

THE IMPORTANCE OF A STUDENT PROFILE
IN AN ACCOUNTABLE OPEN LEARNING
STUDENT COUNSELLING MODEL

by

SEIO
BENE

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

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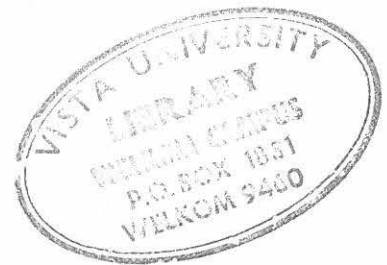
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Dedication

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I wish to express my appreciation and gratitude to the following people for their assistance and support.

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- The many Vista University distance learning students, who have over a decade given unstintingly of their time and energy to respond to my questionnaires.**

DECLARATION

I declare that:

The importance of a student profile in an accountable open learning student counselling model

is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

PAUL BENEKE

SUMMARY

THE IMPORTANCE OF A STUDENT PROFILE IN AN ACCOUNTABLE OPEN LEARNING STUDENT COUNSELLING MODEL

by

PAUL BENEKE

for the

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS DEGREE

in the

DEPARTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

under the supervision of

DR J F HAY

Summary:

Student support and the counselling of open and distance learners is an area of potential growth. It attempts to emphasise that each individual student should be recognised as a human being, by drawing attention to the multiplicity of factors which impinge on the academic success of the student. It is argued that in distance learning counselling this can only be achieved by the construction of student profiles.

The study explores current practices and shortcomings before the dissertation demonstrates the essential information required by the counsellor in providing counselling to a student removed in space and time by means of a detailed report on longitudinal qualitative and quantitative research.

The dissertation also presents some existing models and explores common factors, and indicates current shortcomings in counselling practice. A combination of all the information gathered, provides the researcher with insights to identify the specific elements of a new model. The model then presented as an outcome of this study is constructed in such a way that it contains all the structural elements while simultaneously representing the dynamic, adaptable nature required by this complex situation. The dissertation concludes that the adoption and application of such a model will have far reaching implications for distance learning institutions and provides a number of recommendations for such implementation.

KEY TERMS

- Student profile
- Student support
- Student counselling
- Open and distance learning
- Tertiary distance education in South Africa
- Counselling distance learners
- Research in distance learning counselling
- Profile questionnaires
- Shortcomings in student counselling
- A counselling model

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CEFT	College of Education for Further Training
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CIS	Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance body
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IACSA	Institute of Administration and Commerce of Southern Africa
iCDL	International Centre for Distance Learning
LCCI	London Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MEDUNSA	Medical University of South Africa
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NSB	National Standards Bodies
PC	Personal Computer
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACTE	South African College for Teacher Education
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SEC	Secondary Education Certificate (Vista University)
SED	Secondary Education Diploma (Vista University)
SLH	Student learning hours
TSA	Technikon Southern Africa
UNISA	University of South Africa
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder
VUDEC	Vista University Distance Education Campus

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, MOTIVATION AND CONCEPT CLARIFICATION.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The Constitution (1996) makes it quite clear that education is a human right which needs to be accorded to every South African citizen. The Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (ANC 1994) has devoted an entire chapter to the need for accountable reconstruction and redevelopment of the human resources of South Africa towards creating a progressive, sustainable and open society. This program has tried to give flesh to the implications of the "right to education" by looking at the options that are available, in order to make this right a reality in the life of the student seeking higher education in the country's post-secondary institutions. Distance education has been proposed as a realizable, affordable alternative to what is, traditionally, the "contact" situation - especially so for the adult learner.

These developments are not unique to South Africa. World-wide, there is a concerted effort afoot to bring access to greater opportunity through education to learners - more than was ever thought possible before (Steyn 1994). At the same time, educationists throughout the world have begun to realise that, without adequate student support, education will remain the preserve of the tight elites which rule societies across the globe. As Willers (1987:48) avers, a modern university has "the potential to benefit large groups of people and advance social, political and economic justice in our society." This concept is reflected in the statement of Holmberg, Wedermeyer and Lewis (in Adey 1995) who state that "individual guidance and support are recognized as a part of support-learning, with participants having access to a range of people on whom they can call as and when they need guidance or help." They claim that an open institution implies *unimpeded access* to study facilities as well as *avoidance of restrictions* on free learning.

The greatest restriction on free learning, and by implication, the greatest restriction on opening up post-secondary institutions to access from diverse communities of students, is the mismatch between what the student needs and what the institution can offer. Referring to South Africa "The National Commission on Higher Education...highlighted various ways in which the distance education sector needs to transform. These include drastic improvement in the quality and relevance of course materials, proper learning support systems, more participatory and democratic governance structures, and extended partnerships among all types of institutions..." (Dodds, Nonyongo and Glennie 1999:103).

Potentially, the fastest growing area of tertiary institutional endeavour is the area of student support services - that is, to address the needs of the post-secondary learner. Freire (In Noble 1995:274) postulates: "Studying is a difficult task that requires a systematic critical attitude and intellectual discipline acquired only through practice". Facilitation of this difficult task is the arena of student support. The concept of student support is a complex one, and indeed, involves aid and assistance over the spectrum of the student's life: from the practicalities of financial support, to the acquisition of the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) skills (cf. Hunter 1990:8) that will enable the student to cope with the complex levels of cognition that will be expected in daily academic reading and writing tasks.

This dissertation focuses on that special area of student support - student counselling for the adult learner in the distance education situation. Student counselling entails a primary focus on the student's humanity - on those factors which impinge on that humanity - and on those factors which can enhance that humanity. It is the assertion of Gibbs (1987) that the stability of the student as a human being is the primary building block of the academic, cognitive personality. Without peace of mind, a sense of self-esteem, and a sense of personal cogency, negotiation of the difficult path towards academic and personal achievement in institutions of learning becomes insuperable. To echo Gibbs' thinking, Earwaker (1992:125) says: "The higher education experience is bound to be a taxing one for the student and properly so. The point is not to make fewer demands, but to set them in a supportive context."

Providing support can never be a top-down exercise. By very definition, the concept of support implies that there is a *need* for that support - even though the adult, more mature student is being referred to. As Hinrichs (1987:2) states, "it is only when a readiness to learn produces a 'teachable moment' that the student is likely to accept responsibility for the learning process." And so it is the contention of the present researcher that without ascertaining the student's felt needs - expressed or unexpressed - the exercise of providing student counselling becomes merely an exercise in tinkering with surface structures. Without an adequate profile of the student which gives a clear indication of the student's needs, student support will never adequately address the deep psycho-social and academic learning needs of the student body. Furthermore, the profound, deep and inner-structural institutional changes that are required to address the demands made on the institution, discovered through this student profile, will not be accomplished. This implies that transformation - and institutional change - will not be possible without knowing in which direction to change. It is the researcher's deep conviction that this direction must be provided by knowing who the student is, and what the student's needs are.

It is at this point that the question arises whether adult tertiary students, having already made up their mind regarding their studies and knowing what they are doing, really require counselling in order to overcome geographical, time related and "psychical" obstacles. Student counselling is proffered as that mechanism set up to remediate these problems, but much confusion has arisen as to what counselling is. Counselling deals not only with career counselling, educational counselling (study and curriculum counselling) but also personal counselling. In this regard Thorne (1985:22) confirms that "The Counselling Service is a general counselling unit where students can find help for the complete range of personal, social, educational and vocational concerns". This assertion has always held true for the traditional basis of counselling as a face-to-face encounter (Vaughan and Bester 1988:17). But what of the distance education student?

This distance education student has, in the past, been described as a "different" type of student. As Botha (1990:9) states with regard to the distance education student, it is not the different form of teaching mode that allows these students to appear different, but rather their

different situatedness, especially when these students are compared to their counterparts at residential (or "contact") universities. The institution and student have to encounter one another across physical space in order to counteract the negative aspects of spacial dislocation.

Spacial dislocation or not, the distance education student is still expected to perform like any other kind of student. Marcel (in Viljoen and Pienaar 1971:11) stated the traditional approach that while the teaching function is relevant to the role of the university, the student has a learning function. Marquardt (1996:48) brings the concepts of learning and training (teaching) much closer, seeing the university as a learning organisation which creates new solutions to problems. This is also more resonant with distance learning as he states: "Learning can take place in the absence of a teacher since it is an ability of the person, the group, and the organization."

In this respect the student counsellor plays a vital role since "Academic advising is an integral part of the educational process, not just a support service" (Winston, Miller, Ender, Grites and Assoc 1984: x).

In traditional institutions, this service was not always evident but present day tertiary institutions world-wide (not only in South Africa) have accepted this responsibility, as is supported by the statement "Student personnel services have become essential to the successful operation of virtually every college and university (Gibson, Mitchell and Higgins 1983:250). This "nurturing" of the student can not only be morally validated but it also relates to the reality of the socio-political situation that has to be dealt with in present times, specifically in a post-apartheid South Africa.

What has been mentioned above immediately poses a question of its own. What are the various origins of this sense of responsibility felt on the part of tertiary institutions towards the student in the distance education situation? As Feasley (1983:36) so aptly states: "The greater heterogeneity of distance learners in comparison to campus students therefore heightens the importance of nontraditional recruitment, admission, orientation, registration, and counselling".

The first demand for nurturing originated from the student, who over time has had to meet heavier demands (financial and otherwise) in pursuit of academic refinement and has demanded something in return. Support resources have long been available in libraries in the form of student guides and in student affairs offices in the form of face-to-face help and brochures. However, with the demand for greater academic achievement by both public and private sector being placed on the student, the need to succeed, coupled with the heavy financial demands on student resources, have prompted the student to demand a greater input from the education institution concerned.

Another origin of the feeling of responsibility has been the emergence of a popular philosophy that tertiary education is the right of everyone, as against the traditional approach of tertiary education for the elite, as reported by Majavu (1990). Society's perception of the increasing importance of the individual has led to societal and group interests diminishing accordingly. The current culture seems to focus heavily on the rights of the individual and the student's desire for nurturing has stemmed from this. This could extend to the point where tertiary education, and adequate support in the pursuit thereof, can be seen as becoming regarded as a right rather than a privilege.

