the needed support mechanisms, or change the supporting infrastructure to assist implementers when implementing new interventions. For successful implementation of any reform mandate there needs to be sufficient “slack resources” in the form of adequate support for the implementers, capacity to deliver their mandate, and some enforcement or incentives to support compliance (McDonnell & Grubb,

1991). On the other hand, capacity-building requires resources in the form of time, funding and information.

Particularly in education, full implementation is often only evident after several stages of activity (Mazamian & Sabatier, 1989; Yin, 1979). This happens sometimes because of the developmental nature of the intervention, but in other instances may be due to the cycles of support and interest of leaders, competing policies and available funding.

3.3.2 The FET case study framework

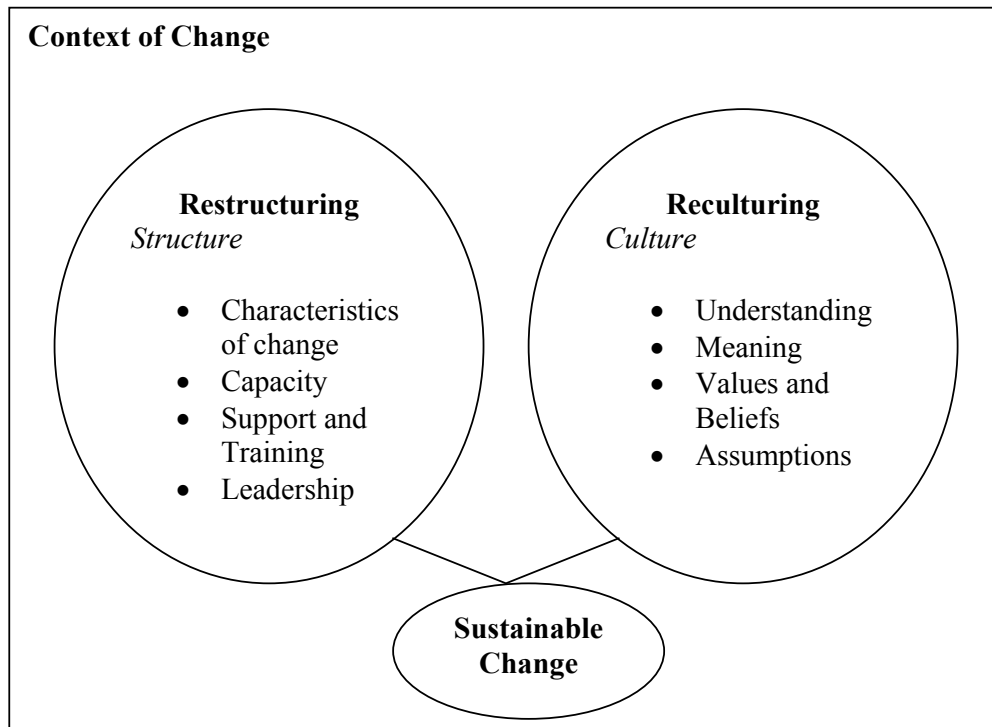
The framework portrayed in Figure 3.1 is an attempt to capture the complex factors that I identified at the heart of policy implementation. I intend to use the framework to examine the *restructuring* of the FET colleges in the South African context, with the intention of informing and improving implementation practices in developing countries.

The innovation and change framework is based on some of the assumptions derived from the literature review undertaken for this study. The framework is underpinned by the assumptions that educational change

- is a process
- takes place over time
- is influenced by contextual factors
- involves the formal and informal organisational dimension (management practices, nature of change, resources, capacity, support, skills, knowledge and understanding)
- involves the informal, intangible organisational dimension (understanding, meaning, values and beliefs, and assumptions).

These five assertions guided my development of the conceptual framework and design of the case study.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework for restructuring and reculturing as approaches to change



The innovation or change framework that I used provides two dimensions of change:

- the organisational (structural) dimension
- the cultural dimension

Inherent in these structures are factors that influence change. These will now be addressed.

The structural dimension of an innovation entails the organisation's philosophy, management practices, employees, clients and capacity to handle change. Inherent in this are the characteristics of the context of change which have a bearing on the nature and extent of the change process. The following factors which could influence the change process are associated with the context of change:

- the general setting (such as a technical college) and the specific scene (state or state-aided college)
- the participants (implementers) involved
- the issues that emerge

- the various actions carried out to effect the change.

The general setting and specific scene together provide a way of examining the dynamics of the change process. This dimension of the change framework helps to uncover the change process and to establish the relationships between the contextual variables (setting, scene, implementers, options) of the change process.

There are many influencing factors which must be taken into account in highlighting the complexity of change. For the purpose of this study I identified the following structural factors: characteristics of the change, capacity, support and training, leadership and resources. The cultural dimensions identified are the assumptions, norms, values, understanding, beliefs and meaning attached to change.

The abovementioned factors collectively constitute a way of examining the dynamics of the change process. These dimensions of the innovation and change framework provide a basis to “unpack” the change process, and to establish relationships between the various contextual variables of the process.

To highlight the complexity of change it must be borne in mind that there are many factors influencing change. For the purpose of this study I made use of the following operational definitions to describe the structural and cultural elements and their respective sub-constructs.

3.3.3. Description of the elements in the framework in terms of the FET case study

3.3.3.1 Structural factors

Capacity comprises the elements of motivation, skills (material and intellectual), and human resources vital for bringing about the desired changes or reforms. It includes knowledge, support and accountability, and the taking into consideration of the uniqueness and complexity of the differences in local conditions. Insufficient capacity could be as a result of a lack of training, lack of appropriate experience, inadequate equipment, or a combination of these. The objective of capacity building is to ensure that people within the institutions are capable of implementing the reform innovations.

Characteristics of the change are those intricate and organic variables that are required to bring about the reform innovation. The change process includes tolerance of a certain degree of uncertainty, greater trust, complexity and is non-linear.

Leadership entails the sharing of power and influence to facilitate an organisational development process that engages the human potential and commitment of staff. It includes communicating effectively, demonstrating trust, showing respect, and creating opportunities for growth.

Resources are the physical and financial provisions needed to implement an innovation or reform successfully. In terms of educational change time is also regarded as a critical resource for successful implementation.

Support and training

Training entails the ongoing, interactive, cumulative learning necessary to develop new conceptions, skills and behaviour – staff development skills, specific training. Support helps to provide learning by doing, concrete role models, meeting with resource consultants and fellow implementers, the putting into practice of the behaviour, gradual self confidence, continuous assistance. Training is effective when combined with concrete, teacher-specific training activities, ongoing continuous assistance and support, and sustained interaction and staff development.

3.3.3.2 Cultural factors

Assumptions are the underlying values and shared identities that determine the behaviour patterns of the people working in the organisation and the visible artifacts of the organisation. Deep assumptions are unconscious, taken for granted and not easily changed.

Meaning refers to the sources and purpose of the educational and social change.

Norms are behaviour patterns that are typical of specific groups. Such behaviours are learnt from parents, teachers, peers, and many others whose values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours take place in the context of their own organisational culture.

Understanding refers to the know how of the orientations and working conditions of the actors and the school system.

Values and beliefs have to do with the importance of the “moral purpose” of education. Teachers are perceived as agents of educational change and societal improvement. This involves teachers having the conviction that every child can learn, considering learning as a developmental process, valuing the creativity of staff and students, and respecting individual differences among staff and students.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I offered a synthesis of *restructuring* and *reculturing* as two recent and complementary approaches to educational change. I highlighted the difficulties involved in using either approach on its own because of the complexities associated with human organisations such as the school system. Large-scale change involves systemic reform encompassing multi-layers of stakeholders, each functioning within their own contexts, capacities, realities and understandings. Systemic change, which is associated with deep organisational and cultural change designed to bring about transformation in the beliefs and values of an organisation, is underpinned by a vast array of complex factors. I concluded the chapter with a conceptual framework based on the constructs of the literature for understanding policy implementation.

In the next chapter I describe the methodology used to collect and analyse data in relation to my two research questions.

Chapter 4

Research Design and Methods

4.1 Introduction

This is a qualitative inquiry based on a comparative case study methodology in which the “cases” are represented by three technical colleges subjected to fundamental reforms in the further education and training sector. The case study data was collected using mixed and multiple modes of data generation including semi-structured interviews, document analysis and questionnaires. Having worked in the Department of Education in the FET college directorate, I also record my experiences of the policy implementation process.

In this chapter I provide a narrative account of my research design. I provide insights into how the design unfolded, a description of the methodology I adopted, and substantiated reasons for my choice of the case study method and sampling decisions. I conclude by reflecting on ethical considerations and decisions made in conducting the research and the methodology adopted in analysing the data.

4.1.1 Getting started

Before starting with the data collection process I had already formulated the key questions and the research strategies that I planned to use in my study. Even though I had a clear plan for collecting my data I was aware that changes might be necessary when considering the specifics of enacting the research design. As the study unfolded I found that it was necessary to make several changes and adaptations to the research process. These changes were mainly due to the various contextual factors that presented themselves, particularly with the data collection and analysis.

My data collection plan changed for various reasons. Two key persons that I had identified as crucial at the national level had left the sector and felt that they were no longer be in a position to add value to the research. They were of the opinion that a long time had elapsed since they had been involved in the policy development process and that they were not in touch with the realities on the ground when it came to

implementing the new policy. At the provincial department level many of the officials that had been involved during the policy development, adoption and implementation stages had also left the department and could not be reached. However, I was able to interview two key actors at the provincial level and they provided me with substantial insights into the policy implementation process as adopted in the provincial department.

One of the critical amendments that I had to make to my sample was the exclusion of the largest teacher union the South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU), in the country from participation in the research study. Although I had made numerous attempts to interview the representatives from SADTU, this was not possible because of the unavailability of the representatives owing to their hectic work schedules. Meetings were set up on five occasions, only to be postponed because of some other more pressing issue. At the time of writing the report I tried again to get hold of a representative from SADTU so as to include their views, but it was evident that, with time running out, the report would have to be completed without incorporating their comments. Furthermore, my experiences of the participation of SADTU in the FET processes during the time that I worked in the FET Directorate in the Department of Education made me realise that it would be virtually impossible to get an interview from SADTU. It had always been difficult to elicit comment or participation, especially when it came to FET colleges, since much of SADTU's focus was on the reforms and transformation of the school sector where the majority of its members are to be found. The concerns over the FET implementation and policy were raised in most instances by the two unions with which I was able to hold interviews viz. Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU)⁶³ and National Professional Teachers' Association of South Africa (NAPTOSA). Furthermore, both SAOU and NAPTOSA were considered to be unions of which the majority of members were white. Given the fact that the majority of the technical college staff was white these unions could be seen to have a vested interest in the merger.

⁶³ Translates as South African Teachers Union

4.1.2 The case study

In this case study I examined the structural and cultural constraints on policy implementation in the FET college sector. According to Yin (1994:1), the study of contemporary phenomena in a real-life context is one of the distinguishing characteristics of case study design. Miles and Huberman (1994:28) define case contexts as the physical location (involved parties, history of contacts) and the relevant aspects of the social system in which the actors appear (e.g. department, college, sector). Through this explanatory case study I sought to discover the meaning of phenomena such as the events or practices that influenced policy implementation by placing these within the specific social context of the FET sector in South Africa.

The unit of analysis refers to “what” the researcher will investigate, that is, the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 1994:21). The unit of analysis is one of the key considerations that a researcher has to bear in mind in case study research (Yin, 1994:31). In this comparative study I chose multiple units of analyses (three FET colleges) that were embedded subunits within the larger unit of analysis (Yin, 1994:44) of the technical college sector within the Gauteng Department of Education. The three colleges selected for this study were clustered together to be merged into one institution and shared the larger unit of analysis as context.

My choice of multiple cases was based on the premise that multiple cases have been found to increase the methodological rigor of the study through “strengthening the precision, the validity and stability of findings” (Miles & Huberman, 1994:29) and more so because “evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling” (Yin, 1994:45). The multiple-cases provided me with opportunities for both qualitative and quantitative cross-unit comparison. My intention was that the end product would be a holistic, intensive description, interpretation and deeper understanding of the structural and cultural constraints on policy implementation within the context of the FET college sector.

The last and probably the deciding factor for my research design was that this study also focused on a “bounded system” as the focus of the investigation. This study was an

“empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1989). The case study approach aims at uncovering the interaction of significant factors (structural and cultural) characteristic of the phenomenon (the implementation of the FET policy).

I used naturalistic methods of inquiry in this study because these methods enabled the representation of the multiple realities that characterise human behaviour, and enabled me (the researcher) to strive for conformability, or agreement among a variety of information sources (Guba, 1978). Naturalistic inquiry is an appropriate method when undertaking “value laden” research (Guba, 1978).

While undertaking this research I was at all times aware of the volatility and sensitivity that prevailed in colleges during the *restructuring* process. This made it paramount that I respect the rights, privacy, dignity and sensitivities of the research population and the integrity of the colleges in the study. Because of my position as an employee of the national Department of Education it was necessary to reassure technical college staff that all discussions would be accorded the greatest degree of confidentiality. Respondents were assured that pseudonyms would be used, as the majority of the respondents were understandably uncomfortable with the use of their names in the text. However, the Rectors were comfortable with the use of the college names. In addition, I provided all stakeholders with sufficient details of my findings, thus ensuring them that I had consciously refrained from withholding or selectively communicating my findings.

4.1.3 Data collection

Access and acceptance

As I was employed as an official at the Department of Education in the FET directorate at the time of commencing this research study, I felt confident that access and acceptance would not be an issue of concern to me. This unique situation provided me with access to documentation and information first-hand, as I was also a member of several teams involved in overseeing the implementation strategies for the FET merger.

In June 2002 I began communicating my intention of using the Gauteng province for my research study to the relevant authorities. My informal, verbal request was formalised with a letter to the Head of the Gauteng Department of Education, requesting permission to conduct my research study in this province. I was informed telephonically that I had been granted permission to conduct my research in the six colleges identified in the Tshwane metropolitan region, as identified in my sample. Letters were sent from the Gauteng Department of Education to the six technical colleges informing them of the research study and requesting their assistance and support. From then on it was fairly easy for me to have access to the colleges, as all the Rectors knew me from my interactions with the colleges during which time I had become acquainted with them. Rectors were willing to share documentation, records of deliberations and discussions that had been held with their staff, although two of the three Rectors encountered some difficulty locating the necessary information.

However, within weeks of preparing to conduct my interviews with the colleges, I had accepted a job offered at the National Treasury. I made it clear to college staff that I would no longer be working at the Department of Education, and that they should be as open as possible with their responses. I felt that it was important to reveal this to the respondents, as it would alleviate any reservations that they might have had in being open in their responses, considering the position I occupied in the Department of Education and my interaction with the officials from the provincial department of education. I reiterated my assurance that all discussions held with them would be guaranteed the greatest degree of confidentiality.

The interviews with the provincial department officials, despite their willingness, proved to be challenging because of their heavy work schedules. They were often out of office in meetings or attending to other line management functions that needed to be prioritised. These interviews had to be rescheduled several times.

At the national level it was fairly easy to make the arrangements to hold interviews with the persons involved in the development of the FET policy, since they were colleagues of mine. Access to the Department of Education officials remained easy even after I had left the Department. My interview with the official from the Department of Education was held after I had taken up my position at the National Treasury.

Collecting data

4.2 Research strategy

I commenced my study by conducting an extensive literature review on *restructuring* and *reculturing* as theories of educational change. Thereafter I proceeded to develop a theoretical framework that guided my “case” selection and helped me to identify and define the specific measures that were important in the design and data collection processes.

I then went on to conduct a pilot study on the structural and cultural factors that influenced FET policy implementation. This pilot study was conducted in the North West Province in two out of the 11⁶⁴ technical colleges in that province which were not part of the full-scale research study. The pilot study helped to identify the concerns, validated the research instruments to be used, and informed the overall research design strategy.

After refining my data collection instruments, I commenced with the full-scale multi-case study investigation at the national level (from the perspective of the policymakers), and in the Gauteng province at both the provincial Department of Education and the three selected technical colleges in order to obtain provincial and institutional perspectives on implementing the FET policy.

I collected data over a period of one year using a multi-method design approach to data collection typical of the case study design (Yin, 1994:91). This included in-depth semi-structured individual and focus group interviews with stakeholders, the analysis of documentary evidence, archival records and questionnaires. However, because the “case” involved a retrospective analysis of the phenomenon and because the decision to study the events was taken sometime after the events themselves had taken place, the use of some of the data collection techniques originally identified was impractical. For example, direct observation and participant-observation were not possible.

⁶⁴ The two colleges for the pilot were from the Klerksdorp area. The reasons for selecting Klerksdorp was its proximity as well as it being one of the areas in which there has been great resistance to change.

Each individual case study of the identified FET colleges consisted of a “whole” study from which I sought convergent evidence regarding facts and conclusions for my broader “case” investigation of the FET sector. The conclusions drawn from each individual case were considered as the information needing replication by the other individual cases. The results from the individual cases and multiple-case results were used as the focus of my summary for my comparative study report indicating the extent of the replication logic.

4.2.1 Data collection instruments

The instrument was developed in a deeply iterative process. I was guided by my supervisor in the development of the questions in the instruments used. Once I had developed a basic set of questions they were reviewed by my supervisor and fellow doctoral students, and revised according to suggestions and comments provided. The reviews assisted in focusing the questions more directly on my two research questions, thereby ensuring that the data collected would be relevant only to the two research questions. All the instruments were piloted before the actual case study and the responses were used to refine the instruments.

The instruments used for data collection are depicted in the table below:

Table 4.1 Data collection instruments

	Type of instrument
College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual interview with Rector of the college • Semi-structured focus group interview with college management staff • Questionnaire • Agendas and minutes of meeting • Written reports from workshops • Internal documents and other communiqués
Provincial department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual interview with provincial co-ordinator/ Head of the FET Unit • Semi-structured individual interview with senior member of the provincial FET Directorate
National department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual interview with an official from the National

<p>Policymakers</p> <p>Stakeholder interest groups</p>	<p>Department of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual interviews • Semi-structured individual interviews
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4.2.2 Sampling

As this was a multiple-case design “the typical criteria regarding sample size” was “irrelevant” (Yin, 1994:50). According to Kuzel (1999), one of the important things to bear in mind when conducting multiple-case designs is that in order to increase the quality of the research design, the selection of cases needs to be driven by the two issues of appropriateness and adequacy. Appropriateness involves demonstrating relevance to the purpose of the research and the phenomenon of inquiry, while adequacy is concerned with how much is enough or how many cases are sufficient (Kuzel, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In terms of appropriateness, the purpose of my case study was to identify the structural and cultural factors that influenced policy implementation in the FET college sector. When I commenced with my research design the intention was that my sample of interest would comprise all six technical college in the Tshwane region of Gauteng Province. As stated in my research design I proceeded to conduct interviews and collect data from all six colleges. The interviews in respect of all six colleges were conducted during the same period i.e. between June and October 2002. I then transcribed all these interviews and submitted the transcriptions to my subjects for verification or amendments. Not one of the respondents had any major concerns regarding the contents of the transcripts. In fact they added to the data either by providing additional information or clarifying what they had meant. I was faced with a huge volume of data from the six technical colleges – a volume which seemed overwhelming considering the time I had to complete my study. I scanned the data and identified recurring themes. The dilemma I then faced was how best to narrate my story within the time constraints without comprising the quality of the report. I discussed this with a colleague who served as a peer reviewer throughout my study, and recorded my overall observations from the six case data. There was a great deal of overlap across all six colleges with respect to the data collected under the themes identified in my theoretical framework. It

was then that I decided that I would reduce the sample size to be used in this study from six to three cases.

I was also faced with the moral obligation of not disappointing any of my subjects by choosing certain colleges over the others. All the colleges were eager to be included in the report. How was I to make this decision? I proceeded to consider all other variables. Since my original intention had been to base my sample on geographic location I decided to stick to this and divide the colleges as identified in terms of the northern and southern regions. Next, I considered the historical contexts within which the colleges had emerged.

The three colleges in the north comprised of 2 state and one state-aided college that were to merge. In the south there were 2 state-aided and 1 state college. The historic beginnings of all 3 state colleges were more or less the same in that they had been built from the late 1980s onwards to address the government's policy of skills advancement for black learners. Two of the state-aided colleges, Pretoria and Centurion, had been established in the 1920s and 1930s respectively, while Pretoria West College had come into existence in 1975.

Since the focus of this study was to be on structure and culture, my decision to reduce the number of samples was informed by the level of cultural diversity among the colleges. For this reason the colleges in the south proved to be a suitable choice. It was important for this study to establish whether historical contexts (Cole & Knowels, 2001) had any influence on the culture of the organisation. After making this decision I returned to the colleges in the north to thank them for their contribution and time but to inform them that I no longer intended to include them in my study. I did, however, agree to share the finding from my research with them.

The three colleges ultimately forming my sample for my "case" provided a homogeneous cluster (Patton, 1990:182-183) in that there were minimum variations between the cases, thus simplifying the analysis and keeping the study focused. The three selected cases also provided me with the number of replications (replication logic of case inquiry) that I thought adequate from which to draw my conclusion and recommendations.

In essence these three colleges in the southern part of Tshwane were sampled using the following criteria: Firstly, they were in the same geographic area i.e. the southern region of the Tshwane region in Gauteng province Secondly, they comprised a mixture of one state and two state-aided colleges. Since this study focused on structure it was important that I included both state and state-aided colleges in my sample as there are definite structural differences between these colleges as identified in Chapter 2. Thirdly, they each displayed contextually different social and historical contexts which could have a bearing on the culture of the colleges, and fourthly, the sample size of three colleges was adequate to provide sufficient replication from which conclusions and recommendations could be drawn. Cole and Knowels argue that the formation of relationships is crucial in conducting life stories, and believe that fewer participants, rather than many participants, should be used as the goal should be one of depth, rather than breadth. The historical and social context of each of these colleges is elaborated upon in Chapter 5 of this research report.

To gain the perspective of the policymakers that operated at the national level, I interviewed a senior official of the Department of Education, two ex-officials of the Department of Education who were involved in the FET policy development, two consultants who were involved in drafting the policy, and two teacher union representatives (SAOU and NAPTOSA). Individual interviews were held with each of the persons identified in the sample.

In the provincial department I held individual interviews with the Provincial Coordinator for FET (Head of the FET Unit) and two line function officials in the FET Directorate.

4.2.3 Research strategy for critical question I

What are the organisational influences and constraints on policy implementation?

This critical question was answered through multiple sources of evidence collection. This entailed in-depth interviews with selected policymakers and implementers, an in-depth document analysis of budgets, minutes of meetings, internal documents and other archival records. In addition I used the survey method of data collection in the form of questionnaires to elicit from technical college staff and council members their

understanding of the FET policy, and the influences and constraints on policy implementation.

Interviews

I conducted both individual and focus group interviews. My intention was to obtain reasonable coverage from respondents with various perspectives, self-interests and attitudes.

In order to gain the national perspective, I interviewed respondents from both within and outside government that had played a role in the FET policymaking process. Some of the persons identified had previously occupied key positions in the Department of Education. I also made use of the snowballing technique by which respondents were asked to identify others whom I should see, in order to reach important influential people who could serve as knowledgeable informants. The “identified persons” were able to inform me about the events and perspectives of people who were in close contact with key decision-makers, but were not decision-makers themselves. The purpose of these interviews was to establish their (the policymakers) understanding of the FET policy and what was expected of implementers at all levels of the implementation process.

Interviews with the officials from the provincial department of education provided an insight into their understanding of and preparedness to implement national policy, and their understanding of policy imperatives imposed from a national department, whose role it is to set norms and standards for policy implementation. Provincial department officials also provided information on their organisational priorities and expectations, and the structure, roles and relationships of their department with the colleges under their jurisdiction.

Interviews with the Rectors and technical college management staff provided valuable data on their understanding of policy implementation, roles, responsibilities and expectations of the various tiers of governance, and their preparedness to embrace change.

Individual interviews were conducted with the line function officials in the provincial FET Directorates and college management staff, in order to establish their understanding of the FET policy, and what was expected of them at provincial level as well as at other levels in the implementation process. In addition I conducted semi-structured interviews (individual and focus group) with both policymakers and implementers (provincial education department officials in the FET units and Rectors of technical colleges) who were involved with the reorganisation of the FET sector as they allowed me to respond to the situation on hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondents, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 1988).

All interviews, that is, those with the policymakers and implementers, were tape-recorded for ease of transcription and analysis later on. Permission was sought from all interviewees to have these interviews recorded. The advantage of this approach is that a verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for analysis. On the other hand, the transcription of interviews was an expensive and time-consuming exercise. For this reason I also made use of the interview log system, as all the interviews were longer than one-hour in duration (Merriam, 1988). This involved playing the tape and taking notes on important statements or ideas expressed by the interviewees. Words, phrases or entire sentences were quoted verbatim so as to provide the reader with the nuances of the interviewees. The notes were coded to the tape counter so as to establish the exact location of the words, phrases and sentences on the tape for use at a later stage. The hand-written notes provided a contingency plan in the event of something going wrong with the tape recording and for the interview log system.

Bearing in mind the possibility that information could be distorted or exaggerated, I found it necessary to crosscheck the interviewees' accounts with the documentary material. Merriam (1988) points out that "comparing an informant's accounts with accounts given by other informants" is a way to detect and correct distortion. Transcriptions of the tape recordings were sent to interviewees for corrective and elaborative comments and verification.

Examination of Documentary Evidence

I used the visits to the provincial education department and colleges to gather documentary evidence that was likely to contribute to the evidence from other sources, such as interviews. “For case studies the most important use of documents is to correlate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin, 1994:81). I made use of agendas and minutes of meetings, written reports from workshops and internal documents and other communiqués.

These sources of documentary evidence enabled me to gain a better understanding of the process involved and the factors that influenced the change agenda. They also provided information on what subjects or topics occupied the attention, time and energy of implementers during the period under study. According to Merriam (1988) documentary data is a particularly good source for qualitative case studies as it grounds an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. The analysis of documentary data lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer.

Questionnaires

I used the survey method of data collection in the form of questionnaires to explore the understanding technical college staff and council members have of the FET policy, as well as to elicit factors that influenced the policy implementation process. I commenced by identifying topics that related to my two critical questions, and developed subsidiary questions in order to design the questionnaire. The questions entailed some general information about the respondents, their understanding of the FET policy, level of knowledge, skills, roles and relationships.

As none of the colleges in the sample could provide me with the exact numbers of the staff complement at the time of conducting the survey, I provided each of the three colleges with a hundred questionnaires. The reason provided by the colleges for not having staff numbers available was firstly, that the teaching staff of colleges is made up of full and part-time staff, and secondly, that they offered both semester and trimester courses which sometimes overlapped. At the time of administering the questionnaires the trimester staff was on vacation. It was agreed that the questionnaires would be

handed out to the full-time staff at the college who were present during the period of collecting the data and conducting the interviews. The Rectors proposed that they assist with the administration of questionnaires at the colleges by getting the heads of the various departments to assist with the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires. They were asked to communicate the reason for distributing the questionnaires to members of staff who were participating in the research study. Of the one hundred questionnaires distributed at each of the colleges the response rate was as follows:

Table 4.2 Response rate on questionnaires

College	Number returned	% of response rate
Atteridgeville	46	46
Centurion	53	53
Pretoria West	45	45

Biographic details:

The questionnaires targeted mainly the lecturing staff in the three case study colleges. The questionnaires were completed by 46 respondents at Atteridgeville College (i.e. 46 percent response rate), 53 respondents at Centurion College (i.e. 53 percent response rate) and 45 respondents at Pretoria West College of Engineering (i.e. 45 percent response rate).

4.2.4 Research strategy for critical question II

What are the cultural constraints and influences on policy implementation?

Reculturing is seen as developing professional learning communities in a school (Fullan, 2000). In answering this question I examined the norms, organisational policies, beliefs, practices, leadership styles, values, shared meanings and social relationships that exist at the provincial and institutional levels.

This critical question was answered through multiple sources of evidence collection. This entailed in-depth interviews (individual and focus group) with selected policymakers, decision-makers and implementers (provincial education department officials in the FET units and Rectors of technical colleges). In addition, I also conducted an in-depth examination of documentary evidence, and made use of questionnaires.

Semi-structured individual and focus group interviews (same as for critical question 1) were used to understand the cultural constraints and influences on change. Semi-structured interviews are used when the researcher wishes to uncover the emergent narrative of the respondents' "lived experiences" (Guba, 1979). The approach that I adopted in the interviews for this critical question was the same as that for critical question 1.

The use of predetermined open-ended questions ensured that the interview assumed a conversational quality. I followed the set of questions derived from the case study protocol. The questions were carefully worded in order to allow respondents the opportunity to provide a fresh commentary on the factors that contributed to policy implementation. The interviews provided me with insight into and understanding of the norms, organisational policies, beliefs, practices, leadership styles, values, shared meanings and social relationships that existed at the provincial and institutional levels, and how these factors influenced the adoption of new policy changes.

Transcriptions of all interviews were sent to the interviewees for the purpose of validating the procedure.

During my visits to the provincial department of education and the technical colleges, I collected documentary evidence that could provide some insight into the cultural factors predominant in these institutions. I examined a wide range of documents to supplement and corroborate the data from the interviews. These included agendas and minutes of meetings, written reports from workshops, internal documents and other communiqués.

Questionnaires

I used the same questionnaire as for critical question 1. Data from technical college staff and council members was collated in order to explore their understanding of the FET policy, and to elicit information on factors that influenced and constrained the policy implementation process. The questions elicited some general information about the respondents, their understanding of the FET policy, embedded beliefs, practices, behaviour and assumptions.

As the same questionnaire was used for both critical question 1 and critical question 2 the sample and response rate was the same for both questions.

4.3 Establishing validity

I used several methods to evaluate the reliability of the study with regard to the applied methods of data gathering and analysis of material. I planned the research design carefully and followed the plan throughout the study. In order to make the quality of the research available for the reader to evaluate, I reported on each phase as thoroughly as possible.

In adopting the multiple-case method for my comparative study, I addressed the issue of the external validity of the study in that the findings could be established through the replication logic of the multiple case study design (Yin, 1994:35).

In this case study research I provide a “thick description” of the specificities of the research context. According to Geertz (1975), the very “thickness” or richness and complexity of the description is in itself a suitable and sufficient form of verification. As a naturalistic researcher my intention was to discover (uncover) the meaning of what I had observed. The credibility of the study is established through describing the setting of the participants and the themes of the study in detail to the extent that the readers would feel that they had experienced or could have experienced the events being described. The objective was to provide as much detail as possible in order to present the reader with a concise narrative account of the study. I provided a narrative of the experiences, actors, and feelings of the “actors” as they experienced the phenomenon (from interview transcripts). This enables the reader to visualise and understand that the account is credible. Readers are also at liberty to choose the degree of distance between the contexts described in this case study and their own contexts. They have the choice to decide to transfer ideas, insights or interpretations across into their own context.

As this was a qualitative study the analysis of data would be the views of the people who participated in the interviews, as well as those who read and reviewed the study. It was therefore important for me to ensure the validity of the study. In checking the accuracy of the participants’ realities, I made use of the following validity checks.

Firstly, I conducted a pilot study in the North West Province. This was not part of my full-scale research study. The pilot was intended to identify the concerns of the officials in the provincial department of education as well as those at the institutional level, regarding structural and cultural constraints and influences on policy implementation, to validate the research instruments to be used and to inform the overall research design.

Secondly, I used multiple sources of evidence and established chains of evidence while collecting the data. Construct validity was fostered through using data triangulation (Denzin,1984) in that different types of empirical material (interviews, questionnaires, minutes of meetings and workshops) were contrasted with each other when categorising the various types of material. The information collected from the multiple sources of evidence was converged to form themes or categories in the study (Creswell, 2000). In addition, I related my conclusion from these findings to the theories that underpinned my conceptual framework. The triangulation of data obtained through the application of naturalistic inquiry methods allowed me to investigate the phenomenon within, and in relation to, its naturally occurring context.

Thirdly, member checking is described as “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Creswell, 2000). By using member checking I took the data and interpretations back to the participants in order to confirm the credibility of the information and the narrative account. In doing so I made use of both focus groups and also requested individual participants to review the raw data. The participants were requested to view the raw data in the form of word-by-word transcriptions of the interview transcripts and to comment on the accuracy. Participants were allowed to give defining comments on the narratives. The working drafts were reviewed and where specified or small errors were found these were corrected. This fostered the credibility of the empirical analysis.

Fourthly, I made use of peer review. A colleague who was familiar with the research served as a sounding board for the ideas and assisted me in providing written feedback after reviewing the data and the research process. This provided me with support, challenged my assumptions and asked searching questions about the methods and interpretations I had used during the study.

Fifthly, I provided clear documentation of all research decisions and activities by including appendices in the dissertation. To this end a colleague was requested to conduct an external audit of the documentation. I also kept a record of the procedures used for sampling, the development of the research instruments, data collection and analysis.

4.4. Modes of analysis and representation

I adopted the interpretive perspective in analysing the data. My aim was to produce an understanding of the context of the policy implementation in the FET college sector and the factors that influenced the implementation of the FET policy. In this section I provide some insight into how I went about conducting both surface-level and deep structure analysis of the data I collected.

My objective was to build a general explanation that fitted each of the individual three cases based on the descriptive approach provided in my theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

All interviews were transcribed as explained above in the section on the research design. The responses to particular questions were then transcribed into a brief narrative form. I proceeded to compare the responses from the various interviews of each individual case so as to categorise responses with the view to identifying structures, patterns and trends, divergent responses and possible explanations. The responses were structured around my two critical questions. This provided a common structure to compare the data. This information was then cross-checked with the data generated through the document analysis. This was a manual exercise.

The objective of explanation-building as the mode of analysis was to analyse the case study data by building an explanation around the concepts *restructuring* and *reculturing* used in the case (Yin, 1994) in order to develop ideas for further studies. This was done by examining the data collected, categorising it and tabulating evidence in relation to my three individual cases and then interpreting the data at the single case level (collectively). The conclusions from the multiple cases formed the explanation for the

overall study. The explanations reflect the theoretical framework used to direct the investigation.

To analyse the questionnaires I made use of a computer-based programme. The first step entailed editing the questionnaires. This involved checking, firstly, whether there was an answer for every question, secondly, that all questions were answered accurately and, thirdly, that all the respondents interpreted the questions uniformly.

Thereafter, with the assistance of a colleague, a data-coding grid was developed to capture all the data from the questionnaires. This was necessary as the coding was developed after the questionnaires had been developed, and answered by the respondents. The post-coded answers were captured on a coding frame. The open-ended questions were not included in this data capturing exercise. Instead I opted to do this manually as I had done for the interviews.

The data captured on the electronic coding frame allowed me to conduct routine frequency counts and cross-tabulations. These were designed so that I could assemble the organised information in an accessible, compact form thus making it possible to see what was happening and draw justified conclusions.

4.5 Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research designs, the researcher could be perceived as the main “instrument” of data collection. According to Creswell (1994:145), “data is mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines”. Although there are several advantages to this design, one of the consequences is that researchers could bring personal biases to their studies (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Wolcott, 1995).

In terms of my research roles I moved between being “participant as observer” (internal researcher) (Robson, 1993) to “marginal participant” (external researcher). In other words my role varied with the context. Being a doctoral student employed in the FET Directorate of Department of Education (Robson, 1999) I had to reconcile my insider and outsider roles. My credibility as a researcher was dependent upon my acceptance by

the Gauteng Department of Education and by case study college staff as a partial insider with sufficient experiential knowledge to understand the system and also to understand and interpret what I learned from my research.

The politics of positionality meant legitimizing my presence in the field. Before commencing with my study I requested entrance into the field from the Head of the Gauteng Department of Education. The response from the Gauteng Department of Education was obtained via the office of the Senior Manager for ABET and FET who later also informed me that he had indicated to the Head of Department that I was also an employee of the Department of Education in the FET Directorate. The Gauteng Department of Education informed colleges that the department had granted me permission to conduct my research study. This facilitated formal access to the Gauteng Department of Education and the colleges.

The challenge for me was, that by playing the role of both internal and external researcher, I had to understand the personal, political and procedural issues in order to maintain a balance between the productive and the stressful (Burgess, 1980). For example I assumed the role of participant when I was a member of the Merger Operational Task Team, while at other times my role was mainly one of observer (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). At the outset of my study my relationships with my numerous subjects varied. The provincial department officials were contemporaries with whom I had over a period developed a professional relationship. Our relationship was such that we could comfortably adapt to being colleague or friend depending on the situation that prevailed at the time. The College Rectors knew me through my interactions at various workshops or meetings where I had represented the Department of Education. In managing relationships with my subjects at the institutional level my experiential knowledge and acceptance as a partial insider allowed me to advance from "stranger to friend" with certain of the key informants in the colleges (Powdermaker, 1966).

Brislin & Holwill (1979) claim that reciprocity is important in field research, and even more so in settings where the researcher is an outsider. My subjects urged me to convey to the national Department of Education and to the Gauteng Department of Education that they had encountered several problems in implementing the merger. They also

wanted their concerns to be addressed so that the next stage of policy implementation would be easier and more or less trouble free. My role as researcher necessitated that I honour their requests. The dilemma was where and how this would be appropriate. I had assured anonymity to all my subject. On the other hand the Rectors were comfortable with the names of the colleges being disclosed. They were of the opinion that either way the historical contexts of each of the colleges were so unique that the particular college would be easily traceable. My main concern was the potential effect my research and narrative could have on my respondents at the colleges and the provincial department. I had to deal with issues of what Lather (1986) referred to as “catalytic validity”. Most of the respondents were downhearted and it was not my intention that my narrative adversely affects my respondents. All three Rectors felt comfortable knowing that they could be identified. Two of them were close to retirement while the third, a black male, was relatively young and had many more years to serve in the department. The question of ethics arose while at the same time I had a moral obligation to my respondents. Nonetheless, Lather’s conception of catalytic validity still applied, not so much in terms of the effects on individuals but rather in terms of my aspirations that my report could have a positive effect on the way in which policies were to be implemented in the future.

I was often faced with the dilemma that my partial insider status and my acceptance by informants resulted in an element of risk to the subjectivity of my analyses in the study. I therefore had to make concerted efforts to manage my subjectivity so that my interpretations were not compromised. I had at all times to be conscious that I did not over identify with my subjects. It was important that I acknowledged my biases from the outset (LeCompte, 1987), because my personal views had positively predisposed me to the FET change agenda. The challenge for me was to balance my reactions to events with my findings and with the perspectives of my informants (Spindler, 1987). My subjectivity was evident from my desire for the transformation of the FET colleges to succeed. At the same time I found that the problems and constraints I had discovered in the process of implementing the merger had also resulted in despondency and disappointment. It was here that the need emerged to search for and analyse the paradoxes inherent in the situation as recommended by Peshkin (1988) so as to separate the problems from the progress made. Of equal importance was the need for me to consider my "null research behaviour". Was I missing important questions and issues,

blinded by my personal perspective? At other times I had to deal with the anger and frustrations experienced by the college staff who lacked an understanding of what was intended with the merger. In these situations I was forced not to focus too emotionally on a single incident, but rather to reorient my thinking and regain my perspective. When I drew conclusions from the research findings my subjectivity again needed to be reviewed in view of the premises and predilections that shaped the study.

I provided all my respondents with written transcripts of the interviews. They either verified or added to the data. Furthermore, since I had used multiple cases I compared the data across the three colleges to identify similarities and contradictions. I did not accept everything said as the truth and questioned the contradictions as they appeared. In addition I used a colleague who was familiar with the FET college sector and the dynamics around the merger as a sounding board. She provided me with ideas and reviewed the data and research process. She also read my narratives and pointed out where my subjectivity had become blurred. This provided me with objective judgments and helped me maintain focus. At the same time I kept a journal of all the events and noted the contexts in which events unfolded. The use of multiple sources of data, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, provided a basis for the triangulation of data across the various sources. In order to be able to draw balanced conclusions my narrative needed to be rewritten several times in order to be "tamed" (Peshkin, 1988:20).

In this case study, it was important that I monitor and reflect on my subjectivity as it had influenced my initial desire to embark on the study, and it shaped the study in regard to the selection and sampling, questions posed, and conclusions drawn. By using my experiential knowledge I was able to shape and redirect the study so as to increase the external validity or fit of the study to the local contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Consequently, my biography and experiential knowledge were key ingredients in the research, as was my involvement as an employee of the Department of Education. My experiential knowledge made it possible for me to understand the complexities and multiple dimensions, for example the interplay of structure and culture, involved in the study. Nevertheless a complete understanding of such complexities was still inadequately served by my experiential and tacit knowledge. The study highlighted for me as researcher the difficulty of conducting research when subjectivity is a powerful issue. I was left to wrestle with conflicting emotions. I learned lessons about the finer

points of boundary spanning and how I had had to negotiate my insider and outsider roles. It was necessary for me to differentiate between my private research and interpretations, and the study conclusions that were to be made public, conclusions which include the presentation of information that informants wanted conveyed to outside audiences about the dilemmas they faced, and the realities of the situation from a variety of perspectives.

Time constraints are a lesson in themselves, as is found in any research. Several changes were continuously taking place between the time that I collected the data and completed my study. My desire to document "all" that was happening and to be "on the scene" needed to be curbed. However, the most important lesson I learnt from this was that as a qualitative researcher I needed to be honest with myself, and I needed to know who and what I was as a researcher.

4.6 Limitations of the study

As the researcher in this case study I am the primary instrument for the collection and analysis of data. One of the limitations of this is the possibility of the introduction of researcher bias into the research study. Because this is related to issues such as ethics, reliability, lack of rigor and validity concerns I made use of a variety of strategies as described under Section 4.3, in order to establish validity.

Since this is a case study it provides little basis for making scientific generalisations and can therefore not be used to make broad generalisations. By stating the purpose of the research study explicitly, namely structure and culture, the FET policy could be used to investigate the constraints these factors had on policy implementation in a particular context of investigation. According to Yin (1994:10) the study may be “generalizable to theoretical propositions” but not to all FET colleges.

In addition the research study resulted in a huge volume of data that needed to be managed and suitably secured. The loss or omission of information could result in a lack of continuity or incoherence in the study. It was therefore important that I create a logical case study database for each set of data collected. Both electronic and manual databases were made and stored in various places for easy reference.

4.7 Summary

This comparative study of three FET colleges was designed to explore and understand the structural and cultural factors that influenced policy implementation in the FET college sector. I approached the “case” from an interpretative perspective using multiple methods of data collection. As a naturalist researcher I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of the FET policy assuming multiple realities. I ensured the validity of my data by conducting a pilot study to validate the research instruments and to inform the overall research design, providing a “thick description” of the “case”, the use of multiple methods of data collection, peer review, and an audit trail. I also identified the limitations of the case study and provided responses to the shortcomings. In the next chapter I provide an account of the inquiry context.

Chapter 5

The Multiple Contexts of Policy Implementation in the FET Colleges

5.1 Introduction

In this research I investigate the cultural and structural factors that shaped policy implementation in three technical colleges in the Gauteng⁶⁵ province of South Africa. In order to identify these cultural and structural factors it is necessary to understand not only the context of each of the three technical colleges but also the broader context within which these colleges are situated, that is, the Greater Pretoria⁶⁶ region in the Gauteng province which falls under the jurisdiction of the Gauteng Department of Education (provincial department of education) as these contexts all influence policy implementation in the technical colleges.

