



Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

**MANAGING A FITTING AND TURNING LEARNERSHIP AT
AN FET INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

GERALD VOLLENHOVEN

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education

Supervisor: Professor R Chetty

Mowbray

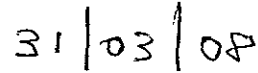
November 2007

DECLARATION

I, GERALD VOLLENHOVEN, declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.



Signed



Date

ABSTRACT

In 1998 the Department of Labour launched a skills revolution in the South African workplace. The Skills Development Act of 1998 introduced the 'Learnership' model of workplace training, which has been promoted as a creative vehicle for addressing high unemployment rates and a serious skills shortage. The Act proposed a very ambitious new framework through the creation of a new institutional regime with strong links forged between learners, employers, government and the new intermediary training bodies, SETAs. This new institutional mechanism for delivering training was termed 'Learnerships'.

This dissertation explores the perceptions of the staff of two FET colleges around the Fitting and Turning learnership in which they are involved, with a particular focus on their roles and responsibilities in managing the Fitting and Turning learnership. Their perceptions were ascertained through a structured interview process. A framework of understanding was established by examining the stakeholders' roles and responsibilities; learnership accreditation e.g., SETA training policies, physical and human resources, budget and finance; structured learning and assessment e.g. logbooks, continuous assessment and work relevant training, partnerships with industry and other skills programmes; the learner monitoring process e.g. administration system, quality management, learner support, recruitment and selection, throughput rate and communication; and limitations and recommendations to improve the management of learnerships. The understanding gleaned from the various stakeholders' perceptions and responses established the basis from which an investigation into a model for managing a Fitting and Turning learnership was examined.

Empirical evidence reveals that the colleges as skills providers are challenged by workplace and skills legislation. The colleges must provide job relevant training, continuous assessment and be accredited by the relevant SETAs. The empirical research concludes that college staff must map their roles and responsibilities, have infrastructure in place, interact systematically with multiple stakeholders to ensure structured learning and assessment and effective monitoring of learners through an administration system.

The study concludes by positing a learnership management model for Fitting and Turning, which incorporates six operational elements of project management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

- Professor Rajendra Chetty, who was always positive and accessible and offered sound and encouraging feedback;
- Dr Dominique Mwepu, who was always supportive and offered useful insights and constructive suggestions;
- The eleven respondents, whose perceptions played an important role in this study, *who shared their thoughts and experiences openly and honestly*;
- My wife, Angela, who gave me space and encouragement when I was working on this project; and,
- The financial assistance of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology towards this research is acknowledged.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms	Explanation
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
DoE	Department of Education (South Africa)
DoL	Department of Labour
ET	Education and Training
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
HRD	Human Resource Development
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
JIPSA	Joint Initiative in Priority Skills Acquisition
LA	Learnership Agreement
LMC	Learnership Management Committee
LPU	Linkages and Programmes Unit
MERSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Seta
NATED	National Education Report 191
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PM	Project Management
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
Roi	Return on Investment
SAQA	South African Qualifications Framework
SDA	Skills Development Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Bodies
SMEs	Small and Macro Enterprises
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The availability of technically skilled labour at the intermediate level has become a critical issue in South Africa. The production of a sufficient number of artisans for a growing economy, for example, has been identified as a priority by the Joint Initiative in Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), which was launched by the government on 26 March 2006. The JIPSA initiative argues that severe shortages of artisanal labour are emerging in key technical fields.

The artisanal crisis co-exists alongside a significant expansion of FET college enrolments in engineering at the National Certificate levels N1, N2 and N3 (the FET band). However, most of these engineering students are not sponsored by employers as apprentices or trainees; as a consequence, many face unemployment once they have graduated (Kraak, 2007:1).

Within this context, the role of colleges in assisting in the development of skills in South Africa cannot be more emphasised. The colleges have been mandated through the Skills Development Act of 1998 and the Further Education and Training Act of 1999 to develop the capacity to offer and manage learnerships that were made available by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Therefore in this regard, the new institutional landscape for Further Education and Training (FET) colleges represents a significant and decisive break from the old system of technical/vocational education and training in South Africa and ushers in a new FET college landscape that will respond to the human resource development needs of the country (DoE, 2001:1).

According to Kraak (2007:1), this paradox of artisanal shortages alongside a surplus of unemployed engineering college graduates, is exacerbated by the dramatic growth in the number of learners who have enrolled in learnerships since April 2001, the date which signalled the start of government's flagship National Skills Development Strategy (DoL, 2001). Kraak (2007:19) concurs that the most important innovation in the intermediate skills development arena in the post-apartheid era is the 'Learnership'. The Skills Development Act of 1998 seeks to overcome the

problems associated with the old apartheid regime training programmes. It proposes a very ambitious new framework through the creation of an institutional regime with strong links forged between learners, employers, government and the new intermediary training bodies, SETAs. This new institutional mechanism for delivering training is termed 'learnerships'.

The Skills Development Act of 1998 refers to the learnership as having a three-fold purpose. Firstly, it is aimed at providing workplace learning in a more structured and systematic form. Formal learning will be provided by an accredited education and training (ET) provider (for example, a college, university of technology or private provider). Secondly, learnerships seek to link structured learning to multiple sites of workplace experience. Learnership Agreements (LA) are to be drawn up between the employer, ET provider and the learner to specify the conditions of employment and practical work experience, and when the learner would be released to attend training classes. And finally, all of this training and practical work experience is to culminate in a nationally recognised qualification (DoL, 1997:3). This link between the ET providers (for the purpose of this research, the FET college) and the multiple sites of workplace experience, namely, the workplace providers have to be managed using an effective management system. The implications for FET colleges to deliver responsive and relevant learning programmes and to manage them are both daunting and challenging.

1.2 Learnership implementation and its implication for FET institutions

According to Bisschoff and Govender (2004), South African training providers are uncertain of their present place in the economy; they are unable to determine their role clearly and are relatively unskilled at managing and improving skills in the current, dynamic workplace. They indicate that training providers and managers employ various frameworks to develop and ensure a skilled workforce. These include the South African skills legislative framework, Total Quality Management (TQM), Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) to determine a Return on Investment (ROI) and Project Management Frameworks (PMF) (Bisschoff and Govender 2004 : 77). Their research identified the skills legislative and project management frameworks as key frameworks for managing current workplace skills development. De Jager *et al.*

(2002:6) concur that a learnership is best managed as a project at various levels requiring project management principles for developing workplace skills (learnerships). Davies and Farquharson (2004:182), however, warn that learnerships exist in a highly legislated context and tend to be implemented in multiple stakeholder environments, which provide a project manager with significant challenges in ensuring the effective delivery of a learnership and its outcomes.

Davies (2001: 194) proposes a multidimensional, collaborative model where a training provider serves as the Lead Agency (taking responsibility for overall project management and deliverables) and arranges with one or more enterprises to use their workplaces to deliver the workplace components of a nationally recognised qualification. The generic learnership implementation model proposed by de Jager *et al.* (2002:9) also supports the need for an appropriate management structure, which they see as an essential component for 'establishing implementation partnerships'. Their model also advocates representatives from the Lead Employer, the Lead Training Provider, the SETA (or relevant SETA structure, e.g., the regional office or chamber) and the relevant trade union/s.

In relation to the effective management of learnerships, Davies and Farquharson (2004:188), maintain that four key lessons learned from a South African case study have emerged: the need to identify and consult with key stakeholders at the outset; the need to clarify stakeholders' roles and accountabilities; the importance of effective contract management with lead service providers; and, the need to manage the learner monitoring process.

1.3 Current workplace management frameworks for training providers

The following five frameworks are employed locally and internationally to manage training in the workplace:

1. Skills management based on the South African legislative framework requiring a training provider to be registered and accredited through a relevant SETA ETQA; qualified to manage skills development via policies, procedures, practices and review mechanisms; develop, deliver and evaluate learning programmes to culminate in NQF credits or qualification; link financial, administrative and physical resources; and claim back skills levies via grants (SAQA, 2000: 17-18).
2. An internal management system for transforming organisations into learning organisations. Rhinesmith's (1996:37) framework for training providers to improve skills development focuses on developing key skills and characteristics through actively changing mindsets.
3. The cost benefit and return on investment framework measuring the cost and benefits of developing skills (Birnbauer, 1986:58-66).
4. Quality performance management framework, which is similar to the learnership agreement type framework offered by the South African skills legislation (Kelly, 1996:122-3).
5. The project management framework for managing workplace training providers, which is similar to the skills legislative framework (Duncan, 1996:139).

While the first four management frameworks are significant to this research as they add value to the skills legislative framework, the framework that this research seeks must be aligned to the national skills legislative framework. Furthermore, the framework must be linked to job relevant training, continuous assessment and national accreditation. Project management stands out as the most effective tool for dealing with daily management issues such as time, cost, resources and risk issues (Govender, 2003:99).

1.4 The project management framework for workplace training providers

This research investigates project management as a probable framework for managing learnerships. Project management is defined as the application of

knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project-manage certain activities in order to meet or exceed stakeholder needs and expectations (Duncan: 1996: 167).

1.5 Purpose of the study

After the Apprenticeship Act of 1922, technical colleges were to provide the theoretical component of apprenticeship training, while the apprentices were to undergo their practical training at their places of employment (McGrath, 2004:159). However, with the decline in apprenticeships, the institutional level of apprenticeship training was transformed from one where apprentices were sponsored by industry, had the status of employees and were trained by means of day- or block-release, to one where most students studied full-time, with no employer sponsorship and, therefore, little or no opportunity available for practical, on-the-job training (Gamble, 2003:9). The colleges will, therefore, have to learn how to manage the courses accredited by the Department of Education, the practical workshop-based skill programmes and learnerships accredited by the Department of Labour's Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAS).

The primary aim of this research is to explore an effective management system for a Fitting and Turning learnership at a FET institution. An effective management system for learnerships is important because SETAs require large amounts of documentation for monitoring, reporting and invoicing. It was reported that the process of delivering learnerships is generally regarded as time consuming and challenging from a management and administrative point of view. A significant obstacle that some FET colleges are facing presently is that the overall learnership system is not yet fully developed (HSRC, 2006). Other reasons accounting for the importance of an effective management system is that learnership implementation is stakeholder rich and has to be managed on various levels, for example, the following bodies have to be managed: the Learnership Management Committee (LMC), learnership implementation teams, co-ordinators for the workplaces and training providers and assessment co-ordinators. For the learnership to run smoothly, an effective management system consisting of the fundamental management principles of planning, organising, implementing and control become apparent.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This study was limited to two FET colleges in the Western Cape. One college is a 'Mega' well resourced, structured and established college and the other a small rural emerging college with limited resources. The limitation is that the result of the research cannot be generalised. The research is therefore confined to a descriptive rather than a comparative approach, which could have been more insightful. Only staff involved in the learnership programme and who had learnership experience were interviewed.

