

University of the Western Cape

Institute for Post-School Studies: Adult Education

**Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the
Western Cape (WC)**

**A research paper submitted in part fulfillment for the degree of
Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC)**



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December 2019

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report titled 'Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape (WC)' is my own work, that has not been submitted for any degree or examination purposes at any university, and that the sources cited have been acknowledged.

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Signed: 
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, all thanks and praises to the Most High God, our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ who gave me the strength and who held my hand daily since the start of my Master's degree.

Secondly, to my parents and my brothers and sisters, especially my Dad and Mom who remembered me in their prayers daily, who sacrificed with me and who showed me that I am not alone and that they see my Master's degree as important and blessed me daily.

Thirdly, to my supervisor, Ms Rahmat Omar, for her deep knowledge in the field of research, for her patience, understanding and her unique manner in her help, guidance and support towards me from the start to the end of my research paper.

Fourthly, to the Rector and Ministers of Cravenby Congregation, of which one serves in Northway Congregation who remembered me daily in their prayers. A special thanks to the senior members of Cravenby Congregation of which some proceeded into the beyond, and to the Golden Voices members who promised to remember me in their prayers daily and who showed a special interest in my studies.

Fifthly, The TVET College where I conducted my fieldwork and the interviewees who willingly participated in my research.

Finally I want to conclude with the words of JR Ewing, played by Larry Hagman in the 1980s television series called Dallas:

'Anything worth having, is worth going for, all the way'

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AH	Academic Head
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIP	Campus Improvement Plan
CM	Campus Manager
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSG	Development Support Group
FET	Further Education and Training
FETC	Further Education and Training Colleges
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HOD	Head of Department
HRD	Human Resource Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISAT	Integrated Summative Assessment Task
ITEC	International Therapy Examination Council
MALGC	Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education Diploma
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PGP	Personal Growth Plan
PM	Programme Manager
POA	Portfolio of Assessment
PPQLTVET	Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
SAIVCET	South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education

	and Training
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SETA	Skills Education Training Authorities
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WC	Western Cape



KEYWORDS:

Co-participation

Workplace learning

Learning Affordances

Constraints on learning

Guidance and support

Agency

Learning environment

Staff development

TVET College

White Paper for Post-School Education and Training 2013



ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to understand workplaces as learning environments. More specifically, the research explored how a TVET college affords opportunities for lecturers for learning through participation in work activities with guidance and support for learning on the job from peers and more experienced colleagues. The research also explored factors which enable or constrain their learning and how they elected to engage with workplace affordances for learning.

Drawing on data gathered through analysis of national and institutional policies and semi structured interviews this paper argues that The TVET College does offer opportunities for learning on the job for lecturers. The TVET College affords opportunities for participation in authentic work activities through which lecturers can develop knowledge and understanding of the practices which are relevant and applicable to their particular work context. It is also evident that guidance and support from peers and more senior colleagues are available to lecturers, both less and more experienced.

Practices which could become elements of a strategy for co-participation and learning *through* work do exist at The TVET College. However, there are also limitations and it cannot be argued that intentional strategies for learning exist at The TVET College which can be seen as aspects of workplace pedagogy and workplace curriculum.

Finally it is clear that TVET colleges are seen primarily as sites of learning for students; there is little focus on TVET colleges as sites for workplace learning for lecturers. This is an under-researched area in the policy and academic literature on TVET colleges and it is hoped that this study has made a contribution, even if a small one, to filling this gap.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The objective of the research is to explore workplace learning at a TVET College in the Western Cape (WC) which I refer to as 'The TVET College'. I am a lecturer at The TVET College and I undertook this research for the purpose of completing a research paper which forms part of the requirements for the Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC)¹. I took special care as an insider to observe ethical principles of research including the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of The TVET College and the lecturers I interviewed (see Chapter 3, section 6).

I developed an interest in understanding how lecturer development strategies can focus on learning through participation in daily work activities. As a lecturer at The TVET College I share the concern about low throughput rates, particularly at the Engineering and Business Studies campuses and developed an interest in how lecturer development through on-the-job learning can contribute to strengthening lecturers' competence and improving throughput rates.

The research explored the following questions:

1. How does The TVET College afford opportunities for lecturers to learn through participation in normal work activities with guidance and support for this learning from peers and more experienced colleagues?
2. What are the factors that influence how learning at the workplace is enabled or constrained amongst lecturers at The TVET College?
3. How do lecturers elect to engage with these opportunities for learning?

TVET Colleges have experienced different phases of restructuring since 2000 in response to changing policies, including changes to their institutional form, governance, management, staffing and resourcing. In this context staff development focused mainly on formal courses for upgrading staff qualifications and short courses

¹ This research paper contributes 25% to the requirements of the Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC).

for institution-specific needs (as discussed in the next chapter). Learning, guidance and support on the job received limited attention. My research intended to give more attention to this aspect of staff development.

Workplace learning and the nature of workplaces as learning environments are areas that are under-researched, by comparison with research on learning in formal educational institutions (Evans, Hodgkinson, Rainbird and Unwin, 2006). Workplace learning and the nature of workplaces as learning environments have attracted greater attention among academics in South Africa, particularly with the introduction of new policies for restructuring the education and training sector such as the Skills Development Act (1998), SAQA Act (1995) and the White Paper on PSET (2013). Changes in the nature and organisation of work have generated increased interest in workplace learning as a way to improve the competitiveness of industries and companies (Fenwick, 2008). These views have been broadened to go beyond the context of paid work in formal work settings and bring new issues to the attention of researchers about learning in contexts where learning is not the primary purpose.

Apart from being under-researched, the workplace context brings new perspectives to research on learning because it encompasses a wide range of more or less structured environments, which are only rarely structured with learning in mind. This is also true of family and community contexts, which are even more difficult to research (Eraut, 2004, p.247).

In many workplaces learning is not the primary goal; however in TVET colleges, where learning is the primary goal, TVET colleges are seen as sites of learning for students. The college is not seen as a site of workplace learning for the lecturers who work in them. However Eraut (2004, p.247) argued that formal education institutions can be also viewed as workplaces (as discussed in the next chapter). This suggests that the focus on workplace learning can be extended to formal educational settings such as TVET colleges.

Practices which could become elements of a strategy for co-participation and learning *through* work do exist at The TVET College. However, there are also

limitations and it cannot be argued that intentional strategies for learning exist at The TVET College which can be seen as aspects of workplace pedagogy and workplace curriculum.

Finally research on workplace learning in TVET colleges usually focuses on industry or workplace exposure for students or opportunities for lecturers to update their industry knowledge. There is little focus on workplace learning for lecturers in their workplace – The TVET College. My research aims to contribute to this under-researched area.

The research paper is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Analysis of Policies

Chapter 5: Interview Data

Chapter 6: Analysis, Discussion and Recommendations for further research



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores some of the main themes in the literature relevant to my research on understanding affordances and constraints for learning for lecturers at The TVET College through participation in daily work activities with guidance and support from more experienced peers or senior colleagues.

TVET colleges have experienced several phases of restructuring as part of broader policy efforts for transforming the education and training system, with TVET colleges seen as part of post-school education and training (PSET) in the most recent policy, the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013). I looked at the literature on TVET colleges to gain an understanding of developments in the sector since 2013 when FET colleges became TVET colleges. These developments helped me to locate lecturer development initiatives through workplace learning within a broader context.

There is a limited focus in this literature on how lecturers learn through participation in daily work activities, as discussed further below. I therefore looked at literature relating to workplace learning in different contexts to identify the main issues and arguments relating to my research questions.

This chapter encompasses the following sections:

2. Restructuring and TVET Colleges in South Africa
3. The importance of researching workplace learning
4. Workplace learning: definitions
5. Situated learning
6. Co-participation
7. Relevance to my research

2.2. RESTRUCTURING AND TVET COLLEGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.2.1. Restructuring

TVET colleges have experienced different phases of restructuring since 2000 in response to changing policies. The most recent policy, the White Paper for PSET

(DHET, 2013), envisages that these colleges will become part of a post-school education and training sector. The renaming of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges occurred in the context of this policy.

Research on TVET colleges in the South African context has focused mainly on issues related to this restructuring, such as policy discourses, contested agendas for transformation, governance, financing or resource issues and improving student performance (Maringe and Osman 2016; Vally and Motala, 2014; Moyo 2007; Wedekind, 2010; Kraak *et al.*, 2016).

Important themes in the literature include the curriculum and employability (Wedekind and Muterero, 2014), the relationship between knowledge and practice in apprenticeships (Gamble, 2009; 2004; 2001) and in the vocational education curriculum (Gamble, 2006; 2003). Many of these studies focus on how people learn through practice to perform their roles competently. It is accepted that a combination of knowledge and practice (or workplace learning) is needed and it is assumed that the knowledge needed as a foundation for the practice component is taught in educational institutions. The emphasis should then be placed on the provision of opportunities to gain 'real world' practical experience in order to develop reflexive competence (Gamble, 2009).

Similarly Papier and Vollenhoven (2017) focused on integration of work and learning in training of artisans at intermediate level. Other research has focused on learning and development in professions such as teaching (Ono and Ferreira, 2010) and nursing (Pimmer, *et al.*, 2014).

Other themes in the literature relate to challenges facing lecturers in the context of restructuring, including onerous administrative duties, understaffing, overload and exhaustion, lecturer motivation/morale, tensions at work and the role of management (Mokone, 2011; Buthelezi, 2018). While these studies did not focus directly on learning in or through work they point to issues which have surfaced in my research as factors which influence learning on the job (see Chapter 5).

2.2.2. Lecturer development

Some studies on lecturer development focused on analysing the training needs of lecturers in the context of restructuring (Zinn, *et al.*, 2019). Some attention has been given to the restructuring of lecturer qualifications at TVET colleges. DHET has gazetted the Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Government Gazette, No. 36554, 2013). These qualifications, to be implemented as from 2016, have been designed to specify the knowledge and skills necessary for lecturers within the TVET sector and to separate the qualifications requirements for TVET college lecturers from those of school teachers who have come into TVET colleges with qualifications for teaching in schools (Van der Bijl and Taylor, 2016, p.98).

Further attention has been drawn to the upgrading of lecturers' qualifications through a three-pronged strategy - the introduction of a new qualification specifically designed for TVET college lecturers, design of curricula and programmes by universities and developing a new professional identity in line with the unique role and responsibility of TVET college lecturers arising out of their 'dual role which spans the divide between the academy and the workplace' (Papier, 2011, p.101).

The notion of vocational pedagogy has surfaced in debates about constructing a curriculum for the training of vocational educators and how this differs from the training of school-teachers in South Africa (Papier, 2012). The idea of 'dual professionalism' (Peel, 2005 in Papier, 2019, p.98) sees lecturers as having one foot in the world of education and one foot in the world of work and raises important questions about workplace learning in the sense of industry exposure or experience for lecturers.

There is also a focus on work-integrated learning which explores how programmes and curricula for students at TVET colleges can respond to the needs of different industries and workplaces. Since preparation of students for these industries and workplaces lies with lecturers, greater attention is being focused on strategies used by lecturers recruited from industry for keeping their industry knowledge and skills updated and relevant once they have been employed as TVET college lecturers (Oosthuizen and Van der Bijl, 2019, p.208).

However, there are relatively few studies on lecturer development through workplace learning at their sites of work i.e. TVET colleges. Some studies have emphasised the importance of this workplace learning and suggested that stakeholders, such as the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and TVET colleges themselves must ensure that lecturers learn at work (Van der Bijl and Taylor, 2016).

However, little attention has been given to lecturers' own perspectives about learning at the workplace through participation in daily work activities.

Furthermore there is relatively little research on learning in the workplace from the perspective of adult learning theory. Studies on learning in the insurance industry, for example, are done mostly from human resource development perspectives (Taylor and Govender, 2013). Some studies using adult learning theory have focused on learning in settings such as communities or social movements from a popular education perspective (Ismail, 2009) and experiences of mature adults who have returned to study in higher education settings (Ronnie, 2016; 2008).

Despite these limitations, looking at this literature has been useful for my research. It helped me to understand how the different phases of restructuring impacted on the role of lecturers within the TVET sector and the challenges which impact on their learning.

My research focused on learning in the workplace through participation in daily work activities. Therefore, I turned to the literature on workplace learning which is relevant to my research, as discussed below.

2.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCHING WORKPLACE LEARNING

Workplace learning and the nature of workplaces as learning environments have attracted greater attention among academics in South Africa, particularly with the introduction of new policies for restructuring the education and training sector such as the Skills Development Act (1998), SAQA Act (1995) and the White Paper on PSET (2013). Changes in the nature and organisation of work have generated

increased interest in workplace learning as a way to improve the competitiveness of industries and companies (Fenwick, 2008).

Learning for paid work takes place in settings where employers try to improve workers' knowledge, skills and attributes as a form of human capital which is seen as a source of competitive advantage for industries and organisations (Hunter, 2014, p.49).

Learning in the workplace, like learning in family and community settings, occurs in contexts in which learning is not the primary goal and generates new issues for research on learning:

Apart from being under-researched, the workplace context brings new perspectives to research on learning because it encompasses a wide range of more or less structured environments, which are only rarely structured with learning in mind. This is also true of family and community contexts, which are even more difficult to research (Eraut, 2004, p.247).

An interesting point for my research is the comment that the focus on workplace learning can be extended to formal education:

However, I would argue that formal education can be also viewed as a workplace and uses a discourse in which the term 'work' is normally quite prominent. Students are given work to do and described as good or hard 'workers'. Moreover, it is usually the work that is structured and not the learning... (Eraut, 2004, p.247).

My research focuses on learning by lecturers through participation in their daily work activities in their workplace which is a formal educational institution. TVET colleges are usually viewed as institutions where students learn and obtain a qualification. On the other hand, TVET colleges are workplaces for lecturers and can be designed in a way that enables their learning on the job. My research aims to contribute to research on workplace learning through a focus on how lecturers learn in their workplace, The TVET College.

2.4. WORKPLACE LEARNING: DEFINITIONS

According to Boud and Garrick (1999), workplace learning has two purposes. Employees learn in the workplace and gain knowledge and skills that they use within the company to perform the tasks that they are expected to do as part of their job and to meet company objectives. The second purpose is for personal development, development of knowledge and skills that individuals can apply as citizens in society and for further learning. Boud and Garrick (1999, p.6) comment that:

The workplace has become a site of learning associated with two different purposes...The first is the development of the enterprise through contributing to production, effectiveness and innovation; the second is the development of individuals through contributing to knowledge, skills and the capacity to further their own learning both as employees and citizens in the wider society.

Others have shifted the focus from the purposes of workplace learning to identifying different approaches to learning and work, as discussed below.

Workplace learning has often been associated with training or participating in courses or workshops. In this view working and learning are seen as completely separate processes which occur in different settings:

Most respondents still equate learning with formal education and training, and assume that working and learning are two quite separate activities that never overlap, whereas our findings have always demonstrated the opposite, i.e. that most workplace learning occurs on the job rather than off the job (Eraut, 2004, p.249).

There is a distinction between training and workplace learning. Training usually refers to activities which take place off the job or away from the job (Stevens *et al.*, 2001 in Manuti *et al.*, 2015, p.3). These activities may take place in-house, in the workplace but off the job, and are structured learning experiences often delivered by professional trainers. Learning at work, on the other hand, is seen as learning on the

job through experience of different work activities which include discussing, observing, asking questions and problem solving (ibid).

A distinction is also made between workplace learning as formal and informal. Formal learning in the workplace is associated with formal training and education and it is usually 'part of an organised workplace-accredited programme, embedded within the organisation's authority and accountability structure' (Owen, 2001 in Silverman, 2003, p.1) while informal learning is 'a process of learning that takes place in everyday work experience' (ibid). Similarly workplace learning is seen as 'the acquisition of knowledge or skills by formal or informal means that occurs in the workplace' (Cacciattolo, 2015, pp.243-244).

While recognising that these distinctions between formal and informal may be commonly used I noted the comment by Eraut (2004) that a simple contrast between informal and formal learning is not useful and that they could be viewed rather as points on a continuum:

Since I deplore dichotomies as indicators of lazy thinking, I refer to informal learning as learning that comes closer to the informal end than the formal end of a continuum... (Eraut, 2004, p.350).

Sambrook (2005) defined workplace learning in terms of the location of opportunities for learning i.e. [outside], at or in work:

It is useful to consider the various opportunities for learning in terms of where they occur – outside work, at the place of work and in work i.e. embedded within work processes, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Sambrook, 2005, p.105).