In this chapter I focus on the context for the case study. In *Section 1* I provide a detailed description of the social context, that is, the Gauteng province and Tshwane South region in which the case study colleges are situated. *Section 2* traces the historical beginnings and developments of each of the three case study technical colleges, and culminates in a description of the colleges in terms of culture and structure at the time of the study.

SECTION 1

5.1.1 The social context

Demographically, Gauteng is the smallest province in South Africa covering only 1,4 percent of the total surface area of South Africa, yet it is the wealthiest province with a Gross Domestic Product of 5,3 percent⁶⁷ and provides 45 percent of the total formal employment in the country.⁶⁸ The province is the second largest in terms of population

⁶⁵ There are nine provinces in South Africa. Gauteng is one of the nine provinces in the country, the others being the Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape and Western Cape.

⁶⁶ Refer to Map 1.

⁶⁷ The national average is 3.6 percent.

⁶⁸ Data Source: Gauteng Economic Development Agency.

size with a population of 8,8 million⁶⁹ or 20 percent of all people living in South Africa. The province is almost entirely urban in character and the majority of the people living in the province are African (71 percent). The rest of the population comprises whites (23 percent), coloureds (3,8 percent) and Indians (2,2 percent) (Census, 2001) as per the Population Registration Act of 1950.

There are 152 technical colleges in South Africa. Thirty-three of these technical colleges, including one distance education college, TECHNISA, which has a national outreach, are in Gauteng. Of the remaining 32 colleges in Gauteng, 13 are state⁷⁰ institutions and the other 19 are state-aided⁷¹ institutions. Gauteng province is divided into 5 economic sub-regions⁷² (see Map1). The 32 technical colleges are distributed across the province with 9 in the Greater Johannesburg region which has the largest population in the province. The Greater East Rand region, in which there are 11 technical colleges, has the second largest population, followed by the Greater Pretoria region with the third highest population and 6 technical colleges. In both the Vaal and West Rand regions there are 3 technical colleges each. The technical colleges that are situated in most of the major townships and cities in the province vary in size.

The Greater Pretoria region comprises 2 districts, viz. Pretoria North and Pretoria South, in which there are 6 technical colleges, of which 3 are state and 3 are state-aided in character. In the Pretoria North district we find the Pretoria, Soshanguve and Thuto Mathalo technical colleges. The case study is situated in the Pretoria South district in which the Atteridgeville, Centurion and Pretoria West technical colleges are situated.

The technical colleges in the province generally enjoy sound infrastructure and facilities. Seven (7) colleges⁷³ have satellite campuses or make use of additional

⁶⁹ Census 2001. The total population of the country is 44,8 million. KwaZulu Natal has the largest population of 9,4 million.

⁷⁰ Defined in Chapter 2

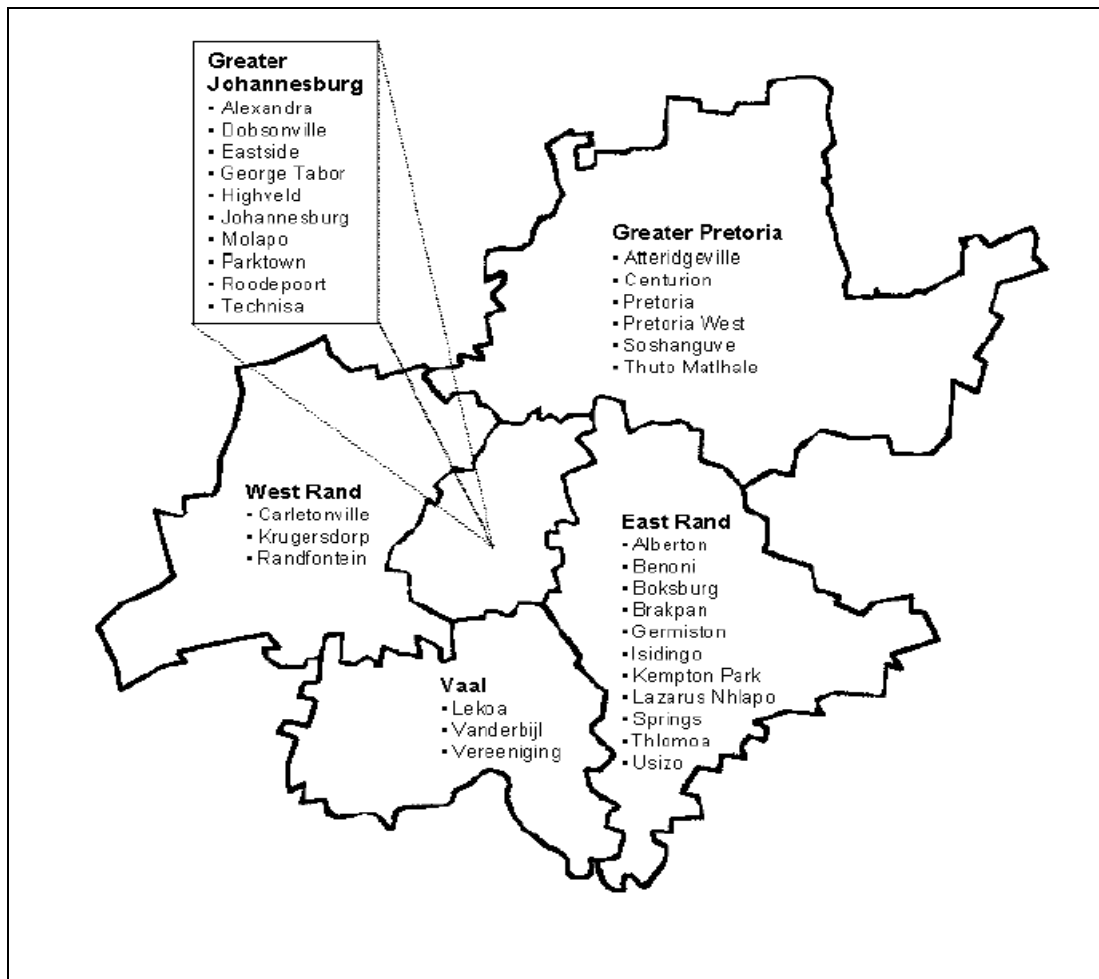
⁷¹ Defined in Chapter 2.

⁷² The other four regions are: Greater Johannesburg, East Rand, West Rand and Vaal.

⁷³ Atteridgeville, Carletonville, Centurion, Highveld, Johannesburg, Roodepoort and Soshanguve.

facilities that do not form part of their main campus, and 25 of the colleges are housed in purpose-built accommodation. Many of the colleges were built in the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁷⁴ Several colleges such as Pretoria, Springs, Kempton Park, Krugersdorp, Germiston and Soshanguve were refurbished or had their facilities and amenities improved, while on the other hand Eastside college occupied a 97-year-old primary school.

Map 1: Five economic regions in Gauteng province



Source: NBI Knowledge and Skills for the Smart Province: An Agenda for the New Millennium (1998)

Technical college facilities

In general the college facilities in Gauteng province may be described as modern and well-maintained with good examples of specialised and well-equipped training facilities

⁷⁴ These include Atteridgeville, Carletonville, Tlameoa, Johannesburg, Roodepoort and Alexandra.

such as hair care and cosmetology salons, industrial kitchens, computer laboratories and art centres. However, the engineering workshops in most state colleges are generally not well equipped, nor are they maintained, and a lot of the equipment is obsolete and unsafe. On the other hand, state-aided colleges with new workshops, such as Germiston, Centurion and Pretoria West, are well equipped.

By and large the college buildings are neat and well-maintained. At the same time, at some colleges there are cramped conditions and improvisations have to be made to accommodate students. One of the most visible features of the technical colleges in Gauteng is that at none of the colleges are there facilities to accommodate staff and students with physical disabilities.

Given that theft and vandalism have been major problems some colleges have elaborate arrangements for controlling access by both students and visitors onto the college premises, and most colleges have burglar alarm systems.

As far as residential accommodation is concerned there is limited accommodation with only 4 colleges in Gauteng having hostels. At most colleges students do not have adequate, or in some cases, any recreational facilities with little attention given to sporting, cultural and extra curricula activities. In general college facilities are under-utilised in the sense that the facilities are not used after hours and there is limited use over weekends and during vacations.

Staff profile

The number of staff employed in the technical colleges is calculated according to the number of weighted full-time equivalents (FTEs).⁷⁵ The staff student ratios in the various provinces vary above and below the norm of 20:1. Of the 7 228 teaching staff nationally, 2 036 are employed in Gauteng (Department of Education, 2003). Teaching staff fill establishment⁷⁶ and non-establishment⁷⁷ posts. Non-establishment posts

⁷⁵ FTEs refer to full-time teaching equivalents, which are based on the length of the course. What this implies in practice is that a student studying full-time for a year course would be 1 FTE while a student studying full-time for a six-month semester course would be 0.5 FTE.

⁷⁶ These posts are paid for by the provincial department of education.

⁷⁷ Non-establishment posts are funded by college funds.

account for 15 percent of the teaching staff (Department of Education, 2002). The appointment of teaching staff is made against a particular post level ranging from post level 1 for lecturers, post level 2 for senior lecturers, post level 3 for heads of department, while post levels 4 and 5 are assigned to Vice-Rectors and Rectors depending on the size of the institution. The number of posts assigned to each level follows an agreed national norm. The general composition of the staff profile at colleges in the Gauteng province is approximately 79 percent of posts at post level 1, 13 percent at post level 2, 5 percent at post level 3 and 4 percent of the posts at post levels 4 or 5 (Department of Education, 2002). Many of the senior staff spend a great deal of their time on administrative duties with very little time allocated to teaching.

The average age of junior staff is 38.2 years as compared to that of senior staff at 45.1 years, with qualifications ranging from higher degrees and equivalent qualifications (17 percent), first degrees and diplomas (34 percent), diplomas (32 percent) and other appropriate qualifications below that of a diploma (12 percent). The latter may be regarded as either unqualified or under-qualified. The remaining 5 percent of the staff qualifications could not be classified (Department of Education, 2002). Non-teaching staff provides administrative and general support services in the form of financial, clerical and office support services, ground staff, security personnel and cleaning staff. Of the 3 646 non-teaching staff nationally, 817 are in Gauteng province. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) pays for 90 percent of these posts.

While technical colleges have been able to change the racial distribution of their student profile, the same cannot be said of the racial distribution of their staff profile. The racial breakdown of technical college staff has over the years mirrored the historical legacy of apartheid in that there are more white staff in comparison to other race groups. Since the 1990s efforts have been made to change this, and consequently, we find that presently 50 percent of the teaching staff is white as compared to 38 percent African, 4 percent Indian and 8 percent coloured (Department of Education, 2003). In addition to this the racial disparities increase markedly with rank. In terms of grouping by post levels very few Africans occupy senior positions in technical colleges. Only 18 percent of senior staff is black. Also, black staff occupy 37 percent of middle management posts and 49 percent of the lecturing posts (Department of Education, 2002).

One of the characteristics of technical colleges has been a staff component that is predominantly male orientated. The gender composition of the teaching staff is 46 percent female and 54 percent male (Department of Education, 2003). Only 255 women occupy senior posts in technical colleges (Department of Education, 2002). Female staff is predominant in the vocational fields of Art and Music, Social Services, Utility Services and Business Studies, while Engineering Studies is dominated by male staff.

Student profile

The majority of students in the technical college sector are enrolled in Gauteng.⁷⁸ Of the 138 712 FTEs enrolled nationally there are approximately 43 486 FTEs (31 percent) enrolled at the 32 technical colleges (Department of Education, 2002) in Gauteng province (excluding Technisa). The majority of the students study full-time (89 percent) with only 11 percent studying on a part-time basis (Department of Education, 2002). This is an indication that the colleges are not sufficiently flexible, open learning institutions, and have not progressed very far in extending their programmes to a wider target group of participants.

From 1998 onwards the formerly historically white institutions⁷⁹ (HWIs) have made vigorous attempts to transform with respect to equitable student access.⁸⁰ Consequently, the student profile at technical colleges currently comprises 76 percent Africans, 12 percent white, 7 percent coloured, and 2 percent Indian (Department of Education, 2003). The race composition of 4 percent of the students is unknown (Department of Education, 2003). Even though there have been attempts to change the student profile at colleges, the student profile in the historically black institutions⁸¹ (HBIs) continues to be predominantly black.

Another interesting point to note in terms of the student profile is the gender composition. There are more males (53 percent) enrolled at technical colleges than

⁷⁸ KwaZulu Natal has the second highest enrolment at 19 121 FTEs (14 percent). The Northern Cape province has the lowest enrolment of 3 102 FTEs (2 percent).

⁷⁹ Formerly white institutions and are mainly the state-aided colleges.

⁸⁰ The demographic profile of the student population in 1996 was as follows: black 71 percent, white 26 percent, Indian and coloured 3 percent (NBI, 1998).

⁸¹ Formerly Black institutions and mainly state technical colleges.

females (38 percent)⁸² (Department of Education, 2003), with the students mainly between 17 and 26 years of age. The gender composition also varies across the vocational fields with 82 percent of Engineering Studies students being male, while 68 percent females study business studies, 56 percent study Art-Music and 65 percent are in the Utilities Studies. On average there are 60 percent males and 40 percent female students in colleges (Department of Education, 2003). The main reason for the skewed gender composition in favour of male students is the small number of female students who enroll for engineering programmes.

Programmes

The programmes offered at technical colleges provide some insight into the responsiveness of the college to both the economic and social needs of the communities they serve. Technical colleges have been known to provide education and training in six broad vocational fields. These are Business Studies (Secretarial, Business, Accounting and Public Administration), Art-Music (Visual and Performing), Social Services (Educare, Care of the Handicapped and Children), Engineering Studies (Civil, Mechanical, Electro-Technical, Industrial and Motor) General Education (Matriculation Courses) and Utility Studies (Clothing Manufacture, Food, Hairdressing, Tourism). Some of the programmes offered are highly specialised while others demand small numbers because of health and safety reasons. Many colleges offer the same courses resulting in duplication and overlap.

In all other provinces there are differences in the ratios of FTEs enrolled at HBIs as compared to HWIs. Approximately 36 percent of the FTEs enrolled in Gauteng are enrolled at HWIs while 64 percent of the FTEs are enrolled at HDIs. There are also significant differences between HBIs and HWIs in terms of enrolment patterns across the various vocational fields, and at the FET level and also at the post N3-level. HBIs are found to be enrolling approximately 59 percent of FTEs for non-Department of Education or Nated⁸³ courses (Department of Education, 2002).

⁸² The gender of 9 percent of the students is unknown (Department of Education, 2003).

⁸³ Programmes not examined by the Department of Education

Colleges offer both Nated and non-Nated programmes. Programmes accredited and examined by the Department of Education programmes are referred to as Nated programmes. Non-Nated programmes are offered by colleges in response to skills needs, especially those of industry. Of the Nated programmes Business Studies and Engineering account for 44 percent and 46 percent of the enrolments respectively. Non-Nated programmes are offered in four fields viz. Business Studies, Engineering, General Education and Utility Studies, with the enrolments in Engineering constituting 53 percent of the total enrolments in non-Nated programmes. Apart from Engineering and Business Studies a large number of students are enrolled for Utility Studies (37 percent) and Art-Music (39 percent) in Gauteng (Department of Education, 2002).

Technical colleges offer programmes from N1 to N6 level. N1 to N3 level⁸⁴ courses fall within the FET band, while N4 to N6 courses fall outside the FET band and within the Higher Education and Training band. Programme articulation through the National Qualifications Framework⁸⁵ (NQF) provides possible continuity between FET and Higher Education. The Post N3-level programmes offered at technical colleges could be aligned with NQF level 5. In Gauteng 58 percent of the programmes offered in technical colleges fall within the FET band, while the remaining 42 percent fall in the Post N3-level (Department of Education, 2002). While enrolments in the FET band consist mainly of Engineering and Business Studies, enrolments in the Post N3-level band are predominantly in Business Studies followed by Engineering.

Governance

All public FET colleges in the Gauteng province are governed by Governing Councils. The functions of the Governing Councils are legislated. However, the powers and functions of the College Councils of state and state-aided colleges are differentiated⁸⁶ in terms of legal and decision-making powers.

⁸⁴ N1 to N3 programmes are equivalent to Grades 10 -12 in the school sector and fall within the levels 2 to 4 on the NQF.

⁸⁵ The framework approved by the Minister of Education for the registration of national standards and qualifications in the education and training system.

⁸⁶ Refer to Table 1 in Chapter 2.

The racial composition of the Councils is 53 percent white, 43 percent black, 3 percent coloured and 1 percent Indian (Department of Education, 2002). Black persons chair 11 of the 32 Governing Councils in the province. Students are represented on the Councils with approximately 95 percent of the student members being black (Department of Education, 2002). In state colleges there is a significantly higher proportion of black council members as compared to the proportion in state-aided colleges. One of the major challenges technical colleges have faced is the difficulty of attracting business and industrial representatives to serve on Governing Councils.

Costs of FET and the funding of colleges

In 2001/2002 the total expenditure on technical college education in South Africa amounted to approximately R792.8 million or 1.8 percent of the total provincial education budget for all nine provinces in the country. Gauteng's budget for FET accounted for approximately R247 million (31 percent) of the total expenditure on technical college education (Department of Education, 2002). This was the largest proportion spent in any province on technical college education, and is understandable because of the larger numbers of student enrolments in Gauteng. It amounts to 3.6 percent of the provincial education budget.⁸⁷

The provincial unit cost⁸⁸ per student in Gauteng amounted to approximately R5 669. There is a considerable difference among the nine provinces in the provincial unit cost per student, varying from the highest of R6 744 per student in the Western Cape to R3 919 per student in Limpopo (Department of Education, 2002). The unit costs do not include income from private sources such as tuition fees paid by students, donations and other sources of income generation. Tuition fees also vary across colleges and vocational fields. If the additional costs were taken into consideration the unit cost would be increased by between 15-25 percent. In addition, these costs do not include administrative costs but provide an indication of the costs to the state for providing technical college education.

⁸⁷ Percentage expenditure of provincial education budgets vary across provinces from the highest in Gauteng (3.6 percent) followed by 2.6 percent in the Western Cape and the lowest in Limpopo province at 0.8 percent.

⁸⁸ The provincial unit cost is based on the total provincial FET budget divided by the total number of unweighted FTEs in the province.

Individual college budgets vary, depending on the size of the institution and also whether the institution is state or state-aided. This status also affects college fees in that the fees of state colleges are fixed by the Department of State Expenditure,⁸⁹ and are capped so that full-time equivalent students pay a maximum of R120 per year. State-aided colleges may fix their fees for non-Department of Education courses and can charge between R1 810 and R2 325 for full-time N1 to N3 programmes (Department of Education, 2002). Students are usually required to pay in advance, or there are staggered payment arrangements resulting in very few cases of problems with student debt.

Twenty-two (22) colleges in the Gauteng province offer small bursaries to students based on academic merit. These bursaries generally cover only tuition fees.

Transformation and growth

The adoption of White Paper 4 in August 1998 and the passing of the FET Act in November 1998 saw the dawn of a new era in technical college education in South Africa. These two documents signalled the inevitable changes that had to be made in the sector. Between 1998 and 2001 the technical college sector in Gauteng grew by approximately 10 percent in student numbers. This increase was due mainly to the increase in enrolments in non-Department of Education programmes. Student enrolments in the non-Department of Education programmes increased by 23 percent between 2000 and 2001, suggesting a growing responsiveness in the socio-economic sectors. In addition, the net participation rate⁹⁰ in the province grew threefold from 1.4 percent in 1998 to 4.6 percent in 2000, while the student enrolment for both Department of Education and non-Department of Education programmes increased by 10 percent, indicating an increase of 9 percent in the FET band and 3 percent in the Post N3-level programmes (Department of Education, 2002).

The technical college staff is the main resource to determine the capacity of the FET sector to meet the new challenges that lie ahead and to be responsive to the social and economic needs of the communities. The total teaching staff comprising establishment

⁸⁹ The Departments of State Expenditure and Finance were merged to create what is now known as National Treasury.

⁹⁰ A net participation rate expresses the ratio of the total headcounts of learners in a defined age cohort (in this case the age cohort 15-29) to the total population in the same age cohort (in this case 15-29).

and non-establishment staff increased by 8 percent while the non-teaching component increased by 4 percent. At the same time there was an increase of 53 percent in the number of African teaching staff and a decrease of 9 percent of white staff members. The 8 percent increase in teaching staff represents a slightly higher increase in males as compared to females (Department of Education, 2002).

As far as the student profile is concerned there have been shifts in the racial distribution of students enrolled at technical colleges. In general there has been a 5 percent increase in African learners and a decrease of 5 percent in white learners at technical colleges (Department of Education, 2002).

Having provided a synopsis of the FET sector in the Greater Tshwane District of the Gauteng province I now proceed to describe the role and functions of the Gauteng Department of Education - the department responsible for the implementation of the FET policy in the three case study colleges.

5.1.2 Gauteng Department of Education

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides the overall framework for the delivery of education. The provision of basic and further education and training represents a concurrent function between the national and provincial departments of education. The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA) provides the basic framework for the Minister of Education to determine national policies, to monitor the implementation of these policies and to evaluate the general state of the educational system, including FET.

The broad mandate of the Gauteng Department of Education in terms of Section 29 (Chapter 2) of the Bill of Rights is to provide

a basic education, including adult basic education; and further education, which the state through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible.

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) provides the broad framework for providing general, or what is also known as basic education, and caters for the needs of learners located within schools as well as those falling into the FET band ie. learners in

grades 10 to 12 in schools. This piece of legislation encompasses the development of an organisation, funding and governance framework for all schools in South Africa.

The Further Education and Training Act (Act 98 of 1998) compels the Gauteng Department of Education to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public further education and training institutions.

The political head of education is usually a Member of the Executive Council (MEC), while the administrative head is also the Head of Department. The Gauteng Department of Education consists of a Head Office that is responsible for operational policy, monitoring and evaluation, and 12 districts that are responsible for all the services to learners, educators, schools and local communities. These districts are also located within the local government boundaries (see Map 2).

The Gauteng Department of Education, which is headed by a Chief Executive Officer, comprises six branches. The technical college sector falls under the branch Curriculum Management and Development. The Directorate⁹¹ FET is directly accountable to the Chief Directorate: Division Institution Development and Support. The Directorate: FET is supported by 10 staff members and these staff members include administrative support. Four of these members who varied in terms of skills and know-how were directly charged with overseeing the merging of the 32 technical colleges in the province.

In terms of the government's constitutional commitments the provisioning of basic education ends once a learner completes grade 9.⁹² Thereafter learners have three choices. A learner may proceed to the following three school grades (10 to 12) in a school and culminate in a matric exam, or leave the formal education sector and seek employment. Alternatively a learner may continue to study at a FET college in pursuit of some skills training as offered in these colleges.

⁹¹ Refers to a subunit in the department's organogram. A Directorate is headed by a director who manages the activities of the subunit.

⁹² Grade 9 or the old standard 7 marks the end of the General Education and Training (GET) Band on the NQF. A learner may then proceed to undertaken study in the FET Band that caters for learning in grades 10 to 12 in the school system or proceed to a FET college.

Map 2: The twelve education districts in the Gauteng province



Source: Department of Education Annual Report 2003/04

The Gauteng Education sector comprises the ordinary school sector which is the largest sector with 2 324 school (1 913 public ordinary schools and 411 independent ordinary schools). This sector is divided into three sections viz. public schools (1 913), independent subsidised school (301) and independent non-subsidised schools (110) (Gauteng Department of Education, 2003). The public schools make up 82 percent of the sector and 72 percent of all education institutions in the province. The other sectors are schools for Learners with Special Educational Needs, Technical Colleges and Adult Basic Education and Training Institutions.

⁹² Grade 9 or the old standard 7 marks the end of the General Education and Training (GET) Band on the NQF. A learner may then proceed to undertaken study in the FET Band that caters for learning in grades 10 to 12 in the school system or proceed to a FET college.

The public schools in Gauteng cater for 92 percent of all learners in ordinary education and 85 percent of all learners in the province. In 2002 there were 47 018 learners in technical colleges (Gauteng Department of Education, 2003). Of the 51 196 educators employed by the Gauteng Department of Education 2 135 are in technical colleges (Gauteng Department of Education, 2003). The learner educator ratio in the public schools is 34:1 as compared to 22:1 in technical colleges.

In the next section I proceed to provide the historical context of the three case study colleges. I begin with the Atteridgeville College, which is the only state college in the case study.

5.2 The historical context

5.2.1 Atteridgeville College⁹³

In the late 1980's, based on a request from the Atteridgeville⁹⁴ community that there was a need for a technical college to serve their community, the Department of Education and Training⁹⁵ established such a college in Atteridgeville. Atteridgeville College was built with funds donated by the Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's fund. The donation of R30 million from the Anglo American De Beers Chairman's Fund to the Department of Education and Training made possible the establishment of a college with modern facilities.

In September 1990, the first Rector of the Atteridgeville Technical College was appointed. He had a Deputy Rector and one additional member of staff to assist him. The key function of the three at that time was to consult with the community, and

⁹³ The historical context of Atteridgeville College was provided in an interview held with the ex-rector of the Atteridgeville College. The interview was held on 16/11/02. The information was supplemented with documentation that was collected during the interviews held with the college rector and management staff on 12/09/02.

⁹⁴ Atteridgeville is a predominantly a black township situated in Pretoria (Tshwane) West.

⁹⁵ Under the apartheid government education for the different racial groups was governed by different education departments. They were the House of Assembly (White), House of Delegates (Indian), House of Representatives (Coloured), Department of Education and Training (Black).

identify the community needs⁹⁶ and how best to spend the available funds to ensure that community needs would be met. The Rector and his team were fortunate to be involved in all stages of the development of the college. The community was consulted on a continuous basis about their needs, and the college management was able to influence the construction of the college facilities. The objective in providing a college for the Atteridgeville community was to provide a community college that answered the needs of the community.

The Atteridgeville Technical College, the only state college in the case study, opened in January 1991 with 319 students, all from the Atteridgeville community. The initial 14 staff members were all white, with a balance between the genders. They were selected with a specific objective in mind, people that shared the same vision in terms of the department and management, and had the support and backing of the Atteridgeville community.⁹⁷ The college was managed by the Gauteng Education Department. The College Council that governed the college was fully represented by local trade, commerce and industry, businesses and the community.

Atteridgeville College opened as a multi-discipline institution that was community friendly with the best facilities and equipment available at the time, and a big community hall that the community could use for its private needs as well. Ninety percent of programmes offered at the college were based on the funding formula in terms of the Nated 191 listed programmes.⁹⁸ These programmes included courses in the engineering, business, hospitality and hair care and cosmetology fields. The remaining

⁹⁶ Community needs refer to the skills and training identified by the local community that the college services. Depending on the community's socio-economic status these could include skills required by industry and business or hobby courses.

⁹⁷ It was important that the staff and management had the support and backing of the community as they were all white serving a black community. The intention in providing these kinds of programmes was to empower communities to become social-economically active.

⁹⁸ Refers to the list of programmes offered towards a specific qualification and accredited by the DoE. The list is updated by removing obsolete qualifications, adding new programmes and making amendments to existing programmes by making them more responsive to the education and training needs of the country. However, over the last few years this process has more or less ceased as the Department of Education is reviewing the FET programme offerings in both schools and FET colleges.

10 percent of the programmes were community-based programmes that responded to particular community needs.

From the time the college opened it continued to expand in terms of the number of sites, programmes offered, student and staff numbers. The campus grew rapidly over five years to almost double its capacity and this resulted in Anglo American agreeing to build a new campus on a phased-in approach over 5 - 7 years. The first phase was a Multi-Skilling Civil Construction Faculty (M.C.C.F) to train about 800 trainees each year.

Programmes were offered at the different sites of the eight campuses of the college. Two of the programmes, entrepreneurship and civil construction, were offered on the main campus. Training also took place in the North West Province, after a request from a platinum mining group to render services in Mooiooi close to Rustenburg. Although there was a technical college in Rustenburg the college was unwilling to offer the type of training required by the mining group. The challenge was to take education to the industry, as the industry was not able to transport shift workers to Rustenburg or to any other college. The Atteridgeville College management saw this as an opportunity to expand its services, and was prepared to send staff to the mining industry to offer programmes to them after hours. Training at Mooiooi took place on a fully-fledged campus, even though there was no specific or separate management in place for this campus.

In addition to the Mooiooi training programme the college opened several other campuses in the Pretoria city centre. These comprised the second chance learning campus, an early childhood development centre and the training restaurant. Cicol, which is the second chance learning campus, was established in March 1993. It opened with 60 students as a removed campus of Atteridgeville College to provide the community's unsuccessful matriculants⁹⁹ with a "second chance" to pass matric. As the programme continued there was also a strong need to provide for the lower grades, and Grades 10 and 11 were gradually phased in.

⁹⁹ Grade 12

Photo 1: Atteridgeville Technical College



Source: CCF Archives

Although Citicol is part of a registered state college, it is mainly self-supporting and managed as a private school offering eight languages as well as Natural Sciences, Humanities and Commercial subjects. Hotelkeeping and Catering is offered at Grade 10 level. Citicol follows an "open access" policy. Any Grade 12 learner, irrespective of age or previous results, may enrol. At the same site the college runs a satellite campus together with Technisa, offering a service to students in the Greater Pretoria Area who are in need of distance education. Contact classes are organised by Distancecol for students who express the need for lectures in certain subjects.

The early childhood development unit known as KIDICOL is unique in that it provides Social Welfare Support, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy on the premises. It caters for the underprivileged children of all races by providing a stimulating

⁹⁹ Grade 12

environment in which children can learn and develop in order to achieve their full potential.

The Educare course offers specialised training in providing for the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and psychological needs of the child from birth to six years of age. It prepares students for a career opportunity in a day care centre, preschool, crèche or after school centre or to work as an educator, daymother or nanny. Donations were sought from ISCOR to renovate the building that was used for the pre primary school. A crèche was designed in a three-storey building and could accommodate more than three hundred pre-primary school children. These facilities offer opportunities not only to learners from Atteridgeville Technical College for their practical training, but learners from other colleges as well.

Twin Palms is a training restaurant and has been launched in central Pretoria to give students exposure to the real hospitality environment. The restaurant is registered with FEDHASA¹⁰⁰ and is open to the public.

In 1994 the Department of Education granted R1,6 million for the erection of pre-fabricated buildings to be utilised for 22 small business units operating from the Atteridgeville College campus. Basicol is an Entrepreneurship programme for graduate students and members of the community. Members of the community are given the opportunity to establish their own sustainable micro-enterprises. Several business partners are involved in this project.

The Paradigm Training & Consulting Facility forms part of the ATTCOL Educational Group. This facility was created to support staff development in Information Technology (IT), and to offer management training focusing on the development of teaching skills, training in the implementation and managing of the NQF, and also training in technology. In addition, it also provides computer backup services to the ATTCOL Educational Group and computer training using mobile computer rooms. Busses were converted into mobile computer centres and equipped with eight computers to bring computer training to the very doorsteps of learners.

¹⁰⁰ Federated Hospitality Association of South Africa.

All these developments and expansions took place rather rapidly and over a period of 5 to 6 years. The student numbers grew steadily to approximately 2500 FTEs on the eight campuses. Pressure from the community placed responsibility on the college management to comply with the need to make the staff more representative of the student demographic profile in terms of race. The first move in this direction was the appointment of a black Deputy-Rector who spent about two years at the college before he was promoted to Rector of another institution. A second person from the coloured community was appointed as divisional head. The process continued and by 1996 approximately half the staff comprised persons from other race groups.

The increasing demand from the community for vocational education and training led to the swift expansion of the college. Staff numbers increased rapidly and by 1999 had grown from the initial 14 members in 1991 to 250 members. Of the 250 staff members, 90 teaching staff were appointed by the Gauteng Department of Education and a further 100 were appointed by the College Council. The remaining 60 members performed administrative and support functions.

The rapid expansion of the college required that the management staff of the college, comprising mainly the 14 initial staff members, were now required to take on new responsibilities if they were to meet the growing needs of the Atteridgeville community. Many of the management staff members occupied senior positions, such as campus heads managing satellite campuses, and other management positions.

The Rector too became involved in performing other roles instead of being involved with the day-to-day management of the college. At the same time he was also the chairperson of the Committee of Technical Rectors¹⁰¹ (CTCP). As chairperson of the CTCP he spent a great deal of his time outside the college trying to investigate ways in which to transform the technical college sector so that it could become more responsive to community needs, as well as to embrace the transformation agenda of the newly elected democratic government. Consequently, he delegated his responsibilities to those members of the staff whom he regarded as having the capacity to perform those tasks. The result of his involvement in the other activities that kept him away from his primary

¹⁰¹ A statutory body consisting of technical college rectors in terms of Act 104 of 1981 to advise the Minister on Vocational Education and Training.

day-to-day tasks at the college was that the staff and pupils no longer recognised him as the head of the institution.¹⁰² Tension arose among the college management, staff and pupils as to what the Rector and his management team's responsibilities were. The Rector was regarded as a person who occupied a particular position and was more than simply an individual who was a driving force for change.¹⁰³

Staff and pupils felt that they no longer knew whom he was, and that he was not performing his duties as the head of the college despite his claims to be community friendly. They were of the opinion that in his position it was paramount that he remain in touch with the community, and that that was where his place was, instead of his jetting off to other countries on study-tours of the FET sector. Through his interaction with vocational education and training leaders in other countries the Rector began seeing FET in another light. He had learnt a great deal in a short period and was extremely enthusiastic to implement many of his newly acquired ideas. Except for a few members of his management staff who had accompanied him on a few visits abroad, the rest of the staff were oblivious to the Rector's intentions, as they had not been exposed to what he had seen and learnt on his study tours overseas. The majority of the staff and pupils viewed the Rector and some of his management staff as "*management with its particular vision*"¹⁰⁴ and "*the balance of the staff as having their own vision*".¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² The Rector was of the opinion that all the necessary policies, procedures and management system in place were sufficient to keep the college running while he and one or two senior members occasionally oversaw activities at the college (Interview with the Rector 10 December 2003).

¹⁰³ The Rector saw himself as the person to drive the changes to be brought about in the technical college sector. This was a mandate that he had imposed on himself more as the Chairperson of the CTCP.

¹⁰⁴ As chairperson of the CTCP the Rector saw it as his responsibility to convert the sector and prepare people for the merging of technical colleges as indicated in Education White Paper 4 (1998). It was a vision that only he and a few members of his management team shared.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with the Rector 10 December 2003.

The disgruntled staff members organised themselves into a forum of resistance against the Rector's management style. They resisted his imposition that they should prepare themselves to merge with other colleges. Some of the staff members belonged to a union and they mobilised themselves through the union. At the same time many of these staff members were also members of the College Council with whom there was regular sharing of information on the proposed changes to be brought about in the technical college sector. The staff saw the proposal on the college mergers as something that the Rector wanted in order to expand "his empire". They were of the opinion that mergers were merely mentioned in the FET policy, and that it was a medium to long-term objective for the sector. The developments and changes as proposed by the Rector at the Atteridgeville College preceded the promulgation of the FET Act and led to growing tension at the college.

As the tension between management and staff increased, members of staff began to mobilise the support of the students. They also questioned the loyalty and commitment of the college management. These included raising concerns about the use of college funds¹⁰⁶ and the appointment of staff.¹⁰⁷ The Rector and management were accused of misusing college funds and nepotism. The problem grew to such an extent that these matters could not be resolved internally, and had to be referred to the Public Protector and the Gauteng Department of Education.

In November 1998, the forum of disgruntled staff members addressed a letter to the Gauteng Department of Education outlining their concerns regarding the college management. The Gauteng Department of Education did not respond to the forum's letter, nor did they investigate the issues raised in the letter. The nonchalant attitude of the Gauteng Department of Education exacerbated the situation further to the extent that the embittered staff members and students decided to take matters into their own hands.

¹⁰⁶ Concerns with regard to the use of funds centred mainly on those funds used for the overseas visits undertaken by the Rector and management to FET institutions overseas. The Rector's wife accompanied him on many of these trips and they were funded from the College funds.

¹⁰⁷ One of the main concerns here was that the Rector's wife was employed by the College Council as a member of the College staff.

When the college reopened on 16th July 1999, after the mid-year recess, pandemonium broke out at the main college site in Atteridgeville. Within two hours of the college opening members of the Student Representative Council had taken control of the college and ordered the Rector and seven members of the management staff off the college campus. The incident was overseen by members of staff who were members of the forum but they did not get directly involved. Prior to the Rector and management leaving the college site they contacted the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and informed the provincial department officials of what had transpired at the college. The chairperson of the College Council was also informed of the ultimatum presented by the Student Representative Council. The chairperson's advice to the Rector and management staff was that they should do as told in order not to create any further problems for the rest of the staff who were not affected.

The Rector and management who were expelled from the college requested a meeting with the Gauteng Department of Education for that afternoon. No resolution could be reached and they continued to hold several meetings thereafter. After numerous meetings no resolutions had been reached and the Gauteng Department of Education's only response to the college management was that transformation had to take place. From July 1999 onwards an Acting-Rector, who was a former member of the college staff, was appointed to manage the college. The Rector ultimately resigned from the Gauteng Department of Education. From then there was a decline in the status of the college, its student numbers and management. The staff was split in two with little cooperation from several members of the opposition group. Interestingly enough, the Rector's wife stayed on as the head of one of the college sites in the city centre.

The teaching and management staff at the college comprises 92 members of whom 51 percent are African, 4 percent coloured, 1 percent Indian and 43 percent white.¹⁰⁸ Atteridgeville College is one of the few colleges in which there are more female staff members (60 percent) than male (40 percent). Seventy-six members are employed by the state while the remaining 16 are College Council employees. There are 36 members who provide administrative and support services at the college.

¹⁰⁸ This data was provided by the CCF based on 2000 figures.

Education programmes are offered in the following fields viz. Business Studies, Utility Studies and Engineering. Of the total 921 enrolments there are 371 students enrolled for Business Studies, 65 for Utility Studies and 485 for Engineering programmes.¹⁰⁹ No data was available on the non-Department of Education programmes offered at the college.

Of the total 3 076¹¹⁰ FTEs enrolled at the college 97 percent are African, 1 percent coloured and, 2 percent Indian. Fifty nine percent (59 percent) of the students are male and 41 percent are female.

Atteridgeville College started out as a college focusing primarily on meeting the needs of the community and grew in its inception years to be a vibrant community college serving the Atteridgeville community. However, friction at the college in the late nineteen nineties led to the decline of the college, something that has not yet been resolved. This affected the way in which the staff reacted to the proposed mergers.

Having described the turbulent environment at Atteridgeville College I now proceed to provide the social context of Centurion College.

5.2.2 Centurion College

Centurion College was founded in order to serve a very unique military purpose and continues to serve that purpose even today. During the past two to three decades about 40 000 of the South African Defence Force¹¹¹ (SANDF) students have undergone practical training at the Centurion College. Twelve thousand of these students were retained by the SANDF after completing their training while the balance was employed in private industry. At present, Centurion College provides approximately 80 percent of

¹⁰⁹ CCF 2000 figures

¹¹⁰ CCF 2000 figures.

¹¹¹ The role of the SANDF is to safeguard South Africa against any onslaught. To be able to carry out this mandate the SANDF needs to be in a state of continual optimal preparedness which includes the constant availability of specialised, current, effective and time-tested technical training in line with the SANDF's particular requirements.

the SANDF's technical training in Tshwane,¹¹² that utilises 20 percent of the college's training resources.

The College was founded in January 1937 at Robert's Heights¹¹³ to provide for the technical training needs of the Union Defence Force.¹¹⁴ The specialised college was established to cater for the theoretical training of Air Force apprentices. This training was carried out at what was then known as the Pretoria Technical College. The School for Technical Training was initially a subsection of the Aircraft and Artillery Depot. Centurion College therefore originally started off as a military college, and despite several name changes, has remained fundamentally, but not exclusively, a military college. With the onset of World War II in 1939, technical training ceased, and the school was restructured to provide military training necessary for the mobilisation of forces. At the end of the war in 1945 technical training recommenced on the site of the present campus of the College, which was then known as the Basic Training Centre (BTC). The BTC was considered as a department of what was then known as the Pretoria Technical College. Between 1960 and 1977 the practical training became more advanced and this resulted in several name changes. The name of the BTC changed first to the SADF Technical Training Centre, and then to the SADF Technical College, and to the SADF Technical Institute in 1960.

The adoption of the Advanced Technical Education Act, 1967 (No 40 of 1967) resulted in the Pretoria Technical College being renamed the Pretoria College for Advanced Technical Education. The promulgation of the Advanced Technical Education Amendment Act, 1979 (No 43 of 1979) led to a change of status for the Pretoria College for Advanced Technical Education, which became known from that point onwards as the Pretoria Technikon. From 1 May 1979, control of the Pretoria Technikon was taken over directly by the Department of Education, Arts and Science.

¹¹² Pretoria was renamed Tshwane in 2002.

¹¹³ Robert's Heights later became known as Voortrekkerhoogte or translated as Pioneer Heights (1950s into the 1990s) and is now known as Thaba Tshwane (Thaba Tshwane is the Sotho word for "black mountain"). It is a suburb situated near the Voortrekker (Pioneer) Monument and is one of the main military bases in Pretoria. There are a number of army units situated in the area and it is also served by the Swartkops SA Air Force Base.

¹¹⁴ The Union Defence Force is now known as the SANDF.

The SADF Technical Institute has also undergone several name changes since 1960 and became known as the Verwoerdburg Technical College in 1977 and then the Centurion College in 1996. The Technical Colleges Act (Act 104 of 1981) allowed the College to enroll private students, thereby ending many years of the exclusive provision of tuition and training to the Defence Force. In 1990 for the first time all race groups were allowed to enrol for courses at the college.

In 1992 the Department of Education ceased to support practical training at the Centurion Technical College. At the same time the Department of Defence requested that the “closed” status of the College be repealed in order to provide for a more cost-effective institution, which would share its unique learning culture with the broader public. This brought about a competitive environment which had a positive influence on both the Department of Defence and on private students. The prime motivation in integrating the campus with the military training environment was to ensure an efficient, cost-effective and centralised military controlled environment.

The College continued to offer training and programmes of a high standard and this was demonstrated by the fact that in 1993 the Faculties of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering of the Pretoria Technikon accredited the practical training offered at the College. This was followed in 1994 by the Metal and Engineering Industries Education and Training Board accrediting the practical training given in the motor and mechanical workshops. The practical training given in the College Motor Workshops was accredited by the Motor Industries Training Board¹¹⁵ (MITB) in 1996.

According to the Rector emphasis is also placed on staff training to ensure that staff is kept up to date as regards the latest skills and international practices. Two motor workshop lecturers were sent to Germany in 1997 to be trained to present a motor electronics course, the first in South Africa. The necessary equipment was received as a donation from Germany through the Motor Industries Training Board and, after installing the equipment, the course commenced at the beginning of 1998. Senior staff has also received training in ISO-9001 2000.

¹¹⁵ Industry Training Boards.

A further development in the College was that the Faculty of Engineering Studies installed an electronic workbench whereby theory and practice are integrated in a simulated form. This integration has proved to be very successful and the students have a much better grasp of electronics, which has led to improved examination results.