It may be asked which demands place the necessity of support services such as the counselling services within the orbit of university life and the university student. The special problems of the distance education student necessitates research into the role and function of a student counsellor in a distance education institution. As indicated by Holmberg (1977:25), guidance is an integral part of the distance education organisation. There are common problems shared by all distance education students because of the physical distantiation between counsellor and counsellee. Because of this distance, counselling must perforce have a different appearance, methodology and a different content. It possibly also possesses a different ethos but ultimately pursues the same broad goal of supporting the student's academic progress.

It is the opinion of the researcher that a university's student advisory service is not something external to the university's teaching and research functions. In other words, it is not an exogenous service extraneous to the traditional roles and functions of a university.

Rather, it is an essential and integral part of the triad of the university, the student and the counsellor as represented in figure one.

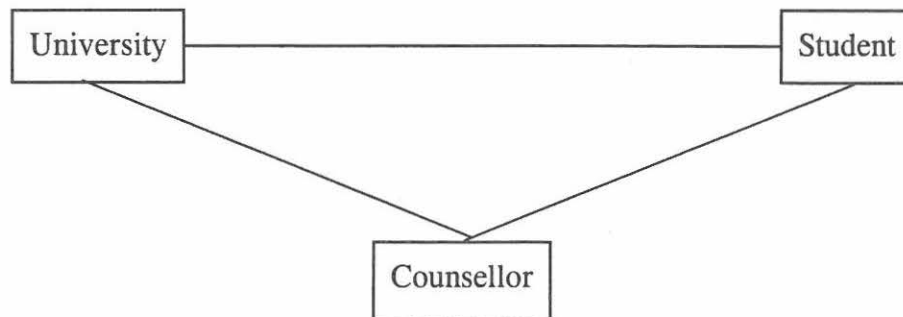


Fig. 1 Diagrammatic representation of the triadic structure of counselling servicing

This triadic counselling function encompasses not only the university as a societal structure but the student as an individual within an academic milieu. The student counselling service should rather be seen as a living organism responding to stimuli impacted upon it by the other two component parts and also initiating drives to support and sustain the two other elements in response to disclosed and undisclosed needs.

The task of effectively managing such a service is an enormous one. It is not surprising that Robinson (In: Kaye and Rumble 1981:157) declare that "Some distance-learning institutions see counselling as an unnecessary service, others offer a little, and very few have organised it into the system it must be said that its precise nature and function continues to be a matter of uncertainty and debate." It is obvious that this situation still exists almost two decades on, as Szucs and Jenkins (1999:232) reports: "Only a small number of universities (in Central and Eastern Europe) offering distance education are systematically operating quality assurance and appropriate student support services." This dissertation sets out to create a model for effective student counselling in the distance education environment, and needs to concentrate on arriving at an extended job description in which pre-conceived ideas about counselling will have to be amended whilst other aspects needs to be redefined and restructured.

At the same time, it is considered essential to obtain an accurate profile of the student that is being served by the student counselling service. This is necessary since the university has to be aware of who the student is, and what the student needs in order to draw up the parameters of the role-description of the student counsellor. These parameters define and describe the compass of the counsellor's activities so that student counselling service can effectively and rapidly respond to the problematic nature of the student's needs. The student profile has to be so constructed that it can anticipate student's needs which the student might not have clearly articulated and overtly identified.

In his many years in the Student Services Bureau of Vista University, the researcher has worked with the complex issues of humanity that beset the students of Vista as an ever-present reality. The University, in 1994, served the learning needs of some 18 373 distance education students (Vista 1995:9). In three successive profile analyses of students (Beneke 1991, 1994 and 1999), the researcher became patently aware how important it was that an institution of higher learning - in its nature, in its mission, in its course design, and in its *modus operandi* - take cognizance of the disparate life-styles, diverse life-worlds and the differing situatedness of the students it claims to serve.

But this is no easy task. South Africa finds itself, like much of the developed and developing world, in a new age of education dispensation. The powerful changes in society, in the economy, in global inter-relationships so adequately described by Toffler (1980 and 1992) have necessitated a dramatic reorientation in the way in which institutions conceive of themselves and of the services they offer. It is the belief of the researcher that Vista can change to meet these challenges that inhere in the accountable provision of an equitable education by creating the necessary structure for a student counselling service that will enable it to respond to the perceived and undisclosed needs of its distance education students. To justify this belief, the researcher has formulated certain objectives as targets he has set for himself. A discussion of these follows.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This dissertation, in its pursuit of investigating how Vista, through its distance education facility, the Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC), can re-orient its present provision of student counselling, will investigate and analyse the following areas:

- Tertiary education and macro-educational developments in South Africa;
- The distance education situation, and open learning;
- Counselling in the distance education situation;
- The essential components of a student profile;
- A model for counselling distance education students using student profiles as resource.

These major goals will be fleshed out in terms of what the findings in each area can offer as far as understanding the social, academic and institutional challenges that face the University and its students. However, coupled with the goal of suggesting a structure which will facilitate the university's ability to respond to perceived and unperceived student needs through a student profile, these goals open a vast number of issues for enquiry:

- What is the education situation of the adult learner? What are the expectations of the adult learner, and what contingencies exist to create difficulties and obstacles for the accomplishment of further studies?
- Taking into consideration the fact that this study refers specifically to Vista university:
 - * What is Vista university?
 - * What is the Vista University Distance Education Campus?

- * What is the university's "statement of intent" and how far does it go towards honouring its commitments thereunder with regard to its activities of student counselling at VUDEC?
- What is counselling? What are vocational (or career) counselling; educational counselling; and personal counselling? How do these components interlink in the student counsellor's scope of activity? How are these to be restructured and re-aligned within the form and composition of the university in order that they become effective components? How supportive is counselling to the education process? What needs of support does the adult learner have?
- Who is the distance education student that Vista University serves? What does the typical student "look" like? What are the particular and specific problems experienced by this student? What problems does the distance education student share in common with "contact" peers? If one of the aims of the research is to establish a student counselling service that is receptive and responsive to the needs (tacit or expressed) of the student, why is it vital for this study to attempt to describe the situatedness of distance education students; to attempt to analyse the milieu, and the niche they occupy in society in space, time and intention?
- As a derivative from the foregoing problem, the researcher poses the question: what elements are necessary for an accountable data-base for the construction of a student profile?
- What components can be added to the traditional role of the student counsellor in order to become more effective and more integral to university life? What aspects must be redefined and reoriented?

These subsidiary questions form the continuum from which this dissertation must draw direction. The answers to these serve as the basis from which perspective can be derived in establishing what the components are of counselling distance education students. It is only once these questions have been examined across the viewpoints brought to bear on them by comprehensive hermeneutic literature research, by idiographic research and by radical reflection, that a full picture of the problems inherent in, and vital nature of, student counselling services can be obtained.

The main assumptions that underlie the attempt to achieve these long term research goals are the following:

- Student counselling services are invaluable and are here to stay. These form an integral part of the university.
- The distance education student is in a different situation to that in which students at residential (contact) campuses find themselves. Therefore, the services offered may often have a different or additional content, respond to different needs, and are structured differently from the traditional "Student Advisor" type of service provided at some residential institutions.
- Counselling to the distance education student has the same basic content, form and intent as other counselling types, contiguous with student advice services such as vocational (or career) counselling, industrial counselling, Rogerian counselling and the help given by registrars and their staff at campus level.
- As a corollary to the above statement, students have to be aware not only of the field of activity of the student counselling service, but also of how these services personally affect them and how these services can help them accomplish what they have set out to achieve in their further studies. As access to tertiary education devolves upon the mass of the people, it becomes incumbent upon these students to avail themselves of what help they can get in

order to achieve their goals. This applies specifically to the student who comes from a background where, via further studies, the student is setting a precedent over forefathers, parents or peers, and does not have role-models or mentors as support to draw on. This student must realise that an integral part of study skills is the skill of effective and fruitful contact with, and propitious use of, the student counsellor.

- Because it is a basic assumption of this study that student counselling services, in their entirety, are integral in the life of the university, and in the life of the student, the student counselling services department has to seek ways and means of extending its field of activity in order that it may occupy its rightful place. In addition to this, the student counselling services department must create for itself mechanisms whereby it can receive, process, analyse and act upon information it obtains concerning its students - their moods, dispositions, ambitions, and problems. It also has to be able to establish mechanisms that will make it possible to receive, process, analyse and act upon unperceived, and perceived needs of the student.

1.3 CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

In order to obviate any misconceptions which might arise from the compass of associated ideas suggested by the title and meanings inherent in individual words or phrases, it is important that concepts contained in the title, as well as those that will frequently be used in this dissertation be examined. This will facilitate communication and narrow the field within which misunderstanding can take place. Two of these, counselling and student profile, are too complex to be discussed here, and will have sections devoted to them in later chapters.

1.3.1 Vista University

Just as the situatedness of Vista University distance education students is of importance in this study, just so it is essential that a brief mention be made also of the situatedness of this university.

The founding of Vista University was a direct result of findings by a 1978 commission of inquiry to investigate the tertiary needs and requirements of urban Blacks in the Republic of South Africa (Vista 1995:8).

This autonomous university was established by Act of Parliament (Act 106 of 1981) and was constituted on 6 January 1982. At its inception, Vista University created a Student Services Department and extended this service to include VUDEC in 1987 (cf Section 3.2.4). Vista University has its central campus in Pretoria with eight decentralised campuses, of which VUDEC, aimed at improving the qualifications of teachers by means of distance tuition, is one.

The university has been seen by some as an instrument of grand apartheid - an expensive experiment by a Broederbond controlled Nationalist Government to keep urban Blacks out of traditionally white universities (Wilderson 1994:62).