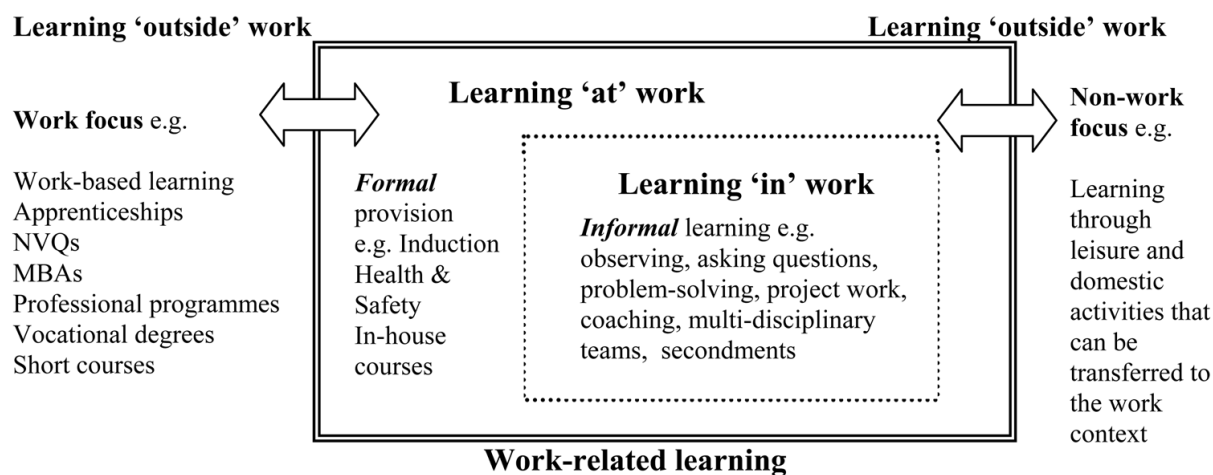


Figure 1: Defining work-related learning – learning [outside], at and in work (Sambrook, 2005, p.105).

Similarly, Stern and Sommerland (1999, p.5) created three categories of workplace learning depending on whether 'learning and working are spatially separated'. The first two categories are the workplace as a site for learning and the workplace as a learning environment. The third category sees learning and work as inextricably linked.

Where the workplace is seen as a site for learning, working and learning takes place at different locations for example 'in-house training' where 'structured learning activity takes place near the job or out of work'. This is similar to Sambrook's category of learning at the place of work as distinct from in work (Sambrook, 2005, p.105).

The second category is the workplace itself as a learning environment and focuses on a variety of 'on-the-job training activities' such as coaching, mentoring, job rotation and team-working (Sambrook, 2005, p.105).

The third category sees learning and work as inextricably linked. Employees are seen as active participants in learning while engaging in their daily work tasks and activities. Employees learn how to become learners themselves and learn skills related to their own job (Stern and Sommerland, 1999, p.5).

There are similarities between the categories used by Sambrook (2005), Stern and Sommerland (1999) and Stevens *et al.*, (2001). Stern and Sommerland's category of on-the-job training activities are similar to Sambrook's category of learning '*in*' work, which emerges from observing, asking questions, coaching and mentoring and so forth. Both refer to in-house training, which takes place 'near the job' (Stern and Sommerland, 1999) or off the job or away from the job (Stevens *et al.*, 2001). These categories in turn are similar to Sambrook's (2005) learning '*at*' work (Sambrook, 2005, p.105).

These distinctions help 'to remove the barrier of workplace learning being viewed as... 'going on courses' and to recognize the value of 'finding things out on-the-job' (Sambrook, 2005, p.105). In other words, workplace learning does not revolve around attending courses at the workplace; workplace learning includes learning on the job and learning in practice.

These distinctions are also useful for identifying the focus of my research which is on learning '*in*' work through participation in everyday work activities (Sambrook, 2005, p.105) and understanding the workplace as a learning environment (Stern and Sommerland, 1999, p.5) in which a variety of on-the-job activities are designed to promote learning (Sambrook, 2005, p.105).

I drew on the idea of learning '*in*' work and understanding the workplace as a learning environment to explore issues relevant to my research about affordances and constraints for learning through participation in everyday work activities.

2.5. SITUATED LEARNING

Situated Learning as used by Lave and Wenger (1991) refers to learning which happens through a series of activities in a set context and culture or community of practice. They present case studies of situated learning in apprenticeships of midwives, tailors, quartermasters, butchers and nondrinking alcoholics i.e. recovering alcoholics (Lave and Wenger, 1991, pp.65-66).

Lave and Wenger (1991) use the term 'legitimate peripheral participation' to explore how learning takes place through a process whereby 'newcomers' or novices learn from 'old-timers' by participating alongside the old-timers in a range of work activities in a community of practice. Ultimately the 'newcomers' or novices build their skills, knowledge and competence until they achieve full participation within that particular community of practice. According to this perspective, learning involves the 'whole' person (not just the mind) where through participation, 'agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.31).

Wenger (1998, p.95) also looked at workplace learning using a Community of Practice approach. In his case study of claim assessors and managers he argued that many employees do not think of their practice or participation in work activities as learning:

They talk about change, about new ideas, about performance levels, about the old days. The concept of learning is not absent from the claims processing office, but it is used mainly for trainees. And yet, when I posed the question directly to them, claim processors all agreed that they were learning continually. One reason they do not think of their job as learning is that what they learn is their practice. Learning is not reified as an extraneous goal or as a special category of activity or membership. Their practice is not merely a context for learning something else. Engagement in practice – in its unfolding, multidimensional complexity – is the stage and the object, the road and the destination. What they learn is not a static subject matter but the very process of being engaged in, and participating in developing, an ongoing practice.

However, Rainbird, Munro and Holly (2001 in Lee *et al.*, 2004, p.10) are broadly critical of the work of Lave and Wenger and comment that 'the communities of practice they examine, which illustrate and support their theory, are not representative of most contemporary workplaces and work organisations'.

Furthermore, Fuller and Munro (2004 in Lee *et al.*, 2004, p.10) argue that there are limitations in the work of Lave and Wenger - such as that there is little attention or focus on how old-timers continue to learn or that others can learn from newcomers;

that previous learning is not acknowledged and issues of power, inequality and conflict are not considered.

In the light of these comments I turned to Billett's (2001) conception of learning as co-participation which addresses some of the shortcomings identified above. It allowed me to focus on the learning of both experienced and less experienced lecturers, to explore whether sharing of knowledge and skills is seen as learning and to explore issues of power, inequality and conflict in relation to factors which enable or constrain learning.

2.6. CO-PARTICIPATION

Billett (2004) suggests that there is a structured way of learning at the workplace which involves co-participation - an 'interdependent process of engagement in and learning through work' (Billett, 2004, p.9). This process involves:

the interaction between the learning affordances and constraints of the workplace, on the one hand, and the agency and biography of the individual participant, on the other (Billett, 2004, p.9).

2.6.1. Learning through co-participation

The concept of co-participation highlights how affordances are offered for learning 'through' work i.e. through participation in daily work activities, ranging from simple to more complex and challenging activities, with guidance and support from an experienced peer or senior colleague within a workplace. Normally the more experienced person takes the lead in the daily work activities in a workplace. Co-participation also highlights how individuals exercise agency – how individuals choose to engage with affordances for learning in the workplace including opportunities to participate in a range of work activities and access guidance and support (Billett, 2004, p.191).

Employees learn from one another through engaging in daily tasks and activities and working together to find solutions to problems that arise on a daily basis within the workplace. This helps in eliminating recurring problems in the workplace as well as creating opportunities for employees to learn from one another (Cacciattolo, 2015,

p.243). Often newcomers or less experienced employees learn from more experienced employees who are seen as being in the best position to provide guidance:

the veteran is the best source of information about a new job, they will be able to tell the new employees about the challenges the job presents and changes that need to be made (Silverman, 2003, p.14).

Learning in the workplace is seen as purposeful, planned, and structured. In other words, learning in or through work occurs through a process of guided learning (Billett, 2001) which involves a workplace pedagogy and workplace curriculum.

2.6.2. Workplace pedagogy

Workplace pedagogy, according to Billett (2001, p.1) is based on three elements - affordances for learning through exposure to work activities, guidance and support for learning, and exercise of agency by individuals in deciding how to engage with such affordances and how to access guidance and support (Billett, 2001, p.1).

The first element is how the workplace affords opportunities for participation in or exposure to the full range of work activities required to develop competence. This requires exposure to a pathway of activities ranging from simple routine tasks to complex and more challenging tasks. Learning - intentional and unintentional - can take place if guidance and support is offered at every step during such participation and exposure.

Guidance and support can be direct or indirect. Direct support and guidance includes coaching and modelling by experienced peers. Indirect guidance refers to opportunities to observe in the workplace, finish partially completed jobs and similar activities. Guidance and support in the workplace works best during interaction between less experienced individuals and their more experienced peers and intentional and unintentional guided learning can occur through guidance and support provided during exposure to and participation in work activities, both routine and complex (Billett, 2002, p.29).

The third element relates to agency - that is how individuals exercise their agency by deciding whether or how to respond to opportunities for learning and accessing guidance in the workplace (Billett, 2002, pp.29-30). How individuals choose to engage is influenced by various factors in the workplace, as discussed below in the section on workplaces as learning environments.

These factors point to shortcomings or limitations in focusing on learning only through everyday participation in work activities (Billett, 2001, p.3). To overcome these shortcomings or limitations, Billett (2001) argues that a 'workplace curriculum' is needed in conjunction with the workplace pedagogy to develop 'robust vocational knowledge' - that is 'knowledge that offers the prospect of transfer across situations and circumstances in which the vocation is practiced' Billett (2001, p.1).

2.6.3. Workplace curriculum

A 'workplace curriculum' comprises three levels of guided learning - everyday participation in work activities, guided learning for work and guided learning for transfer (Billett, 2001, p.3).

Participation in work activities includes everyday work activities which become increasingly complex and more challenging. The progress of individuals is monitored as they proceed through the full range of work activities and the different phases or steps in these work activities. This applies to both novices and experienced employees.

Guided learning for work is the second level of the workplace curriculum. Work is organised to ensure participation in authentic work activities (i.e. real time, not simulated activities) so that individuals can develop knowledge and understanding of practices which are relevant and applicable to that particular work context. Guidance and support is provided at every step including modelling, coaching, questioning, analogies (making comparison) and diagnosis. This type of knowledge and understanding cannot be developed by the learner on his/her own. Guidance and support is needed from someone who is more experienced.

Guided learning for transfer involves the use of strategies to develop 'robust vocational knowledge' which refers to 'knowledge that offers the prospect of transfer across situations and circumstances in which the vocation is practiced' Billett (2001, p.1). Strategies include the use of questioning dialogues, the interaction in groups and reflective practices.

The three interdependent planes or levels of guided learning should occur simultaneously as part of everyday work activities, rather than being separate and remote from authentic work activities.

Through such a workplace curriculum and pedagogy individuals can learn to assess the scope and limits of their present knowledge and how this can be extended to enable the transfer of their knowledge to novel tasks and new circumstances (Billett, 2001, p.3).

2.6.4. Workplaces as learning environments

According to Billett (2001) if the workplace is to operate as a learning environment, learners must be given opportunities for **full** participation at work. As discussed above this means they must have exposure to and opportunities to participate in work activities from simple routine tasks to increasingly complex activities and must have access to guidance and support. If employees are limited to do certain tasks, or if they are unable to access guidance and support their learning will be limited.

Although the workplace provides opportunities or affordances for learning for employees there are constraints which restrict or limit the ability of employees to take advantage of affordances for learning in the workplace and optimising their learning.

According to Billett (2001, p.5):

Affordances are constituted in workplaces, shaped by workplace hierarchies, group affiliations, personal relations, workplace cliques and cultural practices. It seems that beyond judgements of individuals' competence, opportunities to participate are distributed on bases including race (Hull, 1997), gender (Tam,

1997), worker or employment status (Darrah, 1996) and affiliations (Billett, 1999b).

Furthermore, employees may not learn to do things in the correct way and may form bad habits. There may be conflict between employees, including disagreements and competition against each other. Furthermore opportunities to learn in the workplace may not be accessible or opportunities may be there but employees may not have prior experience or knowledge they need to benefit from these opportunities or may not be willing to take advantage of these opportunities.

In conclusion, Billett (2001) argues that ‘the way workplaces afford opportunities for learning and how individuals elect to engage in activities...with the support and guidance provided by the workplace, is central to understanding workplaces as learning environments’ (Billett, 2001, p.209).

In making these arguments he challenges negative perceptions about workplace learning including perceptions that workplace learning is inferior in quality to learning in formal education institutions (Billett, 2002, p.58). He asserts that describing workplace learning as “informal’ learning environments is negative, inaccurate and ill-focused’ (Billett, 2002, p.58) and that ‘in workplaces there are intentions for work practice, structured goal directed activities that are central to organisational continuity’ (ibid). This suggests that these negative perceptions are based on a failure to acknowledge that workplace curriculum and workplace pedagogy can be found in the workplace. In other words, workplaces can in fact be designed to act as learning environment.

2.7. RELEVANCE TO MY RESEARCH

I explored my research questions through analysis of national and institutional policies. National policies included the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013) and the policy on the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for FET College based Educators (DHET, 2005). I also analysed institutional policies including The TVET College Institutional Policy (2013) and Departmental Reviews at The TVET College. My focus was on understanding what the policies say

about the issues relevant to my research about how lecturers learn through co-participation, particularly through participation in everyday work activities with guidance and support from peers or more senior colleagues.

The analysis of policies could not help me understand about how lecturers view and experience these affordances for learning in work at the TVET College – hence I conducted semi structured interviews. The next chapter discusses the methodology including the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis as used in this research paper.



CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research approach and methods which I used to explore my research questions and includes a discussion of the research site, the research methods and how ethical principles were observed in this research process. My comments are presented under the following headings:

2. Research site
3. Research approach and methodology
4. Data collection methods
5. Data analysis
6. Ethical issues
7. Conclusion

3.2. RESEARCH SITE

The research was conducted at a TVET College in the Western Cape (WC) which I refer to as 'The TVET College' in accordance with ethical requirements as discussed below (section 6).

The research took place at two campuses - an Engineering Studies campus that offers a National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) now known as Report 191 courses and a Business Studies campus which offers National Certificate: Vocational (NCV) courses, that are pre-matriculation courses offered at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels two to four².

The TVET College was an appropriate site for exploring my research questions. The TVET College is focusing on lecturer development through upgrading lecturers' qualifications and skills. Further, national policies focus on upgrading qualifications for lecturers (for example lecturers who have trade qualifications are expected to gain teaching qualifications) and all lecturers must have SETA accreditation as assessors and moderators. However there is little focus on how lecturers learn through participation in their normal work activities and how they access guidance

² Levels two to four are equivalent to Grade 10, 11 and 12 respectively in the school system.

and support in the workplace. Similarly there is little consideration of the College as an environment for workplace learning for those who work in the college.

Another reason why I selected The TVET College is that I am a lecturer at the NCV Business Studies campus and I have knowledge as an insider, which was useful in my research I have easy access to The TVET College institutional policy documents and to the lecturers for interviews. On the other hand my insider status could be a source of potential bias. It is possible that interviewees would give responses that would be in line with what the interviewer wants to hear. While acknowledging this as a possible limitation, it is more likely that interviewees spoke openly in this context as I did not have any power over them; they could speak to me freely, as I was their colleague and did not play a supervisory or evaluative role in relation to their work, as discussed further in the section on ethical considerations (3.6).

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

I adopted a qualitative research approach as it was appropriate for my research which explored the perspectives of insiders such as lecturers at The TVET College about understanding their workplace as a learning environment.

Babbie and Mouton state that qualitative research is about 'describing and understanding rather than the explanation and prediction of human behaviour' (2016, p. 646). They describe qualitative research as research that 'takes its departure point as the insider perspectives on social action [and] attempt always to study human action from the insiders' perspectives' (ibid).

Bryman states that qualitative research 'usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data' and that 'as a research strategy it is inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist, but qualitative researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these features' (2016, p.694). In my research I explored the viewpoints of lecturers at The TVET College to grasp how they understand their workplace as a learning environment.

A constructivist approach is 'an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors' (Bryman, 2016, p.689). Through my research I gathered data about lecturers' views and perspectives on affordances for learning in their workplace. Insights and understandings of these issues were constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the lecturers.