In 1997 the University of Potchefstroom requested the College to act as a satellite campus in the offering of bachelor's and master's degrees in Business Administration. During the same year a UNIMOG programme was instituted at Centurion College. This programme involved a chassis production line, as well as engines and gearboxes. A further programme for overhauling Bedford truck engines and gearboxes was also instituted.

Developments in 1998 entailed the building and commissioning of a new, modern and well-equipped welding centre, in accordance with all the necessary safety and health regulations. This workshop can cater for the training of up to 100 students at a time, and enhances the concept of lifelong learning.

The college offers Engineering Studies, Business Studies, Practical Workshop Training and Skills courses. A wide variety of academic and skills courses are offered, and practical workshop training commences with basic training for beginners and progresses to advanced levels where students are prepared for trade tests. These courses are all based on the Competency Based Modular Training Model.

An agreement of co-operation and a growing relationship exists with the Pretoria Technikon regarding engineering and business studies, and since 1980, the University of Pretoria has been sending its first-year engineering students to the College to fulfil their requirements of practical training. The students have to meet these requirements in order to be promoted to their second year.

The SANDF and Centurion College launched the initiatives for the training of MK and APLA cadres for integration into the SANDF. The College campus was used as the headquarters for this activity in 1994. Ex-MK soldiers were given ABET training in a new ABET Block opened at the Centurion College.

SANDF students who receive technical training at Centurion College are from military bases throughout the country. Whilst receiving training they are accommodated at TEK Base, which is located close to the College. Apart from the technical, academic and practical training provided, the college also provides specialised training for the SANDF. Other courses that are presented include Photography and Television Production, while courses in Product Knowledge, Life Skills and Leadership Development are in an advanced planning stage and include an EB 2000 computer course and mentorship for senior SANDF personnel.

The vision to provide learners with an holistic education led to the College participating in various sporting activities in 1995. This resulted in partnerships forming with the 68 Air School and Gauteng Logistics Command of the SANDF with respect to the use of sports fields and organised leagues in sporting activities such as soccer, cricket and road running. The college is affiliated to the various provincial sports bodies and regular competitions are held against other colleges and league clubs.

Together with the SANDF the College undertakes community development projects. One such programme is a joint venture between 68 Air School¹¹⁶ and Centurion College at Olievenhoutbosch informal settlement where assistance is given to the school. Computers have been donated and installed, and assistance provided for a school-feeding scheme with the help of Old Mutual.¹¹⁷

The staff comprises 108 members of whom 3 percent are African and 97 percent white.¹¹⁸ The staff composition is made up of 74 percent male and 26 percent female members. Approximately 80 percent of the staff is employed by the state, while the College Council employs 20 percent of the college staff.

¹¹⁶ Provides logistic training for the South African Air Force.

¹¹⁷ Old Mutual is a private company that is listed on the stock market.

¹¹⁸ This data was provided by the college and is the 2001 figures.

¹¹⁹ CCF 2000 figures

There are 1 616 FTEs of which 49 percent are African, 47 percent white, 2 percent Indian and 1 percent coloured.¹¹⁹ Of the 1 616 FTEs 76 percent are male while only 24 percent are female.

Education programmes are offered in two fields viz. Business Studies and Engineering. There are 709 FTEs enrolled for Business Studies and 875 FTEs for Engineering.¹²⁰ Engineering programmes are offered from orientation level¹²¹ up to N6 level. Evening classes are also offered at the college. The college has substantial partnerships with SAAB in Sweden and has, over the past year, forged mutually beneficial relationships in terms of technical training and technology transfer. Both Department of Education and non-Department of Education programmes are offered in Engineering.

Centurion College started as an exclusively military college serving a specific sector. Once the “closed” status of the college had been lifted the college aspired to extend and include new programmes, and change its demographic profile to include staff and students of all races. This state-aided college evolved from a very strong white male institutional culture with a predominantly white staff complement and remains predominantly white even though the gender imbalances have to an extent been corrected.

Having provided the historical context of the Centurion College, I now proceed to describe the Pretoria West College as the final case study technical college.

5.2.3 Pretoria West College

In the early 1970s the political ideology remained premised upon racial separation, and the homeland policy was vigorously pursued. On the other hand, during this period, state policy began to reflect the long-term reality of the urban black working class. The shift in urban development and the increase in the blue-collar black working class led to

¹²⁰ 2001 figures.

¹²¹ Orientation programmes have a strong numeracy and literacy focus for learners who did not achieve Grade 9, which is the entry requirement to a N1 programme offered at technical colleges.

the expansion of senior secondary schooling, and technical and vocational education for blacks. The emphasis was on the addressing the “manpower needs” and “skill shortages” in the country.

The Pretoria West Technical College was established in 1975 as a state-aided college to offer theoretical training, mainly to apprentices.¹²² The College opened with 14 personnel and 255 students with the objective of providing theoretical training to individuals on a block release concept from their employers who provided the practical training and experience. After obtaining the appropriate theoretical knowledge students were able to qualify as artisans after passing their trade tests.

However, the economic instability experienced during the 1980s resulted in a decrease of approximately 87 percent in the number of registered apprentices.¹²³ As a result there was an increase in the proportion of unemployed students at technical colleges. Prospective artisans began looking to technical colleges to provide the practical training that they needed in order to qualify as artisans. Colleges were unable to fill this gap by offering practical training in line with the technical careers of those who were unemployed.

The Pretoria West College of Engineering recognised this as an opportunity and started exploring ways of offering practical training to students. The College established a partnership with ISCOR¹²⁴ in order to be able to meet this need. ISCOR’s contribution of several donations made possible the establishment of new practical workshops in which approximately 3 000 students per trimester could receive accredited practical training. Since 1994 the Pretoria West College of Engineering, in collaboration with ISCOR and the City Council of Pretoria (PREMOS), has been able to provide opportunities for unemployed students to receive practical training. In 1997 this training was recognised and given accredited status. The Metal Engineering Industries Education and Training Board (MEIETB) recognises the 84 weeks of practical training offered by the College as being equivalent to that offered to apprentices in industry. The

¹²² This was based on the apprenticeship system used in the United Kingdom. Such a system, although effective and of a high standard, did not cater for South Africans.

¹²³ Data provided from college archive.

¹²⁴ Iron and Steel Corporation.

Pretoria West College of Engineering is the only technical college in the country to offer unemployed students the opportunity to reach artisan level.

The college has enrolled students from the neighbouring states of Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho. However, the main target group is South Africans from previously disadvantaged communities. In recent years the student numbers have increased by 45 percent. This has necessitated the employment of additional staff and, as a result, many young academic staff have been employed at the college.

Photo 2: Pretoria West College of Engineering



To ensure a high standard of training and accreditation for the different modules the college is affiliated to National Training Boards such as the Metal Engineering Industries Training Board (MEIETB), Education Training Board for Local Authorities (ETBLA), Electrical Contractors Training Board (ECTB) and is represented at the Pretoria Tehnikon.

One of the main challenges for the college is to be on the look-out constantly for available partnerships and learnerships from the private sector, so as to provide students with practical exposure in industry as part of the completion of the artisan-training programme. A rotation system is used so that students are provided with exposure to more than one company during their training. This helps students gain invaluable experience during their 24 weeks on-the-job-training programme. The college has established similar associations with other tertiary institutions, for example, offering practical training to students from the Technikon and the University of Pretoria.

Photo 3: First lady to pass trade test as Electrician at the Pretoria West College of Engineering



The teaching and management staff comprises 100 members of whom 45 are African, 1 coloured, 1 Indian and 53 white¹²⁵ with 95 percent male and 4 percent female. The

¹²⁵ The data was provided by the CCF based on 2000 figures.

entire teaching and management staff component at the Pretoria West College are employed by the state. They are assisted by nine non-teaching staff members.

Education programmes are offered in two fields, viz. Business Studies and Engineering. There are 799 FTEs enrolled for Business Studies, 17 for General Education, 15 for Utility Studies and 875 for Engineering programmes.¹²⁶ All programmes offered at the college are Department of Education programmes. More than 50 percent of the lecturers and instructors employed at the colleges have qualified as artisans through the ISCOR Training System that forms part of the ITCC.¹²⁷

Of the total 2 680¹²⁸ FTEs enrolled at the college 89 percent are African, 7 percent white, 2 percent coloured and 2 percent Indian. Seventy six percent (76 percent) of the students are male while only 24 percent are female.

The Pretoria West College identified a niche and took up the challenge to provide theoretical training to apprentices. However, over the years, with the decline in apprenticeships its role has changed to that of providing both theoretical and practical training to students from disadvantaged communities.

5.4 Summary

Gauteng is the smallest of the nine provinces in South Africa and yet the wealthiest, with the second largest population in the country. It is known as the economic hub contributing 5.4 percent towards the GDP. The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand

¹²⁶ CCF 2000 Figures

¹²⁷ Industrial Technical College Certificate.

¹²⁸ CCF 2000 Figures

area spawned economic development and growth in the province as far back as 1875. This discovery of gold led to the establishment of the province's technical college sector. Of the 32 technical colleges in the province, 13 are classified as state institutions and the remaining 19 as state-aided institutions. The disparities between the state and state-aided colleges were reflected in the governance, management staff and funding, all of which were based on racial segregation policies. State-aided colleges catered primarily for skills training for white students, while state colleges were established in response to the economic need of the country in the light of huge skill shortages as a result of black urban development during the 1970s and 1980s.

The three case study colleges in the Tshwane South district of the Greater Pretoria area were all established with a specific purpose in mind and have striven over the years to fulfil specific objectives in terms of providing education and training. Centurion College, the oldest college in the study, was established in 1937 to meet the training needs of the South African Defence Force. The college's roots are based firmly in a strongly conservative institutional culture that could be typified as being white male dominated. The majority of the management staff could be described being mature individuals over the age of 45 years. Despite efforts to change the student profile at the college the teaching staff remains almost totally white. As a state-aided college it has been able to maintain its elite status that is supported by a culture of superiority, racial segregation and hierarchical management arrangements. The ultimate authority within the colleges lies with the Rector who has the unwavering support of his staff. The college provides mainly Engineering programmes that are directly in line with the needs of the South African Defence Force.

The Pretoria West College opened its doors in 1975. The college was established in response to the need to provide technical and vocational training to blacks as a result of the urban development that had taken place at the time. The college was founded as a state-aided college to provide theoretical and practical training to employees on a block release concept. Over the years the college expanded from 255 students in 1975 to 1 328 students in 2001. The demographic profile of the staff and students has, over the recent past, begun to change. However, the gender profile of the staff still remains predominantly white even though the Pretoria West Rector is one of the few black

Rectors in the sector. Despite this, the college still maintains a strong institutional culture and ethos as a state-aided college.

Atteridgeville College was conceived as a community college with the sole purpose of meeting the needs of the Atteridgeville community. The college was built with funds donated by the Anglo American and De Beers Chairman's Funds under the auspices of the Department of Education and Training. Many of these developments could have been spurred on as a result of the 1976 Soweto Uprising. This state college opened in 1991 and expanded dramatically over the next five years, opening distance learning programmes and several off-site campuses in the Tshwane city centre. However, the pace at which the college was expanding left the Rector with little time at his disposal to attend to the management affairs of the college. This resulted in severe tension among staff members and the college management with the Rector and seven members of the college management staff being dismissed from the college. Since the incident in July 1999 the college has been plagued by several problems resulting in a loss of morale, motivation and commitment on the part of staff members. Even though the staff composition at the time of opening the college was completely white, the college has managed to transform itself and in 2002 43 percent of the staff was white.

It is evident from these contexts that the culture and structure of the three technical colleges have evolved within explicit social and historical contexts. In the next chapter I present the structural and cultural factors that influenced policy implementation.

Chapter 6

Factors influencing policy implementation:

The saga of policy implementation in further education and training

6.1 Introduction

In order to consider the structural and cultural factors influencing policy implementation it is important to acknowledge the fact that there are multiple role-players. If we are to understand how policy implementation is influenced at the operational level then it is important to consider the individual perceptions of the various role-players in the implementation chain. In this chapter I explore the intentions of the FET policy as expressed in the various documents, as explained by national and provincial departments of education officials, as voiced by policymakers and as described by union representatives.

The chapter is arranged in four sections. In **Section One**, I analyse the FET policy and the two implementation framework documents, i.e. *National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999-2001; Preparing for the Twenty-First Century through Education, Training and Work* (Department of Education, 1999) and *A New Institutional Landscape for Public Further Education and Training Colleges: Reform of South African Technical Colleges* (Department of Education, 2001). The focus of my analysis will be on the policy intentions and the implementation plans for this policy. The information will be supplemented with data from interviews conducted with policymakers and national department officials who were involved in the development of the FET policy and the drawing up of the implementation framework documents.

In Section Two I document brief narratives built on the semi-structured interviews conducted with department officials, policymakers and union representatives. This will be supplemented with documentary analyses of various submissions made to the Department of Education and minutes of meetings held. The spread of stakeholders is a way of reducing the bias, as well as allowing these individuals an opportunity to provide perspectives from their various portfolios.

In Section Three I present brief narratives of semi-structured interviews conducted with the provincial department officials to provide their perspectives of a department to which implementation has been assigned in the face of a multiplicity of new policies competing for attention.

The data in this chapter is arranged in two categories. First, a category which includes the national department officials, union representatives and consultants who were policymakers and a second comprising provincial department officials. In Sections Two and Three my focus is on the elements of the structural and cultural factors as identified in Chapter 3.

Finally, in the last section I summarise each section of this chapter by comparing patterns and trends that emerge with the intention of the FET policy as expressed in the policy document, and explained by policymakers, national and provincial department officials, and union representatives. Having identified the structural and cultural factors influencing policy implementation at the macro-political level, I then proceed in the next chapter (Chapter 7) to analyse the data collected from the Rectors and staff operating within the ambits of the technical colleges. My objectives in keeping the college data separate from that of the other sectors is that, firstly, it enables a more visible picture of how culture and structure influence policy implementation in the three case study colleges, and, secondly, it makes for easy comparison between the three categories.

Section One

6.2 Policy objectives: As indicated in the documentation

6.2.1 Methodological considerations

In this section I provide an analysis of the FET policy as presented in the official documents identified earlier in this case study. In order to present a methodological framework which I could utilise I have drawn on literature on policy and policy analysis. According to Silver:

The analysis of policy ...is concerned with its origins and intentions – the complexities of competing and conflicting values and goals, the explicit and implicit representations of objectives which spring from diverse economic and social realities. It is concerned with the policy choices that are made, the decisions made – by whom, with what timing and with what authority. It is concerned with the guidelines, the rules, the regulations, the machineries of information, the interpretation in practice, the outcomes. At its most theoretical the analysis is concerned with what happens and why; at its most pragmatically historical it asks what, in known instances, seems to have happened (1990: 213).

Drawing on Silver I found the following guidelines to be useful in the analysis of policy. Firstly, policy construction is grounded in a specific time and place. Secondly, a study of choices seeks to offer an understanding of human preferences and action, either as a group or independently. Thirdly, the history of the policy development process helps to determine the connection between policy intentions and policy outcomes across time, and fourthly, policy analysis helps to identify alternatives for the future.

“Policy” may be defined as “whatever governments choose to do, or not to do” and “policy analysis” may be considered as “the study of what governments do, why and with what effects (Taylor et al., 1997:35)”. According to Taylor et al. (1997), policy construction and analysis are both broad in scope and highly complex. They explain that policy is more than merely text and therefore the nuances and subtleties of the context in which the text is written must be considered when interpreting the textual meaning. The text represents “political compromises between conflicting images on how educational change should proceed” (1997:15). In addition, policy is multi-dimensional and the contributors to the policy construction bring particular, contestable and different worldviews. Another characteristic of policy is that policy is value-laden, and a range of stakeholder values permeates its construction. At the same time, policies exist in context and therefore “there is always a prior history of significant events, a particular ideology and political climate, social and economic context – and often, particular individuals as well which together influence the shape and timing of policies as well as their evolution and their outcomes” (Taylor et al., 1997:16). Furthermore, policymaking is a state activity and the state should be regarded as a complex and non-unitary entity of competing parts. It must also be borne in mind that education policies interact with

policies in other fields. Finally, policy implementation is never straightforward and results in both intended and unintended consequences.

I have used Silver's (1990) historical perspectives and Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry's (1997) understanding of policy analysis as a framework for my analysis.

6.2.2 Policy process

I commence the policy analysis by reflecting on the origins of the FET policy. In South Africa, a country undergoing great political change since the newly elected democratic government in 1994, the challenge was to redress historical inequalities. The newly elected ANC-led government reacted in its first five years of governing with a proliferation of policies at a rapid pace so as to gain the confidence of the masses that had voted for it. The Department of Education set out to develop several policies to reform the education and training sector. The immediate priority, because of the excessive pressure from civil society, was the urgent reform of the school sector and the amalgamation of the nineteen apartheid education departments into one department. The Department of Education vigorously put in place policies to change the school sector. Thereafter the emphasis shifted to the development of policies to reform the Higher Education and Training sector. In terms of public education, the FET sector was the only sector for which policy had not been developed by the beginning of 1998.

A senior Department of Education official explained that the lack of public interest in the technical college sector stemmed from the racialised past of these institutions. Given the history of technical colleges these institutions were virtually unknown to black communities in South Africa. Technical colleges had played no substantial role in the emancipation of civil society in the fight for freedom. On the other hand, several schools and universities were regarded as icons of liberation that had provided a platform for political engagements and activities in the apartheid era. Nearly everyone in political leadership since 1994 could claim affiliation to a particular school or university in the country and point out the role that these institutions had played during the apartheid era. Technical colleges, on the other hand, had served the needs mainly of the white community in the country and protected specific interests; they also embodied the conservative core of institutional culture as described in Chapter 2. The Department of Education official emphasised that:

... the colleges are the least known institutions within the system ... and there wasn't any public pressure, so we saw this as an opportunity for us to draw lessons and experiences from the Higher Education process and to then fast track the FET (Brad, 23/10/2002).

At the time it was accepted that FET was a new concept that would be introduced into the South African education system. In addition there were other imperatives that had to be considered. Of equal importance was the recognition of the requirements of the NQF and the fact that both senior secondary schools and technical colleges offered programmes that covered levels 2 to 4 on the NQF. Technical colleges offered N1 to N3 programmes that were considered equivalent to grades 10 to 12 in the senior secondary school phase or levels 2 to 4 on the NQF. The technical colleges also extended their curriculum to include N4 to N6 programmes, which were considered to fall outside the FET band. This compounded the dilemma faced in transforming technical colleges, as consensus could not be reached as to which level the N4 to N6 programmes could be equated to on the higher education band.¹²⁹ The general assumption was that the N4 to N6 programmes would equate to level 5 in higher education.

The lack of knowledge of the sector, coupled with the unresolved programme desegregation and the limited capacity and resources, restricted the extent to which the national and provincial departments were able to respond to the new FET policy. General public consensus mandated that the school sector needed immediate attention before efforts could be directed towards the higher education sector. A senior Department of Education official explained that the reason for the delay was to a large extent based on the negative perception of the sector:

... not only the number of people with dedicated capacity within provinces to deal with this issue, but it was also a reflection of the attitude of the system towards the institution. It reflected a lesser priority compared to the other subsystems (Brad, 23/10/2002).

It was definitely not the intention of the Department of Education to neglect the FET sector, but it was apparent that the history of the technical colleges placed these

¹²⁹ This required an investigation and evaluation of the programme content by the South African Certification Board (SAFCERT) that was later renamed UMLASI.

institutions in a peculiar situation. The limited knowledge of the newly appointed officials (bureaucrats) in both the national and provincial departments made it virtually impossible to develop policies for an institution about which there was little known in terms of its educational role and value in a society that was redressing historic racial imbalances. The Minister of Education proceeded by appointing the National Committee on Further Education¹³⁰ to investigate FET¹³¹ provisioning in the country. Although the investigation entailed FET provisioning as a whole, emphasis was placed on policy development for technical colleges. The National Committee on Further Education's brief was to make recommendations that would inform policy to transform the sector.

According to a Department of Education official, the political mandate was that, as the end of the first five years of the new government's term of office drew closer, it was imperative to ensure that all the necessary transformational policies were in place in order to secure the confidence of the people who had voted for the new government. The NCFE Report showed that the technical college sector had a vital role to play in increasing and ensuring the country's skill and human resource base in line with global trends. It was deemed necessary that new policy be required to change the status and function of the technical colleges in order to meet the skills shortage and high rate of unemployment prevalent in the country. However, the Constitution had divided the function of human resource development between the Departments of Education and Labour (explained in Chapter 2 page 34). By the end of 1997 the Department of Labour had more or less finalised the Skills Development Act, but had to delay the parliamentary process of having the Skills Act enacted, as the complementary FET Act was not in place. Pressure mounted on the Department of Education to deliver the FET policy.

¹³⁰ The choice of a committee as opposed to a commission as specified in the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) was explained in Chapter 2 (Page 31).

¹³¹ The definition of FET as provided in the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) includes secondary schooling, education and training in colleges, and a range of other training programmes. Internationally we find that there is a distinction between schooling and (vocational) further education and training

The Green Paper on Further Education and Training was released in April 1998. A vigorous public consultation process led by the Department of Education throughout the country followed. Appropriate feedback from the consultation process was incorporated into the policy. Consultation workshops on the Green Paper were hosted by the Department of Education in most of the major cities in the country. The technical college sector was poorly represented at several of these workshops. Those representatives from the technical college who did attend generally displayed a great deal of bitterness towards the newly appointed Department of Education officials. The technical college staff believed that they had made a valuable contribution to the socio-economic needs of the country thus far, and that the colleges had proved themselves in the past. They were of the opinion that initiating and implementing a new policy would disrupt a structure and system that was working properly and serving a purpose. One of the Rectors at a meeting referred to the imminent suggested changes to the sector, in particular as referring to the technical colleges, as wanting to “kill the goose that laid the golden egg”. It was obvious that the college staff held these institutions in high esteem, and were proud of their colleges. They believed that change was not necessary.

From April 1998 the Department of Education maintained a dual process with the development of both Education White Paper 4 (1998) and the Further Education and Training Bill (1998). The intention was to fast track the process well ahead of the 1999 government elections. The Education White Paper 4 (1998), which outlined the government’s vision, mission and objectives for FET, was released in August 1998, and the FET Act, which provided the legislative parameters for change, was proclaimed three months later in November 1998. The Department of Education was confident that the FET policy had gone through sufficient consultative processes in order to be claimed a legitimate process that carried public credibility. These processes included consultation on the NCFE Report, the Green Paper on FET and the FET Bill. Notwithstanding the political pressure, limited capacity and challenges that lay ahead, the Department of Education introduced the FET policy. A senior official of the Department of Education recalled that:

... from a financial point of view, the state was introducing a policy that was unfunded, and we referred to it as an unfunded mandate. ... so that was very much up front , ... the first four or five years was great for policy, but on the other hand few resources
(Rob, 16/07/2003).

From the very outset it was obvious that this policy had come into effect with no additional funding, even though resources are absolutely vital in order to initiate and implement any form of change in the sector. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of the sector and the changing global trends in FET created an arena for heavy borrowing from other policies, both nationally and internationally. The FET policy mirrored the Higher Education and Training policy and legislation in several aspects.

It was imperative that the changes made to the technical college sector be in line with international trends, and the concept of providing life-long learning. Technical assistance to develop the policy framework was elicited from anti-apartheid alliances built with Australia, Canada, Holland and the United States of America. According to a senior Department of Education official the help of external consultants was brought in:

... to assist in areas that were completely new, because we do not have that kind of experience and knowledge. The people in our system have never been involved in such major changes – the old civil servants included. The old civil servants have some knowledge but that is not what we want, they have a narrow racially based expertise (Brad,23/10/2002).

The FET policy was one of the key policies put in place to address the human resource development needs of the country. The challenge would be to coordinate the policy and concomitant activities with the various subsectors of the education system, as well as those in the different government departments, and to ensure that the human resource and skills' needs would be addressed.

6.2.3 Rationale for the FET policy

The FET policy¹³² was developed with the intention of establishing a co-ordinated FET system at the national and provincial levels. In line with global trends it is of paramount importance that the sector be responsive and flexible in order to meet the economic, social and human resource needs of the country. By definition FET in South Africa is provided in both schools and other institutions, including technical colleges. Despite the fact that public FET is provided by several different types of providers (see Chapter 1,

¹³² Education White Paper 4 (1998).

page 10), the FET policy focuses in particular on the technical colleges.¹³³ The reason for this is that the school component of FET falls under the jurisdiction of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). The policy also further regulates the provisioning of FET by making it obligatory for private providers to register with the Department of Education as private FET providers.

The anticipated changes to be brought about through implementing the new FET policy would ensure a new image, status, demography, governance, funding, organisation, management and leadership in the FET college sector. The policy highlights the reorganisation of the technical colleges through the declaration¹³⁴ of public FET institutions. The purpose of declaring the technical colleges to be FET institutions is to dispose of the inherited legislative difference between state and state-aided technical colleges by bring them under a single piece of legislation.¹³⁵ The legal parameters within which the declaration of FET institutions is to take place is provided for in the FET Act. There is also provision made in the FET Act for the merger¹³⁶ of two or more FET institutions. The rationale for mergers is “to optimise the use of scarce resources and to achieve economies of scale” (Department of Education, 1998b:36).

The FET policy provides the following four main pillars for change:

- A new governance framework
- A new framework for programmes and qualifications
- A new quality improvement and assurance institution
- A new funding system envisaged as a key lever for system change (Department of Education, 1998c).

The new governance framework is based on the principles of co-operative governance, with advisory structures at the national and provincial levels, substantial powers

¹³³ The technical college sector was characterised by unequal access, differences in the quality of programmes, infrastructure and funding based on race, as already explained in Chapter 2.

¹³⁴ Declaration entails the acquisition of a public FET institution status once an institution has satisfied the prescribed national criteria – this serves as a quality control mechanism.

¹³⁵ The differences were explained in Chapter 2.

¹³⁶ Mergers will take place with a view to rationalising institutions with the objective of increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

accorded to the FET institutions, and partnerships between government, organised business, labour and communities. A National Board for Further Education and Training is to be established as an advisory statutory body. College Councils will be appointed at the institutional level.

The new programme for programmes and qualifications will aim at providing a range of transferable skills and knowledge. FET institutions will also provide remediation services, counselling and job placement facilities.

The new quality improvement and assurance institution includes the introduction of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and the establishment of several new structures such as an Education Management Information System (EMIS) and a FET Quality Authority (FETQA).

Funding will include programme-based funding, funding for special purposes and private funding. The challenge will be for FET institutions to offer programmes that attract financial support through the National Skills Fund and Sector Education and Training Authorities.

6.2.4 Objectives of the FET policy

An analysis of FET policy (Education White Paper 4, 1998) reveals that the explicit and implicit objectives of the policy in terms of *restructuring* the sector are as follows:

- To establish a new governance framework, programmes and qualifications, quality improvement and assurance institution; and funding system
- To provide the support and training necessary for successful implementation, particularly to historically disadvantaged institutions
- To build capacity within the sector to fulfil the new roles and responsibilities
- To ensure that the relevant guidelines and regulations will be made available by the Department of Education
- To provide leadership from the Department of Education and the provincial departments of education to facilitate and manage the change agenda

Some of the underlying structural and cultural assumptions of the FET policy are the following:

- There is a general understanding and acceptance of the FET policy and change trajectory.
- Implementers' beliefs and values are aligned with the policy intentions.
- Implementers share a common meaning of the moral purpose of the change innovation.
- Implementers embrace the change innovation.
- There is trust, commitment and motivation among implementers for successful change.

Even though the policy acknowledges the shortages of skills and capacity in the sector, the policy is obscure about how skills and capacity will be built to implement and sustain the changes in the sector. The policy is also unclear about how the necessary cultural transformation will be brought about. Neither did the Department of Education provide any indication of where and how resources will be made available to overhaul the inherited fragmented, unresponsive FET sector.

6.2.5 Theory of action

The introduction of the FET policy framework generated optimism about the creation of a new FET college sector. However, the policy is obscure in regard to a number of issues that I will highlight in my subsequent discussion on the theory of action. Like other policies¹³⁷ that emanated from the Department of Education, the FET policy appears to be more a statement of intent. There are several unresolved issues, *inter alia*, the inclusion of schools in the new FET system and the application of programme-based funding in senior secondary schools. The role of the national Department of Education, as defined in the policy, is to steer and co-ordinate the development of the FET system. The constitutional responsibility of the Department of Education is the development of policies, norms and standards for the transformation of the sector. Provincial departments are expected to implement national policy, as indicated in the national guidelines, through reorganising FET institutions, developing strategic plans, and

¹³⁷ Reference is made for example to the policy on Education for Learners with Special Needs (ELSEN).

supporting institutions to manage allocated resources according to a programme-based funding formula.

Immediately after releasing Education White Paper 4, (1998) the Department of Education embarked on a process of developing a strategy for the implementation of the FET policy. The document was developed in collaboration with the national and provincial departments, and culminated in the *National Strategy for Further Education and Training 1999-2001: Preparing for the Twenty-First Century through Education, Training and Work*¹³⁸. The FET Strategy was released in May 1999 and outlined four broad strategic objectives for systemic change viz. Organisational Development, Learning and Teaching, Resourcing FET, and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, as the areas of intervention or change. This document served as the first implementation plan that outlined where priorities would lie for the next five years in transforming the sector.

The FET Strategy identified key priorities with timeframes and expected outcomes. The intention was to provide a vision for addressing the systemic weakness and deficiencies that existed, including a strategic direction for the transformation of FET. This was the national plan. All initiatives were to be directed towards changing the FET sector so that it responded to the education and training needs nationally, kept up with international trends, served as guide for the development of provincial plans,¹³⁹ and provided a reporting and accountability mechanism to evaluate the performance of the system.

The new proposed governance framework as outlined in Education White Paper 4, (1998) is based on the principles of cooperative governance with a “strong steering, coordinating and developmental role” for government, substantial authority for colleges, and partnerships between government, organised business and labour, and communities (Department of Education 1998c:19). Cooperative governance is reflected in various committees and sub-committees such as the National Board for FET (NBFET) that was established as a statutory body to advise the Minister on all aspects of FET. The other

¹³⁸ Referred to as the “FET Strategy” in my case study.

¹³⁹ MECs will have to appoint provincial advisory bodies as required by the FET Act to advise them on FET transformation and growth within the province, including the development of the provincial strategic plans for FET.

committee that plays a substantial role in shaping education and training, including FET, is the Heads of Education Department Committee (HEDCOM). The role of the Department of Education is to plan, coordinate and monitor activities on a national basis, while implementation is delegated to the provincial education departments.

Considering the role FET would play in providing a skills base, and the principle of partnerships between government, organised business and labour, and communities, the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF) was established in 1999 by the National Business Initiative (NBI), in partnership with the Department of Education. The CCF was the implementation agency for a five-year programme of targeted business interventions in the public FET sector. An amount of R12 million was pledged by the business community over the five-year period (June 1999 to July 2004) to kick-start the transformation of the technical college sector, with the intention that technical colleges become responsive to the needs of business and industry. These were the only new funds that were made available to implement the FET policy.

A senior official of the Department of Education explained that this arrangement was necessary to bring the skills, competencies and capacity, as well as models and ideas from the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector, and to transfer these skills to the FET sector at the provincial and institutional levels. He explained that

... when we were building a state outside the state, the NBI had set itself up as a body that has the competence and skills to be the intermediate, to bring on board business, business skills, business approaches, together with accumulated knowledge of the sector, the college sector, together with the international experience in effect to support the implementation of this policy. This was a case of a consortium being brought together to help government implement its plan (Rob, 16/07/2003).

Rob explained that the role of NGOs prior to 1994 was to build the necessary capacity and skills within these organisations in order to be able to take over the new roles and responsibilities when the time came. The Department of Education officials reiterated several times that the constraints the national and provincial education departments faced in terms of capacity and resources necessitated the need to bring on board additional expertise and skills to assist in the implementation of the FET policy. The partnership with business through the CCF was a collaboration arrangement tha

... was intended to help build a new conduct of management and leadership in the organisation (FET colleges) so that they could take over leadership of this new merged organisation. The idea was to introduce business practices and sufficient management practices so that they could be managed more effectively and in a more targeted manner (Rob, 16/07/2003).

The CCF commenced with research and data collection on the technical colleges in the nine provincial departments of education. The first of these reports to be published by the CCF was the report on the Gauteng province in October 1998, entitled Knowledge and Skills for the Smart Province: An Agenda for the New Millennium. Reports for each of the other eight provinces followed. This culminated in a report known as the “Situational Analysis”, which provided the first authentic data on the technical colleges in the country. The data contained in the Situational Analysis report on each province formed the basis for the planning of the reorganisation of the sector. Other activities undertaken by the CCF included a labour market analysis, project planning; partnership survey report; training for College Councils and senior management; placement of potential middle managers under mentors in UK colleges; the establishment of a college wards system together with the Department of Education; the establishment of National FET conventions; partnership training programmes; research; dissemination and publicity; merger facilitators training and workshops; advocacy and communication; and monitoring and evaluation of the project that it implemented.

At the inception of the CCF programme the Department of Education delegated all the identified implementation activities to the CCF, which reported on a quarterly basis to the Department of Education on its achievements and progress in the technical college sector. The reason for this arrangement was the lack of leadership capacity within the Department of Education as there were not sufficient people with the necessary skills employed in the Department of Education to be involved in these activities on a day-to-day basis.¹⁴⁰ The Department of Education assumed that provinces understood the FET policy and would initiate implementation as outlined in the FET strategy. However,

¹⁴⁰ At the time I was an official of the DoE and was aware of the capacity constraints that the DoE faced. Reforms in the school sector had sapped all the available capacity leaving little resources free for the implementation of the FET policy. The arrangement with the CCF seemed to most appropriate since the CCF had the necessary resources, capacity and skills to initiate changes in the FET college sector.

what the Department of Education did not take cognisance of were the gaps that existed in the policy and the FET strategy. The inability of the Department of Education to produce the necessary guidelines inhibited the provinces from implementing the policy. Instead the Department of Education opted for the use of technical assistance. The intention was that the CCF would use the capacity and skills at its disposal to supplement the scarce human resources in the provincial departments, and to build the necessary capacity and skills at the institutional (college) level. According to Rob (16/07/2003) the assumptions on which the partnership was based were that “within the first few years sufficient capacity would be built at the national, provincial and institutional levels for colleges to have a reasonable degree of autonomy”.

In practice, ownership of the reform interventions undertaken by the CCF seemed to shift from the Department of Education to the CCF. As soon as each of the provincial reports was completed, the CCF undertook to disseminate the information to the respective provincial departments and colleges in the nine provinces. The Department of Education was not actively involved, and the general impression created was that the CCF had taken over government’s responsibilities and was driving the FET reform agenda. The Department of Education was not visible and the impression formed was that “the CCF had taken over from the Department of Education” (Tom, 12/11/2003). The CCF assumed a more dictatorial role in marketing its own reform strategy to provincial departments,¹⁴¹ and began prescribing the process and procedures to be followed to implement the changes. The CCF became synonymous with the FET change agenda. This lack of direct involvement on the part of the national and provincial departments of education created a great deal of anxiety and tension among technical college staff. Provincial departments saw their roles and responsibilities in implementing national policy being usurped, and this caused “a great deal of tension” between several provincial departments of education and the CCF (Tom, 12/11/2003). The matter was referred to the Department of Education which reassessed the situation. It was evident that the CCF was seen to be capitalising on government’s incapacity to implement the reform agenda. A senior Department of Education official referred to the

¹⁴¹ This fallacious relationship was as a result of the CCF having access to funds that could be used to facilitate the change agenda – funds contributed by business and funds that neither the DoE nor the provincial departments could afford within their already heavily committed education budgets.

CCF as seeing itself as a “government outside the government” (Brad, 23/10/2002). By this he implied that the CCF had assumed that the responsibilities of government had been handed over to them. The CCF, on the other hand, believed that it was filling the gap in terms of the capacity, skills and resources needed to build the foundation for the new FET sector. The agreement between the Department of Education and the CCF was amended to bring ownership back to the Department of Education, and to redefine the role of the CCF, ensuring that the CCF would be responsible for reporting quarterly on all identified projects.

The dilemma that provincial departments faced was that, for several reasons, they were not in a position to devote a substantial amount of capacity, time and resources to the transformation of the technical colleges under their jurisdiction. This inability included the limited knowledge, skills, capacity and financial resources available within the departments. The FET policy was thrust upon already pressurised provincial departments of education amidst a multiplicity of competing policies. Given the dynamics and urgency of transforming the school sector, provincial departments had postponed the implementation of the FET policy until such time that resources could be freed from other subsections, and there was more clarity on the FET implementation strategy. The assumption was that the Department of Education would provide provinces with guidance and support to establish a coordinated FET sector based on national guidelines, norms and standards regarding the declaration of FET institutions. A provincial department official was of the opinion that the Department of Education was aware of these impediments, but instead alluded to “a lack of capacity in provincial departments to drive the FET transformation agenda” as being the reason for the non-implementation of the FET policy (Morris, 10/11/2003). I want to argue that non-implementation stemmed from the absence of capacity in the sector, and more particularly, in the Department of Education to share the vision. It was evident from the numerous queries raised by provincial departments that, had provinces received the criteria for the declaration of FET colleges, they would have gone ahead to capacitate colleges to meet the criteria. This was the intention of the policy (Department of Education, 1998:35).

Three years had lapsed since the Education White Paper 4, (1998) was adopted in August 1998. The only visible change activities undertaken in the FET sector were

those undertaken by the CCF. Not one of the technical colleges had been declared FET institutions. Pressure was also mounting on the Department of Education to deliver on the FET policy, as increasing public attention was being drawn to the high rate of unemployment prevalent in the country.¹⁴² As political and social pressure on the Department of Education increased, it became imperative to create some visible sign that change in the sector was inevitable, and that the government had done something to address the skills shortages and unemployment problems. FET was seen as the key to addressing the skills shortages faced by the country and a means of reducing unemployment. This required political intervention. A high level decision was taken that intervention by the Department of Education was necessary to set in motion the reorganisation of the FET sector. Once the Department of Education had a plan, it was certain that it would have the necessary political support and be able to mandate change. In June 2001 the Minister of Education appointed the National Landscape Task Team (NLTT) to advise him and other political counterparts on the *restructuring* of the technical colleges. The NLTT comprised eight members of whom two representatives were from the Department of Education - the Deputy-Director General (DDG) for FET and the Director for FET Colleges, two representatives from the nine provincial departments of education, an international consultant, a national consultant and a representative from the CCF. The task team was headed by the DDG from the Department of Education. The NLTT's report entitled *A New Institutional Landscape for Public Further Education and Training Colleges: Reform of South African Technical Colleges*¹⁴³ (Department of Education, 2001) provided the implementation strategy for the declaration of the former 152 state and state-aided technical colleges as FET institutions, and also the merger proposals for the nine provincial departments to merge the 152 technical colleges into 50 FET institutions nationally.

The Report was developed in close negotiation with senior management in both the national and provincial departments of education. Provincial departments were provided with the parameters within which to base their merger configurations. The Department of Education assumed that there would be vigorous interaction and negotiations between the provincial departments of education and the technical colleges about the

¹⁴² There is a 40 percent rate of unemployment in the country.

¹⁴³ Referred to as "The Report" in the case study.

objectives and intentions to restructure the sector. The NLTT reviewed provincial submissions, and provinces were requested to incorporate the suggestions and amendments provided by the NLTT in the finalisation of the Report.

The pace at which the Report was developed left no time for provincial departments to engage with technical colleges on the objectives, intentions and proposed recommendations of the mergers. Discussions in the provincial departments of education were confined only to a few selected senior managers within the departments. The finalised merger configurations were based on the personal convictions of the selected few within the provincial departments, and ratified by the NLTT. The provincial department officials who were not involved in the planning process felt disillusioned and perceived this as a lack of confidence in their abilities since they were at the forefront of implementing the mergers of which they had no knowledge. Having been excluded from the process they had had no opportunity to have any input into either the plan or the process. I want to argue that this resulted in a lack of ownership, commitment and motivation at some levels in the provincial department level. Neither the Department of Education nor the NLTT had taken the initiative to share the plan and explain the rationale for the mergers, or the process to be followed, to “foot soldiers” at the forefront of the action. The Report was embargoed until it was released at a public launch on 17 September 2001. How did the Department of Education anticipate the mergers being implemented without disseminating the information to those most affected? What was the Department of Education’s understanding of the skills and capacity needed to implement the reform?

Stakeholders at the launch comprised mainly national and provincial department of education officials, technical college Rectors and representatives from the College Councils. It was obvious from the uncanny “silence” that the Rectors were unhappy with the plan. When asked on what this assumption was based Brad (23/10/2002) replied that from his experiences with the sector he was sure that none of the Rectors or College Council members were brave enough to air their views aloud. He referred to the whispers and the way in which the Rectors and Council members congregated in small groups after the official function, as being indicative that the plan had not been well accepted. The provincial department officials indicated that it was the culture of colleges which dictated that the Rectors would not challenge the Department of

Education or the provincial department by questioning the rationale for the mergers, or openly display resistance. According to the plan the CEO of the merged FET colleges would be appointed only after the mergers had been completed. Tom (12/11/2003) felt confident that the Rectors were not going to jeopardise their chances of being appointed as head of the new merged colleges by displaying resistance. Even though it was not mentioned, the Rectors' main concern was whether their jobs were secure. Tom referred to "the white college staff feeling threatened by the secretive manner in which the plan was conceptualized". The irony however, was that in the apartheid era planning was just as secretive, yet college staff had not manifested distrust nor shown resistance to policy changes. The fears emanated from the deep-seated culture of mistrust about change that was embedded in the sector (Engelbrecht, 1982; Esterhuyse, 1982). In the old dispensation change had always been accompanied by limitations, restrictions and job reservations. Brad was perturbed at this reaction from the college staff as "there was no mention at any time that jobs would be threatened, yet the white staff feared that they might lose their jobs".

Provincial department officials were startled at the tight timeframes set by the Department of Education. They assumed that the capacity, support and resources necessary to implement the changes would accompany the top-down mandate. The Report included the National FET Implementation Plan that stipulated activities, levels of delegation of responsibilities, and timelines. According to the plan, the merging of the 152 technical colleges into 50 FET institutions nationally was to be completed by the end of December 2001. The activities from January 2002 entailed the appointment of Rectors and Councils by March 2002, the development and approval of institutional plans by August 2002, and other relevant structures to be put in place by April 2003. It was apparent that no consideration had been given to the unique contexts of each of the nine provinces and the 152 FET institutions (Taylor, et al., 1997). However, the history of the sector revealed the huge disparities (see Chapter 2 pages 36-39) that existed within technical colleges and even across provinces.

What was evident from the outset was that the NLTT saw the implementation of this plan as a rational, linear process, and assumed that the prevailing circumstances in all nine provinces would be the same. The assumption was that there was sufficient understanding, capacity, resources and buy-in for the 152 technical colleges to be

merged within the specified three-month period. The NLTT had omitted the vital communication loop essential to alleviate fear, address resistance, and build trust and vision. Where and when did the NLTT expect communication to happen? How should it have been communicated to the colleges?

