An exploration into the synergy between the experiences and perceptions of students and inclusive education discourse within a Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape

by

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DECLARATION

By submitting this research report electronically, I, Adèle Bianca Ebrahim, declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences and perceptions of students enrolled in an inclusive Further Education and Training College in South Africa. A qualitative, phenomenological design using interviews was found to be the most suitable approach to data production that would allow for the examination of feelings and perceptions around students' inclusion. The guiding questions for the study were:

1.   What are the day-to-day experiences and expectations of students enrolled at one Further Education and Training college in the Western Cape?

2.   What feelings and perceptions are generated by these experiences and expectations?

The data was analysed using a constant comparative method of analysis in order to accentuate the meanings that student experiences held for them. Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Theory has been used to describe the way different systems and structures influence the development of students. Through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, students' needs are examined, revealing what their perceptions of inclusion are.

The findings have indicated that while institutional intentions might express details of what is deemed to be inclusive, students' experiences and voices are

often not taken into consideration, with the result that full inclusion is not achieved.

Key words:

Inclusion

Further Education and Training Colleges

Barriers to Learning

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DPSA	Disabled People South Africa
EFA	Education for All
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NCSNET	National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NSDS III	Nation Skills Development Strategy
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
POLP	Primary Open Learning Pathways Trust
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Recent legislation in South Africa has changed education considerably, particularly in the move towards inclusive education (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2010:3), which is in contrast with previous educational provision in the country. As in many countries, students with learning barriers were assigned to segregated settings (Sukhraj-Ely, 2010:15), but current educational trends mandate that, in South Africa, all children and youth should have access to education, irrespective of their ability (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2010:4).

While the new legislation may have addressed what has been called special needs education, barriers to learning and inclusive education in different contexts, the issue has been an integral part of the post-apartheid education development.

Following years of oppression and discrimination, there was much enthusiasm around government-driven initiatives to investigate and institute new policies and legislation in education (Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001:309). The education section of the Bill of Rights in South Africa's Constitution states that '*all learners have a right to basic education including adult basic education and further education*' (South Africa, 1996:29).

While the an intention of the bill of rights in South Africa was to provide for the end of segregation between education and training, which could be attained by integrating academic and vocational curricula aimed at preparing students for the world of work (Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath, and 2005:116), its implementation had other implications. The Bill of Rights envisaged an education and training system that would encompass all students, including those with barriers to learning.

White Paper 6 (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001) was intended to address the issue of students with barriers to learning, but its application was, nationally, inconsistent. The inconsistency in application was partly due to legislation not following White Paper 6 and partly due to philosophical changes within what was generally referred to as barriers to learning in 1994 and inclusive education by 2004. These two concepts are however not synonymous as will be seen in this section. Barriers to learning is a concept which in recent inclusion discourse has been used to replace the historical term, special educational needs, because the latter is limited to the understanding that students might not function as expected in schools because of inherent deficits. Inclusive Education, on the other hand, is an umbrella term that encapsulates special educational needs as it acknowledges that students learning can be hindered by both intrinsic and extrinsic issues. The concept of barriers to learning is therefore more consistent with the philosophy of inclusion that advocates acceptance and acknowledgement of diversity and difference among learners and the environments within which learners operate. Support for human beings within

their contexts is the key intention of inclusive education (Stubbs, 2008; Sayed *et al.,* 2007).

One Further Education and Training College located in the Western Cape developed an office for Inclusive Education with the aim of broadening access to education for those with disabilities and other barriers to learning. This study investigates the synergy between (i) inclusion and (ii) experiences and perceptions of students within that Further Education and Training College.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the study, the research design and methodology and concludes with a chapter outline. In order to understand the rationale behind this study, this chapter reflects the problem statement, the research questions as well as the significance of this study.

1.2   INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DISCOURSE

The terms inclusion, barriers to learning, special needs, remedial education and disabilities feature prominently in the literature that seeks to make sense of the product and process of inclusive education. Inclusion is a broad social justice philosophy that informs debates on who should be included in different spheres of life, for example in education what we could call inclusive education.

Dreyer (2008) cites Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, (1997) and indicates that inclusive education refers to a broad philosophical and principled position in

relation to the educational rights of all children, which includes students with learning difficulties. Dreyer further argues that within the South African context, inclusive education relates to the Bill of Rights that commits us to creating access to and provision of a process of education which is appropriate to the needs of all children (Dreyer, 2008:20). Inclusive education therefore focuses on supporting all students, educators and the system, to address the full range of learning needs. Mittler (2000: 10) further contends that inclusion implies a radical reform of the college in terms of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of students. This means that inclusive education amounts to much more than the physical placement of students experiencing barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms (Dreyer, 2008; Lomofsky and Lazarus, 2001 and Booth *et al.,* 2002). Ultimately, as emphasied in this study, inclusive education is aimed at overcoming barriers within the system and the support systems alike, to help all students achieve their full potential.

As a philosophy, Inclusive Education focuses on the match between the student and the learning environment. CSIE (2000) defines inclusion as the greatest degree of match or fit between learners' requirements and the provision that is made for them. Furthermore, inclusion means making unified efforts between all systems in order to accommodate diverse learner needs at a college. With the help of lecturers and parents who understand learner profiling, the student can adapt the information to understand their own strengths and weaknesses (Kalenga and Fourie, 2011:31). Ainscow and Sandhill (2010: 402) assert that the aim of inclusion is to eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and

ability. In other words, inclusion fosters respect for diversity at large. As a result, inclusive education stems from the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. From this perspective, extending the social justice dialogue, inclusion refers to diversity as a concept, rather than reducing it to categories of differences (Ainscow and Sandhill 2010: 402).

Inclusive Education has different contextual meanings. A broad review of the literature indicates that there are as many meanings and varied definitions of inclusion as there are people from different theoretical fields such as humanities and social sciences who are interested in this concept. Inclusion, according to the Salamanca Statement for Action of 1994 (UNESCO, 1994), recognizes and responds to the diverse needs of students and accommodates all students, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. The framework formed at Salamanca also sought to encourage states to provide a continuum of support services to espouse the development of inclusive institutions of learning (UNESCO, 1994:6). Engelbrecht, *et.al* (1999) describes Inclusive Education as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. On the other hand, Cheminais (2001) notes that inclusion is about creating a sense of community and belonging by encouraging mainstream and special schools to come together to support each other in their efforts to provide for the needs of special children. In this thesis, unless stated otherwise as, *inclusion* is used to refer to the unified efforts between all systems in order to accommodate and support diverse student needs in their educational environment.

For the purpose of this study, Inclusive Education means that all students, including students experiencing barriers to learning, should have access to and participate in the education system, and is in line with the definition used by the Education in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

A distinction is drawn between mainstreaming and inclusion. Education White Paper 6 (2001) explains that mainstreaming focuses on getting learners to fit into a system and to give extra support to those learners so that they can fit into the existing system. Therefore, according to the Department of Education (2001) mainstreaming deals with changes that takes place within the students to make them fit in, whilst inclusion focuses on overcoming systemic barriers that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs.

It must be noted that a broad range of learning needs exists among a student population at any point in time, and that where these are not met, students may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system. Education White Paper 6 acknowledges that different learning needs arise from a range of factors including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psycho-social disturbances, and differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation, which all act as barriers to effective learning (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001:7). According to Booth *et al.* (2000: 92) the term "barriers to learning" was taken up in discussion documents of UNESCO, where it is suggested that it be used to replace the term "special educational needs". In this study, barriers to learning

are those learning breakdowns that may occur as a result of factors emanating from within the student the education system as a whole or the wider society.

Barriers to learning are seen to result from pervasive social conditions and attitudes, inappropriate education policies, unhelpful family or school conditions, or a classroom situation that does not match the learning needs of a particular student (Booth, 2000; Engelbrecht*, et. al*, 1999; Hays, 2009). The description differs from the medical model definition, which locates special education needs within the learner and while ignoring learning barriers that result from learners' contexts or their surrounding social environments (Dreyer, 2008).

In this study, *barriers to learning* refer to learning breakdowns that may occur as a result of factors emanating from within the learner, within the education system as a whole or from within the wider society. It is acknowledged by the Department of Education (2001) that a broad range of learning needs exists among learners at any given time and when those needs are not met a barrier to learning might arise. Barriers to learning may arise because of physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psychosocial disturbances, and differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation (Department of Education, 2001: 17).   The Department of Education (2001:18) also acknowledges that a barrier to learning might arise due to negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences, an inflexible curriculum, inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching, inappropriate communication, inaccessible and unsafe built environment, inappropriate and inadequate support services, inadequate policies

and legislation, the non-recognition and involvement of parents and inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and lecturers.

In contrast to *Inclusive Education* and the notion of *barriers to learning*, special needs education is based on the premise that education is provided to learners with special needs in a separate school. The student is assessed, diagnosed and labelled. The focus is on the student and on 'fixing' the student. The student is removed from the context and the support is rendered outside of the context in which the challenge occurs. The student is later allowed to re-enter mainstream education if found to fit in with other "normal" students. This contradicts the Inclusive Education approach which welcomes all learners into the same school recognizing their similarities instead of focusing on the differences.

Inclusive Education is intended to support the individuals and the education system to ensure the provision of quality education to all. Naicker (2006) adds that *Special Education* theory is primarily concerned with students who experience learning breakdown. This implies that any breakdown was caused by innate deficits resulting in a diagnosis with a label. In other words these notions of special needs suggest that the individual is second-rate and the disability justifies the exclusion of learners from the mainstream classroom. In support of this notion, Landsberg, *et al.* (2008) defines *Special Needs Education* as a system that responds to children's "special" characteristics and needs. Consequently, *special education* is generally defined in terms of a disability, learning difficulty, handicap or a combination of these (Farrell, 2000; Hay, 2003). Therefore, it seems that to function in the broader society, students with any of

these afflictions are deemed dysfunctional, in need of exclusion from the mainstream and need to be "fixed". Thomas (2002) avers that disability is a commonplace term which means not being able to do something. This term refers to people with impairments as disabled and signals that they belong to that group of people who cannot engage in normal activities because of their abnormal bodily or intellectual deficit or incapacity. The implication here again is that because of their disabilities, persons are excluded from the mainstream and need to be mended. As a result of this point of view, remedial education came to be.

According to Clark, *et al*. (1997) remedial education is based on the assumption that it is possible to correct deficits within the individual pupil through limited interventions in a context where the curriculum itself remained essentially unchanged. Further, it is based on individualized programming based on the specific needs of the learner. Again, the implication that the deficit is inherent to the student and therefore such students are in need of fixing.

One of the main categories of people who were and are subjected to special and / or remedial education practices are those with disabilities which are physical or cognitive in nature. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), disability is an umbrella term, which covers impairments, limitations in activities and restrictions in participation (WHO, 2012). I*mpairments* are a problem in bodily function or structure while *activity limitation*s are difficulties encountered by an individual while performing tasks or actions. The WHO defines *participation restrictions* as problems experienced by individuals in life situations. Disability is

a multifaceted phenomenon, which reflects the interaction between the features of a person's physical being and the features of the society in which he or she lives (WHO, 2012).

This study looks at students enrolled a Further Education and Training College and uses the abovementioned concepts as lens through which to understand their daily, lived experiences. There is a focus on understanding what systems interact in order to support the diverse needs of students, regardless of their inherent abilities, disabilities or barriers to learning.

1.3   BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In 2001 the South African Department of Education introduced Education White Paper 6. This was a draft policy document that required the revision of pre-existing education policies and legislation so that students who are experiencing physical, cognitive and sensorial barriers to learning could be provided for within the mainstream education system in South Africa (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001:10). Triggering the development of Education White Paper 6 was an argument that special needs education was an element of South African education where the depredation of the apartheid era remained most apparent (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001:9).

Education White Paper 6 suggests a model for inclusion that focuses on: (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001:55)

1.　　Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;

2.　　Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all students;

3.　　Acknowledging and respecting differences in students, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases;

4.　　Broadening formal schooling and acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures;

5.　　Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environments to meet the needs of all students.

6.　Maximizing the participation of all students in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimizing barriers to learning. (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001:55)

While Education Paper 6 appears to focus on the needs of students with disabilities, its intention was to align South African education with developing inclusive education practices in other countries (Stofile, 2008:2). The introduction of White Paper 6, furthermore, correlated directly with the worldwide call for inclusion in order to bring the benefits of education to "every citizen in every society" (UNESCO, 1990; 1994).

Inclusive education practices are not limited to students with learning barriers. It has been argued that inclusive education provides a necessary platform for collaboration across a range of constituencies who are marginalized or excluded from education. Apple *et al*, (2009: 178) argues that "inclusion" includes, but is not limited to students of colour, students who are economically disadvantaged, students who speak a different language, students who are of different sexual orientations or refugee or immigrant students. It is therefore argued that inclusive education is aimed at identifying and dismantling education and social exclusion for all students.

Studies by D'Alonzo, *et al.* (1998), Salend and Dunhaney (1999) and Clark (2008) have shown that when students with barriers to learning, especially those with disabilities are placed in mainstream education courses, all students benefit from heterogeneous grouping and learning. Considering the pressures from international human rights groups such as the United Nations as well as the current legislative climate in the country, it appears to be imperative that South African educational institutions and colleges answer to the international call for education for all citizens. This would allow for an enhanced educational experience for educators and students with and without barriers to learning.

The involvement of Further Education and Training Colleges with the inclusive education movement can be linked to the education department's alignment with millennium development goals. With the intention of meeting targets set by the Millennium Development Goals, all education institutions falling under the National Department of Education, including Further Education and Training

Colleges, were tasked with addressing barriers to learning (South Africa. Department of Education, 2001:22).

Within the Further Education and Training sector the implementation of inclusive practices implies that consideration be given to more than the cognitive side of teaching and learning. Eradicating barriers to learning would mean that elements such as social climate, physical environment and affective environment should receive favorable attention. By addressing issues such as social climate, affective environment and physical environment, colleges will be able to positively influence the perceptions and experiences of all their students, thereby challenging educational and social exclusion (South Africa. Department of Education, 2007).

Educational experiences are influenced by various factors, including school climate, which refers to the feelings those within schools have about the culture of the school. However, in this study we are interested in students' perceptions and experiences around what the college is doing in order to include them. Implementation of Education White Paper 6 in the Further Education and Training sector would mean that this sector has to make more of a concerted effort in supporting all its students, particularly those who experience barriers to learning. The need for this kind of provision becomes crucial since it seems to be the case that the majority of learners who enter Further Education and Training Colleges do so with the assumption that the colleges are alternative means of education for people who could not cope with the demands of traditional curriculum in mainstream schools. This is evidenced by the view of

Bengu (1994) who indicated that apart from the sheer scale and complexity of the Further Education and Training system, its importance stems from the fact that students are situated at the cross–roads between General Education and Training, entry to Higher Education and the world of work. As such, Further Education and Training is an important allocator of life chances and provides both initial and second-chance opportunities to young people and adults.

1.4   PROBLEM STATEMENT

 This study explores the problem of students' experiences on how their needs of are met within one Further Education and Training institution. The study proceeds with assumption that even in the absence of special needs, students could still experience barriers to learning. The problem is explored by examining their perceptions and experiences.

Given that students who enroll at Further Education and Training Colleges include those who are attempting to enter the system for the second time, those that might not have succeeded in mainstream education and adults who have perhaps not had access to education previously, the needs of these students are far-reaching. These needs may include elements of cognitive or socio-emotional support, counseling, career guidance, understanding of diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and ability, as well as other barriers which may impede the students' ability to learn.

In order to establish the degree of synergy between (i) inclusive discourse and (ii) experiences and perceptions of students within the Further Education and Training College, this study poses the following questions:

1.   What are the day-to-day experiences and perceptions of students enrolled at one Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape?

2.   What feelings and perceptions are generated by these experiences and perceptions?

Exploring the abovementioned questions through listening to the voices of the students currently enrolled at one Further Education and Training College, this study uncovers key markers of successful inclusive education practices within a Further Education and Training College in the South African context.

1.5   IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

This study strongly considers the perspective of the students and contends that Further Education and Training institutions are service providers and these students are its clients. As such, the needs of these students have to be carefully considered and met to ensure that they are able to become successfully skilled. Besides being successfully skilled, it is important that the learning experience is meaningful and relevant to the students. Because emphasis is placed on what the students' experiences are, regardless of the legislative or

educational climate in which they find themselves, the study provides an indication of student experiences, not those intended by legislation or institutional planning.