1.7 Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation is organised as follows: Chapter One outlines the purpose of the study; Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant literature; Chapter Three contains the methodology; Chapter Four presents the interpretation of the data; and Chapter Five discusses the findings, posits recommendations and concludes the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Further Education and Training colleges have been mandated to offer learnerships as a model of workplace training. This thesis adopts the notion of a learnership management model, which includes institutional learning, its integration with workplace training and its effective management by a FET college, as its focus. However, because of the lack of secondary sources on learnerships and its applied knowledge, this chapter will be developed through an examination of some pilot projects and their findings. It will further explore the ideas or concepts as they relate to skills training and the British Modern Apprenticeships (from which the South African learnership system was adapted) by researchers such as Fuller & Unwin (1998), Lave & Wenger (1991), Young (2004) and Brunello & Medio (2001). Learnerships are a tool for aligning education and training initiatives more closely with industry. Therefore this chapter will look at the relations between work, learning, and, the integrated approach to assessment.

The meaning of the learnership 'concept' is investigated through examining the ideas of various writers. Skills development is defined, current management theories and frameworks for skills development will be reviewed, and, finally a learnership model for workplace training and its management is investigated through examining the writings of Davies *et al.* (2004), de Jager *et al.* (2002) and Govender (2003).

2.2 The “concept of learnership”

The “concept of learnership” was introduced through the Skills Development Act of 1998 and is seen as a model of workplace training in South Africa. Literature also refers to other models like apprenticeships, which are universally used as a model of workplace training. Can the concepts of apprenticeship and learnership, each as a model for workplace training, be compared? According to Brunello & Medio (2001) assigning meanings to concepts like apprenticeship and learnership might differ because of the institutional and cultural difference that exists between countries. Learnerships are referred to as a model that is structured around two

components namely institutionalised training and workplace training. Furthermore, it emphasises workplace training as a key component. There is a strong link to the *world of work*. Therefore, this implies that the theory component and its practice must have a strong link to the workplace environment. De Jager *et al.* (2002) refer to a learnership as an occupation that consists of a structured learning component and practical work experience. The two components cannot be isolated but must be seen as a form of integration of the two. The two concepts namely learnerships and apprenticeships as models for workplace training are both seen as models of vocational education and training but is there a distinction between these two models?

2.3 Learnerships and apprenticeships

In South Africa, learnerships were introduced for the first time in the Skills Development Act of 1998. Unlike apprenticeships, which apply to selected trades, learnerships apply to any occupation. Furthermore, a learnership must culminate in a qualification registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) according to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The 1997 Green paper and the 1998 Skills Development Act state that learnerships have a three-fold purpose. Firstly, they are aimed at providing workplace learning in a more structured and systemic form and that formalised learning shall be provided by an accredited education and training (ET) provider for example, a FET college. Secondly, learnerships seek to link structured learning to multiple sites of work experience. Finally, all this training and practical work experience must culminate in a nationally recognised qualification (DoL 1997: 3). Furthermore Vorwerk (2002: 14), states that learnerships also adhere to applied competence.

These features differ markedly from the previous apprenticeship system, which had very vague requirements regarding the linkage between theoretical training and work experience. The minimal level of theoretical training was often unrelated to the practical training of the apprentice with little supervision or structured induction into skilled work at the apprentices' place of employment. Learnerships seem to emphasise two important aspects of training namely, structured learning and workplace training.

2.4 The relationship between work and learning

Although there are limitations when seeking comparisons between 'apprenticeship' and 'learnership', both models of education and training involve a relationship between theory and practice. According to Davies & Farquharson (2004:183), the term 'learnership' describes a particular model of workplace training. The question then arises: what is the nature of the relationship between the theory and the application of that theory? Fuller & Unwin (1998:158) argue that enabling young people to work and learn in Communities of Practice can foster effective learning in apprenticeships. The key partners in communities of practice are further education lecturers and trainers, employers and apprentices (Lave & Wenger, 1991:98). Another key characteristic of a learnership is the integral role of structured workplace experience. What is the nature of structured workplace experience? Does it imply that the institutionalised learning must be linked to what actually transpires in the workplace? Should there be some kind of co-ordination to ensure that it does happen? Fuller & Unwin (1998:159) suggest that people learn in social situations and through interaction and that knowledge and understanding are further enhanced through structured teaching and learning. Learnerships have a theoretical and a practical component. They have little meaning if they are not linked to and applied in a real work environment. Learnership design and implementation links training providers and workplace providers in a meaningful way. It seeks to link training with the real world of work. Socialisation to work and introduction to the ethics and values that underpin a professional knowledge base come through work experience itself (Gamble, 2004:100).

Hatting (2003:5) argues that learnerships are a tool for aligning education and training initiatives more closely with labour market needs. They establish a relationship between structured learning provided by education and training institutions and structured work experience, in order to equip learners with the competence that is required in the labour market. Hatting (2003:6), explains that an essential requirement for the successful completion of a learnership is that learners must demonstrate their competence by applying effectively what they have learned in the workplace. Heitman (2005:63), affirms that learnership implementation demands a learning process that ensures a link between institutional and workplace learning,

the integration of theory and practice and the practical learning in the workplace. Is this integration of theory and practice an applied competence as referred to by Vorwerk (2002: 14)? Can it then be said that learnerships seek to contextualise a simulated training environment as experienced by the learner at the college and apply it in the workplace? Gamble argues that context-dependent knowledge is always tied to the 'real world'.

This is what Heitman (2005:63) refers to when he explains that the action-oriented learning approach can be seen as appropriate for developing the competencies required to cope with the challenges of a complex and continuously changing work environment. Furthermore this links to another important connection between work and learning namely the learner-centred approach to education and training, which put the focus on the learner and not on the teacher, instructor or the facilitator.

2.5 Learner-centred Education

According to Heitman (2005:69), one of the most important factors determining the success or failure of action-orientated learning is a change in the role of the teacher/instructor (facilitators). The more traditional one-way, top-down communication of information from facilitators to learners does not promote active and self-managed learning. While the facilitators still have an important role in planning and structuring the learning process around tasks, problems and questions, they do have to relinquish their role as 'organisers' of the learning process. However, in order to encourage the development of autonomous, self-directed learners who, to a large extent, 'organise' their own learning, the facilitator must encourage more interaction between the learners.

The new approach to education, training and skills development is in line with learning in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, which tends to focus on the learner and on the development of learner-centred programmes. According to Young (1994), key features of learner-centredness include: the idea that learners should take responsibility for their own learning; that assessment should be available on demand; that outcomes, but not learning processes should be prescribed; and that more emphasis is put on learners' access to resources (e.g., learning materials) than

tutors. This is certainly a far cry from the traditional approach, which emphasised the teacher as the dominant figure in the learning process. Does this new approach of learner-centredness teach learners self-responsibility? Does the idea of shifting the responsibility to learners not also teach self-discipline to the learners? Self-responsibility implies that learners learn to organise themselves without coercion.

There is much value in a learner-centred approach which gives “due recognition to the needs and perspectives of learners” (Bolton & Unwin, 1996), and which offers a welcome antidote to the failings of authoritarian, transmission pedagogy. Fuller & Unwin (1998:158) argue that such an approach in its ideological form may not fully recognise the needs of the young people that make up the apprentice-client group. In order to fulfil this objective, it is necessary for them to become accomplished in the activities - conceptual, practical, social and the building of relationships - which constitute full participation in communities of practice. Learnerships are registered as a qualification on the NQF and are unit-standard based. One of the fundamental principles of the unit standard based qualification is Outcomes Based Education (O B E).

2.6 Outcomes Based Education

The learnership qualification is registered with SAQA and therefore FET colleges as training providers must heed the OBE requirements of the NQF. In “Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century” (DoE 1997: 6-7), the Minister of Education urged all training providers to switch from the “old” to the “new” approach of training, assessing and providing of educational service as follows:

Table2.1: Old versus new approaches in education, training and skills development.

OLD	NEW
Passive learners	Active learners
Examination driven	Continuous assessment
Rote learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action
Content-based/ subject-based	Integrated, real-life learning
Teacher centred+ worksheet / text book bound	Learner centred with facilitation and group work
Rigid syllabi	Learning programmes guide learning
Teacher responsible for learning	Learners responsible for learning through feedback and affirmation
Teacher hopes achieved	Outcomes are achieved: learner understands and does
Rigid time frames	Flexible time frames at learner pace
Public comment denied	Comments and inputs encouraged from wider community

(Govender 2003:53)

2.7 Assessment in the context of the NQF

Davies (2005: 2) states that assessment in the context of the NQF lies in learners' demonstrating that they can perform the outcomes for which they are being trained. This seems to be what Vorwerk (2002: 14) refers to as applied competence and integrated assessment. Table 2.2 outlines a generic workflow for assessment in the context of the NQF and within learnerships in particular.

TABLE 2.2: Workflow for assessment

Plan assessment
Prepare candidate for assessment
Conduct assessment
Evaluate assessment
Provide feedback
Review assessment

(Davies 2005:2)

According to Davies (2005:2), assessment and quality processes and procedures are pertinent to both the structured learning and the practical workplace components of any learnership. An effective assessment is subject to accurate standards driven by industry needs. Learnerships are unit standard based qualifications and they are linked to the assessment of outcomes.

2.7.1 Unit standards and assessment

The South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995) and the Skills Development Act (1998) require that education and training programmes and practices be based on unit standards registered on the NQF and which results in a national qualification, where appropriate. Therefore, the use of unit standards is inextricably linked to assessment processes in learnerships. Essentially, the process of assessment aims to determine an individual's status in relation to these standards through a variety of processes, enabling an inference to competence. How does an individual demonstrate competency in an applied manner? It happens through the following indicators for example: perform individual tasks, manage a number of different tasks in a job, respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine, and deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment. Vorwerk (2002: 14) alludes to issues like applied competence and integrated assessments where a number of different tasks are all assessed as part of one big whole

2.7.2 Integrating workplace, classroom learning and assessment

The relationship between assessment in the classroom and the workplace is a key issue in learnerships, particularly where integrated models of training have been

adopted. According to Bloch (1996), most of the literature suggests that classroom assessment practices are often translated in their entirety into the workplace, with little consideration given to the impact on the processes of learning and the resultant outcomes of the assessment process. Docking (1998), referring to his review of publications on workplace assessment, notes that there are many debates about the differences or similarities between workplace assessment and classroom assessment. There is an attempt to restore the original competency-based focus and the pre-eminence of workplace assessment through learnerships.