This means that the researcher brings potential influence to the research in contrast to the idea that the researcher does not influence the data gathered and that the investigation is done objectively. Interviewees commented on their experiences and gave their views about learning through participation in daily work activities. I then considered their responses as the researcher and constructed my analysis and interpretation. I supplemented this with my analysis of the national and institutional policies. This constructivist position allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of how lecturers at The TVET College understand their workplace as a learning environment.

An inductivist approach is 'an approach to the relationships between theory and research in which the former is generated out of the latter' (Bryman, 2016, p. 691). My initial research findings arose from an analysis of the research data collected through interviews and document analysis. These findings were then examined further in relation to concepts and issues identified in the literature review to generate the findings and conclusions of the research.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection methods refer to the process of gathering data from the research sample to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Commonly used methods in qualitative research include document analysis, interviews, focus groups and observation. I made use of analysis of policy documents and semi-structured interviews to collect the data for exploring my research questions.

3.4.1. Analysis of Policies

Bryman refers to qualitative content analysis and states that it is ‘an approach to documents that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of and in texts’ (2016, p.694).

In this study I analysed national and institutional policy documents. National policies included the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013), DHET’s Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for FET College based Educators (2005) and the Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2013). Institutional policies included The TVET College institutional policy document (2013) which I refer to as The Manual in accordance with ethical requirements of protecting the identity of the institution.

Bryman explains that qualitative content analysis is done whereby:

an emphasis on allowing categories to emerge out of data and on recognizing the significance, for understanding the meaning of the context in which an item being analysed (and the categories derived from it) appeared (2016, p. 694).

I first read the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) to gain an overall sense of the policy and to understand the background to the comments in the White Paper on TVET colleges as part of the post-school sector. I then looked at what the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) says about lecturer development.

Secondly, I read The TVET College institutional policy document (2013) to understand what is expected of lecturers at The TVET Colleges and what the institutional policies say about opportunities for learning on the job for lecturers at The TVET College with guidance and support from peers or more experienced colleagues.

The content analysis of national and institutional policy documents helped me to understand the policy context in which The TVET College operates, the environment in which lecturer development is considered and what the policies say about learning in the workplace. My comments in Chapter 4 are based on an analysis of these policies and my knowledge and understanding of these processes (such as the

IQMS, performance reviews and departmental reviews) as they are implemented at The TVET College.

3.4.2. Semi structured interviews

Bryman refers to semi-structured interviews as a term that:

refers to the context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but is able to vary the sequence of questions (Bryman, 2016, p.696).

He further states that the 'interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies' (ibid).

I used semi-structured interviews to gain a better understanding of lecturers' views about how The TVET College affords learning opportunities for lecturers on the job (particularly through participation in work activities) and how lecturers elect to participate in and take advantage of these opportunities for learning. The interviews also focused on guidance and support for learning from peers or more senior colleagues and factors in the workplace environment that enabled or constrained their learning.

The interview schedule (Annexure 4) was used to guide the interviews and was designed to include open-ended questions. Bryman describes an open-ended question as:

a question employed in an interview schedule or self-administered questionnaire that does not present the respondent with a set of possible answers to choose from (2016, p.693).

This enabled me to explore lecturers' responses to questions about affordances for on-the-job learning, mentoring, guidance and support on the job, factors that enable or constrain learning and how lecturers choose to engage with learning opportunities at The TVET College.

Using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions gave me flexibility in using the interview questions which I had prepared beforehand to guide and focus the interviews. I could change the sequence in which questions were asked and I could probe further when interviewees' responses required further exploration as explained below (3.4.2.3).

3.4.2.1. *Sampling*

Bryman defines purposive sampling as:

a form of non-probability sample in which the researcher aims to sample cases or participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed (Bryman, 2016, p.694).

I used purposive sampling to identify interviewees (lecturers) for the semi-structured interviews. I identified and selected interviewees according to criteria relevant to this research, as explained below.

My research was guided by the concept of co-participation (Billett, 2001, 2002, 2004) which emphasises the interaction between more experienced and less experienced lecturers at work. My sample of interviewees consisted of five less experienced lecturers (with less than ten years' experience) and five more experienced lecturers (with ten years' experience or more). My interviewees consisted of male and female lecturers. The sample was fairly small due to limitations of completing a research paper which forms part of the requirements for completing the Master's degree.

Initially I sent out invitational letters (Annexure 6) via email to lecturers at the Engineering Studies campus whose names appeared on a list provided by the Campus Manager. I approached potential interviewees on the basis of my own knowledge of who are less and more experienced. I received one positive response from a female lecturer who was willing to participate in an interview. Two male lecturers from the Engineering Studies campus declined the invitation to participate in this research; other lecturers on the list did not respond even after several requests. I then approached lecturers at the Business Studies campus where I am

based and was able to secure agreement from nine lecturers who were willing to be interviewed.

The profile of interviewees in the table below (Table 1: Interviewees) shows that the interview sample included a good combination of less experienced and more experienced lecturers with five male and five female lecturers over the two campuses of The TVET College.

Table 1: Interviewees

Number	Pseudonym	Gender	Experienced	Subjects they teach	Departments	First Language	Experienced
1.	Neil	Male	4 years	Public Health	Primary Health	Afrikaans	Less experienced
2.	Jason	Male	5 years	Policing	Safety in Society	Afrikaans	Less experienced
3.	Timothy	Male	6 years	Mathematical Literacy	Wholesale and Retail	Shona	Less experienced
4.	Chantal	Female	6 years	Mathematical Literacy	Safety in Society	Xhosa	Less experienced
5.	Cleo	Female	9 years	English	Electrical Infrastructure Construction and Civil Engineering & Building Construction	English	Less experienced
6.	Carmen	Female	13 years	Beauty Therapy	Cosmetology	Afrikaans	More experienced
7.	Heather	Female	17 years	Mathematical Literacy	Safety in Society and Primary Health	Afrikaans	More experienced
8.	Martha	Female	33 years	Office Practice	Office Administration	Afrikaans	More experienced
9.	Samuel	Male	34 years	Mathematical	Safety in	Afrikaans	More

				Literacy	Society		experienced
10.	Piet	Male	42 years	Business Practice and Computer Practice	Office Administration	Afrikaans	More experienced

3.4.2.2. Interview preparation

Interview questions, letters to interviewees and consent forms were drawn up beforehand and submitted for approval with my research proposal as part of my ethics clearance application at the university.

When I sent out the invitational letter to my interviewees requesting their participation in my research I also attached an Information Sheet (Annexure 2) about the research project, the objectives of my research and the risks and benefits of my research. I also attached the Interview Consent Form (Annexure 3) outlining my research project, my contact details as the researcher, their rights as interviewees and a request for the interviewee to sign the form as an indication of his/her consent to take part in my research. The Information Sheet and Interviewee Consent Form were discussed again during interviews to ensure informed consent. I highlighted that I am a student at the University and that the research was for academic purposes only as part of the requirements for completing the Master's degree.

3.4.2.3. Interviews

Interviews took place in October 2017 at a time and date convenient to the research subjects. Interviews took place in one of the classrooms at the college. The interviews were conducted when the campus was quiet and conducive to conducting a conversation with interviewees.

I conducted semi-structured interviews as indicated above, using an interview schedule with a number of open-ended questions I had prepared beforehand (Annexure 4). With open-ended questions I could explore lecturers' views about their experiences of learning on the job at The TVET College and how they choose to take advantage of these opportunities for learning.

The interviews explored issues such as affordances for learning through participation in daily work activities; guidance and support from peers or more experienced colleagues, factors in the workplace that enable or constrain learning and how lecturers choose to engage with learning opportunities at the College. I encouraged interviewees to speak openly. If interviewees were uncertain, I assured them that their comments would be treated confidentially and that their identities would be protected by using pseudonyms. At the start of all the interviews I asked the interviewees to view the Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) (Annexure 7). I reminded them that the interview will be recorded referring interviewees to point 4 in the Interview Consent Form, where it reads: *I agree to the interview/consultation being audio recorded*. Interviewees completed and signed the Consent Form and I completed and signed the section relevant to me as the researcher. Each interviewee had in front of them a copy of the Interview Schedule with the questions I had prepared and circulated beforehand to guide the interview.

The interviewees were relaxed and in some instances good-humoured, in saying they were excited to be interviewed and to share their insights with me as a colleague and researcher. With some interviewees I had to explain words like 'affordances' and other questions. Some of the responses from the interviewees were in Afrikaans and I had to give the English word here and there.

On average the interviews lasted for forty minutes. All interviewees are from the NCV Business Studies campus, except for Cleo who is from the Engineering Studies campus. She is the only interviewee who has English as the first language. However, all academics are expected to teach in English and the interviewees are all proficient in English.

The open-ended questions that I had prepared beforehand were very useful in helping me and interviewees to stay focused and keep to the point. I could also probe interviewees' responses in order to gain a deeper insight. For example the response of one of the interviewees was that she received assistance from

management. I could probe and explore further to elicit a fuller comment on how this assistance was provided and by whom.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

I employed thematic analysis to analyse the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis according to Bryman is 'a term used in connection with the analysis of qualitative data to refer to the extraction of key themes in one's data' (2016, p.697). Further, he says 'it is a rather diffuse approach with few generally agreed principles for defining core themes in data' (ibid).

I developed core themes for analysing the data, by drawing on the research questions and key issues identified in the literature review (including affordances for learning, guidance and support, factors which enable or constrain learning, and agency and engagement). I transcribed all the semi-structured interviews and first organised the data under headings derived from the interview questions (such as roles and responsibilities at work, exposure to role-related work activities, learning from peers and senior colleagues or more experienced colleagues, agency and engagement, etc). I looked for similarities and differences and for comments that I thought were particularly striking. I then related the data to the themes I have developed and formulated initial research findings. I then discussed these findings in relation to the issues and themes which have arisen during the analysis and in the literature review.

My analysis is presented in Chapter 4 (Analysis of policies) and Chapter 5 (Interview data).

3.6. ETHICAL ISSUES

I paid careful attention to ethical issues in preparing for and conducting the research, particularly since I am an insider as a lecturer at The TVET College. I paid particular attention to securing informed consent, using pseudonyms to protect the identity of the institution and interviewees and other issues as discussed below.

3.6.1. Access and permission

I requested permission in writing from the CEO and campus managers to conduct the research at The TVET College. I was granted permission to conduct the research via the deputy CEO (Education and Training) in a form of a formal letter.

It was relatively easy to gain permission to conduct my research at The TVET College in the light of the fact that I am a lecturer at the college and the senior managers know me and are aware that I am conducting the research for my Master's degree studies.

3.6.2. Informed consent

An important ethical issue was to ensure that participants give informed consent. At the start of the interview, I gave each interviewee an information letter, consent form to sign and interview schedule before the actual interview. At the start of the interview, I checked that participants understood the contents. I then explained that participation in the interviews was completely voluntary and highlighted their rights such as the right to anonymity and confidentiality and the right to withdraw their participation at any stage.

3.6.3. Confidentiality

I then explained to the interviewees that I used pseudonyms for each interviewee, and that the name of the college has also been replaced with a pseudonym. I also explained that I stored all interview recordings/notes, transcripts, and contact details the research subjects securely - hard copies were stored in a locked filing cabinet at home, and only I have the key and access to the filing cabinet. Electronic copies were kept on my personal computer, and secured/protected with a password. No one else is allowed to use my personal computer. Back up electronic copies were kept on a hard drive or external hard drive which are secured with a password and are stored in the locked filing cabinet to which only I have access.

3.6.4. Power relations and conflict of interest.

I was conscious of the fact that being an insider could give me certain advantages as pointed out earlier; but could also be a potential source of bias. There is a possibility that interviewees might not speak honestly and might say what they thought I wanted to hear. In other words it could lead to a potential bias in the data. I am convinced that interviewees spoke freely, openly and honestly as they regarded me as a colleague. At the time of the interviewees I was at the same post level as all my interviewees and I had no power over them. I also explained the risks and benefits involved in my research and that interviewees could withdraw from the research at any time with no consequences to themselves.

Further, I gave interviewees an opportunity to ask questions. None of the interviewees asked questions, however, they were excited to be selected to be part of my research.

Finally I assured interviewees that I am conducting my research in part fulfilment of the requirements of the Master's degree and that my interest is for academic purposes only. In addition, I indicated that my research will help develop my knowledge and understanding on the issues I am researching and that I will receive no financial benefit for conducting my research in the same way as there are no financial rewards for their participation in interviews.

Interviewees voluntarily decided to participate in my research and signed the consent forms.

3.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research approach, research site and research methods used in this study. I discussed ethical principles of research relevant to my role as an insider at The TVET College. The findings of the research are presented in Chapter 6.

In the next chapter I present my analysis of national and institutional policies.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF POLICIES

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present an analysis of national and institutional policy documents. The national policies include the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013) and the policy on the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for FET College based Educators (DHET, 2005). I also analysed institutional policies including The TVET College Institutional Policy (2013) referred to as The Manual and Departmental Reviews at The TVET College.

I focused on understanding what the policies say about the issues relevant to my research about how lecturers learn through co-participation, particularly through participation in everyday work activities with guidance and support from peers or more senior colleagues.

This chapter encompasses the following sections:

2. White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013)
3. Qualifications for lecturers in TVET Colleges
4. Institutional Policy Document: The TVET College Manual (2013)
5. Integrated Quality Management System
6. Departmental Reviews
7. Conclusion

4.2. WHITE PAPER FOR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (2013)

I analysed the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) to gain a broad understanding of the policy and to understand what it says about professional development for lecturers, particularly about on-the-job learning.

The White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) sets out a vision for a post-school education and training system in South Africa in which universities, TVET Colleges and community colleges would provide education and training as part of an integrated and differentiated system. The post-school education sector is expected to contribute to the development of thinking citizens 'who can function effectively,

creatively and ethically as part of a democratic society' White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.viii).

TVET Colleges are expected 'to train young school leavers, providing them with skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market' White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.11) and to provide mid-level skills training for industries such as engineering, construction, tourism, hospitality, general business and management.

The White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) focuses on how to strengthen TVET Colleges and to improve 'the quality of teaching and learning [and] increasing their responsiveness to local labour markets' White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.vii). It identifies strategies for improving the quality of educational provision and throughput rates of TVET Colleges which requires 'a well-educated, capable and professional teaching staff' White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.16) and includes the professionalisation of lecturers, development of guidelines for minimum qualifications for lecturers, lecturer training and development and minimum professional requirements for employment in TVET Colleges.

The DHET has established the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) to support TVET Colleges in developing lecturers' technical and subject knowledge, improving their pedagogical knowledge and skills and ensuring that they keep up with the latest developments in their field White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.26). This means *inter alia* that lecturers with trade qualifications must obtain teaching qualifications and lecturers with a teaching qualification must improve their subject knowledge and qualifications.

Incentives will be offered to lecturers who are currently employed in TVET colleges to study further and improve their qualifications so that they can move into management positions and other functional areas within the TVET College sector White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.17). This can enable lecturers to follow a career path within The TVET College, as discussed in Section 5 below.

The White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) also states that 'workplace experience required by lecturers will also be prioritised to ensure that their training is up to date with workplace needs and to provide lecturers with a better understanding of the needs of employers in their field' White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013, p.17). This means that TVET College lecturers will have to stay up to date with changing developments and changing skills needs in their specific fields or trades.

However, the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) does not focus on how lecturers can learn on-the-job through participation in role-related activities in their workplace - that is The TVET College itself. Furthermore, there is no reference to how lecturers can learn through accessing guidance and support from peers or more experienced colleagues in their workplace. TVET colleges are not seen as an environment for workplace learning where work and learning are inextricably linked. They are seen as sites of learning for students; there is little focus on TVET colleges as sites for workplace learning for lecturers. These issues about learning *'in' or 'through'* work are central to workplace learning as discussed in the literature review chapter.

4.3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR LECTURERS IN TVET COLLEGES

The DHET has gazetted the Policy on Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Government Gazette, No. 36554, 2013) referred to as The PPQL in TVET (2013). The PPQL in TVET (2013) were to contribute to the availability and development of quality lecturers for example the development of technical knowledge or subject knowledge. The PPQL in TVET (2013) were to improve the education, knowledge and skills and the insurance of workplace experience for the lecturers with the latest development in their field as mentioned above.

The PPQL in TVET (2013) was developed to put in place a framework of higher education qualifications that can be used for the professional and post-professional development of TVET lecturers (Government, Gazette, 2013, p.3).

TVET College lecturers were to be given an opportunity to upgrade their qualifications. As indicated earlier lecturers have different needs. Lecturers who

have trade qualifications need to obtain a teacher's qualification and the lecturers who have teachers' qualifications need to upgrade their subject knowledge. The document states teachers must have an understanding of The TVET environment, knowledge of the subject taught and knowledge to prepare students to understand what will be required in the workplace.