Moreover, the training of people with barriers to learning, and specific, work related, disabilities, in practical skills has become increasingly important. With the legislative policies such as the Employment Equity Act (South Africa. Department of Labour, 1995) and the Integrated National Disability Strategy (South Africa, 1997), the thrust towards employing people with disabilities in South Africa is increasing and educational institutions are tasked with implementing training opportunities for people with disabilities that result in exclusion from the labour market. The National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS) states, *"Despite commitments from NSDS I and II to increase opportunities for the training and skills development for persons with disabilities, we are still far from achieving our goals in this regard. Therefore, NSDS III aims to significantly open up opportunities for skills training for people experiencing barriers to employment caused by various forms of physical and intellectual disability"* (South Africa. Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010: 9). As such, this study provides an indication of organisational challenges to be met when students with learning barriers and disabilities are included in a mainstream educational institution.

In order to acquire decent employment, people with disabilities need to have an education. In a knowledge-based society, this is a key ingredient if people with disabilities are going to have a competitive advantage (ILO, 2007:121).

Marketable skills are also important, however, many people with disabilities do not have the same access as persons without disability to basic education and thereafter skills training and therefore the acquisition of such necessary skills is challenging (ILO, 2007:11). This study provides an indication of challenges faced by learners with learning barriers and disabilities who desire vocational education that is perceived by them to be real and normal.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research Design

A qualitative framework was utilised in this study. As the basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community, the process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the inquirer generating meaning from the data collected in the field (Creswell, 2003, Neuman 2006).

The research approach utilized in this study is predominantly phenomenological, as it involves work with individuals that are making sense of their life worlds. In a qualitative research paradigm, as opposed to a quantitative research framework, meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world that they are interpreting (Creswell, 2003:10). Likewise, Merriam (2009:5) indicates that qualitative research is concerned with how people interpret their experiences; construct their worlds and what meanings they ascribe to their experiences.   Creswell (2003:17) describes phenomenological research as

research in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Groenewald (2004:5) asserts that the aim of phenomenological researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, while refraining from any pre-given framework but remaining true to the facts. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:121) indicate that phenomenological research involves research with a clear focus on understanding the meaning that events have for persons being studied. It is not uncommon for phenomenological research to be experiential and qualitative.

Using a phenomenological research approach therefore allows the researcher to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive narrative of it and to analyze the meanings within the context of its occurrence.

1.6.2   Participants in the Study

The population from which the sample was chosen is students who are studying towards business qualifications at one Further Education and Training College in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town in the Western Cape. The college was targeted for reasons of practicality and accessibility by the researcher. A non-probability or purposive sample of learners (Neuman, 2006:222) was identified by the researcher and students that matched the sample frame were recruited to participate in the study. The criteria for selection included students from each year of study of a three-year business qualification. The rationale behind these criteria is that all students would have the same or similar experience of the

academic curriculum and the demands thereof. Additionally, the researcher was interested in seeing if there were differences in the experiences of students from when they first entered college as opposed to having engaged with this environment for a period of time. Such a sampling strategy was appropriate as some of the participants have an apparent or obvious barrier to learning such language, disability or learning difficulty.

These participants were chosen from various levels of the National Certificate (Vocational) programme. This programme is a three year qualification in which, on completion, the students will achieve a level 4 qualification on the National Qualifications Framework. This level of qualification is equivalent to Grade 12, which is attained at secondary educational institutions. The minimum entry requirement into this National Certificate programme is a Grade 9 pass. This entrance criterion allows learners to enter straight from conventional schools, special schools (who incidentally often only continue up to Grade 9) and learners who may have left school years earlier and now enter colleges as adults. Because of the broad base of learners who have the option to enter Further Education and Training Colleges, the need for different types of support is significant.

Although the sample is small, if judged from a quantitative perspective, the reason for the research and the methodology used were to attain qualitative depth. Qualitative depth is invariably achieved at the expense of sample breadth.

1.6.3   Data production and analysis

A qualitative framework was utilised in this study.   In a qualitative research paradigm, as opposed to a quantitative research framework, meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world that they are interpreting (Creswell, 2003:10).   Likewise, Merriam (2009:5) indicates that qualitative research is concerned how people interpret their experiences; construct their worlds and what meanings they ascribe to their experiences.   It is not uncommon for qualitative researchers to use open-ended questions, which allows participants to express their views (Creswell, 2003:10).   As humans engage with their world and make sense of it, based on their historical and social perspective-because we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture, qualitative researchers, according to Creswell (2003), seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally.   Qualitative researchers also make an interpretation of what they find which, are shaped by the researchers' own, experiences and background.

The questions posed in this study refer to students' experiences and perceptions.   Interviews were determined to be the most suitable method of data production in this study that would allow for the examination of feelings and opinions around students' inclusion.   Kvale (1996:4) indicates that at the most basic level, interviews are conversations. Qualitative research interviews are in essence attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to explore the meaning of peoples' experiences and to delve into their lived world prior to scientific explanations.

Data was then coded by means of the constant comparative method and analyzed by means of thematic data analysis. The process of comparison allows the researcher to look at what makes a piece of data different and/or similar to other pieces of data. Constant comparative method is inductive as data is critically examined and new meanings are drawn from the data.

1.7   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One provides a general overview of the study. This chapter has highlighted the need to establish how Further Education and Training Colleges are able to accommodate students with barriers to learning, given the diversity of students within that context.

In Chapter Two, a review of the literature is carried out with the aim of locating ideal inclusive practices for Further Education and Training Colleges. In addition, the chapter provides a framework for interpreting the findings of the study.

Chapter Three presents the method employed in conducting this study. The chapter makes clear that in seeking to understand how inclusion is implemented, it is necessary to garner people's perceptions around inclusion. As such, a qualitative research design employed to investigate the opinions and experiences of students who are enrolled at a Further Education and Training College.

The fourth chapter presents the findings and the initial analysis of the data collected.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, offers an interpretation of the findings in light of the literature reviewed. Thereafter, the conclusions in respect of theory and practice, the scope and limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are presented.

1.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a brief overview of the rationale for this study and presented the key research questions being investigated in this study. It also introduced the problem of this study that explores the notion of Inclusive Education in Further Education and Training Colleges. More specifically, this chapter has highlighted the need for the notion of inclusion to become ubiquitous in college, since they serve a population consisting of wide and diverse learning needs. This will in turn lead to all students having equal chances to access economic independence in the vocational stream of their choice and not those streams imposed upon them based on what may be perceived to be their deficits. The next chapter presents a review of the literature around inclusive practices and the ramifications that these practices have for educational institutions. Chapter Two also conceptualises the importance of including students with disabilities in Further Education and Training Colleges.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the synergy between (i) inclusive education discourse and (ii) experiences and perceptions of some students within a Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape. This is carried out by exploring and analysing the day-to-day experiences of students who are enrolled at a Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape. Through uncovering the student experiences, it is believed that they will indicate whether or not there is synergy, between some conceptualisation of inclusion and the practices of the college where the students are enrolled. In this sense, the researcher set out to develop an understanding of the extent and nature of the interplay between student experiences and perceptions and the notion of inclusion in the context of a particular Further Education and Training College.

The literature review in this chapter was carried out in order to contextualise this study. According to Henning (2004:29), a review of literature allows the researcher to embark on a process of constant reflection and consideration of the research in its entirety and the theoretical implications thereof. Alternatively, Neuman (2006:111) proposes that it is preferable to ascertain information from existing research on what is already known about a question before trying to answer it oneself.

2.2   CHAPTER ORGANISATION

Considering that this study seeks to establish the extent and nature of the interplay between student experiences and perceptions and the notion of inclusion in the context of Further Education and Training Colleges, this chapter presents a review of literature in three parts. Section 2.3 examines literature around Further Education and Training Colleges in general. In this section the following questions are posed:

- What attributes do students at Further Education and Training Colleges possess?
- What are perceptions of college students and the wider society around Further Education and Training Colleges?

Institutional cultures, student experiences and inclusive education are explored in section 2.4. This exploration is carried out in order understand how institutional culture and climate impacts upon student experiences. The first question guiding this section is "What constitutes an institutional culture and climate and how does this impact upon student experiences?" The second question that guides this section is "What developments in the South African education system necessitate inclusion in Further Education and Training Colleges?" Section 2.5 explicates, identifies and analyses inclusionary models. This section makes clear the importance of the successful interaction between students and their learning environment in order for inclusion to be deemed successful.

2.3 FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section seeks to briefly outline the development and nature of Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa as well as to look more closely at the students who enrol at these educational institutions. As indicated above, it is necessary to unravel who Further Education and Training College students are in order to establish a link between their attributes and a need for inclusive practices. Societal perceptions about Further Education and Training Colleges are also examined in order to uncover ways in which such perceptions could point out barriers to learning. The latter has been carried out because these perceptions themselves could act as barriers to learning to those who choose to enrol at Further Education and Training Colleges.

2.3.1 Brief Overview of Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa.

The task of building skills and knowledge at an intermediate level in education has historically been the appointed curriculum responsibility of technical colleges (Gamble, 2003:1). The National Education Policy Act and Further Education and Training Colleges Act: National Plan for Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa of 2008 states that up until 1995, the vocational and technical component of the education system consisted of 152 technical colleges located in various education departments (FET Act, 2008). The 152 technical colleges were governed, managed and funded in different ways and served different

population groups. The location of these institutions was determined by apartheid policies of separate development. Post 1994, the system that was envisaged to address the vocational and training needs of the country was characterised by a specific identity and legislative sphere of operation. It also had to be responsive to the needs of the South African society as well as be cognisant of the demands of the economic sectors. Most importantly, it had to be accessible to economically active youth and adults who found themselves outside of the school system and who wished to improve their skills, gain access to jobs or to progress to higher education. As such, the 152 technical colleges merged into 50 Further Education and Training Colleges spread across 263 campuses around the country (Gewer, 2010).

Presently, Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa are described as institutions that provide further education and training in all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from Levels 2 to 4 on the National Qualifications Framework. These levels are above General Education (from entry level to Grade 9) but below Higher Education (post-secondary school) (South Africa, 2008:3).

Having briefly described the development of Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa, I now turn to focus on those who choose to attend these educational institutions.

2.3.2.   Students at Further Education and Training Colleges.

The largest and growing pool of potential students identified by the National Plan for Further Education and Training Colleges is the unemployed, out-of-school youth, who are 16 to 24 years of age, and who exit the school system with less than a National Qualifications Framework Level 4 qualification (Cloete, 2009:11) Given the fact that some, if not the majority, of college students are in a sense drop-outs from mainstream high schools, there is an implication that they need high levels of support against factors and barriers that could have pushed them out of schools in the first place. According to an HSRC review (Panday and Arends, 2008); data on the reasons for 'drop-out' are limited. However, the available information proposes that there are high levels of grade repetition and low achievement because of a lack of remedial programmes. These elements contribute to "pushing" students out of the system. Additionally, it is suggested that the poor quality of interaction between teachers and students also contributes to students exiting the system. According to Cloete (2009:13), approximately 1 million young people leave school at Grade 10 level, without completing their final two years of schooling. The reality of these students not completing their schooling leaves them particularly at the risk of not finding employment. Such individuals require multiple 'second chance' schooling opportunities to be made available to them. In such instances, Further Education and Training Colleges provide learning opportunities for these 'second chance' students to complete their schooling.

Colleges seem to attract students who require alternative pathways to gainful employment and who may need additional support, for example, learning

assistance and/or financial aid or emotional support. McCleary-Jones (2008:14) postulates that college education is the avenue utilised by many students to begin their pursuit for higher education. Furthermore, students who experience barriers to learning of a scholastic nature at times turn to colleges for their educational needs (McCleary-Jones, 2008:14) as there is some assumption that Further Education and Training Colleges are an easier alternative. Given the fact that some programmes are intellectually more demanding (e.g. engineering courses), learners who have not coped with academic demands of mainstream high school and hope for an easier pathway in the education system by enrolling at colleges also indicates inherent difficulties such a group of learners might experience in the Further Education and Training College setting. The South African Schools Act of 1996 makes provision for students with barriers to learning and development. The Act emphasises that all students have a right to be admitted to all educational institutions and should not be discriminated against in any way (South Africa. Schools Act, 1996:4). The college setting therefore has to be proactive in meeting the needs of a diverse group of learners, some of whom could not cope with schooling demands of schools they attended prior to entering Further Education and Training Colleges.

The other perspective on barriers to learning that students enter Further Education and Training College with is presented by Papier (2009) and Lomofsky (2001). The two authors allude to the fact that students who attend Further Education and Training Colleges emanate from previously disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds, where possibly there could have been a dearth of access to basic services such as health and education. As

such, students could present with a host of developmental, health and social issues, which impede their ability to learn. Some of these impediments or barriers could be related to chronic health issues, disability, behavioural mal-adaptation, economic deprivation, abuse, language and culture. In order to meet the expectations of students, especially those who present with one or more of these barriers, colleges will have to look toward providing and implementing support structures to ensure that these students succeed. At present there are more students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds given the financial backing government and established for those entering colleges (Education South Africa, 2012:22). Such support could consist of, for example, counsellors, allied health professionals, social workers, language specialists, interpreters, among others. Some of these professionals have already been recommended by the Department of Education in the Education White Paper 6 (2001).

Further Education and Training College students are usually between the ages of 16 years and 19 years of age at the time of their first admission. At this age group, these students can be broadly categorised as young adults. What motivates students to enrol at Further Education and Training Colleges is the desire to improve their standard of living, obtain a good job, fulfil their dreams, to make a success of their future and to work on their careers and become something in life Papier (2009:24). It has been observed that students have internalised their aspirations for success but what remains unknown at this point is whether students experience Further Education and Training Colleges as enabling environments in which they are able to succeed.

Young and Gamble (2006:20) note that the envisaged role of Further Education and Training College, is (i) to provide a way for young people to stay in the education system; (ii) to provide secondary education for a far wider range of learners for which the existing systems were designed; (iii) to meet the needs of the economy and (iv) appear to be combating unemployment. However, these students have appeared to have a specific set of needs, which include the need for a second-chance to be part of the education system and as such it needs to be established what pushed them out of the system initially. These elements make clear that there is a need for a well thought out support system that will in turn enhance student experiences and their chances of acquiring skills for better citizenry.

2.3.3   Conceptions around Further Education and Training Colleges.

The concept of a "college" has different meanings in different countries. For example, in the United States of America, a college is an institution that awards degrees and it refers to the first phase of post-school study (www.theinternationalman. com/universities- colleges-schools.php).   These institutions allow their students to exit at the end of their course of study with Bachelor's degrees in various disciplines.   Students are also afforded the opportunity to pursue postgraduate degrees should they wish to do so. However, in countries such as South Africa, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Canada, 'college' refers to an institution awarding trade qualifications (www.theinternationalman. com/universities- colleges-schools.php).

In recent times, much emphasis has been placed on the Further Education and Training Colleges. An article published in the Mail & Guardian in early 2012 indicates that College is definitely a second-choice option for students despite the fact that it provides very real employment opportunities. This article indicates that one factor that discourages students from studying at Further Education and Training Colleges is their poor reputation. Another factor discouraging students from opting to study at Further Education and Training Colleges is the poor pathway of movement between high school, Further Education and Training Colleges and universities (http://mg.co.za/).

This negative perception about colleges has resulted in a critical shortage of artisan and mid-level skills in South Africa. The department has had to contend with a general public perception of Further Education and Training Colleges as being sub-par institutions when compared to universities. While the Department of Education acknowledges that Further Education and Training Colleges are perceived to be "mainly weak institutions"; which at their present capacity, can "neither absorb significantly larger numbers of students nor achieve acceptable levels of throughput and that success of the National Certificate (vocational) offered by FET colleges is "generally poor" and only 4% of the class that started the certificate in 2007 completed the qualification in 2009, he believes that colleges still have a role to play in terms of training artisans (http://www.news24.com).

The negative views about Further Education and Training colleges that are held by mainstream society, governmental structures, other educational institutions and perhaps students themselves affects the experiences of students who are

enrolled at such colleges. These negative views can have a ripple effect as their level of confidence is impacted up and therefore negatively influence their desire to excel. Negative views could act as barriers to learning as students may internalise a sense of inferiority and which could impact upon their willingness to achieve or succeed in this environment. Negative views may also manifest in the way that colleges may be perceived to only suit students who are academically sub-par and this has a negative effect on the way society at large may view the student who enrols at a Further Education and Training College. In terms of support, it would be vital that these negative perceptions be challenged by structures within the college itself. These perceptions can be negated by colleges becoming institutions which pride themselves on excellence in terms of service delivery, student support and student success. Additionally, support structures could be put in place which support student growth and development, so that students, regardless of their diversity, feel accepted and feel able to achieve success.