Implementation was delegated to the provincial departments, while the Department of Education understood its role as providing support to the provincial departments through the establishment of the Merger Operational Task Team¹⁴⁴ (MOTT). The MOTT comprised one representative from each of the nine provincial education departments and representatives from the Department of Education. The CCF provided the secretariat support to the MOTT. A member of the Department of Education chaired the MOTT. The terms of reference of the MOTT¹⁴⁵ were as follows:

- Design an implementation template for all activities necessary to establish the 50 FET colleges in a nationally coordinated and supported manner.
- Develop and maintain provincial FET Strategic Plans in line with the National Implementation Plan.
- Ensure that resources can be procured to achieve the merger process.
- Develop FET operational plans, steer and report on implementation.
- Identify issues that need to be considered by the Department of Education.
- Provide the national and provincial departments of education with updated reports.
- Assist with institutional audits.
- Develop a profile of each proposed FET colleges, including a SWOT analysis.

The MOTT meetings served as a forum to operationalise the plan in terms of implementing the mergers. The Merger Manual was the guideline provided, however there were several structures, regulations and unresolved policy issues that were not

¹⁴⁴ The terms of reference of the MOTT were to guide and assist provinces in the implementation of the national FET plan. The MOTT met on a weekly basis to monitor the implementation of the new landscape plan.

¹⁴⁵ Terms of reference were developed by the DoE for the MOTT.

considered at the time of developing the plan. Most times provincial departments were “fire fighting” as colleges raised questions about issues that impacted on them as a result of the mergers. The issues raised included the finalisation of staff complements for the merged colleges, Education and Labour Relation Issues, work study exercises on the evaluation of the CEO posts, funding for the new CEO posts, identification of skills and capacity needs in the new institutions, audits of colleges and so forth. The major benefit of holding the MOTT meetings was that these meetings created unity and a team spirit among firstly, provincial department officials, and secondly, between the Department of Education and the provincial department officials of the same rank.

The initial step and support in implementing the merger was the appointment of merger facilitators to assist colleges with the development of their merger plans. A national advertisement was placed for the recruitment of fifty merger facilitators. The short-listing, selection and appointment of the facilitators were done by the provincial departments of education. Each province appointed the same number of facilitators as the number of merged institutions to be established in that province. Although the provincial departments appointed the merger facilitators, the funding for the merger facilitator was provided by the CCF. This was the only “financial” support that colleges received to implement the merger.

It was the responsibility of the merger facilitators to provide colleges with the context and the rationale for the mergers, and to facilitate the development of a merger plan. It was apparent that the merger facilitator was considered a key player, and that the success of the merger plan process depended on the merger facilitator’s ability to guide the process, and motivate the members of the various structures that were established within the colleges to be merged. The NLTT in its planning assumed that the facilitator would be accepted by colleges to co-ordinate the merger activities. The role of the provincial department was to support the colleges and the merger facilitator, through providing and disseminating information, solutions to problems, and serving as negotiators when there were disagreements or consensus could not be reached. Yet the provincial departments did not have the necessary resources, capacity and skills to carry out their duties effectively.

Prior to commencing with their tasks, merger facilitators were familiarised with the processes and structures that the merging entailed. Between 30 September and 2 October 2001 a three-day Merger Facilitator Workshop was held to familiarise merger facilitators with the contents of the Merger Manual. The processes, structures and timeframes had been outlined in a Merger Manual prepared by the Department of Education. The intention was to coordinate merger activities across all nine provinces. The Department of Education hosted the workshop that was attended by provincial department officials and all fifty merger facilitators. Merger facilitators were appointed for a period of one month, during which time the merger plans were to be developed by the colleges for submission to the provincial departments for evaluation.

Provincial departments immediately established the Provincial Merger Teams (PMT) as identified in the Merger Manuals. The PMTs were departmental line function teams comprising members from the provincial FET directorates. The PMTs were required to develop provincial FET plans, and to oversee and monitor the merger process within their provinces. The PMTs also played an advisory role in the provinces by making recommendations to senior management in the provincial departments to advise the provincial MECs for education on the merger process.

At the institutional level, an Institutional Merger Team (IMT) comprising all the Rectors of the technical colleges in the cluster, the merger facilitator and representatives of the stakeholder groupings appointed to the total number of Rectors plus one had the responsibility of steering the process. The role of the IMT was to oversee the development of the merger plans, to coordinate and monitor working group¹⁴⁶ activities and receive reports from the working groups. The ultimate responsibility of the IMT was to ensure that the merger plan reflected the attributes¹⁴⁷ listed in the new FET landscape plan. The IMT was required to work closely with the merger facilitator in the development of the merger plan.

¹⁴⁶ There were 8 working groups viz. Governance and Management, Administration and Business systems/EMIS, Finance, Programmes, Human Resource Development, Learner Affairs and Support, Facilities and Infrastructure, and Marketing and Communications.

¹⁴⁷ These are: large multi-site FET colleges, greater authority for colleges, a quality assurance framework, specialised niche and multi-purpose colleges, open and distance learning, articulation and collaboration with higher education, and student support services (Department of Education, 2001).

Photo 4: Merger facilitators at a training workshop held by the Department of Education and CCF



Merger facilitators assumed duty on 1 October 2001 on a one-month contract with the provincial department of education. A provincial department official introduced the merger facilitator at a meeting with representatives from the three colleges to be merged. The Rectors were not present at this meeting. The process commenced with the establishment of the interim council for the three colleges, and the establishment of the IMT and the workgroups as identified in the Merger Manual. From this point provinces and colleges proceeded at their own pace taking their individual circumstances into consideration. Several provinces were not able to achieve the milestones within the set timeframes. Gauteng province, the province in which the case study colleges are situated, achieved the milestones as set out in the plans as follows:

¹⁴⁶ There were 8 working groups viz. Governance and Management, Administration and Business systems/EMIS, Finance, Programmes, Human Resource Development, Learner Affairs and Support, Facilities and Infrastructure, and Marketing and Communications.

¹⁴⁷ These are: large multi-site FET colleges, greater authority for colleges, a quality assurance framework, specialised niche and multi-purpose colleges, open and distance learning, articulation and collaboration with higher education, and student support services (Department of Education, 2001).

- The declaration of the 152 technical colleges to bring them under the FET Act by 1 August 2001
- Provincial departments of education to publish their intentions to merge the FET institutions by 1 August 2001
- The declaration of the 50 merged FET institutions by 11 December 2001
- College Councils and Rectors to be appointed by the end of March 2002

The political dynamics within the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to effect the changes in the FET sector were so strong that it was certain that the FET colleges would be merged within the set timeframes, despite the uncertainty, resistance and unhappiness prevalent in the sector. The senior officials in the Gauteng Department of Education saw the mandate to implement the reform as a legitimate justification to address the numerous problems that beset the technical college sector.

6.2.6 Synthesis

There are several conclusions that may be drawn from the foregoing analysis:

Firstly, the policy formulation process was not straightforward and simple when one considers the context in which this policy was developed. There were several causal factors that influenced the FET policy. These include the extent to which globalisation and the forces of economic modernisation played a major role in the reconstitution of the FET college sector while redressing historic injustices. The impetus was to put in place a policy that would transform the FET college sector so as to be responsive to the challenges of globalisation while at the same time be able to address the human resource needs and skill shortages that South Africa faces. Historic imbalances were to be redressed by ensuring that the policy and strategy upheld the importance of equity. This could only be achieved through eliciting sufficient political will to activate an interventionist state planning, coordinating and steering role while the policymaking process entailed a vigorous consultation process in order to elicit support and credibility.

Secondly, gaps in the policy implementation plans are referred to as “policy refraction” (Taylor et al., 1997:119). Policy refraction refers to the distortion of policy, a distortion which comes about as a result of the interaction of competing interests and sets of

values. Policy becomes disjointed and less coherent as it goes through the “encoding” and “decoding” processes, in other words, it is refracted. This was evident in the several unresolved issues which resulted in numerous ambiguities in policy intentions. Accordingly, predicting the FET policy effects is not easy.

Thirdly, the FET policy, like several other educational policies in South Africa, could be described as a “symbolic policy”, which the state, conscious of its human, financial and other constraints, put in place (Jansen, 2001). The FET policy was developed at a rapid pace with the objective of reinforcing the credibility of the ANC government before its end of first term of political office. The adoption of the FET policy succeeded in reinforcing the leadership image and instilling quiescence among others - a dulling of a critical response from the electorate that the government was not committed to transforming the entire education system. This was less about practical change than to legitimise the role of the FET policy in the government’s redress and equity agenda.

Fourthly, the shortcomings in the implementation of policies in the South African context represent a process of “policy ambiguity and slippage” (Kraak, 2001), with the state appearing unsure of its direction, and the conflicting discourses on the establishment of a “single coordinated” FET sector. This is of particular relevance when one considers the characteristics of technical colleges and senior secondary schools.

Fifthly, the FET policy relies heavily on several underlying assumptions about the change. Some of the underlying assumptions in the FET policy are that stakeholders would willingly embrace the *restructuring* of the sector; there would be sufficient training and capacity building, that sufficient resources would be available; that roles and responsibilities would be clearly defined; that implementers would have a common understanding of the policy intentions and expectations, and that implementing units would be adequately staffed to provide support and leadership.

Sixthly, the FET policy was introduced in an environment of a multiplicity of competing policies. The political emphasis was directed at reforming the school sector, and the FET policy, which was associated with a lesser political and social status, was bound to be accorded less significance.

6.3 Policy intentions: Views of policymakers and union representatives

I conducted audio-taped interviews with the national department officials, union representatives and consultants to elicit their understanding of the FET policy, ascertain the policy goals, provide reasons for the implementation strategy, and identify the factors that facilitated or inhibited the implementation of the FET policy. The interviews were transcribed and responses to questions described in narrative form. Data from the interviews and documentation was analysed to produce a comprehensive picture of the stakeholder understanding of the FET policy. All similar and divergent responses were categorised in order to identify response patterns in the different groups of stakeholders who were interviewed. In my analysis of the data collected I used the elements of structure and culture as identified in Chapter Three.

6.3.1 Characteristic of change

In general, there was consensus among the Department of Education officials, union representatives and consultants that change initiated through the FET policy was extremely complex. FET, as outlined in policy, was a new concept introduced into the education and training system. The technical college sector, in particular, was virtually unknown for its role in the previous system. Both an official from the Department of Education and a consultant concurred that there had been a great deal of consultation and engagement in stakeholder forums during the policy development process to clarify issues that were unclear. Reflecting on the vibrant and dynamic policy development process the consultant noted that:

There was to a large extent strong external inputs, such as the NCOP¹⁴⁸, and there was also a lot of input from other external role players (Tom, 12/11/2003).

And, even although there was this level of interaction, it was further noted that:

... I was not sure that there was the level of understanding of what this policy was about in terms of the responsiveness to the external demands (Tom, 12/11/2003).

FET is essential to provide skills for employment and to address the human resource needs of the country. In order to achieve these objectives, FET provisioning needs to be

¹⁴⁸ National Committee of Provinces

responsive by providing a wide and flexible curriculum and different modes of learning that suit the diverse learner population and satisfy the socio-economic needs of the communities they serve. At the same time public FET is provided through both schools and technical colleges. A second consultant indicated that:

... I don't think that anybody on the ground really understood or was actively pursuing the full integration of FET at the senior secondary phase and the technical college phase (Paul, 12/05/2003).

The union representative concurred with the consultant that the unresolved issues in Education White Paper 4 (1998) compounded the challenges associated with implementing the FET reform agenda. Stakeholders were unclear as to whether the FET Act was explicitly for the technical colleges, or whether it also included the senior secondary schools. The union member recollected that college staff experienced a high level of frustration because of the differences in opinion between themselves as practitioners and provincial department officials, who were the bureaucrats responsible for overseeing and steering the policy implementation process. He expounded that it was only after the Department of Education clarified its intention that the *restructuring* applied only to the technical colleges that emphasis moved from schools to technical colleges, and that the provincial departments began focusing some attention on the technical colleges as well. Provincial departments were under the impression that both senior secondary schools and technical colleges were affected by the FET policy. The Department of Education was unclear about the role that schools would play in providing FET. The issues around the role of schools was one of the unresolved policy issues noted in the Education White Paper 4 (Department of Education, 1998c:14-15).

Implementing the FET policy implied changing the technical college sector within an environment of competing policies. A Department of Education official maintained that the intricacy of the intervention, and the limited human and fiscal capacity, required political intervention to drive the FET college change agenda. He went on to describe the technical college sector as “very weak,” and because of this, there was no concern from the Department of Education’s perspective about resistance from the sector towards imposing a political mandate to merge the technical colleges and redefine the FET landscape. The Department of Education official recollected that a decision was taken that:

A nationally driven collaborated process would be adopted to drive this change. It was going to be a political mandate and we knew that there would be no contestation. If the restructuring of the technical colleges was left to the provinces it was not going to happen (Brad, 23/10/2002).

The Department of Education official indicated that the institutional culture prevalent in technical college was not innovative and it was therefore unrealistic to expect colleges to initiate the change from within. He was sure that without external intervention nothing would change. Brad maintained that political pressure left little option but to take a bureaucratic stance and mandate changes in the FET college sector. The prevailing situation warranted a different approach and stringent intervention by the Department of Education to the effect that

... given the limited fiscal and human resources available to the sector within provincial departments (Brad, 23/10/2002).

The FET Act, which provided the legal basis for the implementation of Education White Paper 4 (1998), was promulgated in November 1998. Because of the time lapse from 1998 to 2001 policymakers, as well as officials from both national and provincial departments of education, assumed that college staff were aware of and understood the implications of implementing the policy. The CCF held several workshops with colleges throughout the country to explain the transformation of the FET landscape. Rectors and representatives from the College Councils generally attended these workshops. The organisation representing Rectors, known as the Association for Further Education and Training Institutions in South Africa¹⁴⁹ (AFETISA), also held numerous meetings at which the transformation of the technical colleges was discussed. The Department of Education as well as the Gauteng Department of Education were often invited to make presentations at these workshops yet college staff still pleaded ignorance of the FET policy.

A policymaker explained that the reason could have been that there was not sufficient communication. However, he believed that people were aware of the imminent changes, particularly the merging of technical colleges intended for the sector. Rectors were

¹⁴⁹ Formally known as the CTCP.

continuously made aware of the challenges that lay ahead of them and the FET college sector as a whole. They were informed

... through the Situational Analysis, White Papers, workshops at top levels provided to Rectors and council representatives over a period of 2 to 3 years (Tom, 12/11/2003).

The policymaker stated that through these interactions he became aware that some Rectors were accepting the fact that changes were essential. He was sure that there was some understanding at the higher levels of college management of the policy requirements and the change strategy. Nevertheless, his observation was that:

... if you stepped down from the level of the Rector the staff knew very little (Tom, 12/11/2003).

The policymaker was of the view that the lack of understanding at lower levels in the technical colleges was reflective of the hierarchical structure of technical colleges a structure that was supported by a culture that believed that information should be shared only when relevant. This was typical of the undemocratic way in which the colleges functioned. This practice was justified with the excuse that information was withheld in order to protect junior officials from undue anxiety and fears about imminent changes. He explained that seniority is associated with maturity and a demeanour more capable of dealing with uncertainty. The college management would share this information with the lower levels once final decisions were taken and there was certainty about how the process would unfold.

The Rectors' reluctance to share information with all members of the staff could also be attributed to their fear of change and resistance to the new change agenda. A Department of Education official explained that it was necessary to devise a national plan to coordinate activities and time-frames across the nine provincial departments of education. He was of the opinion that there was no need for further stakeholder consultation about the implementation strategy, since the policy provided clear directions for the intended changes. He recollected that the decision was that:

There was a political decision that we are going to go the route of merging the colleges and, once the political decision was taken, civil servants have to follow (Brad, 23/10/2002).

The intention was to bring both state and state-aided colleges under a single piece of legislation and to dismantle the apartheid structural and cultural disparities that existed among the colleges. The consultant, however, disagreed with the Department of Education official in this regard. He indicated that the objective of the FET policy was to establish a regulating system with quality assurance processes around the development of programmes, and a governance mechanism that would interact to regulate the system. He strongly believed that there was no intention of creating a bureaucratic model that decided on a way of systemic change and governance.

The union representative, on the other hand, lamented that there was no stakeholder involvement in the development of the plan, released in September 2001, mandating the merging of technical colleges. The impression he had was that:

The colleges were put under great pressure to merge, to show that something was happening (Chris, 06/11/2002).

He went on to elaborate that stakeholders felt very insecure about the merger. He identified the lack of stakeholder participation as the reason for anxiety among college staff. When reminded that the option of mergers had been widely debated during the policymaking process he indicated that too much time has elapsed between the policymaking stage and the real implementation. He indicated that college staff were of the opinion that mergers were no longer under consideration. He expressed his concern that people's feelings had been ignored. He recalled that college staff were not concerned about the real meaning or intentions of the mergers, or what it meant for FET or the country as a whole.

The staff were concerned about their jobs, they were looking at their own personal concern and that is where the problem came in (Chris, 06/11/2002).

It was evident from the data that white college staff feared that they would lose their jobs. Implicit in the plan was the assumption that implementation was a linear process in which all the pieces would fit neatly into one another. Implementation in practice, proved otherwise. According to the union as per the union official

... the national department has good ideas and they want to take it somewhere. I just don't think that both provincial and national department officials share the same vision for various reasons. The national department officials have a wonderful plan, it will work in Gauteng, you don't know what is going on in a rural area of KwaZulu-Natal, you don't know what's going on in the Northern Cape, where colleges are 300 km apart from one another, and that kind of thing. Those are the dynamics that come in (Chris, 06/11/2002).

This was an indication of the complexity of the nature of the change. Not only were provinces different from one another, the disparities that existed among the individual colleges even in the same geographic region were huge.

6.3.2 Capacity

Overall, Department of Education officials, provincial department officials and union representatives concurred that one of the greatest challenges posed was the lack of capacity to steer the changes in the technical college sector. Reference was made to human and physical resources. Particular reference was made to leadership, skills, knowledge, know-how and understanding of the change, particularly the merger. Physical and financial resources continued to be a major constraint throughout the merger process.

A Department of Education official acknowledged that new skills were necessary to carry out the reform as specified in the FET policy. He understood that there were new relationships to be forged with different sectors of the community, and it was for this reason that the partnership arrangement had been established with the CCF. He emphasised that there was limited capacity available within the national and provincial departments to implement the various new policies, including the FET policy, and that organisations such as the CCF were in a position to provide the necessary skills and support required to drive the transformation process. A policymaker attributed weaknesses in transforming the technical college sector to the following:

... the unevenness of capacity in the sector. Definitely there is a discrepancy between capacity in the provinces compared with national. There was capacity in pockets (Paul, 12/05/2003).

A second policymaker pointed out that external expertise was necessary since

... the departments were starting from a very limited knowledge base, limited resources and limited expertise (Tom, 12/11/2003).

The Department of Education official recalled that the CCF was recognised as the organisation that had acquired the necessary business skills and approaches together with the international experience needed to transform the FET colleges sector. He pointed out that the intention of the partnership with the CCF was an arrangement to

... transfer skills at the lowest level. Take the capacity and build on that capacity. This was a case of forming a consortium to help government to implement its plan (Rob, 16/07/2003).

Accordingly, a component of the partnership arrangement was to

... start with management training at the college level, so that that will be in place at the time of implementing the mergers (Rob, 16/07/2003).

In addition international consultants were brought in from countries where there was an already established FET sector, countries such as Australia, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. A Department of Education official elaborated that it was necessary

... to provide expertise in areas that were completely new to us. We required a completely new leadership to lead these organisations into a new role. A leadership that understands the role of these institutions in the new context of the economic, social and political roles the institutions are to play in the future (Brad, 23/10/2002).

Leadership was not only necessary at the college level but also in the provincial departments. Officials employed in provincial departments had limited knowledge of the type of institutions that were envisaged for the sector. The Department of Education had wavered on its commitment to build capacity in the provincial departments of education, nor did the Department of Education hold discussions with the provincial departments to build a vision for the sector. The discussions that were held with provincial departments were at a very senior level and, unusually, involved officials who were not directly involved in the implementation of policy, but instead were the decision-making bureaucrats.

The Department of Education official lamented the lack of capacity within the provincial departments to implement the policy. He admitted that one of the reasons for the national plan was the

... incapacity of the provinces, even in terms of their constitutional obligations, to drive this process (Brad, 23/10/2002).

On the other hand I wish to argue that the ineffectiveness of the provincial department could be attributed to a lack of capacity within the Department of Education to build capacity within and disseminate information to the provincial department. Collaborative structures could have been established so that the Department of Education and the provincial departments could engage in implementation issues, and together find solutions to drive the FET reform agenda with the aim of establishing a coordinated FET sector for the country.

A consultant described the Department of Education

... as a very small number of individuals in a department in which there isn't the kind of systematic staff work that you would expect to inform the development and implementation of policy (Tom, 12/11/2003).

He indicated that the FET Directorate in the Department of Education comprised five staff members. The Director FET was responsible overall for the implementation of the national plan and had one staff member assigned to the institutional development of the FET colleges. The other three staff members were assigned to other responsibilities such as the registration of private FET providers and youth programmes in the sector.

When asked how decisions were made the Department of Education official responded that decisions regarding the implementation of the FET policy were taken at different levels within the Department of Education depending on the complexity and severity of the decision. All major decisions were taken by HEDCOM and the CEM. Decisions taken by the Director had to be sanctioned by the Chief Director and Deputy-Director General for FET before they could be put into action.

The consultant lamented that the hierarchical structure of the Department of Education influenced policy implementation in that considerable time would sometimes elapse before decisions could be taken. He was of the opinion that the isolated work ethic in the Department of Education contributed to individualistic thinking among the officials, with very few opportunities for collaboration. The environment was not conducive to decision-making and debate among staff members, and major decisions were based on

... individual characteristics, temperament and traits, and not something you would expect to find in a more stable and more mature bureaucracy (Tom, 12/11/2003).

The policymaker indicated that this posed several challenges when it came to policy implementation, as individuals often differed about the approaches to be adopted or the sequence that events should follow. He implied that decisions would sometimes change if the senior officials had opposing views, and the person who wielded more power in the hierarchy would make the decision on the strategy to be followed. Tom explained that in a more mature bureaucracy there would be debate and discussions around the various options and solutions and a decision would be taken collectively.

The long periods of indecision were questioned by the union representative in terms of whether capacity existed at the Department of Education to implement the policy. He felt strongly that the provincial department did not have the capacity to drive change of this magnitude. He indicated that:

There are certain individuals who worked very hard to get this thing off the ground. There are many unanswered questions, and I think that is an indication that there is a lack of capacity at national level as well as at the provincial level (Chris, 06/11/2002).

In his assessment of the situation the union representative referred to the lack of clarity on the curriculum to be offered in both FET schools and colleges, that the funding arrangements for the FET colleges were not agreed to, that there was no indication of when CEOs would be appointed, and that the staff establishments of the newly merged colleges had not been formalised. These were the unanswered questions to which he was referring.

6.3.3 Support and training

Representatives from the Department of Education and consultants strongly believed that support and training were available to implement the reform, even though this support and training may not have been sufficient in all aspects. The use of international consultants provided technical support for the development of the policy and the implementation plan.

The representatives from the Department of Education and consultants acknowledged the need to provide support to institutions for capacity building. The Department of Education official recalled that management-training programmes had been provided by the CCF at the institutional level. The management-training programmes were targeted at middle management in technical colleges in all nine provinces. The objective of the management training programmes was to build a cadre of middle managers from designated previously disadvantaged groups. The training programme consisted of a three-month mentorship programme in the United Kingdom for middle managers in technical colleges. All nine provincial departments nominated middle managers for the programme. By the end of 2002 75 middle managers nationally had been trained on the programme. In addition, College Council members were also being trained. These training programmes were offered over weekends to College Council members in all provinces. The effectiveness of the middle management training programme, was still to be assessed. The union representative however, indicated that he had only heard of the training programme but had not met anyone that had gone on the training programme. He was therefore in no position to voice an opinion. One of the middle managers who had undergone the mentorship training programme in the UK was promoted to a managerial position in the Western Cape Department of Education while several others were used as mentors in provincial offices.

A Department of Education official referred to the MOTT as being a support structure to provincial departments. The policymaker described the MOTT as a “symbiotic structure” whereby the national department and provincial departments could

... get a handle on how to do things – so it was more like a parent- child relationship
(Tom, 12/11/2003).

The Department of Education provided direction to coordinate the activities while provincial departments highlighted the realities on the ground. The provincial departments brought their problems to the MOTT where collectively the members found solutions to most issues raised. Another positive aspect of the MOTT was that it helped build and foster a relationship between the Department of Education and provincial department officials, and among provincial department officials. A provincial department official expressed regret in that the MOTT was restricted to just one representative from each province. He pointed out that it would have been far more beneficial if more provincial representatives had been involved in the planning as this would have increased the level of their understanding and support to the colleges.

However the opinions of stakeholders differed from that of the Department of Education official in terms of the support provided by the Department of Education. The policymaker and union representative believed that the Department of Education did very little to support the implementation of the mergers beyond the preparation of the merger manual. The policymaker explained that the Department of Education had taken the leadership initiative to drive the mergers, but felt saddened by the thought that the Department of Education had not succeeded sufficiently in “selling” the idea to the sector as a whole. By this he meant that the strategy and process had not been communicated to the people who would have been at the forefront of implementing the reform. He asserted that once the political buy-in and support had been given, the Department of Education

... stood back and said to the provinces “Well, you have to implement it” (Tom, 12/11/2003).

The union representative recalled the frustration on the part of the colleges because of the inadequate support and directions provided by the provincial department to steer the mergers. He observed that there were only a small number of provincial department officials available to provide guidance on the process

... if you look at the capacity in the provincial departments, even at this stage, there is no deadline for them to have certain people in place to assist with the roll-out of the plan. Many provinces don't even have fully fledged FET units within the provincial departments yet, so where are you going to be supported? (Chris, 06/11/2002)

The union representative alleged that provincial departments were understaffed. In addition the necessary organisational structures were lacking. He was of the opinion that the provincial departments were in no haste to fill posts to ensure that there was the capacity within the departments to implement the FET policy. He was also perturbed that many provinces functioned without the appropriate and necessary structure in the form of a FET unit. He pointed out that without the necessary people and structures in place there would not be support to colleges.

6.3.4 Leadership

Leadership could have taken various forms such as the sharing of power and influence to facilitate staff commitment. This could have included effective communication, demonstrating trust, showing respect and providing opportunities for training and growth. According to a Department of Education official most provincial education departments were *restructuring* in order to align their functions with the new policies. *Restructuring* also implied the appointment of staff with the necessary skills and expertise to positions identified in the new departmental organograms. Coupled with this was the need to appoint persons from the designated race groups, so that the composition of departmental staff would be representative of the demographics of the population that they served.

The Department of Education official was of the opinion that the leadership provided by the national department played an integral role in ensuring that the technical colleges merged. He was adamant that without the Department of Education's intervention and leadership the mergers would not have been realised as FET was not high on the provincial priority list considering the financial constraints that the provincial departments faced. He maintained that this also one of the reasons why provincial departments were not enthusiastic about filling vacant posts in the FET units.

The Gauteng FET unit was considered to be well resourced when compared to other provincial education departments. However, a matter of concern was that staff was employed at lower levels, and were therefore not in a position to influence policy implementation decisions in any significant way. Senior management staff was seldom assigned to the FET college sector, and where there was senior management

involvement it was usually curriculum specialists who in fact knew very little about institutional change. Curriculum reform comprised only one facet of this major systemic change process. The policymaker felt disturbed that there was a genuine lack of necessary leadership in the provincial department and that

... the people employed really belonged to the colleges and not to the provincial departments, so there wasn't the kind of capacity and leadership that was needed (Tom, 12/11/2003).

In line with the government's equity agenda provincial education departments embarked on a policy of appointing people from the designated race groups to positions within the departments. Considering the history of the technical college sector it was not possible to find suitable candidates from the designated race groups to fill these positions. Consequently, several of the officials employed in provincial departments came from colleges where they had been either lecturers or held middle management positions. The policymaker strongly believed that these people should not have been appointed to the provincial departments but should have rather remained in the colleges as they lacked the leadership skills needed in a provincial department to steer the change agenda.

Under these circumstances the consultant understood that it was the responsibility of the Department of Education to steer the process, even if this meant a top-down change agenda. He concluded that there was leadership and will at senior levels of the Department of Education. He was of the opinion that without leadership at the senior levels the mergers in the technical colleges would not have happened. He thought that

... it took some guts and political stage and leadership to push it in the way that it was pushed. (Tom, 12/11/2003).

The union representative expressed his disappointment that provincial officials were often not in a position to provide leadership, nor to answer questions posed to them in relation to the mergers. He commented that implementation could have been a little easier had there been

... people in place who could provide answers and not just show the plans in terms of saying that it comes from national level, we've got to implement (Chris, 06/11/2002).

It was evident that provincial department officials had not bought into the change agenda. They were not in a position to communicate the essentials of the reform to colleges nor were they committed to the strategy put in place by the Department of Education – a strategy in which they had no say.

The union representative alluded to the fact that a lack of leadership in provincial departments had resulted in a lot of tension among the staff of the various colleges. This in turn often led to a breakdown in the process. However, he believed that leadership was present among college staff. It was evident that Chris had a narrow understanding of what the new leadership attributes for further education colleges entailed. Nevertheless he maintained that even though it had been necessary to assign the administrative leadership to one individual appointed in an official capacity, the merger facilitator was not the person to whom this responsibility should have been given.

6.3.5 Resources

Financial resources, human capacity and time have been identified as key elements in educational change. Department of Education representatives, policymakers and union representatives unanimously agreed that the human and fiscal resources did not exist to bring about the changes as anticipated in the FET policy.

A senior Department of Education official explained that government had committed the resources it had available to restructure education as a whole, and that provinces and individual departments had the prerogative of deciding how they intended to utilise the funds available to them. He indicated that, because of the lower priority assigned to technical colleges, only 2 percent of provincial education budgets are spent on technical colleges. He emphatically stated that additional funding was needed for FET given that:

The state of the colleges is such that they need to be revamped. In addition to this there are several members of staff who are not actually qualified to teach, and therefore staff needs to be retrained. At the same time there is a need for interventions to bring colleges closer to the local communities and local industries . (Brad, 23/10/2002).

He was concerned about the cost of the reform, as a great deal of money was needed to restructure the sector to achieve the long-term objectives. The Department of Education official understood the pressures on the education system as a whole, and he knew that

it was not possible to make the additional financial resources available through the provincial budgets. In addition, provincial education departments decided what proportion of their education budgets would be allocated to FET, and this was generally a very small proportion of the budget, as schools and compulsory basic education were the immediate priorities. FET colleges fell outside of these parameters. The official maintained that a possible solution could lie in partnership arrangements with the private sector which would potentially have a vested interest in FET colleges. He recognised the partnership arrangements with the CCF as one such arrangement.

The consultant was sympathetic towards the fact that funds were a major constraint. Government had not made any additional funds available to implement the FET policy. The policymaker pointed out that private sector funds were utilised to remunerate the merger facilitators. Without private sector funds it would have been virtually impossible to appoint merger facilitators. He questioned that, had the Department of Education been committed to the reform of the FET colleges, why had no resources been made available to support the change agenda? The Department of Education had indicated that the mergers would increase efficiency in the FET college sector, but, there had been no indication of how much the savings would amount to.

The union representative was distressed that funds for the merger activities often became a contentious issue between the members of the different colleges since it was not clear who would be responsible for particular expenses associated with the merger activities. These issues were never discussed and colleges had to provide funds from their already committed budgets.

Time

The role of time is often underestimated when it comes to implementing new policies. Simultaneously, different role-players have different perspectives on the role of time in implementing educational change. A senior Department of Education official felt that sufficient time had been allocated for the development of the merger plans, and the announcement of the merged colleges. He believed that stakeholders were aware of what was required in terms of the policy promulgated in 1998. He stressed that

... people knew that we would be restructuring. This was a decision taken in 1998.
(Brad, 23/10/2002).

What the Department of Education official failed to acknowledge was that even though people were aware that there would be restructuring they had not understood that restructuring implied mergers. The emphasis at the college level was on being declared a FET institution as indicated in the FET Act. Deliberations that were taking place at the college level were around the criteria that colleges would need to satisfy in order to be declared a FET institution.

A second Department of Education official alleged that there had been no need for further deliberations or time to ensure understanding of what was intended, as the policy development process had been through a vigorous consultation process. He pointed out that

Provinces knew all along that the intention was to consolidate; they were very clear about that as these were all negotiated long ago as we went through the legitimate exercise of serious engagement with several public forums and comments in the development of this policy (Rob, 16/07/2003).

Like the college staff the provincial department officials were aware that the policy involved the reorganisation of the sector. However, they did not consider the merger as the first stage in the restructuring of the FET college sector. The provincial department had engaged with the colleges on the criteria to be declared as a FET institution.

The consultant felt differently from the Department of Education officials and recalled the hasty pace at which the mergers proceeded. He expressed concerns about the process, and indicated that the pace at which things were supposed to happen placed a lot of pressure on all those involved. He was of the opinion that the Department of Education perceived it as

... a bureaucratic notion of where the Department of Education will take the decisions and people will simply comply and there will be buy-in and understanding (Tom, 12/11/2003).

A union representative explained that he felt pressured as things were so rushed and not sufficient time allowed for college staff to grasp the steps and stages of the mergers. He felt disillusioned as the haste had created a lot of insecurity among college staff and questioned the process. Chris indicated that he could not understand

... why this process was steamrolled, why couldn't we have stopped when things were heavy, and we could all see that it is going to come apart at the seams, why didn't we just take one step back and say, okay let's see if everybody is on board, number one, are all the provinces exactly in line at this stage, number two, do you all have the funds that you need to carry on with this process, number three, what are the problems you experience at ground level at your colleges. (Chris, 06/11/2002).

The pace at which the events unfolded left no time to review and monitor implementation. This resulted in anxiety, frustration and demotivation among those involved, as there was no opportunities to question, understand or interpret the merger.

6.3.6 Culture

Assumptions

In terms of the cultural aspects of the change agenda it was evident that there were substantial variations as regards the **assumptions** made by the policymakers, union officials and provincial department officials interviewed. Firstly, both Department of Education officials and policymakers assumed that stakeholders had a degree of **understanding** of the FET policy and implementation strategy.

The Department of Education official was of the view that since the policy had been promulgated in 1998 each individual involved in the sector had at least read the FET Act and Education White Paper 4 (1998) as it impacted directly on their lives. He assumed that the stakeholders had some understanding of what was implied by the reorganisation of the sector. However, the college staff differed in their assumptions about on the role and responsibilities of the new bureaucrats in the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education.

Secondly, college staff assumed that the Gauteng Department of Education would enter into discussions and negotiations with the colleges when implementing the policy

changes. The Department of Education on the other hand assumed that further discussions and negotiations were unnecessary as the policy has been through a rigorous consultation process. The policymaker maintained that the policy intentions were made clear at the various workshops and meetings held over the two to three year period prior to the mergers. The Rectors of the technical colleges and representatives from the College Councils attended these workshops and meetings. The assumption was that Rectors and Council members would initiate discussions at the college level on the imminent changes in order to convey the message down to all levels in the colleges. A senior Department of Education indicated that

... the understanding of the sophistication of the strategy in arriving at that change was understood varyingly by different people given their location within the system at a particular point in time (Brad, 23/10/2002).

He assumed that this was the case depending on the level of information shared at the colleges and the practice within the specific college to encourage debate and discussions on the FET policy. However, Rectors assumed that it was not their role to inform college staff of the change. The Rectors assumed that the Gauteng Department of Education would do this through meetings and workshops since it was the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education that intended to put the plan into action.

Thirdly, since neither the Department of Education nor Gauteng Department of Education had informed college staff directly of the merger the college staff assumed that there was a hidden agenda in the merging of the FET colleges. They assumed that the restructuring of the FET colleges implied that white college staff would lose their jobs. The assumption was that restructuring implied making the staff profile more representative of the demographics of the student profile, which was changing rapidly. The Department of Education on the other hand assumed that since there was no such indication in the policy or anywhere else college staff would not feel threatened that they would lose their jobs. The Department of Education official indicated that

... part of the problem in transforming institutions to be reflective of the demographics of this country is a problem of a skills base so the transformation is not by anyway a two year thing (Brad, 23/10/2002).

He assumed that college staff was aware of the challenges that the sector faced in terms of teaching skills shortages and that it would not be possible to change staff profiles within a short period of time. He explained that it would take several years to build capacity among the different race groups in order to make the staff profile representative of the student demographics of these institutions.

Fourthly, the union representative assumed that mergers would result in a decline in the status and the quality of service provided by colleges. He assumed that through the amalgamation of the colleges resources would have to be shared, thereby leading to a decrease in the quality of services provided by the colleges. Of great concern to the union representative was the fact that the merger would result in

... sharing the resources and being attached to somebody who isn't on your level
(Chris, 06/11/2002).

He believed that state-aided colleges were superior to state colleges.

Norms

Norms relate to behaviour patterns that take place in the context of an organisational structure. The general norm is that the technical college sector is known to be white male dominated and responsible for a particular role in a designated sector of the South African population. The policymaker described technical college staff as

... of the most capable and committed advocates of change; or you get these very solid soldiers who do not want to change and who have their roots and won't be able to make a change. Then you get the older Rectors and senior managers who are entirely uncomfortable with the changes (Tom, 12/11/2003).

He explained that college staff could not be classed as a homogenous group where in which all staff shared the same values and beliefs about change. However, technical colleges were considered to be institutions that were managed by white males – a typical characteristic of the institutions considering the history of technical colleges (refer to Chapter 2). Some of the older members of staff were deep entrenched in these institutions and resisted change. They believed that they understood the sector best and had established a work culture that had proved to be successful. Change implied

challenging the beliefs and values that they had upheld for decades. On the other hand younger staff members were more adventurous and were willing to embrace the change.

The union representative agreed that the technical colleges were by nature very conservative. He emphasised that the values and beliefs of the state-aided colleges were deeply embedded in the conservative institutional culture. He felt that the culture of the colleges was something of which the white staff was proud, and that merging colleges with different cultures would be a problem. By different cultures he was referring to the state and state-aided colleges that were established to meet the education and training needs of different race groups. He referred specifically to race and saw this as an inhibitor to change. He was of the opinion that:

Blacks have a totally different way to of doing things. They have a different attitude and different style in life from whites and anything that you do or start together, requires really working hard at it. It will slow things down (Chris, 06/11/2002).

The union representative believed that the values and beliefs of college staff were based on race. He described blacks as being laid back and unwilling to work hard, and believed that only whites would make a concerted effort to bring about the necessary changes. To him the mergers would slow down the pace at which the colleges functioned. He went on to explain that:

... we are extremely proud of what we achieve, number one, with our students, and what we have as facilities, and the staff all feel that we are part and parcel of this. Now anything that could affect that will put us on our guard and then I will say yes, it would be easier for a college if they had a more casual approach to life, and where the pass rate was, for instance, low, or where they didn't have the facilities to merge, because they have a lot to gain, whereas the college who had everything and a lot to lose or not to lose, they had to sacrifice a lot, and it could be at the end that they will not be in the same elite position as they were before (Chris, 06/11/2002).

It was evident that the union representative believed that the whites owned the college and there was a sense of pride in what they had achieved. He displayed a strong sense of ownership. He believed that mergers implied a loss of these long held values and beliefs. He was saddened that state-aided colleges would have to share their resources

with state colleges and believed that this would lead to a decrease in the performance of state-aided colleges.

The Department of Education official referred to the mergers as the “hard stuff” in the reorganisation of the FET college sector, while the creation of a new ethos and culture constituted the “soft stuff” of the process. By referring to the “soft stuff” he was referring to the cultural aspects of change as the assumptions that college staff held, the values and beliefs, norms and meaning of the purpose of change. The “soft stuff” would have to be changed as the next stage in the mergers.

6.3.7 Strands of congruence

The conclusions drawn from the preceding analysis indicate that:

- The Department of Education envisaged implementation of the mergers as a rational, linear, intellectual paradigm and saw the mergers as a technical exercise that could be implemented by a mandate. However, the focus on the importance of cultural conditions in educational settings can be seen in theories on organisational change. Fullan (1999) referred to the impact of chaos or complexity theory on conceptions of change. Implementers, on the other hand, face a non-linear, non-rational, complex and sometimes even chaotic reality.
- The reallocation of resources to support the conceptualisation of the mergers was also an important element of *restructuring*. Limited access to the resources of money, time and data is often a major barrier (Louis & Miles, 1990). In the South African context education policymaking has, to a large extent, been a product of redressing apartheid. Political symbolism in educational policymaking was the order of the day in the post-apartheid state. The policy agenda is set by powerful politicians while the implementation is left to those at grass-root levels. The success of implementation depends upon motivating educators to implement the new policy, and upon providing them with the necessary resources to do so (Fowler, 2000).

- Department of Education officials, policymakers and union representatives identified the complexity of the change as one of the most challenging aspects. This affected the understanding among stakeholders, but even where there is understanding, people seldom embrace change that is threatening to their comfort zones (Fullan, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994). Without the investment of time to bring about understanding the change process, building collegiality and relationships, sharing beliefs and values, and developing norms, there is bound to be resistance and failure (Sarason, 1982; Simpson, 1990).
- One of the biggest challenges that the sector faced was the lack of leadership to drive the change agenda. Leadership was paramount to initiate the agenda, conceptualise the plan, and provide opportunities for capacity building, support and training (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Giacquinta, 1994). The lack of capacity was identified as one of the major constraints, and even external support sometimes hampered implementation.
- The implementation agenda was based on several underlying assumptions. Embedded values and beliefs were ignored in this top-down mandated change. While financial resources were acknowledged as necessary no specific provision was made to provide these resources.
- The role and channels of communication were undermined and it was assumed that stakeholders would have taken it upon themselves to develop an understanding of the policy and implementation strategy. According to McLaughlin the "actual consequences of the policy will depend finally on what happens as individuals throughout the policy system interpret and act on them" (1987:172).
- The lack of sufficient time for collaboration was a major challenge, and both the provincial department officials and college staff referred to time constraints in the context of formal collaboration, stating that they felt overwhelmed trying to meet the associated responsibilities (Miles, 1978; Rogers, 1995). Implementers need time and other resources to learn and understand the purpose of the innovation, and to become comfortable with new strategies and structures. The

time made available for this is usually inadequate or nonexistent. I wish to argue that in top-down mandates the change process leapfrogs from the planning or policy development stage to the implementation stage, neglecting the preparation stage.

6.4 The provincial experience

In this section I present the perspectives of the Gauteng Department of Education officials responsible for the implementation of the FET policy, particularly the merging of the three case study technical colleges. The Gauteng Department of Education, like the other eight provincial education departments in the country, embarked on streamlining their functions in accordance with the new education policies and its requirements. During the course of 2002 the Gauteng Department of Education had established and proceeded to staff all the relevant units to cater for the new policy demands. A Directorate: FET Colleges and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), was established to implement both FET and ABET policies. In both the FET and ABET sectors new policies had been enacted and needed to be implemented almost simultaneously. The officials assigned to this directorate had to allocate their time, skills and capacity to both FET and ABET. This placed a huge burden on their ability to service both sectors adequately.