The PPQL in TVET (2013) is aligned with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (1997) and replaces all former professional qualifications approved for employment in Further Education and Training Colleges (FETC).

These qualifications and programmes are designed to help TVET College lecturers to obtain the qualification they need within the TVET sector.

4.4. INSTITUTIONAL POLICY DOCUMENT: THE TVET COLLEGE MANUAL (2013)

The TVET College institutional policy document (2013), referred to as The Manual (2013) was introduced as a guide for TVET College lecturers and to provide information and guidance for new lecturers.

My analysis of this policy was guided by the focus of my research which was on learning for TVET College lecturers through co-participation (Billett, 2004) i.e. learning through participation in daily work activities with guidance and support from peers and more experienced colleagues. I therefore needed to understand the roles and responsibilities of lecturers, what is expected of lecturers in their work, how they learn through participation in daily work activities and how they access guidance and support.

4.4.1. Job profile of lecturers

The job profile of lecturers appears in section 1.3.1 in the Introduction of The Manual (2013).

The primary task of a lecturer is to teach students in their care create a learning atmosphere within the classroom and engage students in a learning process. They

are expected to set up assessments and memoranda for examinations and tests, to mark these timeously and to record the marks.

They also have to assist with student evaluation and do subject-specific remedial teaching as an intervention to support weaker students. At the TVET College this is done as a two-step process after every test or assessment. In the first step lecturers complete an intervention form that is available on the college intranet. The second step is the actual intervention with students in the classroom.

Lecturers are expected to keep abreast with the latest teaching, learning and assessment techniques. There are no further guidelines in The Manual (2013) about this.

The job of lecturers, particularly more experienced or senior lecturers, such as the Campus Manager, Academic Head, Head of Department (HOD) and Programme Managers includes providing support to newly-appointed lecturers. How this works in practice is discussed in Chapter 5 which presents data on the views of lecturers about how they receive guidance and support for learning through participation in work activities.

Lecturers are also expected to assist with peer evaluation and developing a Professional Growth Plan (PGP). Participation in these activities also provides opportunities for learning (as discussed in Section 5 below).

Lecturers have to attend meetings including departmental, subject and general staff meetings. The policy does not comment on participation in the meetings as an opportunity for learning. My analysis suggests that these meetings do provide opportunities for learning (as discussed in Section 5 below).

In addition, The TVET College offers workshops and courses to lecturers which normally take place at the end of the term. These are an example of learning '*at*' work which is distinct from learning '*in*' or '*through*' work, the focus of my research.

4.4.2. Staff training and development

The Manual (2013) states that The TVET College will continue to provide training which will consist of general and functional classroom training, developing individual career development plans, assigning mentors and coaches after consultation with the protégés or mentees and regular individual appraisals. The Manual (2013) mentions these issues, but does not provide detail or guidelines for implementation.

Similarly, The Manual (2013) makes reference to but gives no guidance on assisting lecturers to update their knowledge about the latest developments in workplaces in their field or subject.

Through regular class visits and lesson evaluations, feedback is given by Programme Managers and HODs as part of a strategy for on-the-job lecturer development and to improve the quality of teaching.

4.4.3. Mentoring

As stated earlier, a TVET College lecturer is expected to mentor and support newly appointed lecturers. A mentor is normally a senior lecturer or more experienced lecturer.

The Manual (2013) focuses on the requirements of a mentor in the section on Human Capital (5.2 and 5.3) such as that a mentor should have a positive and professional attitude towards the workplace and towards fellow lecturers, have a reputation as a highly skilled educator, have the ability to define and solve problems in terms of academic and curriculum matters and have knowledge of assessment and evaluation. A mentor is also expected to have knowledge of the institution's policies, procedures, curriculum and resources. Finally, a mentor should have a commitment to continued professional development.

The Manual (2013) does not give guidelines for mentoring for TVET College lecturers.

4.5. INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for FET College based Educators (DHET, 2005) is one of several strategies to improve the quality of teaching and monitor the performance of lecturers.

The IQMS focuses mainly on two programmes – developmental appraisal and performance measurement (DHET, 2005, p.4).

The primary purpose of the developmental appraisal is to give lecturers the opportunity to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, identify specific needs, and suggest further development and support (DHET, 2005, p.4). Thereafter the scores arising out of the self-evaluation are re-evaluated by a Development Support Group (DSG).

The appraisal process involves several steps. In the first step lecturers who are to be evaluated nominate other lecturers in the same department to be part of their DSG. One of these should be a peer at the same post level and the other should be at a more senior post level. For a lecturer the peers are at same level, and the senior could be a more experienced lecturer, such as the Programme Manager (PM). For the PM the senior will be the Head of Department (HOD) and so forth.

The peer should be a lecturer who works closely in the same department with the lecturer who is to be evaluated. A lecturer in Mathematical Literacy, for example, will have a peer from the same subject department.

Once this step has been completed, the lecturer and the DSG decide which of the performance standards are applicable. Lecturers at post level one are measured against 7 performance standards, post level two are measured against 10 performance standards and post level three to five are measured against 12 performance standards. Each lecturer evaluates him/herself against the 4 descriptions in each performance standard and scores him/herself according to the rating of each description. The scores are totalled at the end. This will be the baseline score for the first round of the evaluation of the lecturers.

The next step is the evaluation by the DSG through actual observation of a lesson. Before the actual observation, there is a pre-evaluation meeting where the lecturer and the DSG decide together what they will observe, when and where the observation lesson is to take place. The lecturer's delivery of a lesson is then observed and evaluated by the DSG using the same performance standards used in the self-evaluation.

Once the actual observation lesson has taken place on the date, time and place decided by the DSG, the baseline (self-evaluation) scores will be measured against the DSG scores.

The observation is followed by a post-evaluation meeting where the DSG give feedback, based on their observation of the lecture or lesson, about the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson presented and recommendations for improvement. The lecturer is then expected to develop a Personal Growth Plan (PGP) which is recorded with all the scores and filed in the lecturer's IQMS file. The IQMS file is stored in the Programme Manager's office. The PGP of all the lecturers will be captured in the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP).

The completed evaluation leads to a performance increase of 1% on the pay progression on the lecturers' salary. However, the process of the evaluation is not only a tool to earn a 1% increase, but is also seen as a staff development initiative as it highlights areas in the professional practice of lecturers where they need support and development. For this reason, lecturers compile their own PGP at the end of the evaluation process as mentioned earlier.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the IQMS (2005) presents an opportunity for learning. It is an opportunity for lecturers, their peers and seniors to evaluate lecturers' teaching, to assess their strengths and weaknesses and to identify areas for development and improvement. These interactions and discussions provide opportunities for learning through lecturers' own reflections and through engagement with peers and more senior colleagues.

4.6. DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS

Lecturers' work activities involve participation in departmental and subject meetings. As part of the departmental review process, subject meetings are held every quarter and cascade meetings are held once a year.

Subject meetings are held in each department and focus on intervention strategies, assessment and curriculum matters. Information and ideas on the subject (for example Mathematical Literacy) are shared amongst lecturers during these subject meetings. Lecturers participate in discussions about assessments, tests or examinations before marking takes place. All lecturers who teach a specific subject participate in these discussions about interpretation of questions and the memorandum for marking. Lecturers discuss possible answers, resolve differences of interpretation and related issues. They learn from each other while developing best practice through these discussions. Normally in these subject meetings the more experienced lecturers take the lead to provide guidance and support to the less experienced lecturers and in turn the less experienced lecturers learn from the more experienced lecturers.

Another example of information sharing and learning amongst lecturers is at the cascade meetings which are held at the end of the academic year to plan ahead for the following year at The TVET College. In the cascade meeting certain tasks and duties are given to lecturers. For example lecturers will discuss amongst themselves who will be the assessor and moderator for a particular assessment, with guidance and support from the Programme Manager. Normally the moderators are more experienced lecturers and the assessors are less experienced lecturers. Lecturers interact with one another while carrying out these tasks and learn from one another.

Similarly lecturers at The TVET College learn from interactions with peers and colleagues at other colleges. Once a year a focus group meeting is held where lecturers from TVET Colleges in the Western Cape who teach the same subject, meet to discuss and plan for setting up and moderating assessments.

More experienced lecturers moderated question papers and did external marking in which, as indicated above, less experienced lecturers were not allowed to participate

in. Guidance for those in external marking sessions was accessed during discussions with the chief marker and lecturers from other colleges who were also there as markers. Lecturers discussed the marking guidelines and considered possible answers and solutions to the questions/problems.

In conclusion, the normal work activities of TVET lecturers present opportunities for learning. Lecturers learn from colleagues at the same college through participation in meetings such as departmental, subject and cascade meetings. They also learn from peers and colleagues at other colleges through the annual focus group meetings.

4.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an analysis of national and institutional policy documents relevant to my research. The analysis of the policies focused on learning affordances which arise during lecturers' participation in daily work activities and through their interactions with peers and senior colleagues. It also focused on their access to guidance and support during these processes.

The White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) focuses on the professionalisation of lecturers, minimum qualifications for lecturers, lecturer training and development and minimum professional requirements for employment in TVET Colleges. However, the White Paper for PSET (DHET, 2013) does not focus on how lecturers can learn on-the-job through participation in role-related activities in their workplace - that is The TVET College itself. TVET colleges are seen as sites of learning for students; there is little focus on TVET colleges as sites for workplace learning for lecturers.

In addition to their main role of teaching and assessing students lecturers are also expected to assist with peer evaluation and developing a Professional Growth Plan (PGP) as part of the IQMS processes. More experienced or senior lecturers are expected to guide and support newly-appointed lecturers. The IQMS includes self-evaluation, evaluation by a development support group which consists of peers and seniors and development of a professional growth plan. Participation in these processes provides opportunities for lecturers, their peers and seniors to evaluate

their teaching assess their strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for development and improvement. In my view participation in these activities provides opportunities for learning.

Similarly participation by lecturers in work activities such as meetings provides opportunities for learning and accessing guidance and support from peers and more experienced lecturers. Lecturers learn from colleagues at the same college through participation in these meetings. They also learn from peers and colleagues at other colleges through the annual focus group meetings.

How this works in practice is discussed in Chapter 5 which presents data gathered through semi-structured interviews with lecturers.



CHAPTER 5: INTERVIEW DATA

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I present and analyse data collected through semi-structured interviews with lecturers at The TVET College. It follows on the analysis of national and institutional policies relating to on-the-job learning for college lecturers in the previous chapter (Chapter 4).

The interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of The TVET College as a learning environment. Interviews focused on how The TVET College affords learning opportunities for lecturers on the job (particularly through participation in work activities) and how lecturers elect to participate in and take advantage of these opportunities for learning. The interviews also focused on factors in the workplace environment that enabled or constrained their learning.

The analysis of interview data is presented under the following headings:

2. Profile of interviewees
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Knowledge and skills needed
5. Learning affordances: opportunities for learning on the job
6. Guidance and support for learning through participating in work activities
7. Factors that enable or constrain learning
8. Agency and engagement
9. Conclusion

5.2. PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES

I interviewed 10 lecturers at The TVET College - 5 less experienced lecturers (with less than 10 years' experience) and 5 more experienced lecturers (with 10 years' experience and more). Selection of interviewees was guided by the concept of co-participation (Billett, 2004) which emphasises learning in the workplace which occurs in the process of participating in work activities with support and guidance from peers

or more experienced colleagues. Both less and more experienced employees learn and exercise agency in this context.

	Pseudonym	Departments	Less experienced/More experienced
1.	Neil	Primary Health	Less experienced
2.	Jason	Safety in Society	Less experienced
3.	Timothy	Wholesale and Retail	Less experienced
4.	Chantal	Safety in Society	Less experienced
5.	Cleo	Electrical Infrastructure Construction and Civil Engineering & Building Construction	Less experienced
6.	Carmen	Cosmetology	More experienced
7.	Heather	Safety in Society and Primary Health	More experienced
8.	Martha	Office Administration	More experienced
9.	Samuel	Safety in Society	More experienced
10.	Piet	Office Administration	More experienced

The interview sample for my research included a good combination of less experienced and more experienced lecturers. Neil, Jason, Timothy, Chantal and Cleo are considered in this study to be less experienced while Carmen, Heather, Martha, Samuel and Piet are considered to be more experienced.

All interviewees are from the Business Studies campus, except for Cleo who is from the Engineering Studies campus. The first language of the majority of the interviewees is Afrikaans except for Timothy whose first language is Shona, Chantal whose first language is Xhosa and Cleo whose first language is English. Lecturers at The TVET College are expected to lecture in English and the interviewees are all proficient in English.

The lecturers teach different subjects and are located in different departments. Four teach in the Safety in Society Department. Two of these are more experienced (Samuel and Heather) and two are less experienced (Jason and Chantal). Jason is a

63 year old male lecturer with 5 years of lecturing experience. He teaches Policing in the National Certificate: Safety in Society. Chantal is a 35 year old female lecturer with 6 of years lecturing experience. She teaches Mathematical Literacy in the National Certificate: Safety in Society. The two more experienced lecturers also teach Mathematical Literacy in the National Certificate: Safety in Society. Samuel is a 59 year old male lecturer who has 34 years of lecturing experience and Heather is a 58 year old female lecturer with 17 years of lecturing experience. Heather also teaches Mathematical Literacy in the Primary Health Department.

Neil, a 29 year old male lecturer teaches in the Primary Health Department. He has 4 years of lecturing experience and teaches Public Health in the National Certificate: Primary Health. This means that there is one more experienced (Heather) and one less experienced (Neil) interviewee from the Primary Health Department.

The two interviewees from the Office Administration Department are both experienced lecturers. Martha, a 55 year old female lecturer with 33 years of lecturing experience teaches Office Practice in the National Certificate: Office Administration. Piet, a 64 year old male lecturer with 42 years of lecturing experience teaches Business Practice and Computer Practice in the National Certificate: Office Administration.

In addition, I interviewed two less experienced lecturers from other departments. Timothy is a 34 year old male lecturer in the Wholesale and Retail Department and has 6 years of lecturing experience. He teaches Mathematical Literacy in the National Certificate: Wholesale and Retail. Cleo is a 33 year old female lecturer in the Electrical Infrastructure Construction and Civil Engineering and Building Construction Department and has 9 years of lecturing experience. She teaches English in the National Certificate: Electrical Infrastructure Construction and Civil Engineering & Building Construction respectively.

Finally, I interviewed another more experienced lecturer. Carmen is a 35 year old female lecturer in the Cosmetology Department and has 13 years of lecturing experience. She teaches Beauty Therapy in the ITEC National Diploma: Cosmetology Beauty Specialist.

In total I interviewed 5 more experienced and 5 less experienced lecturers. I used pseudonyms for my interviewees in accordance with the ethical requirements of this research.

5.3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The main roles and responsibilities of lecturers identified by interviewees were teaching, facilitating learning, assessment, preparing for classes, planning, administration and motivating students.

All interviewees said that to teach or to lecture is their main responsibility. Many refer to themselves as lecturers. Jason said: 'I am a lecturer for the Safety in Society programme and my main responsibility is to lecture'. He also commented that: 'I must be prepared and know my subject. I must plan every day and I must work according to a lecturing plan'. Cleo said: 'as an English or Communications lecturer I'm expected to do everything in my classroom - teaching, signing off tasks and assignments as well as lesson planning'. Neil commented: 'I am a lecturer so my primary responsibility and role is to teach'. Samuel said: 'as far as I'm concerned, I am teaching Maths Literacy for level two to four students'. Chantal said: 'I am a Maths Literacy lecturer for level two and level four students' and Martha said: 'I'm a lecturer in the Office Administration Department'.

Carmen did not refer directly to her role as a teacher or lecturer, but made indirect comments on her role: 'I believe my roles and responsibilities as an academic staff member would be to manage my class, manage my programme'. Heather commented that, in addition to teaching, she had to keep up with changes in the curriculum: 'my first role is basically to teach' and 'staying up to date with the curriculum'. Piet said: 'my main role and responsibility at the college is to teach my students'. Timothy described his responsibilities as: 'preparing lessons, teaching, invigilating and marking'.

Many interviewees identified assessment as a major role but they described it differently with some focusing on assessment and others on admin related to

assessment. Jason said one of his responsibilities is 'to assess the students' work'. Cleo spoke about 'signing of tasks and assignments'. Martha said: 'we also help to compile ISAT marks' while Heather mentioned 'recording', meaning recording of marks. Piet, Chantal, Neil and Samuel did not mention assessments as part of their roles and responsibilities as lecturers.