While it is essential that Further Education and Training Colleges increase their responsiveness to the needs of their local economies and communities, the department of higher education has acknowledged that even though South Africa is a country committed to the equality of all, too many still suffer unfair exclusion. The department of higher education indicated that that they are committed to ending all form of discrimination in the Further Education and Training sector, including in colleges. Six forms of exclusion have been identified which too often compound to create insurmountable barriers for many. These have been listed as class, race, gender, age and disability (http://www.pmg.org.za/)

Given that these forms of exclusion have been identified as barriers to learning, in addition to the poor perception that colleges have in the minds of society it stands to reason that a well thought out and comprehensive system of support which is based on the premise of inclusion, would be a meaningful concept in the landscape of Further Education and Training Colleges. In the next section, I examine what inclusion could mean for students whose learning and development are hindered by these barriers.

2.3.4   Known barriers to learning in Further Education and Training College Sector.

In a similar manner to the rest of the schooling sector in South Africa, students in Further Education and Training Colleges are faced with a myriad of barriers to learning. On one hand are those barriers which are innate to the student, such as physical or cognitive difficulties and on the other hand there are barriers which emanate from the education system at large.   Notwithstanding, barriers emanating from socio-economic factors are singled as out the most rife of barriers to learning, as revealed by Lomofsky and Lazurus (2001) and Kalenga and Fourie (2011). A major challenge is the effective management of [students] with diverse needs who are being referred back to mainstream educational institutions as these still do not have 'specialised services' as promised by the Department of Education (Kalenga and Fourie, 2011).

 Barriers to learning and development that resulted in learning breakdown in impecunious communities are found to be poverty and lack of access to basic

services. In South Africa, socio-economic factors are singled out, as these factors exacerbate of other kinds of barriers. This is not surprising given that previous research (POLP Research Team, 1998) alludes to 'developmentally normal children who are born in environmentally unhealthy circumstances' as a key factor for intrinsic barriers to learning like chronic illnesses and disabilities in South Africa which place the students at risk (Lomofosky and Lazarus, 2001:311).

Furthermore, prejudice on the basis of class, race, gender, culture, language, religion and disability results in negative attitudes becoming barriers when directed towards students in the education system (Lomofosky and Lazarus, 2001:312). The inflexible curricula, which can lead to learning breakdown, has also been identified as a barrier. Owing to the level of irrelevance of the subject content, lack of appropriate materials and resources and a dearth of assistive devices, teaching often does not allow for variations in individual differences (Lomofosky and Lazarus, 2001:312).

With the abolishment of apartheid laws and the introduction of the new South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 and White Paper 6 of 2001, all students regardless of race, culture, language and gender have been given the right to attend any Further Education and Training College of their choice. It is therefore implied that there are far more students who will have the chance of selecting and attending a Further Education and Training College of their choice. The Department of Education aims to have 1 million students enrolled at Further Education and Training Colleges nationally, by the year 2014 (Taylor, 2011:42). This aim means that there will be a more diverse range of students who will want

to access an education sector that may not be adequately prepared to accommodate their diverse range of needs. The inability to support these diverse needs could lead to the development of a myriad of barriers to learning for students who enter this sector of the education system.

The minimum entrance requirement into National Certificate (Vocational) programmes at Further Education and Training Colleges is the successful completion of the Grade 9 curriculum from the General Education and Training band (Umalusi 2009:9). With such a basic pre-requisite and level of knowledge as an entry requirement, it may be the case that students entering Further Education and Training Colleges to pursue vocationally-oriented qualifications lack a basic understanding around the vocation and it is this that poses the greatest barrier to learning and development. For example, with Grade 9 as an entry requirement for students, there is a possibility that some students would not be able to cope with the highly specific nature of the curriculum of some courses, which could include mathematical and scientific knowledge. The barrier in this instance is the lack of prior knowledge that students would need to possess in order to cope with the demands of their chosen courses. This is essentially a systemic barrier and not necessarily inherent in prospective students.

The South African Department of Basic Education indicates that in 2009, the Public Further Education and Training sector catered for 420 475 students nationally (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2010:27). In the Western Cape, six multi-campus Further Education and Training Colleges,

catered for 50 510 students (South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2010:27). These 50 510 students were taught by 882 lecturers. The student–lecturer ratio was 57:1. The large student–lecturer ratio implies that lecturers are placed under enormous stress and have to manage large workloads. A survey conducted at the end of 2009 reveals that lecturers have difficulty in dealing with the diverse groupings of students who are enrolled at colleges (Papier, 2009:34-36). In addition to dealing with over-crowded classrooms, a huge workload, students with varying levels of ability and disability; the new Further Education and Training College entry requirements mean that lecturers also have to deal with the fact that students' ages range between 16 and 35 years. The wide range of student ages could impose a new set of classroom management challenges for lecturers who are used to dealing with older and more mature students.

A barrier, which is evident here, is mainly systemic in nature as there are high numbers of students taught by lecturers who do not necessarily have a background and training in teaching. Some difficulties which could arise out of this situation content is not taught in a manner that is easily accessible to students; students who operate on different cognitive levels may miss out or be bored by what is being taught to them and lecturers may be overwhelmed by trying manage the demands of the curriculum while maintaining discipline in the classroom. This exemplifies Shulman's theorisation that [lecturers] who lack pedagogic content knowledge but are well grounded in content knowledge may themselves some barriers to learning. (Shulman, 1986:8)

The literature describes several ways in which colleges could assuage barriers to learning that are found in such settings. A study conducted by the University of Sydney found that for students with little prior knowledge in a domain, bridging courses offer an efficient and cost-effective way to help students to address any deficiencies in their prior knowledge (Youl, Read, George and Schmid, 2006). It was found that bridging courses afforded students the opportunity to gain an improved understanding of the material studied, as well as improved confidence and enhanced academic self-efficacy. This in turn contributed to improved student engagement and thus an improved experience for students (Youl, et al, 2006). Additionally, students can perhaps be allowed to complete the course over an extended period, which will allow them to concentrate on the gaps in their knowledge. Such strategies have to be part of the daily operation of institution in order for it to have a meaningful effect on student experiences and success. In this light, it is necessary to look at the institutional practices that allow such strategies to exist. The concept of culture and climate are discussed in many works of literature as key complimentary elements that beget and influence a host of results in institutions of learning. I now turn to look at the effect of institutional culture and climate on student experiences.

2.4.   INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Research has shown that experiences of people in educational institutions are largely influenced by institutional culture. Institutional Culture can be described as the collective behaviour of humans that are part of an institution or

organization (Stover, 2005). As such, organizational culture affects the way people and groups interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders. A number of variables are regarded as key in defining the culture of any organisation. These are values, visions, norms, working language, systems, and symbols and includes beliefs and habits of the members of the organization. This section highlights the specific prerequisite conditions or culture that should be present in the educational institution, such as a Further Education and Training College, which could in turn render such an institution as inclusive.

2.4.1   Culture and Climate.

The terms 'climate' and 'culture' are sometimes used interchangeably, but researchers in the field aver that there is any important difference between the two. Stover (2005) believes that how students and staff members feel about their [educational institution] is climate and why they feel the way they do is determined by culture in the [educational institution].   Culture refers to shared ideas like assumptions, values, feelings, experiences and beliefs that give an [educational institution] its identity and standard for expected behaviours while climate encapsulates feelings, opinions and attitudes members of a school community have about their school as a result of the culture of such a school.

Another lens through which we could make further sense of the importance of culture and climate is by borrowing from Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Thinking Theory. His theory defines four types of systems, which contain roles, norms, and rules that shape development of individuals. Bronfenbrenner proposes that

human development is responsive to relationships formed within a complex set of interconnected environments minimally involving home, school, and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). These concepts are particularly relevant for educators and other adults participating in classroom social networks because they are part of the ecological niche and therefore have a responsibility to manage classroom social dynamics appropriately. (Garrison-Wade and Lehmann, 2009:418)

Charland (2011:5) postulate that Bronfenbrenner's theory contributes to our understanding of education by identifying the contextual forces that delineate the contours of cultural knowledge and influence its propagation. Bronfenbrenner's model of the cultural ecosystem can be represented by the interface of levels of influence, from the societal at the macrosystem level, to the individual at the microsystem level (Charland, 2011:5). The culture of an educational institution is the result of a complex, ongoing negotiation of elements from each level of the cultural ecosystem. These elements include the overarching ideas about the role of education in society at the macrosystem level, policy, curricula and standards at the exosystem level, learning expectations and teaching practices at the mesosystem level, and lecturers' personal understandings of identity and mission at the microsystem level. (Charland, 2011:5). An educational institution's distinctive culture can be characterized by the dynamic interaction of students' and lecturers' microsystem understandings and mesosystem relationships, functioning within the opportunities and restrictions of the exosystem and macrosystem (Charland, 2011:5).

Institutional and classroom culture have been shown to impact upon student experiences. Tableman and Herron (2004) in a publication they wrote for Michigan State University Best Practice Brief indicate that attention needs to be given to the different environments within an institution. These environments are the physical environment, the social environment, the affective environment and the academic environment. At a broad level, these environments can be likened to Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Theory as all these environments impact on students by either supporting or impeding student experiences Kalenga and Fourie, 2011) and could in turn be influenced by students. In a physical environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning, learning is supported by the fact that students feel safe and comfortable, classrooms are inviting and that are enough resources available. Should the physical environment be inauspicious, students may find themselves in an environment that is unsafe, disorganised and unwelcoming.

The social environment of an organisation should promote interaction and communication between students and lecturers as well as between students themselves. When decisions are made in a unilateral manner, conflict arises which causes students to self-segregate and which causes lecturers to become isolated from each other. This segregation and isolation does not encourage interaction or communication and therefore can have a negative effect on the students' experience. Additionally, the affective environment should promote as sense of belonging for both students and lecturers. An environment that promotes a sense of belonging for all is open to diversity and all members of the institution feel valued and respected. In such an environment, learning is

supported because interactions between staff and students are responsive, supportive and respectful and as a result students develop a sense of belonging and a strong sense of self-esteem.

Finally, Tableman and Herron (2004) are of the opinion that the academic environment should encourage self-fulfilment. While all types of competencies and abilities of students are supported, the emphasis is on academics and expectations are high for all students, regardless of whether these students experience barriers to learning. Importantly, teaching methods respect and respond to the different ways in which students learn and therefore lecturers could use assessments to improve their methods instead of repeating the same cycle of failure.

It must be remembered, like Bronfenbrenner's systems, the various aspects of institutional climate do not operate independently and each environment can encourage or discourage another. However, collectively, the physical, social, academic and affective environment ultimately influences the students' experience.

With respect to inclusive education, it must be remembered that this concept is concerned with *all* students, with a focus on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2001; Lomofsky 2001; Maher, 2007). The particular needs of students, even if they are considerable, must be taken into account in all environments and systems with which the student comes into contact. Ainscow, (2010:404) postulates that the principal's

leadership and attention to quality of instruction, a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus; an orderly and safe environment which is conducive to teaching and learning are the main features of institutional cultures where successful inclusion practices exist. Moreover, Ainscow suggests that it is important that teacher behaviours convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery (1991:4).   These concepts of climate and culture have an impact on the behaviour of both the students and educators. By directing the climate and culture of a classroom towards inclusion and acceptance, all students regardless of their barriers will develop a sense of belonging

In terms of the broader educational institution, Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) indicate that the features of an inclusive institutional culture include inclusive leadership, a broad view of school community, and shared language and values. These elements combine to create an environment in which inclusion is not merely a program model, but a way of thinking. Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) found that in this inclusive culture, students are not intruders that needed to be integrated into the educational institution's community because they already belonged (Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu, 1999:172).

Institutional and classroom culture can therefore be understood to be vitally important in Further Education and Training classrooms as this culture has a great impact on the experiences which students may or may not have. However, it appears that for educational institutions to embark on fostering inclusive

classrooms with positive climates, the organisation as a whole needs to adopt a positive attitude towards positive and effective teaching strategies. This implies that institutions would need to have a vested interest in empowering their educators in terms of effective teaching strategies, for example, which would encourage positive teacher dispositions. As a result, learning and teaching will be a positive experience for both students and lecturers.

In terms of institutional inclusivity, it has become clear that there needs to be quite a lot of interplay between governing legislation as well as the stakeholders of an educational institution such as a Further Education and Training College. It requires that educational institutions implement a focus on the positive values of acceptance, equality, and respect for all students, while legislation provides support to institutions in terms of providing support and training in pedagogical methods in order to better differentiate their approaches to teaching.

Literature that is examined is largely borrowed from what the rest of the world is saying about student experiences. The following section will look at the generic experiences of students who are transitioning from a regimented school-like environment into an environment where there is more freedom of choice and where training is directed at a specific objective such as attaining a specific skill. The underlying aim for the section is to examine more closely previous research and other literature on the link between institutional cultures and student experiences

2.4.2   Student experiences and institutional culture.

It is important that a study by Keup (2007) investigates the experiences of college students who were transitioning from high school to college. The major experiences that are uncovered in Keup's study include an increase in the frequency and depth of interpersonal relationships.   These relationships are characterised by the social interaction envisaged by being part of college student organizations and other social gatherings. In addition to their experiences with respect to interpersonal relationships in college, these students allude to issues related to personal growth and development and articulate clear ideas about how they had changed during the time of study at college (Keup, 2007:13). Keup found that the emerging theme with the highest frequency under the topic of personal development is independence. Keup finds though, that freedom and independence are far more frequently discussed within the context of personal choices and social relationships than in reference to their academic pursuits. This implies that for young people, although college education is important in terms of academic achievement, college allows them the space and time to develop themselves.

Experiences of independence at college level is also linked to the realisation that the completion of college-level subject-matter requires much more self-discipline, initiative and personal responsibility than required by classes at high school. Adjusting to enhanced freedom with respect to academics proves to be more difficult for students than managing their personal choices and independence in a social setting, especially in light of the fact that they do not take full advantage of professors as an academic resource during their transition to college.

Choosing courses, arranging a study schedule, meeting the demands of various classes and motivating themselves to attend class were some of the specific challenges discussed by students. These challenges imply that students at college level, especially younger students, require specialised support in order to improve their academic performance.

Specialised support can take the form of career guidance and assistance in choosing the correct courses, on course support in terms of remedial intervention and general life skill development in terms of developing their sense of responsibility and accountability. It needs to be remembered that in the current structure of Further Education and Training Colleges, students are following courses that are vocationally oriented at the age where their peers are still involved in rigorous and structured environments such as schools. In essence, Further Education and Training Colleges expect adolescents to behave like adults and treat them as such without adequate support for the students. It should be expected that the disparity between institutional expectations of its students and what the students expect of the college experience will impact on student success rates.

Students who enter Further Education and Training Colleges are required to undergo placement tests indicating their level of reading, writing and mathematical skills. However, students do not have to demonstrate critical thinking skills or skills that relate directly to their course of choice. There are several reasons for entering Further Education and Training Colleges, some of which relate to the fact that some students struggle with the content load in

mainstream classrooms and therefore are unable to cope with an academic course. A benefit of Further Education and Training College courses is that the subjects are not school-based but career orientated.   Additionally, practical training is cheaper than various other higher education training options such as university (Gewer, 2010:14).

Some of the reasons mentioned above are exactly the reasons why student success rates are affected in Further Education and Training Colleges (Papier, 2009). Difficulties experienced by students who are attending Further Education and Training Colleges include academic, social, socio-economic and personal problems. Many students struggle particularly with the social aspect of adapting to college life: having to make new friends, taking responsibility for their studies and understanding the college system.   Academically, most learners report problems with the workload at hand. Students also report that that they find the courses difficult and there are many complaints about lecturers who do not prepare adequately and are unable explain the subject matter (Papier, 2009:26). The implication is that these issues impact negatively on student motivation and may be the cause of the low rates of student academic success reported by colleges thus far.

Success in assisting students to discover their unique motivations is dependent on the educational institutions' capacity to assist the students in buying in to the culture of that institution, with learning itself and with the faculty and with their peers. (Boroch et al, 2010). It is through a process of being part of a particular institutional culture that students can discover motivation that can lead them to

use learning to achieve their goals and this motivation can certainly have an impact, whether positive or negative, on their daily experiences. The challenge of achieving participation of the part of students is most effectively met at college where programmes and services are integrated across disciplines as opposed to fragmented silos with all staff focussed on the mission of student success. For example, the college could assimilate career guidance and work placement experiences with theory that students learn in class. Furthermore, student support services could be acknowledged by management and teaching staff as a critical component to student involvement in the teaching and learning process. Such integration leads to the discovery of motivation, which leads to success in basic skills and to achievement in college and ultimately a step towards self-actualisation (Boroch et al, 2010). I propose that classroom and institutional culture is intrinsically linked to student experiences and that one variable, in a sense, claims causation over the other.

In *Toward a Psychology of Being (1962:31)*, Maslow defines self-actualization as the "ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities and talents, as fulfilment of mission (or call, fate, destiny, or vocation)." It is, "a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person's own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend toward unity, integration or synergy within the person." Maslow (1962) states that self-actualization stresses full-humanness and that it is the "ongoing" process by which the unique potential of each individual is realized.

