

FET Colleges offer you quality education and training



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Northlink College students enrolled in the tailor-made boiler-making short course in a group practical session

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We are marching to Pretoria!

“We are marching to Pretoria”, a traditional folk-song (with various versions), first emerged during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The song is currently experiencing something of a revival in the FET College Sector, as the administration of these institutions shifts from provincial education departments to the Department of Higher Education and Training in Pretoria!

Another shift that has occurred is that all six FET Colleges in the Western Cape have been found to be ISO 9001:2008-compliant, in an audit conducted by the South African Bureau of Standards.

FET Colleges are also receiving the attention and interest of any number of high-ranking dignitaries, as is evident from the fact that in this edition we have articles that feature royalty, national ministers and ambassadors who are all in some way connected with our colleges.

Colleges and the people that make them work are clearly passionate and believe in what they do. This energy is bound to draw wide-ranging interest and support locally and even internationally.

The initiatives, programmes and activities of the colleges reflected in these pages, although representing

only the tip of the proverbial iceberg, are nothing short of inspiring. Read about textile-printing and ceramics initiatives in Guguletu; about a life-skills programme with royal endorsement; about excellence in early childhood development; about numerous awards and appointments associated with the movers and shakers in our colleges; about a wide range of campus matters that reflect the benefits of partnerships both local and international; and about the quest for quality and some tips when starting your own business.

In Policy and Operational Shifts we feature an article on student support that we sincerely hope will inspire

further debate and ultimately action, as well as two items of special interest to lecturers.

We close with our usual Intellectual Debate where we invite you to interact with current thinking on a variety of education and training issues. This time we focus on Assessment and Evaluation with Mark Corneilse.

Finally, a word of thanks must go to our dedicated contributors. They ensure that we have a fine selection of articles of interest. Thank you also to the FET Colleges of the Western Cape, whose support ensures the continuity of FET College Times. Happy reading!

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FROM THE CHIEF DIRECTOR'S DESK

The year is still young and some of us are already struggling with the resolutions we made in the early days of 2010. Others, more successful, may be way ahead in implementing them. For all of us, this is an exceptional year for South Africa.

Besides the global attention that we are receiving because of the Fifa Soccer World Cup and what goes with it, our iconic leader-to-democracy also celebrates twenty-years since his release from prison. Nelson Mandela, the father of South African democracy, we salute you more than ever before for what you have achieved for our country!

For the FET Colleges in this region it is also a special year because all six FET Colleges have now been certified as ISO 9001:2008-compliant institutions. This is an achievement that we hope will help to make FET Colleges even more successful in the execution of their mandate for this country.

We are absolutely confident that all college clients will reap the benefits that come with, and are expected

of, institutions that subscribe to internationally recognised quality benchmarks.

We are also very proud of the various achievements that our colleges have registered on the academic front. It looks as if some of our colleges continue to earn recognition for their work in areas such as marketing and communication.

While we expect FET Colleges to have their hands occupied with every aspect of human development in the context of teaching and learning, it warms our hearts to watch them grow and gain well-deserved recognition in so many areas. Of course the striving must be relentless. There will always be room for more achievements.

Lastly, it gives me pleasure to welcome three new deputy CEOs to the sector. Three appointments were approved towards the end of 2009 and these managers are now in their new posts. We would like to congratulate Mr Brian Phike, who has joined Boland College as DCEO Academic.



**Zozo Siyengo, Chief Director:
 Further Education and
 Training Colleges**

West Coast College has two new deputy CEOs, namely Mr Mavovane, who is DCEO Academic, and Ms Razia Hamza, who will take over the post of DCEO Innovation. We welcome you and wish you well in your new tasks. Stay focussed!

It is early in the year but it is clear that we are going to have a very busy one. We shall have to work hard and ensure that we are not distracted from our mission and objectives.

I wish all our readers well, and good health. May you continue your part in nation-building, wherever you are!

Textile-printing Studio opens in Guguletu

DR ADRIAAN LANDMAN

In its constant drive to improve its services and range of programme offerings, the College of Cape Town added a high-quality textile-printing studio to its Guguletu Campus during 2009.

The introduction of textile design and print as a course of study at the Guguletu Campus has caught the eye of many small businesses and design experts. The availability of a high-quality textile-printing studio, combined with the creative genius of an up-and-coming artist at the helm, has further created an opportunity for job creation and financial support to students from the surrounding area of Guguletu.

Passionate about his craft and the endless possibilities of what the future could hold for the textile-printing studio, George Myburgh, or "Frik" as he's known to many in art circles, has set up shop at the Guguletu Campus. Needless to say, George is also making a firm imprint on the lives of those with whom he comes into contact. A lecturer in textile design, George is an artist whose passion lies in textile design and printing. Born in the Northern Cape town of Douglas in 1963, George studied textile design at the Pretoria Technikon following his school career in Warrenton and a period of conscripted service in the South African Defence Force. George started his career in textile design as a designer of hand-

woven carpets in Bushbuckridge, in what was then the "homeland" of Lebowa. He sought creative fulfilment in a variety of places that included managing a small hotel in Prince Albert, a stint as a chef on the Isle of Man and another as manager of the Governors' restaurant at the Castle of Good Hope. He finally found his inspiration and home in the township life of Langa, and more recently Guguletu, where he now lives and works. At the centre of the textile-printing studio you will find "Maggie", the state-of-the-art carousel printing machine with different settings for a variety of textile-printing options. "Maggie" was affectionately named after a dear friend of George's "who could multi-task like nobody else you've ever met. She could do so many things at once it was as if she had twenty arms."

The textile-printing process at the Guguletu campus allows for the printing of T-shirts, golf shirts, cushion covers and napkins, in fact nearly any textile article that has a flat, unbroken surface. The entire production process is undertaken personally on site by George and his enthusiastic and dedicated assistant, Luntu Fonte, an ex-student (College of Cape Town, 2005) who works purely for the love of his art. The fully equipped studio provides a service of the highest standards that includes a combination of artwork development, colour separation, the production of positives, the manufacturing of silk screens and

the textile printing itself. Printing can be done either in water-based print inks or in high-quality Plastisol.

Together with the printing service, customers are guaranteed personal attention and guidance as to the preparation of client-ready artwork, the effect of material quality on the final product, and care instructions to ensure the best "wear-mileage" of the end product. The textile printing studio can print up to 500 T-shirts per hour on a fast run, and as little as 50 units per hour on complicated prints with multiple colours, always with consistent quality assurance throughout the process to ensure customer satisfaction.

All printing is professionally done, of the highest quality and very competitively

priced. Current and past clients include Mzoli's, the Artvark Gallery in Kalk Bay, a number of FET Colleges within the Western Cape, the MOT programme, various community organisations and private consumers. The textile studio also produces a range of T-shirts and bags proudly branded under the Loxion Boy (the man who stays in the location) label, featuring George's unique range of artistic impressions of township life.

A large portion of the proceeds from the textile-printing studio will be invested in bursaries for deserving students from the Guguletu community. For further information, free quotations and the best-quality textile printing, please contact George Myburgh at tel. (021) 683 3131, cellular 073 831 1380 or via email gmyburgh@cct.edu.za.



Modelling part of the Loxion Boy range of T shirts are Thabo Ikaneng, George Myburgh and Xolisa Gabavana

College of Cape Town takes top honours at National ECD awards

SHARON GROBBELAAR

The importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD) was once again brought firmly into the spotlight with the recent annual ABSA/Sowetan Early Childhood Development National Awards held at Velmore Estate, outside Pretoria. We congratulate the staff of College of Cape Town, Gardens Campus, on winning the National Awards leg of the ABSA/Sowetan ECD Awards.

The ABSA/Sowetan ECD Awards creates awareness of the importance of ECD and provides a platform and support system for those working in ECD. The awards give recognition to those leading ECD practitioners, centres and training providers, thereby encouraging others to meet the same standards. There are five categories in the ABSA/Sowetan Early Childhood Development Awards, of which the College of Cape Town won

the first prize in the category "ECD Resource and Training Organisation for 2009". This prestigious award follows on the College of Cape Town's victory at provincial level in this category in the Western Cape in November 2009. Through the Absa and Sowetan ECD Awards we pay homage to all the great work ECD practitioners are doing in developing our youth. Awards of this

kind are encouraging and ensuring the future professional development of ECD practitioners and further expansion in the infrastructure, improvement and support of ECD centres and ECD resources. Early childhood education is the key to building a great foundation for your child's educational success. This was the driving force in initiating an event of this kind at which ECD

practitioners are praised for the vital role they play in building a strong nation by nurturing well-rounded future leaders. Melody Marescia, Senior Lecturer in ECD at the Gardens Campus of the College of Cape Town, confirmed that the award testifies to the confidence expressed by the sector in the quality of provision offered by the ECD Department of the College.