The plan for the New Institutional Landscape indicated that the 32 technical colleges in Gauteng were to merge to form eight FET institutions.¹⁵⁰ The Gauteng Department of Education was in a favourable position compared to the other provinces in that one of the two provincial education department representatives on the NLTT was a senior official from the Gauteng Department of Education. However, despite this arrangement, little information on how and why the plan was conceptualised was transmitted to other members of the Gauteng Department of Education FET Directorate. Like everyone else, the officials in the Directorate: FET Colleges and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) learnt of the contents of the plan at the launch on 17 September 2001. An official of the provincial department recalled that he experienced a sense of humiliation. He indicated that he felt as though the Department of Education was dictating

¹⁵⁰ The plan indicated the merger of 152 technical colleges nationally into 50 FET institutions.

... that certain things should be done, and done in a particular manner so that it fits into the mode of achieving the 50 FET colleges within the set timeframe (Ray, 26/05/2003).

A second official from the Gauteng Department of Education indicated that he could not understand why, when an official from within the Gauteng Department of Education was part of the NLTT process, the contents and proposals were not shared with him and the other members of the FET Directorate, as the “foot soldiers” implementing the plan. He indicated that at that time he felt insulted and perceived it to be an indication of a lack of confidence in his abilities as a senior department official. However, he later concluded that

... this is as result of real bad communication, it wasn't intentional, but it's really bad communication on the side of senior officials who worked with this (Vish, 14/11/2003).

Vish explained that implementation of the merger was delegated to him and his colleagues. He said that it was an instruction that implementation was to begin immediately, based on the assumption that he and his colleagues would be able to provide technical college staff with the relevant information regarding the rationale for the mergers. Morris recalled that

The first time I saw the plan was when it was launched nationally and, at that stage, I didn't know why college A was merging with college B. I didn't know that, and if people asked me later why are you merging college A and college B, instead of college A and college C, I wouldn't be able to provide that answer. The only thing was that once it was there in the document, I needed to go to colleges and give them that information (10/11/2003).

As implementers they had to deal with the finer details of the implementation process. The department official elaborated on the frustrations they experienced, as there was no time to engage with the plan and internalise why something was being done in a certain way. He described the prevailing state of affairs as

... people who had nothing to do with the day-to-day running of institutions were taken on board to develop a detailed plan for the colleges, and obviously the plan had many gaps. Some of those gaps that I'm talking about, like resources, could have been identified (Vish, 14/11/2003).

He was of the opinion that people who had hands-on experience with the colleges should have developed the plan. By this he implied that provincial department officials should have been included in the detailed planning for their respective provinces. In this way many of the problems that colleges encountered would have been foreseen and addressed during the planning stage, instead of having to deal with them while implementation took place.

A second provincial department official emphasised that there were a lot of complications and challenges with which they had to deal. He recalled that he and his colleagues felt bitter, and distanced themselves from the plan. There were too many substantive issues that were not clear. He was of the opinion that

... the plan should have included the activities, the time-frames and where the resources were going to come from for every activity, so that people could see the whole plan, activities, time lines, and also the budget for every line item....so the whole thing revolved around good planning (Morris, 10/11/2003).

The implications of being excluded from the planning resulted in the Gauteng Department of Education officials feeling alienated and this resulted in an attitude of indifference. This was compounded by the fact that they lacked the necessary understanding of how and why the plan had been conceptualised in such a manner. The provincial department officials referred to this as the “Department of Education’s plan”. He indicated that they were not prepared to take ownership thereof and

...began siding with the Rectors, when the Rectors indicated that they were not going to inform their staff about the benefits of the merger because they were not consulted the department officials would reply that they were also excluded and that they were both victims and that the people who did the planning should sort out the implementation process (Morris, 10/11/2003).

He explained that they often felt inadequate when they were unable to provide the appropriate responses to questions raised by technical college staff regarding the reason, purpose and process of the merger. They felt that their weaknesses were being exposed and they were not willing to lose credibility as department officials among technical college staff.

The low morale prevalent among the provincial department officials was compounded by the lack of capacity that existed within the system. A provincial department official alluded to the fact that the Department of Education did not have a sufficient number of staff members to manage the task on hand. He also referred to the limited understand that provincial officials had of the change trajectory. He believed that

... the Department of Education simply identified what they regarded as a key aspect of planning such as the, establishment of a coordinating structure. Since the national department didn't have capacity they brought onboard provinces and they hoped that the provinces were going to cascade the message, and that's where there was a breakdown in communication (Morris, 10/11/2003).

He was aware that the FET Directorate in the Department of Education comprised two persons, a Director: FET Colleges and one other member who were responsible to oversee and drive the mergers from the national department. The role these two Department of Education officials played was to coordinate the support to provinces through the MOTT.¹⁵¹ They had very limited decision-making powers, and senior management in the Department of Education had to be consulted when there were issues that needed clarity or consent. Provincial department officials regarded the Department of Education officials as having a “clinical idea” of implementation issues once “policy hit the ground”. The reality of the situation was that implementation was never going to be a straightforward process.

The Gauteng Department of Education official was of the opinion that provincial department officials should have been brought in to develop the implementation plan. Vish strongly believed that a plan conceptualised by people not involved in the day-to-day running of technical colleges was bound to have several gaps. He, however, confessed to the limitations of the provincial department in that

Capacity in terms of they think in twos people who are able to think the process through, they had that kind of capacity, but capacity in terms of numbers they didn't have, and that was one of the biggest problems (Vish, 14/11/2003).

¹⁵¹ Defined earlier in the chapter.

He implied that planning at the provincial level was done collectively and he believed that they had the capacity, know-know and understanding of what planning for change entailed. He did, however, acknowledge that there were too few people in the FET Directorate at the provincial level to implement the required change. He felt saddened that their increasing responsibilities in having to implement two major new policies¹⁵² simultaneously did not ease the highly volatile situation that existed. Vish described the process as an exercise of “fire-fighting” and keeping the process going so that the mergers would be completed within the designated timeframes. The provincial department official acknowledged that end product was to be a merger plan formalising the mergers.

As the process unfolded several additional issues began to surface. The issue of additional financial resources was raised continuously by colleges. The Gauteng Department of Education official explained that the college staff was despondent because

Colleges had to carry the burden of having to cover some of the costs and the issue of resources, was only considered much later when the colleges started complaining (Morris, 10/11/2003).

The support provided by the Department of Education to provincial departments was purely to ensure that all provinces complied with the legislative requirements in terms of the FET Act. The provincial representative described the MOTT as a useful structure at which implementation issues were addressed, and working groups established to attend to issues that warranted lengthy deliberations. He, however, remonstrated that a lot of time was spent at MOTT meetings, or finalising tasks assigned during MOTT meetings, over and above their other day-to-day activities as departmental representatives. The increased workload limited the time available for discussions with the rest of the team on implementation issues and strategies. He lamented that they were unable to ensure a common understanding as departmental officials, and, consequently, very little information was made available to colleges.

¹⁵² The Directorate was responsible for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) as well as FET. Both sectors were implementing new policies.

The senior Gauteng Department of Education official recalled that a few selected Rectors were occasionally invited to the MOTT meetings when aspects necessitating their specific specialist input were discussed. These Rectors were considered to be in a favourable position as they had access to the issues raised and some notion of the processes to be followed. A provincial department official voiced his discontent as these Rectors often returned to their colleges and prematurely disseminated the information they had acquired to their colleagues. Provincial department officials who were not part of the MOTT often found themselves in a compromising situation

... as it sometimes caused tension because we were still trying to conceptualise or deal with an issue while someone had already spread the word and we were seen as superficial at the provincial office for not wanting to share information with them. We did not share information freely as it was not making sense to us, and therefore we could not take this to the colleges because we were at the coalface and when it comes directly from the top to the bottom then that is the tension and the challenge (Ray, 26/05/2003).

The Gauteng Department of Education official expressed distress that this situation created dissension among technical college Rectors. Those Rectors who were invited to the MOTT meetings were regarded as the preferred few. This state of affairs was further compounded as most of the Rectors were serving in an acting capacity. A provincial department official indicated that the Gauteng Department of Education had placed a moratorium on vacant senior positions in the technical colleges until the *restructuring* of the technical colleges was complete. He pointed out that in the majority of instances the person appointed as Acting-Rector of a college was a senior member of the college staff who assumed leadership in a void. He further indicated that the perception that college staff had was that the government was busy with a secret agenda and people did not know what to expect next. The Rectors interpreted the FET Act and Education White Paper 4 (1998) in terms of their own contexts and understanding. The provincial department official recalled the empathy he felt for the college Rectors.

I actually had sympathy for some of the Rectors and staff in the colleges. I was an official of the department, it wasn't affecting me directly, but I was just saying to myself if this was me and people were sitting somewhere and they were discussing my future, how would I feel about it? I felt very bad that as human beings working in the sector, information was not coming to them as it should and obviously they would act in a different way (Vish, 14/11/2003).

College staff were unsure of their future in the colleges. He recalled that he tried on several occasions to share the little information he had with the colleges

... firstly there were provincial merger teams and I chaired the provincial merger team in the province. I would go out and convene meetings with Rectors, convene meetings with various people within the colleges, and they were informed on a regular basis. They came up with very crucial questions, some of which we were not able to address, because I was not aware of the processes, but as far as I knew, the information that I had given them (Morris, 10/11/2003).

He defined the role of the provincial department as merely passing information from the Department of Education on to the colleges. He described the role of the provincial department as

... being that of a conveyer belt; we were taking information from the national department and delivering it to the colleges, because if they asked certain questions you wouldn't be able to answer, because you were not part of the major planning process (Morris, 10/11/2003).

The official stressed that this created a lot of discontent, and that as a senior provincial departmental official he felt disempowered. Morris lamented that

... sometimes you get bitter, you really get angry, you get demotivated, you feel like you are not valued, you feel excluded and really feel you are not adding value to the organisation (Morris, 10/11/2003).

It was obvious that the frustrations experienced by departmental officials were due simply to a lack of understanding of the strategy and process that had been conceptualised by a higher authority. A senior Gauteng Department of Education official expressed that

... we are still grappling with some of those issues even today. It is not only the responsibility of this Directorate, but also the understanding from the entire organisation within the Gauteng Department of Education as a whole to understand the direction that FET should take (Ray, 26/05/2003).

The complexity of implementing the FET reform was that it required the integration of numerous activities across the entire provincial department. The fact that the plan had been conceptualised in isolation from the relevant units that were to be involved in its implementation was bound to cause several problems. A departmental official elaborated that

... for example your human resources section within the department is going to play a role in making contributions towards the new situation within colleges, how does your curriculum component come in and guide this process towards the requirements of a curriculum within an institution, and how does the institutional development and support from the organisational development point of view come in with leadership up to the top level bringing in that support and combining all these elements to give appropriate leadership to the process as a whole. It's a bit of both in terms of a lack of a clear understanding of the process and also a lack of very strong leadership that understands the direction which the sector should be taking (Ray, 26/05/2003).

The stringent timeframes left no opportunity for interaction among and across departmental units. The various subsections within the provincial department saw it as a responsibility of lesser importance as noted earlier. A provincial department official explained that the lack of capacity within the provincial department, and the proliferation of policies directed at the school sector had removed the focus from the FET policy implementation. The sudden bout of activity within the FET sector created the impression that there was a sudden urgency to put a plan into action. He indicated that

... it was rushed, they were rushing things, it looked like some senior official was challenged to make sure that within a short period of time the Act is implemented, because remember the Act was promulgated in 1998 and in 1999 nothing happened. It's only in late 2000 that a lot of things started happening and within the period, 2000, 2001, 2002 there was a lot of rushing (Morris, 10/11/2003).

The rigid timeframes of six months (June to December 2001) led to a great deal of anxiety. People were often uncertain of what was expected of them mainly because they were not informed. Ray felt saddened by

... the lack of proper communication and understanding of the task that lay ahead in terms of what we wanted to achieve (Ray, 26/05/2003).

The provincial department official maintained that more time was needed to execute the plan and to create an understanding at all levels in the sector. In order to alleviate and address some of the anxieties and fears there was a need for a clear understanding of the procedures and processes involved, and how these would impact on people. The official recalled that

... we expected to put much more hours in engaging about the changes and how that was going to affect various people. Most of the colleagues within the college sector were dealing with their own fears and anxieties rather than looking at the sector in terms of restructuring benefits (Ray, 26/05/2003).

The strong conservative institutional culture that had prevailed for years was threatened. It was insensitive to disregard this as many college staff had served the sector for a considerable length of time and were proud of their accomplishments as

... they saw the colleges as belonging to them and they saw government as interfering with their little space, and it was clear that there was going to be a lot of resistance. People feared losing jobs, you definitely needed to be sensitive to those fears, because it is natural and you might think people are resistant only to find that you are not addressing their particular fears (Vish, 14/11/2003).

The plan did not address the human resource matters relating to the service options involved in *restructuring* the sector. Implicit in the plan was the acceptance at all levels of the change agenda as mandated. The provincial department official who dealt directly with colleges was unsure of why no provision had been made to deal with the fears and trepidations of college staff threatened by the change. He felt strongly that

... you definitely need to put incentives and provide options and say to people that they may exit if necessary. You need to say to people these are the options that you can take, so that you are able to move along with people who are committed, and for all the people who are to be off-loaded you get a system in place that can help them get off, if they are not comfortable with moving forward (Vish, 14/11/2003).

The policy made reference to mergers as an option in reshaping the FET landscape, and the FET Act provided the legal basis from which to implement mergers. Mergers were not the only option, however the Department of Education had decided that the *restructuring* of the FET landscape would be through mergers. An official of the provincial department considered this to be an indication of the indifference displayed by those people who had the vision of where they wanted to take FET colleges. He maintained that this was largely a power play displayed through an

... arrogance that you feel you are in charge, you are the head of a particular sector and you mandate through the Act. You really feel the Act has gone through consultative processes and if people were not part of those consultative processes it's not your problem, that's how people feel, but you've got a different view to say that it is not everybody who's interested in reading a White Paper or Green Paper, the whole policy process, people are not interested in those to a large extent. At the end people want to be given information that says, because we are expecting you to do this, this is where it comes from (Morris, 10/11/2003).

The hastily mandated implementation plan ignored the many dissenting voices. The provincial department official felt uneasy that

...at lot of members of the colleges were bitter, we couldn't see the bitterness very clearly, because we didn't work much with the educators, we did not hear them, we locked them somewhere. The people with whom we had been in contact were the Rectors and the Rectors were waiting for posts, they couldn't spoil their chances deliberately by speaking out viciously against anything that was happening, so they kept to their little corners, patient and quiet, but in their corridors you could hear the rumbles (Vish, 14/11/2003)

The anticipated reform required strong leadership that focused on the pertinent aspects of the change agenda. The facilitator was appointed to facilitate the process, but leadership was divided between the three campus heads. The provincial department official maintained that this hampered the process as

... you need a champion; you need an advocate to drive the process. In my view, the advocate or the champion was none other than the Rector; if you got the Rector earlier on then you had the necessary advocate, the necessary champion, to drive your process. Without such a person, placed in a particular institution, how else would you expect other members of the colleges to be part of the process? (Morris, 10/11/2003).

Despite the challenges of developing quality merger plans, the provincial department was able to meet its mandate and announce the mergers in January 2002. A department official referred to this as the fulfilment of a “legislative requirement,” and stated that they were not in a position to influence this process substantially as it was a political mandate. However, as already noted, the official recognises that the biggest challenge of the *restructuring* of the college sector resides in the second stage as people begin to see how the *restructuring* or merger affects them as individuals.

Morris described the mergers as a “paper exercise” and indicated that heads of institutions needed to be appointed before any further steps could be taken. Taking the size, responsibilities and complexities of managing an institution of such a nature, the Department of Education proposed that the heads be appointed at salary levels substantially higher than the current levels. In addition, the head of the FET institution would be referred to as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the institution. The number of appointments would be considerably fewer than was previously the case, as the number of institutions was to be rationalised through the merging process. Consequently, many of the former Rectors could no longer be appointed as heads of institutions. The steamrolling of the merger exercise did not allow time for the provincial department officials to engage with the Rectors to build trust, ensure buy-in, and eradicate misconceptions and fears.

Inferences from the implementer’s dilemma

The role of the provincial department officials cannot be undermined in a large complex change agenda. Provincial department officials were excluded from the design of the reform programme. Past experience has revealed that provincial level support, or lack thereof, has been shown to be critical to the consequences of reform (Deal & Peterson, 1994). "The active commitment of district leadership is essential to project success and long-run stability" (McLaughlin, 1990:12).

There were no proper communication channels internally or externally. This hampered the stakeholders' understanding of a very complex change agenda. Communication and decision-making *structures* for information and support, as well as a well developed administrative *structure* supported by adequate funding, are other critical structural elements (Parer & Benson, 1990:22). These factors are interrelated, dynamic and central to the process of change. They can facilitate the discovery of the essential features of an innovation.

For successful change there is a need to establish and support enabling structures that provide the framework around which rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships are built and maintained, and at the same time, shape the culture of the organisation. However, to change an organisation's structures – *restructuring* – is a very complex task (Elmore, 1995). This is largely due to the fact that cultures, almost by definition, tend to be conservative and self-preserving. Cultural forces persuade us to cling to familiar, established structures, so that structural reform can only take place and achieve its objectives when accompanied by cultural change.

In the FET sector it is evident that there exists a relationship between *cultural* and *structural* factors, and that change is neither static nor linear. The data reveals that the structure of the FET college system is hierarchical, isolated, balkanised, and lacking the necessary skills, support resources and leadership to take forward the changes as envisaged in the policy. Furthermore, the culture prevalent in the sector is deeply entrenched in the apartheid ideology of CNE. The conservative institutional culture of colleges are associated with superiority, submissiveness, respect for authority, waiting for instructions, and are non-confrontational, with the assumption that new resources will accompany the change agenda, and a distrust of people from other cultures. Fullan (1999) maintains that change and reform are primarily seen from the perspective of the classroom, schools and districts, rather than society as the unit of analysis. Educational change can be successful only when the reform effort is well thought out, when implementers are the active change agents in the process, when there are sufficient resources and time to support the reform, when capable leadership is present, and when the organisational culture changes along with the structural changes.

6.5 Summary

Having explored the intentions of the FET policy and various documents, and having obtained the perspectives of the national department of education officials, policymakers and union representatives, and also the impressions of provincial department officials, it was apparent that the structural and cultural factors identified in Chapter 3 played a role in the implementation of the FET policy. The analysis of the data lent itself to indicating that the policymaking process was not straightforward, and that the FET policy was placed in an environment of other policies competing for limited human and fiscal resources. These situations led to the Department of Education taking on a bureaucratic stance by mandating the merger of the technical colleges, thereby causing a great deal of unhappiness to the policy implementers who were left out of the planning process. Among other factors a lack of ownership hampered policy implementation.

I now proceed in Chapter 7 to identify the structural and cultural factors that played a role in influencing policy implementation in the three case study technical colleges.

Chapter 7

Implementing FET Policy: A Tale of Three Technical Colleges

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe and explain how the FET policy (viz., the mergers) was implemented in the technical colleges, in order to illustrate how structural and cultural dynamics intersected during the policy implementation process in the three case study colleges. The story of each of the three case study colleges is reconstructed based on data from questionnaires, documents, photographs, and the transcripts of the many interviews I conducted. I provide a sequence of the events as they unfolded during the policy implementation process. I endeavour to understand, express and explore the ideology of the stakeholders, as experienced in terms of the emotions and undercurrents prevalent during the merger process, and to identify the key structural and cultural factors that played a role in the implementation of the FET policy.

I have divided this chapter into two sections. In **Section One** I present the individual narratives of each of the three case study technical colleges. I provide the context in which the technical college existed and how each one learnt of the mergers. I then proceed to provide the perspectives of the Rector and staff by recalling their personal experiences, with the intention of capturing their views and providing an insight into the policy implementation process in the relevant local context. In all three instances I narrate the words of the Rector and staff who were given the freedom to explain what happened from their individual perspectives. The excerpts from the Rector and staff have been infused into a narrative account with the intention of placing these lived experiences within the institutional contexts. I also include the analysis of the data from the questionnaires administered at the college level.

In Section Two I summarise the commonalities and exceptionalities that were prevalent, with the intention of identifying the major key structural and cultural factors that overlapped in the three case study technical colleges as identified in Chapter 3.

In the final chapter I revisit these recurring themes within the larger framework of theorising about change in a context undergoing transformation.

7.2 The tale unfolds

It was extremely difficult to decide on the single, most suitable way to capture the subtleties and nuances of the data as shown through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) studies so as to make comparison easy. After having worked through numerous drafts I eventually settled on presenting detailed narratives as they unfolded in each of the case study technical colleges. This makes for easy reading and provides the reader with an opportunity to live the processes and experiences as they unfolded in each of the three technical colleges.

The data for this chapter was collected over a period of one year through multiple methods of data collection that included interviews, questionnaires, document analysis and photographs as already indicated in Chapter 4.

7.2.1 The Atteridgeville Story

In Chapter 5 I provided a comprehensive description of the history and background of the Atteridgeville Technical College and the events over the past three years that led to the complete collapse of a once vibrant and leading technical college. Atteridgeville Technical College was wrought with complexities from the onset.

During the tenure of the "old" Rector, and soon after the release of the FET policy, the college management commenced discussions on the new FET policy and merger possibilities. The Atteridgeville focus group was of the opinion that the "old" Rector was promoting the idea of mergers, but that the micro-politics unique to their campus had played a major role in hampering the process at that time. The "old" Rector had, in their opinion, prematurely initiated dialogue and engagement on the policy option to merge with other colleges. The focus group members were of the opinion that the "old" Rector had been proactive by holding discussions on mergers with the staff, and with other colleges with which he thought it would be mutually beneficial to join forces. Considering the differences that existed among the technical colleges, the "old" Rector had initiated discussions with colleges of more or less the same standing as

Atteridgeville. In practice this would have translated into forging partnerships with state-aided colleges. His interventions were not taken lightly as the “old” Rector was a white male forging relationships with “white” colleges. Furthermore, the “old” Rector was the chairperson of the CTCP¹⁵³ which had a majority white membership. The staff was of the opinion that the Rectors of the white colleges were combining to form consortiums and thereby creating even bigger disparities between the colleges. In their opinion this would have led to the demise of the black colleges. The consequence was that tension at the college grew so bad that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) dismissed the “old” Rector together with six members of management from the college. A member of the college management team not affected by the incident was appointed as the Acting-Rector in the interim, and continued as Rector of the college until the merger. When interviewed the Rector concurred with the focus group that there had definitely been racial undertones to this incident. She added that the staff was of the opinion that

*... if they were rid of all the” pale males”they would have opportunities to further themselves (RAC, 12/09/02).*¹⁵⁴

The Rector was of the view that the staff who initiated the unrest at the college anticipated that they would replace the Rector and management staff who had been dismissed. Instead she, a white female, was appointed as the Acting-Rector and the management still comprised mainly whites. The Rector indicated that ever since her appointment as Rector of the college there have been attempts to transform the college management but it was a slow process as it depended on when a vacancy would become available.

The Rector and focus group lamented that the aftermath of this incident had continued as the matter had never been resolved. They indicated that the staff was divided and that morale had declined. A member of the focus group expressed that

... the lecturers feel negative because Gauteng Department of Education did not take a stand. We have no confidence in the system as a whole (Zola, 12/09/02).

¹⁵³ Refer to page 131 for definition.

¹⁵⁴ Rector Atteridgeville College.

A sense of apathy developed among college staff, and a focus group member alluded to the fact that the Gauteng Department of Education remained distant and left the college staff to resolve the issue on their own. The staff believed that the Gauteng Department of Education was incompetent because they had not resolved the matter. They saw it as the responsibility of the Gauteng Department of Education to appoint a permanent Rector and to ensure that the racial disparities in the composition of the college management were being addressed. When it came to the merger the opinion of the staff was that:

... so what-If we're changing, we're changing all that I am concerned with is that my job is secure, as we are working for a secure Gauteng Department of Education. So you make the changes if you want to, and if you don't want to make the changes just leave me alone, I am going to teach and just get on (Zola, 12/09/02).

The staff displayed apathy towards the imminent changes. They believed that their responsibility lay with their students and that they had a moral responsibility toward their students. Furthermore their jobs were secure, they were employed to teach and that was all that they would do. The Rector explained that over the past two to three years the situation at the college had deteriorated, insecurity among staff had increased and their morale remained extremely low. She emphasised that during that time some staff members grew frustrated with the situation and began looking for employment elsewhere. She was saddened that most staff members who were “worth their salt” found employment elsewhere. The Rector indicated that there were several members of staff at the college whom she referred to as

... dry wood, because they would not necessarily find other employment.

By this she implied that they were either too old to leave and find employment elsewhere, or were totally incompetent to perform any other job that would demand hard work. They were in a comfort zone and protected by the conditions of employment which did not provide for the termination of their services as a result of incompetence. Atteridgeville was plagued by its own internal problems and a divided staff that was a direct result of the history of the previous management. There was an air of indifference and negativity from the very beginning of the merger. A member of the focus group summed up the situation as follows:

When the previous Rector was here this was a vibrant, alive, moving along college and then the unfortunate thing happened . Since then it has been a fight for survival, the procedures were not followed. We tried to survive getting in facilitators, trying to speak to lecturers, getting people to participate again. I don't think people will realise what a complete break-down it was and continues to be. It was as if this college was closed. It was a complete break-down. The Acting-Rector tried her best (Tumi, 12/09/02).

The aftermath of this resulted in the college staff considering themselves inferior to colleagues in other technical colleges. This exacerbated their sense of insecurity even before the question of the merger arose. Accordingly, the process was plagued by internal factors from the beginning. The unresolved breakdown in the college culture remained an important incident in the minds of the current Rector and the staff, since the focus group interviewed returned to discuss this incident on several occasions. It obviously impacted on the current staff complement and had an effect on their attitude to yet another radical change in the internal management structure of their college.

The College Council and Rector made several attempts to restore the morale and enthusiasm of the staff. A senior member of the staff lamented that:

They (the staff) are aware that change is inevitable and we have to merge. I think we are aware and I think changes mean leaving your present situation and way of doing things, and it always means that if you have been comfortable for too long you have got to get up, wake up, shake up and move on, and the point is if I have to do that it means an extra part on me. Unfortunately, the control mechanisms are not in place, so if you go the extra mile or if you don't its human nature – if I don't do it it's fine. (Tumi, 12/09/02).

The focus group alluded to the internal problems experienced prior to the appointment of the interim council. Yet despite the divided nature of the staff a member of the focus group admitted that the *Council tried to keep the college "intact"*. Tumi explained that the college had appointed an external facilitator to motivate staff members and build their morale. He was saddened that this has made no difference to the attitude of the majority of the staff. He went on to say that the internal situation in the college hampered the merger process because staff was divided on the issue.

However, the Rector felt otherwise and maintained that the majority of the Atteridgeville management staff and council members supported the plan, since they considered it an opportunity to join forces with two stronger colleges and make a fresh start after all the difficulties they had experienced. The Rector indicated that it had taken two years to develop some change in attitude with a new focus and

... now staff look at how we can do things better, how we can improve. It has been a process.

She strongly believed that although she had the full support of the management staff and council members who were in favour of the merger, she did not have the same level of support from staff at other levels. She alleged the reason for the negativity on the part of the lecturers was because they wanted to protect their own “turf,” and were not in favour of merging because they saw themselves as inferior to the staff from the other colleges. The Rector felt confident that the situation at the college had improved.

Even though the Rector believed that she had the full support of the management staff an air of indifference prevailed among some of the management staff. A member of the focus group nonchalantly made it known that:

I stood in for the Rector at one of the AFETISA meetings and there we heard a few of the timeframes. They were feeding this information to the AFETISA members and almost the whole department was there in one of the meetings in Kempton Park. But, I am also just as guilty because I did not give that information to anybody, I gave it to the Rector and that was that (Sammy, 12/09/02).

He did not perceive it as his responsibility, nor did he see the need for him to share the information that he had received. It was evident that a culture of individualism prevailed throughout the college from management right down to the lowest level. What was important though was that AFETISA served as the communication line between the Gauteng Department of Education and the colleges. College Rectors were kept informed through AFETISA of the proposed changes. However, it was later discovered that it was at these meeting that information was dispersed and that that is where the information remained.

In the long run communication became a central issue in the breakdown in understanding and ownership of the merger, and the communication between the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education hampered progress in the colleges. The Rector maintained that Gauteng Department of Education did not communicate effectively. She described that the situation as follows:

... they were understaffed but I think to a large extent the communication department was poor to pathetic.

The Rector did not see herself as responsible for the staff not being kept informed. Instead she placed the responsibility on the Gauteng Department of Education. A management member admitted that although the communication strategy was seriously flawed the staff needed to shoulder some of the blame because

... it was communicated, but I don't think the seriousness was strongly emphasised. It (the directive) comes from somewhere and there is no feedback mechanism. That kind of structure wasn't built in (Zola, 12/09/02).

The college culture was not conducive to promoting discussions among college staff on the reforms. Staff members were left on their own to interpret the merger intentions and process. Communication was an issue throughout the process. The focus group emphasised that because the *communication loop was missing* the entire merger strategy evolved under the leadership of the Department of Education, and the process which was to have been carried out by Gauteng Department of Education was flawed. There were no clear directives. The colleges were simply instructed to develop merger plans and had already been partnered with other colleges as merger partners. A focus group member alluded to the merger as an “arranged marriage”.

The issue of mergers was never raised officially with the staff. Staff members alleged that they became aware that they were to merge with two other technical colleges in their vicinity when the merger facilitator arrived at the college, and members of the staff were requested to indicate their interests in the identified working groups. A focus group member expressed her disappointment by indicating that, despite such a major change in the FET sector, neither all the aspects nor the possible consequences or rationale behind the Act had ever been discussed in depth in a meeting where questions

could have been posed by the staff. Tumi pointed out that there was no general understanding of the FET policy and its intended outcomes. Staff members did not have a concept of the broad vision of the FET. Tumi explained that

... not many know what the implications of the policy are, the only thing that happened is that people don't really understand. The Rector and the Department of Education don't say the Act is available and that you can come and read it. I think 75 percent of our staff have never read it (Tumi, 12/09/02).

Another member of the focus group responded that the Rector disseminated most information verbally at informal discussions that took place at intervals. According to Sammy the weakness in communication lay in the fact that there were no clear communication channels at the college. He explained that:

No, we do not have a staff meeting and that is a problem. In the morning we get together and it is not compulsory. It is supposed to be compulsory but it is not compulsory, and if 50 percent of the staff attends nothing is done to ensure that the remaining staff attend the next time. We have never had full attendance at any of these meetings (Sammy, 12/09/02).

It was evident that no formal channels of communication had been established within the college. It seemed as if even staff meetings were casual occasions and that attendance at these meeting was not mandatory even though the information that was disseminated was of vital importance in terms of the future of the college. When asked about the staff's understanding of the process and rationale behind the mergers the Rector emphasised that

... there was an enormous lack of communication. ... And that those structures were missing.

It was not clear why the Rector did not see it as her responsibility as the head of the college to ensure that a proper communication channel was established to keep staff informed. She made no reference to any efforts in this regard but kept implying that it was the Gauteng Department of Education's function to inform the staff of the changes. The Rector indicated that she was aware that the plan had been conceptualised by the Department of Education, but was not sure of the extent of the Gauteng Department of Education's involvement. Nevertheless, in her opinion, if this were the basis for corporate governance and the reorganisation of the FET college sector, then she was

concerned that both the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education had proved to be ineffective in communicating the information to them. She maintained that the Gauteng Department of Education was not adequately informed and referred to instances when she had been unable to get any response from the Gauteng Department of Education when she needed information. The impression created was that the Department of Education maintained ownership over the process and that the Gauteng Department of Education had developed a passive attitude. The Rector was of the opinion that the Gauteng Department of Education waited for direction from the Department of Education. The Rector maintained that no written circulars or minutes were disseminated to the staff, either from the departments (Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education) or from the Council meetings. The Rector went on to explain that she thought that it was not the responsibility of the Department of Education to communicate with the college at any level, but that she found the Department of Education to be more informed than the Gauteng Department of Education because

... whenever I phoned them (Gauteng Department of Education) for answers they always provided satisfactory information.

After probing further it became apparent that the Rector was hesitant to engage with the staff on issues relating to the merger. Her reluctance was based on the incident with the previous Rector. In addition to this she indicated that she did not have a good understanding of the FET policy and intended changes. She felt disempowered to engage effectively with the staff on the policy issues, and therefore merely transmitted whatever she picked up at meetings in the hope that the staff would not pose too many questions that she would be unable to answer. The Rector reiterated the frequently heard opinion that whoever had done the planning should have

... started at college level with the Rector, who could take the lead. There wasn't a clear vision. Different messages were communicated and we needed information to proceed.

A focus group member indicated that

We should have been part of this, at least in the beginning, to facilitate the merging (Tumi, 12/09/02).

It was obvious that they felt alienated and had wanted to be part of the planning process. Tumi's sentiments indicated that they wanted to merge and to improve the status of the college. He felt that they should have taken charge from the beginning and facilitated the activities. They wanted a sense of ownership of the process.

It was also indicative that throughout the entire process there was no clarity on the roles or responsibilities of the different parties. What was also evident was that college staff did not receive any feedback on the work they produced in the workgroups. They had devoted time to these work-groups and no one ever came back to them with comments. This resulted in frustration and a loss of interest in the process as they wanted to know where their input went or if it even counted. The Rector emphasised that this was as a result of inadequate capacity within both the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education.

Sammy was of the opinion that many of the problems encountered had to do with the capacity of the provincial department officials. Support from the Gauteng Department of Education was virtually non-existent, giving the impression that the Gauteng Department of Education officials did not have the level of competence required to drive the merger. There was no clear, decisive plan passed on to the colleges and they could not resolve problems which emerged as the process advanced. The Rector recalled that

... on two occasions officials did not know what to say, they had no idea or clear vision, and that makes it difficult when people are just dying for answers, and you simply don't get them...it was more like a passiveness from the provincial side, there is not enough manpower to drive this process and get involved at college level because they just don't get involved if there is a problem at college level. ...I don't think it is an attitude problem, it's a manpower problem. Not enough people.

When asked what they thought was the role of the various stakeholders, such as the Department of Education, Gauteng Department of Education and CCF, a focus group member replied that

The National Department is as a controlling authority of their guidelines and provincial department has no real control over the process, they simply follow the national guidelines irrespective of what the situation is (Sammy, 12/09/02).

He was definitely distressed that the Gauteng Department of Education did not take up a more active role in the entire process. The focus group member elaborated on his sentiments that the Gauteng Department of Education should have ensured that the colleges

... receive information on the processes. A feedback session and understanding rather than appointing the external facilitator ...I see it also as that there should have been interactive communications from top to bottom and visa versa. (Sammy, 12/09/02).

Another focus group member was of the opinion that the Gauteng Department of Education had abdicated its responsibility in terms of the Centurion College because it did not have the expertise and knowledge to drive the process competently. He was sympathetic and said that

I was placing my confidence in those people at national level in ensuring that this merging will become a quality thing, and it has not happened, and I am losing my confidence in the whole system (Tumi, 12/09/02).

The loss of confidence in the Gauteng Department of Education and the system at large resulted in a state of apathy among the majority of the staff members. It seemed to them that neither the Department of Education nor the Gauteng Department of Education were able to provide the leadership needed to merge the colleges.

When asked about other support the focus group acknowledged the role the CCF had played in discussing the policy and providing support through workshops and training. The Rector stated that, although the CCF had made an enormous contribution, this had not reached grass-roots level. At no stage was there evidence of follow-through to all the stakeholders at different levels of the colleges.

Both the focus group members and the Rector understood the role of the facilitator to be that of providing support to college staff and managing the merger through the coordination of the workgroup activities. However, they found the facilitator to be ineffective. Neither the College Council nor the college staff understood what was expected and why. In addition, there was no intervention on the part of the Gauteng Department of Education to clarify procedures, and an atmosphere of confusion prevailed. The Rector stated that it was simply that

... neither the Department of Education, Gauteng Department of Education or the facilitator communicated clearly. The merger facilitator did not communicate the plan adequately, not at council level, and not at management level, and not at staff level.

According to Sammy everyone had his or her own personal views of what should happen, and this made it difficult to manage the process from within when there were no clear guidelines from the Department of Education or Gauteng Department of Education. He explained that

... no one had the experience of what a merger really involved., I think we all sat in the same boat and looked and hoped for a positive light (Sammy, 12/09/02).

It seemed apparent that leadership was absent both within and outside of the college. The Rector explained that several people shared responsibility for the merger plan and the facilitator was appointed to oversee the development of the plan. By this she meant that all three Rectors were responsible with the ultimate responsibility not resting on a single individual. One of the key elements cited by the Rector and senior management as the overriding weakness in the merger was a leadership vacuum. She maintained that the Rectors

... should have felt a sense of ownership to drive the process. Additionally there was no clear vision, no clear messages were communicated. No strong leadership was evident.

Over and above the internal dynamics that prevailed at the college several unresolved external factors impeded the development of the merger plan. One of the management members reiterated the feeling expressed throughout the interview that a major inhibiting factor was the process that was adopted.

Another member of management referred to the fact that Centurion College, one of the merger partners, was not totally on board. Centurion College was not eager to merge so they requested permission from the Gauteng Department of Education that they remain a stand-alone institution. As they had not received any answer to their request the staff members were reluctant to participate actively in the workgroup activities. He referred also to the incident with the previous management and stated that it had left Atteridgeville College with a stigma

... They are so scared of us, so afraid that it will influence their college and that is where the negativity comes from (Tumi, 12/09/02).

The college saw the resistance from Centurion College as a mitigating factor that hampered the process of finalising the merger plans. They viewed the reluctance on the part of Centurion College to be indicative of self-interest. A focus group member explained the reluctance of Centurion College as

... they have an empire on their own and they are not going to share their kingdom with two other colleges (Zola, 12/09/02).

The focus group maintained that many of the problems at the college emanated from the blurring of the leadership roles and responsibilities. The Rector explained that as a result of the Gauteng Department of Education not resolving the problems that existed at the college, there was confusion among the staff. In addition, the Gauteng Department of Education had contested several college disciplinary judgements placed before them by the college management and council. This had placed the college management in an invidious position because the Gauteng Department of Education had claimed authority over all college judgements. The college staff expected a high profile and a high degree of leadership or intervention from the Gauteng Department of Education. The Rector lamented that the Atteridgeville College management and College Council were basically helpless and at the mercy of the Gauteng Department of Education. As a result some members of staff capitalised on the situation and became disrespectful towards the college management and Council, indicating that they were employees of Gauteng Department of Education and would not take directives from any other source. Staff members believed that the Gauteng Department of Education would protect them from the college management and Council irrespective of their actions, thereby leading to greater conflict among staff members.

The breakdown of leadership and authority in the college and the Gauteng Department of Education's non-involvement in resolving the problems at the college resulted in confusion and insecurity on the part of the staff. As a result of this incident certain of the staff had no faith in the Gauteng Department of Education, neither did they feel any loyalty towards the Department.

A culture of non-involvement on the part of the staff impeded the process of change. The focus group was of the opinion that the facilitator could not motivate staff or muster any sort of participation on the part of the staff. He too was to blame for the failure of the merger plan.

The new College Council of Atteridgeville Colledge was unable to provide the vision for the new three merged colleges. A leadership vacuum developed over time, and the staff simply detached themselves from the process and continued to teach, leaving the merger to be driven by “some outside force”.

The problems were further compounded when it came to the financial resources needed for the merger activities. Although money was a definite factor, it was not the major factor, but it did raise sufficient concern. A focus group member implied that money was being wasted, and that there were no controls in place to channel funds to the right quarters, namely resources for teaching, such as computers. A member of the focus group lamented that:

I can't understand how good tax payers money can be put into structures like these that are not controlled or monitored and that, for me, is so frustrating. I feel so bitter about that. ... The only message I get is that there is no money and then I see money spent on unnecessary things. I want to educate children - that is my major purpose - but I can't do it because there is no money and I need computers. But I get told that there is no money, (Ian, 12/09/02).

The inference was that the hiring of the facilitator had been a waste of money. Several times reference was made to the cost of the services of the facilitator who proved to be ineffective, especially when the issue of Centurion College surfaced. The Rector vociferously echoed the sentiments of the staff that:

An enormous amount of money was spent on the facilitator who did not perform, and the process ground to a halt.

According to the focus group the end result was that their *merger plan was not worth the paper it was written on*. Most members of staff felt that the merger was seriously flawed in respect of the action/strategic plan, the process, communication and feedback. The staff resented the appointment of an external facilitator. They felt very strongly that

a CEO should have been appointed to manage change from within the college sector, with either the Department of Education or Gauteng Department of Education in control of the process, structure and dissemination of information regarding timelines and proposed goal. The old refrain re-emerges from a focus group member who claimed that:

A chief executive officer should have been appointed to run the merger from the start – the process was the wrong way round (Sammy, 12/09/02).

In conclusion, the lack of communication between the college and the departments flawed the process from the beginning of the merger, but, as with the other colleges, internal culture also hampered the transformation of the college. The insecurity of the staff and the stigma left by the previous management created an internal situation that was difficult to alter. At no stage was there any sense of ownership evident among the staff. The facilitator was also not mentioned in the interviews as a prominent figure or “change-agent,” instead he was seen to hamper the process. It appears as if their own internal issues and insecurities “trapped them”.

It is evident that there were numerous factors militating against the merger process, both internal and external. The external factors that were perhaps most influential in stalling the process were the lack of clearly defined leadership roles, responsibilities, capacity, and the poor communication between the departments, and the departments and the colleges. But the internal politics that have dominated the Atteridgeville campus since the exodus of the previous management also played a significant role in hampering the development of a consolidated front in favour of the merger

7.2.2 The Centurion Account

Centurion Technical College was established in the late 1930's to meet the training needs of the South African Defence Force and, despite several name and governance changes over the years, it continued to service the needs of the South African Defence Force. The staff, management and council believed that the college had the capacity and vision to continue as it had over the past years, adapting to the changes on the national, social, economic and political fronts while serving the needs of the Defence Force. The college had substantial contracts with the South African Defence Force and several

other large business organisations, and felt that this would make them self-sustainable for the unforeseeable future. The opinion of the college staff, based mainly on self interest, was that any disruption of the prevailing status quo through the merger process would lead to a deterioration in the quality of services rendered by the college. The Rector emphatically supported the concept of remaining a stand-alone college in his following statement:

The Centurion College Council, first of all, was constitutive and quite representative of the community representing the different institutions or employees. I believe it was a very important factor at this point in time. The College Council was of the opinion that Centurion College had the capacity, with the new Act being enacted, to be a stand-alone institution and therefore they supported the request to the MEC to consider the option that Centurion College be a stand-alone institution.

He had solicited the support of the South African Defence Force in making a recommendation to the provincial MEC for Education for the college not to merge, but to remain as a stand-alone institution. This request was made to the provincial MEC in October 2001 via the offices of the South African Defence Force during the 90 days period prescribed for this purpose in terms of the FET Act. The recommendation of the South African Defence Force was based on

... the perspective of the Centurion College Council that felt that we have the capacity, we have the expertise, and we still have our expertise to move into this new dispensation and still make a contribution as a specialised unit because the FET Act makes provision for that, and also that the MEC consider stand-alone options and that was the basis for our request (Rector, 10/09/02).