Four interviewees mentioned administration duties as part of their responsibilities as lecturers. Heather said: 'my responsibilities include administration'. Jason said: 'then, of course, to do all the administration'. Similarly Neil and Cleo also referred to their administration responsibilities. However, Timothy, Chantal, Samuel and Martha did not mention administration duties. By contrast Carmen and Piet both commented that their administration duties play a direct role in constraining their ability to learn at The TVET College. This is discussed further below (5.7: Factors that enable or constrain learning).

Two interviewees stated that as lecturers they need to understand the learners and guide and motivate them. Lecturers referred to their students in different ways. Carmen referred to her students as clients. She said it is important 'also to see the student as a client and look after them as you would a client'. This reflects her view that students should be treated as clients to provide a model for when they will interact with their own clients in the field of Beauty Therapy.

Cleo referred to her students as her audience and said: 'you also need to look at your audience that you are catering for'. She said she learns about student needs as they work: 'you pick this up as you go along' - for example 'language and learning barriers' experienced by students.

Neil, a lecturer in Public Health focused on challenges that arise from the socio economic background of students and said: 'you also need a lot of personal guidance as students come from certain challenges'. Martha commented on changing needs: 'the learners aren't the same' every year. Jason said that it is important 'to involve and motivate the students'. Neil said: 'I just do general guidance and motivate students to learn and focus on their studies'.

All interviewees said that their main responsibilities relate to teaching or lecturing. Many referred to themselves as lecturers or made indirect comments on their role in teaching. In addition to teaching, many interviewees identified assessment as a major role in motivating, understanding and guiding students. Several interviewees mentioned administration duties as part of their responsibilities as lecturers and some commented that their administration duties play a direct role in constraining their ability to learn at The TVET College.

5.4. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED

Interviewees commented on the knowledge and skills needed to become proficient to perform their roles and responsibilities as lecturers and identified the following issues:

- Qualifications, subject knowledge and experience
- Management skills

5.4.1. Qualifications, subject knowledge and experience

Six interviewees said that they need to have knowledge of the subject which they teach and to keep up with the curriculum. Neil, who teaches Public Health, has a degree in Psychology and emphasised the importance of subject knowledge: 'you need to be well informed about whatever field it is you're teaching'. Martha a former teacher said: 'you do need the background', meaning subject knowledge. Heather who teaches Mathematical Literacy has a Bachelor of Arts degree and added: 'you must know your subject very well and know the curriculum for the future'.

Many have a university degree or diploma in their subject. Carmen, who has a qualification in Beauty Therapy said: 'You would obviously need to have the knowledge and skills of the specific subject'. Jason, who has a qualification and experience in Policing also emphasised the importance of subject knowledge: 'You have to have the subject knowledge'. Both have industry experience as well, (for example Jason, as a former policeman and Carmen in Beauty Therapy). However they have no educator qualification and their priority was to gain a teaching

qualification once employed at The TVET College. Jason said: 'I also need to get an education qualification; that I think is also important'.

Similarly Cleo, who teaches English and has a Linguistics degree, commented on the importance of subject knowledge: 'you need to familiarise yourself with your subject content'. Like Carmen and Jason, Cleo commented that in addition to subject knowledge they need to have an educator qualification to improve their knowledge and skills as educators. Cleo said: 'I also went for the National Professional Diploma in Education to enhance my skills and knowledge'.

Samuel, Piet and Timothy were school teachers before they came to work at The TVET College and have teachers' qualifications. They emphasised the need for experience in teaching. Samuel said: 'basically the first one is just from my own experience'. However, Piet highlighted the need for both experience and an education qualification: 'maybe by experience and the basic need of having to go to university to get those skills to know what your role at the college would be'.

Heather and Neil commented that to work with learners, patience and communication skills are needed. Heather said: 'you must be patient' and Neil said: 'I think you need excellent communication skills and patience'.

Samuel commented that he had to familiarise himself with the computerised systems of The TVET College such as the marks administration system. He said: 'I have learnt how to do it. Sometimes there are computer programs to help me with these roles'.

Cleo is the only interviewee who commented on improving teaching methods: 'there is always that thing that's reminds me and makes me think how I can improve my teaching methods'.

Interviewees' comments show that several considered subject knowledge to be most important. Some identified the need for both subject knowledge and educator qualifications while others emphasised educator qualifications and teaching experience.

Overall the emphasis in interviewees' responses, both more and less experienced interviewees, was on the need for qualifications and experience in teaching, possibly because many already have qualifications and experience in their subject area or field.

5.4.2. Management skills

Three interviewees commented on the need for management skills such as being systematic, working with others and time management. Heather and Carmen commented that they need good management and team skills. Carmen said: 'you should also be able to have good managing skills' and 'you must be systematic'. Carmen added: 'you need to work as a team player with your support staff'. Similarly Cleo mentioned that they have to be able to work with others and said: 'I've learnt along the way through my students, other staff members and my colleagues'. She also mentioned that she needs to work on her time management skills: 'time is one of the things that I'd say personally I need to improve on'. One interviewee said that to be disciplined and punctual is important. Heather said: 'you need to be disciplined; you need to be on time'.

These comments came mainly from more experienced interviewees who considered it important for lecturers to have good management and team skills.

However, two lecturers said that they already had the skills and knowledge they needed. Timothy said: 'I think with the current knowledge that I have, I meet the requirements to perform these duties'. Similarly, Chantal said: 'at the moment I don't need anything because I think I've got all the skills that I need'.

The next section explores affordances for learning through work at The TVET College.

5.5. LEARNING AFFORDANCES: OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING ON THE JOB

Interviewees' comments on affordances for learning on the job or learning through participation in work activities focused mainly on the following issues:

- Exposure to role-related work activities
- Learning from policies, rules and regulations

5.5.1. Exposure to role-related work activities

Three interviewees said that they are learning from exposure to and participation in work activities related to their roles as lecturers.

Some of the more experienced interviewees said that lecturers are exposed to a range of work activities in The TVET College which can contribute to their learning and development. Heather said that the college management provides opportunities for lecturers to participate in discussions in subject and departmental meetings about memoranda, marking and moderating scripts of students who had completed national examinations and assessments:

'They want you to go to memo discussions; they want you to participate in moderations and year-end national examination marking. They will always support you on the level that you need the development for the future'.

Carmen agreed that lecturers have opportunities to learn through participation in work activities such external marking and moderation: 'I agree with doing assessment and moderation'.

Similarly, Martha said lecturers are exposed to many work activities at The TVET College:

'Everyone gets exposed to methods and ways of how things are done. We get exposed in everything'.

Martha made a positive comment about how participation in work activities, such as subject meetings and group marking enables learning amongst lecturers:

'Fortunately we have subject committees and you have your Programme Manager. We also have colleagues that are willing to help regarding your

specific subject and the meetings, short courses and workshops we are sent on. In a way, the marking of papers especially during exams when you mark as a group - you learn a lot from the group’.

In addition, lecturers learn through their participation in informal discussions about work activities such as discussions about marking or conversations about work-related issues in the staffroom during breaks or free periods.

The less experienced interviewees made interesting comments about exposure to a variety of work activities. Cleo said that her Campus Manager gives her an opportunity to practise her skills and knowledge of Linguistics which she gained while studying at university:

‘In terms of opportunities, there are always opportunities for staff to participate in work activities. Since I’ve done linguistics, I am now teaching Communication. My Campus Manager feels that I am the perfect person to write articles for the newsletter for students and lecturers at The TVET College. So there is an opportunity’.

Cleo also said that she learns from activities unrelated to the subject she teaches, which is English:

‘I even learn through participating in something that is not subject-related like events - the Life Orientation students had an election and presentation. I participated just to assist them and I learnt a lot and how to incorporate that subject matter into my subject matter’.

Timothy mentioned that he learns from his mistakes and in so doing he improves his teaching. Timothy said:

‘I am learning various skills from my mistakes and time management. I try to upgrade every time I am teaching’.

Interviewees commented that sometimes they have to be creative and improvise when dealing with unforeseen challenges.

Martha gave the example of having to improvise in her Office Practice class: 'For Level Three Office Practice, they need to visit a business and they need to draw up a floor plan'. However, she explained that it is not always feasible for students to visit businesses. She then arranged that they should draw up a floor plan of the Hair Care Department as 'it is also a business' - meaning that the Hair Care Department runs a business which provides hairdressing services to members of the community. This gives students an opportunity to gain practical business experience in hair care and the funds generated are used to buy hair care products as needed.

Martha also mentioned dealing with unexpected challenges such as shortages of equipment and power outages: 'we also need to accommodate for power outages especially when you have a component when you need fax machines or computers'. Another example was about equipment needed when students engaged with the practical component of the Office Practice module: 'I improvised with getting an extension cord so my students could do their telephone etiquette practical'.

From these comments by the interviewees, it seems that lecturers have to improvise to meet curriculum requirements, for example integrating practical experience into their teaching. They also have to deal with unforeseen challenges such as power outages and shortages of equipment.

5.5.2. Learning from policies, rules and regulations

Some interviewees said that they learn from engaging with the institution's policies, rules and regulations.

Jason said: 'I learn by making a study of the policy documents'. Heather said she learns from the 'college rules and regulations that they have laid out' to all lecturers.

Recently The TVET College introduced a policy that guides assessment and marks verification processes. Lecturers are expected to verify students' marks by ensuring that the marks on the computerised marks administration system match the marks on the students' scripts.

Cleo spoke of this as an opportunity to learn and said that this process helped her to identify mistakes she had made:

‘We tend to do double work when management bring about change. After verifying, they requested that we verify again. It was entirely up to us, if we felt that it was correct then we should just verify for September. I felt the need to go back and there were one or two errors that I’ve picked up. I’m thankful that I am doing double work because now I have learnt’.

Neil said he learns from ‘normally things like certain activities, processes or rules regarding the institution or how things should be done’ and gave the example of external tasks:

‘Like if you take a certain external task that is given by an external source that is not part of your institution it normally comes with certain rules - and even though instructions are given, these activities can’t be completed fully unless you have done them before and you are aware of these challenges or someone guides you through it before you experience these challenges’.

From these comments by interviewees who were less experienced, it seems that lecturers learn from engaging with policies, rules and regulations set by The TVET College and those relating to external tasks. They also learn when new policies are introduced such as the policies on assessment and verification of marks.

Their comments in the next section illustrate the role of more experienced lecturers in guiding less experienced lecturers to understand and implement rules and policies relating to certain work activities, a point discussed more fully in the section on guidance and support for learning through participation in work activities (below).

5.6. GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN WORK ACTIVITIES

Interviewees spoke about support for learning through participation in work activities, including:

- Guidance and support on the job from managers
- Learning from peers, more experienced colleagues and students

- Pathways for learning
- Training (courses and workshops)

5.6.1. Guidance on the job from managers

Six interviewees said that they receive guidance and support while participating in work activities from various sources – including Programme Managers, Academic Heads, Head of Departments and Campus Managers.

Timothy said in his experience the guidance on the job comes from management level: ‘from my experience it is so to say the Academic Head and the Programme Managers’.

Piet said that in his view on guidance on the job comes from the Programme Manager through direct guidance and support:

‘Responsibility would be for the Programme Manager to guide the new staff by means of personal guidance. It won’t help by sending an email; you have to take through the process step by step like a mentor.

Similarly, in Chantal’s view, it is the job of the Programme Manager to provide guidance on the job and added that the Academic Head also provides support:

‘I believe it is the Programme Manager. He or she will orientate the new member and show them everything they need to know about the college....Programme Managers plays a huge role and you can always go to the Academic Head to lead you into doing this’.

Jason emphasised that it is the Programme Manager’s job to guide and support lecturers after they have been on induction courses:

‘When you join The TVET College as an educator you partake in a three day introductory course that is done by the training staff of The TVET College based at head office. It is a good thing and is in fact very informative but other than that you are placed into your programme and your Programme Manager is then responsible for you’.

Jason added that he also learns and receives guidance on the job from his colleagues, including his peers and more experienced lecturers:

'Your Programme Manager and fellow educators will assist and guide you with how to do certain tasks, how requirement should be met. And how you actually plan your year assessments and lessons that is done amongst the staff members'.

Neil commented that in his view it is the Programme Manager's role to guide and support lecturers or delegate the responsibility to an appropriate person:

'This is primarily done by the Programme Manager. He will also designate a certain senior lecturer that will supervise and mentor the specific new employee on how certain things take place and what is expected of them'.

Similarly Cleo's view is that the Programme Manager guides the lecturers. Cleo said:

'If you're new and you're assigned to your subject Programme Manager that is the person that guides you through the first steps. Once you've got the hang of it, they leave you on your own'.

Further she said that lecturers also receive guidance on the job from other managers:

'I would say that we get guidance from our PM [Programme Manager], HOD [Head of Department], Academic Head as well as the Campus Manager since we already know the ropes'.

Piet pointed out the similarity between his experience at The TVET College and how he provided guidance to new teachers when he was a teacher in the school system:

'At school when they welcomed academic staff I was responsible to welcome, guide, do the induction and orientation with them. When I personally started here in 2008 at this campus our Campus Head took me and guided me through the things that I needed to know'.

On the question of who is responsible for guiding more experienced staff, several interviewees (both more and less experienced lecturers) said that Programme

Managers, Academic Heads and Heads of Departments are responsible for guiding more experienced staff.

The two more experienced interviewees (Martha and Samuel) expressed contradictory views. Martha said that the responsibility for guiding more experienced lecturers would be the job of the Programme Manager:

‘So the responsibility is again the Programme Manager if it is a normal lecturer’.

By contrast, according to Samuel, more experienced lecturers do not receive any guidance and support on the job:

‘As far as I know there is absolutely no guidance in terms of the more experienced staff’.

However, the less experienced interviewees agreed with Martha that guidance and support is available for more experienced lecturers. Timothy’s view is that senior management provides guidance to both new and more experienced lecturers:

‘In my view it is still the top management - that is the Campus Managers, the Academic Managers and the Programme Managers that are guiding all the staff: new and experienced’.

Similarly Chantal commented that together with the Academic Head and Programme Manager, the Head of Department is also responsible for guiding more experienced lecturers:

‘I think that would also be the Academic Head, the HOD [Head of Department] or even the Programme Manager’ and: ‘it is the Academic Head; he should ensure that everything is going according to the system or policy’.

Jason said the Programme Manager, Academic Head and Head of Department are responsible for guiding more experienced lecturers:

‘If we talk about more experienced staff I think it could only be the Programme Manager as he is in charge of the programme and the Academic Head or the Head of Department’.

In Neil's view more experienced lecturers are guided by the Academic Head and the Programme Manager. He says that the Academic Head will initiate activities and the Programme Manager will implement them:

'The senior staff are normally guided by the Academic Manager who also works with the Programme Manager to facilitate certain learning experiences or activities. Mostly, the Academic Manager will put forward certain activities and the Programme Manager will facilitate or implement the instructions received'.

Further, Neil commented that a more experienced lecturers guide and support each other on subject-related matters:

'A person that has either taught this specific content before or a person that is very competent in this specific field'.

From these comments by interviewees, it seems that both more experienced and less experienced lecturers receive guidance and support.

5.6.2. Learning from peers, more experienced colleagues and students

Four interviewees commented that they learn from their peers, more experienced colleagues and from their students.

Cleo commented that lecturers learn from one another and said:

'We pick up and learn very quickly from each other. They enjoy getting placed with a peer'.

Further she says that: 'I learn from my colleagues as well, like shortcuts'. i.e. they learn from colleagues how to do things in a quicker way for example downloading documents from the college intranet.

Similarly Heather commented on the role of peers and more experienced lecturers in guiding new or less experienced lecturers about daily tasks and activities, such as keeping a daily attendance register, and unwritten 'rules' at work:

'I learn a lot from my peers...the current staff will play a huge role in leading the new academic staff in the do's and don'ts of the workplace'.

Similarly, Jason said that lecturers in the Safety and Society Department receive support from more experienced lecturers and said:

‘Any of our lecturers get a lot of support from the experienced lecturers who enjoy telling you how things should be done and our standard is very high’.

Further, Jason commented that: ‘I learn by listening to my colleagues and asking the more experienced people from who I get a lot of support’.

Carmen said that in her view a new lecturer learns from more experienced lecturers and said:

‘Currently if it has to be a new person it would be the lecturing staff who would show them how to do it’.