Celebrating the awards with dignitaries, from left, Melody Marescia (Senior Lecturer in ECD, College of Cape Town), Veneta Klein (Executive Director of Retail Banking at ABSA), Phuti Ragophala (Innovation), Victor Mecoamere (Sowetan), the Hon Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshemba, Mary Mabatle (Home-based Centre), Georgina Bachelor (Practitioner), Hlengiwe Mthimkulu (Community Based ECD)

King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway meet with MOT SA

WANDA MÖLLER

It is not every day that one gets to rub shoulders with Royalty. It was a real honour for students and MOT presenters from the Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges and MOT SA Board members to have met King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway on Thursday, 26 November 2009. MOT SA presented the MOT programme in the form of an exhibition at Zeekoevlei Yacht Club, at the last official event during Their Majesties' state visit to South Africa. Annalízé Blake, lecturer at the Art & Design Department of City Campus, College of Cape Town (CCT), and Keegan Kensley, an art student at CCT, helped MOT SA to arrange the exhibition.

MOT SA is a Public Benefit Organisation and facilitates the implementation of the MOT life-skills training programme

among the students at the FET Colleges in the Western Cape.

The Norwegian word "mot" means "courage". The MOT life-skills programme empowers young people to make conscious life choices, it strengthens their courage to take care of themselves and one another, and it focuses on establishing sound values, social skills and a belief in one's own abilities.

South Africa is extremely fortunate to have acquired Norwegian intellectual property in the form of the MOT programme. MOT Norway has an exceptional 13-year track record of success. The results of MOT's work are an improvement in quality of life and in well-being, and the prevention of bullying, violence and drug abuse. The MOT programme consists of nine sessions, presented over a three-year

period. At each session the MOT presenter (qualified by means of a three-day training course) facilitates the students' exploration of a particular life-skill. Each session requires active student participation and includes the use of practical exercises, role-play, group discussions, thought-provoking questions and general reflection on life.

General life-skills can be regarded as some of the most important skills a person can have. Being able to communicate effectively and the ability to make the right decisions and choices everyday can often mean the difference between success and failure in life. A poll conducted by UNICEF indicated that 25% of youth primarily learn life-skills at home, whereas 47% indicated that they primarily learn life-skills at school.

The King and Queen, accompanied by

a high-level of delegation, were clearly very interested and impressed by the FET College students. The students gave feedback on how the MOT programme has had a positive impact on their lives. Some of the feedback indicated that the MOT programme helped them to better understand one another's culture. It encouraged their classmates to give positive feedback and to support one another, and they talked about how the session on values guided them in making good life decisions.

For more information on the MOT programme contact:

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Back: Keith Loynes and Brian Dalton (MOT SA Resource Committee members), Denver Beech (MOT presenter), Delia Timmie (MOT SA staff), Lukhanyo Mbude (Student), King Harald V, Wanda Möller (MOT SA CEO). Middle: Are Hovstad (MOT SA Board member), Her Excellency Beryl Rose Sisulu (South Africa's Ambassador to Norway), Tove Aasland (Norway's Minister for Research and Higher Education), Elize Erasmus (MOT presenter), Andréa Witbooi (Student), Queen Sonja, Collins Chabane (South Africa's Acting Minister for International Relations and Cooperation) and Jannie Isaacs (MOT SA Board member). Front: Shaney Taute (Student), Trish van der Merwe (MOT SA Board member), Lesley Badenhorst (MOT presenter) and Muneerah Khan (Student)

New Deputy CEO for Boland College



Brian Phike has a vision for colleges: from industry responders to industry advisors.

JANDRÉ BAKKER

Xolelo Brian Phike matriculated from Ethembeni High School in Prieska. He went on to obtain both a BA in Psychology & African Languages and a B Ed degree at the University of the Western Cape. Fitting in a Higher Diploma in Education (majoring in Guidance and Counselling) between the two, he followed these qualifications with a Certificate in Labour and Social

Law. He started his working career in the production industry but soon moved to education, which is his passion. He went from the ranks of Primary and High School teacher to Head of Department, Deputy Headmaster and Head-master, and then to Project Manager in the Office of the Chief Director of Operations and Services, and on to Campus Director for Northlink College. His experience and expertise in the management of Academic matters and human, financial and physical resources makes him an all-round, balanced team player in this position.

He is a dedicated family man and, true to his strong focus on balance, spends as much time as he can with his wife Brenda, three daughters Thembisile, Inawe and Lukhanyo, and son Hloniphile. Many organisations have him on their list of founding members, testifying to this community man's dedication to society.

When he was asked about his professional passions it was evident that four things are of primary importance – making a contribution to society and the country; patriotism; education; and leadership. He says, "Leadership is not about position, it is about your

passion and attitude – the passion with which you do your work, work with other people and inspire and lead them by way of example to give of their best, to the optimal benefit of the organisation and inevitably of the country."

Responding to a question about his first impressions of Boland College, he said: "It reminds me of home, a rural-based organisation with friendly people. Coming from a small rural town in the Northern Cape, Prieska, makes identifying with the unique challenges of rural FET College students easier."

This speaker of seven languages went on to say that making a difference, by taking students from rural areas and empowering them through education to become industry leaders, is one of his life's missions. "Many of these students face so many obstacles but all have the potential, if someone guides them over these hurdles, to become great."

In his opinion the key challenge facing FET Colleges is to differentiate them from the mediocre, to show that the negative publicity and feedback the sector has been experiencing is unfounded and, in fact, simply an inspiration to do even better.

When he was asked what his vision is for Boland College and sector as a whole, high on his list was to increase student numbers and to make the College the institution of choice. But more important remained quality. "I have studied pass and throughput rates of the Colleges in a recently released document on the 2009 results.

"We have the numbers, but while it is one thing to say that throughput or pass rate is X%, quite another is to be able to quantify and to say that, of X% passes, 20% passed with an average A, and 50% with an average B."

He went on to say that "...by not only focusing on getting as many students through the system as possible, but increasing our focus on the quality of those passes, we shall vastly improve the public and industry's perception of the quality of the sector." He values the input of industry and acknowledges the fact that the FET Sector has to be responsive to the market. However, he is excited about the prospect of Colleges' becoming pro-active, when they do not wait for industry to say what they need but tell industry what they will be needing in the future, while building a optimally skilled labour pool to satisfy that need.

Colleges Marketing and Communication awards

JANDRÉ BAKKER

The Western Cape Public FET Colleges once again proved that they are able to compete with (and beat) the big players.

The Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Education (MACE) organisation, formerly known as Unitech, is an organisation of which the Marketing Departments of the various Higher and Further Education Institutions are members. This organisation originally focused on Higher Education Institutions, hence its initial name Unitech – UNiversity and TECHnikons. With the increasing importance of FET institutions in the quest for reaching education and training goals and the inclusion of the FET College sector into the newly established Department of Higher Education and Training, a serious re-strategising had to take place to ensure that the organisation was fit for purpose. This made way for the full inclusion of FET Colleges into the organisation, and a re-branding took

place under the guidance of Dr Rian Els (CEO: Karl & Emily Fuchs Foundation) and Chairman of MACE, Professor Dasarath Chetty (Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Corporate Relations, University of KwaZulu Natal).

Annually the organisation hosts contact sessions in the various provinces with the aim of up-skilling Marketing and Communication Department (MCD) practitioners and allowing for the sharing of best practices between the various institutions. All these interventions culminate in the National Conference hosted in October each year. This conference is a highlight of the MCD Calendar, and with the quality of this year's speakers and facilitators it proved to be as big a success as in previous years.

Speakers ranged from international education fund-raising specialists, Deputy Director Generals from the Department of Higher Education and Training, and experts in the fields of Media and Branding in the Private Sector to international experts in the

field of e-marketing and communication. The highlight of the event is the Excellence Awards. Education Institutions enter in various categories ranging from internal newsletters and magazines, external magazines, fund-raising initiatives, integrated campaigns and special events to community projects and web-sites.

Building on their reputation as leaders in the FET Communication and Advocacy sphere, the Western Cape FET Colleges once again brought home

numerous awards. Boland College won the award for best internal magazine (*Re:Aksie*), False Bay College for their community project (False Bay College gives Kite festival wings), South Cape FET College for their internal newsletter (*Caucus*) and Northlink College for their integrated campaign (Call Centre). In another step to integrate FET institutions with the organisation, Jandr  Bakker, Marketing and Communication Manager for Boland College, was elected to the National Board of MACE.