Burchardt (2004:181) espouses that young people's aspirations, including those of '*being*' and '*belonging*', are critical ingredients for academic achievement and

for occupational outcomes later in life. While Burchardt does not discount the importance of skills, qualification and experience, he argues that self-belief and encouragement are equally important (2004:181). It is found that having a positive assessment of future activities or occupations is associated with wanting to stay in education. With respect to Further Education and Training Colleges, it is critical to take cognisance of what such institutions can do to support students' aspirations. One suggestion is that Further Education and Training Colleges need to incorporate into their process of marketing, the notion that they are providers of education not for those who would not succeed elsewhere but for a necessary calibre of people. Further Education and Training Colleges should be seen to produce economically competent and entrepreneurial trades-men and women who are essential ingredients for the development of South Africa's economy. As such, there seems to be a need in Further Education and Training Colleges to improve their inclusive practices to not only focus on physical access but to provide various types of support for those who are being accepted to be enrolled at these educational institutions in order for all students to have access to quality education.

Providing support for the diverse needs of students is indicative of an institutional culture of acceptance and belief in the potential of its students. This in turn can perhaps be utilised as a predictor of student experiences. It has come to light that when educational institutions adopt a culture of acceptance and support for diversity that many systemic barriers to learning are immediately eradicated, allowing students the opportunity to grow and develop their individual potentials.

2.5 MODELS OF INCLUSION

This section of the literature review now looks at various models of inclusion that are commonly utilised in post-secondary institutions as a way of influencing student experiences positively.   Although there are multiple definitions of inclusion, it is commonly taken to mean that (i) educational institutions accept the rights of **all** students to enrol and to receive education and to be treated with respect; (ii) to have dignity and independence to access a fair share of available general and special education resources and (iii) not to be directly or indirectly discriminated against (Mitchell, 2000:330).   Moreover, inclusion means that educational institutions reduce barriers to learning by underpinning their practices with a philosophy of providing quality education for **all** students (South Africa, Department of Education, 2001).   Such a philosophy would recognise, and respond to the diversity of student needs, accommodate students' styles and rates of learning and ensure the equality of educational opportunities through appropriate curricula and use of resources (Mitchell:2000:330). Embracing the above definition of inclusion means that institutional policies and practices aim to adopt a whole organisation approach with regard to students with disabilities, students without disabilities, lecturers, curricula and the school system in general.

2.5.1   Service Delivery Models.

Hafner (2008) expounds upon five distinct types of inclusionary practices that are utilised.   These are termed (a) substantially separate, (b) mixed or hybrid, (c)

independent inclusive supports, (d) use of Support Services and (d) transition partnerships using duel enrolments with school districts. It was found that a mixed method of service delivery was predominantly utilised on college campuses in the United States, while there was a move away from the use of substantially separate programmes for students with barriers to learning. In terms of these separate programmes, it was found that colleges offered a 'college-like' experience that consisted of separate academic programmes from other college students (Hafner, 2008:29).   In this classification, students with barriers, like disabilities participate only in classes with other students with disabilities. Other characteristics of the substantially separate model are that programmes for students with disabilities are separate from the course of study offered to other students; students with disabilities do not follow a typical college student schedule; students may not typically interact with peers without disabilities and studies may not result in recognised certificates. However, given that inclusion is defined as the practice of educating students with barriers to learning alongside their peers, this model does not meet the criteria of post-secondary inclusion (Hafner, 2008:30).

The model most used by inclusive programmes in colleges is a *mixed* model or a *hybrid* approach to education, which comprises a combination of integrated courses of study as well as substantially separate programmes for students with more severe barriers to learning. Hafner (2008) cites Schmidt (2005) and indicates that this model allows students with and without disabilities to participate in social activities together and that the collage places a greater emphasis on having students with disabilities participating in regular college

academic courses (Hafner, 2008:32). According to Stodden and Whelley (2004), in this approach students with disabilities interact within the typical student body. This model seems to closely meet the criteria mentioned in the definition of inclusion where all students have the opportunity to access and participate in all services available to students.

In the South African context, models of support offered by Higher Education Institutions seem to mirror a hybrid approach where the notion of inclusion is made manifest as support for barriers to learning. Furthermore, it is recognised that students come into learning institutions with diverse needs and backgrounds and therefore the inclusionary practices do not only focus on enhancing the student experience for those with disabilities only.

Prinsloo (2001:344) offers a background to the development of inclusion in South Africa and asserts that the new constitution of South Africa emphasizes respect for the rights of all with a special emphasis on the recognition of diversity. Recognition of diversity implies an inclusive approach to education in the sense that all learners are entitled to appropriate education in an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Prinsloo, 2001:344). This view supports the notion that inclusion is ensuring the provision of educational experiences to all individuals who experience barriers to learning and development. Furthermore, it is clear that inclusion is about acknowledging and catering for diversity by all educational institutions including Further Education and Training Colleges.

However, Prinsloo (2001:345) iterates that students with barriers include those with barriers of physical and intellectual disability as well as students with barriers caused by economic and emotional deprivation. In addition, South African students experience barriers caused by social exclusion. According to the report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) (South Africa, 1997), students' whose education requires additional planning and modifications in order to assist them to learn are described as those students who are experiencing barriers to learning (South Africa,1997).

Factors which were conceptualised as barriers to learning and development are those that lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, leading to learning breakdown or preventing learners from accessing educational provision (Naiker, 2006:4 and Lomofsky and Lazurus, 2001:310). The challenge is to minimise, remove and prevent barriers to learning and development and thereby assist the education system to become more responsive to the diverse needs of the student population. Barriers may be located within the student, within the centre of learning or school, within the educational system and/or within the broader social, economic and political context (Naicker, 2006:4; Lomofsky and Lazurus, 2001:310).   This approach seems to mirror the mixed/ hybrid model mentioned in the literature and emphasises integration of all students, regardless of the barriers that they may face.

Kalenga and Fourie (2011) propose an eco-systemic approach to Inclusive Education (2011:30). These authors suggest that an eco-systemic perspective

on Inclusive Education is that individuals and groups at various levels of the social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent and interacting relationships (Kalenga and Fourie, 2011:30). Because of the interrelationship between the parts, an action in one part of a system cannot be seen as the cause for action in another part in a simple, one-directional way. Actions are seen as triggering and affecting one another in a cyclical, often repeated manner. Canham, Cole and Lauenroth (2000) explain this interrelationship by alluding the fact that a [student] with a barrier to learning exists within a larger grouping of their peers and any change without considering the peer system could lead to negative side effects. Conversely, knowledge about the peer system can aid in the selection of student interventions. Kalenga and Fourie are of the opinion that Inclusive Education needs to be considered in relation to the systems theories because then Inclusive Education would then be to contribute towards the development of an Inclusive Society and social integration, where all citizens are able to achieve their potential, fully participate and function optimally (Kalenga and Fourie. 2011:30).

In the context of Further Education and Training Colleges it could be the case that the over-arching barrier that students face is that they enter the system while lacking the relevant background knowledge for the programmes offered at colleges. The advent of the policy on Inclusion, Education White Paper 6, requires that pre-existing education policies and legislation be revised so that provision for students experiencing physical, cognitive, sensorial and other barriers to learning can be made. In this light, Further Education and Training Colleges appear to have failed to consider all of the abovementioned factors

which impact upon the student's experience of learning and teaching. Despite having undergone significant changes in terms of curricula and governance, it is essential for colleges to consider the needs of their students.

Inclusion in Further Education and Training Colleges will, at the simplest level, mean that students who experience barriers to learning will have access to education and training. At this level, Further Education and Training Colleges have already included students with varying profiles by simply allowing access to a diverse range of individuals. What remains unknown is how students are capacitated to participate meaningfully in their own education and this will only become clear when listening to the voices of these students as they describe their day-to-day experiences.

The South African Further Education and Training Act of 2006 indicates that any attempts at increasing student enrolments at Further Education and Training Colleges must be matched with appropriate access and support systems which effectively increase the access of marginalized students and students who are at risk (South Africa, 2006:35). This implies that the students who experience barriers to learning are entitled to access these Further Education and Training Colleges and therefore should receive the support that is required to achieve academically. Additionally, Further Education and Training Colleges are intended for students in the age group 16 years to 24 years; students who have made an informed decision to enrol at Further Education and Training Colleges and for out-of-school youth and adults, who wish to improve their skills, gain access to better jobs or progress to higher education. It makes sense, therefore,

that Further Education and Training Colleges are a logical choice for students with barriers to learning such as disabilities, who wish to improve their skills and to become economically independent.

Farmakopoulou and Watson's (2003:237) study shows the multifarious position in which the Further Education Sector finds itself in with regard to inclusion. This study emphasises that because of its vocational orientation, Further Education and Training Colleges need to consider very seriously how inclusion can be effective in this particular environment. It is recommended that these institutions be aware that while students enrol for courses to obtain marketable skills, they also enrol in order to enhance their self-worth and to engage with their peers (Farmakopoulou and Watson, 2003:237). This means that the current emphasis on Further Education and Training Colleges to produce students with a significant number of skills and qualifications needs to be contested if these Further Education and Training Colleges fail to consider students' needs in terms of fulfilling their developmental and social goals. Unless changes to structures, cultures and functions of Further Education and Training Colleges are effected, students with barriers to learning, who fail to successfully acquire meaningful skills, will be seen to be at fault and this will then be used as an excuse to deny these students full citizenship and autonomy later in life (Farmakopoulou and Watson, 2003:237).

If we look specifically at disabilities as barriers to learning, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of People with disabilities (United Nations, 2006), which

was ratified by the South African Government in March 2007, highlights success indicators for supporting persons with disabilities as :

- Providing pre-service and in- service training to teachers so that they can respond effectively to diversity in the classroom;

- Adaptation of teacher training syllabuses to include teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms with diverse student populations;

- Revision of national curriculum to make it accessible to all students;

- Revision of testing and evaluation methods to ensure that accommodation is made for students with disabilities;

- Make the teaching of "human rights" principles a part of both the formal school curriculum, and more general school culture to promote respect for the rights of every learner, including students with disabilities;

- Accommodation to assure physical access to the school and classroom– ramps, lifts, other technical supports;

- Assistive technology for communication and other instructional purposes;

- Individual support, on an as- needed basis, from a paraprofessional or peer;

- Appropriate provision of supports such as sign-language interpretation, Braille training and associated equipment and materials, and other individualized supports;

- Teacher and student access to diverse professional expert collaboration to assist with health needs, behaviour challenges and other requirements.

The implications of these suggestions for Further Education and Training Colleges are far-reaching. Budgetary considerations will need to be reviewed in order to provide basic accommodations and specialised support services, lecturers will need to receive training over and above their general teaching and subject-speciality training. Furthermore, examination departments will have to review their methods of assessments. In this regard, assessments could be conducted orally or electronically, allowing students with barriers to learning to utilise assistive devices when completing tests and examinations.

The Further Education and Training College that this study is based upon seems to have, on the surface of it, met most of the above-mentioned criteria. This particular Further Education and Training College is accessible via public transport, efforts have been made to alter the built environment, management have developed policies supporting inclusive education and Further Education and Training College is known to share the lessons they have learned on their journey towards inclusion with other organisations and educational institutions. However, what this list excludes is the measure of what the experiences of students are and whether elements on this list enhance or detract from the students' college experience. This is what this thesis aims to highlight.

2.6   CONCLUSION

It was the intention of this review of literature to uncover how student experiences and perceptions can influence and can be influenced by the

implementation inclusive practices in the delivery of education to students with barriers to learning who enrol at institutions of learning.

The literature that has been reviewed has revealed that inclusion is more likely to be achieved in institutions that create a collaborative context for problem-solving. Salient features of inclusive institutions have been identified and most of these involve institutional buy-in and institutional reform before inclusion can be practiced.

From the point of view of the student, the literature has revealed that inclusion is of benefit to both students with barriers to learning and to those without. Essentially, education is a human right and as such should be equitably accessible to all those who wish to engage with it. It has also been emphasised that there is more to education than the acquisition of skills and the learning experience and meaning is as important as acquiring marketable skills that could make students employable. The background about Further Education and Training College students and systemic issues within the colleges can provide us with ideas of ways in which the colleges can translate themselves into inclusive environments. In the next chapter the research methodology used in this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two provided some theoretical insights into this research and serves as a backdrop to analysing the findings of this research. This chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the study. The way in which data was produced, analysed and categorised is described and the chapter ends with an explanation of ethical considerations. This study utilises an exploratory qualitative design in order to answer the question "*What are the day-to-day experiences and expectations of students enrolled at a Further Education and Training college in the Western Cape?*" Utilising a qualitative approach to the research allows the researcher to attempt to understand people in their own definition of their world. Neuman (2006:159) makes clear that qualitative research is interpretive as it seeks to assign significance or coherent meaning to the data collected. In this way, qualitative research is given meaning, is translated and is made understandable through interpretation. What follows is a description of the way in which data was produced, analysed and categorised.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is located within the qualitative research paradigm, applying methodological approach by making use of a constant comparative data analysis. In a qualitative study meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Creswell, 2003:10). Richie and Lewis (2003:2) cite Denzin and Lincoln and argue that qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. Qualitative research is therefore an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world. A researcher who uses methods associated with the qualitative paradigm studies phenomena in their natural, social settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret them in terms of the meanings that people attribute to such events and behaviours.

This study has relied quite heavily on the views of Maykut and Morehouse (1994), as these authors seem to have specifically focused on the use of small groupings within qualitative studies. Mtsweni (2009:11) refers to Maykut and Morehouse's understanding of qualitative study which brings together a relatively small group of people, characteristically six to eight, to find out what these people feel, think or know about the researchers' focus of inquiry. This is exactly the format that this particular study takes. Moreover, Maykut and Morehouse suggests that the value of qualitative research lies in the ability to explore the richness of the research participants' thoughts, feelings and emotions, which can only be achieve by adopting a relatively flexible approach that captures the

complexities and subjectivity in the narratives of human experience (Thusi, 2006).

Methodologically, in gathering data through interviews qualitative researchers commonly use open-ended questions so that participants can express their views (Creswell, 2003:10). Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspective, because we are humans born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers, according to Creswell (2003) seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also interpret what they find and such an interpretation is shaped by the researchers' own experiences (i.e. literature read, previous study and situations engaged in) and backgrounds (i.e. professional background and field of study from which the research is approached). The basic generation of meaning is always social and arises in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the inquirer generating meaning from the data collected in the field (Creswell, 2003; Neuman 2006).

The methodological approach utilized in this study is predominantly phenomenological. Creswell (2003:17) describes the phenomenological approach as a strategy in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, described by participants in a study.

The emphasis for a phenomenologist, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 28), is that human beings are engaged in making sense of their life worlds.

In this study, the experiences of people who are enrolled as students at a Further Education and Training College are explored. In particular, the phenomenon of inclusion, as its practice is perceived by the experiences of a group of Further Education and Training College students in their particular context are explored. Creswell explains that understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell, 2003:17). As a result, there will be a clear focus on understanding the meaning that events have for persons being studied (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:121).

Research conducted by means of the phenomenological approach is both exploratory and qualitative. Being simultaneously qualitative and exploratory, according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:20), lessens the risk of selecting methods prematurely and is object-centered as opposed to method-centered. Using the phenomenological approach facilitates determination of what an experience means for the people involved. In this study, the phenomenological approach enables the participants to provide a comprehensive narrative of the perceptions of their experiences about life at a Further Education and Training College. Examination of these perceptions allows the researcher to explore the articulation between what institutional intentions indicate should be occurring and

students experience of what practices are actually occurring within the environment in which they find themselves.

When considering the subjects of interest in this study, qualitative research design was an appropriate choice as the sampling was purposive. Participants were carefully selected so that the possibility of variability common in any social phenomenon will be represented in the data, as recommended by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:45). In this instance, although the participants are all enrolled in similar courses at the same college and even on the same campus, their experiences might differ and this is what is referred to by variability.

In this study the specific interest was in understanding the students' experiences in a particular context, and therefore operated from the notion of "human as instrument" (Maykut and Morehouse: 1994:46). By using this approach, Maykut and Morehouse propose that the researcher has the responsibility of being the collector of relevant data as well as the determiner of meaning from this data (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:46). The specific focus of this study and my aim to view this phenomenon holistically, allowed participant expression to be the unit of analysis and thus leant itself to qualitative research methods (Denscombe, 2007:249).

This research study collected data from a sample of 6 students captured during one hour interviews. Data was then coded by means of the constant comparative method and analyzed by means of thematic data analysis.