Some very interesting comments came from interviewees who said that they learn from their students. Carmen said: ‘I learn in the responses that I get from learners’. Chantal said: ‘sometimes when you present a lesson to the students, you learn from them’.

Heather said: ‘As an academic giving class I learn a lot from the students like their way of thinking and I add it on to my knowledge’.

Heather also said:

‘I learn every day from the students not content but people skills, how to handle students, I learn a lot about the circumstances, I learn a lot about what I need to do to make them listen and motivate them’.

Similarly Cleo said that she learns about young people’s preferences and tastes:

‘Yes, I learn all the time from my students even things that are not subject-related but I learn about worldly things’.

From these comments by the interviewees, it is evident that lecturers learn from their peers and more experienced colleagues about daily activities (such as keeping attendance registers) and about unwritten rules in the workplace (such as where to

park). They also learn from listening to and asking for support from more experienced lecturers. An interesting point is that lecturers said that they learn from their students – about how to encourage and motivate students and about young people's tastes and preferences.

5.6.3. Pathways for learning

The pathways for learning by lecturers include learning through participation in work activities (including simple, routine activities and more complex activities) as well as courses and workshops for lecturers at the college. However several interviewees commented that they do not know how the learning pathways for academic staff are determined. Others commented that pathways for learning are not determined systematically and that there is no policy that guides the process.

Jason said that there is no policy that guides lecturers on their learning pathway:

'I don't know of any policy at the college that can actually guide you and tell you what you must study and what pathway you should follow. There are policies from the Department of Higher Education and Training and there are courses like the moderator's or assessor's course that the college nominates candidates to complete every now and again. Apart from that, nothing is spelt out as to what you should achieve and what your pathway is'.

Neil commented that the college does not have a systematic approach to identifying learning pathways for academic staff:

'It seems to be randomized. There is no set out pathway that is laid out by the college. It's mostly free opportunities that is given to staff members to participate in learning activities on their own and if they are motivated to participate they are normally sponsored or there are some minor training or learning activities that takes place where all college staff members need to participate in and those ones are compulsory'.

Martha commented that she does not know who determined the learning pathways for academic staff at the college and thinks it is the management of the campus:

'I would say the Subject Head then the Programme Manager also the Academic Head and the Campus Manager. I'm not sure how they figure it out and who'.

Similarly Chantal was not sure of how the learning pathways for academic staff at the college are determined. She says it could be the Human Resource Department of The TVET College:

'We are not aware of that. Maybe HR was supposed to inform us but from the time I've started up until now I haven't heard about that'.

Jason suggested that the training department should consult lecturers about their specific needs and their future plans for the job as a lecturer:

'I don't know what the training department consists of and who they consist of but I should think that apart from just having an introduction session they should also come to campuses and talk to the individuals even though it might take a bit longer. Perhaps have an interview with each educator and find out what the vision is for their job, where they would like to progress and what they might need for training. From there they can compile a survey of the gathered information. I know it is done with emails and lists that they circulate but I think they should have face-to-face meetings to find out'.

Jason added that lecturers' strengths and weaknesses should be taken into consideration:

'They should also find out the strengths and weaknesses of the educator and question whether they can do all the administrative tasks and whether they have proper lesson plans apart from what is in the POA and whether they have enough knowledge of their subject'.

Further, Cleo suggested that staff should be actively involved in the planning of on-the-job learning:

'Have the staff participate and feel more involved. Staff can help management and management can help staff. It's a give and take situation.

Cleo and Piet have a different view. Cleo said that management has a skills profile of lecturers and identify what skills the lecturers need:

'I'm sure management knows your profile as they sit in on the interviews; they know who they are taking on. They can weigh out your skills on your profile and from there encourage you to fill the gaps and better yourself or improve on specific areas to cater for the job you're going to carry out. From my point, I think they encourage us on what we can improve by looking at our CV. It's a win-win situation'.

In Piet's view learning pathways for academic staff at the college are shaped at the head office of The TVET College:

'I think that is determined by the different people at the central office. As everything comes from there through our Academic Head and Programme Manager who keeps us up to date when things are there and when things need to be done as well as deadlines. They also inform us by means of email'.

From these comments, it is clear that interviewees had different views about learning pathways for lecturers. Some interviewees said there is no learning pathway for lecturers. Some said they do not know whether or how learning pathways were decided for lecturers; and that there is no policy that guides decisions about this i.e. it is not systematic. Others said that head office decides on the learning pathway for lecturers based on the skills profile of each lecturer.

However, earlier comments by interviewees suggest that there is a pathway for learning and development through participation in work activities such as group marking and discussions in subject and departmental meetings about assessment, marking and moderations. It is interesting that none of the interviewees commented on this, which may suggest that they did not consciously think about participation in normal work activities with guidance and support as presenting opportunities for learning.

5.6.4. Training (courses and workshops)

Five interviewees commented that structured training is offered on the job by The TVET College through courses and workshops.

Cleo commented that The TVET College does offer structured training for lecturers:

'There is coaching and workshops when they [management] pick up that there is a need for staff to be trained in a specific subject. They also picked up that people [lecturers] needed to improve their computer literacy skills because there were more convenient methods put on the system for us to use that we were not familiar with'.

Similarly Jason said that:

'They do train us regularly in computers and that type of training takes place almost once a quarter'.

In Chantal's view the Human Resource Department (HRD) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The TVET College decide who should go for training. Chantal said:

'I think it is HR and the principal, not all of us can go for certain training, attend workshops or further our studies, so it depends on them. They also only financially support us up to a certain level'.

Chantal has been unsuccessful in being selected for the moderators training and is obviously disappointed:

'Sometimes when they provide a certain course they select a minimum number of educators to attend the courseThere are people that need to go for an assessor course but it is only provided for certain people. The same goes for the moderation course. Minimum people are sent for those types of courses. I believe it is a need for each and every academic staff member'.

Similarly Jason said that he has also been trying to complete specific training that will assist him in his job as a lecturer, in particular the moderators training, but he has not been selected for it:

'I did the assessor training in the very beginning. Since 2013 I've been trying to do the moderator training and I had the opportunity this year to join for the moderators' course but I wasn't selected to join. So I think it comes down to funds and the interest amongst other lecturers'.

Neil said that there are few opportunities for lecturers to participate in courses and workshops because training was often conducted at times which clashed with lecturers' work responsibilities:

'From management side, there is very rarely opportunities for academic staff to participate in further training that is normally done part time while still doing the normal duties at college'.

Neil added that the training courses and workshops focused on things that the majority of lecturers are already competent in:

'The training we normally receive is things that I feel most staff members are already competent in. They are not really teaching anyone anything new and helpful. This could be different from person to person but from my experience I do feel that the training we have received is not something that adds to development. It is more for people that may need certain activities. But in order to fulfil the roles that we need to do, we are already competent in the training they are providing us'.

Similarly, Samuel commented that the training courses and workshops provided by The TVET College did not always benefit staff: 'not always, for example there are quite a lot of computer courses that I've attended which isn't really helping me'.

The comments made by the interviewees (Chantal, Cleo, Jason and Neil, all less experienced) show that training is offered by The TVET College, through courses and workshops. However, these lecturers were not sure how decisions were made about who would be selected to participate in training courses, such as assessor and moderators training. Interviewees' comments show that they were conscious of and concerned about how opportunities for learning were afforded to them through structured training courses. The one more experienced interviewee, however, was sceptical about the usefulness of some training courses as he felt that lecturers were not learning anything new.

5.7. FACTORS THAT ENABLE OR CONSTRAIN LEARNING

It is clear from interviewees' comments that lecturers have access to guidance and support which come from a range of sources including more experienced lecturers, Programme Managers, Heads of Departments and Academic Heads (see Section 5.6 above). However learning at work can also be affected by other factors in the work environment which may either enable or constrain learning.

5.7.1. Enabling learning

Interviewees identified factors which influence how learning is enabled for lecturers at The TVET College, including involvement and participation in work activities and access to guidance and support which was discussed above (5.5–5.6). Interviewees also identified factors such as availability of experienced staff and leadership, availability of policy documents and a working environment which is conducive to learning.

Timothy said that the factors that influence how learning is enabled amongst lecturers in his view are: 'a comfortable working environment, a fair environment and fair leadership'.

In Martha's view on-the-job learning can be enhanced if lecturers are active in their job:

'Learn by doing. You learn while you're busy doing it. On-the-job learning is like a text book, it guides you but on the day that you have to use it, it won't always be the same so you will still make alterations but the basics will be there'.

Martha referred to the availability of peers, experienced staff and managers and said:

'They [lecturers] ask friends, colleagues to help them. If they really have a problem, management might be willing to assist. There will be a way out if you really need to get a way'.

Jason said that more experienced lecturers are available to assist less experienced lecturers:

'The experienced staff is always there to assist you, you just have to ask and even if you don't ask they will offer assistance. You just need to be open to learn from others'.

Jason also commented on the availability of policy documents on the college intranet: 'Then of course all the policy documents are available on the system'.

Heather commented that The TVET College provides financial support to lecturers to pursue formal studies at other higher education institutions:

'The college set clear standards for what you should do and they will promote to develop lecturers by financially supporting those who would like to study and they do give you special leave for if you need to study'.

Similarly Timothy said that some lecturers engage with opportunities for learning and developing themselves by pursuing formal studies outside of The TVET College:

'Some respond by doing online courses. Some respond by pursuing courses outside of the college, in other words, outside the provision of the college They see these opportunities as a way of upgrading them and a way of developing them so that they can offer better services'.

However, Samuel's view was that each individual decides on his or her own to pursue opportunities for learning at other higher education institutions:

'As far as I know, you decide on your own what further studies you need to do. By that I mean main studies outside of what the college can provide like your Honours, Masters, etc'.

Interviewees' comments suggest that lecturers were active in engaging with learning opportunities, particularly opportunities for learning from more experienced lecturers. This is discussed further in the section on agency and engagement (below).

5.7.2. Constraints on learning

Interviewees identified several factors that constrain learning at The TVET College, including lecturers' changing roles, increased administration duties, workload and time constraints.

5.7.2.1. Administration and changing roles of lecturers

Three lecturers (more experienced ones) see the increase in their admin load and the lack of admin support as a change in their role and workload as lecturers and as a major constraint on their learning. Previously certain tasks were carried out by admin staff, such as loading of marks onto the computerised marks system and marks verification processes which were introduced recently. Now lecturers have to complete these tasks which are onerous and time consuming.

Carmen commented that:

'Factors that constrain learning at the college for me personally would be admin. I have so much admin that I don't get time to do anything else and I also don't have enough support, admin support specifically'.

Heather also said that the admin duties act as a constraint. She said the heavy admin load affects her work as a lecturer 'very negatively. It influences my ability to teach. It influences my set of mind'.

Further, she says that the admin duties constitute such a large proportion of her work that it changes her role as a lecturer:

'The constraints on work activities is that there are too many administrative work to really do what I was employed to do. My main function at the college used to [be to] teach and the administrative work is so much that you can't really put everything in preparing for teaching'.

Similarly Piet said that increased administrative duties and top-down changes at work have changed the role of a lecturer and led to a negative attitude among lecturers:

'Administrative work and changes that are made and that makes educators negative ...We have no initiative any more to do things on our own; we are told what we have to do and that is it wrong. That makes the academic staff act negatively against these things'.

Piet suggested that the lecturers should be able have a dedicated focus on teaching and that the administrative duties of the lecturers should be shifted to the administrative staff members:

'They should leave the educators with the job that they were appointed for so that they can give attention to the students and leave other administrative work, verifications and declaration for the administrative staff'.

Interviewees' comments show that there is a strong feeling among lecturers (mainly the more experienced ones) that their academic role has been reduced as a result of a heavy workload, under staffing, increased admin duties and top-down decision-making processes.

5.7.2.2. *Time and workload*

Five interviewees (mainly the more experienced lecturers) identified time and workload as factors which constrain their learning.

Piet alluded to the fact that the lecturers are overloaded with administrative duties and cannot make their own decisions about their work - which constrained his ability to learn as a lecturer:

'We are not free to go on our path what we would like to do; we as academic staff are loaded with too many other things to do'.

Martha added that workload constrained lecturers' ability to study: 'I think workload has also got a big impact on the willingness to study further'.

Carmen commented that lecturers are overloaded due to large student numbers and heavy work load which influence their ability to learn:

'There are definitely a few factors that contribute to academic staff that are not able to learn because they don't have time referring to the amount of students versus the workload we have; therefore we don't have time as we have to cram everything in'.

Carmen pointed out that under-staffing in her department increases her workload and constrains her ability to learn and participate in training courses:

'In our department we have too little staff so I am basically doing someone else's work as well...we get the opportunity to go on specific courses but we are too little staff in the department to take any time off to go. So the Academic Head will then say that there is a specific course available but there is just no time for any of us in the department to go and participate in those type of things'.

Samuel also said his teaching load restricts his ability to participate in training courses. He commented that teaching time is compromised when the timing of training courses clashes with teaching time:

'One of the factors I know of is that sometimes we use academic time to do some programs. Teaching times don't always allow us to have more participation in further advancing our academic abilities..... As I've said earlier, teaching time.... we are supposed to teach so we don't always have extra time. Our workload, in terms of marking and setting up extra work pieces for students'.

Martha also suggested that the timing of courses offered by The TVET College should be reviewed, as courses are often offered at times when lecturers have other commitments, such as marking of scripts after assessments:

'If the time frame in which they are sent for the specific course or workshop, it is very important as they might have a lot of other things to do like marking. Then they won't be too willing to go..... If an opportunity can be arranged where you don't have to do extra work for the college, like in the beginning of the year, the people will feel more positive about it.

Martha and Samuel identified funding and time constraints as factors which inhibit their engagement with opportunities for learning. Samuel identified lack of resources as a constraint: 'Academic staff don't always have money, fuel or transport for extra activities'.

Martha said:

'I think available funds (money) might play a role. Definitely the time as I've already indicated because I really don't know when they get time. Attention in class to students. Marking their work. Setting papers. I don't know where they get time and energy to study. Time is the main problem'.

Cleo's concerns are centred on difficulties with time off to complete course tasks and assignments and family commitments which constrained her participation in part time classes outside of her teaching hours:

'For me it was getting time off because our classes didn't run during the week. It was on a Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. In terms of convenience, it wasn't easy make arrangements with family responsibility. One just needed time off to carry out tasks as we still got assignments and had to study for tests too.

Heather commented that the workload of the lecturers is so demanding that it seems that the college is not always playing a supportive role:

'But again the workload is so much that it is not always a supportive role shown by the college'.

Martha too questioned whether the college gave enough support to lecturers who wanted to improve their skills:

'From the college side I'm not sure whether they give enough towards a person who wants to improve himself to become a better lecturer. They do offer courses and workshops but sometimes time isn't always in our favour'.

Martha commented that lecturers would have a more positive attitude towards participating in training courses if they could apply in their daily work what they had learnt in the training:

'If they can use it in their work they will be more willing to go and they will feel more positive.....and if they can use whatever they learn there in their work they'll go. For an example, the OneDrive course we attended doesn't work on the computers; so you go on the course but you can't come back and do something with the knowledge. They say you should also be able to give this through to your students but the academic time is so short, you can't fit in this extra thing. So my view of this opportunities is wonderful if you can learn something new and better if you can use it optionally in your day to day activities in your class room'.

Similarly Heather alluded to the fact that when training is offered by The TVET College it is offered towards the end of the term. As a result she cannot implement what she has learnt because the term has ended. This places a constraint on her learning:

'There is not a lot of time for me as a lecturer to learn. They usually do the new type of training towards the end of the term and you can't implement it into the term and that basically constraints my ability to learn'.

From these comments by interviewees (mainly the more experienced lecturers) it appears that the demanding teaching load, under-staffing and increased admin duties constrained lecturers' ability to take advantage of opportunities to learn. They commented on the negative effect on the quality of their teaching when training courses were offered during teaching times. Furthermore, they commented that there were limited opportunities to apply their learning or implement it in practice and this constrained their learning. Some lecturers felt that the environment at the college was one that was not supportive to lecturers' efforts to learn.

While factors in the work environment influence their learning, the attitude and responses of lecturers also play a role in enabling or constraining their learning, as discussed below.

5.8. AGENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

Interviewees' comments on how lecturers choose to engage with learning affordances at The TVET College focused on lecturers' attitudes, age and tensions in the workplace.

5.8.1. Attitude

Seven interviewees expressed the view that lecturers' attitudes play a role in their engagement with opportunities for learning through participation in everyday work activities.