Newly elected board member Jandr  Bakker (left) – Marketing and Corporate Communication Manager, Boland College – receiving an award from Dr Rian Els, CEO of the Karl & Emily Fuchs Foundation

Award-winning Customer Services

NOLENE DE COSTA

Northlink College established its Customer Information Services Department in January 2009. Barely nine months later, on 29 October 2009, the College was named the winner in the category Integrated Campaigns (Newcomer), at the national Marketing, Advancement & Communication in Education (MACE) Excellence Awards Ceremony. The Excellence Awards recognise outstanding performance among marketing and communication practitioners in Higher and Further Education.

The Customer Information Services (CIS) was introduced to integrate

recruitment, enquiries, applications, assessments and registration. In other words it provides a fully-fledged track-and-trace system developed to streamline this whole procedure.

Previously the College, like any other tertiary institution, would spend thousands of rands on printing information that was distributed to learners at various schools and exhibitions. Of course there was no guarantee that the learner receiving the brochure or pamphlet would apply to study at Northlink College.

Convenient Enquiry Cards replaced the cumbersome booklets, resulting in a massive saving in the production of

marketing material for "paper-grabbers" at exhibitions and school visits. Only prospective students complete the card and relevant information is sent to the student via the method of his/her choice (electronically or by post). These cards were designed to follow the same order in which information had to be captured on the system.

This integrated campaign has the potential to become almost paperless. All enquiries, whether received manually via schools and exhibitions, or electronically via the college web-site with its current average of 15,000 hits per month, are captured; and potential students are kept up to date regarding their enquiry, assessment or application. Communication is instantaneous via the method of their choice, be it Cell-phone SMS, live-chat, e- or snail-mail.

Conveniently and instantly, the most spot-on target market database is available. With the press of a button, interested or potential students can be informed about any forthcoming Northlink activity, for example the college open day, or new courses that are on offer. The CIS is fully integrated with Northlink's web-site, designed to help prospective students, staff and students (current or past) with information relating to Northlink.

The CIS would not be successful in isolation and so other elements were brought in to support this venture. An information line was established, namely 08600 NLINK (65465), and thirty-five of Northlink College's vehicle-fleet were branded with Northlink branding, which includes this number. Whenever a communication channel or tool is used, the web-site address and the Northlink College number are included.

This applies across the spectrum, whether it is media (print-news, radio advertising or interviews, or television),

signage at each campus, flyers, street-pole posters, fence and roller banners, telephone directory, e-mail, search engines or corporate stationery. The web-site has a statistic monitoring system installed that enables the College to monitor the traffic to the CIS. This in turn allows the relevant staff to see if objectives are being met.

Over the past eleven months the College has seen a marked increase in the number of enquiries from the web-site, as well as via e-mail and the call centre. The progress of every application is also statistically monitored, and monthly reports are passed to management.

Recruitment is an integral part of the Marketing campaign of any tertiary institution. In the Western Cape, FET Colleges, Universities and Universities of Technology attend the same career expositions and visit the same schools in order to inform students about the courses they offer, and ultimately strive to convince the same learners that their institution is the best one to attend. However, the decision and final choice rests with the learner, whose interest, aptitude and financial ability dictate the choice of tertiary institution.

Because of failed administration systems and recruitment procedures some students are lost to certain institutions. But through this CIS, Northlink College aims to eliminate any inaccuracies that would cause a potential student any frustration or difficulties whilst applying for admission.

One of the values of Northlink College is to ensure that innovation, creativity and responsiveness remain the driving forces of this institution. The CIS department is proof in action of this value and the fact that Northlink College is equal to, and even surpasses, other tertiary institutions in the field of innovation and development, as evidenced by this award.



Northlink College's "Dream Team" in the Customer Information Services Department, standing from left, Beatrice Gqomo, Nathan Claassen (job shadowing), Viola Visagie and Lorren Sauls. Seated, Reynold Woeke, the System's Developer. Absent, Audrey Lakay

Northlink Student awarded international Medal of Excellence



Ada Kruger, off to London to receive a prestigious award

ANGELIQUE JORDAAN

Ada Kruger, who completed her Studies in 2009 at Northlink College, has been awarded the City & Guilds Medal for Excellence for her outstanding performance in the Diploma: Reception Operations and Services. This diploma is one of the Hotel and Restaurant Management Programmes offered at Encore, the Hotel School of Northlink College.

City & Guilds offers internationally recognised qualifications as well as

the opportunity to progress into higher education. The organisation has been awarding medals to their best achievers for more than 125 years. The Medals for Excellence programme recognises and rewards exceptional people whose hard work makes them stand out. In this case the recipient was a student whose dedication and talent enabled her to produce work of an exceptional standard.

The winners receive invitations to both a local awards ceremony and the Medals of Excellence Dinner, where they will

be in the running for one of eight prestigious Lion Awards. Furthermore they receive an engraved medal and a certificate, and they stand a chance to win one of the many additional prizes awarded by supporters of City & Guilds.

Northlink College is very proud of Ada Kruger and wishes her well for the Lion Awards Dinner to take place in London in April this year. She is further proof that Northlink lives up to its mission of providing quality, relevant and accredited education and training at an international standard.

Tokyo Sexwale motivates local students

DR ADRIAAN LANDMAN

Inspiration can be found all around us. For many of us it is found in books, in guidance provided by our elders, in the words of the wise or in nature. Four young students from Guguletu have found inspiration within themselves, and their hard work and the resulting success are driving them closer to reaching their dreams at a rapid pace.

Simphiwe Sam, Thabo Ikaneng, Tshepo Phetlu and Nandiha Dayinani, all students at the College of Cape Town's Art & Design faculty in Guguletu, recently became celebrities in their own right when their handiwork was selected to display the art of Luke Dale-Roberts, head chef of La Colombe. (See *FET College Times* June 2009.) La Colombe, located in Constantia Uitsig, was selected as the winner of the Prudential Eat Out Awards Restaurant of the Year 2009, last November.

When Luke conceptualised his *Elements* menu, he was inspired by the elements of nature, the seasons and the senses. To ensure that diners enjoyed a unique sensory experience Luke and this writer, in his capacity of Programme Manager for Art and Design at the College of Cape Town, decided to design a range of "Elements" crockery that complemented the food.

During a special lunch celebration at La Colombe in December 2009, the students presented a set of 36 of the specially designed and hand-crafted "Forest" plates to Luke Dale-Roberts for use in the restaurant. Inspired by the success of their hard work, the students proudly conveyed their passion for a career in Ceramics. Their future plans include completing their studies

and striving for the highest accolades possible within their chosen path of study. They aim to set up their own ceramics studios and "show the world what we can do", and invest in their communities by sharing their skills with children in schools within the areas where they've grown up.

Inspired by those whose role in South Africa's democratic history allowed her the opportunity to follow her dreams, student Nandiha Dayinani seized the moment to gain inspiration from Minister Tokyo Sexwale. Mr Sexwale, a regular diner at La Colombe, and owner of the farm on which it is located, was in Cape Town to attend a meeting of

the Local Organising Committee of the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup. "Think big, start small" is the advice that these talented young Guguletu students received from him when they handed over a set of the "Forest" plates to him in person.

Minister Sexwale spent a considerable amount of time motivating the students with anecdotes from his own life about the importance of design and the drawing of inspiration from our world.

Mr Sexwale showed the students examples of his own designs, including items of clothing and the exclusive champagne, La Gabrielle, designed and

manufactured on his wine farm near Franschoek. Meeting the Minister was the realisation of an inspirational dream for these students.

Even more so are the lessons that they've taken from their experience in seeing their handiwork being showcased in a manner that they never dreamed possible. From humble beginnings and backgrounds with sometimes little hope of a future, these students have seized every opportunity to achieve their goal of rising above society's expectations of them. They are truly inspired young people inspired to inspire other young minds. We look forward to following their careers in the Arts.



Students from the College of Cape Town present hand-crafted "Forest" plates to Minister Tokyo Sexwale. From left: students Nandiha Dayinani and Tshepo Phetlu, the Hon Min for Human Settlements Tokyo Sexwale, student Thabo Ikaneng, Luke Dale-Roberts (head chef of La Colombe restaurant), Mr Andile Dyalvane (Tutor, Imiso Ceramics), Simphiwe Sam and Dr Adriaan Landman, College of Cape Town

Institute of Certified Bookkeepers accredits False Bay College six times!