3.3   THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population from which the sample was chosen is students with and without a diagnosed disability or barrier to learning and studying towards business qualifications at the Business Studies Campus of a Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape. The college was selected for reasons of practicality and accessibility by the researcher. A non-probability or purposive sample of learners (Neuman, 2006:222) was identified by the researcher and students that matched the sample frame were recruited to participate in the study.

The sample was purposive in that respondents were chosen from a cohort of volunteers. The students were specifically identified either because they had a diagnosed physical disability or because they did not have a physical or any obvious disability but still utilized college support facilities. Six respondents were chosen from the pool of volunteers. These six respondents were comprised of one student with and one student without a disability, at each of the three levels of study. The students with disability (as their barriers to learning), in this sample, were those diagnosed with either a congenital physical disability or an acquired physical disability. These students were identified through a counseling process. The second group of participants consisted of students who did not have an identified barrier to learning. This group however shared classes with those students who were identified as having barriers to learning.

The participants were chosen from all three levels of the National Certificate (Vocational) programme. This programme is a three year qualification in which, on completion, the students will achieve an NQF level 4 qualifications, which is equivalent to a Grade 12, which is attained at secondary schools.

Although the sample was made up of volunteers, to a great extent the sample was also convenient in this specific context as the researcher had sufficient access to the sample being studied. It is noted that this sort of sample may hinder the external validity of this study however; the results of this study are particularly pertinent to the organization in which this study was done.

3.4   DATA PRODUCTION

Data was collected by means of semi structured interviews. Permission to carry out this study was sought and granted by the Department of Education in the Western Province (Appendix A) as well as the Chief Executive Officer (Appendix B), the Deputy Chief Executive Officer: Innovation and Development, the Student Support Manager and the Campus Head of the College in question. Written permission and informed consent (Appendix C) were also received from the parents and/or guardians of the respondents chosen to participate in the study. Only after consent was obtained and reply slips returned, were interviews conducted.

This study relied on one instrument. This instrument for collection of data was interviews. Semi-structured interviews are often combined with more closed-ended, structured data production formats, such as questionnaires or surveys (King, 2010, Denscombe, 2007, Neuman, 2006). By utilising several data production formats a researcher is able to look at the research question from several viewpoints and thereby verify and validate the research outcomes. However, in this particular study, interviews is the only method of investigation utilised due to the fact that some participants experience barriers or conditions that could have made the requirement of other methods, for example completing questionnaires or surveys, an obstacle. In order to acquire first-hand responses to questions, it was decided that interviews would be conducted face-to-face. The semi-structured interviews gave the perspectives of student with disabilities about being in a general education class as well as the perspectives of non-disabled students about being in a general education class with students with disabilities.

The questions posed in this study refer to students' feelings and perceptions. Interviews were determined to be the most suitable method of data production in this study that would allow for the examination of feelings and perceptions around students' inclusion. Kvale (1996:4) indicates that at the most basic level, interviews are conversations. Qualitative research interviews are in essence attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to explore the meaning of peoples' experiences and to delve into their lived world prior to scientific explanations.

The choice of the semi-structured interview was influenced by the argument that the interview is an appropriate tool for descriptive research (Borg, 1987:110). The intention was to provide a non-threatening opportunity to engage in conversation with the students around their experiences of being a student at a Further Education and Training College.

The interviews were one-on-one and as such elaboration and tangents occurred during the interviewing sessions. A total of six questions were compiled and the initial question attempted to relax the student being interviewed and provided him with the opportunity to talk openly about themselves. The final question was very broad to allow the students to say exactly what they wanted to. The four remaining questions attempted to clarify what I was trying to understand from this specific context. The following interview protocol was utilised in order to guide the interviewer through the interview.

1.   What is your prior experience as a student in LSEN (Students with Special Education Needs) Schools and/or mainstream institutions of learning;

2.   What is your current experience as a student in the current, publicised inclusive environment in terms of the physical, academic and interpersonal/social environment?

3.   What did you expect from college?

4.   What are the challenges and difficulties faced?

5.   What positive experiences have you had?

6.   What would your personal recommendations be to make current or future experiences better?

The questions posed in the interviews were conversational so as to make the respondent feel as relaxed as possible. The language utilised was also of an elementary level that the respondents were able to understand the questions and when necessary, colloquialisms and slang terms were utilised in order to ensure that the respondents fully understood the meaning of the questions.

The students and researcher sat in a quiet room, during the researcher's usual consultation times, which were normally used for counselling, mentoring or problem solving sessions between the occupational therapist and the student, or during intervals. These sessions were used so that class-time was not interrupted. These interviews were recorded on an audio recording device and later transcribed (Appendix D). The researcher also made use of field notes during the interview process and reflected on these field notes during the analysis phase of this study.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews, recorded on an audio-recording device and then transcribed. Data was captured by making

use of the constant comparative method and analysed by means of thematic data analysis.

A constant comparative method of data analysis was used. The Constant Comparative Method (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:126), was originally developed for the use in grounded theory methodology, but has since been applied more widely as a method of analysis in qualitative research. It requires the researcher to take one piece of data (e.g. one interview, one statement or one theme) and compare it to all other pieces of data that are either similar or different. The process of comparison allows the researcher to look at what makes this piece of data different and/or similar to other pieces of data. Constant comparative method is inductive as data is critically examined and new meanings are drawn from the data.

The practical implementation of the constant comparative method involves following two concurrent steps. Firstly, the researcher coded the respondents. As the sample used in this study was small, two students from each year (Y) of study were chosen to participate. The year of study that respondents were completing was demarcated as Y1, Y2 or Y3. Of the two students chosen from each year of study, one respondent had a diagnosed disability, which was demarcated by RD, while the respondent without a diagnosed disability, was demarcated by R.

Once data was coded, the researcher then examined all the transcripts thoroughly and grouped common responses to determine what the common perceptions and ideas were. The responses were tabulated under headings. These headings were broad descriptions of the information provided by the participants.

Following the capturing and coding of data by means of the constant comparative method, thematic data analysis was utilized. One of the central positions of qualitative research pertains to the idea of interpretivism and the notion that we are interpretive in our actions and in our understanding of the actions of others; that we impose meaning on the world; that we inhabit cultural worlds and engage in cultural practices that are defined by shared interpretations (Kasi, 2009:96). In essence it is believed that we do not operate as 'isolated individuals' in our interpretive actions, but share with groups of people, certain interpretations (Kasi, 2009:96).

Once the researcher had familiarized herself with the captured data, responses that looked or felt alike were grouped together. It was assumed that because some responses were more frequent than others that these responses were indicative of the general feeling of the sample.

Captured data was analysed in the following way, which was adapted from Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 135):

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Inductive category coding and simultaneous comparing of │
│              meaning across all categories         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Refinement of Categories              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│         Explorations of Patterns across categories  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │
                        ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Integration of data yielding an understanding of people │
│              and settings being studied.           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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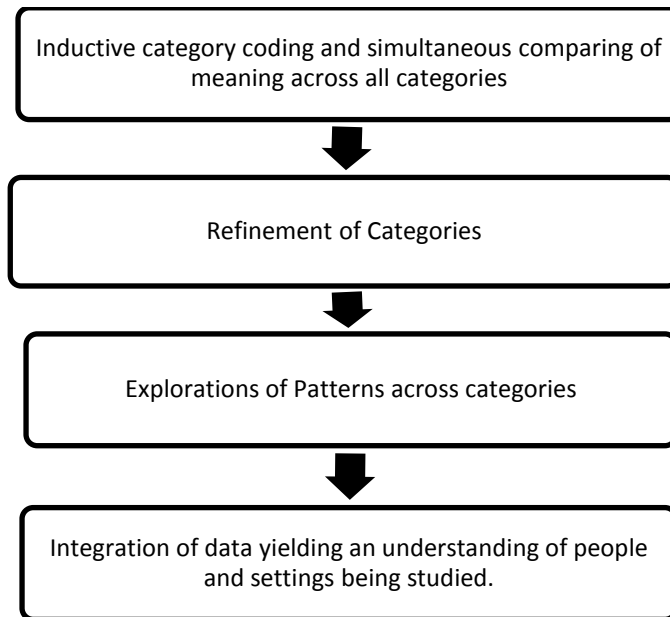
FIGURE 3.1: PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

During the inductive category-coding phase, responses and concepts that recurred and overlapped in the interview transcripts were grouped together. The main ideas reflected by these responses acted as the code. Although the process of deriving important meanings from data required tolerance for the initial ambiguousness of the 'look and feel alike' criteria, this approach was consistently utilised throughout the initial coding process (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:137). For example in response to a question pertaining to their reasons for attending college, students responded by saying that their aim was to finish their schooling. These responses were all grouped together and coded under one category.

Categories, such as positive versus negative experiences and the difficulties faced, were refined by further scrutinising the data to determine whether or not these do actually fit into the initial groupings. Once the classification was refined, propositional statements were examined and it was found that some were more relevant to the study than others were. However, each one of these statements described an element of the phenomenon being studied. These statements were organised thematically, and analysed as such. This constituted the third phase of Maykut and Morehouse's model of analysis.

The final step in the process of analysis was to integrate the data that was yielded. This entailed exploring patterns across categories and inferring meaning from these patterns. For example, where students indicated that they aimed to finish their schooling but faced certain obstacles, it was inferred these students possessed aspirations and were motivated to overcome these obstacles in order to achieve these. Data was written up in such a way that sense could be made of the phenomenon, which was studied.

3.6   ISSUES OF QUALITY

Schurink (2009:788), states that social science research is a systematic and organised process in which enough knowledge or evidence is gained to provide and accurate or truthful representation of a phenomenon under study. An important criterion that qualitative research should meet is that of credibility so that research of high quality is produced. Credibility can be assessed by

evaluating the reliability and validity of the research study. Methods for ascertaining reliability and validity in qualitative research differ from those used in quantitative research. Reliability, according to Neuman (2006:196) is the dependability or consistency of the study. To ensure reliability in qualitative research, an examination of trustworthiness is imperative. According to Neuman (2006:196), the trustworthiness of a study is measured by validity. However, Neuman avers that qualitative researchers are more interested in authenticity than in the idea of a single version of the truth. As such, authenticity refers to giving a fair, honest and balanced account to social life from the viewpoint of someone who lives is it daily (Neuman: 2006:196). Golafshani (2003: 602) is analogous with Neuman and indicates that validity is not a single, fixed or universal concept but rather a contingent construct, which is grounded in the processes and intentions of a particular research project.

Maxwell (1992) noted that trustworthiness is dependent on four types of validity that researchers should aim to apply to qualitative research studies. These types of validity are Descriptive Validity, Interpretive Validity, Theoretical Validity and External Validity.

a) Descriptive validity

Maxwell (1992: 285) states that the first concern of most qualitative researchers is the factual accuracy of their account. In other words, that the presence of phenomena are not made up or distorted. In this study descriptive validity is firstly achieved by ensuring that the sampling frame and resultant sample was

purposive in order to ensure that was meant to be to be studied what studied. Descriptive validity was also maintained by using voice recording so that instances of phenomena could be checked and re-checked as frequently as was necessary. Additionally, these voice recordings were transcribed so that word for word accounts were noted down.

Maxwell (1992:287) explains that descriptive validity can also pertain to statistically descriptive aspects. The author indicates that that a claim that a certain phenomenon is frequent, typical or rare is also subject to descriptive validity. In this case, Maxwell advocates the use of "quasi-statistics", where the occurrence of phenomena are counted to support claims that are inherently quantitative. In this study, these "quasi-statistics" take the form of tables, presented in chapter four, which illustrate the frequency of certain responses.

b)   Interpretive validity

This type of validity refers to the comprehension of phenomena not based on the researchers' perspective and categories, but from those of the participants in the situations studied. Interpretive validity is grounded in the language of the people studied and relies as much as possible on their own words and concepts (Maxwell, 1992:288). This type of validity is achieved in this particular study by using Maykut and Morehouse's process of data analysis, whereby categories are coded according to a "look and feel" alike criterion, based on the responses of the participants and not based on the view of the researcher.

c) Theoretically validity

Theoretical validity refers to the research account's validity as a theory of a phenomenon (Maxwell, 1992:291). In essence, theoretical validity is established by the information, previous theories and postulates with which a researcher builds a model and how this model is applied to the phenomena being studied. This is essentially the theoretical constructions, which a researcher brings to the research, and research in this instance is an explanation (Cohen et al, 2000:135). A theory articulates/formulates a model of relationships as they are postulated to exist between salient variables or concepts. As such theoretical validity is concerned with the validity of the concepts but also with their relationships to one another and also "goodness of fit" as an explanation. In this study, theoretical validity will be established by exploring and reviewing literature and then comparing the "goodness of fit" between existing literature and the findings resulting from this study as depicted in the discussion chapter.

d) Generalizability

Generalizability refers to the production of laws that apply universally. In terms of qualitative research generalizability is considered to be the matter of the "fit" between the situation studied and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that study to other similar situations. Schurink (2009:790) indicates that generalizability refers to whether or not the findings of the research can be transferred from a specific situation or case to another. This is similar to the term external validity utilised in quantitative studies. The results section in the next chapter provides detail of participants' verbatim responses in order for all the readers to assess transferability. While

the results of this study may not be generalised to all students in all colleges in South Africa, if a study using the same methods was conducted, similar results may be found.

3.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was obtained from the Western Cape Department of Education (Appendix A) to conduct research in the Further Education and Training College in their jurisdiction. Secondly, permission was obtained from the Chief Executive Officer, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer: Innovation and Development, the Student Support Manager and the Campus Head of the selected Further Education and Training College. The students were given consent and forms before the interviews were conducted (Appendix C), which detailed the purpose of this study. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured in all cases. The researcher transcribed the recordings from the audiocassettes used during the interviews.

In addition, the following ethical principles were stringently adhered to, as the researcher is bound by Health Professions Council of South Africa's code of ethical practice for Occupational Therapists (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2008), within an educational context.

- *Non-Maleficence*, which would ensure that no harm would come to the participants;

- *Beneficence*, which would make sure that the welfare of the participants always takes precedence;

- *Autonomy,* which would ensure that the participants' right to information and self- determination is upheld. In this light participants who participate in this study were voluntarily and well informed;

- *Veracity*, which would ensure that the researcher is obligated to a full and honest disclosure of the findings;

- *Confidentiality* would ensure that only critical information will be revealed where ethically and legally required and only with the consent of and benefit to the participants

- *Social responsibility*, in this regard, actions will be consistent, accountable, transparent and non-discriminatory.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed the qualitative process used by the researcher during the production of data. The use of interviews and the thematic analysis of the information, which these yielded, aims to try to produce descriptive data, which will give insight into the experiences of students with and without disabilities at Further Education and Training Colleges.

Chapter Four presents a detailed description and analysis of the data that was produced using the methods in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings gleaned from interviews done with six students who are registered and enrolled at a Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape. This chapter will present the categories and subsequent themes that were derived from one-on-one interviews after using a multi-level approach to data production, which correlates with levels of data analysis.

This study aimed to establish how students are included at Further Education and Training Colleges. In order to achieve this aim, the following questions were posed:

1   What are the day-to-day experiences of students enrolled at Further Education and Training colleges in the Western Cape?

2   What feelings and perceptions are generated by these experiences and expectations.

The findings that are presented consist of (i) a narrative of the salient features of these responses received and (ii) the results in a quantitative form referring to a number of times certain response was received, which serves as a summary.

4.1.2   ORGANISATION OF THE CHAPTER

Section 4.2 includes biographical and functional descriptions of the participants in this study. The following section, section 4.3, utilising the first and second steps of Maykut and Morehouse's model, which is presented in Chapter Three, presents the results of inductive coding, while simultaneously comparing meanings across all categories. This section groups together concepts and ideas that have similarities in order to derive meaning from the data collected. By grouping together and comparing concepts and ideas, categories are defined.

The penultimate step of Maykut and Morehouse's model of constant comparison is applied in section 4.3. In this section, an exploration of patterns is performed across the categories defined in section 4.2. In addition, these categories are further refined in order to derive a deeper understanding of the phenomena explored.

4.2   FINDINGS

4.2.1   Data gathering procedure.

In this section, the data gathered from the analysis of the one-on-one interviews are examined. The interviews were unstructured and rather conversational in nature, in order to fully understand the participants' perspective and the meanings constructed by individuals. The following questions were used to

determine respondent's perceptions of their day-to-day experiences as students before and during their Further Education and Training enrolment.

1. Prior experience as a learner in schools for Learners/Students with Special Education Needs and/or mainstream institutions of learning;

2. Current experiences as a student in the current, publicised inclusive environment in terms of the physical, academic and interpersonal/social environment;

3. Expectations before admission to the current institution;

4. Challenges and difficulties faced;

5. Positive experiences;

6. Personal recommendations to augment current and future experiences

The use of language during these interviews was of such a nature that the participants were put at ease during the interview process. Slang, colloquialisms and paraphrasing and even the use of Afrikaans at some point, were incorporated in order to ensure that the respondents understood what was being asked of them as well as to reassure them that what they would say would be understood.