Neil said that lecturers saw training opportunities offered by The TVET College as irrelevant or limited because their learning could not be applied:

'The majority of staff feel that there are limited or almost none further opportunities offered at the college and even though certain training is sponsored, most of those roles are unavailable at the college'.

Jason added that at first lecturers were doubtful about the usefulness of courses offered by The TVET College but later acknowledged the usefulness of the training:

'The IT courses that they have at least once a quarter are attended by the staff members who are sometimes sceptical of it but at the end of the session they will agree that it was good to attend it'.

Jason commented that lecturers' engagement was affected by lack of interest and laziness:

'I'd say it's mostly two things which I have experienced from people; it's either that they are not very interested in what they're doing and I've experienced it here too that they see it 'just a job' and they have better things to do. A lack of interest to learn something new and lastly, laziness to do things and to find out things should be done'.

However Jason commented that lecturers responded positively when invited by The TVET College to participate in training courses:

'Usually they send out an email to ask for people who are willing to go. People would nominate themselves or when they are a few nominations the Academic Head or the Programme Manager would then nominate a person who he or she thinks should go but most of the time it is voluntary and many grab the opportunity particularly those who have been in education for a long time'.

Furthermore, he said that in his experience some of the lecturers complain if there is not enough training:

'I've come across people that actually complain about the fact that they don't get sufficient training'.

Piet commented that despite many challenges lecturers respond positively to opportunities for learning:

'We have positive staff and it is important to stay up-to-date with all new things and learning experiences. We are never too old to learn new things'....'at this stage at our college, I think they accept it if it is positive it was fine but if the workload is too much they will still respond positively. However, at the end they shall participate as we are all well-educated adults and always focus on being positive'.

Similarly, Carmen commented that lecturers have a positive attitude and are keen to engage with opportunities for learning in the workplace:

'There are a lot of academic staff that really want to benefit from whatever the college offers'.

Carmen suggested that arrangements should be made to relieve lecturers of teaching duties so that they can participate in training courses:

'I would think time is needed for on-the-job learning. Everything in our course is crammed and we don't have time for anything, there is not even time to have a break. So I think on-the-job learning should take place when someone else has taken your class for you to do that additional learning'.

In Samuel's view lecturers will participate depending the timing of the training:

'The other big factor for me is in which part of the academic year will it be. Sometimes it is awkward as we need to leave our students alone if it happens during lecture time'.

Samuel referred to lack of extra time and exhaustion as factors which affect lecturers' attitudes towards participating in training:

'We don't always have extra time, time is one of the big concerns and we are exhausted that is why we don't always want to participate in these opportunities'.

Heather made a similar point about the timing of training:

'If a learning opportunity comes to me I will probably grab it with both my hands depending on the time of year because our schedule is quite full and not all lecturers would like to do it in the holiday'.

Heather also suggested that the presenters of the courses offered at The TVET College should be well informed and up to date with what is currently happening in the classroom:

'It's sad to go to seminars with people that you have to learn from people that are presenting it knows less than you do. It doesn't really handle or probe the mistake and shortcomings that you have in a class situation and they talk around the bush; they're not really in the situation that we are by doing the work'.

Chantal commented that lecturers chose to participate in training courses depending on their relevance:

'Most of the time it depends on what type of course it is being offered because sometimes they offer courses that are not relevant to us. Sometimes they offer relevant courses like the ICT skills course because we need to do the admin via the computer'.

In Chantal's view the courses offered by The TVET College should be relevant to the lecturers to improve on-the-job learning and said:

'If they can provide more courses that are relevant to us and not just any course that they feel like'.

Similarly Jason expressed enthusiasm for participating in training courses which are relevant to his job as a lecturer:

'I will grab any opportunity to go on a course if I think that it is in line with what I am doing'.

Further, Jason commented that he engages with activities at work with full commitment: 'I involve myself; when I have to do something I do it as best as I can'.

Neil commented that motivating lecturers and offering relevant learning activities will help to improve on-the-job learning and said:

'Motivation is very important for staff to engage in learning activities and when learning activities are provided they need to be relevant else staff will frown upon them and not be interested'.

Cleo said that lecturers would be more enthusiastic about engaging with learning opportunities if they could see some benefit in terms of acknowledgement and remuneration and would even be willing to give up personal time:

'There are staff that jump for the opportunity when it arises. How they view it would be based on benefits, like what they benefit from it. If it means that it takes up of my personal time but I'll get some form of acknowledgement or remuneration, then yes'.

Neil commented that motivation and morale influence lecturers' decisions to engage with opportunities for learning at The TVET College:

'I would say motivation and morale. When staff morale is low, no one seems to be interested in participating in any learning activity and vice versa. When the morale is high then seem to be very open to learning'.

Timothy said that lecturers would decide whether to participate in training courses offered by The TVET College depending on whether they are compulsory:

'Normally for compulsory opportunities they have to but for those that they do have choices to attend they don't'.

Heather raised similar points about the decisions lecturers make about participating in courses. She felt strongly that lecturers should have a choice:

'I think it's the way that it is presented to them. If it is forced upon them is not a nice feeling because I think it is for them to decide in what areas they need help. If it is for five days academic course the timeframe plays a role that is not very adaptable for lecturers and the distance that you have to travel to do it is also an important role. Finally that would determine if you'd want to participate or not'.

Chantal also highlighted the point that lecturers do not have choice to participate in training courses as some of the courses offered by The TVET College are compulsory. Chantal said:

'Most of the time we don't have a choice and we have to go for the course. So most courses are compulsory'.

Samuel shares the similar sentiments as Heather and Chantal that lecturers should have a choice about attending training courses:

'The college forces us to participate in extra lessons which they plan. They force us by having us sign a register and follow up on whether we really attend the courses'.

Samuel's view was that he will engage with learning if the learning activities are enjoyable to the lecturers: 'As I've said, it will be whether I will enjoy it'.

Martha also emphasised that if participation was forced upon lecturers, it made them feel negative. However if the lecturers have a choice, they will participate willingly:

'I think the positive side on this one is if you choose to do something, you're more willing to do it but if you're forced you don't feel so positive. In most cases you're forced to go on workshops. It works for some but not for all. If it's something you're interested in and something that can help you improve your

skills, then you'll be positive. If you think it's time wasting then you're negative and you don't want to go'.

Neil also highlighted the issue of motivation. If lecturers complied because the training courses are compulsory, they were likely to participate half-heartedly which could have limit their learning:

'Most activities are participated is based either on motivation and whether it is compulsory. If staff are not motivated, they seem to lack interest in participating in these activities. Staff may also participate in these activities with a lack of motivation which hinders their learning experience'.

Carmen's view was less negative. She made a comparison between lecturers and students and said:

'From what I've seen they are a lot of people that do not want to participate. They are like students who cannot wait for that activity to be done but then there are a lot of academic staff that really want to benefit from whatever the college offers'.

Jason said participation training courses depends on the personality of the individual and said:

'I think this differs from individual to individual or individuals that grab opportunities with both hands. On the other hand, when training courses come up there are some individuals who are very hesitant to do that but it all depends on what type of person it is'.

Like Jason, Carmen's view is that lecturers choose to participate in training courses offered by the college depending on their personalities and their priorities:

'It is compulsory and therefore most academic staff would therefore go for the activity or whatever it may be instead of training. I think it is in your personality whether you want to improve yourself or not. So if you decide that you're not going, that is a personal thing. Then obviously workload, if the workload is too much you'll decide to stay but as I said most of us have the personality where we want to. We will prove that we can do anything regardless of the time constraints'.

5.8.2. Age

Three interviewees expressed the view that age is a factor which influences lecturers' engagement with opportunities for learning and that young lecturers are more eager to engage.

Cleo said that young lecturers seem to be more interested to engage with opportunities for learning while some older lecturers were more focused on retirement:

'You might find the younger staff that are still interested. There may be one or two older staff members that feel they at this time of their life where they want to wrap up their studies and not go further'.

Similarly, Samuel said that the younger lecturers are more eager than the older lecturers like himself who will be less keen to participate:

'Most of the younger academic staff view it as an opportunity and they grab it with both hands. Older people like myself will enjoy it and find it worthwhile but I won't be as eager as the younger staff'.

Martha also commented that age plays an important role in lecturers' engagement with opportunities for learning:

'The time the person might have will also play a role as well as age. If you're young, I think it's easier to study and to look forward to achieve something'.

5.8.3. Tensions in the workplace

Another issue that arose during the interviews is that of tensions in the workplace which impact on how lecturers engage with opportunities for learning such as reluctance on the part of lecturers to consult managers, poor communication and unwillingness to assume greater responsibility.

Cleo mentioned several issues that contribute to creating tensions amongst the lecturers. In her view, some lecturers acted as if they were at a junior level and were

reluctant to assume responsibilities which, in their view, go with being in a more senior position:

‘Certain staff come across as though they should only be a lecturer and not in a higher title yet because it comes through in their working style’.

She said that some lecturers avoid going to management for guidance and prefer to solve issues amongst themselves, even if it is likely that they will not receive the guidance they need:

‘Certain academic lecturers who are all over the place and go to other lecturers for guidance instead of going to the person in the managerial position knowing that that person won’t know’.

She added that lecturers would not engage with managers and would simply comply with instructions from senior staff to avoid tension:

‘We all have this mindset of just being quiet and doing things the way senior staff want things to be done.... They [lecturers] try to avoid conflict by being in their comfort zone’.

She also highlighted poor communication among lecturers as a source of tension. For example preparation for the examination involves discussion in lecturers’ meetings of exam-related issues, including the exam and invigilation timetables and distribution of question papers. Lecturers are expected to invigilate and distribute question papers to students if an exam has been scheduled during a period when they normally teach that class even if the exam is for a subject other than the subject they teach. Despite all these discussions, some lecturers said that they were unaware of the exam arrangements which affected their teaching.

Cleo said:

‘I know my question papers should be prepared for the invigilator. We have back to back meetings about it amongst ourselves. Speaking to my colleagues on the day of the exam and speaking about them invigilating my students later in their classroom they were not aware as they have classes’.

A related issue which Cleo raised is the unwillingness of lecturers to assume responsibility and a tendency to shift the blame:

'They will blame me the subject lecturer and I had to make arrangements on the day of exam. I then had to invigilate my own subject'.

Tensions may also arise amongst lecturers, when lecturers have to stand in for one another when a lecturer is absent. The TVET College procedure currently involves a relief timetable when a lecturer is absent. The relief timetable will ensure that students are not left unattended and that the stand in lecturer can continue with work with the students. Lecturers who are absent must email the day's work to their Programme Manager to ensure that the day's work is covered by the stand in lecturer and that the students do not run the risk of falling behind. Lecturers have to give up their 'free' periods which they often use to complete administration tasks.

Cleo said:

'We also have to fill the gaps of free periods and when lecturers are not present. If the student goes home, it's at their own risk. If that person who wasn't at work, returns to work now has to fill his gaps when someone else could just have given the work to the students in their absence'.

Carmen said that teambuilding initiatives and involvement between colleagues in different departments might help to improve on-the-job learning and improve the morale of the lecturers:

'I think they can be more opportunities for staff to learn perhaps more teambuilding and that sort of thing. I know you're talking about academic staff but it is also about being positive at work. I feel that it should be more personal and more interactiveness between departments and getting to know other people so that you feel that you want to come to work and it is not just follow a monotonous process every day'.

The responses of interviewees highlighted several factors which limit the possibilities for learning on-the-job. If the college procedures are not implemented difficulties arise as both students and the lecturer have to catch up with work which was missed while the lecturer was absent. Furthermore, tensions arise as lecturers have to offer

up their 'free' periods to stand in for absent colleagues which add to an already demanding work load.

Another factor which constrained possibilities for learning was reluctance on the part of some lecturers to seek advice and guidance from managers and instead to consult their peers' even if the relevant advice and guidance was not likely to be available from peers. Lecturers' learning and development was also restricted because of poor communication and unwillingness of some lecturers to assume greater responsibilities.

5.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented data obtained through semi-structured interviews with lecturers at The TVET College through which I gained insights from the lecturers about the themes and issues which I explored in my research.

In the next chapter I present an analysis and discussion of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and analysis of policies.



CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present an analysis and discussion of my research data and recommendations for future research.

My research drew on the ideas about workplace learning as learning ‘in’ work as discussed by Sambrook (2005) and learning ‘through’ work (Billett, 2004). I drew on the concept of co-participation (Billett, 2004) within the context of The TVET College to explore affordances for lecturers to learn through participation in their normal work activities, guidance and support they received factors which enabled or constrained their participation and how they elected to engage with workplace affordances for learning.

Billett (2004) argues that there is an ‘interdependent process of engagement in learning through work’ (Billett, 2004, p.9) i.e. structured processes of learning through work which involve co-participation. Affordances are offered for learning through participation in daily work activities, ranging from simple to more complex and challenging activities, with guidance and support from an experienced peer or senior colleague within a workplace.

Billett (2001) also argues that the workplace must be designed to act as a learning environment, so that individuals can progress through a structured pathway of activities which enables their exposure to and participation in the full range of work activities from simple routine tasks to increasingly complex activities with guidance and support.

My research paper explored two aspects of this argument. The first aspect is that lecturers can learn through participation in work activities at The TVET College and must be given the opportunity to perform all the tasks and activities with guidance

and support from peers or more experienced colleagues so that they (lecturers) can develop the knowledge and skills needed to fulfil their roles as lecturers at The TVET College. The second aspect is that lecturers exercise agency in deciding how to respond to opportunities and constraints for learning in the workplace. Lecturers do not respond to workplace affordances and constraints on their own. They interact with peers or more experienced lecturers who can take the lead in providing support, mentoring and guidance on the job.

My analysis and comments are presented under the following headings:

2. Affordances for learning on the job
3. Guidance and support for learning.
4. Factors that enable or constrain learning at the TVET College
5. Agency and engagement
6. Conclusion: Workplaces as learning environments

6.2. AFFORDANCES FOR LEARNING ON THE JOB

My research shows that there are opportunities at The TVET College for lecturers to learn through exposure to and participation in work activities related to their roles as lecturers. Lecturers are exposed to a range of work activities which can contribute to their learning and development. The nature of their work requires that they do much of it on their own - lecturers generally prepare lessons and teach on their own and conduct assessments on their own.

However they interact with each other regularly when participating in other activities related to their main role as lecturers which provide opportunities for learning on the job, such as moderating each other's marked scripts and structured discussions about teaching and conducting assessments.

Lecturers attend regular meetings - including departmental, subject and general staff meetings - which provided opportunities for learning. Subject meetings for example involved sharing of information and ideas and discussion of academic issues such as curriculum and pedagogy, particularly in courses where students did not perform well. Similar affordances for learning arose through their participation in structured discussions about assessments, interpretation of questions and developing marking guidelines for moderation of each other's scripts. The more experienced lecturers usually take the lead in these discussions. In addition, lecturers learned through their participation in informal discussions about marking or conversations about work-related issues in the staffroom during breaks or free periods.

Similarly less experienced lecturers learnt from more experienced colleagues about new policies and procedures as well as unwritten rules in the workplace - including how to implement policies and procedures, such as new marks verification procedures, keeping attendance registers and observing unwritten rules in the workplace such as where to park. They also learnt from listening to and asking for support from more experienced colleagues.

Both senior and less experienced lecturers assist with peer evaluation and development of professional growth plans. Senior lecturers and peers observe and evaluate other lecturers' lessons and participate in post-evaluation meetings as part of the IQMS processes. These interactions and discussions provide opportunities for learning through lecturers' own reflections and engagement with peers and more senior colleagues.

Both experienced and newly appointed lecturers perform many of the duties related to their role as lecturers whether simple or complex such as teaching, assessment, evaluation, internal moderation, implementing policies, admin tasks, etc. All lecturers moderate scripts, but only more experienced lecturers do external marking and moderate question papers. The latter is a source of unhappiness for lecturers who were not able to access opportunities for learning about and working as external

markers. This suggests that pathways for the full development of lecturers at The TVET College are limited.

Despite these limitations it can be argued that there are elements of a structured pathway for learning and development for lecturers at The TVET College through participation in the work activities, meetings and class visits outlined earlier. Moreover, lecturers have opportunities to practise their skills and knowledge in activities unrelated to the subjects they teach.

It is interesting that interviewees did not comment on this, which may suggest that they did not consciously think about participation and interactions in normal work activities as presenting opportunities for learning. These should be highlighted and included in designing more conscious strategies for lecturer development and learning *'through'* work not only at The TVET College but also at national policy levels.