DARREN FRANCIS

False Bay College has been accredited to offer all courses offered by the Institute of Certified Bookkeepers for 2010. This achievement comes while South Africa is challenged to address the skills shortages in the Financial and Accounting Sector (FASSET). According to FASSET, the sector needs workers with tertiary qualifications. Studies of the sector show that 70% of the workforce has tertiary qualifications and that this number will have to grow in order to fill the requirements of the sector.

False Bay College now offers accredited programmes in bookkeeping/accounting and administration on a full-time and part-time basis. These programmes lead to a

national qualification, and the flexibility in the delivery mode make ICB qualifications very accessible to students that are working.

Dr Chris Mertz, business development manager for False Bay College, says, "Our challenge is to deliver the programmes in such a manner that students gain the best possible learning experience."

In addition the Scarce Skills audit in the FASSET sector ranked accountants at number one and book-keeping at number six. As an institution we believe that this situation will change for the better if students are given the best possible training. For more information about these courses, contact False Bay College on 021 701 1919.

Oil & Gas partnership aims to impart skills

ANGELIQUE JORDAAN

In response to the high unemployment rate and skills shortages in South Africa, Northlink College recently partnered the South African Oil and Gas Alliance (SAOGA) to train and prepare unemployed learners from disadvantaged communities for job and career placement in the boiler-making industry.

According to a recent study, "Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-School Youth", the shortage of skilled workers, specifically with technical skills, is one of the enormous hurdles in the continued growth of the South African economy. There is an ever-increasing demand for skilled

workers. The study also found that financial capability was the biggest stumbling block as it ultimately determines whether or not a learner chooses to further his or her studies. It also impacts on the choice of institution that the learner will attend, and whether it will be a university or college.

This training collaboration project between Northlink College and SAOGA aims to reduce the problem of skills shortages and unemployment, by providing students from disadvantaged communities with the necessary specialised skills. The selected skills are also aligned with the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDS). The approach has been through the development

of new specialist courses. Northlink developed tailor-made boiler-making short courses aligned with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) framework, which is also aligned with the new N2 conversion of the MERSETA.

There are currently 120 students enrolled in this programme, all of whom are funded by SAOGA. The needy students receive a weekly allowance to cover any travelling expenses. Supportive of national policy, Northlink College – in collaboration with different government departments, the private sector (SAOGA) and others – created an updated programme that responds to economic needs.

As part of efforts to increase the throughput and success rates of students, and focusing on the historically disadvantaged, Northlink College has begun profiling the students through standardised testing upon enrolment, and this is applicable to all students.

The outcome is a personalised programme that sets the students on a career pathway providing them with multiple exit points. The approach includes a tracking system. Currently this is a research pilot project, but the intention is to conduct it on a larger scale and incorporate the new knowledge in future projects. Yazeed Daniels, one of the students currently enrolled in the programme, worked for two different companies at Cape

Town Harbour during his holiday, and he reported, "I am confident working in the industry now as I have already acquired the relevant, accredited skills. All I needed to do was to apply this knowledge". He emphasised the fact that the students are exposed to the latest available industry technology and techniques, which enhances their training.

Northlink believes that this training project is a good example of what is envisaged in the Human Resources Development Strategy. With the focus on the supply side (the provision of accredited and quality-assured further education and training) and the demand side (the demand for specific skills from employers), Northlink believes it is well positioned to effect a happy match.

This partnership agreement has been extremely well received by the boiler-making industry. Northlink College offers precisely the kind of education which is so sadly lacking at the moment, and SAOGA is in a position to ensure that these students are adequately trained to industry standards.

The students are immediately employable once they leave the "nurtured environment" of the College. Northlink and SAOGA are opening up a world of opportunity for these young people. It is hoped that this project will gain momentum and be expanded to meet skills shortages in other scarce-skills trades.



Students enrolled in the tailor-made boiler-making short course in a group practical session

False Bay College flies the FET flag in Sweden

DARREN FRANCIS

Two groups of False Bay College students and staff visited Sweden over the festive season, from 27 November to 22 December 2009, on a Staff and Student exchange programme.

Twenty-five students and five lecturers comprising two groups were given the opportunity to experience college life in Norrkoping and Lidingo Folkhogskola. This exchange programme formed part of a strategic partnership with Sweden through the False Bay College - Lidingo Folkhogskola staff exchange.

Shannon Doolings, a programme manager at False Bay College and one of the exchange leaders, says, "The experience we gained in Norrkoping was unbelievable as we had the opportunity to experience a vocationally oriented institution first-hand. As we entered the campus the South African flag was raised high in our honour and the cold weather seemed worthwhile enduring."

When students were asked about their impressions they all agreed that "the freezing weather and dark skies" were some of the challenging factors, as we were so used to our beautiful country and its beautiful weather.

The SA delegation met the Mayor of Norrkoping, Li Teske, who spoke of Sweden's rich history and its industries. Mrs Doolings mentioned that she was pleasantly surprised when the mayor said that Sweden's biggest export was education. Education in Sweden is free and this enables students to get the best possible chance of contributing

to the thriving economy. The visit to Norrkoping and Lidingo Folkhogskola involved class attendance, observation of best practices, industry visits, cultural experiences, sight-seeing and a week's stay with a host family.

Mrs Doolings added: "Our students were absolutely awesome. They were given an opportunity to present their findings in an auditorium filled with more than 700 students and lecturers, and the level of the presentation of the findings was phenomenal. The staff of Ebersteinska Gymnasiet were extremely impressed."

False Bay students spoke of Cape Town and its attraction, the history of South Africa, the people of South Africa, sports, and what it means to be "Proudly South African". In reciprocation False Bay College is preparing to welcome two delegations from Sweden in February for a period of three weeks, when it will showcase what South Africa has to offer.



At the meeting with the South African Ambassador to Sweden were, from left, Stefan Torngvist of Ebersteinska Gymnasiet (EG), Pierre Koekemoer (False Bay College), Kristina Erlansson (EG), Shannon Doolings (FBC), His Excellency the South African Ambassador to Sweden, Zeph Makgetla, Tommy Burnet (EG), Birdy Booysen (FBC), Mikael Svensson (EG)

6 FET Colleges ISO 9001:2008 compliant

Editor's Note:

All six public FET Colleges in the Western Cape have been found to be ISO 9001:2008 compliant in an audit by the South African Bureau of Standards. Congratulations to all the hard-working staff that have earned the Colleges this achievement.

JANDRÉ BAKKER AND
NOLENE DE COSTA

Boland College is one of the first Western Cape Public FET College to be ISO (International Standards Organisation) certified. The slogan of the Quality Management System (QMS) of Boland College is *Quality First*. The college has lived up to this slogan by being one of the first FET Colleges in the country and first in the Western Cape to become fully SABS (South African Bureau of Standards), ISO 9001:2008 aligned, compliant and certified.

The lengthy process followed in pursuit of this milestone – the various internal and external quality audits – ensured that all process-owners and staff members remain informed and updated on the various trends within the quality sphere. This also motivated all process-owners to see the QMS as a live system and to actively and continuously update

and improve on set procedures, policies and documents.

Three months after the first Stage II SABS audit, Boland College CEO, Mr Chops Fourie, and Boland College Quality Manager, Ms Johanna Coetzee, had the honour of receiving the SABS Accreditation Certificates, proof that all the hard work and commitment by all staff involved had finally paid off.

In his acceptance speech Mr Fourie went on to say that obtaining accreditation in such a smooth manner was "a result of not doing what we did to obtain certification, but doing it with an overriding commitment to good service delivery to both internal and external clients."

At an informal event hosted at the Head Office in Stellenbosch, Mr Tony Fillmore, the SABS Representative, agreed with Mr Fourie and added,

"One only needs to watch the news to see that our country is passionate about service delivery. By committing to deliver good service of high quality, Boland College has taken ownership of the process and is an example of what can be achieved." He went on to say: "When service delivery becomes the main focus of an organisation, quality is the obvious next step."

Ms Coetzee thanked all involved since the initial intervention in 2004 (from the GTZ-support, process-owners, staff and management to the Danida/SESD assistance). Being recognised for Boland College's quality is a proud legacy, and to be certified according to internationally accepted standards proves to prospective students, parents and industry that they are investing in a legitimate and credible product. This will further increase trust, and the validity and reliability of the popular slogan "FET First".

Northlink College was among the first of the Western Cape FET Colleges to establish a fully integrated Quality Management System (QMS) in 2005. This was done with the support of a German-based company (GTZ). The College successfully implemented

the QMS and then computerised the system, with the support of Blue Sky Consultants, as part of a provincial strategy initiated by the Chief Directorate FET Colleges in the Western Cape Education Department.