Coding of respondents was done in an uncomplicated manner, as this was a small sample. Two students from each year (Y) of study were chosen to be part of this study. One respondent with a disability (RD) and one without a disability (R), from each year of study were chosen to participate. This method of grouping students was based on the fact that students entering the National

Certificate (Vocational) programmes embark on a three-year course and as such are enrolled at the college for a minimum of three years. Responses were grouped and tabulated. Respondents who gave similar answers are demarcated with a correction tick (✓).

4.2.2   Description of classroom abilities for study participants with disabilities

The sample was chosen from students who are studying towards business qualifications at a Further Education and Training. The criteria for selection included students from each year of study of a three-year business qualification. The rationale behind these criteria is that all students would have the same or similar experience of the academic curriculum and the demands thereof. These participants were chosen from various levels of the National Certificate (Vocational) programme. The disabilities included Phocomelia, Spina Bifida and Quadriplegia.

Table 4.1 below summarises the biographical details of the respondents:

TABLE 4.1: Biographical details of respondents

Respondent	Age	Gender	Disability
RDY1	18 years	Male	Phocomelia[1]
RDY2	23 years	Male	Spina Bifida[2]
RDY3	18 years	Male	Acquired C5/C6 Quadriplegia[3]
RY1	17 years	Male	None
RY2	17 years	Male	None
RY3	19 years	Male	None

The first respondent with a disability (RDY1) has a congenital condition. This condition is characterised by shortened limbs. He presents as being half the height of his peers and his upper limbs are non-existent. He has fully functional hands, which are attached at the shoulders. RDY1 is able to walk independently despite having shortened lower limbs. The implications for this condition in the classroom include slowed speed of writing and difficulty operating devices such as calculators and computers, which are integral to his course of study. This respondent manages to complete class work independently and his personality is such that he has made many friends and thus has built up a support network

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[1] **Phocomelia** is a congenital malformation (birth defect) in which the hands and feet are attached to abbreviated arms and legs

[2] **Spina bifida:** is a congenital malformation in which there is a bony defect in the vertebral column so that part of the spinal cord, which is normally protected within the vertebral column, is exposed. People with spina bifida can suffer from bladder and bowel incontinence, cognitive (learning) problems and limited mobility.

[3] Quadraplegia is the paralysis of all four limbs, often resulting from high level spinal cord injuries.

within his class. As result of his condition, RDY1 has slowed speed of mobility between classes.

The second respondent with a disability (RDY2) also has a congenital condition, which has affected his lower limbs, which are completely non-functional. As a result, he mobilises with the aid of a manual wheelchair. This condition impedes the student's ability to mobilise to all parts of the college campus as well as his speed of mobilisation. His upper limbs are fully functional and he is able to complete class work independently. This student is slightly older than his peers are and therefore his level of maturity has allowed him to make adaptations in his learning strategies (such as using a voice-recording device) to augment his learning experience.

The third respondent with a disability (RDY3) suffered a spinal injury at the age of 14. The result of this injury was quadriplegia. In his particular case, his lower limbs are completely non-functional and his upper limbs have very limited movement, while his hands are completely non-functional.   This student mobilises with the aid of a motorised wheelchair, which he operates independently. The classroom implications for this particular student are that he is completely dependent on others for note taking, for written work and for the operation of devices such as calculators and computers. This particular student has a good support structure at home and therefore he is able to complete tasks and project with the assistance of his family.

All three of the students mentioned above use assistive strategies at college to augment their learning experiences. This assistance includes the provision of extra time to complete tests, exams and projects; the use of scribes and the use of assistive computer software where necessary. It must be noted that none of these students have a classroom facilitator/classroom aide of any kind to provide assistance or support during a regular college day.

What follows below are the responses grouped according to analytic categories used as questions during interviews.

4.2.3   Previous experiences

Previous experiences are of importance to this study as it sheds light on what students might expect when enrolling at a college and how these previous experiences may or may not influence their current experiences. This question was asked in order to establish the previous experiences of the respondents in terms of their educational career. In Table 4.2 below, we see the number and nature of responses that were given by respondents.

TABLE 4.2. Duration of time spent at learning institutions before entering

college

Respondent	LSEN School	Duration	Mainstream	Duration	Other	Duration
RDY1	✓	12 years				
RDY2	✓	13 years				
RDY3	✓	2 years	✓	8 years		
RY1			✓	10 years		
RY2			✓	7 years	✓	2 years
RY3			✓	9 years		

As is illustrated in Table 4.2 above, in response to the enquiry about previous schooling experiences, respondents with disabilities (RDY) reported that they all attended schools for learners with special education needs. Two respondents had attended special schools for their entire school career while one respondent (RDY3) had only attended such a school for two years – post injury. The duration of the participants with disabilities and those without disabilities attendance at educational institutions before enrolling at the Further Education and Training College also differed somewhat. In the South African Education system, twelve years of schooling would normally allow a student to have achieved a Grade 12. The students with disabilities all only achieved a Grade 9 pass before enrolling at the Further Education and Training College. This implies that progression through the grades at special schools is significantly slower than progression through the grades at regular schools. In addition, this slower rate of progression means that these students enter the Further

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Education and Training College at a slightly older chronological age than their peers from regular schools.

Able-bodied respondents (RY) all attended mainstream schools or other educational institutions such as private educational institutions and skills based institutions. All RY reported that they have had no previous exposure to people with disabilities. However, these respondents opted to leave mainstream education as it did not cater for their individual needs and therefore they felt that they were not coping with the demands of the curriculum. These respondents tended to feel that Further Education and Training Colleges were an easier pathway to completing their education.

4.2.4   Current experiences

The second grouping of responses includes the reasons for enrolling at a Further Education and Training college and students' current experiences. In addition, I enquired about the respondents' current experiences as a student at a Further Education and Training College. Questions were directed towards their day-to-day experiences as well as what they perceived the day-to-day experiences of their fellow students were. The rationale behind this question was to discover whether students had similar experiences at a college, regardless of whether they had a disability. This question also shed light on whether the institutional intention was being practiced.

The responses included in the table below (Table 4.3) were gleaned in reply to questions around (i) what the main rationale was for them enrolling in a Further Education and Training college, as opposed to other institutions of education, (ii) what they perceived the environment as being when they first enrolled at a Further Education and Training College and (iii) what they perceived to be the most fundamental differences between a Further Education and Training College and the institutions from which they had come.

By all accounts, all the students in this sample indicated that they enrolled at a Further Education and Training College to complete their schooling. While the respondents with disabilities had no other pathway to completing their schooling (as schools for learners with special education needs generally go as far as grade 9), Further Education and Training College for the able-bodied students was more as a second chance or in some instances a last chance to complete their schooling. For the respondents with disability, it was almost impossible to enter mainstream schools as they were physically inaccessible to them as well as being inaccessible in terms of curriculum which did not match the curriculum followed in their respective special schools. For the respondents with disability, mainstream education had not catered for their physical needs and therefore college education was the only other option for them.

In response to the second question relating to the institutional environment, all the students who were interviewed stated that they found the environment to be welcoming and non-judgemental. While students with disabilities had

reservations upon enrolling to enter a mainstream institution, they indicated that they were made to feel part of the student population generally and were not judged because of their disability. Respondents felt that they were able to pursue their personal interests at college. The environment was able to cater for their needs in terms of support facilities as well teaching methodologies, which tended to be more practical in nature.

In terms of what respondents considered different to their previous educational institutions, the issue of academic demand featured prominently. Two of the students with disabilities, who had previously attended special schools, also indicated that the level of academic work at the Further Education and Training College was more difficult and more demanding than that which they had experienced at special schools before. Two able-bodied students, who have come from mainstream institutions, also echoed this sentiment. It appeared that these students expected an easier experience in terms of study demands. One student without a disability referred to the differences in the following statement:

> "*And the academic the rate... it was alright and I think that I learned a lot of where I come from and the schools is very different and the children is very different*"

This statement is poignant in that it encapsulates both the difference in the academic demands between school and college as well as the difference in the profiles of students who attend school and those who attend college.

TABLE 4.3: The day-to-day experiences of being a college student

Respondent	Purpose to complete education	Welcoming atmosphere at college	Different academic standards
RDY1	✓	✓	
RDY2	✓	✓	✓
RDY3	✓	✓	✓
RY1	✓	✓	✓
RY2	✓	✓	
RY3	✓	✓	✓

4.2.5   Expectations before admission

This was asked in order to understand respondents' expectations before enrolling into a Further Education and Training College. This question was asked, as responses to it would be we reflective of the students' experience, whether or not they had disabilities. The responses to this question also served to elucidate the fears that students may experience upon leaving the schooling system and entering a different one, such as a Further Education and Training College.

Reponses to this question revealed that respondents' expectations of college life vary greatly. One respondent indicated that he expected to have trouble adjusting and that he expected ridicule from his peers, while another respondent had no expectations of the institution, only of himself to succeed within it. One student without a disability admitted to being concerned initially about being

placed in the same class as someone with a disability because to him, it appeared that there must be something wrong with him for him to be placed together with students who have disabilities. Two students, one with and one without a diagnosed disability, expected freedom and less discipline at college. It was evidently a "cool"[4] place to be.

TABLE 4.4. Student feelings before starting their college careers

Respondent	Reservations about college	Expected to be judged	Excited about college
RDY1	✓	✓	
RDY2	✓	✓	
RDY3		✓	
RY1			✓
RY2			✓
RY3	✓		

4.2.6   Challenges or difficulties faced

The fourth question focussed on perceived challenges or difficulties within their day-to-day lives as a student at a Further Education and Training College. This question also aimed to unpack what they perceive the challenges of students with disabilities are – whether they are disabled themselves or not. This question was posed to try and understand the issues that were noticed and experienced by the students involved in this study. This question also allowed

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[4] In this context "cool' refers to something being very good or excellent.

the researcher to see similarities or difference in the daily experiences of students with and those without disabilities.

With respect to challenges or difficulties faced, all respondents in this study indicated that students with disabilities struggle to complete tasks within class-time because of the length of time it takes the individual to complete those tasks. This was directly linked to the inherent characteristics of the individual disabilities. Interestingly, nobody mentioned that these students were incapable of completing classroom activities. The concern or observation is it that it took longer than normal for a student with a disability to complete these activities.

Five of the six respondents indicated that students with disabilities face more practical challenges than able-bodied students. These challenges include the fact that they are not able to accomplish certain tasks due to inherent barriers caused by their disability, for example writing. Four respondents commented on the length of time it takes for a student with a disability to complete ordinary tasks such as moving from one venue to another, irrespective of the accommodations made by the college. One respondent, without a disability indicated that certain students with disabilities struggle with all that they have to do and often are not included in daily class activities.

It is interesting to note that one student with a disability was of the opinion that he did not face challenges and difficulties at all.

TABLE 4.5. Challenges or difficulties as perceived by respondents

Respondent	Inability to complete tasks within set time frames	General physical challenges (access, time)	More challenges faced by students with disabilities	Mobility between venues	None	Inclusion in classroom activities
RDY1	✓				✓	
RDY2	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RDY3	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RY1	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RY2	✓	✓	✓	✓		
RY3	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

4.2.7 Positive experiences

This question was raised in order to uncover what respondents deem to be positive experiences as students at a Further Education and Training College. This question also focussed on the positive experiences they have had within what is purported to be an inclusive environment.

The responses to this question are reflective of the how students perceive themselves as part of a group or community and these responses have been grouped under categories that appeared to be of most importance to the students involved in this study.

Whilst comparing the responses the question, it came to light that making friends appears to be the most positive aspect of being a student at a Further Education and Training College. There seems to be sense of sharing of new experiences. For students with disabilities it is an opportunity to learn how to function in an "able-bodied" community, relate to able-bodied peers and how to deal with their disability whilst interacting with their peers. It appears that there is a sense of symbiosis between the able-bodied students and the students with disabilities as they learned from each other and taught each other basic life skills such as communication, tolerance, non-judgement and co-operation.

The ability to communicate with one another within the student body is also a very positive experience for students, where five respondents all indicated that they felt that communication was important in order to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Together with making friends and communication, being seen as or feeling "normal", also featured prominently. Two students with congenital disabilities express this feeling strongly, while the third student – who had become disabled – did not indicate this at all. All three students without disabilities indicated that they felt that it was a positive phenomenon that students with disabilities were included with "normal" students.

TABLE 4.6: Positive aspects of being a college student

Respondent	Making friends	Communication	Being "normal"[5]	Having Responsibility
RDY1	✓	✓	✓	
RDY2	✓		✓	✓
RDY3	✓	✓		✓
RY1	✓	✓	✓	
RY2	✓	✓	✓	✓
RY3	✓	✓	✓	

4.2.8 Negative experiences

The sixth question focussed on the negative experiences, which respondents may have had as a student at a Further Education and Training College. These negative experiences are different to the challenges or difficulties that they may have faced, in that these experiences refer to those in which they faced imposed adversity or where they felt powerless to correct or overcome such adversity. This question aimed to elicit the inherent perceptions of themselves and others, which students hold as well as more arcane social issues that may be occurring. These perceptions were grouped according to what students were most concerned about in the day-to-day experiences at a Further Education and Training College.

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[5] In this context *normal* means that something is accord with, constituting, or not deviating from a norm, rule, or principle, conforming to a type, standard, or regular pattern

Respondents indicated that that there was a degree of segregation between those students with disabilities and those students without. Four out of the six respondents indicated that they felt that there was a degree of non-inclusion. The respondents also felt that perceptions of staff members, management and the student body were skewed somewhat. They were of the opinion that this needed to be corrected. Interestingly, those students who felt there was segregation also felt that this was due to incorrect perceptions of the students with a disability. One respondent also indicated that there was also a lack of future planning for students in general as he felt unsure of what would happen once he left the institution, with regard to the possibility of employment or further study.

Table 4.7. Negative Aspects of being a college student

Respondent	Non-inclusion in classroom activities	Incorrect perceptions of staff, management and student body	None	Lack of future planning
RDY1			✓	
RDY2			✓	
RDY3	✓	✓		✓
RY1	✓	✓		
RY2	✓	✓		
RY3	✓	✓		

4.2.9 Recommendations by students

This question allowed the students to make personal recommendations to improve their experiences as students. The response to this question were grouped according to what the students in this study felt needed attention, in order to augment the day-to-day experiences of all students enrolled at a Further Education and Training College

When asked for personal recommendations, four main answers were given. The first recommendation that was made was that the physical access at the campus needs to be improved. Physical access included transport and travelling to campus as well as ease of movement within the building. The second recommendation was that social integration between student groups be improved and that things like sports activities be expanded to include those with disabilities. The third recommendation was that management and staff members should take responsibility for students and that they are held accountable to promises that have been made. Although on-course assistive interventions, such as scribe use, readers and extra time to complete examinations seemed to be adequate, respondents felt that more could and should be provided in order to accommodate students with disabilities.

TABLE 4.8: *Recommendations made by respondents*

Respondent	Improvement of Social Integration	Improvement of physical access	Staff involvement and accountability	Improvement of assistive intervention
RDY1	✓	✓		✓
RDY2	✓	✓	✓	✓
RDY3	✓	✓		✓
RY1	✓	✓	✓	
RY2	✓	✓	✓	
RY3	✓	✓	✓	

4.3 INTERPRETATION OF THE SALIENT FEATURES OF RESPONSES

Bearing in mind the research questions, which relate to the day-to-day experiences of students at a Further Education and Training College and what feelings these experiences generate, the analysis of the raw data comprised the comparison, and grouping responses that seemed alike or felt to be similar in meaning.

From the analysis of the raw data, four major themes, which will be discussed in depth and in relation to current literature in the following chapter, emerged. These themes answer the question of what feelings and perceptions are

generated by the daily experience of being a student at a Further Education and Training College, thereby giving the students a voice.

This part of the analysis is informed by the following questions:

1.	*What are the similarities between responses from students with disabilities and those without?*

	and

2.	*If there are differences in the day-to-day experiences of students with disabilities and those without, what causes these differences?*

The four categories that emerged were:

- Participation in college life

- Impediments to learning

- Access

- Preconceptions and misconceptions of students with disability

### 4.3.1	Participation in college life.

With respect to participation in college life, I looked at the respondents' views as concerns communication, making friends, completing education, college

atmosphere and social integration. According to the raw data presented earlier, all respondents expressed the view that these were important. As such, these elements are common to all students and set on equal footing both students with disabilities and those students without.

Being able to participate in college life, students with disabilities were able to feel "normal".