A recent South African review of learnership assessment practice by Denny & Davies (2003) within seven learnerships, hosted by a range of SETAs, noted evidence suggesting that current assessment practices: 1) reflect a lack of consistency in assessment decisions and assessment practice; 2) seem to rely predominantly on assessment against unit standards with little mapping back to the qualification's competency profile; 3) demonstrate low levels of integration in the learning and assessment process; 4) are overly reliant on summative assessment at the end of a unit standard; 5) make little appropriate use of formative assessment which suggests a lack of role clarity with regard to the different types of 'assessors'; 6) confusion in the understanding of the different types of assessment that exist within the learnership context; and 7) provide evidence of a lack of rigorous quality assurance processes, raising concerns about the quality of assessor training programmes and ongoing support for assessors. The questions raised are then: does effective assessment require a high degree of understanding and skill? Does it require specialist skills and ability? Assessment requires analytical thinking, creative ability, application of complex knowledge and the ability to interpret facts and make predictions based on these interpretations.

Davies (2005:7) suggests a need for concrete procedures to be put in place by training providers to ensure quality assessment processes and strategies. Major issues appear to be: 1) the cost of setting up and maintaining such processes and strategies; 2) the appropriate identification of roles and responsibilities for quality assurance when assessment is carried out in different locations; 3) the limited understanding and skills that service providers have as moderation and sampling processes; and 4) the need for training to support auditing assessment processes and decisions.

Davies concurs that there is an overwhelming need for guidance, planning and structuring assessment in learnerships. The literature thus indicates that the need to manage assessments forms an important function of the management of a learnership.

2.8 Management of learnerships

Davies and Farquharson (2004:182) warn that learnerships tend to be implemented in multiple stakeholder environments and similarly according to de Jager *et al.* (2002:6) learnerships are best managed as a project at various levels. The researchers are thus referring to the composition of *bodies/groups with various functions or roles, which have to be managed*. At this stage of the debate the term 'management' needs to be defined, as it applies to learnerships.

According to Koontz and O'Donnell (1964:1), "Management is defined here as the accomplishment of desired objectives by establishing an environment favourable to performance by people operating in organised groups". Trewatha and Newport (1976:22) define management as the process of *planning, organising, actuating and controlling an organisation operation in order to achieve a co-ordination of human and material resources essential in the effective and efficient attainment of objectives*. This definition makes mention of the co-ordination of people and resources. It complements what Davies and Farquharson refer to as multiple stakeholders. It also mentions resources that need to be managed. The management of learnerships includes both people and resources. Smit and Cronje (1992: 6) define management as *a process or series of activities that give the necessary direction to an enterprise's resources so that its objectives can be achieved as productively as possible in the environment in which it functions*.

The key elements that appear to run through the above definition of management are objectives, resources, people and processes. Does this not suggest that management can be regarded as a process through which an organisation's objectives are achieved, by effective use of people and resources, in a co-ordinated manner? Central to the process is the co-ordination of human resources within an organisation (Pather, 1995: 36). The relevant stakeholders or human resources in the management of a learnership are the learnership management committees (LMC),

learnership implementation teams, co-ordinators for workplace and training providers and assessment co-ordinators. From the above definitions, management has been perceived as a social action and is concerned with the relationship between people.

Moreover, De Wet (1981:42) considers management as the social process through which the manager co-ordinates the activities of a group of people by means of planning, organising, guiding, supervising and controlling in order to achieve specific goals. Learnerships by implication have a huge paper trail that needs to be managed. Furthermore, it has a multiple of stakeholders that must be organised, controlled and managed in a co-ordinated manner.

2.9 Function of the administration system

De Jager *et al.* (2002:16) argue that an effective administrative system is critical to successful learnership implementation and should form an integral part of the quality management system. This implies that this 'effective' administrative system keeps track of the paper trail that is so evident in learnerships; thereby also constituting some sort of quality management system. This administrative procedure constitutes a quality management system which presupposes that some policy and procedure are in place.

De Jager *et al.* (2002:16) elaborate further that the administration activities include: tracking of learner facilitation and assessment, tracking of learner rotation, recording of learner achievements against the learning programme's desired outcomes, managing the finances, forwarding assessment results to ETQA and also capturing, recording and disseminating data in accordance with the learnership project plan. If the administration of the learnership includes all of these activities, then, it calls for co-ordination and the establishment of channels through which those who apply it can improve the policy continually.

Learnerships require an effective communication strategy between the Learnership Management Committee (L M C) and the other stakeholders.

2.10 Communication as a management task

According to Van Schoor (1977:13), communication is the mutual exchange of ideas and interpretation of messages. His description of communication puts an emphasis on the following four concepts, which are important to educators: making contact, informing, interpreting, and providing messages.

A learnership is governed by a legislative framework (Skills Development Act 1998), which requires a contractual relationship between learners, employers and providers that inevitably places the parties in a partnership situation. An effective communication strategy is needed for the learnership implementation process (de Jager *et al.*, 2002). The success of the learnership hinges on effective management of the partnership particularly from the training provider side in terms of making contact with all the other stakeholders timeously and, informing them about issues that are important for the successful running of the learnership.

FET colleges have been mandated via the Further Education and Training Act of 1998 and, according to amongst others (SAQA Bulletin, 2003: 17), to offer a diversity of programmes relating to business, industry and community needs. Kraak (2002:1) points out that the public FET sector has been identified as a key vehicle to drive the process of human resource development in South Africa.

2.11 FET in pursuance of the country's Human Resource Development

According to Asmal (2003), the FET college sector is a significant player in the national Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy, which was launched in 2001. Through restructuring, especially of the colleges, it is the single biggest contributor to intermediate skills, which are essential for achieving four out of five HRD objectives. These are: 1) improving the foundations for human development, 2) improving the supply of high quality skills which are more responsive to the economy's needs, 3) increase in employer participation in life long learning, and 4), supporting employment growth through industrial policies, innovation, research and development.

There might be some truth in what Asmal is alluding to; however, the HRD strategy describes FET as "the only sector where the prospects for employment growth at an intermediate level are strong". This FET sector has the capacity to contribute to growing the employment opportunities by providing the necessary skills. They will be able to respond to a wide range of skills needs and cater for different audiences. The 'learnerships' developed by the SETAs and registered with SAQA enable these institutions to be responsive to regional and local needs. According to the DoE (2003:7), that is what is intended with learnerships. In order for the FET colleges as skills providers to contribute to the HRD, they need an effective management framework for skills development. The concept of learnerships and its relevance to skills development is now looked at through the 'window' of the piece of legislation, which gave rise to the birth of learnerships.

2.12 The Skills Development Act of 1998

The Skills Development Act was proclaimed, through the Department of Labour in 1998, to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce: to integrate those strategies within the NQF according to the South African Qualifications Authority Act, of 1995; to provide for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications; to provide for financing of skills development by means of a levy-grant scheme and a National skills Fund (NSF); to provide for and regulate employment services; and to provide for matters connected therewith (DoL, 2003). According to DoL (1998: 1-2) the purposes of the Act are:

- a) to develop the skills of the South African Workforce: to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility, to improve productivity in the industry and the competitiveness of employers, to promote self-employment and to improve the delivery of social services;
- b) to increase the levels of investments in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment.;
- c) to encourage employers to: use the workplace as an active learning environment, provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills, provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience and employ persons who found it difficult to be employed;

- d) to encourage workers to participate in learnership and other training programmes; to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education; and
- e) to ensure quality of education and training in and for the workplace.

This is certainly a very daunting challenge for training providers by any standard. Training providers need to be in the driver's seat of workplace training initiatives. They need a strong management process to manage employee training if they are to ensure that the country receives an adequate supply of skilled workers.

2.13 The role of training providers in the South African workplace

Govender (2003) argues that according to the skills development legislation, South African training providers have a role and a position that is designed to improve skills development. The type of management framework employed by providers has direct implications for the future role of training providers in workplace training. Yet, no prescription or criteria is forthcoming from the DoL or DoE for an effective internal management system for training providers to develop skills in a systematic way. This section highlights the legislative and management role of training providers in improving skills development in the South African workplace.

2.13.1 Legislative obligations of South African training providers

A brief review of the legislative requirements in summary form is that:

- they meet organisational and educational management criteria;
- The management criteria require the provision of optimal learning environments based on OBE principles; and
- to show evidence of this, training providers must provide the relevant SETA with information on their internal organisational and educational management strategies (as per Table 2.3 below).

Table 2.3: Organisational and educational management requirements from relevant SETAs

SETA REQUIREMENTS	DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS
ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name of provider 2. Legal status of organisation and structures 3. Purpose and goals 4. Ownership and organisational structure 5. Staffing numbers and policies 6. Premises and equipment 7. Financial management 8. Student rules 9. Regulations supporting fees policies 10. Procedures and protection 11. Prospectus 12. Publicity material
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unit standards and /or qualifications as recorded and registered by the SGBs under SAQA on the NQF 2. Quality management policies 3. Quality assurance 4. Quality control 5. Evaluation and improvement of policies, practices and management systems.

(Govender, 2003:48)

Training providers will register to serve either as multi-site, multiple or single providers with a SETA and SAQA before providing learnerships and skills programmes. Training providers register their learnerships and/or skills programmes with the required skills development authority in the sector they service.

Training providers will allow external evaluators to assess the standards and quality of their learnerships and skills programmes. Training providers must offer NQF aligned learnerships or skills programmes (DoL, 1998).

2.13.2 Current workplace management frameworks for training providers

It is evident that training providers need an internal management system to implement the skills legislative framework. According to Govender (2003), there are a number of frameworks employed to manage training in the workplace locally and internationally, namely the South African legislative framework where a training provider must: register and be accredited through a relevant SETA ETQA; be qualified to manage skills development via policies, procedures, practices and review mechanisms; develop, deliver and evaluate learning programmes to culminate in NQF credits or qualification; link financial, administrative and physical resources; and claim back skills levies via skills grants (SAQA, 2000: 17-19).

The skills legislative framework forms the fundamental mandatory framework for sustainable skills development in the workplace. This framework requires a practical and effective internal management framework for implementation. Legislative frameworks provide guidance to internal management frameworks that training providers could use to improve workplace skills development. Another framework offers an internal management system for transforming organisations into learning organisations through actively changing mindsets (Rhinesmith, 1996: 37).