It is not the intention of the researcher to support or refute this view. However, Vos and Brits (1988:96) imply that, by the creation of Vista University campuses in the traditionally black townships, the urgent academic needs of the Black residents in urban areas were provided for, with students being able to commute to the campuses with ease. This concept also seemingly obviated the necessity of Vista University having to provide expensive hostel accommodation.

Vos and Brits (1988:96) go on to state that Vista University was a new concept amongst South African universities. It followed the logical developmental phase, they claim, of the universities in the cities of Europe and America, namely to take the university, where practical, feasible and necessary, to the people.

As has been mentioned, Vista University also offers a distance education facility to all eligible teachers to upgrade their qualifications, as well as to others. This distance education division of Vista University forms the study field of this dissertation, being the Vista University Distance Education Campus. For the purpose of this study, the contact component of the university will be disregarded and the accent will fall on the distance education component with possible cross-referrals to counselling at the contact campuses for the purposes of comparison.

1.3.2 Vista University Distance Education campus (VUDEC)

This campus was part of the *raison d'être* of Vista. Having identified the need to upgrade black teachers, the Department of Education and Training initially founded a department for further training by means of distance teaching. It was realised that this service fell outside the functions of an administrative government department. Due to the need for urban tertiary facilities for Blacks as identified by the Retief Commission (Retief 1980:165,166), it was decided to establish Vista University, which would then also accept responsibility for the distance education component.

This campus was taken over from the Department of Education and Training by Vista University on 1 April 1982 (Vista 1995:8). Its purpose was, and still partially remains, to improve the qualifications of underqualified teachers. Tuition is provided by means of distance education.

VUDEC at present serves to upgrade teachers in subjects such as Accountancy, African Languages, Afrikaans, Agricultural Science, Biblical Studies, Biology, Business Management, Economics, Education, English, Geography, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Physical Science and Statistics by enabling the students to obtain further qualifications such as the Primary Education Certificate (Grade 4 & 5), Primary Education Diploma (Grade 6 & 7), Secondary Education Certificate (Grade 8 - 10), the Secondary Education Diploma (Grade 11 & 12) and the Higher Education Diploma, which can be accessed via the SED courses.

The nature of the course content is based on the various levels of school syllabi enriched with further academic content and combined with teaching methodology. Students are supplied with pre-prepared study guides, which require them to study in a systematic and progressive way with the aid of prescribed textbooks. They are required to submit a set number of assignments in each course and receive feedback from lecturers by means of comments on this work and in tutorial letters. Students are also invited to communicate with university staff through telephonic discussion and personal visits.

1.3.3 Adult education

Adult Education can be defined as that category of academic endeavour which is the educational assistance directed at a group of people generally considered by their communities to have reached a certain level of maturity and whose lifestyle is representative of adult activities. The level of maturity is of necessity an assumption and the concept adult activities automatically implies a value judgement, but given these admissions the statement corresponds to the definition (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982:9)

"Adult education is a process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills".

What is implied, in effect, are social roles, cognitive process, moral values and psychological attitude. It is no wonder that Kidd (1973:9) justifiably says "Adult education is a field of enormous complexity, and there seem, on the surface, to be more counter-trends than trends, and there is more paradox than consensus." This is further illustrated by Pappas and Irving (In: Noel, Lee, Levitz and Associates, 1985:143) when they recognise that their students maintain other social roles such as workers and parents. Burge (In: Lockwood 1995:156) recommends that; "...adult characteristics - as they help and hinder learning - need some new angles of analysis." And further that "...their learning group may need help in working through the inevitable stages of development."

The unique nature of adult education is further accentuated by the fact that most of these adult students have not been studying for a number of years and need special assistance in developing academic skills, as Winston, Miller, Ender, Crites and Associates(1984:256) points out. This leads to the fact that they experience a lack of self-confidence about their study abilities (Winston et al. 1984:262) and should be encouraged to select manageable academic loads (Winston et al. 1984:263) in one particular academic year.

On a practical level, Botha (1990:9) states that the distance education student should comply to a greater extent to the norms of more accomplished adulthood since they are on average older than their fellow-students at residential universities. She qualifies this remark by adding that whilst age cannot be regarded as an absolute criterion for adulthood at the same time the relationship between the two concepts cannot be denied. Her remarks are specifically addressed regarding the UNISA student, however such comment is also of relevance to the VUDEC student.

She states that, since the majority of distance education students are active in the labour market, they are not only economically independent but render a significant contribution to the country's economy. Since they are self-supporting and independent, already certain criteria for adulthood have been met therein. In addition thereto, most distance education students at UNISA, and as the statistical survey will show, at Vista, are parents, and parenthood demands a greater degree of responsibility and discipline from these students than would be expected from students at a residential university. Botha (1990:10) states that the fear of failure can also play as great a role in motivating the distance education adult student, as the desire for achievement.

In summary, it may be said that Adult education encompasses the entire diversity of pedagogy to which may be added the complexity of adulthood.

1.3.4 Further education (training)

As implied by the name, the principle of further or continuing education is distinctly different from initial training in a specific field. As the SAIDE Report (1995b:163) interprets it, it can be seen to represent a period after a ten-year cycle of compulsory education. Chapter 8 of the SAIDE Report (1995b:167) states:

Lifelong learning is more than learning throughout life, it is learning for all.

The task therefore for further education is immense. The clientele is *all* adults, and, if the economic imperative is recognised, their participation is not once but several times in their working lives. The techniques of open and distance education must be used.

Based on various statements in the Report of the HSRC Work Committee: The role of distance teaching in providing formal, non-formal and informal education in the RSA (Crouse 1987) further training can be defined as the formal procedure of facilitating learning, improving qualifications and acquiring skills to improve such performance as is required by a change from one educational structure to another and a change-over from one study phase, level or direction to another.

This need for "further" education will be even more relevant in the twenty-first century society subjected to a knowledge explosion, sophisticated communication technology, demographic forces and social problems. This is acutely verbalised by Rowntree (1992:38) when he says: "Now it [further education] is becoming a necessity for survival. Whether we are simply trying to understand the world or are trying to hang on to paid employment, we realise that there's no way but to keep on learning, throughout our lives." This is most definitely the case of Vista university's 'further education' students.

Due to several factors, such as motives of self-actualizing, demands made by a changing society, the increase of knowledge and new approaches in occupational methodology, adults experience the need to enrol for further training.

The content of courses subscribed to depend on two factors. Firstly, students may upgrade their skills and knowledge in an existing field of endeavour. Secondly, students may wish to extend their expertise to new terrains of competence, using previous training merely as a point of departure.

Further training has vast implications for counselling as stated by Thorne (1985:31), who says that "the world for further education is so extensive, however, that it is difficult to comment authoritatively on the development of either careers guidance or student counselling provision during and since the latter-half of the 1970's". If this was true two decades ago, it will surely be more so in the next century.

1.3.5 Distance education

Holmberg (1977:25) as quoted in the International Journal of Innovative Higher Education (1989) defines distance education as follows:

"Distance education covers the various forms of study at all levels which are not under the contiguous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a supporting organisation".

It can be stated with safety that this distance education is based on two constituent elements, a pre-produced course and non-contiguous communication between students and lecturers.

The pre-produced courses are still predominantly in a print format and are intended as a self-instructional medium, sometimes supported by other media such as audio-cassettes, video, computer-links and broadcasts. The courses generally follow a strict curriculum, are designed to elicit student reaction by posing problems and self-tests and are followed by set student assignments which are marked and commented on by lecturers.

The non-contiguous communication rests heavily on the written word in a two-directional context which is then reinforced by face-to-face encounters and other electronic links such as the telephone.

In the case of VUDEC both these elements are present. Pre-produced courses are standard while random face-to-face encounters by lecturers with groups of students and individuals take place from time to time. Telephonic communication between teachers and learners is a daily occurrence.

It is necessary to stress the importance of support and guidance from the lecturers as well as from other support services viz. student counsellors as was mentioned by Holmberg in the Fern Universitat study where a link was found between the student success rate and learner friendliness as embodied in personal counselling and tutorial service.

Another approach to distance education is espoused by Shale (In: Moore 1990:333-343) when he says "Most important is that the view of distance education described here folds it into the mainstream of education." His appeal is that distance education potentially contains all the recognisable characteristics of education in general, including that of student support systems, and that the added strengths of distance education, such as economies of time and costs, and flexibility of application can "bring about a rise in the quality of education in general"(1990:342).

1.3.6 Open learning

In his recent letter of invitation to various stakeholders to join the Open Learning Association of Southern Africa, Adey (1995) succinctly defines open learning as "a state of mind." It is evident that this educational activity is termed as 'open' because it is by definition a learner-centred mode of learning, providing the student with the maximum of opportunities regarding the time, process, structure and content of the learning experience. It is in particular free from externally imposed restrictions of access and assessment. The existence of certain restraints, such as limited resources or societal demands and personal limitations of insight and potential

experienced under these circumstances suggest that open learning recognises guidance, counselling and support of the individual student through his/her access to a range of people when this need is experienced.

This is also confirmed by Clennel, Peters and Seward (In: Seward, Keegan and Holmberg 1988:328) when they state "It is through the tuition and counselling system, however, that this standard package is interpreted according the student's individual needs and ability."

Concomitant with this philosophy of open learning is the view of Rowntree (1992:13) when he says "... it seems to me that open learning is two different things. It is a philosophy - a set of beliefs about teaching and learning (and) a method - a set of techniques for teaching and learning." What is of great significance in designing a model for the counselling of open and distance learning students, is the following statement; "Packages and support systems that do not tie in to what the learner can draw on locally may be neglecting a vital means of helping him or her become autonomous" (Rowntree 1992:18).