One respondent without a disability said the following:

R: *so they feel like, so they don't feel uhm...like they away from people, like they are in their own schools...like they don't feel like they're normal like other people and stuff. Like they in a school with other children who don't have disabilities and so that they can feel like welcome and stuff.*

In response to the same question, another respondent with a disability had this to say:

R: *Uhm, I expected…I didn't really expect anything, but I didn't think it was so easy. Because I thought they would first laugh and stuff, but it took me two days to get into the crowd.*

I: *What are your current experiences as student with a disability at this college?*

R: They treat me the same like normal kids. And uhm…

A respondent with a disability who had experienced both a school for learners with special education needs and mainstream institutions said the following:

I: ..for two years. So what was the difference between [school for learners with special education needs school] and [mainstream school]?

R: Uhm, the [school for learners with special education needs] school was very , its like I ....it blocks disabled people off from the outside world.

I: How do you mean?

R: You don't get to communicate with normal people.

I: Ok..

R: And if you don't come from the outside world, then you wouldn't really know how to communicate with other people because of the negative effect that the school has.

Respondents also recognised the fact that to fully participate in college life, students would have to be able to participate in both the academic and social aspects of the educational institution. Respondents without disabilities had the following to say:

R: *What would I recommend? That, uhm, to have some more sports activities that include the disabled children, because there are sports that disabled people can play*

R: *I think our class does that, we all all participate in class, we all get along well in class. During, break times, its really not that much, because, they, all the disabled people, they sit one side on top, and we all at the bottom, so it's quite difficult for them to like every time come down and then mix with us.*

What these quotes indicate is that although respondents felt that all students were entitled to participate in college life, this was not in fact the case at this particular Further Education and Training College.   There seems to be a discrepancy in terms of wanting to participate and the actual ability to participate fully and equally in all spheres of college life.   In other words, respondents perceived obstructions in being or becoming college students.

4.3.2   Impediments to learning.

Impediments to learning take on various forms and shapes. Respondents listed various issues that they interpret as obstructions or barriers to learning. These include inability to complete tasks in the set amount of time by those who live with disabilities. The following quotes taken from interviews with RYs evidence this:

R: *Uhm, It is really an enormous challenge because I can do work in five minutes where it takes them like an hour to do.*

         and

R: *The people with disabilities have to go through so much more stuff before they can actually sit down and do their work and stuff...*

I: *Ok... what kind of things do you think?*

R: *I know RD2 has a problem with like writing and stuff...so like for him to do the homework that we do is ...must be harder for him to do because he sits longer... he told me already...*

I also found that there is a perception amongst able-bodied students in this sample that students with disabilities find it more difficult to be part of the college community.   There is the perception that students with disabilities struggle to keep up with their able-bodied classmates and therefore they miss out on classroom activities and nuances of college life.

R: *for me ne, they actually going through a lot. They actually struggling more, because of all the stuff they must first do, like the lifts and that especially for classes. They miss out a lot also.*

         and

R: I think our class does that, we all participate in class, we all get along well in class. During, break times, its really not that much, because, they, all the disabled people, they sit one side on top, and we all at the bottom, so it's quite difficult for them to like every time come down and then mix with us.

4.3.3   Access.

Access featured prominently in terms of dissimilarity between students with disabilities and those without disability.

R: Uhm, I can't write because I am a quadriplegic. But otherwise I'm ok. I can get around, except for the lifts that is slow.

and

R: "Uhm, make the stairs shorter.

and

R: I'm not sure Miss. You see Miss, they can make like the elevators and stuff a bit more better, it so plain and stuff and sort out the steps."

       and

R: .there are a lot of other challenges that I noticed. Like moving to the next class, that is also time consuming.

I: And what is the college doing in terms of trying to make things better?

R: They are trying to make things better because they like let the disabled students leave class like ten minutes before the end of the lesson, so that they can be in time for the next lesson. I think they are trying to make it better.

       and

R: *"I think, uhm, I don't really know, I haven't really thought about that, I think that they should actually make it quite easier for the people in wheelchairs to get around much faster and the lifts is slow that is all a bit of a problem. The ability to get around on the college is quite difficult, with all the stairs, so that's also another problem that they face.*

The quotes above reflect the concern that students in this sample have about access to the college campus. In essence, they place importance on a simple occurrence such as mobility, which in their view impedes students with disabilities' ability to be part of college life and student activities.

Recommendations from students in this sample all point to increasing access to the physical environment.

4.3.4   Preconceptions and misconceptions of students with disability.

Although the preconceptions and/or misconceptions of students with disability were not overtly mentioned by respondents, these were alluded to. For example, when one student was asked what his view was on seeing students with disabilities.

R*:*   *Not necessarily. But ja[yes], when I came here I did see a few. And ja [yes] I didn't know what was the, I didn't know if they going to be in the same class or in separate classes or what. So ja [yes] uhm*

I*:*   *What did you think when you saw these people? Did it make any difference to you?*

R*:*   *Not actually, how can I say? I the type of person, I like to help other people. So, like when I met RD, you know for the first time and then he obviously, ja[yes], he looked like he was all on his own so I started helping him, so ja[yes] that's how me and him became friends.*

Another student had this to say:

R: *I think, I thought it was a great idea because all of us are equal and if we have a disability or not, we shouldn't be judged on it.*

It was also evident that there was a sense of "them *versus* us" as students without disabilities tended to talk about "they" – as in students with disabilities. For example:

R: *They are accepted, because everybody is the same, nobody is somebody less than the next one.*

I: *Is that everybody's attitude?*

R: *Oh ok, there is some. There will always be that one or two people that... that has that negative view and mind-set.*

Students with disabilities tended not to make this distinction.

R: *As long as I keep my focus, and I keep my focus on my studies, I don't believe that anything can go wrong. And so far, it has been like that."*

and

R: *Uhm, I expected…I didn't really expect anything, but I didn't think it was so easy. Because I thought they would first laugh and stuff, but it took me two days to get into the crowd.*

and

R: *It's alright. Because you can communicate with people, you can...*

I   *And in terms of your class group, are you friends with them?*

R: *Yes we all are friends.*

I: *You don't find it being different?*

R: *Not at all. I feel like I fit in.*

From these quotes, I infer that students with disabilities view themselves as part of the student population at a Further Education and Training College more easily than students without disabilities. These students do not set themselves apart and strive to be included as any other student would. Students without disabilities on the other hand tended to over-compensate and mentioned the challenges, barriers and obstacles, as they see them that students with disabilities face.

4.4   CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to analyse data gleaned from interviews such that the question of what feelings and perceptions are generated through experiences of being a student at a Further Education and Training College is answered.

It can be seen that from the perspective of students, irrespective of ability or disability, that they share similar day-to–day experiences. However, the perceptions associated with these experiences vary somewhat. I have found that students without disability seem to be more piquantly aware of the difficulties that students with disability may face.

It is my feeling that the themes that have emerged encapsulate the feelings and perceptions that are generated by the day-to-day experiences of students at a Further Education and Training College in the Western Cape. These themes will be taken forward as new data, which will be analysed and interpreted in relation to existing literature in Chapter Five. This constitutes the last step in Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) model for data analysis, which is the integration of data so as to yield an understanding of people and settings being studied. In addition, the next chapter will also seek to achieve theoretical validity and generalizability as explained in Chapter Three by considering the goodness of fit of between the findings of this study and the concepts described in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter involves the analysis and discussion of the results presented in the previous chapter. These results were gathered through the constant comparison of responses gleaned from interviews with six students enrolled at one Further Education and Training College. The students were interviewed in order to discover what they experience on a daily basis as students enrolled at a Further Education and Training College and what meaning these experiences hold for them. In particular, the study sought to establish through students' responses to questions around their day-to-day experiences, whether there is synergy between students' perceptions and experiences and inclusion at a specific Further Education and Training College.

In terms of the four-step data generation and analysis process described in Chapter Three, this chapter is step four, where data is integrated to yield an understanding of the people and the settings being studied. In analyzing and discussing the results, the chapter pays attention to the two focus questions the study set out to answer. Section 5.2 answers the question "what are the day to day experiences of students enrolled at the college", while section 5.3 explicates the synergy between these experiences and what is advocated by inclusive education discourse. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations encountered, recommendations and possible pathways for further research.

5.2   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research study concentrates on the experiences of students enrolled in a Further Education and Training College.   In addition, the study sought to establish (i) what meaning these experiences hold for the students and (ii) what indicators such experiences have of inclusion or lack thereof within a particular Further Education and Training College setting.   The key findings manifested are that attending college involves more than learning the curriculum.   Students expressed four key concerns which can be classified under the following categories:

(i)   Students' desire for self-actualization;

(ii)   The perceptions held by individuals with reference to barriers to learning;

(iii)   Access to participation in student life including access to the built environment;

(iv)   Preconceptions and misconceptions held by non-disabled individuals towards those with disabilities.

The above categories relate directly to the dynamics of teaching and learning. First, without self-actualisation, learning would be severely impacted as students may not want to engage or actively participate in this process.   Feeling part of and participating in Further Education and Training College life and activities contribute the process of self-actualisation.   However, if this participation is limited, so is the learning process.   The perceptions of others also directly impact

the dynamic of teaching or learning. If students form pre-conceived ideas about the ability (or lack thereof) of their peers, teaching and learning may be skewed towards those who are thought of as able to participate in and perhaps dominate the process. This would inevitably lead to a situation where these pre-conceived ideas could become self-fulfilling prophesies where those who are perceived to be unable to actively participate simply do not participate in the learning and teaching process. With respect to access, it appears that if students do not have physical access to the built environment, such as classrooms or social areas, that teaching or learning simply cannot take place. Literature reviewed in this study suggests that there is a dearth of research (Gewer, 2010; Fisher et al., 2003) which explores the dynamic of learning and teaching within the Further Education and Training College context. However, existing education policy suggests that the Department of Education in South Africa has taken measures to create an environment for student success, which depends on a teaching and learning experience which is meaningful and relevant to the students involved. The above categories are discussed in order to discern whether or not the students at this particular Further Education and Training College feel that the college is providing an enabling environment in which all of them, regardless of the barriers to learning which they face, are able to succeed.

In Chapter Two Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory, and how it relates to institutional culture and climate as well as *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, are explicated. These conceptual frameworks are utilised in this section to analyse the data derived from the interviews conducted. In order to derive meaning, these categories are looked at critically in terms of how they contribute to the

interaction of the person, environment and learning and how these interact to influence the perceptions and experiences of students enrolled at a Further Education and Training College.

5.2.1   Self-actualisation

In this particular study, the theme of actualisation speaks to being or becoming a student, irrespective of the students' ability.   In essence, students are self-actualising in this specific context and as such are reaching the full realization of their own potential. Several indicators, both positive and negative, of self-actualisation were gathered from the interviews.   Some of the indicators are directly related to the college whole other related to aspects such as relations with others within the college setting.

All the respondents indicate that on enrolment at the college, their primary aim was to finish their schooling. As such, two students with diagnosed disabilities and one without had reservations about becoming and being student at a Further Education and Training College. These reservations relate to fear of judgement, and the fear that they would not be able to adjust to their environment. The implication here is that students with disabilities regarded themselves as unsuitable to the environment. When looking at this situation through the lens of the Ecosystemic model we can deduce that successful completion of their learning would depend on the successful interaction between the individual and the context in which they are learning. It appears that students do not feel that the actualisation towards being productive students is met at the college.   It

appears that the Further Education and Training College setting was not perceived as an enabling environment that did, or does anything apparent to allay students' feelings of inadequacy.

When asked about positive experiences, all respondents indicated that being with other students and being a student was the most positive aspect of being enrolled at the Further Education and Training College. This includes making friends and communicating with other students irrespective of disability, which all seem to level the playing fields as it were. Also supporting this notion of self-actualisation was the fact that negativity arose around issues such as the perceptions of others as well as the feeling of non-inclusion generally. In essence, students were not able to *be students* because of other's perceptions of their ability or inability. This sense of negativity also gave rise to a feeling of segregation between the *normal* and the *rest*. This interplay between the need to be part of a community and feelings of inadequacy highlights what Bronfennbrenner (1975) alludes to when he indicates that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems.

The realisation of potential is also evident as these students endeavour to come to terms with themselves in relation to the others regardless of their ability or lack thereof. The researcher also found that through the students' responses that students with disabilities are motivated to improve themselves. They are also keen to improve the way in which they interact with other individuals. An illustration of this desire is encapsulated in the following extract:

R: Uhm, the school was very , its like I, it blocks disabled people off from the outside world... You don't get to communicate with normal people... And if you don't come from the outside world, then you wouldn't really know how to communicate with other people because of the, that negative effect that the school has....

The researcher found it interesting that none of the students mentioned interaction with lecturers or the role which lecturers, support staff or management play in their day-to-day experiences and in creating and enabling environment. This could be a positive aspect of self-actualisation as implies that students wish to be in a sense their own persons and operate as individuals without emphasis being placed on the barriers that they face.

Studies indicate that when students with disabilities are placed in general education courses, all students benefit from heterogeneous grouping and learning (Clark, 2008:3). When students with disabilities are included in activities in the classroom and are accepted by their peers, then they will perceive their inclusive classroom as an environment that is useful, valuable and important to their learning and development. These sentiments are echoed by the students who participated in this study. Peer acceptance, identification of their unique motivations depends on the educational institutions' capacity to assist them in identifying with the culture of further education, with learning itself and with other students. These students are then able to use learning to achieve present and future purposes and goals.

It is in the context of an educational institution's culture and climate, which is reflective of shared ideas, values and assumptions, that young people are able to realize their own potential. Being or becoming a student, irrespective of ability is seen to be important. In essence, students who participated in this study are seen to be involved in a process of self-actualisation in the specific context of a Further Education and Training College and as such are reaching the full realization of their potential. As a result, self-worth and self-value are fostered. However, fear of judgement, and the fear that they would not be able to adjust to the environment remain.

Self-esteem has been shown to have a pervasive and powerful impact on human emotion, cognition, behaviour and motivation (Campbell and Lavallee, 1993:141). The evaluations that individuals have about themselves and their competencies are vital aspects of self that can be pervasive and may influence all others aspects of conduct and psychological well-being (Bagchi, 2010:234). According to Harter (1999:127) high self-esteem is important not only for students' academic achievement but also for their long-term general well-being and personal development.

The findings of this study support the notion that self-esteem is important for students' academic development. As such, students' journeys toward self-actualisation need to be acknowledged and supported. When looking at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), this is more pertinent to students with disabilities, as they may be perceived to be unable to reach any potential because of their inherent barriers. Further Education and Training Colleges therefore have to be alerted to the fact that in order to support students with

disabilities, they have to acknowledge that each student, regardless of ability, has the potential to succeed and that they have the same developmental goals as their able-bodied peers. The aim of Further Education and Training Colleges should be to create a teaching and learning environment that enables programmes and services to be integrated across disciplines, so that teaching, learning and support programmes enhance the self-esteem of all students including those with disabilities.

5.2.2   Minimisation of Barriers to Learning

Barriers to learning have been shown to be systemic, physical, social and emotional. These in a sense are all things, overt and covert, that act as impediments to learning. According to Ainscow (2010:405), very little time is spent on defining the concepts that are important in inclusive education. Ainscow argues that the way inclusion is defined impacts significantly on the way in which learner difficulties are perceived which, in turn, affects the way in which the intervention in respect of the difficulties is conceptualised. This may then have implications for the effectiveness of the interventions and the way in which lecturers and education policy makers respond to learner diversity. Booth and Ainscow (2002) indicate that what students perceive as effective inclusion, has very little to do with the type of difficulty the learner is perceived to have. A student without a diagnosed disability expressed the following about fellow classmates with disabilities:

*R:	For me [hey], they [are] actually going through a lot. They [are]*

actually struggling more, because of all the stuff they must first do…

The extract above is supports Booth and Ainscow's theory that effective inclusion is not dependent on the specific difficulty a student experiences, but rather on how students have to navigate through systems or structures before being able to participate fully.

Effective inclusion means that students with disabilities will interact with students without disabilities. As a result of the integration of diverse student populations into general education classes, Further Education and Training College policies supporting this educational environment, administrative assistance, appropriate materials and resources, and qualified teachers are all needed. It also necessitates that a teaching approach based on equity is best for students (Idol, 2006:77-94). It is important to know the skills, knowledge and dispositions that are needed to enable lecturers to practice inclusive education appropriately. In this light Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Theory (1975) is applicable once again, where the influence of the macrosystem is evident in the implementation of education policy.