A quality performance management framework is an integrated framework encompassing the recent trends of total quality management, performance management and other performance improvement systems. This framework is similar to the LA or Learnership Agreement type framework offered by the South African skills legislation (Kelly, 1996: 122-3).

2.13.3 Project management for training providers

Project management is defined as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project-manage certain activities in order to meet or exceed stakeholder needs and expectations (Duncan, 1996:167). According to Duncan

(1996: 27-35), the project management processes involve a series of carefully planned activities to bring about specific results or outcomes that are either linked to the work of the project or to the product of the project. Processes are grouped according to the project phases of initiating, planning, executing, controlling or closing phases. A close relationship exists between the processes as they interact, overlap or succeed each other.

The Table 2.4 below details the project management framework knowledge areas. The framework describes how to manage various aspects of a project. The discussion that follows, presents reasons for highlighting the project management framework in this research.

Table 2.4: Project management knowledge areas

KNOWLEDGE AREAS	DEFINITION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Integration Management	Co-ordinating the various elements and processes of the project, including project plan development, plan execution and overall change control.
Scope Management	Ensuring that all of the work and only the work required for the project is included, through the processes of scope initiation, planning, definition, verification and change control.
Time Management	Ensuring timely completion of the project through activity definition, sequencing, duration, estimation, schedule development and schedule control.
Cost Management	Ensuring that the project is completed within the approved budget through the processes of resource planning, cost estimation, cost budgeting and cost control.
Quality Management	Ensuring that the project will satisfy the needs for which undertaken through quality planning, quality assurance and quality control.
Human Resources Management	Effectively using employees in a project through organisational planning, staff acquisition and team development
Communications Department	Ensuring proper collection and dissemination of project information through communications planning, information distribution, performance reporting and administrative closure
Risk Management	Concerned with identifying, analysing and responding to project risk through risk identification, quantification, response development and response control.
Procurement Management	Acquiring goods and services from outside the performing organisation through procurement planning, solicitation planning, solicitation, source selection, contract administration and contract closeout.

(Duncan: 1996: 167-168)

To conclude the above discussion on current management frameworks employed by managers and training providers, the mandatory skills legislative framework must be emphasised as the foundation for the internal management framework. However, Govender (2003) argues that managing any workplace challenge as a project has become the norm in rapidly advancing organisations. A further model for managing learnerships in a multi-stakeholder context is the 'lead agency' model where an ET provider such as a college co-ordinates the learnership.

2.13.4 Lead Agency Management Model for managing multiple service provider learnerships

In this model Davies (2001) proposes a model where a training provider serves as the lead agency and arranges with one or more enterprises to use their workplaces to deliver the workplace components of the learnership qualification. In this model the training provider takes full responsibility for training and assessment. This model makes it easier for the training provider to execute control over the learnership project in terms of the following: clearly distinguishing roles and responsibilities; exercising better control over summative assessments and mentoring; better quality control and maintenance of standards; and ensuring greater levels of co-operation and integration in delivery of both on- and off-the job training.

According to Davies and Farquharson (2004:188), four key lessons learned from a South African case study were: the need to identify and consult with key stakeholders at the outset; the need to clarify stakeholder roles and accountabilities; the importance of effective contract management with lead service providers; and the need to manage the learner monitoring process.

De Jager *et al.* (2002: 16) have identified the administrative systems that are needed to facilitate proper learnership monitoring. These include recruitment and selection; tracking of learner facilitation and assessment; tracking of learner rotation; recording of learner achievements against the learning programme desired outcome; and monitoring and managing of budgets and finances during the learnership's implementation.

Davies & Farquharson (2004:194) suggest that adequate resources, including staff who are trained to use the systems are made available when the systems are implemented. The literature indicates that a training provider serves as the Lead Agency (taking responsibility for overall project management and deliverables). The various stakeholders in the learnership namely the Lead Agency, the Learnership Management Committee, the Lead Training Provider and the Lead Employer, each has an important role to play in ensuring the successful implementation of a learnership.

2.14 Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter provided a discussion of the key aspects of learnerships as a model for workplace training and the role of the college as a training provider. A variety of management frameworks were investigated in search of the most effective framework to manage a learnership. Chapter 3 will detail the methodology that was used to investigate the respondents' perceptions around their roles in the management of their learnership.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore a Fitting and Turning learnership, with a focus on a best practice management model for the learnership. To achieve this, a qualitative approach was used. Rubin & Rubin (1995:42-43) explain that the entire design for a qualitative project cannot be designed in advance because the design changes as one learns from interviewing. A qualitative approach has the potential to supplement and reorient current understanding of learnership management complexity. Against this background, the approach to this qualitative research is phenomenology (i.e. the descriptive study of how individuals experience a phenomenon). The interview process using open-ended questions was used. The issues of validity, reliability and ethical considerations were addressed in the design of the instrument. It was a qualitative research design as it gave the stakeholders a voice to express their lived experiences in the learnership.

3.2 Interviews

The instrument chosen to conduct the research was the interview. Investigating the learnership stakeholders' (staff of two colleges) perception implies giving them an opportunity to express their opinions and it was felt that the use of an interview process would provide the right setting for the stakeholders to express themselves. An interview enables participants to discuss and express their perceptions and interpretations of particular situations (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 267). This interaction between people is crucial: "the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable" (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 267). There are certainly other methods of collecting information, but Blaxter *et al.* (1996: 153) make the point that the interview can provide information that methods such as observation or questionnaires would not provide. This information can be obtained through further probing questions as the interview progresses or it may be revealed by a candid and outspoken interviewee.

There are four basic types of interviews:

- informal conversational interview;
- interview guide approach;
- standardised open-ended interviews; and
- closed, quantitative interviews (Patton: 1980, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000: 271).

For the purpose of this study it was decided to use the open-ended interview because it is more flexible and the researcher was able to use probing questions when respondents gave unclear responses. In this situation the questions are drawn up in advance. All the interviewees are asked the same questions, in the same order, which ensures consistency (Patton, 1980, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000: 271). The benefits are that:

- the responses are comparable, as the questions are common; there is a full set of data for each interviewee;
- the bias is reduced through common questions;
- the instrument is available for review; and
- the data can be organised, grouped and analysed relatively easily (Patton: 1980, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2000: 271).

The interviews ranged in time from about 45 minutes to nearly 60 minutes, depending on the interviewee and what he/she had to offer. In most of the interviews, opportunities arose to ask further questions as the interview unfolded.

3.3 Interview Schedule

Exploring a management framework for a FET institution to manage a Fitting and Turning learnership was the primary aim of this research. The researcher considered it both important and relevant to determine from the stakeholders, their description and their actual experience in their own terms. The interview schedule was used to give a voice to the stakeholders, so that an effective management model for a Fitting and Turning learnership could be achieved.

Twenty designated questions were asked in the interview. In addition, as the interviews developed with each interviewee, further questions were asked if issues needed to be explored in greater detail or if the interviewee needed to elaborate on the topic. Most of the questions were structured and fixed and dealt with issues

around roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders within a learnership, accreditation, communication and reporting structures, with some open questions on structured learning and assessments. The two questions that dealt with the limitation of the institution and recommendations to improve the management of learnerships were open.

3.4 Selection of the institutions

Two colleges were selected. One small FET college and a larger FET college in the Western Cape region as it met the requirements of the study, namely, that it had a Fitting and Turning learnership currently in operation. I have just recently been employed at the college where I currently teach and was not engaged in any activity around the learnerships; therefore any bias around the selection of the college was ruled out. This allowed for the interviewing of two groups of stakeholders, which consisted of assessors, administration staff, campus managers, project managers and learnership co-ordinators. In addition, I had relatively easy access to all the stakeholders, although the consent of all the parties was nevertheless still required and obtained. The choice of each of these stakeholders was based on legislative and institutional requirements.

Table 3.1: Interviewees

INTERVIEWEES	Number	Gender
Project Manager	1	M
Admin Clerk	2	F
Project Leader	1	M
Learnership manager	2	M
Campus Manager	2	M/F
Assessor	3	M
Total	11	

The institutions are public FET colleges, situated in the Western Cape, offering WCED accredited programmes, accredited and non-accredited skills programmes as well as learnerships.

3.5 Selection of respondents

I wanted to examine the thoughts and opinions of staff that played a role in the Fitting and Turning learnership and record their real experience (in the day-to-day running of) and perceptions of how the learnership is managed. A group of 5 staff members from the FET college where I teach and a group of 6 staff members of another FET college were selected as the sample for this research. The two groups were made up of staff that had previous experience in the running of a Fitting and Turning learnership and occupied key positions in the college. Purposeful sampling was used to select the respondents. FET college R had one Fitting and Turning lecturer and he was selected. FET college P had three Fitting and Turning lecturers and I chose the two with the most experience. Each respondent was interviewed individually in order to capture real life experience of their roles in the learnership and their experience of the management of the learnership.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability measures how well the research has been carried out. Blaxter *et al.* (1996: 200) make the point that reliability would have been achieved if another researcher, conducting the same research, under the same constraints, settings and conditions were to produce similar findings. Ensuring that the results are as objective as possible will contribute to reliability. This was addressed in the design through attempts to minimise bias and consider ethical issues, which could have impacted on responses. My commitment is to reliability of the data in terms of 1) data selected for study, 2) the careful design of the interview schedule, 3) the technical quality of audio-recordings and 4) the adequacy of the transcriptions. Before embarking on the main individual interviews it became necessary to conduct a pre-run or pilot study to assist in refining the interview schedule. Piloting, or reassessment, is the process whereby the research techniques and methods are tried out to see how well they work in practice and, if necessary, are modified accordingly (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2001: 135). In this study, a pilot study was conducted with two educators. The aim was to determine whether questions were repeated and to determine whether ambiguity was evident. The pilot confirmed that there was no reason to re-adjust the questions.

3.7 Validity

Validity refers to whether the researcher has actually measured what he/she set out to measure (Bell, 1993: 65). This is, understandably, a crucial aspect of the research methodology; non-compliance here would render the research invalid. This study used an interview process to gather data and it was crucial that correct and relevant data was obtained. It is also important to take cognizance of the fact that an interview process is a social interaction between two people and can be fraught with all kinds of problems. To maximise validity, any potential bias must be minimised (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 121). These sources of bias could include: the attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer, a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in his/her own image, and a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support his/her preconceived notions. Other sources of bias could also include: misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying, misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked, race, religion, status, social class, age, gender, and sexual orientation (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 121).