Revisiting section 1.3.2 it is evident that we have not yet approximated the nirvana of open learning in South Africa and that a distance education system is currently still in use. In this study the researcher contends that this is likely to remain so for some time, until structural changes such as unimpeded access, negotiated syllabi and evaluative criteria are adopted and are strongly supported by an accountable student counselling practice, which is underpinned by student needs as disclosed in a reliable profile of the distance learners.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The practice of scientific investigation covers a vast research field of unlimited scope. It incorporates a wide variety of themes and touches on innumerable subject areas. Research into that which is not known, or vaguely understood is a natural human endeavour and more specifically a human activity, to enable *Homo sapiens* to come to grips with the reality which surrounds them. It is this truth that necessitates that humanity's natural striving to acquire

knowledge can never be satisfied, but that human kind will be impelled forever and always towards new and more knowledge in order to deepen, broaden and complement existing knowledge. This in itself serves as adequate justification for this dissertation, in full recognition that final answers may never become possible.

One concludes from this that pedagogical and more particularly andragogical research make exceptionally high demands on the researcher in terms of objectivity, intellectual rigour, and clear, unambiguous terminology. Total objectivity is always elusive merely by virtue of the fact that no matter how much one researches, there is still more information to be obtained, more content to be sifted through, more knowledge to be learned somewhere else, in another time, in another place. The information-explosion of the past few years has made the task of the researcher very difficult in this regard. Still, the volume of literature to be perused cannot excuse the researcher from undertaking extensive literature review in the pursuit of understanding, and a perusal of what is meant by "literature review" is the subject of the next sub-section.

1.4.1 Literature review

The primary method of research that will be used in this dissertation is that of literature survey. Gibaldi (1999:2) claims that a thorough and well-planned review of literature is a necessary precondition for successful research. The researcher will avail himself of current reference works and information systems which he will evaluate and interpret according to the aims of the research and the problems posed by it. Through literature review it is possible to obtain a perspective on established and current findings, not only of the environs of the specific subject, but also on the actuality of the research. This is also confirmed by Leedy (1993:93-94) when he states: "The discussion of the related literature... shows the relatedness of the research project to the broad environment of similar research that has been done by others. This is the sole purpose of the literature discussion. In a very real sense, it forms the *raison d'être* for the problem the student is proposing to research." Literature survey is not the only method used, however.

1.4.2 Compilation of a data-base

The researcher, in the studies that he has conducted in terms of student profile and student needs assessment, has made use of questionnaires circulated to students, the responses to which were fed into the university's computer to create a data base. He is thus able to provide a survey of the physical, emotional and human resources available to the students of VUDEC. It must be pointed out that no attempt will be made to arrive at hypothesis formulation or correlational studies through the quantitative methodologies described by Burgess (1985).

In considering this concept it is essential to look at two definitions. Landman (1988:58) quotes Slavin on data as being; "Information systematically collected in research. Data are usually information about individuals or groups." As the research referred to relate to information obtained from individual students in order to compile a profile from the research sample, it is justified to apply this concept to the study. This information was computed and the composite results are described as a data-base. Corresponding to the method of data capture used in the research, Landman (1988:58) offers Walizer's definition of a data-base (data files) as "Sets of data that have been stored in the computer for later use".

The data obtained in the present study remain, in every sense of the word, data-based and descriptive, rather than analytical or correlational. This data base is essential for the researcher to put forward his case for needs analysis and for detailed student profile construction in the counselling of students in the open learning situation. The process of constructing this data-base, and the results it produces after critical analysis form the basis of this dissertation, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

1.4.3 Idiographic research

Idiographic research is also known as qualitative research, which has, as aim, the understanding of the actions and attitudes of an individual without attempting to apply these findings to other individuals. It focuses, quite simply, on the perspectives of those being studied (Marton In: Sherman and Webb 1988:6). The function of qualitative, idiographic

inquiry therefore, is to *describe* the essential qualities of phenomena; to *interpret* the meanings of and relationships among qualities; and to give a reasoned *judgement* or appraisal as to the significance and the value of those things (Sherman and Webb 1988:8). Lombardi (1975) cites eight idiographic instruments which can be used to investigate the life-experiences and opinions of the individual, one of them being the interview.

As stated by Gay (1987:203) the interview is the most appropriate form for asking questions which cannot be effectively structured into a multiple-choice format such as giving opinions on options, asking questions of a personal nature and so forth. The interview is flexible, and the interviewer can adapt the situation to each subject, following up on incomplete or unclear responses by probing questions. Gay states that by establishing a rapport and trust relationship, accurate and honest information can be gleaned about the interviewer and how the interviewee interprets phenomena and experiences.

In the present study, the researcher makes use of idiographic research methodology as described above by conducting interviews, and making qualitative analyses thereof. This was done to seek informed opinion from well-known practitioners in the field regarding the most recent developments in South Africa at other open learning institutions and the issues attendant upon those developments.

In Chapter Four the two interviews are reported on in detail. Prof H T Gous, considered by many as the doyen of counselling distance learners in South Africa, and Prof L P Calitz, a widely respected academic and consultant to the University of the Transkei on distance education, were interviewed to determine if the concept of counselling "absent" students was in their opinion a valid one, and if so, what issues they considered as being relevant to the field. These interviews are published verbatim as post-script annexures to this dissertation and the valuable insights obtained are reflected in the model arrived at in this work.

1.5 PROGRAMME ANNOUNCEMENT

CHAPTER ONE commences by outlining the research area - that is, the problems entailed in providing an adequate student counselling facility within a university - more specifically, Vista University. It is established that the triadic nature of student counselling at a university is essential for the life of all three. The absence of one destroys this structure and without two elements a nonsensical situation arises.

This same chapter looks not only at the problems involved in providing adequate student counselling services but it also looks at those basic assumptions that underpin a problem of this nature. Following the brief outline of the scope of the problems entailed in a consideration of counselling services provided to adults in the distance education situation a section dealing with concept definition follows: Vista University and VUDEC, adult education, further education, distance education, and open learning. These concepts are the fundamental concepts that underlie the entire dissertation. It is essential that clarity be obtained of the meaning of these concepts at the outset in order that a more adequate communication could be realised and that misunderstanding could be eliminated.

This chapter also examines from which methodological background this dissertation proceeds. For the purposes of this research hermeneutic literature review, the creation of a data-base, and the value of idiographic research are discussed.

In CHAPTER TWO, the theme of the dissertation will be placed in context by attempting a brief macro-analysis of trends in South African tertiary education, bearing in mind the vast changes that are occurring in education in the country generally. The reality of students in the distance education situation and the description of their situatedness in their milieu and the extent and nature of the provision of student counselling services are addressed. The distance education situation, related, as it must be, to the growing trend of what is now called open learning will be discussed. The characteristics of the distance learning situation and the "personality" of the concept of open learning will be examined in terms of where it is located logistically, educationally, institutionally and in terms of its accountability.

The expectations, the attitudes, the motivation and the physical conditions in which distance education students must function will be discussed. The characteristics of these facets of their existence will be discovered in order to examine how counselling (supportive guidance) can be provided to address student needs. The role of the student counsellor will be discussed as a response to the needs (explicit and/or inexplicit) of the student. This discussion will include the qualities of the student counsellor and the components of this particular field of endeavour. These are teased out in order to analyse in what measure they are an adequate response to the educational needs of the learner.

A description of the practice and principles of procedure of accountable student counselling will be discussed, as will the challenges that beset student counselling in the distance education situation. This will be done in such a way that the relationship between the student-at-risk and the provision of student services at the university can be reflected upon, critically analysed and synthesized into a model for accountable student counselling provision in CHAPTER FIVE.

The chapter concludes with a review of how the student counsellor can act as facilitator of self-actualization and self-realization of the students he or she is responsible for.

In CHAPTER THREE specific attention is given to the current situation with regard to student counselling at open and distance learning institutions in South Africa. Given the country's recent history this chapter will reflect on the challenges which face the provision of this service, and will attempt to identify shortcomings. It will be argued that research on distance learners can contribute to a solution to these problems.

CHAPTER FOUR of this dissertation will show the reader how support can be planned and how a profile of the student can be drawn by creating a data-bank of student profiles and classified in such a way that the key factors that influence a student's academic life can be understood by those who need to meet that student's learning needs. In doing this, the criteria for drawing up an accountable student profile which adequately reflects the emotional, physical, intellectual and academic needs of the student will be discussed.

Details of the surveys that have been done at Vista University by the researcher will be provided and a critical assessment will be made of the results of the surveys to further inform a model of accountable student counselling.

Before attempting to construct a new model, CHAPTER FIVE motivates the need for a new model. To justify this argument an examination of some existing theoretical models is done, what their basic approach is and what components are evident in them, and what their relevance to Vista University's situation may be. The information obtained will assist the researcher by providing guidelines of some of the components of a student counselling model.

The most important component of this dissertation will be contained in CHAPTER SIX, where the new model will be presented and discussed. Because the University finds itself in a transition period between an old order and a new, the model must perform as a dynamic, metabolic one. An attempt will be made to bring Vista's seventeen years of experience in this regard to bear upon these "tried and trusted" protocols. The researcher will lead the reader through the components and the structure of this proposed model, and proposals and suggestions will be made to show how Vista University can proceed into the future - to refine, to maintain, and to sustain the development of a student support system that will foster openness, democracy, fairness and a commitment of the institution to redressing the historical imbalances of the past.

A FINAL CHAPTER will summarize briefly the program of research conducted, look at the limitations and shortcomings inherent in the situation which might impede the implementation and viability of the model, and try to propose problem-solving recommendations.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The provision of accountable open learning, of student counselling and institutional change are bound by a complex web of interrelationships. However, at the base of all three factors lies the question of the students' profile - who they are, how they function, and what resources they have available for further study. The answer to these questions is the kernel of how the University is to provide for them. It is hoped that the knowledge and the understandings generated by this dissertation will contribute to the ongoing debate about how Vista and other open learning institutions can meet, head-on, the challenges it faces as the 21st century approaches.