Students who participated in this study, irrespective of ability, interpreted disability as being a manifestation of visible inability. In other words, according to the respondents, one is only disabled if one has a physical impairment, which others can see and which visibly indicates that one cannot perform certain

functions. The respondents did not mention students who may have been experiencing other barriers to learning within the educational institution. Granted, the concept of *barriers to learning* is a mammoth one which has several connotations and which has often sparked heated debates among theorists (Pather, 2007; Lindsay, 2007, Whittaker and Kenworthy, 2000 and Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

It is clear that students in this study perceive disability to be physical inability to do something that someone who does not have a disability was able to do. In this light, students with disability were perceived to have an impediment to learning, and perhaps denied experiences, as they were seen to be unable to participate in all facets of student life. As such, all comments and recommendations made by the students tended to be directed toward improving physical access, allowing students with disabilities more time for task completion and improving inclusion in social and sporting activities. This implies that the overarching conception is that it is the disability that serves as the barrier, as opposed to the learning environment, which presents obstacles. Through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic theory, this means that the interaction between the person (the student), the environment (the college building) and the system (social or classroom activities) is unsuccessful because the person is unable to adapt to the environment in which he finds himself. In Bronfenbrenian terms, people and systems influence and are influenced, both positively and negatively, by one another.

The second barrier that respondents highlight is the feeling that there is the lack of interaction between students caused by what they perceive to be at the college. Lack of interaction was expressed by both students with and without and without disabilities in terms of not being able to spend break times in the same physical area due to constraints in the built environment. This results in the fact that those students with limited mobility are not able to access all areas of the college campus. This suggests that students' ability to interact with each other on a social level is impinged upon. Another area of non-interaction, with regard to participation in classroom activities, is highlighted by the students without disabilities. Students with mobility impairments and specifically upper limb impairments are unable to participate in writing or computer-based activities and are often left to watch their classmates complete their own classroom activities.

Despite the barriers to learning that have discussed in this section, one student raised a very important point that the onus is also on the person with a disability to be included and to include. He had this to say:

> R: …it comes with a responsibility….To see that things get done. As long as I keep my focus, and I keep my focus on my studies, I don't believe that anything can go wrong. And so far, it has been like that.

It can be deduced therefore, that inclusion takes personal effort and investment from all parties' concerned (staff, students with disability and students without

disability), and cannot be fully implemented unless all role-players make a concerted effort at understanding and making a success of inclusion.

5.2.3   Access

In the literature reviewed for this study, mention is made of physical access to education – in terms of buildings and public areas amongst others. Such access has been encouraged by inclusive discourse and demanded by persons with disability, as in the Disability Rights Charter. Access to the built environment is a huge point of contention in inclusion literature but in this study, access to quality education in general appears to take precedence over access to the built environment.   Several authors, including Ainscow (2010:405), Clark (2008:14) Sautner (2008:144) allude to the fact that [lecturers] attitudes and the organisational ethos determine whether or not students have access to quality education.   Again, it can be inferred that in respect of Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystemic Theory, the environment does not allow for successful interaction between the person and the systems in which they wish to perform.

Physical access constraints features prominently in terms of dissimilarity between students with disabilities and those without disability in this study. All students felt that access to the physical environment prohibits students with disability from fully participating in student life and learning. This is illustrated by the following response:

> *R: I think our class does that, we all participate in class, we all get along well in class. During, break times, it's really not that much, because, they, all the disabled people, they sit one side on top, and we all at the bottom, so it's quite difficult for them to like every time come down and then mix with us.*

The lack of access seems to be a priority for everyone as it impacts greatly on students' ability to perform and compete on similar levels. Students with disability are left feeling that they have to *play catch up*. A student without a disability noted the following:

> *R: Uhm, It is really an enormous challenge because I can do work in five minutes where it takes them like an hour to do.*

Students without disability seem to be acutely aware of the impact which physical access has on students with physical impairments. While education policy, as cited in various pieces of legislation, speaks directly to the improvement of access to the built environment, even in an institution, which in the opinion of the administrators, has made an effort to improve its accessibility, the disparity between what actually exists, students' opinions and what policy says should exist is apparent. This disharmony implies that there is policy–practice gap that may be a result of either attitudinal perspectives of the institution or lack of budgetary commitment from policy-developers or even a combination of the two.

The connection to be drawn between the two views of access (access to the built environment and access to quality education and student life) is that both of them require equal attention. It is not enough that the buildings are accessible to persons with disability, when access to quality education is hampered by inflexible curricula demands and other constraints.

5.2.4   Preconceptions/misconceptions of students with disabilities

One of the crucial findings of this study is what can be termed as preconceptions and/or misconceptions about students with disabilities. Preconceptions refer to the ideas, prejudices and presumptions that have been made about students with disabilities before learning about or interacting with these students directly. These preconceptions are often based on circumstantial knowledge and not based on fact. Misconceptions refer to mistaken beliefs, false impressions or a misunderstanding.

Respondents expressed a view that in order to be classified as having a barrier to learning or a disability, students have to present with a physical or mobility impairment. Presumptions and false impressions are expressed in extracts from the interviews of two different students. By indicating the following, "*I think that they should actually make it quite easier for the disabled people, the people in wheelchairs…",* this respondent clearly associates disability with a physical impairment which necessitates the use of a wheelchair. Similarly a second respondent noted," *There are a lot of other challenges that I noticed. Like moving*

to the next class…". The example referred to by the second respondent reflects the presumption that having a disability means that mobility is a problem.

Misconceptions and preconceptions seem to be aligned with an outdated view that children who by reason of physical (or intellectual) disability are unable to benefit sufficiently from instruction meted out in mainstream schools (Naicker, 2006:3). Post-1994, disabilist theories and teaching methodologies which were informed by the medical model were replaced by non-disabilist theories and methodologies which were informed by the social model (Naicker, 2006:3). If one were to interpret the preconceptions and misconceptions using the social model, it can be construed that these viewpoints are constructed by society and promulgated as such. Eradication of such a view requires social action and is the responsibility of all members of society. Although respondents did not overtly mention the preconceptions and/or misconceptions of students with disability, these are alluded to. As discussed earlier, it is found that students' interpret disability as being a manifestation of visible inability. This interpretation could be considered a misconception, which could develop into an attitudinal barrier to learning that both students with disability and students without disability have about disability. It could be that those without disabilities fail to see that even without apparent disabilities there could be circumstances other than disability that make them deserving of support.

The prevailing perception is found to be that disability is a physical inability to do something that someone who is "normal" is able to do. As such, all comments

and recommendations tended to be directed toward improving physical access, allowing more time for task completion and improving inclusion in social and sporting activities.

As Booth, Ainscow and Sautner assert, the successful adoption of inclusive practices requires the involvement of all [lecturers] within an institution of learning as it is a radical change from the tradition that has reinforced the idea that [students] with special needs are the responsibility of specialists. However, it must be noted that inclusive education discourse speaks directly about accommodating and including persons with disabilities specifically. Education White Paper 6 was developed in 2001 along international debates regarding the inclusion of people with disabilities. However, this piece of legislation makes clear the scope of inclusion and indicates that barriers are not restricted to disabilities only.

The foregoing section makes clear that the day-to-day experiences of Further Education and Training College students are varied and raise important questions about the synergy between these experiences and inclusive education. It is this synergy between experience and discourse that I turn to below as I seek to answer the second question of this *study ".What perceptions and feelings do these day–to-day experiences generate?"*

5.3 SYNERGY BETWEEN STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION DISCOURSE.

The nature of student experiences was discussed in the foregoing section. Given the experiences, we turn more specifically to the analysis of the ensuing students' feelings and perceptions. In this sense the final stage of validation, Theoretical Validity (Maxwell, 1992), is completed. In terms of the two focus questions around which this study rests, this section therefore makes clear the level of synergy between student experiences and the dominant, existing inclusive education discourse.

5.3.1 Self-actualisation

Self-actualisation, described earlier as the process of being or becoming (Maslow, 1943). a student, has generated feelings of inadequacy as students at the Further Education and Training College are embarking on the journey towards fulfilling their potential A prevalent feeling deduced from students' experiences is that innately, they are not suited to the Further Education and Training College environment and therefore are not able to participate in the learning and teaching process. These feelings of inadequacy impact on students' self-esteem and self-worth which has a significant impact on their desire to be successful. In addition, students who find themselves in this situation may feel that they are obliged to work harder and longer in order to prove themselves.

5.3.2   Students' conceptions about ability and disability

Feelings and perceptions around ability and disability reveal a need to promote an environment that facilitates an understanding that people influence and are influenced by different systems in which they operate (Bronfenbrenner, 1975). Since students seem to think that only those with visible physical disabilities could experience barriers to learning and therefore require support, there is a need to conscientise the general student population at the Further Education and Training College about the existence and the impact of other barriers to learning. Conscientising all students will eliminate feelings of isolation and would allow students to disclose their barriers and access the teaching and learning support which is available to all students.

5.3.3   Access to quality education

The findings in this study indicate that the students have a desire to be part of the education system. Their reasons are far reaching, but echo those given by Papier (2009) and include the desire to become more economically and otherwise independent. The feelings expressed about education at a Further Education and Training College indicate that students were not perhaps as informed as they could have been upon their enrolment. This lack of information may have created expectations that remain unfulfilled. This creates a level of frustration and hinders the students' ability to progress through the system. The matter of the curriculum is voiced by both students who previously attended special schools and students who come from mainstream schools. It is revealed that neither group were prepared for the level of academia that is required at a

Further Education and Training College. The reason could be that there is the impression that Further Education and Training Colleges are an easier option as opposed to a mainstream school. There is the sense that students were not supported sufficiently in terms of improving their proficiency in certain subject areas. This lack of proficiency impacts both on the self-esteem students as well as in the teaching and learning process in that the foundation had not been laid on which a Further Education and Training College curriculum could be based. There is an implication that there is a need for lecturers who are skilled in multi-level or mixed-ability teaching, given the student concerns. Unfortunately, commenting on whether lecturers have these skills or not is beyond the scope of this study as they were not participants.

The analyses of the feelings and experiences of the respondents have indicated that opportunities for self-actualization are available within this institution which may be suggestive of the positive leadership and ethos of this particular institution. However, there seem to still be physical and inter-personal barriers, which impede engagement in all spheres of college-life. The physical barriers prohibit access which in turn impedes students with disabilities' ability to be part of the student population.

Through the examination of the feelings and perceptions of students above, it can be inferred that while inclusive education discourse takes into account all the needs of students at Further Education and Training Colleges, students feel that this particular college does not follow the social guidelines promulgulated by the

inclusive education discourse. As a result, students feel isolated and unsupported in their endeavours to access quality education and in their journey of self-development. It is ultimately by listening to and examining the experiences of students that we can see whether or not the discourse is correctly articulated to cater for the needs of those it was developed for.

5.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its contributions. However, some of these limitations can be seen as fruitful avenues for future research under the similar topic of how students experiences Further Education and Training Colleges with regard to inclusion.

Firstly, the research was conducted with a very small sample of students at a Further Education and Training College in Cape Town. This small sample may not represent the majority of students enrolled at Further Education and Training Colleges nationally or provincially. However, for the purpose of this study a small sample allowed the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge around their day-to-day experiences. Secondly, in order to produce data, only one method of data production was utilised. While using one method could be deemed a limitation, the instrument of data production, interviews, allowed the voices of the students to be clearly heard and interpreted. Thirdly, this study only took into account the views, opinions and experiences of students and not those of

parents or lecturers or management of the institution. At this level we are unable to gauge the compatibility or incompatibility of student voices with the voices of lecturers, parents or management of the institution. This juxtaposition would make for informative research in the future.

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability puts strong emphasis on education for all and provides a checklist against which to measure the success of inclusive practices. In order to measure the success of inclusive practices within the context of Further Education and Training, it is recommended that these guidelines be used to improve inclusion at these institutions. In particular, the following require close attention:

1.   Revision of national Further Education and Training curricula to make it accessible to all students in such a way that students have a feeling of preparedness when entering such educational institutions;

2.   Revision of teaching methodologies to ensure that accommodation is made for students with disability; in order to facilitate active participation in the classroom, thereby improving inclusion and active participation and engagement by all students;

3.   Accommodation to assure physical access to the educational institution and classroom such as ramps, lifts, other technical supports so that all students have the opportunity to be among their peers should they wish to do so;

4.   Assistive technology for communication and other instructional purposes which would allow a sense of independence as well as full participation;

5.   Appropriate provision of supports such as sign-language interpretation, Braille which, would then ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all students.

Operationally, this could mean that the needs of the students with disabilities have to be considered at every step of the curriculum-development and teaching and learning process and that adaptation and accommodation options are put into place, perhaps before students are accepted at the Further Education and Training College. For example programmes could be developed with the idea of "course substitution" in mind. Currently, all students have to complete the same subjects within a particular course in order to receive certification. There could be an option where one subject is substituted for another but still allows for the accumulation of credits, which will allow the student to receive full certification. Should this be the case programmes can be adapted around the strengths of students, which inevitably increase student success. By so doing, students

would not feel that support measures have to be put in place especially for those with disabilities; these measures would already be available to any student who chooses to attend a Further Education and Training College.

There should also be a focus on student success through the integration of programmes and services. This could possibly be achieved by having academic staff and support staff work together to ensure success instead of each only focussing on their own area of work. In other words, academic support should not only be role of remedial or other staff, but should be shared by all staff members who come into contact with that student. Likewise, the emotional needs of the student should be taken into consideration and respected by all staff members and not be the sole responsibility of counselling or other specialist members of staff. Such integration leads to the discovery of motivation, which leads to success in basic skills and to achievement in the Further Education and Training College.

It would be beneficial for further research to be conducted into the roles which Colleges themselves play in Inclusive Education discourse and practice. Additionally, investigation into the skill levels and teaching practice of lecturers could be pursued in order to gauge lecturers' opinions and understanding around the notion of inclusion.

5.6   CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the experiences and perceptions of students with and without disabilities at a Further Education and Training Colleges.   These experiences were found to be mostly positive and encouraging to future practices.   This study also provided insight into the legislation surrounding inclusion.   There has also been emphasis on how these policies are currently being implemented and whether these policies and practices allow students with disabilities to access vocational education.   In this light, the study has shown that there is very little concurrence between inclusive education discourse and students experiences   at a Further Education and Training College as their experiences on a day-to-day basis leave them feeling somewhat isolated and misunderstood.

It is evident that only with help from well-qualified, informed and willing lecturers, positive leadership and a welcoming environment, that successful and full inclusion is a possibility.   There are certainly issues that will require continuous attention, which include physical access and the adaptation of curricula offerings. Notwithstanding, providing students with disabilities with the option of being trained vocationally, makes sound economic and social sense.   As such, institutions and educators at all levels have the responsibility of adopting philosophies which encourage inclusion and quality education for all, develop enabling environments and focus on improving student success.

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APPENDIX A:

Letter of approval to conduct Research from Western Cape Education Department

Navrae Enquiries IMibuzo	**Dr RS Cornelissen**
Telefoon Telephone IFoni	(021) 467-2286
Faks Fax IFeksi	(021) 425-7445
Verwysing Reference ISalathiso	20090428-0013

Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

Western Cape Education Department

ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mrs Adele Ebrahim

████████████████████

Dear Mrs A. Ebrahim

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ARTICULATION BETWEEN THE NOTION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND CURRENT PRACTICES WITHIN FET COLLEGES IN THE WESTERN CAPE.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **19th May 2009 to 31st July 2009**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: **19th May 2009**

MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE / NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: http://wced.wcape.gov.za

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INDIENSNEMING- EN SALARISNAVRAE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎0861 92 33 22
VEILIGE SKOLE/SAFE SCHOOLS ☎ 0800 45 46 47

APPENDIX B:

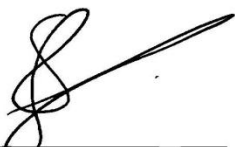## Letter of Approval to conduct research from Further Education and Training College

9 December 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

PERMISSION GRANTED

Permission is granted to Mrs Adele Ebrahim, currently employed as ▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓ Disability Officer, to conduct a study for her proposed Masters in Education dissertation at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓, subject to the submission of her proposal to Management.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive Officer

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARENTS

June 2009

Dear Parent,

I am currently registered as an M.Ed. student at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, researching how the idea of Inclusive Education is perceived by students at our college. In this study I want to explore student's opinions and experiences around inclusive education and how it has been implemented in their learning environment.

I request permission for your daughter/son

....

to participate in this research. As part of my research I will conduct one-on-one interview sessions with each of the participants. I will ensure his/her anonymity and assure you that the information gathered will be treated with the strictest confidence.

I have obtained permission from the Western Cape Education Department and the CEO of the college to conduct my research at this particular college.

Your permission would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Adele Ebrahim

Occupational Therapist

REPLY SLIP

I, Mr/Ms/Mrs ....

hereby give permission/do not give permission for my son/daughter

.... (name)

to participate in the this study.

....

SIGNATURE