In an attempt to minimise bias in this study, the following precautions were taken, namely:

- the same questions were used;
- the same wording was used;
- the questions were asked in the same order;
- the venue was neutral, namely a room in the college administration building;
- the venue remained constant for each of the colleges; and
- the time frame was short; all the interviews took place over a ten-day period between March 30 and July 30 2007.

3.8 Analysis of data

The data was captured on audiotape, and then transcribed.

The stakeholders' responses were grouped together into the following categories: stakeholder roles and responsibilities; learnership accreditation; structured learning and assessment; and learner monitoring process.

The respondents were not given options to choose from in response to questions, apart from question nineteen and twenty where their responses were often wide-

ranging. However, it was possible in many of the above categories to tabulate and categorise their responses. The four categories mentioned earlier were further subdivided and the responses of each respondent of the two institutions, which consisted of either a *yes*, *no*, *not sure* and *neutral*, were added. The findings were analysed making use of the literature review, conclusions were reached and recommendations were made.

3.9 Ethics

The essence of ethics within research is that researchers balance the pursuit of information, for their own purposes, with the rights of those to be interviewed (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 50). In no way should the position of any interviewee be prejudiced through, for example, divulging sensitive information or expressing an unpopular opinion. The FET colleges were not named so as to avoid any potential prejudice in terms of their reputation.

I did not envisage much risk to the respondents for the following reasons:

- it was an anonymous process - their names were not used;
- confidentiality was rigorously observed; and
- respondents were not asked to comment about anyone specific person within the college.

Informed consent is an important component of ethical considerations. This includes four aspects: competence; voluntarism; full information; and comprehension (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 51). High ethical standards were adhered to. Confidentiality was guaranteed. The consent of all stakeholders was sought via a covering letter requesting their participation in the research. Each stakeholder signed the letter thereby granting consent to participate. A letter to the WCED requesting permission to conduct the research was submitted and permission was duly granted. I have attempted to respect the confidentiality of my colleagues and institution by using codes to maintain privacy.

3.10 Conclusion

The research project has been set up so as to produce meaningful data, which can be used to answer the research questions. Validity, reliability and ethical issues have all been considered. While it is impossible to produce totally objective data, an attempt has been made to produce the best possible data within the operating framework. The interpretation of the data appears in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to provide an effective management model for a *Fitting and Turning* learnership at a FET institution. The sample, consisting of staff of two colleges who were involved in the learnerships at their respective colleges, was interviewed with regard to their involvement in the management of the learnership.

As this study used interviews, responses have often been wide ranging. All the questions were open-ended and the responses were the personal experiences of the respondents as they lived or experienced the learnership on the ground. The stakeholders' responses were grouped together in four main categories, namely, stakeholder role and responsibilities, learnership accreditation, structured learning and assessment and the learner monitoring process. These four categories were further subdivided. The responses have, however, been represented in tables in this chapter in an attempt to clarify the responses and the weighting of these opinions. Respondents have been identified as R1 to R 6 and P1 to P5 for institution R and institution P respectively as they have been assured confidentiality.

4.2. Stakeholders and stakeholder roles

Respondents were asked if there was a learnership management committee (LMC) or management team. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Learnership management committee

Learnership management committee	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	1	1	2
NO	2	2	4
NOT SURE	2	2	4
NEUTRAL	1	0	1

One third of the respondents (3/11) said that their institution did not have such a committee and an equal number of respondents were not sure whether a learnership committee existed within the learnership structure at their college. Two of the respondents felt that the role of the learnership management committee was that of watchdog to oversee the overall running of the learnership whereas others felt that its role was to see to the logistics and infrastructure such as roles and responsibilities of staff that manage the learnership. Other comments made were that they had “to ensure that the learners get the appropriate skills training and that the learnership meets its deadlines”. At no time were the respondents asked what the role of the LMC was, yet they went on to describe what they thought its role should be. Since only one respondent of each institution thought that such a committee existed, there was clearly an absence of such a committee, which plays a vital role in the financial and also the general planning of the learnership.

Another important issue was that of the role of a learnership co-ordinator. Respondents were asked whether there was a learnership co-ordinator in the learnership. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Learnership co-ordinator

Learnership co-ordinator	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	0	0	0
NO	2	4	6
NOT SURE	2	1	3
NEUTRAL	2	0	2

Most respondents felt that a learnership co-ordinator did not feature in their structure. There was a perception that the learnership co-ordinator is the learnership manager or the project manager. One respondent was of the opinion that no person with such a title was on his staff and that the project manager saw to the needs of the learnership. The same respondent who was an administration support person claimed to fulfil the role of the co-ordinator, because the project manager was not available due to classroom engagements. Two respondents who remained neutral and did not want to commit themselves viewed the role of the co-ordinator as the

person who would: ensure that all the paper work was in order; look for new business; and look at the budget. There was definitely a difference of opinion between the various respondents with respect to this question. There was some confusion as far as the role of a learnership co-ordinator was concerned. What is of interest is that six respondents responded negatively and five altogether had, to some degree, tried to explain the role of a learnership co-ordinator which was not even part of the question. This finding indicates a lack of understanding of what a learnership co-ordinator is and the role of such a person in the learnership, which according to the literature is a clearly defined function within the workplace and the college.

The learnership administrator also forms part of the learnership structure and respondents were asked whether there was a learnership administrator. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Learnership administrator

Learnership administrator	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	2	1	3
NO	0	3	3
NOT SURE	0	1	1
NEUTRAL	4	0	4

Although an equal number of respondents gave a “yes” and a “no” answer, there was some confusion in the answers given by the four respondents who did not say yes/no, for example the role of the learnership administrator was confused with the person performing administrative functions like registration and filing of portfolios. R6 responded by saying that the learnership administrator was also called the learnership co-ordinator and went on to explain that “this is an administrative person” whose function is to help with photocopying, registration of learners and seeing to the invoicing. The same respondent said that should the MERSETA need to know anything about the learnership, e.g., administration and submission of reports, then the learnership co-ordinator would do that. R4 for instance says that “the learnership administrator’s function is performed by the admin clerk”. P2 responding by saying:

“The role of the learnership administrator is to do all the administration revolving around the learnership”. There did not appear to be any difference between the respondents who said “yes” and those who said “no” with respect to a learnership coordinator. Two of the respondents in the neutral camp went on to give almost the same description of what they thought a learnership administrator does.

The responsibilities and activities of the various stakeholders are important in the roll out of the learnership project. Hence the respondents were asked what role they played in the learnership. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.5

Table 4.4: Stakeholder designations

Designation	Institution R	Institution P
Project Manager	1	0
Admin Clerk	1	1
Project Leader	1	0
Assessor	1	2
Learnership Manager	1	1
Campus Manager	1	1

Table 4.5: Responsibilities and activities of the various stakeholders

	Institution R	Institution P
Project Manager	Deal with SETAs, Learner agreements, coach learners, moderation, companies and clients liaison	No project manager
Admin Clerk	Filing, faxing, registers, print learner material, procurement and stock control	Keep Portfolio of Evidence up to date, registers, stored information on computer
Project Leader	Company liaison; oversee training at companies and smooth running of learnership and maintenance of machines	No project leader
Assessor	Facilitate learning, POEs, assessments	Facilitate learning, mentor, assessments
Learnership Manager	Draw-up service level agreements, see to learning material and training, work with clients	Learnership co-ordination gets new business, organise role-out plan, budgets, infrastructure, assessment timelines, ensure that administrative procedures are in place and ensure that assessment results are updated on NLRD
Campus Manager	See to infrastructure including human resources and physical resources, procurement	See to infrastructure including human resources and physical resources

The roles played by the various respondents like the Learnership Manager and the Project Manager did overlap but both respondents felt that they played key roles in terms of dealing with clients and the SETA. Although institution P did not have a project manager, the learnership manager did play a key role in terms of learnership co-ordination, budgets infrastructure and administration. The campus managers of both institutions felt that their main duties were to look at infrastructure, both physical and human.

4.3 Learnership accreditation

Respondents were asked whether the institution had SETA required training policies and procedures in place. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.6

Table 4.6: SETA training policies and procedures

SETA required training policies	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	5	11
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

All respondents felt that the SETA training policies played a vital role in the accreditation of their institution. Some respondents perceived that programme approval by the SETA was subject to having the policies and procedures in place. There was also a strong sentiment that learnership accreditation and programme approval are dependent on dealing with unit standards and having qualified assessors and facilitators or coaches in place. Both institutions have the training policies in place, which indicates that they operate within the scope of the legislative requirements as set out by the SDA.

One of the conditions that has to be met for accreditation is to have the physical and human resources. Respondents were asked whether the institution had the physical and human resources to be able to run the learnership. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Physical and human resources

Physical and human resources	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	3	3	6
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	2	1	3
NEUTRAL	1	1	2

Half of the respondents from both R and P institutions felt that they had the physical resources available to offer the learnership; other respondents felt that the human resources are a great challenge. R2 was of the opinion that a pool of external assessors, facilitators and moderators could be used for the learnership as internal staff is fully tied up in the WCED and other skills programmes. R5 responded that “where we do not have the physical resources, we outsource the work”. P3 responded: “We have most of the physical but not the human resources because we need qualified fitters and turners in the learnership”. Six respondents agreed that the physical resources are available, but, almost an equal amount of respondents were concerned at the lack of human resources which was felt to be scarce.

One of the main functions of the Learnership Management Committee is to develop a project plan and a budget plan; therefore, respondents were asked whether a policy on budget and finance was in place and how it was monitored and managed. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Budget and finance

Budget and finance	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	3	0	3
NO	0	1	1
NOT SURE	2	2	4
NEUTRAL	1	2	3

Three respondents of institution R viewed their involvement in drawing up the budget as paramount to the successful running of the learnership; however, comment was made around the strict monetary measures in place. Certain respondents felt that there are too many administrative interruptions, which often caused a delay in the procurement of much needed resources. Respondents of institution P expressed disquiet about the lack of a dedicated budget for the learnership. The main criticism was the lack of openness in the affairs of the budget, which brought about the fear of overspending. There was an overwhelming feeling of despair amongst the respondents of the R institution especially at the amount of bureaucracy when it came to budgetary issues. An equal number of respondents from both institutions were not sure whether a dedicated budget for the learnership existed or whether the campus budget was used for the learnership. One respondent of the P institution said that no separate budget existed for the learnership and, hence, the college budget was used.