CHAPTER TWO

TERTIARY EDUCATION, OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING AND STUDENT COUNSELLING

2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One the researcher provided a justification for researching the topic of counselling open and distance learning students. Present problems were sketched and the objectives of the research were formulated, while the assumptions underlying the issue at hand were disclosed. Concepts to be used in this dissertation were clarified and a brief description was given of the research methodology to be used in the dissertation.

In Chapter Two it is necessary to establish the macro perspectives of tertiary education in South Africa, coupled with a brief investigation into local distance education practices at this level. It will also be necessary to investigate current counselling practices in open and distance learning, in an initial attempt to arrive at a model of the mission, content, form, target group and *modus operandi* of an effective distance counselling unit. This should identify the strengths and weaknesses of current practices, to act as guidelines in the establishment a new counselling model.

2.2 TERTIARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In his research, Dreijmanis (1988:1) states that “Government plays an increasingly significant role in tertiary education.” This would then imply political, economic and social perspectives and influences on tertiary education. This view is also substantiated by Mills and Fage (1999:1) who say: “Governments increasingly realise that the future lies in ‘Education, Education, Education’ for economic development, social stability and personal development and fulfilment.”



The involvement of government has become very apparent in the White Paper on Higher Education Transformation (DoE:1997), in the new Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, and in the establishment of the Higher Education Council. Dreijmanis (1988) approaches an analysis of tertiary education from a person power needs paradigm, which also resonates with current thinking on higher education focussed on human needs. As the Vista University Distance Education Campus is a major provider of teacher training, a person power issue, as well as a provider of specific degree studies, the locus of this study is very appropriate.

At the present time, considering the perspective of education being in the axis of societal change in South Africa, it is also reasonable existentially to accept that we live in an epoch of major changes in tertiary education. Concisely put, Bell (1996:28) says "It could be argued that institutions of further and higher education needed to respond to changing times and changing populations, and that they needed to become more efficient. That these changes have affected the nature of the student experience is certain...and the need for counselling increases." The current tertiary education structures are however, so well established that it is necessary first to examine the existing dispensation, with particular attention to current practices for distance education.

In contrast with many first world, privately sponsored institutions, it is important to note that all South African universities up to now, have been government aided, autonomous institutions, except for a measure of financial control. Tertiary education in this country can, in broad structure, be seen to consist of university education, technikon education and specialist colleges such as police, nursing, technical, agricultural, forestry and teacher training colleges, with a certain number of courses being offered at tertiary level by some private correspondence colleges and institutes.

At present there are 21 universities, 15 Technikons, 38 Nursing Colleges (NEPI 1993:205) and approximately 74 Teacher Training Colleges (May 1999) in South Africa. There are also 57 correspondence colleges (SAIDE 1995(b):16) of which only five, Intec, Damelin, Rapid

Results, Sukses and Lyceum, can be considered to be major role players (Andrew 1995:13). They tend to teach on an agency basis for certain professional bodies such as CIMA, CIS, LCCI, IACSA and as certifying bodies for government certificates. They are supervised by the Correspondence College Council, which was established in 1965.

2.2.1 The development of tertiary education in South Africa

Research indicates that the universities have the longest history in tertiary education in this country. F C Metrovich (In: Dreijmanis 1988:18) states that “ University education [in South Africa] dates back to 1829 when the South African College was established.” From these humble beginnings the roots of almost all South African universities, with the exception of the very youngest, can be traced.

Specialist institutions have a more divergent origin and seem to have sprung up as need and local policy dictated. The entire technical tertiary education provided by the Technikons is a far more recent development which only dates back to 1967 (CTP 1987:1).

Given the fact that courses offered by correspondence colleges date as far back as 1906 (SAIDE 1995(b):16), and in 1998 serviced the tertiary learning needs of 223 000 students (Andrew 1999), it is surprising that South Africa still has a low percentage of learners with tertiary qualifications.

It is evident that the entire tertiary education infrastructure in South Africa is firmly established, and can justifiably be said to be the best developed on the African Continent. Historical imperatives indicate that most of these tertiary education provisions in South Africa were aimed at the white minority: “Although the relation between the political system and the education system is one of reciprocal dependence, the former is the independent variable which largely shapes the latter” (Dreijmanis 1988:28).

Sir John Daniel, Vice-Chancellor of The Open University, England says:

At the end of the millennium in which the idea of the university has blossomed, population growth is out-pacing the world's capacity to give people access to universities. Half the world's population is now under 20 - three-quarters in countries like South Africa and Palestine. Our traditional concept of the campus university will deny higher education to nearly all these young people." (Daniel 1997:12).

A new democracy in South Africa gave voice to this demand for higher education and followed with a new educational policy to substantially shift access to tertiary education to a far greater section of society.

Realities of infrastructure and economy of scale dictate that study at residential institutions will not permit a landslide shift but will rather lead to a gradual process of accommodation. The NEPI Report (NEPI 1993:18) clearly states that "Financial resources are the life-blood of the education system." Regarding the question of infrastructure this report indicates that "the PSE (post-secondary education) system would need to accommodate 1.6 million students" (in terms of South Africa's 1991 population) and that "The challenge of access policy would then lie not in access to PSE, but in access to scarce residential university and technikon places" (Gultig In: NEPI 1993:214).

The need is great and immediate, and the obvious solution lies in access which can be provided by means of distance learning. This viewpoint is supported by the *Avis* magazine: "Interest in distance education has been growing steadily over the last few years in South Africa for a number of reasons. The most obvious reason is the huge backlog in education caused by apartheid" (Schultze 1998:120). In the following section attention will be given to the situation of distance education provision in the country.

2.3 TERTIARY EDUCATION BY OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The history of distance education in South Africa compares well with the beginnings of other first world distance education provision. Perry and Rumble (1992:28) avers: "Distance education or correspondence education has a long history, going back to the 1840's". Australia, often recognised for its distance education, presents their proof: "The first significant attempt at offering external courses at the university level was made in 1911 by the University of Queensland" (Smith 1988:195). We will now reflect on the South African situation.

2.3.1. The present situation of distance learning in tertiary education in South Africa

If Australia's distance education dates back to 1911, then South Africa followed soon after. Boucher (1973:26) indicates that

In 1873 the University of the Cape of Good Hope was created, incorporating all of the existing colleges. When, in 1918, it became the University of South Africa (UNISA), it commenced with correspondence courses and became a fully fledged correspondence university in 1951. It is dual medium and for all population groups.

"UNISA is today recognised as the pioneer of distance education in the western world" (Wiechers 1995:100) and is at the end of this century still the biggest in South Africa, providing education to approximately 130 000 students (UNISA, website).

Of far more recent origin, Vista University was founded in 1982, and additional to urban contact teaching at seven geographically separated campuses, also provide degree studies and teacher upgrading by means of distance education at VUDEC.

As previously stated, the imperatives of access and affordability have caused other universities in South Africa also to adopt the option of dual mode delivery.

Although on a smaller scale, twelve of the other universities in South Africa also offer distance education to a greater or lesser extent, namely:

- Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA)
- Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education
- Rand Afrikaans University
- Rhodes University
- Stellenbosch University
- University of Fort Hare
- University of the Free State
- University of Natal
- University of Port Elizabeth
- University of Pretoria
- University of the Western Cape, and
- University of the Witwatersrand (iCDL website)

In terms of technical and vocational training, the Technikon Southern Africa, established in 1980, provides much needed distance learning opportunities to 84 000 students, and has become a major role player in the field (TSA website). Three other technikons, Free State, Natal and Northern Gauteng also offer distance education programmes.

Specialized education is also provided by means of distance education by the South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE) in Pretoria. This college was established twenty five years ago in 1974 as the College of Education for Further Training (CEFT), which originally catered only for the upgrading of white teachers in its own province. It has now developed into a major provider of distance education in South Africa, catering to 26 250 students across all communities in the whole country (Posthuma 1999).

2.3.2 The unique nature of distance learning

As discussed in section 1.3.5 traditional education implies the simultaneous presence of learner and teacher in a defined area, involved in a specific educational activity, usually in the presence of other learners.

At face value, it would appear that none of these conditions can be met in the distance learning situation. The learner and teacher are separated in time and space most of the time. The teacher has limited control over both the activity and interaction with the content and the process of the learning experience. As individualized learning, the distance learner is usually separated from the input and contact with other learners with which learning experiences can be enriched and shared. In her study Greene (1999:4) found:

There is a limit to what students can undertake on their own even if they are given the opportunity to contact tutors for advice. If it is possible to organise get-together occasions where students meet each other, more extended projects can be undertaken. The key is group work.

It stands to reason that this places a large burden of responsibility on the learner. The accent seems to have shifted from the input of the teacher to the output of the learner. This impacts on issues of motivation, learning style, time management, environmental factors and the discipline of the student, all of which implies a “different situatedness”.

It is therefore, logical that the learning incident, rather than resorting under the direct management and control of the teacher, becomes the responsibility of the student. (S)he is no longer the “victim of teaching” merely responsible for the internalisation of knowledge, skills and attitudes. (S)he now becomes the “manager of learning” and is personally responsible for the construction of meaning, thereby shouldering a far greater burden. In essence, this templates very well with the philosophy of Outcomes-based Education.

Given the fact that the distance learner at tertiary level is usually also involved in life sustaining activities, such as full time employment, partnering, parenting and leisure-time activities, the learning issue becomes far more complex (Gous 1997:8) If this be the case, it follows that this student is subject to many more conflicts of interest and is far more deserving of counselling and support on a far wider range of issues than does the traditional contact student. Gous (1997:7) describes this as “a mediating role in the teaching-learning process ...through which learning takes place and sustains the dialogue and learning through its support services.”

What is understood today by these ‘support services’? Tait (1995:232) divides it into four broad categories; tutoring, counselling, teaching, and other activities. In the context of this dissertation the researcher focuses specifically on professional student counselling, which will be described briefly in the next section.

2.4 STUDENT COUNSELLING

Although it is generally accepted that student counselling has its roots in the whole developmental history of Psychology in the 19th century, it appears that counselling specifically of university students, was established in the United States of America by the American Council on Education in 1949 (Gous 1997:1).