6.3. GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

The Academic Head runs a formal induction programme for newcomers who usually focus on the issues in The Manual such as job profiles, staff training and development and mentoring, as discussed in Chapter 4. Thereafter the Programme Manager provides guidance on the academic rules of programmes and daily admin duties of lecturers. Through regular class visits and lesson evaluation, feedback was given by Programme Managers and HODs as part of a strategy for on-the-job lecturer development and to improve the quality of teaching.

However guidance about daily teaching, assessment and learning support for students usually came from other lecturers who teach the same subject. In general lecturers preferred to seek guidance and support from colleagues as they felt more comfortable with asking another lecturer for advice and guidance (as discussed in 5.6.2. in Chapter 5).

There were other sources of guidance which were specific to the tasks or activities lecturers participated in. If a lecturer was responsible for moderating question papers for the first time, experienced colleagues provided advice and guidance and were available to answer any questions. More experienced lecturers moderated question papers and did external marking which, as indicated above, less experienced lecturers were not allowed to participate in. Guidance in external marking sessions was accessed during discussions with the chief marker and lecturers from other colleges who were also there as markers. Lecturers discussed the marking guidelines and considered possible answers and solutions to the questions/problems.

Over and above the guidance and support provided during regular work activities departmental reviews and IQMS processes also provided opportunities for learning and accessing guidance and support. As part of the departmental reviews discussed earlier (5.6. above and 4.5 in Chapter 4) lecturers accessed guidance from each other through discussions in subject meetings about moderation guidelines and other academic matters. Similarly the IQMS processes (discussed in 4.5 in Chapter 4) created opportunities for accessing guidance and support during evaluation and post-evaluation discussions with peers and senior colleagues.

The role of more experienced lecturers in providing guidance and support to less experienced lecturers can be seen clearly in comments from interviewees. It is also clear that guidance and support was provided even for senior or more experienced colleagues although interviewees had different views about this with some saying that more experienced lecturers do not receive any guidance and support on the job while others said guidance and support for senior colleagues came from managers (Programme Managers, Heads of Department, Academic Heads and Campus Manager).

6.4. FACTORS THAT ENABLE OR CONSTRAIN LEARNING AT THE TVET COLLEGE

There are several factors in the work environment which influence lecturers' learning at TVET College.

Enabling factors included that lecturers are exposed to a wide range of work activities that consisted of both simple and complex work activities. It is also evident that lecturers received guidance and support from their peers as well as senior colleagues. Further, lecturers learn from engaging with policies introduced by The TVET College, such as the policy on the verification of student marks. Another positive factor that enabled lecturers to learn was financial support to lecturers to pursue formal studies such as obtaining teachers' qualifications such as a PGCE. Although this does not fall under learning through work, it enabled lecturers to further their studies.

Factors which constrained lecturers' learning included the demanding teaching load, under-staffing and increased admin duties. When the timing of training courses clashed with lecturers' teaching sessions, their ability to participate was limited. Furthermore, there were limited opportunities to apply their learning or implement it in practice and this also constrained their learning (see 5.7.2 in chapter 5).

There was a strong feeling among lecturers that their academic role has been reduced as a result of increased admin duties and top-down decision-making processes and that the environment at the college was not supportive to their efforts to learn.

6.5. AGENCY AND ENGAGEMENT

These enabling and constraining factors were not the only influences - the attitude and responses of lecturers also played a role. In other words lecturers' agency – their choices and decisions about how to engage or respond - also influenced how they accessed affordances for learning and guidance and support at The TVET College.

Lecturers generally responded positively to opportunities for learning through work activities. They actively sought advice and guidance from more experienced lecturers. They carried out their responsibilities as lecturers with a positive attitude and responded creatively when faced with unforeseen challenges such as bringing their own equipment during power outages. Similarly, when visits to businesses could not be arranged, lecturers improvised by setting students the task of drawing a floor plan of the Hair Care Department at the TVET College (5.5.1. in Chapter 5).

Younger lecturers were more likely to pursue opportunities for learning while older lecturers were less likely to do this, apparently because they were more focused on their retirement. It seems that the age of lecturers influenced their engagement with opportunities for learning.

Tensions in their workplace impacted on how lecturers engaged with opportunities for learning. There were tensions among lecturers about invigilation duties during examinations and the relief timetable which was used when a lecturer was absent. There was some reluctance on the part of lecturers to seek advice and guidance from managers and they preferred instead to consult their peers even if the relevant advice and guidance was not likely to be available from peers (see Chapter 5).

6.6. CONCLUSION: WORKPLACES AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

It has been argued that describing workplaces as “informal’ learning environments is negative, inaccurate and ill-focused’ (Billett, 2002, p.58) and that individuals can learn through participation in daily work activities with guidance and support i.e. through co-participation in workplaces which are designed to act as learning environments with intentional strategies for learning which can be seen as workplace pedagogy and workplace curriculum (ibid).

Practices which could become elements of a strategy for co-participation and learning *through* work do exist at The TVET College. There are opportunities for

participation in or exposure to a wide range of work activities, both simple and complex, with guidance and support (direct and indirect) from various sources.

The TVET College affords opportunities for participation in authentic work activities through which lecturers can develop knowledge and understanding of the practices which are relevant and applicable to their particular work context.

There are limitations as discussed earlier and it cannot be argued that intentional strategies for learning exist at The TVET College which can be seen as aspects of workplace pedagogy and workplace curriculum. There are practices which can be included in processes for guided learning **for** work; whether these can be strengthened through a conscious and deliberate strategy and whether the strategy can also extend to developing learning for transfer is a question for further research.

Furthermore there are factors in the work environment which enable or constrain lecturers' learning through work at The TVET College. They also influence how lecturers decide to engage with affordances for learning. It is not enough, therefore, to focus on learning through participation in daily work activities. The reality is that there are tensions at work and some opportunities for learning are not accessible or available for lecturers, as discussed earlier. The issue of how to design the workplace as a learning environment in a way which can overcome these issues needs further exploration.

Finally it is clear that in national and institutional policies and in the academic literature on TVET colleges the colleges are seen as sites of learning for students; there is little focus on TVET colleges as sites for workplace learning for lecturers. This is an under-researched area in the policy and academic literature on TVET colleges and it is hoped that this study has made a contribution, even if a small one, to filling this gap.

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ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Request for permission to conduct research at the TVET college

Annexure 2: Information Sheet

Annexure 3: Interviewee Consent Form

Annexure 4: Interview questions for lecturers at the engineering and business studies campus at The TVET College

Annexure 5: Request for permission to conduct research

Annexure 6: Invitation to participate in an interview for my research

Annexure 7: Ethical Clearance Certificate



ANNEXURE 1: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE TVET COLLEGE

4 July 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am registered for the Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). As part of the requirement for completion of this degree I need to conduct research and write a research paper. The topic of my research is "Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape (WC)".

The objective of the research is to understand workplaces as learning environments focussing on [REDACTED]. This research intends to focus on staff development for academic staff at the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. Currently the College offers bursaries for formal qualifications, short courses and guidance and support on the job. I intend to focus on how opportunities for learning and staff development are offered to academic staff and how academic staff elect to participate in these activities. More specifically, the objective of the research is to explore how the College affords opportunities for learning through participation in work activities, guidance and support for learning on the job and how academic staff elect to engage with these opportunities for learning.

Based on the above information, I kindly request permission to conduct the study at the [REDACTED]. I hope to conduct my research between June and September 2017. My request is to conduct interviews with academic staff. The theoretical framework for my research emphasises interaction between more experienced and less experienced staff. My sample of eight interviewees will therefore consist of 4 experienced staff (that is academics with 5 years' experience or more) and 4 with less experience. I will also interview both male and female academics to explore whether gender issues influence their experience of the learning affordances in this workplace. In addition I hope to analyse national and institutional policy documents relating to training and development of academic staff at the college.

An interview schedule will be used to conduct interviews and all information obtained from the participants will be treated confidentially. All participants will be provided with an information sheet (see Annexure B) to provide details of the study and invited to sign a consent form (see Annexure C) before conducting the interview. The study will be conducted in accordance with ethical and professional guidelines of the University of the Western Cape.

If my request meets your approval, kindly provide me with permission in writing to conduct the study at this college.

Kind regards

R Levitt

Russel Levitt

Student Number: 3161988 Contact number:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email:



ANNEXURE 2: INFORMATION SHEET

You are kindly requested to participate in a research study which I am undertaking as part of the requirements for completion of a Masters' degree (Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change) at the University of the Western Cape.

Research project title:

Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape (WC).

The objective of the research:

The main objective of the research is to understand workplaces as learning environments focussing on staff development for academic staff at the [REDACTED] at [REDACTED].

You are requested to participate in an interview which will cover the following main questions:

- 1) What are the factors that influence how learning at the workplace is enabled or constrained amongst academic staff at [REDACTED]?
- 2) How does the College afford opportunities for learning for academic staff through participation in work activities with guidance and support for this learning in the workplace?
- 3) How do academic staff elect to engage with these opportunities for learning?

Risks and Benefits:

I am conducting this research in part fulfilment of the requirements in Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC). My interest is for academic purposes. This research will help to develop my knowledge and understanding in the academic field on the issues I am researching. I will receive no financial benefit for conducting this research and there is no financial reward for participating interviews.

You have the right to ask questions and raise your concerns regarding the study or to withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are not obliged to take part in any research. Your comments will be treated confidentially and your identity will be protected by using pseudonyms in my research paper. I undertake to respect the dignity and integrity of all participants in the research and to take steps to ensure that no risks or harm will be done to any participants in the research. All interviewers will be able to see a transcript of the interview so that you can ensure that the comments have been recorded accurately.

My research data, including data gathered during this interview will be secured and protected. Hardcopies of my findings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at home, and only I will have the key and access to the filing cabinet. Electronic copies will be kept on my personal computer, and will be secured/protected with a password. No one else is allowed to use my personal computer. Back up electronic copies will be kept on a hard drive or external hard drive which will be secured with a password and will be stored in the locked filing cabinet to which only I have access.

I have permission from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of [REDACTED] to conduct the research as well as the Campus Manager of the [REDACTED]. A formal permission letter is available if necessary.

Telephone numbers of the researcher and his university supervisor are provided. Please feel free to call any of these numbers.

Yours sincerely

R Levitt

Mr Russel Levitt
3161988 (Student number)
[REDACTED]
3161988@myuwc.ac.za

Supervisor: Ms Rahmat Omar
Institute for Post-School Studies (Adult Education) UWC
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raomar@uwc.ac.za



ANNEXURE 3: INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM

Research project title:

Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape (WC).

Name: Russel Levitt
Position: Lecturer
Contact nr: [REDACTED]
Student number: 3161988
University: University of the Western Cape

- Please Tick Box**
- 1) I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have the opportunity to ask questions
 - 2) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any-time, without giving reason
 - 3) I agree to take part in the above study
 - 4) I agree to the interview / consultation being audio recorded
 - 5) I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in final research paper and related publications

Name of Participant
Tel No

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher
Tel No

Date

Signature

ANNEXURE 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LECTURERS AT THE ENGINEERING AND BUSINESS STUDIES CAMPUS AT THE TVET COLLEGE

1. Background information

1.1 Name of interviewee: _____

1.2 Date: _____

1.3 Age: _____

1.4 Male/Female: _____

1.5 Job title: _____

1.6 Years of experience: _____

2. Guiding Questions

In these interviews I intend to explore the factors that influence how learning at the workplace is enabled or constrained amongst academic staff at [REDACTED], opportunities for learning for academic staff through participation in work activities in the workplace, how academic staff view learning affordances offered at the workplace and how academic staff elect to engage with learning affordances at the workplace and why?

2.1 Learning Affordances at the College

- 1) Describe what your roles and responsibilities are as academic staff?
- 2) What knowledge/skills do you think you need to become proficient/competent to perform these roles?
- 3) How do you acquire the knowledge/skills – i.e. how do you learn to perform these roles or become proficient/competent to perform these roles?
- 4) Are you exposed to the full range of work activities that you need to learn how to carry out your roles and responsibilities?
- 5) How do you learn through actually carrying out your work – i.e. through participation in work activities in the College?
- 6) What are the factors that influence how learning is enabled amongst academic staff at the College?

2.2 Constraints at the College

- 1) What are the factors that constrain learning amongst academic staff at the College?
- 2) What are the constraints on participation in work activities which they need to participate in to become competent in the roles as academics?
- 3) How do academic staff respond to constraints in the College?

2.3 Mentoring, guidance and support on the job / Staff development at the College

- 1) How does the College provide support for learning by academic staff during their participation in work activities? (Probe: Arrangements for guidance on the job, coaching and mentoring).
- 2) How are the learning pathways for academic staff at the College determined?
- 3) Are the learning pathways based on the needs of academic staff? (Probe: Opportunities for participation in work activities).

- 4) Who is responsible for guiding new academic staff? (Probe: Explain how this works).
- 5) Who is responsible for guiding more experienced staff? Probe: Explain how this works).

2.4 Engagement with learning opportunities at the College

- 1) How do academic staff view affordances offered at the College?
- 2) How do academic staff elect to engage with these opportunities for learning? (Probe: How do academic staff choose to participate in some learning opportunities and not others and why?)
- 3) What do you think is needed for on-the-job learning? (Probe: What recommendations for improvements).
- 4) Any other comment?



ANNEXURE 5: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am registered for the Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). As part of the requirement for completion of this degree I need to conduct research and write a research paper. The topic of my research is “Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape (WC)”.

The objective of the research is to understand workplaces as learning environments focussing on [REDACTED]. This research intends to focus on staff development for academic staff at the engineering campus of [REDACTED]. Currently the College offers bursaries for formal qualifications, short courses and guidance and support on the job. I intend to focus on how opportunities for learning and staff development are offered to academic staff and how academic staff elect to participate in these activities. More specifically, the objective of the research is to explore how the College affords opportunities for learning through participation in work activities, guidance and support for learning on the job and how academic staff elect to engage with these opportunities for learning.

Based on the above information, I kindly request permission to conduct the study at the [REDACTED]. I hope to conduct my research between June and September 2017. My request is to conduct interviews with academic staff. The theoretical framework for my research emphasises interaction between more experienced and less experienced staff. My sample of eight interviewees will therefore consist of 4 experienced staff and 4 with less experience. I will also interview both male and female academics to explore whether gender issues influence their experience of the learning affordances in this workplace. In addition I hope to analyse national and institutional policy documents relating to training and development of academic staff at the college.

An interview schedule will be used to conduct interviews and all information obtained from the participants will be treated confidentially. All participants will be provided with an information sheet (see Annexure B) to provide details of the study and invited to sign a consent form (see Annexure C) before conducting the interview. The study will be conducted in accordance with ethical and professional guidelines of the University of the Western Cape.

If my request meets your approval, kindly provide me with permission in writing to conduct the study at this college.

Kind regards

R Levitt

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Russel Levitt

Student Number: 3161988

Contact number: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]



ANNEXURE 6: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW FOR MY RESEARCH

[Mr/Mrs/Ms SURNAME]
LECTURER

28 August 2017

[EMAIL ADDRESS OF ACADEMIC STAFF]

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms Surname

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW FOR MY RESEARCH

I kindly request you to participate in an interview for the research which I am currently doing as part of the research which I am currently doing as part of the Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Interviews will be conducted between 4 and 23 September, 2017 or on a date which is convenient for you. The interview will take 45 minutes to an hour of your time.

I have obtained permission from [REDACTED], the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of [REDACTED] as well as [REDACTED], the [REDACTED]. The permission from both the CEO and Campus Manager are in the form of a formal letter and can be viewed during the interview, if necessary.

The topic of my research is "Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff Development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape (WC)". The objective of the research is to understand workplaces as learning environments focussing on [REDACTED] and intends to focus on staff development for academic staff at the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] in particular, how opportunities for learning and staff development are offered to academic staff and how academic staff elect to participate in these activities. More specifically, the objective of the research is to explore how the College affords opportunities for learning and staff development are offered to academic staff and how academic staff elect to participate in these activities (see information sheet attached).

The study will be conducted in accordance with ethical and professional guidelines of the University of the Western Cape.

If my request meets your approval, kindly email me whether you are willing to participate in an interview.

Looking forward in hearing from you.

Kind regards

R Levitt

Russel Levitt Student Number: 3161988 Contact number: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]

ANNEXURE 7: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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03 October 2017

Mr RC Levitt
Faculty of Education

Ethics Reference Number: HS17/5/26

Project Title: Understanding workplaces as learning environments: Staff development at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges in the Western Cape.

Approval Period: 26 September 2017 – 26 September 2018

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josias', is placed over a faint, large watermark of a sunflower and the university's name.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049