The Rector was of the opinion that sufficient understanding and know-how existed within the college to provide learners with the skills needed to meet their socio-economic needs. The use of the word capacity also implied finances and physical resources. He referred to the staff's expertise in terms of the age of the college. The Rector maintained that if the college had proved to be responsive to the needs of industry, and to the needs of the SANDF in particular, for more than 70 years then he was confident that the college could exist in the future serving a particular need. On the other hand, what was the Rector's understanding of the change and the need to merge?

The college expected a response, either sanctioning or refuting their request, at least by the end of the 90-day period, which would have been 31 December 2001. However, the general assumption and expectation of the Gauteng Department of Education was that the colleges would continue with the development and finalisation of the merger plans as specified in the plan released by the national Minister for Education. Merger plans were to be completed by 11 December 2001. The merger facilitator had assumed duties at the college cluster and the work simply had to go on so that the merger plan would be complete at the end of his one-month contracted assignment with the Gauteng Department of Education.

As with all the other technical colleges, the Centurion College staff first learnt of the merger when it was officially announced at the national launch. It was the first time that anyone has seen a written directive and, up to that point, the only information that college staff had had been gained through the talks going on in the media about the transformation of technical colleges. According to a focus group member:

The only thing that was of concern to us was people losing their jobs (Rose, 10/09/02).

The feeling of uncertainty was exacerbated, by the fact that provincial department officials remained silent on the process. The college staff felt despondent that neither the Department of Education nor the Gauteng Department of Education had informed them about the mergers and what the implications of these arrangements would be for them. A focus group member stated that

I think, the uncertainty existed because there was no prior knowledge ...if you read in the newspaper you are going to merge, I mean, surely you are going to think, I'm going to lose my job. I think that is where the uncertainty starts, that people bigger than us were organising our lives without even consulting us. Another example, there was a rumour spreading amongst the personnel at the workshops, at Atteridgeville for instance, that there are 70 people with no students and they are going to be transfer to here, and some of our college staff are going to loose their jobs, I don't know where it came from, but that was the rumour and that uncertainty is still among the institutions (Eddie, 10/09/02).

It was apparent that there was a lack of understanding of the merger. Eddie indicated that they had some prior knowledge of the imminent merger through media reports.

However, the media coverage on the merger did not seem to be sufficient as he interpreted it as a threat to his job. He felt despondent that senior officials in the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education were rearranging his life and he had not been consulted. He too was a senior member of the college management staff and had more than 25 years experience in the colleges sector. He interpreted the merger as a loss of jobs and he felt extremely threatened firstly, because of his age and secondly, he was a white male. His fears were exacerbated by the rumours that were going around concerning a large number of staff at Atteridgeville College that would be moved to the Centurion College. He also knew that the merger would imply the rationalisation of staff and felt that the white staff would be most affected by this.

Another focus group member, Kenny, said that he

... read the article in the paper. Professor Asmal wrote a article in the paper, saying that technical colleges are going to merge, because I think one of the reasons was that much money is spent and colleges waste a lot of money (Kenny, 10/09/02).

It was obvious that there was no understanding among the Centurion College staff of the purpose of the *restructuring* of the technical college sector. This lack of understanding and the absence of a clear communication channel created a great deal of anxiety, since there was no clarity on the implications of the FET policy. It seemed as though the management staff had made no attempt to look beyond the newspaper articles to find out what the implications, rationale and process of the merge were going to be. The focus group assumed that it was *a fait accompli*

... we didn't even see the plan, or nobody even discussed it with us, we saw it in the newspaper and we didn't know the rationale. It wasn't discussed why A, B and C and why D, E and F were going to cluster (Kenny, 10/09/02).

The process seemed to be forging ahead as an Interim College Council was appointed in terms of the Act. A focus group member recalled that the staff experienced a sense of disillusionment during the period of setting up of the Interim Council, as there were no negotiations with officials from Gauteng Department of Education. He stated emphatically that nobody visited the college and that

... documentation was handed out, the structure, the new landscape, there were no negotiations, nobody visited us (Kenny, 10/09/02).

Kenny indicated that they felt as though they had been abandoned by the Gauteng Department of Education and could not understand the reason for this. He explained that they were unable to discover what the Gauteng Department of Education's intentions were in regard to their request. The Centurion College staff was indignant because they had had absolutely no response from the MEC, who had apparently communicated through the department about their request to remain a stand-alone institution.

The MEC's response was that he had referred the matter to the Gauteng Education Department, which were to set up a task team to investigate the possibilities. I believed that at certain point in time after we submitted our documentation to the MEC, that we would at least get some feedback from the Gauteng Education Department indicating that there was a problem with our request, and suggesting that we would have to enter into the merger for this and this reason. Even if we had any acknowledgement that they had received our documentation it would have helped, but we didn't even receive that (Rector, 10/09/02).

Throughout the process the Rector maintained that he felt that the final decision regarding the status of the college was still on hold. He also maintained that the merger partnership was never discussed at college level. He had been informed through AFETISA about whom his merger partners would be. He was under the impression that there had been discussions between AFETISA and the department, but emphasised that he, as a member of AFETISA, was not part of these discussions, if there had indeed been any discussions. He believed that if there had been discussions with AFETISA it could not have been a legitimate process as he was of the opinion that

... AFETISA wasn't actually recognised as an organisation.

Prior to the landscape document being released the organisation of Rectors (AFETISA) held meetings with its members to sensitise them to the imminent *restructuring* of the technical college sector. Their discussions were based mainly on hunches, and department officials were often invited to these meetings to address the college Rectors on the *restructuring* process. In fact, it appeared that there was a great deal of tension generated through these AFETISA meetings, because there were no direct departmental directives or clarification as to what the situation really entailed. The Rector explained

that he first heard about and saw the merger landscape document at the launch in September 2001.

He lamented that it was in the June or July of 2001 when the reality really dawned on them that the merger would actually take place. He reiterated that

... there were no negotiations with the colleges. I think these were the recommendations made to the education department by perhaps AFETISA or someone else and I believe that they had taken up those suggestions.

He did not want to openly blame the Department of Education or Gauteng Department of Education. He insinuated that the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education had based their decisions on the recommendations made by a third party who in his opinion was AFETISA. The lack of consultation reinforced their hope that the application for stand-alone status submitted to the MEC would be approved. The Rector maintained that he had expected the Gauteng Department of Education to come back and explain the situation. The fact that they had not received any response from the Gauteng Department of Education served to prolong their hope that perhaps the request would be approved. The Gauteng Department of Education helped create a false hope, and increase the anxiety and tension on the ground. A focus group member stated that because no information was being disseminated via the provincial department they continued to feel insecure and uncertain

This information was not clear – you were unsettled (Busi, 10/09/02).

The lack of proper communication between the Gauteng Department of Education and the colleges led to misinformation. The Rector expressed his regret at the lack of interaction with the Gauteng Department of Education and emphasised that some kind of interaction would have provided a degree of motivation for the college staff. He maintained that they were anxious, but willing to be included in the planning via the Gauteng Department of Education.

Staff meetings served as a forum to discuss the imminent changes and likely effects of the FET policy on Centurion College.

At least once a month, average twice a month, in smaller groups, unless we had a management meeting and then we reported back to the staff after these meetings. We have a senior staff meeting every week, then we have meetings with the senior lecturers, and we meet every day in the staff room and then report back to the non-management staff members (Rose, 10/09/02).

Rose explained that there was an established communication channel in the college. The entire staff met on a monthly basis when major policy issues were discussed. This was the formal communication channel in the college. On rare occasions they would meet twice in one month. Management meetings were held weekly and the members of senior management would report back to the staff on any issues that needed to be considered at daily meetings held in the staff room. The daily meetings in the staff room were of a casual nature and there were no discussions. They served merely as a means of transmitting information to staff on general management issues.

The Rector was disappointed that there was no support or training provided to assist his college through the merger. He remarked that they assumed that there would be support and a certain amount of capacity building to drive the process within the three colleges. He was of the opinion that the work done by the CCF was “*valuable support*”. He referred to the services provided by the merger facilitator as a “*good exercise*” which created a new working partnership through the portfolio committees. However, he admitted that the facilitator had failed to develop the organisational structure necessary for the merger. There was also duplication in portfolio committees. He summed up the facilitator’s contribution as minimal.

I don’t think that we’ve reached any objectives or even a few objectives in the last year.

There are indications to suggest that he and his staff were pessimistic about the merger. For example it was noted that

We indicated to the interim council that we were busy with the process of trying to remain a stand-alone institution. We were quiet transparent and didn’t negotiate with the MEC without making our intention known to all the stakeholders, I believe that Centurion College was quite transparent in their intentions.

Although the Rector did not explicitly say so, it was evident from his behaviour and the things he said that the deeply seated conservative institutional culture of the college contributed to the resistance to the reform. Centurion College had been established during the height of racial segregation practices in South Africa, and long before the establishment of the other two colleges with which it was to merge. The college staff accorded a high status to the college and to the work they did. They were of the opinion that the merger would lead to a decline in the quality of education at the college. The Rector made reference to the fact of having to share “our” resources with “them”. He claimed ownership of the college and staff. He referred to the other two colleges as “them” implying that they were, in his opinion, inferior partners. Neither he nor his staff were open to the changes. He often referred to the number of sponsorships that he had acquired through his relationships with industry and that these had provided his college with sufficient finances. He was of the opinion that the college did not need any additional resources to exist. He was extremely unhappy that he would have to share these resources with the other two colleges. He believed that these were things that made Centurion College “superior”.

Even though all other FET colleges in the country were making attempts to transform staff racial and gender imbalances Centurion College was having problems with this aspect. White females were replacing white males in order to change the college’s gender profile. The Rector maintained that Centurion College was an Engineering college and that few women studied in the Engineering fields. He was unable to use this argument when it came to race but maintained that the black people were not sufficiently trained in this field. At the same time the college was also offering Business Studies programmes, yet the College had made no attempt to appoint black staff members in this field. It was evident that the College was trying to maintain the status quo even though there had been major transformation in the country.

When asked what changes had taken place in the college the Rector and management referred to the increased numbers in the admission of black learners at the college. This was their understanding of what change entailed. What they did not want to admit was that one of the conditions for financial support from business and industry was that the college admits more black learners to its programmes.

The college staff were aware of the radical cultural change that had been taking place in the education sector since 1994. The focus group alluded to the deep-seated institutional culture prevalent at the college. They indicated that several workshops had been held in diversity training to create an understanding of cultural differences, and this was substantiated in that

... from our Western side, the former Rector and all of us are extremely aware of other cultures, we really do, we have lot of workshops in our training sessions, because the majority of the staff is white. In addition to this almost all of us are Afrikaners. We served the South African Defence Force for the last 68 years and there is definitely a culture that has developed here over that period about which we are extremely sensitive. We are aware of our background and therefore we really make an effort to make the paradigm shift. Little culture things like why the student is sitting in your office before you said they can sit – but that's a culture thing and we try to learn the culture (Kenny, 10/09/02).

The focus group indicated that they were making efforts to understand the different racial cultures that existed in the college. The culture that prevailed at the college was mediated through Western values and norms. In Western culture it would be disrespectful for a student to enter an office and take a seat without being asked to do so. However, African or black culture dictated otherwise.

One of the ways in which the college was displaying its progressiveness and adaptability to cultural differences was to use English as the medium for communicating at staff meetings. However, the general unofficial communication between staff members remained in Afrikaans.

... our staff meetings are conducted in English, all our memorandums are in English. There is here and there some "Boere omies" I mean they are 60 years old, almost on pension. Typically, but I think in general, 95 percent of the staff have adopted as a business culture and to the new South Africa (Kenny, 10/09/02).

Kenny explained that it was important that they had begun using English for communication purposes as it was a prerequisite if they were to continue to have the support of business and industry. Almost all business communication was conducted in English. This was the first radical cultural change that had taken place at the college in an attempt to ensure their survival in a transforming educational context. As far as the

Rector and management staff were concerned they were taking the right steps toward transforming the college.

The Rector added that the staff was not eager to spend time and energy on something, that in their view, was not going to be beneficial to them. They accorded little meaning to the changes that would be affected through the merger. They were of the opinion that the merger would not improve their situation in any way. Nevertheless the Centurion College management was determined to take control at college level and give the impression that they supported the process. This was suggested to be an indication of their support of changes in the FET sector. They were aware that non- participation would be construed as insubordination and defiance against embracing change. This was contrary to the culture they maintained. They were not going to let their non-participation be a reason for the other two colleges not merging.

There were eight working groups set up to deal with specific aspects of the merger plan as indicated in the merger manual. Staff members were assigned to each of these working groups and they realised that their negativity would impact on the other colleges. They maintained throughout the process that they did not have the capacity or the expertise within the college to drive the merger process. The Rector emphatically stated that his staff did not have the skills to co-ordinate the meetings. This was in contradiction to what he had earlier claimed when he stated that he believed that the staff had the capacity to serve in a stand-alone institution. He did not understand that the volatile international and national contexts demanded new skills and competencies from staff members. It was only when he was forced to participate in the merger that he acknowledged that the staff did not have the necessary skills to take on additional responsibility.

The Rector did not want to take any blame for the situation. Instead he stated that he had felt disheartened that they had been ignored totally by the Gauteng Department of Education, and by the chaos that had resulted as the process lost focus and fell apart. He recalled that

... it was a confusing situation, the most confusing part of my life, and within this confusion you must run a college and you must get people motivated to come into a new dispensation, that is in short.

Consequently the staff of Centurion College was non-supportive and disruptive at meetings so that consensus and finalisation were difficult to reach. They described the facilitator as “incompetent”. A focus group member summed up the situation as follows:

... the lack of the managerial structure was hampering us but there are skilled people. ...We didn't stop the process, we went on in all the portfolio groups and workgroups.. But, yes, all these people don't have the skills to really participate productively to produce something. So across all the campuses, I am sure we could handpick skilled people, but to be consultative you have to handpick your post level 1 and even your lower levels to be transparent. They can't help it if they don't have the expertise, they don't, and I mean they are experts in the classrooms, but they don't have the next stage yet because that is not where they are yet (Busi, 10/09/02).

Busi indicated that many of the problems were as a result of the absence of an established management structure and appropriately skilled people to plan the merger. In his opinion there were sufficient people in terms of numbers, but that these individuals did not have the expertise and experience in the areas that they were working. Collectively, in all three colleges there were few members of staff who understood the process. He also stressed that in order to be transparent and to give the process credibility it was essential to include staff from all levels in the work groups. However, staff at lower levels did not have the skills, the know-how and the understanding of the process.

Eddie explained that this had led to a great deal of confusion and stakeholders made their own interpretations of what was expected in terms of the merger plans. The lack of motivation or interest on the part of the staff members at Centurion College was emphasised over and over again in that they kept indicating that there was no clear directive from the Gauteng Department of Education, and that whatever they did at the college under the guidance of the facilitator was rejected.

You see the facilitator told us what to do, we did everything that he said we must do, and then the department was very unhappy. Somewhere there was some misinformation (Eddie, 10/09/02).

It is evident from Eddie's statement that they relied heavily on the facilitator. They believed that the facilitator would have all the answers to their queries as he had been appointed by the Gauteng Department of Education. This resulted in a loss of confidence in the facilitator and the staff's self-confidence also being eroded. They had produced a merger plan but

... they (Gauteng Department of Education) were very unhappy with our plan. But we didn't have guidelines (Eddie, 10/09/02)

The Rector and focus group members kept referring to the fact that there were no proper guidelines. The merger manual that encompassed the process and guidelines had been given to the merger facilitator. The merger facilitator had also attended the training workshop mentioned in Chapter 5. The staff were searching in vain for solutions to the problems they encountered, and began blaming the different role-players who had designed the strategies and the process. They also felt that the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education were exploiting them because, at the end, they themselves had to find the capacity and develop the expertise to drive the process. They were out of their depth and felt that, besides the "extra load they had to carry," there was also an information gap between the department, the facilitator and themselves.

The Rector and focus group were of the opinion that the national and provincial departments did not understand the logistics of running a successful college. They would have preferred it if the Gauteng Department of Education had sent representatives to explain the rationale and the plan that they were expected to follow before it was published. They felt excluded from the process and maintained that there was no transparency in the process. A focus group member stated categorically that it was the responsibility of the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to communicate with the college. The Rector was also disturbed that there was no student involvement in the entire process.

The college staff lost faith in the ability of the Gauteng Department of Education officials and believed that the Gauteng Department of Education did not have the expertise and capacity to deal with the complexities of the reform process. The focus group made reference to a meeting hosted by the Gauteng Department of Education at the beginning of the process where departmental officials had not been able to answer the questions from the floor. The conclusion drawn was that the officials were incapable of taking a leading role and that

... the meeting was a mockery. This was a meeting hosted by the Gauteng Department of Education at which national officials were present and answers could not be provided (Rose, 10/09/02).

Rose emphasized that there had been representation from the Department of Education at the meeting and that these representatives had also been unable to sketch a clear process or answer the questions raised by college staff. In her opinion this was also an indication of the incompetence of the Department of Education as well. Busi explained that he saw the process

... on ground level that the Department of Education needed to understand us, the actual numbers and the hugeness of an effective college, which is what Atteridgeville was, and look at what has become of it. The department should have managed this (Busi, 10/09/02).

He was of the opinion that the Department of Education did not understand the complexities and intricacies of a big FET college. He made reference to the Atteridgeville College that had been once a vibrant institution and the incidents that had taken place there over the last few years. He alluded to the fact that the status of the college had deteriorated because the Gauteng Department of Education had not intervened and managed the situation. He was afraid that the same would happen to them if the Gauteng Department of Education was not actively involved in the merger.

Busi claimed that they were in fact responsible for

... activating the process, and people would say, aren't we going to get paid? I mean, I can't do this during college hours, I need to do it after hours, but then they want to be paid to work after hours, we don't have money (Busi, 10/09/02).

The focus group was of the opinion that they were doing the work yet there was no compensation for the extra effort they put in. They wanted to be remunerated for the long hours they spent after normal working hours. Why did the Gauteng Department of Education not recognise some other form of compensation or reward for the college staff in the absence of funds? The Gauteng Department of Education saw it as part of the college management and staff's responsibility to comply with the directive given to develop the merger plan. The focus group indicated that they would have felt better if the Gauteng Department of Education could have at least recognised their efforts by visiting the college and providing feedback. In their opinion the active participation by the Gauteng Department of Education and their acknowledgement of the efforts made by the staff members of the colleges would have constituted some form of compensation. This could have led to increased motivation and self-confidence on the part of the college staff.

The Rector and focus group concurred that one of the main flaws in the process was a clear lack of leadership. The facilitator was not able to take control of the situation and they were of the opinion that

... if the Rector was appointed then we know and we would work to make sure we work as a team (Busi, 10/09/02).

A second member of the focus group endorsed the sentiment that mismanagement and the lack of communication on the part of the Gauteng Department of Education on the strategy of driving the process from outside the colleges led to a total lack of ownership on the part of the colleges. He maintained that

... if we had started off with Rectors, if we started off with management and if we started off with the department, the national department explaining to us exactly why, I think it would've been plain sailing (Kenny, 10/09/02).

The Rector maintained that the new Rector (CEO) should have been appointed to drive the process. He believed that

...if a Rector had been appointed the whole process would've gone quicker.

The focus group understood that the role of the department should have been to provide both support and training in order to improve the understanding of what was taking place and how to achieve the new vision.

In addition, the resources that were promised, such as training of staff and financial assistance, were also not forthcoming from either the Department of Education or the Gauteng Department of Education. The staff was confused as they tried to piece together the information they had gleaned from different sources. A focus group member recalled with sadness that there had been no money provided for any activity even though there had been an indication that:

The CCF, had many millions, for merging, so everybody assumed that there is money available.,however, there was not any provision made even for a snack while we were working these long hours (Busi, 10/09/02).

Several focus group members mentioned their concern with the funding of the process and their resentment was quite tangible. They explained that college funds that were committed for other purposes were used to meet the demands of the merger planning process, and they were uncertain of when, and indeed if, there would be a refund from the Gauteng Department of Education. A member of the focus group vociferously emphasised that:

Money could have improved the situation.. In order to set up a merging fund we had to find a way of getting additional resources. We drew up a newspaper, which we sold in order to raise funds for the merger activities (Busi, 10/09/02)

He continued to explain that

... even when it came to the appointment of the Rectors we were told that there was no money. This should have been done long ago including the staff establishment matters. We still continue to work with our old post establishments from two years back and then next year in 2003, because there is no money, we will see what is going to happen. Perhaps, this year we may only get a Rector. So I want to know how decisions are made without funds or capital?

While money remained to be a contentious issue throughout the process Centurion College was confident that it was a strong college with a good track record, and the

security of current contracts with the Defence Force to consolidate their position as a stand-alone college. They missed the bigger picture of the political transformation that was taking place within the South African education system, and continued to be encapsulated in their world and to cling to the current college culture. The departmental attitude towards the college served to reinforce the resistance because they had been excluded from early negotiations or even briefings about the plan. A focus group member verbalised his sentiment indignantly

... we didn't even see the plan, or nobody even discussed it with us, ... (Kenny, 10/09/04)

In his opinion the repercussion was that:

Some of our very highly skilled people are looking for other jobs. We are going to lose a lot of these skilled people, and we can't afford it.

Kenny cited the lack of communication and negotiation as being the reasons why people were looking for jobs elsewhere. He failed to admit that those who were looking for jobs elsewhere were actually resistant to the changes taking place within the FET college sector. The focus group lamented the state of affairs as many of the unhappy staff members had served for a long time in the college sector. Their understanding was that this would lead to a drop in the institutional capacity and skills of the college as many of these members had a huge amount of experience. Kenny indicated that many incidents and sentiments had been triggered by rumours. The focus group was distressed that there was no leader to step in and clarify events, or to pacify and motivate the staff.

I think, it really affected people, but on our side we are still going on to try to keep them up to date all the time, all the time. We would report back and keep them going. We told them just do your job and carry on. In my section I had people who became very negative (Kenny, 10/09/04).

Data from the respondents suggested that staff ultimately became demotivated, and their level of commitment and loyalty to the college decreased because of the high level of insecurity experienced. A member of the focus group added that

... it had a double effect, a positive and a negative, because in the workshop, for instance, although they were hearing these rumours and heard that they were going to lose their jobs, they decided well, let's just go for it and they actually went out and marketed and they got more students and more work. So in that way they became really positive. What hurt staff is that those of them who were Gauteng Department of Education appointed staff, had this attitude that I can't lose my job and were not willing to go on, because they knew they were not going to lose their jobs (Busi, 10/09/04).

The issue of how staff was appointed at the college was a problem. The focus group alleged that staff employed by the Gauteng Department of Education were less committed than those appointed through the College Council. College Council staff appointments were on a contract basis and they would be the first to be affected if staff numbers were to be reduced. This resulted in the staff being divided and the College Council appointed staff embarked on a marketing strategy to increase enrolment at the college in order to secure their positions.

In conclusion, the data suggests that the staff of the colleges had a great deal to cope with from an emotional point of view. They referred to the lack of communication and commitment on the part of the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to clarify the plan and to support the staff by reassuring them that their jobs were not at stake. Self-interest seemed to have dominated their actions.

7.2.3 The Pretoria West Version

The Pretoria West saga unfolded slightly differently as compared to the other two colleges that were ridden with conflict of various kinds. The staff at the Pretoria West College seemed less complacent about the structural effects of the reform than about the cultural aspects of the change agenda. A member of the focus group indicated that all staff members had, at some time or the other, read the FET Act, but that the level of understanding of the implications of the Act varied substantially from staff member to staff member. He said that

... everybody read the FFT Act, but I reckon that only 10 percent of the people understood what they were reading (Nox, 11/09/04).

As a member of the college management team, the focus group member based his observations on the questions that arose during the merger. He too, like the rest of the staff, did not understand what the policy meant in practice, or how implementation was going to work. He explained that the reason for this was the indifference displayed by the lecturing staff and college management in terms of engaging with the new FET policy and its accompanying Act. They were fully aware that one of the policy options in the medium to long term was the merger of two or more FET institutions, but their assumption was that it was the responsibility of the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education to provide insight into the merger, and empower staff and Council members to deal with the issues in relation to the merger.

When the Department of Education launched the national plan, the Rector, as the head of the institution, recalled being taken aback by the tight timeframes indicated in the plan. He firmly believed that his college was not ready to commence with the merger since insufficient information had been made available to his staff through his own office. The Rector explained that he did not have the relevant information to pass on to staff. He kept his management team updated with whatever little information he had gained by attending the few meetings or workshops held by AFETISA. However, he made no attempt to siphon the information he received down to the lower levels of the staff. He explained that there were too many questions that remained unanswered. He also maintained that unclear information and inappropriate responses to queries would have increased the apprehension and insecurities among staff members. He blamed the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education for imposing the change agenda without addressing him, as the Rector of the college, and his staff on the policy implementation strategy, particularly as regards the merger

The staff, however, did have access to the limited media coverage on the FET reform agenda, and occasionally raised questions with the Rector and management staff based on the information gained through the media. The Rector recalled that he was often in a compromising situation and felt incompetent as the head of the institution when faced with questions from the staff on the media reports and the future of their college. This resulted in a total lack of understanding of the rationale behind the merger with a wide array of interpretations and assumptions being made by the staff about their future in the college. He explained that

... we have this problem of culture which you cannot avoid, there are whites who think that this is the end of them, and the blacks are expecting miracles from these mergers. They expect to move up the ladder since they have been disadvantaged in the past. Whites tend to be negative because they think that they don't have a future with this college. If we consider the racial composition of the staff, we are fortunate because it's more or less 50/50. The problem arises when it comes to the management and we are making special attempts to change this, especially in terms of female staff members, both in management as well as in the lecturing staff.

By culture the Rector was referring to the racial composition of the staff as not being similar to the demographic student profile of the college. Only 47 percent of the staff members were black compared to 89 percent of the black student population. The Rector alleged that the merger created conflicting expectations among staff. White staff members who were in the majority felt threatened that they would lose their jobs while black staff were of the opinion that the merger would create opportunities for them to be promoted into management positions as they had previously been disadvantaged. These concerns of the staff members were never addressed and affected the way in which staff reacted to the merger.

The imposition of this top-down mandate had several repercussions. First and foremost there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to who was to be responsible for the merger implementation. The Department of Education launched the plan as a national FET restructuring plan, and it was known that the plan had been conceptualised by both the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education. The implementation was the responsibility of the Gauteng Department of Education, and then there were also other role-players such as the facilitator and College Council. Each role player had a specific role to play. The Rector lamented that a great deal of confusion reigned as

... it is very difficult because the development of the guidelines for the merger plans were done by, I don't know whether it was the Department of Education or Gauteng Department of Education, and there was the MOTT. Colleges were not represented on the MOTT. The provincial official who represented the Gauteng Department of Education on the MOTT never really give us feedback from the MOTT. Then there was a PMT, the provincial merger team, we were not represented in that team, we were just informed whenever they felt like it, and in the form of circulars, not in the form of meetings.

The Rector was aware of the various structures, but was unsure of the roles and responsibilities assigned to each structure. This led to the confusion about where accountability for the mergers lay, whether with the Department of Education, Gauteng Department of Education, MOTT and/or PMT. A focus group member felt that it was the responsibility of the Gauteng Department of Education to set up the Single Council for the colleges to be merged, and then to appoint a Rector to lead and drive the process. Instead, a facilitator was assigned to manage the merger on behalf of the department, and to ensure the successful development of a merger plan. The focus group was of the opinion that the facilitator had also not been provided with clear directives and a clear merger implementation plan. A focus group member, Zanele, pointed out that the facilitator exacerbated the confusion around the process because he learnt that the facilitator

... had information and documentation that was not disseminated to college staff
(Zanele, 11/09/02)

A second focus group member maintained that the problems that arose were as a result of there being

... no principal for the institution, there was nobody to lead, and we needed a facilitator or leader to champion this someone with the interests of the college at heart (Musa, 11/09/04).

Musa believed that the facilitator did not have the interests of the college at heart. He indicated that the appointment of an outside agent to manage the merger was an inappropriate gesture. The focus group stated categorically that an outsider could not head the development of a new corporate image for the college.

Zanele held the opinion that the fact the facilitator failed to disseminate the information and documentation provided from the Gauteng Department of Education to the college staff was an indication that he was not capable of directing the process. Lucky alleged that no merger plan had been developed under the facilitator's guidance, yet they were told that the facilitator had handed a plan to the Gauteng Department of Education. He expressed his discontent with the facilitator by indicating that:

From day one our facilitator was pathetic and I don't know what he received, I believe it was over R50 000, and there is no plan, I don't know what they handed in, I never saw it, this is why the my colleagues have indicated that there are many things that they not aware of (Lucky, 11/09/02).

It was suggested that the facilitator was paid handsomely yet, in their opinion, there had been no final product. There were indications that a member of the Gauteng Department of Education was also of the same opinion and it seemed as though the focus group members were in touch with someone at the Gauteng Department of Education. The college staff felt disillusioned with the lack of both internal and external leadership, and capacity to implement the change process. A focus group member sadly described the chaotic situation with the facilitator as

... when the process was moving, committees were functioning, then the facilitator would withdraw and everything came to a standstill (Zanele, 11/09/02).

It seemed as though they considered the behaviour of the facilitator to be erratic. The facilitator did not provide reasons for his stopping the process to the college staff. The Gauteng Department of Education also failed to address the matter with the colleges. The Rector strongly believed that

Our provincial department, I think was under staffed or was not really prepared enough to drive this merger.

The lack of capacity in the Gauteng Department of Education seemed to be an inhibiting factor. According to the Rector the problem was that there was no clear communication between the college and the Gauteng Department of Education.

I would have liked to have meetings with the provincial department officials about where we were going, to indicate or plan how we were going to go about this merger. This just didn't take place.

Although the Rector maintained that there was this communication void he did not indicate that he had on a few occasions been requested by the Department of Education to assist with MOTT activities. His input was considered vital when there were unresolved implementation queries. This interaction placed him in an advantageous

situation compared to his colleagues. He indirectly alluded to his interaction with the Department of Education when he stated that:

... there was not really clear communication between us as a college, and the provincial department. We received more information from the national department than from the provincial department, and to me that was an indication that it was not really planned properly.

The Rector, who at times worked closely with the Department of Education was fully aware of where the planning and conceptualisation took place yet he too complained about the lack of communication and flaws in the planning process. He pointed out that he understood that there were clear distinctions between the policymakers and the implementer of the merger. He was of the view that if only the Department of Education had left the implementation to the Gauteng Department of Education then there would have been less confusion. He defined the roles of the departments as

... the national department was supposed to develop policies and those policies are suppose to be implemented by the provincial department., In this case, the policies and everything were developed and implemented by the national department. The ultimate responsibility for implementation was left to the province which in actual fact had assumed the role of an agency service for the Department of Education. This is where Gauteng has had problems is understanding the policies and the implementation.

He understood the role and responsibilities of the various sectors of government. It was clear to him that the roles were confused and this was the reason for the many problems which arose with the implementation of the merger. The Rector indicated that he struggled to understand why the Department of Education had taken over the role of the Gauteng Department of Education but left the responsibility for successful implementation to the Gauteng Department of Education.

The Rector understood that the lack of capacity was the reason for Department of Education's intervention. The Rector and focus group were of the opinion that even if there was this lack of capacity at the provincial level, it was the responsibility of the Department of Education to provide support and to implement the new change reforms. The focus group concurred that they would have liked workshops to be held with staff prior to the merger, in order to inform and build capacity to cope with the changes. This

would have engendered a sense of ownership of the plan because, later, as more information started to filter through, support for the merger did begin to emerge. Instead it was left to the Rector to deal with the unrealistic timeframes set by the Department of Education. The Rector summed up that

After each and every meeting I reported back to our staff what was happening and why we had to merge. At the beginning it was difficult for them to understand. They had so many questions, but as I kept on giving them information they started to understand the necessity of merging, and they started to support the merger.

However, the Rector was distressed that the

current councillors of the merged colleges were not consulted, nor were they really work-shopped, they were not trained how to manage or how to govern the new institution.

It seemed as if the College Councils as well did not have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities. The Rector elaborated that he was of the opinion that, in terms of human resources, it was expected that people would be trained to support the merger. He understood that the CCF paid facilitators to train staff on how to deal with the merger, but this was certainly not viewed as an investment in the college per se. He commented that

Our present top managers or management have not been work-shopped or trained.

A focus group member reiterated the sentiments expressed by the Rector. He said

... not one of us are trained, or are being trained to form part of these committees, or to lead this whole process (Zanele, 11/09/02).

Zanele was of the opinion that the Department of Education should have assumed the leadership role, because the Gauteng Department of Education was not in a position to offer support to the staff and to encourage their professional growth in order to take ownership of the merger through the committees. Staff felt inadequate, as there was no one to build their self-esteem and give them a sense of motivation to support the process.

In retrospect, the focus group felt that Department of Education should have provided clearly defined directives, timelines and a solid leadership structure to support the process within the colleges. A focus group member maintained that the process was structured the wrong way around. He questioned the wisdom of the departments in their appointment of the council before the process was actually underway in the colleges. He felt that:

With the situation as it is now, we've got the council, but it needs an institution, we don't have management for that institution. There is no principal for that institution. There is nobody to lead (Lucky, 11/09/02).

Lucky acknowledged that the announcement of the merger had been symbolic of the change to take place in the sector. He understood that the real changes would come later but that there were several aspects needing immediate attention. These included the appointment of the college's head and management staff. After the announcement of the merger each Rector continued to take charge of their individual sites until such time that the new Rector or CEO would be appointed.

In addition to the lack of strong leadership, the other impeding factor was the inter-college dynamics that also compounded the problems experienced at the institutional level. Zanele indicated that the Centurion College members hampered the work of the committee because they maintained that they were not part of the merger. This resulted in a lack of commitment from them during the committee's working sessions.

So we were busy with a partner who was not cooperating. They were one of the leading colleges so this issue should have been sorted out first. How could there be transparency when you are involved with someone who does not want to be part of it (Zanele, 11/09/02)?

It seemed as though there was tension between the staff members of the three colleges. As far as the focus group was concerned it was a matter of not planning properly. A member of the focus group indicated that he would have liked the Department of Education to make a distinction between the **premerger** activities and outcomes and the **postmerger** activities and outcomes. He believed that

... this would have clarified the process for us – when are we considered merged? What are the stages of merging that we need to go through? (Nox, 11/09/02).

Nox reiterated what had been said a few times before that the important steps in sensitising colleges and sorting out differences had been ignored. It seemed as if the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education assumed that colleges had already adjusted to accepting the changes. The Rector recalled that there was also a great deal of confusion regarding the financial resources available for the merger activities. He made reference to both the physical and financial provisions needed. He explained that financial resources in the colleges were severely strained, and although there had been several verbal indications that there would be funding provided through the CCF, no funding had been received from CCF. He explained his dilemma in that:

... we were told that there is a lot of money, and if we were told that there is money so we were expecting a minimum of R2 million per campus.

It is not clear where he had got this information. The Rector had huge expectations that the money pledged would be available to bring colleges up to a standard in line with each other, especially the disadvantaged campuses. He understood that this would be in addition to the money received for the new CEO.

The focus group members were also disgruntled about the unavailability of financial resources. They were of the opinion that funds were being spent wastefully

Now, money was made available to facilitators whom which I had reason to believe were paid in the region of R75 000 each (Zanele, 11/09/02)

They were of the view that the money spent on the services of the facilitator, particularly in their case, was wasted as they believed that the facilitator had added no value to the process.

Furthermore, the merger activities cut into lecturing time and this raised many concerns, as the staff believed that their moral responsibility was toward their students, and therefore valuable teaching time should not be used for any other purpose. The focus group and the Rector reiterated their concerns several times that many of the issues raised during the merger could have been dealt with had appropriate planning involving

the relevant stakeholders taken place. The Rector emphasised that the timeframes were not satisfactorily clarified. He pointed out that a long time had elapsed since the adoption of the policy in 1998 and its implementation in 2002. He could not understand the sudden haste to merge the colleges. He asked the question why it had been necessary to have waited so long before starting and then to try and hasten the process? He maintained that the process had not been properly thought out. To the Rector it appeared as if someone had suddenly realised that time was running out. He was also puzzled about the omission of representation from chief stakeholder groups, in particular the omission of the colleges from committees such as the MOTT. He acknowledged that there may have been reasons for this omission, but concluded that a proper channel of communication should have been in place to ensure that information on the strategies and processes be transmitted to the people affected by the change agenda. Over a period of four years there had been virtually no dissemination of the implementation strategy or any real activity to prepare colleges for the mergers. The Rector was of the opinion that the department had assumed that the colleges would initiate the reform agenda on their own, but the intentions behind the “big picture” and the process had not been communicated. Neither had any form of support been made available. He indicated that there were several gaps in the policy that need clarification, but that the Gauteng Department of Education had never made any attempt to engage with the colleges on ways to elucidate these gaps.

When asked how he had received directives from the Gauteng Department of Education the Rector responded through circulars. However, he was unable to produce any of the circulars as evidence of communication between the Gauteng Department of Education and his college.

The Rector was distraught at the recollection that the “ill thought-through process” had created a great deal of tension and demotivated the staff. He admitted that although

... I didn't really get resistance, but you know it really demotivated many staff members, you could see now even by their performance, maybe until after we have completed the process of merging. But staff's morale is down, and I don't know how we are going to really bring it back to what it was in the past two years or so.

The staff felt betrayed because they maintained that the new plans emerging from the colleges were being rejected by the Gauteng Department of Education, and yet no officials visited the college to discuss the issues that they found unacceptable. They were of the opinion that the colleges were being treated badly by the provincial officials. Transparency was an issue throughout the process, and this was illustrated by the fact that the plan submitted on behalf of the colleges was apparently not endorsed by the focus groups.

It seemed as if a great deal of confusion had resulted and the staff were overwhelmed by the demands made on them. However, the blame for the failure of the process cannot simply be assigned to the Gauteng Department of Education and Department of Education. One also needs to examine the commitment of college staff. To what extent were they willing to get involved and build their own capacity?

The Rector and management alluded to the lack of leadership as a major factor that inhibited the process. By this they implied that the strategies to implement the process were not clearly defined and planned. In their opinion it was a matter of poor communication.

Lucky identified the lack of clarity and communication as a factor that contributed to a great deal of anxiety among staff. He was bitter that neither the Department of Education nor the Gauteng Department of Education dealt with the emotional and psychological factors arising from the plan. He said that

... there have been so many negative connotations, and assumptions, I am going to lose my job, I this, me that, my post is going be matched, people don't know what this matching is, there is no document on matching and what this matching is going to involve. People don't know that, once again there is that uncertainty, but on the other hand, if there is any uncertainty, why don't people first make sure of their facts, before they start spreading these malicious rumours, I'm going to lose my job, I mean this was right here at our institution, for quite a while (Lucky, 11/09/02)

It seemed as if self-interest prevailed above all else during the process. The focus group maintained that it was the responsibility of the facilitator to explain the structures and

the procedures. As it was, staff members made several assumptions, including the assumption that transforming the college meant replacing white staff with black staff.

Both the Rector and the focus group agreed that there were several flaws in the process adopted to deal with the merger. The Rector was of the opinion that, since the Department of Education had launched the mergers as a national initiative, it was their responsibility to provide the support and guidance at the institutional level. He regretted that the Department of Education had withdrawn after the initial planning, leaving the implementation to the provincial department.

In summarizing the events as they transpired at the Pretoria West College the data suggests that both internal and external factors affected the development of the merger plan. Firstly, the internal politics and assumptions about what was happening as a result of the lack of a direct, formalised channel of communication aroused the fears and trepidations of the staff about their future in the college. Secondly, the lack of leadership and communication from the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education, as well as the inability of the facilitator to clarify the rationale behind the merger, to motivate the staff and to quell their fears of redundancy, demotivated staff and made them lose confidence in the system.

7.3 Quantitative data

The data from **Atteridgeville College** revealed that 54 percent of the staff speaks Afrikaans as a first language. In terms of their awareness of the FET policy, 73 percent of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the FET policy, while only 41 percent of the staff indicated that they had participated in discussions on the policy. Staff members indicated that they first became aware of the FET policy either through the Rector of the college (40 percent) or through workshops (42 percent). Although they were aware of the policy 41 percent of the staff had never engaged in discussions on the FET policy, while 40 percent of the staff had engaged in discussions once, and the remaining 20 percent ten times or more. Generally the FET policy was considered to be difficult to understand (86 percent). Only 20 percent of the staff understood the objectives of the policy and 40 percent believed that the policy provided clear guidelines for implementation.

In terms of the organisational setting of the colleges, 45 percent of the respondents agreed that leadership at their college provided opportunities to engage with the policy and 50 percent of the staff saw the Rector as the facilitator of change. Staff also saw very few opportunities to engage in discussions on the FET policy, with only 29 percent indicating that they saw time being made available to engage in discussions on the FET policy.

The work ethos of the college indicated that teamwork was not common with 75 percent of the respondents stating that they did not work in teams. Fifty-four per cent (54 percent) of the staff claimed that the opinion of senior staff is considered to be more important than that of junior staff.

The data from **Centurion College** revealed that 89 percent of the staff speaks Afrikaans as a first language. In terms of their awareness of the FET policy, 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the FET policy, and 74 percent of the staff indicated that they had participated in discussions on the policy. Staff members indicated that they first became aware of the FET policy either through the Rector of the college (48 percent) or through workshops (42 percent). Although they were aware of the policy, 28 percent of the staff had never engaged in discussions on the FET policy, while 22 percent of the staff had engaged in discussions between two and three times, and 28 percent ten times or more. About half of the respondents indicated that the FET policy was easy to understand (58 percent), while only 32 percent of the respondents claimed to understand the objectives of the policy, and 40 percent believed that the policy provided clear guidelines for implementation.

In terms of the organisational setting of the colleges 75 percent of the respondents agreed that leadership at their college provided opportunities to engage with the policy and 86 percent saw the Rector as the facilitator of change. Staff also saw very few opportunities to engage in discussions on the FET policy, with only 68 percent indicating that they saw time being made available to engage in discussions on the FET policy.

The work ethos of the college indicated that teamwork was common, with 78 percent of the respondents stating that they worked in teams. Forty-five percent (45 percent) of the

staff felt that the opinion of senior staff was sometimes considered to be more important than that of junior staff.

The data from **Pretoria West College of Engineering** indicated that 69 percent of the staff speaks Afrikaans as a first language. In terms of their awareness of the FET policy, 95 percent of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the FET policy, while only 64 percent of the staff indicated that they had participated in discussions on the policy. Staff members indicated that they first became aware of the FET policy either through the Rector of the college (36 percent) or through workshops (36 percent). However, only 16 respondents (32 percent) had personal copies of the FET policy for reference. Although they were aware of the policy, 41 percent of the staff had never engaged in discussions on the FET policy, while 40 percent of the staff had engaged in discussions only once and the remaining 20 percent ten times or more. Most staff members found the FET policy difficult to understand (78 percent), with only 13 percent of the staff indicating that they understood the objectives of the policy, while 30 percent believed that the policy provided clear guidelines for implementation.

In terms of the organisational setting of the colleges 54 percent of the respondents agreed that leadership at their college provided opportunities to engage with the policy. Seventy-five per cent (75 percent) of the staff saw the Rector as the facilitator of change. Forty-four (44 percent) of the staff indicated that there were opportunities to engage in discussions on the FET policy, and 40 percent indicated that time was made available to engage in discussions on the FET policy.