In 2009 the Western Cape Education Department, in collaboration with the Danish Support to Education and Skills Development programme, supported the six Colleges in the Western Cape to obtain the 9001:2008 certificate of the International Standard Organisation (ISO). This was done to ensure that the Education and Training processes of the Colleges meet international standards as prescribed by the ISO standard.

The South African Bureau of Standards was appointed as External Auditors on behalf of the ISO. After a series of audits of their Central Office and all of their campuses, Northlink College achieved ISO certification at the end of September 2009.

The official ISO Certificate and flag were ceremonially presented to Mr Leon Beech (CEO: Northlink College) on the 25 of January 2010 by Mr Pierre de Waal (Quality Manager: Northlink College).

Starting Your own Health and Beauty business

Editor's Note:

This article demonstrates how successful FET College students can translate the skills they acquired at an FET College into a successful self-employment business opportunity. Published with the permission of the author. First published on www.bizassist.co.za.

JAQUELINE MARTINEZ

Setting the stage for yet another breed of entrepreneur in the health, wellness and beauty arenas are our brand new, from-the-ground-up starters in the industry.

Yasmien Williams, owner of Essential Health and Beauty, lives by the creed "Nothing must be left to chance. We offer a luxury and we must not take any client for granted. Always give of your best to keep your clients interested."

As an accountant in her previous life, Yasmien was set on track by none other than her manager, who always appeared to have tense shoulders from the stressful environment in which they worked. On discovering that Yasmien had a talent for massage with her "healing hands", her manager enrolled her in a health and wellness course at the College of Cape Town.

"Initially I only did it part-time," she says, "but I loved massage so much that I became a full-time student." Yasmien says it is important to have qualifications when entering this industry. Since a person needs to be perceived as professional and a "people's person". She completed the course at the College of Cape Town and immediately went to work in beauty salons to become what she calls "industry friendly" and with the intention of building up clientele. "I befriended salon reps and asked them if they knew of salons that were closing, at which point I bought some good second-hand equipment, put it into storage and opened my very first *cabine* in Claremont inside a hairdressing salon."

By this time she had everything she required: stock, a client book for two months and a R200 float! In her first month she made R16,000 and in the

second, R22,000. Initially she worked from home while she was studying, but she decided that she did not want to wake up in the same place where she worked, so she found herself a studio from which to operate.

Yasmien loves empowering people and recently employed a relative, Khadeeja, who showed an interest in health and beauty. She has also mentored a student for the past two years, who she describes as "brilliant", and she has another trusted staff member, Vuvu. An intern, Lerato, helps Yasmien and Khadeeja on Saturdays.

"Marketing your business should be an on-going process," says Yasmien. "I never depended on my current clients. I make a point of making new clients each week by giving brochures to friends. I always have leaflets in my bag and give them out on the taxi, in the street or in the supermarket. I also do a post-box drop three times a year in the area and, finally, I advertise in gyms, offering a discount for members and students."

This intrepid entrepreneur, who can count movie stars amongst her clients, has also formulated her own hand-

and-heel balm product range. The product was launched this year and is called Tajmeel. It means "to beautify" and is completely halaal, endorsed by the Muslim Judicial Council. "When I developed this product, I had the pilgrims in mind who travel to Mecca on a hajj twice a year, ending up with cracked and bleeding heels."

Her advice to anybody aspiring to start a health and beauty business is, "If you are the owner of the business you must lead from the front, lead by example and work five times harder than everyone else. You have to listen to the voice on the ground, have good people and management skills. Your employees are the most valuable asset of your company. You 'grow' your company by 'growing' and empowering your staff."

For further information and guidance from this graduate of the College of Cape Town, FET College, contact the author:

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Information and Support: Too late for the teenager from Emndeni

Editor's Note:

Patricia Flederman is a former Director of the Careers Research and Information Centre (South African Qualifications Authority, SAQA). She is also the author of the Environmental Scan of Career Guidance in South Africa. The article was submitted by Siphokazi Phillip, Communication Strategic Support Unit, SAQA. Student support, particularly in FET Colleges, is a vital matter. There is clearly a need to expand this as a comprehensive service. For more information or comment contact Siphokazi Phillip by e-mailing her at sPhillip@saqa.co.za.

PATRICIA FLEDERMAN

Nomsa Mokone, a high school teenager, is said by police to have hanged herself on Thursday January 7, 2010, in the storeroom of her Emndeni home she shared with her sister and cousin. On the floor was a newspaper of matric results.

On her cell-phone was the news that she had failed. Nomsa's apparent suicide is devastating and is challenging many to think about the plight of others in the education system. So many learners may see the future as bleak and hopeless, and feel that they have nowhere to turn. Accompanying this widely reported police account are media comments about what could have helped Nomsa.

Most of these comments refer to the need for encouragement to never lose hope, for information about options, and for support in exploring new information. The important role of parents, teachers and friends is emphasised. For example, the Minister for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, Nolithando Mayende-Sibiya, advised parents and families to support learners who had failed to matriculate and to encourage them to keep trying. Gauteng Education Minister, Barbara Creecy, also said the department encouraged learners to never lose hope and to explore the many alternatives to university options. She encouraged parents and friends to help those in need to find counselling (*Mail & Guardian Online*, January 10, 2010).

Certainly parents, friends and teachers can make a significant difference in terms of information and support. But this solution only benefits students with parents who have access to relevant, accurate, broad information for exploring options, and who have both the time and the means to pursue

options, and the social capital in terms of information networks. Similarly, students from better-equipped schools will be more likely to find teachers with the resources to network and access information. The student-teacher ratio at such schools allows for extended counselling to all students.

Information – current, comprehensive and student-friendly – and support that is accessible to all are vital (but missing) components of equity and redress. For access and redress to have meaning in poor people's lives it is not enough to provide schooling and learning. To neglect to provide services that help students, parents and teachers from all communities to navigate the complex array of options, and to link these to capacity and aspiration, further disadvantages poorer communities and reproduces disadvantage based on race and class. An information and support service for transition between school, further study, training and work that is affordable (and is accessible by all) is urgently needed.

This service by its nature cuts across the silos of education, training and work, and can be seen as a systemic intervention that links the individual (and those helping them such as parents and teachers) to opportunities throughout the system. And to be affordable by government it must use the latest communications and information-searching technology. A model for this concept exists and careful groundwork has already been laid.

This model is a careers-guidance cell-phone/telephone help-line that provides the caller with someone to talk to who is trained to listen, support, encourage and help search for relevant, realistic information about work and study, and to help the caller plan the next steps. Follow-up information can be sent to the caller via cell-phone,

letter, fax, e-mail or internet forums, and individuals can also communicate with the service through these channels. Those using public internet sites or their own computers would have a self-help web-site option, and when needed they could press the "call-me button" and a help-line advisor would call them. In this way any person from any part of South Africa could receive the help they need to navigate the options, especially when they hit the kind of "roadblock" that failing an exam represents. There are just not enough clinically trained counsellors for everyone, and counselling services are generally extremely expensive. Help-line coaches and givers of advice and information on telephone lines have been shown to be highly effective as helpers.

South Africa has a legacy of a career development approach based on equity and access that began 30 years ago. And new initiatives over the past two-plus years have laid a solid groundwork and mandate for a help-line. The Careers Research and Information Centre (CRIC), founded in 1977 following the Soweto uprising, and its network of related careers guidance NGOs tried from the late-1970s to the 1990s to meet the need for helpful, accurate information and guidance for all through outreach programmes. This work challenged both traditional elitist career guidance and apartheid paradigms, and, with its non-racial stand, forged the beginning of an equity-based career development system to contribute to developing a new non-racial South Africa.

In 2007 SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority), having established the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) to increase mobility and flexibility across the education and learning spectrum, began to ask the next question: how do learners easily navigate across the system of learning, studying, training and work-seeking? In 2007 SAQA commissioned a study to explore the terrain of career development provision in South Africa. Based on interviews with over 60 educators, career development personnel, and others (including international experts concerned with equity and career guidance provision), the study made a central recommendation. The recommendation was that a free telephone/cell-phone help-line with comprehensive quality information

should be a national provision within an adult learning framework. A consulting group set up by SAQA accepted this recommendation and SAQA then began laying the groundwork to further this idea.

In October 2008 SAQA hosted Professor Tony Watts, one of the pre-eminent career development experts internationally, to present a number of talks and seminars in Johannesburg and Cape Town. He argued that career development is not only of benefit to individuals but is also a public good. First, it is important for efficiency in the education system. If learners make decisions about learning paths in a thoughtful and realistic manner with a work goal in mind they are much more likely to be successful, and investment in education will yield higher returns. Second, it is important for an effective labour market.