This formal process seems to have been independently preceded in England, when Mary Swainson started working informally with her students at Oxford University in 1945 (Bell 1996:2). Initially her focus was on study skills, but this gradually developed into formal individual counselling. Bell (1996:17) declares: “ it is true to say, however, that counselling first became formalized within universities.”

2.4.1 Criteria for measuring professional student counselling services

The basis for formal student counselling adopted by the British Association for Student Counselling in 1974 can also form the criteria on which to measure the provision of professional student counselling services in this country. There are three indicators:

- a) The counsellors should be fully trained professionals,
- b) The student counselling service should be seen as an integral part of the educational programme, and
- c) The service should be pro-active and not just problem-based (Bell 1996:22).

These criteria will be applied to the student counselling situation in South Africa.

2.4.2 The individual institutional nature of student counselling services

In considering what student counselling entails, Tait (1995:236) wisely cautions that “each institution has a unique task, and no general schemes can be drawn up on an international or even national basis.” Accepting this as a dictum, one must still attempt to provide a broad understanding of the structure and function of student counselling in the last decade of the twentieth century.

2.4.3 The nature of student counselling

The work of a higher education student counsellor should be seen to comprise of two main functions. The first is individualized formal counselling and the other is institutional work. In brief the nature of the personal counselling can be summarized as:

- a) Preventative
- b) Developmental

- c) Diagnostic
- d) Supportive
- e) Problem-solving
- f) Therapeutic
- g) Referral, and
- h) Collaborative.

The responsibilities of the institutional work of a student counsellor can be described as follows:

- a) Resource creation and management
- b) Policy development and adjustment
- c) Quality management
- d) Academic interaction and collaboration
- e) Institutional development inputs and participation.
- f) Teamwork and networking.

A review of these two categories serves to confirm the triadic nature of counselling illustrated in chapter one. No wonder that Bell (1996:52) states: "Thus in the 1990's student counselling services are dealing with complex situations and the evermore complex demands of students."

2.4.4 Ethics and principles of student counselling

In a conference paper Swart (1989:1) quoted the work of Mabe and Rollin (1986), and that of Swartz (1988), on the purposes of ethical codes as:

"Two common purposes of professional ethical codes or guidelines are:

- 1) to establish ethical principles and standards for professional behaviour and responsibility which serves to protect both the recipients and the deliverers of a service, and
- 2) to define and develop a professional identity."

Ethical codes are based on the values, ideologies, experiences and knowledge bases of the members of a particular profession. As all of these foundations are subject to change over time, a code of ethics should never be seen as a fixed position, but should be subjected to constant critical reflection and review. This does not defeat the value of a code of ethics on which an individual can model his professional behaviour, and by which that profession defines a specific identity.

The Canadian Psychological Association have developed four clear principles, which would seem very appropriate to student counselling:

- Respect for the dignity of persons
- Responsible caring
- Integrity in relationships
- Responsibility to society.

Many other specific issues such as

- exclusion of any other relationship basis
- physical and sexual contact
- remuneration and gifts
- correct clothing and language use
- discussion and disclosure of procedures, and
- malpractice issues

(Allan 1997)

can be included in a code of ethics, but profound reflection will indicate that they are inherent in the four guidelines provided.

To this can be added the Code of Ethics (NADEOSA1999) adopted on Student Care by the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (NADEOSA), which undertakes:

- to make fair regulations governing its relationship with learners and to treat equitably those who, for good reason, are unable to comply with these regulations;
- to encourage learners to complete their courses of study and to do everything reasonably possible to enable the learners to derive full benefit from their courses; and
- to provide tutorial/learner support that enhances the learners' opportunities for success.

These principles of behaviour or this Code of Ethics can comfortably be integrated with the nature of student counselling, as was described above.

2.4.5 The fields of student counselling

The fields of student counselling will vary from one institution to another, but can be seen in a broad sense as:

1. Learning and study skills
2. Academic and career planning
3. Personal and interpersonal counselling
4. Trauma counselling
5. Personal financial and circumstance counselling
6. Motivational and inspirational counselling.

Certain role-players within tertiary education may dispute some of these fields of counselling, as properly belonging elsewhere, but this will be influenced by the institutional mission, structure and the individualization referred to in 2.4.2.

2.4.6 The personal qualities of a student counsellor

The focus of this dissertation is to arrive at an accountable student counselling model in a distance learning, tertiary education environment. A study of counselling in its broadest sense is not the aim of this study. There is an entire range of specialized fields of counselling, such as substance abuse, sex and marriage, health and aids, war and violence trauma and other branches of psychological counselling. Changing circumstances and individual need may require of the student counsellor to attend to some of these issues, although referral to specialists is an inherent factor in student counselling.

As a point of departure, the assumption is that the basic qualities sought in any counsellor is also valid for the student counsellor. However, an old, but still relevant study of the characteristics of counsellors is the one by Tyler (1969:207) in which she says: "The study suggests that college counsellors are a somewhat distinctive group." She analysed the empirical research of 39 research teams who had conducted their research over a period of a decade and a half. From this analysis it became apparent that there were many variables with insignificantly low correlations.

At the same time there were a few items that produced significant correlations throughout. Her findings were: " Counsellors as a group show some distinctive personality characteristics." (Tyler 1969:216):

- 1 Freedom from dogmatism or prejudice
- 2 Tolerance of ambiguity
- 3 Sensitivity or perceptiveness
- 4 Empathy
- 5 Unconditional positive regard and respect
- 6 Relationship competence
- 7 Academic success
- 8 Affective vitality.

2.5 COUNSELLING DISTANCE LEARNERS

Guidance and support of tertiary education students have become an accepted fact since the educational boom of the post-war years (Gous 1997:1), and the question arises as to what support is needed and how it is to be provided to distance learners.

2.5.1 Counselling distance learners - world perspectives

Although an attempt was made to scan the student counselling services of all tertiary distance institutions across the world, this proved to be a gargantuan task worthy of a separate thesis. For purposes of comparison an assumption was made that the very large distance education institutions of the world are most likely to provide professional student counselling services. *Change*, the magazine of the American Association for Higher Education, (Daniel 1997:14) listed the eleven distance mega-universities (having more than 100 000 students) as:

COUNTRY	NAME OF INSTITUTION	FOUNDED	STUDENTS
China	China TV University System	1979	690 000
France	Centre Nat. d'Enseignement a Distance	1939	387 000
India	Indira Gandhi National Open University	1985	430 832
Indonesia	Universitas Terbuka	1984	397 543
Iran	Payame Noor University	1987	147 815
Korea	Korea National Open University	1982	208 935
South Africa	University of South Africa	1873	130 000
Spain	Universidad Nac. De Educacion a Distancia	1972	133 651
Thailand	Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University	1978	216 800
Turkey	Anadolu University	1982	470 072
UK	The Open University	1969	160 000+

UNISA will be discussed in the next chapter so will not be dealt with here. In his book Daniel (1996:40) states: “The mega-universities depend on systems that support three outcomes: good learning materials, effective student support, and efficient logistics.” If one interprets this support in the fourfold manner suggested by Tait in 2.3.2, also a staff member of the Open University, it would seem as if teaching, tutoring, and other activities enjoy more prominence than counselling at many of the above mega-universities. Scrutiny of the iCDL database indicates that six of the eleven institutions, in China, India, Korea, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom provide their students with counselling, while the other five either do not, or do not consider it important enough to report on (iCDL website 1999). As Bell (1996:48) says “...it is often less easy to convince institutions that such work is appropriate and valuable.” Of the services listed it would appear that the UK Open University provides the most extensive student counselling service, making it available in more than 290 study centres across the country.

2.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher attempted to provide the reader with a macro perspective on the history and structure of tertiary education in South Africa. This was followed by the provision of open and distance education in this country, and an endeavour to sketch the unique nature of distance education.

Focussing on one of the main issues of this dissertation, this was followed by a broad discussion of student counselling, its nature, ethics, components and qualities within tertiary education. It was also deemed necessary to reflect briefly on current world practices in the provision of counselling to distance learners.

In the next chapter, this argument will be teased out more by a consideration of these counselling practices within South African distance learning institutions.

CHAPTER THREE

COUNSELLING DISTANCE LEARNERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the structure and development of tertiary education in South Africa were teased out. This was followed by an examination of tertiary education by means of open and distance learning, in which various institutions and categories were briefly discussed. It was pointed out that although distance education could merely be seen as a different mode of delivery, there is a distinct situatedness in distance education which impacts on this study.

Secondly chapter two addressed the topic of student counselling in some detail. Not only did it reflect on criteria for the provision of professional student counselling, but it also considered the nature, ethics, practices and fields of student counselling. The personal qualities of a professional student counsellor were also listed. In the last section of the chapter, some broad perspectives on student counselling were considered.

In chapter three more particular attention will be given to current practices in student counselling at some of the major open and distance learning providers in the region. This is justified by Mugadzaweta and Benza (1999:5) when they state: "Student Support Services constitute an important component of any distance education system" The researcher will indicate some of the challenges which face student counsellors in South Africa, and on the basis of this, formulate his perceptions of the shortcomings in the system. He will argue that further local research should be conducted in this domain, to enhance the provision of counselling services to distance learners in this country.

3.2 CURRENT PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this section the major providers of distance education will be identified, and a scope of their counselling provision will be listed.

3.2.1 The University of South Africa (UNISA)

As can be expected from the South African mother institution, UNISA has a substantial infrastructure of counselling services, mainly based in its counselling unit in Pretoria. First functioning as a sub-unit of UNISA's Bureau for University Research, a full fledged Student Services Bureau was established in 1980 (Gous 1997:8). This bureau, now known as The Bureau for Student Counselling and Career Development, has a team of nine counsellors in Pretoria and the regional centres, possessing a wide range of skills as educationists, psychologists, researchers, lawyers and communication specialists.