The work ethos of the college indicated that teamwork was common, with 64 percent of the respondents considering it to be part of the college culture. The informal rules and roles had an influence on how staff behaved (70 percent), and 53 percent thought that the opinion of both senior and junior staff was equally important.

Synthesis of the biographic data from the three case study colleges

An analysis of the data from the three colleges (Atteridgeville, Centurion and Pretoria West) indicated that although there was a general awareness of the FET policy (86 percent, 90 percent and 95 percent respectively) there was not much interaction and

deliberations on the policy (42 percent, 73 percent and 64 percent respectively). In all three cases less than 20 percent of the respondents indicated that they had engaged in discussions or deliberation on the FET policy ten times or more. In all three cases the Rector was the primary source of informing staff of the new policy (52 percent, 36 percent and 42 percent respectively). All three colleges saw the Rector as the main facilitator of change within the college. The level of understanding of the FET policy (40 percent, 58 percent and 42 percent respectively) and its intended objectives was low in all three colleges (20 percent, 32 percent and 14 percent respectively). Respondents indicated that the policy did not provide clear guidelines for implementation (63 percent, 54 percent and 70 percent respectively) and that they did not understand the policy intentions or the objectives of the merger (93 percent, 93 percent and 98 percent respectively).

Respondents were of the opinion that the social groups within the college do exert some influence, however this was not a barrier to the change agenda (87 percent, 86 percent and 84 percent respectively). In all three cases respondents were of the opinion that change should be initiated from the outside (80 percent, 84 percent and 78 percent respectively). The lack of communication (80 percent, 72 percent and 77 percent respectively) and the lack of information (67 percent, 60 percent and 72 percent respectively) were considered to be one of the major barriers in all three cases.

In the two state-aided colleges more members spoke Afrikaans as a first language at 89 percent and 69 percent respectively, compared to only 54 percent of the staff speaking Afrikaans as a first language at the Atteridgeville College. This was an important observation as culture and language are closely linked as shown earlier. There was generally collegiality among staff members (35 percent, 68 percent and 71 percent respectively) and the belief that the informal rules play a significant role in the behaviour of staff toward the change agenda (73 percent, 70 percent and 71 percent respectively).

SECTION 11

Drawing from the three colleges: observations from the field

In this section I conduct a cross-case analysis of the three case study colleges. My intention is systematically to compare the three case study colleges and identify the structural and cultural factors that influenced policy implementation. My analysis will be interrupted by questions that are meant to establish the agenda for identifying the elements of the framework that I will propose in Chapter 8. In my analysis I also make reference to the policy intentions identified in Chapter 5, with a view to explaining the change trajectory adopted by the Department of Education in the implementation of the mergers, as compared to what was outlined as the short-to medium term¹⁵⁵ objectives.

The cross-case analysis is designed to address the critical questions of the study:

- 1 What are the organisational influences and constraints on policy implementation?
- 2 What are the cultural constraints and influences on policy implementation?

7.4 Structural factors

7.3.1 Characteristics of the change

One of the major concerns around *restructuring* is the rational planning of objectives and sequential tasks, regardless of the complexity of the system involved in the change process, resulting in what Fullan and Miles refer to as “faulty maps of change” (1991). Fullan (1999) maintains that “change unfolds in non-linear ways” and should be seen as a “journey not a blue-print”. According to Wheatley & Kellner-Roger (1996:9) this implies beginning “with a strong intention, not a set of action plans” and allowing plans to emerge locally, based on needs and contingencies. Planning should begin with developing a shared intention and vision. The policy intentions were clear in Education White Paper 4 (1998) as explained in Chapter 6. An analysis of the data from all three colleges indicated that the changes proposed in the FET sector were complex and multifaceted. The challenges posed by the objectives of the FET policy required a great deal of institutional capacity building. The colleges were grappling with making

¹⁵⁵ The first five years after the adoption of the FET policy.

themselves more responsive to the needs of the communities they served, while preparing to meet the requirements necessary to be declared as FET institutions as specified under the short-to-medium term objectives outlined in the policy document. In addition, there were governance structures to be put in place, there was no clarity on how the colleges would be funded in the future, and the policy contained several unresolved issues that impacted directly on the colleges.¹⁵⁶ The Gauteng Department of Education officials waited for directions from the Department of Education who was suppose to provide national guidelines for declaring technical colleges as FET colleges. These guidelines were necessary for the development of a co-ordinated FET system throughout the country. The policy specified that the Minister of Education would set requirements and capacities that needed to be met before an institution could be declared as a FET institution. The Gauteng Department of Education officials informed colleges of the anticipated criteria¹⁵⁷ colleges would need to satisfy in order to be declared a FET institution. This included making the programme content more responsive to the socio-economic needs of the communities they served together with addressing the impact of globalisation on skills training, changing the demographical profile of staff and students, and engaging in partnership arrangements with industry, business and government departments. The unexpected announcement of the mergers gave the impression that the anticipated changes were not merely complex but that things were chaotic. Why was the Gauteng Department of Education misleading the colleges? The impression created was that neither the Department of Education nor Gauteng Department of Education knew exactly what they were doing. College staff grappled to understand why the focus had shifted from meeting certain criteria to reduce the historic differences between colleges to mergers.

¹⁵⁶ One of the unresolved issues was the role of senior secondary school in the provisioning of FET.

¹⁵⁷ I was employed at the DoE during this time and spent a great deal of time developing criteria for the declaration of FET institutions. These criteria were shared with the provincial departments as a means of getting colleges ready to be declared FET institutions. The criteria were submitted to the senior management structures at DoE for approval and adoption, but did not happen nor was there any feedback ever provided on the criteria. It was an exercise that was shelved once it had reached some senior official's desk. In retrospect the impression I received was that I was assigned this task in the absence of a plan to steer the sector ,and to provide my restless character with something to keep me occupied so that I would not ask too many questions.

In the case of all three colleges it was evident that there was a lot of confusion. It seemed as if this lack of clarity resulted in college staff losing trust in the system and in the Gauteng Department of Education officials. Considering the context and history of the colleges, it was imperative that trust be established before implementing a new reform. Without trust in the Gauteng Department of Education officials the college staff were bound not to give the implementation agenda their full commitment and support. How did the Gauteng Department of Education expect colleges to give meaningful support to something they did not understand?

The Rectors and management staff in all three colleges indicated the need for them to become responsive to the socio-economic needs of the communities they served. They understood this to be one of the criteria that the Gauteng Department of Education would use when making a decision to have them declared as FET institutions as required by the FET Act. They indicated that the criteria were not available but the Gauteng Department of Education had provided some of the indicators that would be used. This included a minimum of 2000 FETs. The colleges were working towards meeting this criteria by marketing themselves and increasing enrolment figures as already discussed in Chapter 5.

The analysis indicated that colleges were committed to the policy changes, particularly to be declared as FET institutions. They pointed out that the slow pace at which they were progressing in the absence of official criteria was not any indication of their lack of commitment. They had initiated minor changes such as changes to the staff profile and the introduction of more non-Nated programmes - changes which they thought would be important when considering the declaration of FET colleges. In all three instances they were perturbed at the unexpected change in the policy direction.

It was evident that the Department of Education was concerned about the slow pace of change, and decided to intervene. Since FET is a new phenomenon in the South African education context stakeholders did not know what was expected in terms of transformation. Bearing in mind the deep-seated cultural affiliations of the state-aided colleges, and the huge disparities between the state and state-aided colleges, the rational choice of implementing a top-down mandate seemed appropriate to “jerk” the sector to change. The Department of Education imposed a top-down mandate to increase the

pressure for reform and to legitimise the actions of the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education officials. I wish to argue that the intention of this mandate (to merge the technical colleges) was to impose a reform that was ideologically driven with sufficient political support and to create a public impression that the government was serious about changing the sector. This begs the question of whether the technical colleges were prepared for the change.

The data indicated that the lack of formal communication between the Gauteng Department of Education and the colleges resulted in demotivated and confused staff. Colleges wanted ownership of the process as it affected them directly. There was much uncertainty and a lack of understanding. When stakeholders are not involved there is less commitment to and no ownership of implementation (Sarason, 1982; Fullan, 1991). Ownership is created through collaboration and discussion. The lack of consultation and negotiations led to resistance, fear and anxiety among college staff.

The Rectors of all three colleges alleged that all that they knew or understood was that they had to produce a merger plan. The Department of Education relied on the assumption that the colleges were willing partners, and that there was the necessary capacity and understanding of what was required at all levels (provincial and institutional) to execute the merger plan at the frenetic pace prescribed. Colleges indicated that they would have liked to have a detailed plan of action. They were correct in their assumption that the Gauteng Department of Education had adopted the plan as it was provided from the Department of Education. As in any other *restructuring* intervention in the top-down mandate of *restructuring* of the technical colleges, all colleges were treated identically, despite the diverse social, political and historical contexts. The process adopted was not supportive in addressing the internal conditions that existed within each of the colleges in order to facilitate the policy implementation. The “one size fits all” approach ignored the culture, context, and socio-economic status of individual colleges. Tyack and Cuban (1995) identify local political and social climate as important factors that influence policy implementation.

It seemed from the data that the absence of a detailed plan left a lot of questions unanswered. Colleges felt alienated and unhappy that a plan developed elsewhere was being imposed on them.

An analysis of the incidents reveals the following about complex change in this context, namely that:

- It is important to pay attention to the process adopted in introducing the top-down mandate of *restructuring* the FET sector through mergers.
- It is essential to strengthen the initiation stage of a complex process through communication and advocacy, rather than initiating it as something that has to culminate in an event (the delivery of a merger plan).
- Collaboration is necessary when planning for complex change in order to share ideas, plan better, develop vision and deal with resistance.
- Implementers need guidance and exposure to the new vision for the sector.
- In complex changes there is a need for clear plans with contingency arrangements.
- It is imperative that proper communication channels be established to build trust, share information and build a common vision.

The analysis also suggests that the manner in which an innovation is introduced is very important. The initiation of an innovation for which the implementers are not mentally and emotionally ready leads to a “paralysis” in implementation. It is important to build a vision of what is expected in order to empower implementers (actors), and to ensure ownership in the process of complex changes that will challenge the beliefs and behaviours of the implementers.

7.3.2 Capacity

McLaughlin refers to “local capacity and will” (1987:172) as important considerations for successful policy implementation. The implementation of any change innovation requires the active participation of the implementers (actors) involved. Fundamental to the success of any new change innovation is the fact that implementers need the know-how and skills necessary to be able to carry out their new roles and responsibilities, in

order to bring about the necessary changes and achieve the desired outcomes (Giacquinta, 1994). When asked whether capacity to implement the reform agenda existed at the college the staff at all three colleges concurred that there was a definite lack of capacity at all levels. They defined capacity in terms of the number of people with the knowledge and skills necessary for the change innovation, the number of people with dedicated time, and managerial structures. These were missing. They were of the opinion that the merger exercise was an additional burden on their already overloaded work schedule. They saw their prime purpose in the college as being the education of their students and could not understand how the change impacted on their students. There was a sense of frustration in the tone of the responses.

The management staff of two of the colleges were of the opinion that a few members of staff should have been identified and trained to manage the merger within the individual colleges. The lack of proper managerial capacity was viewed as a major constraint.

All three colleges questioned the capacity of the Gauteng Department of Education. They were of the opinion that the Gauteng Department of Education was not only understaffed but that the officials lacked the necessary understanding of the process. This, in their view, was a major constraint as the Gauteng Department of Education officials were unable to provide answers to questions or solutions to problems as they emerged during the merger. The impression that the Rectors had was that the Gauteng Department of Education was merely a puppet carrying out the Department of Education's mandate without understanding or internalising the intentions behind the mergers or the process to be adopted. Why was this so? What was the role of the Department of Education in the implementation of the reform agenda?

The College Rectors understood the role of the Department of Education to be that of developing policy, norms and standards. They were absolutely convinced that it was not the responsibility of the Department of Education to implement the policy at the provincial level. To the Rectors the roles of the Gauteng Department of Education and Department of Education appeared blurred and this affected the capacity of the Gauteng Department of Education to implement the policy. They saw the Department of Education as the driving force behind the mergers while the Gauteng Department of

Education did not have sufficient capacity in terms of numbers of officials or a clear understanding of the process. This begs the question as to why the Department of Education did not build capacity in the provincial department prior to the implementation of the reform agenda? Why were there no discussions on the changes to the sector? What process should the Department of Education have adopted to build capacity? What structures should there have been in place to improve capacity? How could capacity have been built? When should this have been done? Why was the Gauteng Department of Education not actively involved with the colleges? Where did ownership for this lie?

The findings support McLaughlin's observation that the "actual consequences of the policy will depend finally on what happens as individuals throughout the policy system interpret and act on them" (1987:172).

The following conclusions can be drawn:

- The lack of capacity and skills impede implementation.
- Collaborative work practices build capacity and increase understanding.
- Competing stakeholder interests constrain capacity and ownership.
- Participation leads to ownership.
- Lack of capacity at the provincial (district) level leads to confusion at the institutional (local) level, particularly when the reform is initiated from elsewhere (Department of Education).

There is a need for both formal and informal communication channels between the provincial (district) and institutional (local) levels to build capacity and increase understanding of the change innovation.

7.3.3 Support and training

The role of support and training is vital for successful reform implementation. For district officials to be able to provide the necessary support it is imperative that they have the necessary capacity and structures in place.

The responses from all three colleges in respect of the support they received from the Gauteng Department of Education were similar. They were of the opinion that the

Gauteng Department of Education should have provided support from the beginning and throughout the process. They regretted that the Gauteng Department of Education had not been actively involved but rather opted for the facilitator to provide colleges with support. To the colleges it seemed as if the Gauteng Department of Education had abrogated its responsibilities to the facilitator. The three case study colleges concurred that the lack of support from the Gauteng Department of Education was one of the main inhibiting factors. It seemed that the Gauteng Department of Education did very little, or indeed, nothing, to introduce the change innovation. The colleges felt that they were putting in the extra effort, yet the Gauteng Department of Education did not reciprocate by making its presence felt. An analysis indicates that the lack of support from the Gauteng Department of Education increased dissatisfaction among college staff as they experienced a sense of alienation from the Gauteng Department of Education. Why was the Gauteng Department of Education not actively involved in providing the necessary support to the colleges? What was the role of the facilitator?

The three colleges concurred that the support provided by the facilitator seemed to be erratic and incoherent. It seems as though the facilitator did not have the necessary skills to provide the support needed by the colleges and the answers to the questions they raised. The Gauteng Department of Education assumed that the facilitator had replaced it in providing support to the colleges. Instead the use of an outsider to coordinate the merger activities increased the insecurities, fears and anxiety among college staff. As an alternative college staff indicated that they would have liked the Gauteng Department of Education to have provided leadership and support on site.

The analysis indicates increased stress levels among college staff and that staff became disgruntled over several issues. In addition, the rapid pace at which they were expected to work compounded the problems at the college level. The process adopted to deal with this top-down mandate failed to take cognisance of the needs and interests of the college staff, build trust among them and produce collaborative action at the college level. Instead it undermined trust in the Gauteng Department of Education and its ability to provide the necessary support and training required to implement the reform successfully. Why did the Gauteng Department of Education not want to get actively involved and provide support? What communication and collaboration structures were in place?

From this analysis the following deductions can be made:

- When a reform is imposed from the top support and active participation are necessary from the provincial level to develop an understanding of the change innovation and to develop a vision of change.
- A lack of support increases dissatisfaction among the implementers and creates negative responses towards the reform.
- A lack of support creates a sense of alienation among implementers and limits their understanding and capacity to implement the reform successfully.
- Implementers need to believe in and be committed to the change.
- Implementers need to be sufficiently empowered, and to act proactively and collectively for the change innovation to be successful.
- Effective communication structures are necessary for support.
- Support should be provided by people who engender trust.

Support can be provided in different forms – resources, active participation, capacity, time, communication and collaboration.

7.3.4 Leadership

Leadership at the institutional (technical college, local or site) and provincial (district) levels greatly influences changes in the culture of an organisation. The role of leadership is to clarify values, beliefs and goals at the local level, and to create organisational structures that empower the staff, provide resources, enable real decision-making powers and cultivate a non-threatening climate that allows for debate. "The principal is central, especially to the changes in the culture of the school" (Fullan,1991:286).

From the outset, very little, if any leadership was provided to support colleges with the mergers. I wish to argue that provincial level support, or the lack thereof, is critical for the success of reform interventions. According to McLaughlin (1990:12) "the active commitment of district leadership is essential to project success and long-run stability".

An analysis of the findings from the three case colleges indicates that the Gauteng Department of Education failed in its role to provide the necessary structures for college staff to engage in discussions about the processes, and to provide procedures to be

adopted in implementing the mergers. Instead Gauteng Department of Education officials distanced themselves from the process and interacted only when necessary via the IMT. An analysis of the findings indicates that perhaps the reason for the Gauteng Department of Education's "non-active participation" and lack of leadership support to the colleges was the lack of capacity within the Gauteng Department of Education itself. All three colleges concurred that the non-active leadership of the Gauteng Department of Education inhibited the process. This was particularly relevant when all three colleges indicated that they were waiting for a response from the Gauteng Department of Education on the outcome of the request lodged by Centurion College to be a stand-alone institution. As a result

... no clear vision and no clear messages were communicated (RAC, 12/09/02).

The lack of strong leadership also caused considerable confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Education, the Gauteng Department of Education, the facilitator and the Rectors. Rectors have an important role in determining the consequences of reform at site level. However, "the role is not as straightforward as we are led to believe" (Fullan,1991:145). Nevertheless, the Rector is central to changes in the organisation. Without the shared vision how was the Rector expected to implement the change? What did the Gauteng Department of Education assume to be the Rector's responsibilities?

It was evident that the lack of leadership created a great deal of confusion and insecurity. It seems that staff felt that there was no strategic direction and did not know exactly from where their instructions were coming. The analysis shows that the staff felt that the activities they were undertaking were disjointed and that each college was working in its own interest. The three colleges concurred that, had a single Rector been appointed for the three institutions, this would have assisted to give direction, create a vision and enable the colleges to see themselves as one unit instead of three separate entities competing for a share. They believed that it was the Rector's responsibility to create the vision, motivate staff, develop collegiality and trust, as well as provide the other enabling structures and resources necessary for success.

The Rectors of the three colleges shared the responsibility to ensure that the merger plan was developed while at the same time assuming full responsibility for the functioning of their individual colleges. The analysis of the data indicated that this was ineffective as each of the three Rectors had their personal interests at heart and did not want to assume responsibility for on their own for the problems associated with the delay in the finalisation of the merger plan. All three Rectors emphatically stated that they would have preferred it if a person had been appointed as head of the merged institution prior to the commencement of the merger activities.

It seemed as if the absence of an appointed leader caused confusion among staff members in that there was no single person to drive the merger process. They agreed that the merger facilitator was appointed to coordinate the merger activities, but indicated that the facilitator was not the appointed leader with the necessary authority and accountability to ensure the success of the change innovation.

In conclusion:

- Leadership should provide support and commitment.
- It is the responsibility of the Rector, as leader of the organisation, to ensure that time, resources and space for engagement and understanding of the change process be available to build vision and provide support.
- The Rector, as the leader of the organisation, should involve all members of staff in the change agenda.

Active district level participation and leadership are vital to provide the stimulus for change and to motivate implementers.

7.3.5 Resources

Resources include time and money. Locating and allocating both time and money for the change are major responsibilities of leaders (Louis & Miles, 1990).

Time is necessary to establish vision, build capacity, address the emotional dimensions of change (fears and anxieties), build trust and develop ownership of the new innovation and change. The analysis of the three case colleges indicated that the frantic pace at

which the change innovation was implemented was a major impediment. The plan released in the middle of September 2001 indicating that technical colleges should be merged by the end of December that year did not allow time for discussions on the change innovation. The rapid pace restricted the Gauteng Department of Education's capacity to engage with the plan before disseminating it to the colleges. It was evident that the pace at which events were to take place impacted on the understanding that the Gauteng Department of Education officials had of the process and procedure adopted.

From a policy perspective, the importance of building in sufficient time for preparation when introducing a top-down mandate should not be underestimated. The stress levels among college staff were high and the situation was often described as confusing and frustrating. In addition, there was no time for college staff to engage with the plan and understand the rationale behind the mergers. Through engagement and collaboration they would have been able to experience and express their anxieties, rather than avoiding them.

Collaboration leads to positive problem solving, and increased understanding and meaning through professional development. It was evident that the lack or non-provisioning of time resulted in college staff not having opportunities to engage in discussions, share information and knowledge, acquire the necessary capacity and provide support to implement the change innovation successfully.

Several of the management staff from the three colleges alluded to the frustrations that work group members experienced when they could not get responses from the Gauteng Department of Education to questions raised. They indicated that not only were answers hard to come by, but that training and support were also limited as the merger manual was not available to them.

The frustration that colleges faced in terms of the lack of time and resources was not limited to the college site. The Gauteng Department of Education officials were also faced with a lack of sufficient resources. The Gauteng Department of Education officials alluded to their heavy workloads in having to implement two new policies simultaneously, referring to the ABET and FET policies. In addition the number of people employed in the Directorate was not enough to provide adequate leadership and

support to institutions. This placed a restriction on the time available to them as a team to engage in meaningful discussions and deliberations about the mergers.

Besides time, money is also necessary to build capacity and acquire the human and physical resources necessary for successful implementation. A lack of funding can limit the type of improvement considered, restrict the materials available, and result in an inability to address problems until funds are available (Louis & Miles, 1990; Pink, 1990). In addition to the lack of time Gauteng Department of Education officials referred to lack of government owned cars at their disposal to travel to colleges to provide support. They explained out that the system employed by the Gauteng Department of Education in regard to pool cars was that the official had to make a request for one of the two pool cars a few days in advance. They considered themselves fortunate on those days when they could acquire a car. This happened on very rare occasions. A provincial department official acknowledged that the lack of resources available to get to colleges and provide support was often interpreted by college staff as reluctance to be actively involved in the change agenda.

An analysis of the three cases revealed that money was an issue throughout the process. All three colleges indicated that additional funds were required for the merger activities yet neither the Department of Education nor the Gauteng Department of Education made any funds available. The Rectors alluded to promises made by the Gauteng Department of Education that there would be additional resources, yet they had to dip into their already over committed college funds to pay for merger activities.

It seemed that the lack of money to provide the necessary human and physical resources created a lot of tension and frustration among the staff of the three colleges. College staff had to explore ways of generating additional funds to cover merger costs. The Centurion College staff made reference to a newspaper that they produced and sold to generate funds to cover merger costs at their college. Why was the plan implemented without consideration of how merger activities would be funded? Was it assumed that no additional funds would be required in implementing the plan? How could resources be made available or freed without additional expenses being incurred? Who would provide the additional resources?

From the analysis the following conclusions can be drawn

- Some resources can be made available without additional funds – the timetable could have been rescheduled so that college staff had time available to engage in implementation matters.
- The rapid pace of change inhibited capacity building, collaboration, trust, understanding, ownership and collegiality.
- Written guidelines and plans are essential resources for understanding and success.
- It is the responsibility of leadership to ensure that the necessary money and time is made available if change is to be successful.
- Time is essential for developing trust and relationships.

7.5 Cultural factors

Several writers have argued that the non-rational, emotional aspects of educational change, such as the subjective meaning of change for individuals (Fullan,1991), or how people are able to deal with change are forces that operate in a non-rational environment (Fullan,1993) need to be dealt with because trust, collaboration, shared meaning and moral support are imperative for successful implementation. *Restructuring* ignores these fundamental deep-seated emotional aspects of change.

7.4.1 Understanding

It was reiterated several times in the interviews with the Rectors and management staff that they did not have a clear understanding of the mergers. Not a single person interviewed understood why the three colleges Had been grouped together. A member of the Centurion College management staff responded that it was “*to reduce duplication,*” and another said that “*it is to get rid of all the white colleges, the former state-aided colleges*”. Why was there this general lack of understanding? Whose responsibility was it to ensure that colleges understood the rationale behind the mergers? What were the implications of the lack of understanding for the implementation of the reform agenda? Did they really not understand what was expected of them?

The lack of understanding caused college staff undue tension, anxiety and fear. The information that they initially acquired was through the media. This increases the suspicions the staff had about losing their jobs. An analysis of the data also indicated that the fears of the college staff were not unfounded, but were based on rumours. Clear communication channels between the Gauteng Department of Education and the colleges could have alleviated these fears.

It would appear that the lack of leadership was a major impediment to the staff's understanding of the change agenda. Leadership was missing at the college level, provincial and national level leadership that was needed to take time and make the effort to explain what the change meant, and to create an understanding of the change agenda. The Department of Education developed the plan but failed to communicate and thus create an understanding on other levels. The communication was limited to very few. Why did the Department of Education not establish a robust communication strategy? It appears as if this action or lack of action led to the college staff feeling demotivated and insignificant. The pace at which the reform agenda was implemented also inhibited the collaboration and discussion that are essential to increase understanding.

It is evident from the data that there was no clear plan in place. How were the college staff expected to be active participants if they had no understanding of the plan? Why were they not involved in the planning? Instead, they felt alienated, de-motivated, confused and abandoned. Why was this the case?

The following conclusions can be drawn:

- An individual's understanding of the meaning of the change increases involvement in and commitment to the change innovation.
- Understanding is the essence of any substantive change.
- There needs to be an understanding of the "big picture" – of how the pieces fit together.
- Staff development practices lead to increased understanding.
- Communication and collaboration increase understanding.
- Collaboration and participation lead to ownership of the change process.

7.4.2 Meaning

In all three case study colleges the general meaning attributed to the purpose of education or change was that staff understand their roles as teachers and the benefits change would have for learners. They could not see the merging as leading to improved learner performance or having any benefits for the learners. The merger was often referred to as “*imposing on my students’ time*” or “*wastage of funds that could have been used to improve the facilities at the college*”.¹⁵⁸

The analysis of the data revealed that academic staff members were not prepared to get involved in the merger activities as they could not see how the merger would improve their teaching or relationship with their students. They believed that their responsibility was to the learners in the classroom. They seemed comfortable in the familiar environment of their classrooms, doing what they did best. They were of the opinion that the planning should be left to the management staff.

The analysis indicates that

- Collaboration and communication increases meaning and trust
- Increased meaning leads to participation and commitment
- Time is essential to develop the new purpose for change.

7.4.3 Values and beliefs

According to Fullan (1985) the values and beliefs that bring success and give meaning to education are developed over a long time. The data indicated that values and beliefs differed between black and white staff members.

White staff in all three colleges believed that the merger implied that they would lose their jobs. They were aware that one of the consequences of mergers was a reduction in staff numbers. They were also aware that change meant making the staff profile more representative of the student profile at the colleges. Their beliefs were based on rumours.

¹⁵⁸ Reference was made to the amount of money spent on the merger facilitators.

Black staff members, on the other hand, believed that the merger would offer them the opportunity to be promoted into managerial positions. They believed that they had been previously disadvantaged and therefore it was now time for them to be adequately compensated through being promoted.

The data from Centurion College indicated that the staff was predominantly white (97 percent) and Afrikaans speaking. The staff had acknowledged that there were cultural differences between blacks and whites but believed that they were adapting to the different cultures. However, the data also suggested that age played a significant role in the staff members' beliefs and values. Older white staff members were uncomfortable with the merger and were looking for ways out of the college. The younger white staff members seemed more adventurous and were willing to take on the challenges that the merger presented.

An analysis of the data also indicated that the historical contexts of the institutions influenced the values and beliefs held by the staff. Values and beliefs are developed and established over time. Centurion College displayed a conservative institutional culture which valued education as the way to economic progress. The staff did not openly display their resistance to the merger. It was not part of the college culture to challenge authority or display resistance. Even when it came to challenging the Gauteng Department of Education on its decision that they should not merge neither the Rector nor the staff were willing to confront the Gauteng Department of Education. Instead they sought the assistance of the SANDF in their request to be a stand-alone institution. The staff of Centurion Colleges were proud of their college and their achievements and displayed a strong sense of ownership over the institution. They believed that the institution was something for which they had worked and which belonged to them. To them merging implied transferring the ownership to someone else who would not hold the same values and beliefs as themselves and that this would lead to the deterioration of the college.

It was also evident from the data that the values and beliefs held by the staff of state and state-aided colleges differed as well. They assigned different values and meaning to education as discussed in Chapter 5.

However, intensive communication and understanding is necessary over a long period of time to change beliefs and values. The data suggested that the missing communication channels did not help to change the values and beliefs held by the staffs of the three colleges. Without the proper communication channels it seemed that the staff saw the change as a waste of valuable limited resources, that change would disturb the equilibrium, and that any change would be to the detriment of their students.

- Communication and collaboration are essential for shaping the values and beliefs of individuals in an organisation.
- Leadership should be such that it allows norms and strategies to work.
- Time is necessary to change values and beliefs.

7.4.4 Assumptions

Assumptions are the underlying values and shared identities that determine behaviour. One of the underlying assumptions that impacted on the change initiative in these three case colleges was that there was the possibility that Centurion College would remain a stand-alone institution. The Rector and staff of Centurion College assumed that the role they had played in the past and continued to play was a sound enough reason to warrant approval of their request, or that nothing concrete would result from the mandate. The Rector and management of Centurion College assumed the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education would retract the decision about the college mergers as indicated in the national plan.

Further analysis of the data in the three case study colleges revealed that colleges assumed that the Department of Education and Gauteng Department of Education would again engage in discussions on choice of policy. The mergers were one of the policy options discussed widely during the policy development stages but discussions on mergers ceased once the policy was adopted. What the college staff failed to recognise was that debates around the merger options no longer remained open. The Education White Paper 4 had clearly identified mergers as the way to reorganising the FET sector.

It was not clear why Colleges assumed that the Gauteng Department of Education would reconsider its standpoint regarding the merger as their past experiences with the Gauteng Department of Education should have indicated that the Gauteng Department of Education always stood by whatever decision it had taken irrespective of whether colleges understood the reasoning behind the decision or not. The Gauteng Department of Education assumed that with time colleges would come to understand the rationale behind the merger.

All three colleges assumed that the new innovation would require additional money, capacity, support, skills and training. None of these were provided. Why?

The analysis indicates the following:

- Implementers assume that when a reform is introduced it will be accompanied by new resources.
- Training and support are assumed to be part of the capacity building needed for successful implementation.
- There will be increased understanding of the change agenda through established communication channels and advocacy.

7.6 Summary

Throughout this chapter I have recounted the events as they unfolded in the three case study colleges as a result of implementing the FET policy. The narratives of each of the cases studied are captured through the conversations, documents, photographs and questionnaires, and indicate the structural and cultural factors that played a role in influencing policy implementation. The information extracted from these sources was interwoven to construct a picture of the emotions, anxieties, trials and trepidations experienced by those most affected by the implementation of the FET policy.

The detailed description provides the background to the relationships between the various role-payers that had a bearing on the implementation of the FET policy, and the dynamics involved in terms of the internal and external variables affecting the context, culture and socio-economic status of the institutions.

In the second part of this chapter I summarised the commonalities and exceptions that were prevalent in the three case study colleges, and identified the structural and cultural factors as identified in Chapter 3. I concluded the analysis of each section with the observations drawn from the analysis. One of the major conclusions drawn from this case study was that mandated changes do not lead to any significant change, unless accompanied by a change in understanding and practice. The data indicated that a bureaucratic stance by government officials or politicians from the top often leads to confusion, mistrust, demotivation and apathy among the stakeholders. The end result was a plan described by one of the respondents interviewed as “*not even worth the paper it was written on*”. The question is whether there was a plan in the end? Incomplete implementation or “symbolic change” occurs when what is missing is the combination and maintenance of the many broadly conceived elements essential for successful change, for instance, stakeholder understanding of the trajectory. On the other hand for this to happen there needs to be sufficient organisation capacity for change to be understood and embraced. The data revealed that organisational incompetence in the form of a lack of appropriate structures contributed to the absence of changes in the understanding, meaning, values and assumptions held by college staff in terms of the merger. In this case the colleges had been merged on paper¹⁵⁹ since December 2001, but when interviewed in September 2002, all the respondents indicated that nothing had really changed. The colleges were still operating as separate entities, with each still operating its own separate bank account. The colleges were informed by the Gauteng Department of Education that they would operate as one college from the beginning of the next financial year (April 2003), but in the meantime a head of the institution had yet to be appointed.

Educational change needs more than strategies - it requires ways in which to anticipate and overcome obstacles and encourage loyalty rather than mandating change. There are several structural and cultural elements that have been identified in this narrative upon which I could focus. In the next chapter I focus on the structural and cultural factors identified as having operated as constraints on policy implementation in this case study.

¹⁵⁹ There was a Government Gazette Notice announcing the merger of the colleges.

Chapter 8

What have we learnt about change?

Connecting Data and Theory

Any major organisational change generates four kinds of issues. Firstly, it will have an effect on individuals' need to feel effective, valued, and in control. Second, it will require new kinds of structural alignment with the organisation. Third, the change will cause conflict among those who will benefit and those who will not benefit from it. And, finally the change will result in loss of meaning for some members... particularly those who are the targets rather than the initiators of the change.

(Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal, 1997)

8.1 Introduction

At the time of commencing this study my intentions were to investigate the factors affecting policy implementation in the six technical colleges in the Tshwane¹⁶⁰ (Pretoria) district in the Gauteng Province. The six technical colleges in Tshwane were to be merged into two FET institutions – one in the northern region and the other in the southern region. I deliberately focused my attention on the structural and cultural differences in the six colleges. My objective was not to produce a framework, but to use what was at hand and also what I had identified from my literature review as the structural and cultural factors affecting policy implementation. However, as I proceeded I realised that the initial framework presented in Chapter 3 needed to be altered and redefined in the light of the emerging data.

Once I commenced with my research study and collected my data it became obvious that the volume of data collected was too voluminous to handle given the time I had to complete my study. I was faced with the moral decision of what should be excluded from my study. Upon scanning the data I was able to identify the recurring themes across all six colleges. I discussed this with a colleague who served as a peer reviewer throughout my study and recorded my overall observations. There was a great deal of overlap across all colleges and it no longer seemed necessary to include all six colleges in my study. My decision on the number of colleges was informed by my initial intention of sampling by geographic area. The technical colleges in the Tshwane region are situated in the north and south.

¹⁶⁰ During the course of the study the city of Pretoria was renamed Tshwane.

The criteria I ultimately used in selecting these three colleges could be summed up as the geographic location; a mixture of state and state-aided colleges; different social and historical context; and that a sample of 3 colleges provided sufficient replication from which I could draw my conclusions and recommendations.

While conducting this case research I discovered that there were several change theorists (Fullan, 1991; 1993; 1999; 2000; Hargreaves, 1995a; 1995a; Elmore, 1995; Stoll and Fink, 1996; McLaughlin, 1987; 1990; 1998) who had looked at policy implementation in developed countries, but very few had really concentrated on developing countries. The models presented in the literature that I perused were based mainly on the findings in schools in developed countries, and seldom recognised the contextual factors prevalent in less developed and less mature environments. Furthermore, the research on FET was restricted to funding or financing, resource dependence, curriculum development, managerial skills and capacity. Through this research study I sought to provide deeper insights into the structural and cultural factors that influence and constrain policy implementation in developing countries, particularly in South Africa, where there is an array of new policies currently being implemented in a transcendently complex environment.

The major observation in this case study deals with what Fullan (2001:77) refers to as “false clarity” – describing what happens when reforms are more complicated than people realise. The FET merger was formalised through the publication of the mergers in the government gazette while college staff stated that they had never seen the completed merger plan. However, they maintained that they were aware that the colleges had merged as they had read the relevant government gazette. They expressed concern that they were not sure of what the mergers meant in practice as everything else has remained the same as far as they were concerned. The reform decision taken by the Department of Education based on the assumption that the merger would lead to changes in the sector was most unlikely to expand the college staff’s understanding of the change initiative.

There was a great deal of uncertainty around the development and finalisation of the merger, primarily mainly because of the “resistance” by Centurion College to the merger. The Gauteng Department of Education failed to contact the college regarding its request not to merge. This was the missing link in the process that created confusion

for all the colleges involved in this merger. Another contentious issue was the fact that the merger facilitator had halted activities on several occasions, and the time allocated by the Gauteng Department of Education for the finalisation of the merger plan had lapsed. The confusion and disarray that prevailed could be explained by the fact that the colleges' staff believed that once they had acquired the merged status they would function as a single entity with a new corporate image and ways of doing things. However, in practice the status quo remained the same in that the colleges continued to function as separate entities, each with their own bank accounts, staff complements, programme offerings and institutional heads. No directives were received from the Gauteng Department of Education to clarify the situation and all that the staff of the individual colleges were told was that a Rector (CEO¹⁶¹) would be appointed soon.

There is another puzzling observation about the Tshwane North merger that requires some explanation. One of the necessary steps in the merger process should have been the pre-merger activities. These would have entailed sensitising all parties involved to the imminent merger, as well as addressing the major issues of concern or other existing factors that might have impeded implementation at the inception of the process. Why did the Gauteng Department of Education not engage in these pre-merger activities? The implementation process unfolded with several problems associated with the plan that had been presented to the colleges. The planning process required a great deal of communication, given the fact that this was a top-down mandate to institutions steeped in a culture of distrust towards outsiders. These observations offered potentially new insights into policy implementation in public institutions grappling with change.

¹⁶¹ Chief Executive Officer was the new title to be accorded to the head of the merged FET institution. The post of CEO was a new post that was being created in the GDE FET college staff establishments.

¹⁶² In Chapter 3 I provided a definition for restructuring as being mainly about altering the “rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships” (Hargreaves,1994) and reculturing as the “the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms” Fullan (1996).

¹⁶³ See pages 42 –44.

8.2 FET policy implementation: perspectives from three technical colleges

In this section I return to the conceptual framework provided in Chapter 3 according to which *restructuring* and *reculturing*¹⁶² are seen as two separate approaches taken to complement each another in bringing about sustainable change. I want to argue that change efforts, particularly in developing countries, need more depth and breadth if real change is to take place. Structural changes without tapping into the cultural aspects do not accomplish the kind of changes intended, particularly in a highly complex process such as the *restructuring* undertaken in the South African FET context. Currently, many of the change efforts in South Africa, including the *restructuring* of the FET colleges, are “from the neck up” as Hargreaves (1997) put it. Besides capacity, skills, resources and leadership, it is imperative that implementers really understand what the change means in order to achieve success.

Several factors, as identified in Chapter 7, have emerged from the cases in the study. It was apparent that the mergers were implemented without paying attention to the deeper aspects of change. At the initiation stage it was crucial that an examination of the culture of the colleges be undertaken to establish what was sacred to the college staff in terms of the deeply seated conservative institutional culture outlined in Chapter 2¹⁶³. Technical colleges typify the deep conservative institutional culture which is characterised by the avoidance of conflict, orderly behaviour, staff blamelessness, distrust of others from different cultures and races, superiority, the embracing of Christian values and conforming to authority. Any deviation from these cultural norms demonstrated disrespect, bad values and inferior beings. The data from the case study suggested that the merger did not result in cultural changes.

Although on the surface it appeared as though college staff, through their involvement in the merger activities, were embracing the change, an in-depth analysis revealed a considerable gap between the philosophy and the new roles, beliefs and practices emanating from the development of the merger plans. For many of the college staff their

¹⁶² In Chapter 3 I provided a definition for restructuring as being mainly about altering the “rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships” (Hargreaves,1994) and reculturing as the “the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms” Fullan (1996).

¹⁶³ See pages 42 –44.

personal beliefs about change were inconsistent with the way they perceived the merger. The college staff believed that the merger was not necessary to bring about the curricular changes essential for increasing responsiveness to the socio-economic needs of the country. It was explicitly stated several times during the interviews with the college staff that what was required was money for equipment and other facilities, and that the merger activities incurred wasteful spending. The disjuncture between their personal beliefs and the bigger picture needed consensus around the meaning of change and what it implied in practice.

The Rectors of the three case study colleges were faced with several dilemmas. As appointed leaders of the technical colleges, firstly, they alleged that they did not understand the change trajectory. They admitted being aware of discussions that colleges would merge long before the release of the implementation plan. Like their staff members they too grappled with the intentions and meaning of the merger. This resulted in their feeling alienated, demoralised and incapable. Secondly, the merger activities disrupted the orderly manner in which the colleges functioned, causing frustration and confusion among staff members. Staff members had to relinquish valuable teaching or private time to merger planning activities. Thirdly, their “havens” were threatened, and the main concern was the sharing of resources with other colleges with which they believed they had nothing in common except for their geographic location. The culture that prevailed in the colleges did not allow for sharing, because they considered this to be empowerment and enrichment of the beneficiary and detrimental to their own well-being. Fourthly, the head of the new institution was still to be appointed, and each one of the Rectors desired the position. They assumed that any disagreement or confrontation with the Gauteng Department of Education could compromise their chances of being considered for the post when advertised. In addition, the culture of the technical colleges commanded subservience to authority, irrespective of whether one agreed with the Gauteng Department of Education or not. The Rectors were instructed by the Gauteng Department of Education to merge, and under no circumstances would this instruction be ignored, irrespective of whether they disagreed with the principles, objectives or strategy of the change agenda.

Furthermore the merger activities offered very few opportunities for collaboration among the staff of the three colleges, or even among staff of the same college, to gain

deeper insights into what the change meant or required. In all three cases, within the colleges themselves the culture of presenting a united front to outsiders sustained the belief that there were no major conflicts. The impression of friendly working relationships was paramount, especially between the provincial department and the colleges, and this was one of the reasons the Gauteng Department of Education avoided confrontation and active participation in the process. There was no avenue for acknowledging conflict or talking about differing interpretations or opinions of the merger. Even though Centurion College had requested permission from the Gauteng Department of Education via the South African Defence Force to remain a stand-alone institution, it was not going to publicly acknowledge that tension existed between the Gauteng Department of Education and itself. Instead, Centurion College pretended to continue to be part of the process even without full commitment, and could not be accused of being uncooperative about the change agenda. It was the culture of the sector that prohibited Centurion College from openly demonstrating resistance by challenging the Gauteng Department of Education on its decision that the college merger with the two other colleges in its vicinity. Both Atteridgeville and Pretoria West Colleges were aware of this, but were unwilling to confront the Gauteng Department of Education as dissent was not permitted within the broader technical college culture. Open disagreement among the technical colleges would have signalled defiance towards authority and disrespect, and this would have been in contravention of the culture of the sector. The culture maintained the appearance of unity thereby preventing staff from openly communicating about the way they felt. In the interviews they aired their complaints about the Gauteng Department of Education and their concerns about implementing the mergers, and referred to staff members and members of the working groups without referring to names, as it was not in their culture to confront each other.