The better the fit between individual capacity and goals and the work they do, the more likely it is that they will be productive, use training and development opportunities and thereby enhance national productivity. Third, career development embodies social equity goals by supporting equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion. Already the Services SETA has seen the urgency and relevance for such a service and has asked SAQA to set up a help-line specialising in services industry career paths. SAQA has set up an NQF help-line.

A career development cell-phone/telephone help-line with national, comprehensive, accurate accessible information on work and study will better encourage the realistic aspirations of youth and adults and improve access and success. At the same time it will ensure that education as well as training and skills-development are more efficiently linked to economic needs.

The impact of this will be felt tremendously in individual lives as a more caring and navigable system and a more efficient use of family resources. It will contribute to education and labour market efficiencies. And it will support citizen engagement through helping individuals to cope with challenges, and to learn planning and decision-making skills. Most of all, it will encourage young men and especially women to take the next step.

The Art and Design Department of the College of Cape Town prepares itself for a new age of right-brainers

Editor's Note:

Dr Adriaan Landman is the Programme Manager and Head of the Art and Design Department of the College of Cape Town.

DR ADRIAAN LANDMAN

... businesses are realising that the only way to differentiate their goods and services in today's overstuffed marketplace is to make their offerings physically beautiful and emotionally compelling. Thus the high-concept abilities of an artist are often more valuable than easily replicated L-Directed skills of an entry-level graduate.

Pink, D H, *A whole new Mind. Why right-brainers will rule the future* (Riverhead, New York, 2006)

The last age, which was known as the Information Age, belonged to a certain kind of person: computer programmers, lawyers and MBA-graduates. In the future a new age, named the Conceptual Age, will belong to the person with a different mind. To survive the economic onslaught the trend-setters will be creators and empathisers, pattern recognisers and meaning makers. In other words, the new world is crying out for individuals that are right-brain thinkers, which makes training in Art and Design more

relevant than ever before in history. Art and Design students have become very valuable to the industry as they have enough relevant training to diversify into any area of specialisation that the creative industries might require.

One of the aims of the Art and Design Department is to respond to the unemployment problem in South Africa in a responsible way, and to enrich our economy through training creative right-brained individuals. It is the policy of the Art and Design Department to introduce our students to the world of work as soon as possible. In 2009 a number of successful projects were launched in collaboration with industry. Some of the successful projects were the following:

- Luke Dale-Roberts, Head Chef of the award winning La Colombe restaurant in Constantia Uitsig, teamed up with the College of Cape Town's Art Faculty to design a range of Elements crockery that complimented the food. Each piece was designed and hand-crafted, as part of a Guguletu upliftment project, to have the same feel, shape and

style as the food displayed.

- An internship was set up in which the students and their tutor, Andile Dyalvane of Imiso Ceramics, collaborated on ideas and skills to conceptualise the unique pieces. These hand-crafted pieces were sold to the public and the proceeds will be used for upliftment of the unemployed. To share their creation with the general public, Luke and this author then teamed up again with Andile, where together they brainstormed the basic concept to analyse how they could build on what had already been done. To launch this project 360 plates were made and used by Luke at the Prudential Eat Out Awards to serve his "Elements: Forest" dish. A set of six limited-edition Elements/Forest plates were also available for purchase on the evening of the event. All proceeds will be used to start up a community project at the Guguletu Campus of the College of Cape Town.
- A Jewellery Manufacture project was initiated to help unemployed women from Guguletu to start their own small businesses. While acquiring jewellery-manufacturing skills, the women also underwent a formal skills programme in making indigenous jewellery, which was accredited by the MQA Seta. Four out of the eight unit standards were

successfully completed during 2009.

- The Graphic Design Department developed the corporate identities for the Battery energy drink, and also that of the Tourism and Hospitality Association of the Western Cape Education Department. Students also designed and manufactured prototype designs for other merchandise for Battery such as sports-shoes, stationery, jewellery, skateboards, T-shirts, radios and beachwear.

The Art and Design Department at the College of Cape Town has introduced several Design Courses for 2010. Introduction into Photography, Fine Arts and Graphic Design provide students the necessary skills to receive a National Certificate in their field of study. Design Studies Level 3 gives students with grade 10 or 11 access to study in the field of art. Design Foundation NQF Level 4 gives students the opportunity to complete their art qualification on a grade 12 level. All these courses are linked with projects that are done in collaboration with industry, which ensures that students are well equipped for the world of work before they leave the College.

For more information on these and related programmes, call Dr Landman at the City Campus, College of Cape Town on 021 462 2053.

Successful lecturers adopt an Applied Competency Mindset

ALBIN BOWLER

At the WCED Applied Conference Workshop held on 28 October 2009 at

Northlink College it was clear that the FET Colleges in the Western Cape are committed to implement an applied competency approach, not only in the

Faculty Business Studies but also for other faculties.

The following table highlights the

differences between a *Traditional Class Room Mindset* and a *Business Applied Competency Mindset* (applied specifically in Business Studies):

	TRADITIONAL CLASS ROOM THINKING	APPLIED COMPETENCY THINKING
1.	Focus on theory (maybe practical awareness), i.e. <i>Academic Education</i>	Focus on Applied Competence, i.e. <i>Vocational Education</i> (& Occupational Education)
2.	Internal (class room & campus) focus	Internal & External (industry) focus
3.	Assignments & exercises, etc. are seen as practicals, combined with <i>practicum</i> approach	Demonstrated competencies are seen as practicals as part of a <i>live business</i> approach
4.	Emphasis on <i>pass rates, class averages, distinctions & through-put</i> (examinations focus)	Emphasis on <i>business competencies</i> (e.g. feedback from employers are valuable), as well as on <i>pass rates & through-put</i> , etc.
5.	Bloom's Taxonomy for test & examination papers (in some circles an outdated taxonomy)	Observational & Reflexive rubrics/check lists
6.	Classroom (Talk & Chalk)/Computer Room, etc.	Authentic Business Setting
7.	Emphasise articulation & preparation for tertiary education, especially universities	Emphasise entry into world of work
8.	Speaks to minority of learners aiming for tertiary education	Speaks to majority of learners on entering intermediate labour market
9.	Curtail non-classroom activities (e.g. simulation activities & computer labs) when faced with resource & budget constraints - seen as not affordable and a <i>nice to have</i>	Uphold & protect practical and applied competencies when faced with budget constraints - seen as a <i>need to have</i> (solution when resource constraints encountered: rather focus on optimal use of resources)
10.	Assessing subject-specific sub-tasks	Assessing authentic integrated tasks

© Albin Bowler

Note: In the *FET College Times* edition of September 2007 the basic differences between Practicums and Simulated Enterprises for Business Studies were highlighted.

An evaluation of TAFE assessment practices

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's degree in

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Australia

Subject: Evaluation for Management and Development

Supervisor: Associate Prof Rosalind Hurworth

November 2009



Mark Corneilse, reading for a Master's in Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Melbourne

MARK CORNEILSE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Australian vocational education and training (VET) system has undergone considerable change over the past ten years (NCVER, 2008). Although there has been much research into pedagogical aspects, very few studies have focused on the related assessment. And yet assessment is a key component of the national vocational education and training system. Recently the reforms to the training system associated with the introduction of the National Training Framework (NTF), especially Training Packages and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), have focused high levels of attention on the outcomes of assessment processes (DETYA, 2001).

The Australian state of Victoria has more than twenty public Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions. These institutions, once registered, are authorised by the Australian Government to deliver nationally recognised training programs. The training programs range from certificate courses to vocational graduate qualifications. With more than 30 study areas and about 1,800 modules offered, the programs have a strong focus on developing skills. Naturally the most successful programs are ones that meet the approval and have gained the respect of the industries for which they prepare their graduates.

In this context, literature on assessment in the vocational education and training system defines assessment as "the judgement or evidence against which the standard of performance expected in the workplace is measured" (NQC, 2007). In Australia, as is the growing trend internationally, vocational education and training is delivered and assessed within a competency-based paradigm. This approach in assessment focuses primarily on making judgements which lead to declaring candidates "competent" or "not yet competent". It is within this context that this evaluation was undertaken.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

According to Patton (2002) the aim of research is to generate or test theory and contribute to the development of knowledge. Merriam and Simpson (1995) add

Editor's Note:

Mark Corneilse is from Cape Town and entered the FET College sector as a lecturer in 1991. Prior to undertaking the scholarship in Australia at the University of Melbourne, he was employed as a Faculty Head (Engineering studies) at Boland College. He is studying towards a Master's degree in Assessment and Evaluation, at the University of Melbourne. He started his studies in Melbourne in January 2009 and will complete the programme in August 2010. Mark plans to return to Boland College on completion of his studies.