One of the SETA requirements for accreditation is the availability of qualified assessors, which also form part of the ETQA function. The respondents were asked whether they are accredited assessors. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Accredited assessors

Accredited Assessors	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	5	4	9
NO	1	1	2
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

All the respondents responded with a “yes” except for the two administration support staff as indicated in the table.

The majority of respondents were qualified assessors as per the requirement stipulated in the Skills Development Act of 1998. In terms of the learnership, skills and knowledge must be assessed, e.g., workplace and institutionalised training must be assessed holistically. An assessment system for learnerships will involve a

partnership between training providers like colleges and workplace providers. Both institutions seem to have qualified assessors in terms of the SDA requirements.

4.4 Structured learning and assessment

Learner logbooks play a rather important part in the structured learning and assessment process therefore respondents were asked whether learners used logbooks. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.10

Table 4.10: Logbooks

Logbooks	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	5	11
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

All respondents of both institutions viewed the logbook as being the means of assuring continuity between workplace and institutionalised or classroom training. It was felt that the logbook served as a good backup should a learner's file be lost. Comment was made around the value of the logbook as a means of checking against non-compliance to the service level agreement in terms of agreed training interventions.

Overall, there did not seem to be any substantial disagreement with respect to the issue of logbooks. These findings thus indicate that there are some means of checking and validating whether relative training does take place between the college and the workplace.

Continuous assessment and work relevant training is the cornerstone of learnerships both in terms of OBE and the NQF. Respondents were thus asked whether continuous assessment and work relevant training occurred, and how it was monitored. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.11

Table 4.11: Continuous assessments and work relevant training

Continuous assessment and work relevant training	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	5	11
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

All the respondents agreed that continuous assessments and work relevant training did occur and that it was monitored via the logbook system. One respondent of the R institution explained that the same lecturer that took the learners for theory at the college also took them for workplace training at the company thus ensuring work relevant training. Another respondent of the R institution maintained that an assessment plan/schedule ensured that continuous assessment and moderation occurred at regular intervals. Thus there was overall agreement in terms of continuous assessment and work relevant training that happens between the college and the workplace.

One of the key partners within a learnership is the workplace provider and, therefore, respondents were asked if there were partnerships formed with industry and collaboration in terms of training and use of facilities such as machines and equipment. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.12

Table 4.12: Partnership and collaboration with industry

Partnership and collaboration with industry	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	5	11
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

All of the respondents agreed that the effectiveness of the partnership and collaboration with industry was beyond question. There was great support for the value of such a partnership and collaboration since according to some respondents it saved the college huge amounts of money to buy special capital intensive resources needed for training.

Partnerships with the social partners, communities, NGO's and others are essential, to promote the development of new responsive programmes like learnerships, to build capacity and to mobilise resources and expertise. The Department of Education should actively develop closer linkages and forms of co-operation with other government departments and build relationships with and enlist the support and co-operation of the private sector, along with other partners (DoE, 2001:20). There is definitely great value in seeking a solid bond between a college as an education provider and its link with the workplace as is evident in this finding.

Often colleges also run other skills programmes parallel with the learnerships; therefore, respondents were asked if other skills programmes at the college affected the delivery of the learnership. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.13

Table 4.13: Other skills programmes

Other skills programmes	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	0	1	1
NO	6	2	8
NOT SURE	0	1	1
NEUTRAL	0	1	1

Some respondents of the one college viewed the other skills programmes that were offered at the college as crossing paths and, therefore, causing 'bottlenecks'. It was felt that the delivery of the learnership clashed with the other skills programmes. There was alarm that their college did not have dedicated facilitators for the learnership and that the facilitators used in the learnership were also required to do duty in the mainstream programmes offered at the college. The same respondents questioned the effectiveness of such an arrangement. Most respondents of the other

college felt that the learnership programme had little or no significant effect on the other programmes as the college had a dedicated learnership department. One respondent commented that good planning and outsourcing where possible was important. There was also a strong sentiment in favour of the need to 'class-up' for example to combine common subjects thereby utilising the staff optimally.

There was definitely a strong feeling among some respondents that the other skills programmes had little or no effect on the delivery of the learnership programme. This finding indicates that the learnership, running independently of other skills programmes, has overwhelming support.

4.5 Learner monitoring process

Respondents were asked whether they had an administration system in place to manage the Fitting and Turning learnership and what function the administration system served. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.14

Table 4.14: Administration system

Administration system	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	2	8
NO	0	2	2
NOT SURE	0	1	1
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

Most respondents felt that their administration system played a major role in the learnership delivery and went on to describe some of the vital functions it performed such as registration, handling of contracts, storing of the learners' evidence and reporting to companies. One respondent commented about post-assessment feedback that involved "a lot of administration work". De Jager *et al.* (2002: 16) concur that an administrative system includes the recording of learner achievement against the learning programme outcomes.

Overall there was a strong view on the importance of having a good administration system for tracking of learner achievements and tracking learner rotations from college to the workplace. There is definitely an administration system in place at both colleges, which means that there is some control over the paper work generated.

Respondents were asked whether there is a quality management system in place. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.15

Table 4.15: Quality management system

Quality management system	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	5	11
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

The respondents were unanimous in their agreement that assessment and moderation policies were vital and that they formed part of the quality management system. Most respondents felt that the quality management system at their college showed them how to do things so that they did not get 'lost' at any time. However, a respondent from the P-institution expressed concern that their existing quality management system needed a review.

In order to obtain accreditation in accordance with SAQA's ETQA Regulations, providers like colleges must have a Quality Management System relating to education and training and in this regard all respondents agreed that they have to ensure policies and procedures are in place to facilitate and assess the learning programmes (SAQA, 2000). Both groups of respondents acknowledged that a quality management system is of great significance in that it makes it possible to trace a paper trail and keep track of the learners' evidence or documents.

A learner support structure was examined where respondents were asked whether there was a learner support structure in place. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.16:

Table 4.16: Learner support structure

Learner support structure	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	5	5	10
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	1	0	1
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

Although the majority of respondents agreed that student support is available at their college, there was a strong sentiment expressed by some respondents in terms of the social problems, lack of money and abuse, e.g., sexual abuse suffered by learners. Most respondents felt that their respective colleges had the necessary support structures in place such as a student support office consisting of a social worker and other support staff. The SRC is also mentioned as playing a vital role together with student support personnel. However, one respondent expressed a concern that the learnership students must not be excluded from the student support structures. There was overall agreement that while such a support structure for students was in place at the colleges, the true nature of its role and function was not very clear.

Respondents were asked if a recruitment and selection process was followed. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.17

Table 4.17: Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	1	7
NO	0	4	4
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

Most respondents were unanimous that the companies did most of the recruitment and selection and that the college's role in this regard was minimal.

Recruitment and selection processes included an aptitude test and set the entry level at Grade 9. Most respondents supported the fact that there was no discrimination of learners in terms of race or gender. However, there were concerns that the possibilities existed that companies chose the 'cream' of the unemployed.

The recruitment and selection process forms an important part of the learnership and although there might be concerns that only the 'cream' of the unemployed might be chosen for the learnership, it is important to identify the target group, for recruitment and selection, as well as the numbers and categories of learners to be selected. Selection procedures including selection criteria and instruments must be developed (de Jager *et al.*, 2002:17). Different views and comments made by respondents seem to indicate the need for some form of recruitment and selection process for learners and that some form of criteria might be necessary. A practical and or a psychometric test might be useful in this regard although some other means could also be used.

Programme delivery in terms of throughput was examined where respondents were asked if the learnership throughput was effective. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.18

Table 4.18: Throughput

Through put	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	6	4	10
NO	0	1	1
NOT SURE	0	0	0
NEUTRAL	0	0	0

Although the throughput rate of the learners is said to be more than ninety percent, the dropout rate was ascribed to factors such as money, or mostly money related matters. Most respondents felt that the good throughput rate was the result of the learners being employed by the companies. Both groups of respondents seem to concur that there are some factors that lend themselves to the throughput of the learners whether internal or external. Employed learners have a positive effect on the

success of the learners since they are closely monitored for absenteeism and negative behaviour by the college, which is reported to their employer.

The communication structure in terms of reporting was examined next, where respondents were asked whether there was a communication structure that they followed to do the reporting. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.19

Table 4.19: Communication structure

Communication structure	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
YES	1	1	2
NO	0	0	0
NOT SURE	5	0	5
NEUTRAL	0	4	4

Some respondents responded by stating that they communicated by means of e-mails, memos and the telephone. However, not all respondents were connected via e-mail, which sometimes made communication difficult in terms of deadlines that had been set.

Many respondents (9/11) felt that their communication structures were ineffective because they lacked an effective communication infrastructure. Some respondents felt concerned about interpersonal relations, which were related to status, but mentioned that there was some improvement. Comment was made about the significance of record keeping and data storing, hence, the importance of good communication and reporting.

R6 explained it rather accurately: "Yes, the learnership is based on reports and data capturing and if the paperwork is not in order then you are going to get lost". It was evident that the reporting and communication structure is somewhat lacking. Co-ordinating the learnership means that a good communication and reporting infrastructure becomes apparent. The literature refers to a broad communication strategy such as communication channels internally and externally (de Jager *et al.*, 2002:10). Only two respondents admitted that there was some reporting structure.

Comments made by the majority of respondents seemed to indicate that the reporting system needed some form of rehabilitation.

Respondents were asked about the limitations of the institution to manage the Fitting and Turning learnership. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.20

Table 4.20: Limitations of the institution

Limitations	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
Money	4	0	4
Procurement	3	1	4
Red tape	1	0	1
Authorisation	1	0	1
Space	2	1	3
Equipment	2	1	3
Human resources	2	1	3
Administration		1	1
Learning material	1	0	1

Money featured strongly as one of the major limitations in the management of the learnership. Most respondents felt that the authorisation process in terms of procurement took too long. Concern was expressed at all the bureaucracy when it came to the buying of equipment and resources such as consumables. Some respondents viewed 'money chasing' as another area of concern as companies take too long to pay the college for work already delivered. Other respondents envisaged physical resources referred to as 'space' as well as human resources as being other limitations. There was also criticism directed at the salary levels that hampered the recruitment of suitably qualified personnel in the learnership. Learning materials and the need for a project manager were highlighted as further limitations.