Contact is frequently face-to-face counselling at the main campus as well as at the four regional offices in Pietersburg, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Secondly, telephonic communication is of a high frequency and this is further augmented by letter counselling. Until recently, the unit also managed an extensive broadcasting schedule, in which counselling issues were also addressed (Adey and Gous 1993:32), but this facility has been discontinued for strategic reasons.

The unit does not only focus its counselling on the student population, but has high level interaction with administration and the teaching staff, to promote the overall effectiveness of student learning. Continuous research is also conducted by the unit to contribute to its core activity. Counselling content spreads across personal and health counselling, to generic skills such as study techniques, library skills, assignment writing and examination skills, while life skills such as financial planning and stress management also receive attention. The staff of the unit have Faculty Board representation and as such can be seen as a core unit to the mission of the entire university.

This is reflected in the Bureau's own mission statement:

The Bureau for Student Counselling and Career Development provides a professional and comprehensive counselling and development service of high quality that is available in various delivery forms to all prospective and registered students, the academic and administrative sections of UNISA and the lay and professional community at large. (UNISA website 1997)

3.2.2 Technikon Southern Africa

Within the Department of Student Development Services (SDS) the Technikon has a Career Guidance and Counselling section providing counselling relating to career choice and personal problems. This section has a Career Resource Library, organises career exhibitions and has also launched a peer counselling project. In the philosophy of the institution student support is also embedded in the lecturing commission of the teaching staff. (TSA website)

3.2.3 The South African College for Teacher Education (SACTE)

This is a teacher training college aimed at upgrading and in-service training. Career guidance is thus not of focal importance. The Vice-Rector: Student Support takes responsibility for the welfare of students, and addresses any problem that is brought to his attention. The Heads of the fifteen Regional Learning Centres also assist tutors when problems are referred to them. Four ladies in the central department of student administration attend to any administrative problems students may have. There is however, no professional counselling service available to students at SACTE (Posthuma 1999).

3.2.4 Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC)

At Vista University student counselling was established for contact campuses by the Department of Teaching Development and Student Services in 1982. This service was extended to what was then the Further Training Campus in May 1987. The student counsellor provided counselling in terms of educational counselling, career counselling, personal and interpersonal counselling, study and personal management skills and counselling with regard to financial and domestic issues. A full job description was developed, and the student counsellor actively participated in his professional association. In 1993 a proposal was also submitted for the creation of a countrywide peer counselling network. Unfortunately, during the period of institutional transformation, this student counselling service to distance learners was discontinued in December 1993.

3.2.5 Vista University Contact Campuses

Except for the Central (management and administrative) Campus in Pretoria, Vista University has seven urban, contact campuses located in the community townships they aim to serve, in Mamelodi, Daveyton, Soweto, Sebokeng, Mangaung, Thabong and Zwide. These campuses attend to the need of full-time students and each has student counsellors and centres. Although their clients tend to be younger and politically more active, the student counsellors have also been commissioned to provide any VUDEC student who applies for counselling with assistance.

3.2.6 Correspondence Colleges

Based on informal enquiry, it seems doubtful whether the private correspondence colleges provide their open and distance learners with a professional counselling service, as was defined in section 2.4.

3.3 A BROADER SOUTHERN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Open and distance learning in neighbouring countries are of a far more recent provision. In terms of potential regional collaboration, and the fact that some of the distance learning providers in South Africa register students outside its national borders, a very brief overview of the regional situation will be given.

In this regard Dodds, Nonyongo and Glennie (1999:98) confirm: “All the universities in the sub-region outside South Africa are running and developing [distance learning] programmes, many of them very similar across the countries, for relatively small student populations both now and in the foreseeable future.” The intention was to look at the distance education counselling practices in six surrounding countries. In a literature search no documented information could be found for Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland on this topic. Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe will now briefly be referred to.

3.3.1 Botswana

The University of Botswana started with distance learning provision of a Diploma in Theology as far back as 1979. At the moment their Distance Education Unit offers a Certificate in Adult Education to 37 students. Although it has continued to be a small provider, it is currently in the process of extending its courses and hope to attract thousands of students soon (Dodds, Nonyongo and Glennie 1999:97) These students enjoy support during residential sessions and study weekends, and this includes “counselling services over financial, social and psychological problems” (Kamau 1999:4).

3.3.2 Namibia

Distance learning in Namibia is offered by three institutions, the University of Namibia (UNAM), the Polytechnic of Namibia and the National Institute for Educational Development.

“Each caters for between 1000 and 2000 students” (Dodds, Nonyongo and Glennie 1999:97). The University and the Polytechnic were established in 1992 as autonomous institutions. The COLISA partners as well as two private colleges also offer distance learning in the country, but the authors indicate that: “The student support services offered by such bodies are mainly on paper” (Dodds, Nonyongo and Glennie 1999:98). In contrast “...the University of Namibia has nine centres throughout Namibia to assist its distance education students” (Beukes 1998:6). In discussions with Beukes it became apparent that these centres also provide student support to their distance learners.

3.3.3 Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Open University originated as the Centre for Distance Education in 1993, and currently has approximately 10 000 enrolled students. “Zimbabwe Open University delivers its services through the National Centre in Harare, 10 Regional Centres and 55 District Study Centres in all the Provinces of Zimbabwe” and “In order to provide them with high quality university education the need for a good and sound infrastructure in the form of learner support services cannot be over-emphasized” (Benza, Chitsika, Mvere, Nyakupinda and Mugadzaweta 1999:1). These authors continue their discourse by stating that the “critical importance of the affective, value-related and social dimensions of open and distance learning”(Benza et al 1999:2)is recognised. Scrutiny of their presentation indicates in their Table 5 that the following guidance and counselling issues receive attention: Pre-admission counselling, orientation, course overview, study skills, examination counselling and counselling for sudden difficulties. This suggests that a full counselling service is available to their students.

In the next section it will be argued that the counselling of open and distance learners is of a specific nature, which may perhaps not have received sufficient attention in the past.

3.4 THE CHALLENGES OF STUDENT COUNSELLING IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

An investigation into the current nature of counselling the distance learning student introduces a very interesting perspective. Whereas the traditional counselling approach places a high premium on establishing the levels of intellectual potential, aptitudes and interests of the counsellee, often with the aid of highly sophisticated rating instruments (humourously referred to as test-and-tell), this has very limited application possibilities in the distance learning environment of developing countries without advanced technology. This is illustrated by Mills and Fage (1999:4): “One of the most significant challenges to Quality Assurance processes for the immediate and longer term future is the increasing use of electronic and computer-based media for the delivery of courses, teaching and advice and counselling.”

Using such existing mechanisms outside of a controlled situation places serious doubts regarding the validity and reliability of the results. Even reliance on feedback from independent, outside practitioners or agencies cannot produce the synergistic whole which usually creates the real engagement between the counsellor and the client. In the interview with Gous, he indicated that he was in favour of the development of appropriate counselling instruments for use in open and distance learning.

Secondly, the benefit of overt and covert observation, a *sine qua non* in a contact counselling situation, is absent in the counselling of most distance learners. The value of observation is aptly described by Gillis (1994:61): “Any realistic understanding of the client’s feelings must therefore be based not only on attentive listening, but also on active observing.” Creative ways must be devised to compensate for this valuable component. The utilization of interactive video would be of great assistance in this regard.

Therapy is often handled on a referral basis, as Gillis (1994:90) confirms: “The need to refer clients to specialised private or community resources is likely to arise from time to time...”.

Development initiatives may be launched, but can only be sustained by use of current distance learning modes, support groups or trained peer counsellors. None of these alternatives produce the ideal personalised counselling engagement.

The content of student counselling is frequently vocational, such as career guidance or career development, particularly if a specialist in this field is not available in the institution. In distance learning, counselling is usually offered to students already interfacing with an employment situation. In rare instances it may still be valid where there is a mismatch between the students' skills and interests and the work they are doing. More often, the result is that vocational counselling in distance learning often relates to conflicts of interests and accommodation of study imperatives within the confines of employment restrictions. "Work can represent deep and unconscious needs, needs that can often be met successfully when a student's career choice and personal needs are congruent. It is when these are in conflict that students get into difficulty. This is why careers and counselling services need to work closely together" (Bell 1996:122).

Counselling content may also be driven by issues of personal development such as linguistic skills, cognitive skills and other life skills. Particular emphasis may also be required in terms of strategies and skills needed for successful individualised learning, seen by some as a separate student support activity. In distance learning the student's personal study management more often requires the support of the counsellor. Personal counselling focusses on psycho-social issues which impact on the student's study effectiveness and learning outcomes. Student counselling for distance learners may for these reasons be more diverse than that of the counselling conducted in residential institutions. As Tait (1995:234) declares: "It means differentiation rather than uniformity and consistency."

If the practice of counselling is considered, several considerations surface. Encounter counselling may be arranged, namely the traditional face-to-face interaction. This usually requires that a fixed appointment be made.

In distance learning this has its own problems, as counsellor and student time concepts often differ, and transport to the counselling venue is generally unreliable. With a very limited telephone infrastructure available to the distance learners, a telephone call to make an appointment or for the counsellor to confirm an appointment is frequently not an option.

Group counselling can be conducted to a limited extent at the institutional base, but more particularly at the regional learning centres. Research indicates that the South African distance learners are geographically wide-spread, and transport networks are either not available, or place a heavy financial burden on the student, so that the group counselling sessions are often an option to only a small proportion of the registered students.

Paper and print counselling is a frequent means of communication for the distance learner. Simpson (1988:133) offers some solace: "Despite all the emphasis on new technology in distance education, I still find myself counselling by the oldest means of non-verbal communication known to humanity - the letter. I take comfort from the fact that such a tradition goes back at least to St Paul." Letter counselling places severe limitations on the counselling interaction, and also demands time consuming letter-and-answer actions. Feedback on successful completion is seldom received. The linguistic skills level of both the counsellor and the counsellee in a third world country, particularly with regard to writing skills and language register, often has a detrimental impact on the success of this counselling form.