The Master's in Assessment and Evaluation exposes students to the latest techniques of assessment analysis and evaluation methods, with staff who are involved in cutting-edge international research in these areas. Assessment is always a contentious issue, and having the skills to unpack assessment approaches and improve assessment techniques will be a valuable asset to South Africa's skills development.

that research can also have the purpose of improving the quality of practice. In the Australian TAFE sector, assessment practices have come under "hot" debate since the sector started using Training Packages to replace centralised panels of "markers". In 1999, Kaye Schofield's review of the traineeship systems in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania identified a host of issues that led to poor quality. These included: a lack of documentation of assessment processes, poor assessment quality assurance, the use of inadequately trained assessors and a lack of consistency in assessment judgements. In each case she stressed that assessment was one of the areas requiring attention in assuring quality (Clayton, Booth and Roy, 2001).

In 2008 the National Quality Council (NQC) commissioned a scoping study to review the elements that constitute and contribute to quality assessment and how perceptions or understandings of this may have changed in the past five years, from the point of view of key stakeholders and industry (NCVER, 2009).

The new grading system used in this (competency-based) assessment approach has also been vigorously debated (Gillis and Griffin, 2005). Furthermore the advent and proliferation of electronic devices and computer equipment has created opportunities for assessment and questions about performing assessment in new and different ways.

The evaluation sought to answer the burning question: "How can the current assessment practices of TAFE institutions be improved?" It took on a qualitative approach to explore the opinions, experiences and thoughts on TAFE assessments, to unpack the needs that the current practices and policies presented. Within this discourse I chose a needs assessment approach to perform a study in the TAFE assessment practices, particularly in an engineering program

1.3 Motivation for the choice of evaluation

The activity of research is largely dependent on the curiosity and energies of individuals who are attracted to the practice and study in the field (Merriam and Simpson, 1995). The motivation for choosing this area of research is both personal and professional. I have been working in the further education and training (FET) sector in South Africa for nearly twenty years and as a national examiner for fourteen years.

Since the South African competency-based education and training system is largely based on the UK, Australian and New Zealand model, I sought to investigate the current challenges that the Australian system was experiencing and to use their

experiences to inform the debates on improvements in the South African practices. Within the Evaluation for Management and Development module of the Master's in Assessment and Evaluation, I believe that this evaluation project will be useful to:

- * assist TAFE managers to review their existing assessment policies
- * review the methods used in the training of assessors
- * review the way in which assessments are being conducted
- * see the value of continuous research in program delivery.

I also believe that the information provided by this evaluation will assist providers of assessor training, for example, the Certificate IV programme in Training and Assessment with current information on the extent to which the course content is meeting the needs of its clients. Finally, I hope that the information will act as a catalyst for further research into the area of assessment practices, and its improvement in the VET system.

2. EVALUATION APPROACH

2.1 Evaluation Design

Evaluation can be considered as a form of applied research because it is involved with immediate problems or situations and is likely to have an immediate impact upon practice (Merriam and Simpson, 1995).

The intended plan of this research is to lead to decisions to be made about the future direction of assessment practices in TAFE institutions in Australia. To strengthen the analysis and reporting of data collected I used triangulation. In this context I use the term "triangulation" to mean the use of multiple sources of data or methods of data collection to confirm the findings (Patton, 2002).

2.2 Sampling

I can align my views on sampling with the definition on sampling as given by Merriam and Simpson (1995). Here a sample, in qualitative data research, is described as "data gathered to represent accurately those behaviours, perceptions, and events that are part of the phenomenon under review". I chose to use a purposeful sample where participants were chosen specifically from TAFE institutions offering automotive programs in Victoria. TAFE staff had to be assessors and students had to be in an automotive program at least since the beginning of 2009, and to have participated in assessments.

2.3 Needs Assessment

According to Owen (2006), one of the best known approaches in evaluation-for-development is needs assessment. The needs assessment approach is typically located within the proactive type of evaluation on the evaluation continuum. According to Davidson (2005) needs in this context, are "things" without which unsatisfactory functioning occurs.

McKillip (1987) proposes four major forms of needs assessments, namely;

- The discrepancy view – described as an improvement of existing program often in terms of "performance"
- The diagnostic view – which aims to find evidence that an absence of the issues could impede the development of the educational sector
- The democratic view – solicits the opinion from stakeholders on the desirability of educational programs
- The analytical view – a direction that leads to predicted improvement, given sufficient information about the current status

My approach in this paper is a combination of the diagnostic and the democratic view. Some of the questions used in the student and lecturer surveys suggest that there is an analysis of differences between the actual state of affairs and the desired state of affairs. But with the use of rich literature, staff and student opinions, I am also able to gather data which examines the direction in which improvements can be predicted involving different stakeholders.

2.4 Data collection

Initially I planned to conduct interviews with TAFE staff at one college as well as carry out an analysis of the policies, hold interviews with students in the automotive program and observe an assessment event in action. As I communicated my plan to four institutions with the hope of later making a selection of one institution which

would be both accessible and offer the richest data, the plan had to be revisited as my first-choice application met rejection due to their building reconstruction program.

Although it was a small-scale research project, I had already invested so many of my resources in this institution and because I had to proceed with the research in the limited time allowed I then had to regroup my thoughts and widen the scope of the research to include more institutions. This experience confirmed the view that while there are disadvantages with "insider" evaluators with regards to bias, the disadvantages or challenges experienced by "outsider" evaluators who have to gain access to data can be quite daunting. In the end I managed to collect enough data to inform the goals of the project. Data was sourced from:

- a telephone interview with a lecturer-assessor
- TAFE assessment and moderation policies from three institutions
- minutes of meetings of Manufacturing Skills Australia (MSA)
- questionnaires received from four TAFE lecturer-assessors
- nine student sketches depicting their views on current assessment practices and what assessments should be like
- personal observation through a site visit to a TAFE institution
- a literature review of TAFE assessment practices

I would add that it is important to develop an appreciation for the democratic rights of the individuals and institutions who opt to reject applications for research and evaluation. My experience in the Evaluation for Management and Development module has affirmed the need to act both ethically and professionally as an evaluator, and I am grateful that I could apply these principles here.

2.5 Ethical considerations

According to Patton (2002) the researcher needs to have an ethical framework for dealing with issues that may put the interviewees at risk. This research project was carried out under the supervision and guidance of the University of Melbourne. The supervisor is Professor Rosalind Hurworth. All information gathered and research undertaken in this project complied with the University of Melbourne's Code of Conduct for Research (Regulation 17.1.R8). The code sets out the obligations on all university researcher work and is available on the web at www.unimelb.edu.au/ExecServ/Statutes/r171r8.html.

The university is committed to creating an environment that promotes responsible conduct by embracing standards of excellence, trustworthiness, and lawfulness. All participants were informed of the aims and objectives of the research. The identity of participants is assured by anonymity. Participants were also informed that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time during the process, if they so wished, without prejudice. Results of the research and copies of the report were offered to all participating institutions on request.

2.6 Limitations to the study

2.6.1 Sample size

The sample used in this study is based on a few participants who volunteered to partake in this study. Four lecturers and eleven students submitted responses. Two TAFE institutions were involved in the study. The findings of the study must therefore take this into consideration. Use of a questionnaire constrains data collection because ideally it should not take more than 40 minutes to complete. Response rates to mailed questionnaires were about 20 per cent. More than 20 lecturers or assessors were invited to participate in the study. A follow-up reminder and finally telephone calls was made after the initial approval was received.

The conclusions and recommendations made in this report must be read within the context of the limitations of the study. It would be irresponsible of me to make large sweeping deductions from the limited sample size and the challenges posed by the limited timelines. However, I am of the opinion that the research provides sufficient data for some clarification and opportunities for further debate and research. It begins to unpack what is essentially a very challenging research domain and the findings may be useful in planning future research projects in the sector.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Telephone interview

Literature on interviewing says that semi-structured or unstructured interviews are among the most common methods of collecting data for qualitative analysis

(Payne, 1999). Payne also mentions that telephone interviews have advantages for researchers as they are generally faster and cheaper. However, there are complexities with telephone interviews. The tone used by the interviewer must encourage free responses and the interviewer may need to rephrase questions for clarity. It is also critical that the session is not too long as this may create boredom and compromise the quality of responses.