The perception was that the lack of money or the bureaucracy involved in obtaining money for procurement of much needed equipment and the lack of infrastructure may hinder the operation of the learnership. According to certain

respondents the ability of recruiting qualified staff and offering them attractive salaries to keep them, may also cause some barriers in terms of service delivery. In a report by the HSRC (2006) of three colleges, which offered learnerships, a number of problems common to learnerships were raised by respondents at all the colleges. The first has to do with employers' reservations, in that they are not yet convinced of the value of learnerships and that colleges can provide the necessary skills. Relatedly, there is a problem with overly bureaucratic SETA processes to become recognised and accredited. Learnerships have very specific requirements that are quite different to setting up standard NATED programmes, because SETA requires large amounts of documentation to monitor report and invoice. It was reported that the process of delivering learnerships is generally regarded as time consuming and challenging from a management and administrative point of view (HSRC, 2006). Money and procurement are a huge issue and if the turn-around time to obtain what has been ordered is too long, it could possibly lead to frustration and a sense of despair amongst the learnership staff. Clearer roles and responsibilities might ease the waiting period for items procured. A separate budget for procurement of learnership equipment could probably assist in reducing the waiting period.

4.6 Recommendations to improve the management of the learnership

Respondents were asked what could be done to improve the management of learnerships. Their responses are detailed in Table 4.21

Table 4.21: Recommendations

Recommendations	Institution R	Institution P	TOTAL
Dedicated staff	1	0	1
Improve salary	1	0	1
Change mindset	2	0	2
Systems	1	5	6
Resources	1	1	2
Infrastructure	1	1	2
Defined roles	1	1	2

Respondents felt that a system to run the learnership is important. There was strong support in favour of better infrastructure; human resources defined roles for all the stakeholders; a reporting structure and an administrative system. Other respondents felt that to improve the management of learnerships, the programme managers, HOD's and campus managers must take a bigger interest in the learnerships. It was felt that some staff were stuck in their old ways and did not like the change that was happening. Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) categorised resistance to change into behavioural resistance, e.g., fear of the unknown or unwillingness to learn new skills, and systemic resistance, e.g., insufficient resources or lack of capacity. Learnership provision at FET colleges is generally seen in a negative light by college lecturers because, many, if not most, lecturers are the products of the apprenticeship system. According to the HSRC Report (2006), one of the problems raised by respondents at the three FET colleges, which offered learnerships has to do with employer's reservations, in that they are not yet convinced of the value of learnerships or that colleges can provide the necessary skills. Hence, college staff showed little interest in switching over to learnerships. Charged with implementing change, managers must redefine their roles. Most people find this a personal challenge and it is also a challenge for the institution as a whole (Slowey, 1995:23). As Brendan Pearce, CEO of the Manufacturing SETA (MERSETA) has observed: 'one of the most important elements of a learnership succeeding in a company is to have buy-in from all parties before a learnership commences' (cited in de Jager *et al.*, 2002: 5).

What is rather clear is that most respondents believe that a management information system for effective communication and reporting is important. In the context of learnerships, systems could have more than one meaning. For instance it could refer to infrastructure, human resources with defined roles, a reporting structure and an administrative system. According to the HSRC Report (2006), a significant obstacle that all FET colleges are facing presently is that the overall learnership system is not yet fully developed. Crucially important is developing capacity to implement the learnership through proper planning as learnerships have very specific requirements. To improve the management of learnerships depends on a number of factors of which a learnership system seems to be vital. Many of the learnership stakeholders including the learners and the workplace providers are dependent on an effective monitoring, reporting and tracking system.

4.7 Conclusion

Understanding how college staff function and see their roles is a valuable tool in the effective management of a learnership at an institution like a FET college. In order to gain insight into these roles and functions, the following learnership concepts are important, namely, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, learnership accreditation, structured learning and assessment and learner monitoring, limitations of the college or institution and recommendations to improve management of learnerships.

The research into how college staff function in and see their roles has revealed some useful insights namely: 1) mapping their roles and responsibilities, 2) having the *physical and human resources to manage the learnership*, 3) the accreditation of the college as an education and training provider to offer the learnership, 4) the interaction of the college and companies to ensure structured learning and assessment and 5) the monitoring of learners through an administration system, that can be used to manage a Fitting and Turning learnership at a FET college more effectively.

This chapter provided a description of the findings and also interpreted the findings using the literature and a reflective approach by the researcher. The conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

FET institutions must be assisted to engage responsively with the new opportunities opened by the Skills Development Act of 1998. They need to develop the capacity to offer and manage learnerships made available by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). With this in mind, this study undertook to investigate a management model to effectively manage a Fitting and Turning learnership at a FET institution. It was felt that it was important to do the investigation in the context of the learnership framework as outlined in the Skills Development Act (SDA). It was important to determine the roles of the learnership stakeholders (college staff) in the learnership, and the lessons learned in the KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Learnership Projects *before focusing on a management model for the learnership*. The findings and conclusions of this study offer an insight into how college staff currently managed the learnership. Recommendations were drawn up based on these findings and conclusions will be made in this chapter.

5.2 Conclusion

With about twenty seven percent (3/11) of the respondents saying that there was no Learnership Management Committee (LMC), no learnership co-ordinator or learnership administrator functioning in their respective institutions, and almost an equal number of respondents saying that they were not sure whether such persons were indeed part of or were playing a role in the learnership was cause for concern. Only about nine percent (1/11) of the respondents agreed that such stakeholders are functional within the learnership. Concern was expressed around many of the roles played by the various respondents in the learnership at their institutions where there was an overlap of duties and responsibilities especially as far as the duties of the project manager, the project leader as well as the learnership manager is concerned. Institution R had no project manager, however, the learnership manager served the role of both project manager and project leader in that institution. One of the key lessons learned during the KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Learnership Project (Koch *et al.*, 1999:4) was the need to clarify stakeholder roles and responsibilities. Relationships between stakeholders are often very complex and a number of different role

arrangements may exist. In the case of the pilot projects, this contributed to a lack of role clarity amongst the key role-players and was clearly an issue needing to be addressed in future learnerships (Koch *et al.*, 1999: 25). Learnerships require extensive co-ordination and planning in order to manage the range of stakeholders' inputs required for implementation. The KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Learnership Project has confirmed the view that learnerships are best viewed as projects, where implementation is managed at various levels (de Jager *et al.*, 2002:6).

Learnership accreditation and programme approval at the two colleges were subject to them having SETA policies and procedures in place, the physical and human resources, budget and finance policies and qualified assessors for the learnership implementation. It was obvious that both colleges had policies and procedures in place which were an important prerequisite for learnership accreditation and programme approval.

The two FET institutions had to a certain degree the necessary physical and human resources to deliver the learnerships. However, the respondents of both institutions expressed concern that they were doing a service in both the learnership and the NATED programmes which was somewhat burdensome. Comment was also made around the issue of the physical and human resources that had to be shared between the two programmes. A learnership programme as is currently offered by an FET institution does put pressure on staff allocation and time tabling and, comment was made around the lack of occupationally qualified accredited staff to serve as coaches and assessors. Fears around too strict monetary procedures were expressed when it came to spending money on procurement of equipment. It was felt that to obtain money for procurement purposes was somewhat problematic due to bureaucracy and, that too many people are involved. The matters relating to the budgets were not transparent and that there was often confusion between the campus budget and the learnership budget.

It was apparent that the logbook served a dual purpose in terms of training and assessment. It was a monitoring instrument to check whether training was done as was agreed upon in the service level agreement, i.e., job relevant training, also whether assessments were done according to the assessment plan and schedule.

The logbook also served as some sort of backup in the event that the learner's portfolio of evidence (POE) was lost.

Continuous assessment principles were adhered to as was explained by most respondents. They referred to the unit standards with its specific outcomes and assessment criteria, which dictate continuous assessments and work relevant training. One respondent of institution P referred to an assessment plan or schedule, which is adhered to during the learnership period.

The literature speaks about a learnership as a qualification on the NQF and that it adheres to the OBE principles of continuous assessment. *The relationship between assessment in the classroom and the workplace is a key issue in learnerships, particularly where integrated models of training have been adopted which is referred to as structured learning and assessment (Bloch, 1996).*

Most respondents agreed that partnerships with other organisations and companies are vital and serve multiple purposes. It affords the learner the opportunity to get work-related training as dictated by the unit standards, companies can make use of college assessors to do their assessments and colleges can make use of company facilities for training. Partnerships build capacity and mobilise resources and expertise.

Comment was made about the clashes that occur between the learnership programme and the other skills programmes. Concerns relating to the facilitation of *both the learnership and other skills programmes were raised. However, some respondents did not regard the learnership programme as having a negative effect on the use of or sharing of facilities as they do combine classes, which they refer to as 'classing up'.*

Most respondents recognised the importance of having a well functioning administrative system. This recognition was based on the fact that a learnership generates a lot of paperwork and is dependent on an administration system that will assist staff in monitoring and keeping track of learner achievements and rotation from college to the workplace. Another lesson that was learned during the KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Learnership Project was the importance of managing the learner monitoring

process. Davies & Farquharson (2004:193) state that one of the dimensions of learner monitoring includes the monitoring of individual learners (which includes a *learner administration system*).

Most of the respondents of institution R agreed that their quality management system facilitated the education and training process and that it also explained in a step-by-step method, the manner in which procedures must be followed. However, the quality management system of institution P that mainly consisted of the assessment and moderation policies was cause for concern. A good quality management system provides integrity to the administration of the learnership and makes it possible to keep track of all the paperwork that a learnership generates.

While most respondents agreed that there is a learner support structure in place at their respective institutions, there were some serious issues facing the learners. What is still not clear is the type or nature of the support that must be given to learners in the learnership programme. A learner support system is vital as learners come from various backgrounds with a multiple of social and financial challenges.

Comment was also made around how colleges had little control over the recruitment and selection process and that most companies did their recruitment and selection very selectively, thus ensuring that they recruited and selected only those students who had the aptitude for the field of the learnership. Learners also had to be medically and physically fit.

The throughput rate of the learners in the learnership is more than ninety percent due to the fact that the majority of the learners were company employees. *The learners were well disciplined, more mature, dedicated and committed.* Respondents expressed concern around the issue of the strict recruitment and selection process of companies and that the criteria and instruments used were different to those of the colleges.

Concern was expressed around the ineffective communication and reporting structures in place and that the interpersonal relationships of personnel might also contribute to inefficient communication. While some respondents did mention using

e-mail, memos and the telephone, others were not connected via the e-mail and internet. Learnerships employ various stakeholders, who need to network with one another to ensure that the project runs smoothly and meets its deadlines, hence, the concerns around the importance of having a good communication structure.

Comment was made around the long delays between the ordering and receiving of goods. Restrictions in terms of the number of learners that can be taken into the learnership programme were another concern expressed by some respondents. The lack of physical infrastructure and human resources, restricted the number of learners that could be accommodated. Salaries for contract staff were another concern as well as the shortages of suitably qualified staff.