The staff at all three colleges displayed sympathy towards the Rectors whom they believed were the victims of the change agenda. They saw the Rector as a person without authority and believed that this inhibited the Rector's abilities as a leader. In addition they were accustomed to a work culture in which written instructions from the Gauteng Department of Education to the college Rector would precede any major policy change. This would be followed by discussions between the Gauteng Department of Education and those involved on the implications, processes and strategies of the change agenda. The Rector as the head official of the college would be responsible for

implementing the change in the college. However, the instruction in relation to *restructuring* through mergers was issued in an unusual way in that the plan was adopted by the Department of Education and the Gauteng Department of Education and the directive given to colleges at the national launch in September 2001. This was followed by the introduction of the merger facilitator to the three colleges at a meeting convened by the Gauteng Department of Education. None of the Rectors attended this meeting. College staff were informed of the workgroups to which they had to volunteer their services and time. Inevitably college staff were thrown into the deep end as they were not accustomed to initiating change on their own. College staff were accustomed to following the rules as given by the authorities above – the Gauteng Department of Education in this case. The college staff also assumed that detailed plans outlining each step, and the resources to implement the change agenda would be made available. They did not see it as their responsibility to engage in new policies and to try to understand what the policy meant in practice. They believed that this was the responsibility of the Gauteng Department of Education, and assumed that the Gauteng Department of Education would provide the capacity and resources to implement the policy.

The culture of maintaining the appearance of harmony discouraged college staff from openly criticising the system, however; they indicated the structures and process that they would have liked to see in place. Several college staff articulated their sense of betrayal that neither the Department of Education nor Gauteng Department of Education honoured verbal promises about additional resources. This increased distrust between college staff and the Gauteng Department of Education and Department of Education. It also led to college staff questioning the sincerity of the Department of Education in implementing the FET policy.

Throughout the process college staff blamed the Gauteng Department of Education and the Department of Education for the lack of support, capacity, resources, training and leadership. It was apparent that they found the poor communication, and insufficient time and money to be barriers to change. The staff at all three colleges were of the opinion that the resources to implement the change should have been provided by either the Department of Education or Gauteng Department of Education. In all three cases the college staff held themselves blameless in regard to the problems associated with the lack of capacity, skills, understanding, collaboration and communication of the change

agenda. College staff acknowledged that it was their own responsibility to acquaint themselves with the new FET policy and legislation, but were of the opinion that the onus was on the Rectors to provide the structural aspects for change within the colleges. Even though they implied this in their discussions they did not openly blame the Rector or college management for the lack of these structures. Instead they credited themselves with highlighting the positive aspects of their colleges, and externalised the problems associated with the policy implementation onto the Gauteng Department of Education or the Department of Education.

College staff saw themselves at the mercy of an unresponsive and incapable bureaucracy that was exerting undue pressure on them to change. They felt that the Gauteng Department of Education had not consulted or negotiated with them, and that the timeframe set to implement the merger was too short. There was no support or training from the Gauteng Department of Education either. In all three cases the staff were aware that the policy had been adopted in 1998 after intense consultation with stakeholders, but held themselves blameless for not having engaged with the policy. In all three colleges staff indicated that they believed that as long as they did not get involved with the policy it would not affect them. The top-down mandate resulted in an implementation that was largely disconnected from the cultural practices and beliefs of the staff of the colleges

8.2.1 The images of organisational inefficiency and change

The study showed that reform is a complex issue and that appropriate organisational structures are needed to support the endeavour. The policy idea (merger) was not necessarily misguided or ineffective, but difficulties were experienced in getting the excessive and poorly supported reform of the ground. From the top the reform agenda was constrained by vague conceptions of what the merger implied in terms of change.

The primary reason for this was the non-allocation of designated resources at the national, provincial and institutional levels to fund the reform initiatives. Money was needed to acquire skills, capacity, support, training, and all other physical and non-physical resources required to initiate and sustain change. Effective communication channels are one of the most fundamental structures needed to ensure that all stakeholders develop a common understanding of, believe in, share information on,

develop trust in, increase meaning and support the change agenda. The lack of financial resources constrained the ability of the provincial department officials to be physically visible through the merger process. Not only was there not enough people employed in the Directorate but the problem was further exacerbated by the lack of physical resources for *inter alia* the availability of a motor vehicle for officials to travel to the colleges. College staff on the other hand construed the visual absence of provincial officials as a lack of support.

Furthermore, the implementation of the policy was the responsibility of the provincial department. The directive for the merger had come from the Department of Education in the form of a national plan. The lack of leadership further compounded the confusion in the minds of the college staff with regard to the intentions and ownership of the change agenda.

The merger demanded new skills, knowledge and understanding yet provision was not made to train staff for their new roles and responsibilities. Change requires time to change understanding, assumptions, values and beliefs (Fullan & Miles, 1991; Gilley, 2000). The merger was implemented over a relatively short period of time. There were just three months between the adoption of the plan and the completion of the merger plan. The set timeframes ignored the individual contexts within which the colleges functioned. The time did not provide adequately for stakeholders to internalise the rationale and process involved. In addition to this time is required to improve understanding, share vision, build capacity and skills.

College staff viewed the merger plan as a symbolic signal of change and they failed to move sufficiently beyond the symbolic formalization of change - the merger, which took the form of a notice in the government gazette. The announcement of the merger, which had achieved one of the policy objectives, was disabled by the colleges' inability to move beyond the structural capacities for, and cultural constraints, on the change process.

8.2.2 Implications for educational change

What can be learned from this case study of policy implementation in the FET sector?

First and foremost, the nature of the reform initiative should match the context within which implementation is to take place. In this case study each of the three colleges was identified as having a unique context, history, staff, leadership, socio-economic status, and “culture”. All these factors were found to play a vital role in how the reform initiative was accepted and implemented. The top-down mandated implementation plan ignored these factors by adopting the “one size fits all approach”. I strongly believe that the lack of consideration of the unique contexts, history, staff, leadership, socio-economic status, and “culture” of the case study colleges affected stakeholders’ understanding of the change, capacity and commitment needed to implement the change innovation.

Second, it is important to share in a vision where the change initiative is adopted and planned without the actors being part of the planning. Evidence from this case study suggests that the possibilities for increasing the success of implementation lie in establishing a shared vision that is linked with planning and support. I argue that the absence of a clear vision in this case study caused confusion, demoralisation and incomplete implementation. Effective change requires a shared understanding and commitment at the local level.

Third, leadership lies at the core of successful implementation. The role of leadership is paramount in establishing structures, providing support, building vision, ensuring the availability of resources, and establishing the culture and ethos of the organisation to embrace the change efforts. Traditional organisational theory entrenched the power of leadership in those informal roles legitimised by hierarchical structures, that is, those people appointed to those posts of authority within an organisation. Current changes in leadership have spawned new concepts of leadership to the effect that leadership no longer needs to be limited to one individual or to those in administrative or supervisory roles (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). For successful *restructuring* and *reculturing* there needs to be empowerment through collaboration, collegiality and commitment (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988). I consider that effective and supportive strong leadership on the part of the Rector is important for collaboration, building capacity and sharing decision-

making. The emphasis at the college level should be on active participatory leadership rather than top-down delegation, as the latter does not encourage debate, stifles initiative, and ignores fears and resistance.

Fourth, the role of the provincial or district level leadership is essential to provide pressure and support for change. Without the shared vision and understanding of the bigger picture implementation at the site or college level is virtually impossible. I strongly believe that active provincial or district level leadership is needed to increase understanding, and motivate and support complex change initiatives. The absence of active provincial or district level leadership leads to the implementers¹⁶⁴ feeling alienated, demotivated and demoralised.

Fifth, I think that to be able to implement the reform initiative successfully capacity and skill are necessary ingredients. I argue that without the necessary capacity and skill implementers will not be able to carry out the directives given, particularly in a top-down mandate where capacity entails the understanding of the process as well as the new skills and competencies required to be actively involved in the change innovation.

Sixth, support and training are critical in any effective process of initiating and implementing reform initiatives. I am of the view that support could take the form of contact with regular collaboration groups, physical, financial and human resources, professional development opportunities, time for planning and monitoring the change process, and two-way communication structures.

Seventh, the lack of time was found to be a major constraint. I firmly believe that time must be made available to engage with the change process. Time is also vital for the establishment of a vision and capacity building. It is important that there is time for planning and professional development. Often the rapid pace at which *restructuring* innovations are implemented does not accommodate time for discussions, engagement in the change process, decision-making, increased understanding and the building of trust among implementers.

¹⁶⁴ In the FET context this will comprise the college Rectors, management, teaching and administrative staff, College Councils and students.

Eighth, the lack of both formal and informal communication structures was found to constrain the stakeholders' understanding of the process. I believe that communication structures and processes should not inhibit or restrict any change intervention. Open communication channels build trust, increase commitment, motivate, and help alleviate fears and insecurities. The communication structures should be such that implementers also receive feedback about implementation. The planning for change should commence with the establishment of clear communication structures. Communication in complex change situations should be accompanied by advocacy campaigns that help arouse attention and increase awareness of the change initiative.

Ninth, for complex changes there needs to be long-term clear plans that indicate process and resources to enable implementing. I wish to argue that the absence of detailed plans leads to confusion and uncertainty about whether there really is a serious intention to implement the change initiative. To plan effectively it is paramount that leaders consult implementers during the planning process, as the implementers understand the contexts better than the leaders, and are bound to look at minor details that are likely to be omitted during planning. The minor details are usually the ones that significantly constrain policy implementation.

Tenth, a collaborative culture allows participants to experience anxiety rather than protect them from it. Through collaboration stakeholders share meaning and understanding, confront resistance, and build capacity, trust and ownership. Evidence from the case study indicates that the lack of collaboration led to confusion, mistrust, and a lack of understanding. I firmly believe that through collaboration and participation stakeholders become actively involved, thereby improving planning and developing a sense of ownership. Leaders need to foster dialogue about the meaning of the change innovation and redefine resistance by respecting and listening to the resistor's perspectives. The staff needs to be encouraged to question the value of the innovation and reform without being viewed as simply being resistant to the new ideas.

Eleventh, the beliefs and values of implementers (college staff) are important in ensuring success. I would argue that where implementers see the reform as working against their own interests they are likely to resist the change innovation and experience a sense of alienation. In a top-down mandate it is therefore important that implementers are given an opportunity to develop their understanding of the initiative, and critically

assess and discuss the initiative in a collaborative environment in order to ensure successful implementation.

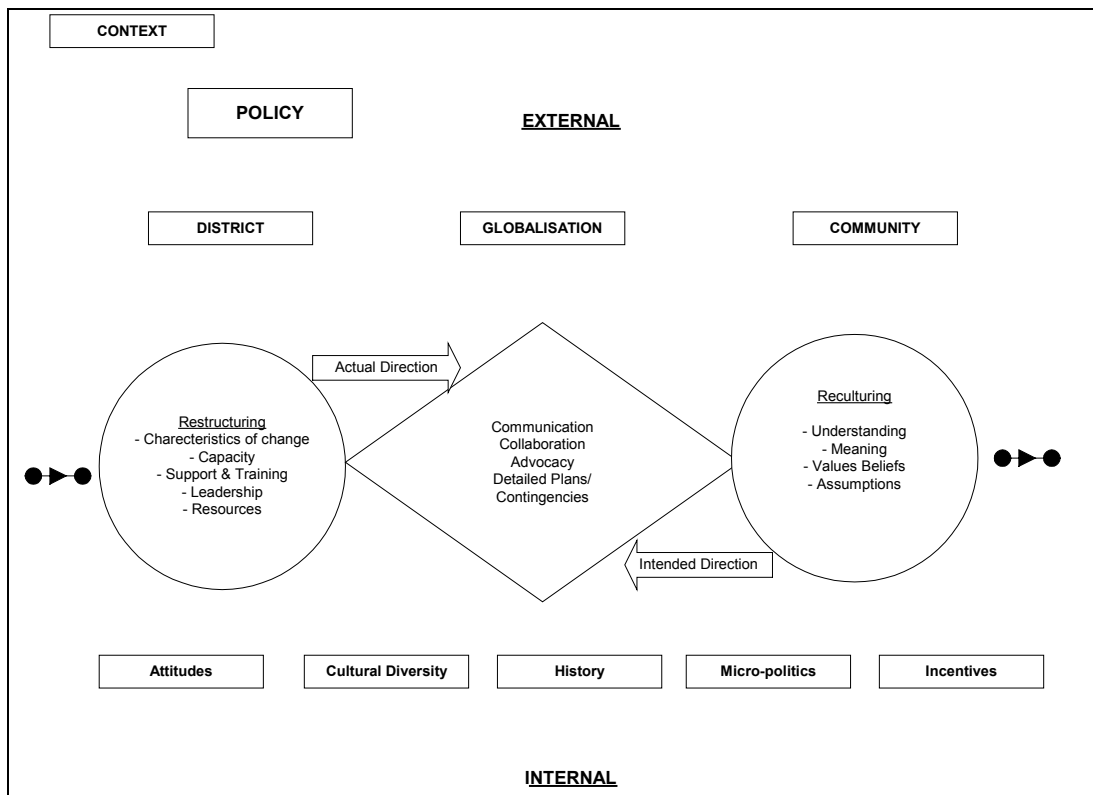
Finally, this case study highlights the consequences of *restructuring* without *reculturing*, and illuminates the importance of the staffs' beliefs and culture in reform implementation. I strongly believe that successful change has more to do with the professional values and beliefs of the college staff than with the voluntary adoption of the reform, irrespective of whether the national or provincial levels mandate it. Teachers choose practices and changes that fit best with their pre-existing beliefs, and which are consistent with the school's culture.

The findings from this study could be summarised as follows:

- that the restructuring of the FET colleges through mergers was constrained by structural or the organisational inefficiencies in the system, that is, the lack or absence of the structures required for effective implementation of policy.
- that the restructuring process underestimated the depth and resilience of the FET college culture, and that this institutional culture militated against effective implementation. In other words, there was no strategy for reculturing these institutions.

Figure 8.1 provides the framework for future studies. The initial framework presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.1) identified the following as important elements of *restructuring*: Characteristics of Change, Capacity, Support and Training, Leadership and Resources. The elements recognised in terms of *reculturing* were Understanding, Meaning, Assumptions, Values and Beliefs. However, my findings indicate that the convergence of the two approaches, namely, *restructuring* and *reculturing*, needs to take place through vigorous formal and informal communication, collaboration, advocacy and detailed plans with contingency arrangements for sustained systemic change, as indicated graphically in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Conceptual model to reculture for restructuring



8.2.3 Implications for future research

In this study I highlighted several questions that could serve as a springboard for future research, namely, the need for

- longitudinal rather than snapshot studies of institutional cultures and their unfolding effects on college restructuring.
- empirical and conceptual accounts of college cultures which allow for micro-political activity and internally initiated structural changes; and
- an investigation into how college systems change or restructure as opposed to an individual college.

8.3 Summary

In this thesis I have identified the structural and cultural factors that constrained policy implementation, as well as documenting the merger as it unfolded in three technical colleges in the Tshwane South region.

I have reconfirmed existing theory and provided new empirical evidence and insight into implementing top-down mandates. The research has shown the symbolic consequences of implementation - *restructuring* without *reculturing*. Much about the implementation of the mergers was assumed, rather than spoken about and debated. College staff were expected to change, despite diverse and divergent philosophies and beliefs about change. Before being expected to change, especially when change is complex and multifaceted, lecturers need to articulate their own beliefs about teaching and teaching practices. They need to question their own beliefs, and challenge their core values about education, teaching and learning.

The research has shown that leadership was absent at both the district and college levels. The Rectors at all three colleges did not provide direction, nor did they encourage dialogue among staff. They themselves were disempowered as there was no dialogue between them and the district officials to achieve consensus around the meaning of the change initiative. The role of the Rector in leading change has been defined as persuading others to change, and building consensus around the meaning of the change innovation. This top-down mandate does not accommodate dissenting views, and the college staff's understanding of the merger was highly varied and largely unspoken.

The role of leadership was further emphasised in that, irrespective of whether the principal or provincial officials are leaders or facilitators, they must communicate their commitment to the goals of the change and demonstrate the sincerity of their intentions to all members within the system. Without the visible and continued support of the leaders the change agenda has little chance of succeeding (Fullan,1985).

Furthermore this research has also shown that sustainable change requires the embracing and developing of the human dimensions of change. Top-down mandates are generally oblivious to the human dimensions of change that manifest in fear, anxiety, loss and resistance. For change initiatives to be successful it is important that the change is well thought out, educators and district officials need to be active change agents in the process with sufficient resources and time to support the reform, and there needs to be capable leadership, and changes in the organisational culture along with the structural changes.

The study also shows that there is a need to ensure that the change agenda is supported by enabling structures, processes and mechanisms. Enabling structures provide the framework around which rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships are built and maintained while shaping the culture of the organisation. However, in order to change an organisation's structure *restructuring* is a very complex task. This is mainly due to the fact that cultures tend to be conservative and self-preserving. Cultural forces persuade us to cling to familiar, established structures, so that structural reform can only take place and achieve its objectives when it is accompanied by cultural change.

Finally, without cultural change it is likely that the change innovation will remain at the level of structural and symbolic implementation. The altering of teachers' beliefs is a daunting task, and many of the cultural beliefs are often hidden, tacit, and upheld by cultural assumptions. To facilitate deep and meaningful change we need to begin with surfacing the deeply held tacit assumptions and bringing to the fore the "undiscussables" (Argyris, 1999).

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Legislation

Advanced Technical Education Act, 1967 (No 40 of 1967)

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Letter to GDE
Appendix B	Letter to College Rectors from GDE
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Appendix N	Document Analysis Schedule
Appendix O	Questionnaire for College Staff

APPENDIX A: LETTER TO THE GDE

P O BOX 34933
Glenstantia
0010

Mr M Petje
Superintendent-General: Education
Gauteng Province
P O Box 7710
JOHANNESBURG
2000

27 May 2002

Dear Mr Petje

Request for permission to conduct research for PhD studies in the technical colleges in Pretoria region of the Gauteng Province

I am enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Pretoria. I hereby request permission to conduct my research in the six technical colleges in the Pretoria region. My study comprises of an investigation into the organisational and cultural factors that influence policy implementation. I have based my research on a case at the three levels (national, provincial and institutional) of the implementation of the new Further Education and Training policy. The FET college sector in Gauteng Province will form the basis of my research.

In addition to the survey I will be conducting individual and focus group interviews with a sample of six FET Colleges in the province.

In conclusion may I add your assistance in this research will not only be sincerely appreciated but will, I hope, make a contribution of some value to improving policy implementation in our FET College sector.

Yours Sincerely

S Sooklal
PhD Student

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO COLLEGE RECTORS FROM GDE



UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

5 August 2002

All FET Colleges in Gauteng

**RESEARCH IN FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING – MS SANDRA
SOOKLAL – PhD STUDENT**

This serves to confirm that the FET Directorate is aware of and gives permission to Ms Sandra Sooklal to conduct her research study in the FET Colleges in the Gauteng Province as a PhD student.

All institutions are therefore requested to give Ms Sooklal their necessary cooperation and support with regard to the above matter.

Thanking you for your assistance.

Kind regards

.....
MOKABA MOKGATLE
SENIOR MANAGER: FET

Memo223

Office of the Senior Manager – Further Education and Training (FET)
Room 1431, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001 P.O.Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000
Tel: (011) 355-0892 Fax: (011) 355-00876 E-mail: mokabam@gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO COLLEGE RECTORS

P O BOX 34933
Glenstantia
0010

02 August 2002

Dear Colleague

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation to you for volunteering your kind assistance with research being undertaken into the implementation of the new government policy on Further Education and Training. I also wish to guarantee that the information you supply will be treated with absolute confidentiality. This information will be used for research purposes only.

My study comprises of an investigation into the organisational and cultural factors that influence policy implementation. I have based my research on a case at the three levels (national, provincial and institutional) of the implementation of the new Further Education and Training policy. The FET college sector in Gauteng Province will form the basis of my research.

In addition to the survey I will be conducting individual and focus group interviews with a sample of FET Colleges within the province.

In conclusion may I add your assistance in this research will not only be sincerely appreciated but will, I hope, make a contribution of some value to improving policy implementation in our FET College sector.

Yours Sincerely

S Sooklal
PhD Student

APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF CRITICAL QUESTIONS AND METHODS

CRITICAL QUESTIONS	METHODS
<p>Critical question 1: What are the organizational influences and constraints on policy implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual interview with an official from the National Department of Education • Semi-structured individual interviews with 3 Ex-National Department of Education officials • Semi-structured individual interviews with 2 writers of the Green Paper on FET • Semi-structured individual interviews with 3 officials each representing a different teacher union • Semi-structured individual interviews with 1 representative from a student union • Semi-structured individual interview with provincial co-ordinator/ Head of the FET Unit • Semi-structured focus group interview with members of the provincial FET Directorate • Semi-structured individual interview with principal/deputy principal of the college • Semi-structured focus group interview with college management staff • Questionnaire containing both open and closed ended questions to elicit staff and College Council’s understandings of the FET policy • In-depth document analysis of: Agendas and minutes of meetings Written reports from workshops Internal documents and other communications Newspaper clippings and other articles in the mass media • In order to understand the processes involved, time spent, information provided on the implementation of the FET policy
<p>Critical question 2: What are the cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured individual interview with an official from the National Department of Education • Semi-structured individual interviews with 3 Ex-National Department of Education officials • Semi-structured individual

	<p>interviews with 2 writers of the Green Paper on FET Semi-structured individual interviews with 3 officials each representing a different teacher union Semi-structured individual interviews with 1 representative from a student union Semi-structured individual interview with provincial co-ordinator/ Head of the FET Unit Semi-structured focus group interview with members of the provincial FET Directorate Semi-structured individual interview with principal/deputy principal of the college</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Semi-structured focus group interview with college management staff• Questionnaire containing both open and closed ended questions to elicit staff and College Council's understandings of the FET policy• In-depth document analysis of: Agendas and minutes of meetings Written reports from workshops Internal documents and other communications Newspaper clippings and other articles in the mass media• In order to understand the processes involved, time spent, information provided on the implementation of the FET• Observations during visits
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APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODS

CRITICAL QUESTION	METHOD	VALUE
Critical question 1: What are the organizational influences and constraints on policy implementation?	Interview schedule (policy-makers and implementers)	This will provide me with in-depth information into policy-makers and implementers understanding of the FET policy and to identify the organizational factors that influence and constrain policy implementation
	Document Analysis schedule	This will allow me to gain a deeper understanding of the process involved, information disseminated, and time allocated to plan for the implementation of the FET policy. This information will provide the basis for development of follow-up interview questions.
	Questionnaire	This questionnaire will enable me to elicit the staff's and College Council's understandings of the FET policy. The questionnaire contains both open and closed-ended questions enabling respondents to provide answers from a list of alternatives as well as to express their views freely.
Critical question 2: What are the cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation?	Interview schedule (policy-makers and implementers)	I will be able to obtain detailed information on the cultural factors that influence and constrain policy implementation in the FET sector.
	Document Analysis schedule	This will allow me to gain a deeper understanding of the process involved, information disseminated, and time allocated to plan for the implementation of the FET policy. This information will provide the basis for development of follow-up interview questions.
	Observations	Observations during visits will provide me with essential information the management and administration systems, social relationships, committees, practices and informal structures that shape the culture of the organization.
	Questionnaire	This questionnaire will enable me to elicit the staff's and College Council's understandings of the FET policy. The questionnaire contains both open and closed-ended questions enabling respondents to provide answers from a list of alternatives as well as to express their views freely.

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH Department of Education OFFICIALS

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from officials in the National Department of Education their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy.

1. What do you believe have been the major *organizational barriers and facilitators* to the merging of technical colleges?

- the nature and degree of stakeholder participation?
- the role and function of technical college leadership?
- the role and influence of powerful interest groups e.g., the unions?
- the degree of coherence among different structures e.g., SAQA?
- the adequacy of resources to facilitate the implementation of the mergers?
- the capacity of the *national* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the capacity of the *provincial* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the role and capacity of international consultants and expertise to drive the college mergers?
- the rewards and incentives to facilitate the mergers? Were there any? How did it work?
- the extent to which the policy guidelines were clear about the reorganization of the FET sector and the mergers in particular?
- the capacity and effectiveness of the CCF (Colleges Collaboration Fund) to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- the extent to which “co-operative governance” was realized in the implementation of the technical college mergers?
- the extent to which the relationship between the national and provincial departments constrained the implementation of the mergers of technical colleges?
- the expected role of the provincial departments with respect to the technical college mergers? Was this realized?
- the reasons for the delay in the provinces to implement the mergers?

2. What do you believe have been the major *cultural barriers and facilitators* to the merging of technical colleges?

- the extent to which *language* (and Afrikaans in particular) was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *race and racial composition* of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *gender and gender composition* of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the perceived *conservative culture* of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the college leadership was *prepared to engage* in discussions of change and restructuring of the technical colleges with national and provincial departments of education?
- the extent to which there was *openness* on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- the extent to which college staff were *consulted* and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policies and restructuring?
- the extent to which *understanding of rules and regulations* facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH EX-DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from ex-officials in the National Department of Education their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy.

3. What do you believe have been the major *organizational barriers and facilitators* to the merging of technical colleges?

- the nature and degree of stakeholder participation?
- the role and function of technical college leadership?
- the role and influence of powerful interest groups e.g., the unions?
- the degree of coherence among different structures e.g., SAQA?
- the adequacy of resources to facilitate the implementation of the mergers?
- the capacity of the *national* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the capacity of the *provincial* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the role and capacity of international consultants and expertise to drive the college mergers?
- the rewards and incentives to facilitate the mergers? Were there any? How did it work?
- the extent to which the policy guidelines were clear about the reorganization of the FET sector and the mergers in particular?
- the capacity and effectiveness of the CCF (Colleges Collaboration Fund) to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- the extent to which “co-operative governance” was realized in the implementation of the technical college mergers?
- the extent to which the relationship between the national and provincial departments constrained the implementation of the mergers of technical colleges?
- the expected role of the provincial departments with respect to the technical college mergers? Was this realized?
- the reasons for the delay in the provinces to implement the mergers?

4. What do you believe have been the major *cultural barriers and facilitators* to the merging of technical colleges?

- the extent to which *language* (and Afrikaans in particular) was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *race and racial composition* of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *gender and gender composition* of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the perceived *conservative culture* of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the college leadership was *prepared to engage* in discussions of change and restructuring of the technical colleges with national and provincial departments of education?
- the extent to which there was *openness* on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- the extent to which college staff were *consulted* and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policies and restructuring?
- the extent to which *understanding of rules and regulations* facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

**APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH WRITERS OF THE GREEN
PAPER ON FET**

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from the writers of the Green Paper on Further Education and Training their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy.

What do you believe have been the major *organizational barriers* and *facilitators* to the merging of technical colleges?

- the nature and degree of stakeholder participation?
- the role and function of technical college leadership?
- the role and influence of powerful interest groups e.g., the unions?
- the degree of coherence among different structures e.g., SAQA?
- the adequacy of resources to facilitate the implementation of the mergers?
- the capacity of the *national* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the capacity of the *provincial* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the role and capacity of international consultants and expertise to drive the college mergers?
- the rewards and incentives to facilitate the mergers? Were there any? How did it work?
- the extent to which the policy guidelines were clear about the reorganization of the FET sector and the mergers in particular?
- the capacity and effectiveness of the CCF (Colleges Collaboration Fund) to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- the extent to which “co-operative governance” was realized in the implementation of the technical college mergers?
- the extent to which the relationship between the national and provincial departments constrained the implementation of the mergers of technical colleges?
- the expected role of the provincial departments with respect to the technical college mergers? Was this realized?

- the reasons for the delay in the provinces to implement the mergers?

What do you believe have been the major cultural barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the extent to which *language* (and Afrikaans in particular) was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *race and racial composition* of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *gender and gender composition* of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the perceived *conservative culture* of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the college leadership was *prepared to engage* in discussions of change and restructuring of the technical colleges with national and provincial departments of education?
- the extent to which there was *openness* on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- the extent to which college staff were *consulted* and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policies and restructuring?
- the extent to which *understanding of rules and regulations* facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

**APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH EDUCATOR UNION
OFFICIALS**

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from the various educator unions viz. SADTU, NAPTOSA, and SAOU their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy.

What do you believe have been the major organizational barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the nature and degree of stakeholder participation?
- the role and function of technical college leadership?
- the role and influence of powerful interest groups e.g., the unions?
- the degree of coherence among different structures e.g., SAQA?
- the adequacy of resources to facilitate the implementation of the mergers?
- the capacity of the *national* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the capacity of the *provincial* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the role and capacity of international consultants and expertise to drive the college mergers?
- the rewards and incentives to facilitate the mergers? Were there any? How did it work?
- the extent to which the policy guidelines were clear about the reorganization of the FET sector and the mergers in particular?
- the capacity and effectiveness of the CCF (Colleges Collaboration Fund) to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- the extent to which “co-operative governance” was realized in the implementation of the technical college mergers?
- the extent to which the relationship between the national and provincial departments constrained the implementation of the mergers of technical colleges?
- the expected role of the provincial departments with respect to the technical college mergers? Was this realized?

- the reasons for the delay in the provinces to implement the **mergers**?

What do you believe have been the major cultural barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the extent to which *language* (and Afrikaans in particular) was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *race and racial composition* of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *gender and gender composition* of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the perceived *conservative culture* of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the college leadership was *prepared to engage* in discussions of change and restructuring of the technical colleges with national and provincial departments of education?
- the extent to which there was *openness* on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- the extent to which college staff were *consulted* and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policies and restructuring?
- the extent to which *understanding of rules and regulations* facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH PROVINCIAL CO-ORDINATOR

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from the Provincial Co-coordinator for the reorganization of the FET sector in the Gauteng Department of Education his understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy.

What do you believe have been the major organizational barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the nature and degree of stakeholder participation?
- the role and function of technical college leadership?
- the role and influence of powerful interest groups e.g., the unions?
- the degree of coherence among different structures e.g., SAQA?
- the adequacy of resources to facilitate the implementation of the mergers?
- the capacity of the *national* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the capacity of the *provincial* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the role and capacity of international consultants and expertise to drive the college mergers?
- the rewards and incentives to facilitate the mergers? Were there any? How did it work?
- the extent to which the policy guidelines were clear about the reorganization of the FET sector and the mergers in particular?
- the capacity and effectiveness of the CCF (Colleges Collaboration Fund) to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- the extent to which “co-operative governance” was realized in the implementation of the technical college mergers?
- the extent to which the relationship between the national and provincial departments constrained the implementation of the mergers of technical colleges?
- the expected role of the provincial departments with respect to the technical college mergers? Was this realized?
- the reasons for the delay in the provinces to implement the mergers?

What do you believe have been the major cultural barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the extent to which *language* (and Afrikaans in particular) was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *race and racial composition* of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *gender and gender composition* of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the perceived *conservative culture* of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the college leadership was *prepared to engage* in discussions of change and restructuring of the technical colleges with national and provincial departments of education?
- the extent to which there was *openness* on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- the extent to which college staff were *consulted* and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policies and restructuring?
- the extent to which *understanding of rules and regulations* facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from the provincial officials in the FET Directorate in the Gauteng Department of Education their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy. Focus group interviews will be used.

What do you believe have been the major organizational barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the nature and degree of stakeholder participation?
- the role and function of technical college leadership?
- the role and influence of powerful interest groups e.g., the unions?
- the degree of coherence among different structures e.g., SAQA?
- the adequacy of resources to facilitate the implementation of the mergers?
- the capacity of the *national* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the capacity of the *provincial* department to lead and manage the implementation of the mergers of the technical colleges?
- the role and capacity of international consultants and expertise to drive the college mergers?
- the rewards and incentives to facilitate the mergers? Were there any? How did it work?
- the extent to which the policy guidelines were clear about the reorganization of the FET sector and the mergers in particular?
- the capacity and effectiveness of the CCF (Colleges Collaboration Fund) to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- the extent to which “co-operative governance” was realized in the implementation of the technical college mergers?
- the extent to which the relationship between the national and provincial departments constrained the implementation of the mergers of technical colleges?
- the expected role of the provincial departments with respect to the technical college mergers? Was this realized?
- the reasons for the delay in the provinces to implement the mergers?

What do you believe have been the major cultural barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- the extent to which *language* (and Afrikaans in particular) was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *race and racial composition* of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which *gender and gender composition* of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the perceived *conservative culture* of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- the extent to which the college leadership was *prepared to engage* in discussions of change and restructuring of the technical colleges with national and provincial departments of education?
- the extent to which there was *openness* on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- the extent to which college staff were *consulted* and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policies and restructuring?
- the extent to which *understanding of rules and regulations* facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH RECTORS OF CASE STUDY COLLEGES

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from the principals of the selected sample of case study colleges their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy.

What do you believe have been the major organizational barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- The extent to which College Council involvement facilitated the merger process?
- The role of the major influential groups with the college?
- The rewards and incentives that were made available to encourage participation in the implementation of the FET policy?
- The capacity and effectiveness of the CCF to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- The capacity and effectiveness of the provincial department to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- The capacity and effectiveness of the national department to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- The extent to which the relationship between the provincial department and the college constrained the implementation of the FET policy?
- The expected role and relationship of the national department with respect to the mergers were realised?
- The expected role of the provincial department with respect to the mergers were realised?
- What structures did you need in place before the merging could take place?
- The extent to which “co-operative governance” was realised in the implementation of the mergers?
- The time allocation for the completion of the mergers?
- To what extent were resources of paramount importance?
- How did stakeholders understanding of the policy and changes facilitate the merging of technical colleges?
- The extent to which capacity facilitated the merging process?

- The extent to which policy guidelines were clear about the reorganisation of the FET sector and the merging in particular?
- Reasons for the late implementation of the mergers?

What do you believe have been the major cultural barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- The extent to which staff members were prepared to engage in discussions of change and restructuring of the colleges amongst themselves?
- The extent to which the College Council was prepared to engage in discussions of change and restructuring of the colleges with staff?
- The extent to which the college staff were consulted and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policy and restructuring?
- The extent to which the informal rules and roles influences the implementation of the FET policy mainly the merging?
- The extent to which language (and Afrikaans in particular) plays a role in the culture of the organisation?
- The extent to which race and racial composition of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- The extent to which gender and gender composition of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- The extent to which the perceived culture of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- The extent to which there was openness on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- The extent to which understanding of rules and regulations facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

**APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH MANAGEMENT STAFF
FROM CASE STUDY COLLEGES**

The purpose of this schedule is to extract from the management staff of the selected sample of case study colleges their understanding of the Further Education and Training (FET) policy and to establish how organizational and cultural aspects influence and constrain implementation of the FET policy. . Focus group interviews will be used.

What do you believe have been the major organizational barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

- The extent to which College Council involvement facilitated the merger process?
- The extent to which college management involvement facilitated the merger process?
- The role of the major influential groups with the college?
- The rewards and incentives that were made available to encourage participation in the implementation of the FET policy?
- The capacity and effectiveness of the CCF to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- The capacity and effectiveness of the provincial department to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- The capacity and effectiveness of the national department to facilitate and steer the merging process?
- The extent to which the relationship between the provincial department and the college constrained the implementation of the FET policy?
- The expected role and relationship of the national department with respect to the mergers were realised?
- The expected role of the provincial department with respect to the mergers were realised?
- What structures did you need in place before the merging could take place?
- The extent to which “co-operative governance” was realised in the implementation of the mergers?
- The time allocation for the completion of the mergers?
- To what extent were resources of paramount importance?
- How did stakeholders understanding of the policy and changes facilitate the merging of technical colleges?

- The extent to which capacity facilitated the merging process?
- The extent to which policy guidelines were clear about the reorganisation of the FET sector and the merging in particular?
- Reasons for the late implementation of the mergers?

What do you believe have been the major cultural barriers and facilitators to the merging of technical colleges?

-
- The extent to which staff members were prepared to engage in discussions of change and restructuring of the colleges amongst themselves?
- The extent to which the College Council was prepared to engage in discussions of change and restructuring of the colleges with staff?
- The extent to which the college staff were consulted and informed by the leadership within the technical colleges about the FET policy and restructuring?
- The extent to which the informal rules and roles influences the implementation of the FET policy mainly the merging?
- The extent to which language (and Afrikaans in particular) plays a role in the culture of the organisation?
- The extent to which race and racial composition of the colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- The extent to which gender and gender composition of the colleges and college leadership was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- The extent to which the perceived culture of technical colleges was a barrier or facilitator of change?
- The extent to which there was openness on the part of the college leadership to consultation and deliberation on change within their organizations rather than relying on a top-down process of managing the restructuring of the colleges?
- The extent to which understanding of rules and regulations facilitated or inhibited the restructuring process?

APPENDIX N: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

The following documents will be analyzed for the purpose of answering the following questions: What is the importance attached to the reorganization of the FET sector? In addition, I will analyze each document in order to establish the amount of resources and capacity that has been assigned to the organizational and cultural factors on policy implementation.

The following documents will be analysed:

- **Agendas and minutes of meetings**
- **Written reports from workshops**
- **Internal documents and other communiques**
- **Newspaper clippings and other articles in the mass media.**

1. ORGANISATIONAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

Are there suggestions of organisational indicators?

- Structure
- Decision making process
- Relationships
- Rules
- Roles
- Resources (human and physical)
- Governance
- Capacity
- Communication channels

2. CULTURAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

Are there suggestions of cultural indicators?

- Values
- Beliefs.
- Assumptions
- Behaviour
- Goals
- Norms
- Conservative culture

APPENDIX O: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLEGE STAFF

PREFACE: The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about the staff and College Council’s understanding of the Further Education and Training Policy. The information you supply will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

SECTION 1

GENERAL INFORMATION 1

(To be filled in by all members of staff and College Council)

PLEASE FILL IN OR CROSS (X) THE APPROPRIATE OPTION UNDER EACH OF THE COLUMNS

1. DESIGNATION, AGE, LECTURING FIELD, QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE IN COLLEGE IN YEARS

Designation	Age	Lecturing field	Qualifications	Experience in college in years
Junior Lecturer	Under 25	Engineering	Technical qualifications only	0-2
Senior Lecturer	25-29	Arts	Teaching qualifications	3-4
Head of Department	30-34	Languages	Technical and professional qualifications	4-5
Deputy principal	35-40	Business Studies	Degree only	6-10
Principal	40-49	Hospitality and Tourism	Degree and diploma	11-15
Council member	50-59	Agriculture	More than one degree	16-20
Other (specify)	Over 60	Other	Other	More than 20

2. RACE

White	Black	Indian	Coloured
1	2	3	4

3.

Gender	Male	Female	
Lecturing staff	Full-time	Part-time	

Your Mother tongue	English	Afrikaans	Other
Former status of college	State	State-Aided	
Are you employed by	Provincial Department	College Council	

SECTION 2

To be completed by all

The Further Education and Training policy was released in August 1998 and the FET Act was promulgated in November 1998. The questions below inquire about the information available and knowledge about the Further Education and Training policy.

PLEASE FILL IN OR CROSS (X) THE APPROPRIATE COLUMN.

1. Are you aware of the policy on Further Education and Training?	Yes	No
2. Do you have a personal copy of the FET policy?	Yes	No
3. Did you ever engage in a discussion on the FET policy?	Yes	No

**4. If you answered yes to question 2, please state how you gained a personal copy?
Through ..**

Workshop	Conference	Colleague	HOD	Internet	Other (Specify)
1	2	3	4	5	

5 How did you first become aware of the FET policy?

Through a colleague	1
In the news	2
I read the policy document	3
I was told by the Head of Department	4
I was told by the principal	5
I was invited to a workshop	6
It was discussed at a staff meeting	7
Other (specify)	8

6. Please indicate at least how many times you have engaged in discussion on the FET policy? V37

Never	1	2-3	4-7	7-10	More than 10
1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION 3

THIS SECTION RELATES TO THE FET POLICY Section 3 may only be answered if you answered YES to Section 2(2).

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. It is easy to understand			
2. It provides clear guidelines for implementation			
3. Your are clear about the intentions of the FET policy			
4. The policy is independent of other pieces of legislation			
5. Staff members understand the objectives of the policy			
6. Staff see the policy as a threat.			
7. Although the policy poises several changes staff see these as challenges			

SECTION 4

RELATES TO THE ORGANISATION FACTORS

PLACE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK INDICATING HOW STRONGLY YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1 College leadership provides open and deliberate opportunities to engage in discussions on merging and restructuring of the technical college	1	2	3	4	5
2 The social groups within the colleges influence change in a positive manner	1	2	3	4	5
3 The social groups within the college are a barrier to change	1	2	3	4	5
4 The social groups outside the college present a barrier to change	1	2	3	4	5
5 The social groups outside the college facilitate change	1	2	3	4	5
6 Staff members understand the effects brought about through the merging the college	1	2	3	4	5
7 The principal as leader facilitates change within this college	1	2	3	4	5
8 The principal as the leader of this organisation resists changes taking place.	1	2	3	4	5
9 There is always opportunity for discussion on the processes and decisions to implement the FET policy	1	2	3	4	5
10 There is interaction and discussion amongst management and staff on change issues	1	2	3	4	5

11 Decision making is a collective exercise in this college	1	2	3	4	5
12 I play a role in the decision making process as I am consulted on my opinion	1	2	3	4	5
14 There are clear communication channels which keep everyone updated with the latest change agenda	1	2	3	4	5
15 One of the greatest inhibitors to change is the lack of information	1	2	3	4	5
16 Time is made available to engage in discussions about the FET policy	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 5

PLEASE READ EACH OF THE STATEMENTS BELOW AND PLACE A CROSS ON THE NUMBER OF THE RESPONSE YOU CONSIDER MOST APPROPRIATE.

THIS SECTION RELATES TO THE CULTURE OF THE ORGANISATION

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1 There is collegiality amongst staff members eg trust, sharing and support which influences how the staff behaves	1	2	3	4	5
2 There exists amongst staff members a strong belief that changes should be initiated from outside the college	1	2	3	4	5
3 The informal rules and roles in our college have a strong influence on how staff members behave	1	2	3	4	5
4 The conservative ethos in the college inhibits change	1	2	3	4	5
5 The general belief amongst staff is that they are targets rather than agents of reform	1	2	3	4	5

6 Teamwork is part of the culture of this college	1	2	3	4	5
7 Individual values influence behaviour and decisions	1	2	3	4	5
8 Important change decisions are usually taken by the male staff	1	2	3	4	5
9 The changes envisaged are for the betterment of all	1	2	3	4	5
10 The staff is generally amicable to the change agenda	1	2	3	4	5
11 There is shared responsibility amongst all members of the staff to implement changes	1	2	3	4	5
12 Risk-talking is a important feature of this college	1	2	3	4	5
13 The most valued members of staff are those that are subservient to the college's conservative culture	1	2	3	4	5
14 The principal as the leader of the colleges supports the development of a collaborative culture	1	2	3	4	5
15 The culture of this college can be best described as one of compliance rather than commitment to change	1	2	3	4	5
16 The general belief amongst staff members is that they need to maintain the status quo	1	2	3	4	5
17 The opinion of senior staff is considered more important than that of junior staff members	1	2	3	4	5
18The culture and traditions of the college make it difficult to initiate change					

SECTION 6

What do you see as the main ORGANISATIONAL challenges in the merging of the technical colleges as listed below. Please elaborate on each item listed.

Please write clearly.

Roles _____

–

Rules _____

Relationships _____

Working
Conditions _____

Structure _____

Resources _____

PhysicalFacilities _____

Other _____

–

SECTION 7

What do you see as the main CULTURAL challenges in the merging of the technical colleges as listed below. Please elaborate on each item listed.

Please write clearly.

Values _____

—

—

Beliefs _____

—

—

Assumptions _____

—

—

—

Behaviour _____

—

—

Patterns of Thinking _____

—

—

Goals _____

—

—

Norms

Other