In this project I set seven questions to explore the opinion of an assessor on current assessment practices. The introductory questions were used to set the tone and to confirm what the literature stated on TAFE assessment practices. The respondent confirmed that the certificate IV is the prerequisite needed for staff to be appointed to undertake assessment tasks in TAFE colleges. It was confirmed that the theoretical assessment tasks come from the workbooks used. Practical tasks are organised by MSA (Manufacturing Skills Australia) and are used nationally. Students, it was stated, work through them as part of their training. TAFE staff are currently involved with teams that are setting up an electronic bank of formal assessments. It was stated that institutions use exactly the same materials across different campuses.

Moderation of assessments is an internal process through meetings between assessors and a moderator. One hundred percent of the tasks are moderated. In Victoria there are three automotive forum meeting per year where staff discuss the assessments to address corrections and gaps in the training material. These meetings are organised by the MSA. The telephone interview data also confirmed that the AQTF (Australian Quality Training Framework) does sample moderation. Once a year they come out and audit the TAFE QA processes in the form of a moderation audit. The AQTF will commonly nominate some students and select a program and just look at those assessments. The institutions certificates are nationally accredited.

3.2 Survey responses

Most respondents acknowledged that the transition to competency-based training has been accompanied by a greater workload. For example:

"I have found it to be a sharp learning experience. I feel the evidence to support competency has got out of hand and we are losing too much time in an administration role and not teaching" (SH)

In response to the question whether respondents felt that the current practices were meeting the industry needs, one respondent stated that "the more industry could be involved in the training and assessment process, the better." Another said: Yes, within reason. But with training packages, and their implementation and interpretation being inconsistent from provider to provider, this can compromise quality outcomes. Maybe a nationally based examination as in the case of the UK with the City and Guilds where students sit externally set and assessed examinations may be a way of establishing consistency? "Tick and flick" is often an easier option for some organisations and with the transition to outcomes-based funding models for TAFE, but there may be an increased problem for this in the future. (CB)

Respondents had differing views on ways to improve assessor training. Most importantly, they felt that the course had to include "more practice and mentoring/coaching for the first few deliveries". Another argued that "we are all professionals in our field – a dotted i or a crossed t does not improve the skills of the candidate." (RM)

Respondents were unanimous on retaining the current "levels of competence".

Further comments on improving current assessment and training practices included:

- Video-taping industry-based assessments.
- Having a pay rate for teachers at a level above industry so future staff can be hand-picked.
- We need to take a more blended learning approach to the delivery of programs.
- By further trainings and the development of good assessment guides. For instance "What is good evidence?"
- Look at the models that are working nationally and internationally and those that are not working and formulate the best.
- Involving Industry and teaching experienced people to have more involvement in Government policies, regulations and Training Package Development.

3.3 Minutes of meetings

The following points of discussion relevant to this research have been extracted from the minutes of the meetings of Manufacturing Skills Australia (MSA). The MSA is the national Industry Skills Council (ISC) that is recognised by the Australian Government and the manufacturing and automotive industries to ensure that the

skills needs of enterprises are being met (MSA, 2009).

Earlier in 2009, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced that Manufacturing Skills Australia (MSA) will now be responsible for all national automotive training and assessment material development. At the first MSA training forum meeting since the announcement, this decision was confirmed (Minutes dated 1 April 2009).

The following points relating to this evaluation project were also noted:

- MSA is moving to a single MSA training package to support mobility and cross-industry skills development...(we) are moving away from printed training packages ... (pg 4 of 6) also,
- now ISC can focus on qualifications or units of competency that need to be developed or changed to meet industry needs. This is more responsive than the previous process. (pg 4 of 6) and
- ...concern was raised about those who have not attended the forums...(we) will try to work with those who have not so far been willing to engage but recognised that they cannot be forced to do so. (pg 5 of 6)
- M stated that this highlights the existing confusion and misinterpretation of the qualification and packaging rules and that the Certificate IV is not necessarily perceived to meet the AQF level of rigour and provides insufficient higher order units.

3.4 TAFE Assessment Policy documents

Lesley Pal eloquently defines policy as a guide for those who implement it and for those who are expected to observe it (Pal, 1992). It is further explained as a descriptive course of action or inaction chosen by those in positions of authority to address a given situation.

In the context of TAFE assessment practices, I studied the assessment policies of the three institutions. My first observation was that the policies were dated 17 April 2009; 8 October 2009 and 7 October 2009 respectively. This indicated that the policies were very recently produced or updated.

- The policies dated October 2009 were labelled DRAFT FOR REVIEW and DISCUSSION PAPER respectively.
- None of the policies referred to specific forms or specific documents to guide actions, for example, "Finalise assessment validation documentation". (pg 3 of 3) In this instance the reader is not guided to a specific document, which should be numbered to avoid confusion.
- Some policies provide no guidance on the authentication of students' work. In another instance students have to produce their student identification each time an assessment activity is undertaken.

3.5 Student responses

This study took a bold approach to invite students to use sketches and diagrams to illustrate their views on current assessment practices and what they thought assessment practices should be like in five or ten years time. According to Hurworth (2009), visual data can be used in both the obtaining phase and the reporting phase of data collection. It is contended that this method of data collection can be used to complement other forms of data collection, and is useful to support triangulation.

Not all students articulated their views very well. Sketches on current practices ranged from a rollercoaster to a flat time-learning graph and a student asleep at his/her computer. To illustrate their views on what assessment should be like students produced sketches that included more high-tech vehicles, greater use of computer-based assessments and a graph illustrating better use of time.

One student respondent appeared uninterested in the prospect of using computers for assessment tasks. However, literature on e-portfolios suggests that most students prefer this method as they enjoy the benefit of making changes to tasks as their learning develops (Gülbahar and Tinmaz, 2006). Lecturers also appreciate the benefit of being able to mark assessments on-line after hours. However, not all students believe that because something is on-line it is necessarily interesting. Using the technology well, it seems, is a skill in itself.

4. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions are made from the data used in this evaluation:

4.1 Current assessment practices

- The literature consulted suggests that the current practices of declaring students

“competent” and “not yet competent” is inadequate to express varying levels of skill, knowledge and ability (Mackenzie, 2008, Gillis & Griffin, 2005 and Sundar, 1999).

- There is a suggestion from the student sketches that they are not able to make a connection between the assessments and the skills being assessed relevant to the program.
- One assessor felt that he was “losing too much time in an administration role and not teaching”. (SH)
- Another participant suggested that a national examination might help to improve consistency. (CB)

4.2 Assessor training

It would appear from the comments made that:

- There should be a process of mentoring or coaching during the first assessments after having done the course. The suggestion was also made that the course should include more practical components and even a First Aid component.
- At the state level it was felt that the programme required better marketing among industry-based trainers.
- The sentiment was also expressed that there should be a closer alignment of the Australian course with the UK’s City and Guild’s equivalent course.

4.3 The use of e-portfolios

- “E-learning is flourishing in VET and developing along several different dimensions: as a tool for communication to and among learners; as a platform for engaging tasks; and as a source of resources” (Figgis, 2009)
- Some of the lecturers were really positive about the prospects of using computers to capture and store assessment tasks. Questions about verification were raised.

4.4 Policies

This evaluation found large discrepancies in assessment policies. It is evident that attention needs to be given to the development of rigorous assessment policies that will guide and provide the boundaries for meeting the expected assessment standards.

4.5 Recommendations

The following focal points would warrant further investigation and research:

- An evaluative study into the merits of a graded scoring system for assessments
- The viability of a national externally set examination at the end of each year
- A review of the content and marketing strategy of the Certificate IV course
- Further analysis into the perceived misunderstandings students are currently experiencing with assessment methodologies
- Further investigation into the viability of e-portfolios and possibly for its use in the recognition of prior learning process.
- Seeking ways to facilitate greater levels of trust between institutions and institutions-and-industry.

Finally, a strong feature of any assessment practice is the integrity of its outcomes. The students who graduate from the TAFE institutions are the ultimate indicators of the quality of the training provided. Australian TAFE institutions will ensure their places in future educational markets if the focus remains student- and quality-centred.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AQTF	-	Australian Quality Training Framework
DETYA	-	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
FET	-	Further Education and Training
ISC	-	Industry Skills Council
MSA	-	Manufacturing Skills Australia
NCVER	-	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NTF	-	National Training Framework
NQC	-	National Quality Council
RPL	-	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	-	Registered Training Organizations
TAFE	-	Technical and Further Education
VET	-	Vocational Education and Training

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