Many respondents expressed concern that the learnership systems are inadequate and need improvement. Also issues like proper infrastructure, human resources, budgets, and proper reporting and communication structures need consideration. A change in attitude with regard to learnerships is required from certain personnel at the FET institutions so that more staff support the learnership programmes, which are currently viewed in a negative light. One of the key lessons learned during the KwaZulu-Natal Pilot Learnership Project was the need to identify and consult with key stakeholders at the outset. As Brendan Pearce, CEO of MERSETA has observed: "One of the most important elements of a learnership succeeding in a company is to have buy-in from all parties before the learnership commences" (cited in de Jager *et al.*, 2002:5).

5.3 Recommendations

Further Education and Training colleges have been mandated to offer learnerships as a model of workplace training. Learnership offering is new to FET colleges and as the empirical findings indicate, its staff have little understanding of the dynamics of the issues that govern and regulate learnerships. Davies and Farquharson (2004:182), warn that learnerships tend to be implemented in multiple stakeholder environments and similarly according to De Jager *et al.* (2002:6) learnerships are best managed as a project at various levels. The researchers are thus referring to the composition of bodies/groups with various functions or roles, which has to be managed. These are pertinent questions and a workshop or conference, involving the relevant SETAs, workplace providers, unions, the DoL, DoE

and the FET colleges, at which these questions could be explored, is an important recommendation. An understanding of the whole process of implementation of a learnership, what needs to be in place and key phases of the implementation process would certainly be a benefit to the FET college.

The question then is: *if learnerships are best managed as a project at various levels as suggested by the literature, should the need to identify and consult with key stakeholders at the outset not be adhered to?* A 'stakeholder mapping' exercise with the purpose of identifying who should be involved and what their roles should be, must be attempted.

The learnership offering at the college is subject to an accreditation process. This means that in order to implement the learnership, colleges must have policies and procedures relating to the budget and the procurement processes and must have the necessary infrastructure in terms of both human and physical resources in place prior to implementation.

The college management needs to examine *what causes the long turn-around time between ordering and receiving of goods.* It could well be that the procurement structure is right, but those who perform certain roles within the structure may not be performing optimally, for example, those staff members who are charged with overseeing the procurement. I recommended that their competence, supervision and training in specific tasks be considered.

It is imperative that the human and physical resources are adequate for learnership delivery. Although the accreditation process calls for suitable physical resources such as workshops fitted with the relative tools and accessories, the management must examine ways of controlling and auditing the workshop equipment and facilities. Perhaps the practical implementation of policies and procedures are found to be difficult.

The issue around obtaining suitably qualified staff to function in the learnership is a matter that needs to be examined by the relative college management. Many of the staff in the learnership programme is on contract. This might be a destabilising factor, which could be the reason for high staff turnover and needs to be investigated.

There is a need for a more permanent contract for learnership staff, coupled with an industry related salary package.

The college offers in most cases both the mainstream programmes that are accredited by the Department of Education as well as learnerships. The college management needs to investigate clashes that often occur between these programmes. There is often sharing of resources such as classes and workshops. The respective HOD's in terms of scheduling and the allocation of resources should closely examine the programming of these two offerings. Often there is an overlap of subjects and the same staff member may be used to facilitate the subject thus an attempt should be made to combine the groups or classes. In this case space and resources will be optimally used. To prevent clashing of these two programmes in terms of competing for space and human resources, the programmes should be separated. For example, there should be dedicated workshops and staff for the learnership programme to make the management thereof easier.

Learnerships, which are delivered in the OBE mode often generate much paperwork. All evidence of written tests and tasks that are completed by learners must be organised in portfolios. Hence, a good and well functioning administration for the management of a learnership is imperative. De Jager *et al.* (2002:16) have identified the following administrative systems that are needed to facilitate proper learnership monitoring: recruitment and selection; tracking of learner achievements; tracking of learner rotation; monitoring and managing of budgets; and, financing systems during the learnership's implementation. The importance of managing the learner monitoring process is also a lesson learned from the KwaZulu-Natal Learnership Pilot project. It is essential that before learnership implementation and the management thereof occur, Davies and Farquharson (2004:182) suggest that adequate resources, including staff that is trained to use the systems are made available.

The learners engaged in a learnership come from various communities and backgrounds. The concern is that stakeholders should be involved in the recruitment and selection process. The communities where these learners live should be involved in the recruitment and selection process. Davies and Farquharson (2004:182) refer to learnerships that are by definition, 'stakeholder-rich' interventions. They require

participation from a variety of stakeholders. The college should have a say in the recruitment and selection of learners who could ultimately be employed. Companies use their own criteria and instruments when engaging in the recruitment and selection of the learners who are employed by them.

An important characteristic of a learnership is its integration of 'on- the-job' and 'off-the-job' learning and assessment. For the effective co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training, researchers suggest an effective communication strategy. It is recommended that: communication channels are set up; LMC should also decide on the documentation flow as well as define distribution procedures and agree on *communication procedures from the LMC to other participants in the implementation*, or to external structures or persons. This communication strategy needs to be examined by the college management. It could well be the right structure to link the college as the education provider and the company as the workplace provider. It is essential for the L M C at the college to link and have proper reporting structures to the external structures (de Jager *et al.*, 2002: 9).

5.4 Project management for education and training providers

According to the literature, skills legislation and empirical evidence, education and training providers like FET colleges must manage the time, cost, quality, risks, resources, communication and procurement of skills development projects like *learnerships*. Hence, the *Project Management Body of Knowledge* or *PMBok* was investigated as these knowledge areas emerge as the most effective principles for FET colleges to improve the management of learnerships. Project management principles mention that **costing** the learnership project is imperative before beginning the project. The cost of time, effort and resources must be budgeted.

FET colleges must achieve **quality** standards of performance in learnership projects. They should promote excellence and quality in the learnerships. This requires proper accreditation of the FET colleges to provide job relevant training and continuous assessment.

Human resources must be allocated and managed throughout the learnership project. *Effective training providers (FET colleges)* are those that value

human resources as assets who need guidance, maintenance and support in order to prevent risks to the project or people. **Risk** management is necessary for unforeseen crisis interventions, especially with regard to learnership implementation teams. Risks must be identified, controlled, minimised and eliminated for the learnership project to be successful. Therefore, **procurement** of key staff, resources and contracts for the project must be carefully considered prior to the learnership. Planning of how, when and what the administrators will record and report must be completed and approved before the beginning of the learnership project. The **communications** department ensures proper collection and dissemination of project information through communications planning, information distribution, performance, *reporting and administrative closure*.

FET colleges employing project management to manage learnerships elude crises caused by poor management. Learnership project managers must integrate sound management strategies, inputs, mechanisms, tools, techniques and outputs in their skills management roles. Finally, this study provides evidence that college staff must map their roles and responsibilities, have infrastructure in place and interact systematically with multiple stakeholders to ensure structured learning and assessment and effective monitoring of learners through an administration system.

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APPENDIX 1

EDUCATOR COVERING LETTER

**MANAGING A FITTING AND TURNING LEARNERSHIP AT A FET INSTITUTION
IN THE WESTERN CAPE.**

Dear Educator

I am currently conducting research in managing a fitting and turning learnership at a FET institution in the Western Cape.

It is the intention of this study to determine the effectiveness of the institution in managing a fitting and turning learnership, its limitation and how to improve managing a fitting and turning learnership. With this information it is hoped to put in place a management framework for managing a fitting and turning learnership

With the above mentioned in mind, I wish to invite you to participate in this study by allowing me to interview you. I wish to assure you that your input will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and that you will be given feed of the results of this study.

Thank you for your co-operation and your time.

Yours in Education

.....

Gerald Vollenhoven (M Ed Student-201070928)

APPENDIX 2

Mr. Gerald Vollenhoven
49 Gemsbok Avenue
Lotus River
7941

14 November 2006

Dr. Ronald Cornelissen
Research Unit
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X 9114
Cape Town
8000

Dear Sir

I am a registered M Ed student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The title of my research is "MANAGING A FITTING AND TURNING LEARNERSHIP AT A FET INSTITUTION IN THE WESTERN CAPE". I hereby request permission to conduct my research at two FET colleges. The research will entail collecting data via interviews.

The following respondents will feature in the research:

- Learnership managers
- Campus managers
- Lecturers involved in learnerships
- Learnership support staff

It is my intention to conduct my research during February and March 2007 should permission be granted.

I hope that this application will be considered favourably.

Yours in education

G. Vollenhoven.

APPENDIX 3

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

**MANAGING A FITTING AND TURNING LEARNER SHIP AT A FET INSTITUTION
IN THE WESTERN CAPE.**

You are hereby invited to participate in this study with regard to managing a learnership.

I.....(full name and surname- please print) hereby give consent for data collection from me by means of an interview to be used in this study. I have been informed that permission to conduct the research has been obtained from WCED.

I am aware that I may refuse to participate in the interview or have it taped/video recorded.

The purpose of this study has been explained in the covering letter. My participation is voluntary and I may refrain from answering any or all of the questions with which I feel uncomfortable. I have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime if I so wish. Information gathered from this study will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used to protect the respondent's identity.

I am assured that the information will be used for research purposes only and that there is no risk on my part for participating in this study.

(Participant's signature)

(Place) (Date)

APPENDIX 4

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Is there a learnership management committee/team and what are the functions of the learnership management committee?
2. Is there a learnership co-ordinator and what is his/her role in the learnership?
3. Is there a learnership administrator? What is his/her role?
4. What role do you play in this learnership?
5. Does the institution have SETA required training policies and procedures in place? Please elaborate?
6. Do you have the physical and human resources to be able to run the learnership?
7. Is there a policy on budget and finance and how is it monitored and managed?
8. Are you an accredited assessor/mentor/coach?
9. Do the learners use logbooks?
10. How effective is your institution in terms of job relevant training and continuous assessment?
11. What is the nature of your partnership and collaborations with industry?
12. Do the other skills programmes offered at the college affect the delivery and management of the learnership?
13. Do you have an administration system in place to manage the Fitting and Turning learnership? What is the function of the administration system?
14. Do you have a quality management system in place? Please elaborate?
15. Do you have a learner support structure in place?
16. Was there a recruitment and selection process followed?
17. How effective was your throughput rate of the learnership?
18. Do you have a communication structure in terms of reporting?
19. What are the limitations facing the institution to manage the fitting and turning learnership?
20. What must be done to improve the management of the learnership?