A second alternative print form counselling is the preparation of booklets, pamphlets or tutorial letters on a preselected topic, or others such as a self-assessment questionnaire, taster packs and newsletter articles. This again amounts to unidirectional 'advising' rather than authentic counselling. Lastly, where the skills of a counsellor are harnessed in the preparation of study materials, text-embedded counselling can effectively be integrated into the learning script.

Electronic counselling is a modern challenging field to be exploited by the distance learner student counsellor in South Africa. Presently, the most frequently used technological mode of contact is telephone counselling, as is also used by Lifeline. “The telephone plays a particularly important part in counselling at a distance” (Holmberg 1989:115). It possesses the benefit of immediacy, but eliminates visual observation and non-verbal communication. In a multilingual country such as South Africa, interaction is also often complicated by linguistic issues; in telephone counselling pronunciation can be an obstruction. Teleconferencing could be highly effective for group counselling at a distance, but, as with the other sophisticated electronic media, teleconferencing facilities in this country is very limited and cannot be employed on a large scale. The second research project reported on in this dissertation was primarily launched in accord with the statement:

Media such as correspondence, face-to-face, telephone, electronic communications etc. provide a range of means which differ widely in their effectiveness for individuals and groups in ways that are as yet inadequately understood, and need constant monitoring if provision is not to replace service (Tait 1995:235).

Let us consider radio broadcast counselling. It must be remembered that the bulk of distance learners are in employment, and their study activities function at a secondary level. Broadcast counselling is cost and time effective if it services a large enough audience, but educational broadcast is often done at off-peak (as in midmorning) periods, which may clash with the other role commitments of students.

Because of the wide audience, topics also tend to be very general in nature. A very recent, interesting and creative adaptation is used in India, and Faruqui (1999:4) reports: “IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) has started recently the **Radio-interactive-counselling through Phone-in** on one of its center of AIR at Bhopal.”

Audiotape counselling can be of two kinds. Developmental issues can be scripted and pre-recorded to be supplied on demand, while individual therapeutic interactions can be dealt with in an audio-letter mode far more effectively than a written letter. This again presupposes that the student is in possession of an audiotape apparatus and has the skill to record on it, together with the physical space and private time to make highly personal recording in his or her own environment. The profile studies under consideration indicate that many students do possess audiotape recorders.

The same scenario may also apply for video-recorded counselling, with the proviso that this is a more costly option and is not as yet, freely available to most students in disadvantaged communities.

It is with envy that one reads of interactive computers and home-based electronic mail in many countries across the globe. One example is cited by Holmberg (1989:115): "The computer is also used in counselling. An application of this kind is to be found in a pre-study advisory system developed at the Fern Universitat in Germany." South Africa lags far behind in this regard at present, especially among the disadvantaged distance learning communities, as the accompanying student profiles prove. Note is taken of several current initiatives to remedy this situation (cf West 1999:1 - 4), but the researcher believes that it can still not be considered a viable option in South Africa in the next decade.

The realities illustrated above stress that a profile of your student population is of vital importance to the counsellor of distance learners. This is also championed by Neuland (1990:33) when he declares: "The average lecturer involved in distance education is not fully aware of the characteristics (or profile) of the students who are being taught." The open and distance learner's student counsellor has a target group which is not on campus for observation. The nature of individualised learning tends to favour participation in distance learning by the more mature student, as is also conclusively proved by the profile study, and this adds a further dimension to student counselling.

Bell (1996:52) concurs: “the increased number of mature students has brought an increase in long-held, even entrenched, problems.”

With current high unemployment levels in South Africa a new hybrid situation is arising where these unemployed students enroll for distance learning courses, but are physically present on campus (cf Gous 1995:42). In these circumstances the situation reverts to that of traditional student counselling, made more complicated by the psychological and physical distress caused by such unemployment. By implication, the distance learning provider would then have to make provision for the counselling service infrastructure to accommodate these students.

Social advancement and empowerment, and the ever broadening scope in distance learning could have a far-reaching impact on the student profile, as do economic influences and technological sophistication. The findings in the longitudinal research in this dissertation is an indication of how rapidly a situation can change, but also of the importance of regular profile studies.

The vision that an institution has of its teaching and of the support to its students will determine the mission statement that it will adopt. This is confirmed by Reid (1995:273): “Institutional ethos should be made explicit - it will affect the model of learning support offered.” To validate this proclamation of intent requires more than establishing the content and form of the counselling to be provided to an identified student body. It also implies the infrastructure and management of a counselling unit. Scrutiny of the findings in section 3.2 confirms that the majority of distance learning institutions in this country lag far behind their contact teaching counterparts.

In proposing a model for the counselling of distance learners it will be argued that the specific nature of distance learning demands technology, staffing and networking to give credence to the institutional mission of optimally assisting students to achieve their academic outcomes.

Scrutinizing the counselling activities in the distance learning institutions exposes certain shortcomings which exist. This will be discussed in the next section.

3.5 CURRENT SHORTCOMINGS

The information gathered indicates that, generally speaking, there is an under provision of counselling open and distance learners at the various institutions in South Africa, in terms of content, form and intention. We should heed the warning issued by Perraton and Hulsmann (1998:24) : “The notion that open-learning materials can stand by themselves, and replace the teacher [and counsellor], is educationally dubious and probably inefficient.”

These problems may stem from an extinct political dispensation in which student counselling was a low priority at institutions, even in terms of counsellor training. Reporting on the situation at secondary school level, the De Lange Report (1981:27) came to the conclusion that:

The best provision, although inadequate, is made for the Whites and the Indians.

The training for Coloureds is totally inadequate while little or no training is available for Blacks. There is ample opportunity for improvement.

Some readers may feel that this information is dated, but Sedibe (1996:130) argues that this situation still exists in the last decade of this century.

This situation is in stark contrast to an even earlier policy, The National Education Policy Act No 39 Of 1967, Section 2(f) which reads:

Education shall be provided in accordance with the ability and aptitude of, and interest shown by the pupil and the needs of the country, and appropriate guidance shall, with due regard thereto, be furnished to pupils.

Surely, the spirit of these pronouncements regarding school learners implies that counselling should be provided to learners in tertiary education as well!

In fairness, it should be noted that there is also an under-utilization of these support services by the learners for whom it is intended. Literature review indicates that the vocational guidance system, especially at school level was inadequate (Dreijmanis 1988:70 reporting from the 1980 Reynders Commission). The natural outflow of this was that pupils at schools in certain communities discovered at an early stage that guidance was either non-existent or totally inadequate and/or unreliable, with the result that they developed a nonchalant attitude of self-sufficiency, without reliance on counselling services. On entering tertiary education there was a spill-over effect. This is even more conspicuous in the distance learning situation where students cannot be invited or confronted by a counsellor to make use of student counselling services. For the distance learner time and communication resources are very limited. The student attempts to achieve his academic goal with the minimum attention paid to, what may be considered by them as 'non-essential' support services.

The error of judgement rests in the fact that utilization of support systems would expedite and enhance academic success, rather than hamper it. It is therefore clear that a major shift of attitude needs to take place among both providers and learners. Attitude is however, deeply embedded and not readily changed.

It is up to the counselling profession to effectively market its services and motivate students to make use of this support. Simultaneously, tertiary education institutions and their staff are frequently blissfully ignorant of the benefits of student counselling, and research, reporting and internal marketing should also be aimed at decision-makers. This pro-active stance on the part of the counsellor may prove to lead to tangible results for the student, which in turn will promote attitudinal change.

To produce these tangible results in the case of distance learning students, the student counsellor will have to research which factors will promote the distance learner's chances of academic success, so that feedback can be channelled to faculty members and administration, and so that the student counsellor can adapt traditional counselling form and content to the distance learning environment. This more scientific imperative will be considered in the next section.

3.6 THE NEED FOR RESEARCH TO OVERCOME SHORTCOMINGS

While education is as old as man himself, educational counselling as a separate discipline has only come into vogue in this century of phenomenal change. Student counselling was originally focussed on the student in the traditional face-to-face first world situation, as discussed in chapter two. The extension of student counselling to the distance learner is of even more recent origin.

Student counselling has furthermore become far more complex. Due to global and national political influences, the knowledge explosion of the twentieth century, the unpredictability of vocational diversification and the phenomenal technological developments which have not only influenced every individual's way of life, but has also impacted on education and particularly tertiary education, the scope and need for educational counselling escalated pro rata. The modern student counsellor has to be a person of great versatility. Bell (1996:52) puts it succinctly: "Thus in the 1990's, student counselling services are dealing with complex situations and the evermore complex demands of students."

Although modern communication has created the global village, it has at the same time increased the individual's sense and conscious awareness of difference. To extrapolate, the distance learner who lives in this global village experiences an even greater sense of isolation and a feeling of individualized situatedness.

What applies to the distance learner in Australasia or Europe is in many ways not relevant to the student in Africa or America. This is amply supported by Adekanmbi (1999:5) when he states: “As Africa moves into the next millennium, it would have to address the implications of global and virtual university offerings, self-directed learning, new media initiatives and attempts to try new models to ensure greater autonomy in its distance education practice.”

For these reasons it has become imperative for the student counsellor in distance education continuously to research the factors which impact on the learning effectiveness of this ‘isolated’ learner. “The inclusion of research in almost any human endeavour indicates the significance attached to its utility value” (Jegade 1999:1).

Some of the factors to be researched in more detail relate to motivation, learning styles, sense of time and time management, environmental factors, self-discipline and the interaction of any one or all of these with the characteristics of the adult student.

It is clear that the student counsellor of the distance learner must constantly assess the content and form of the support given, keep in touch with changes in his target group (also influenced by changes in policy related to access, retention and credit mobility, which is presently in a very fluid state) and keep track of new developments introduced by counsellor peers across all boundaries. This dissertation attempts not only to give the South African perspective, but aspires to a comparison of practices elsewhere. This initiative is supported by Edirisingha (1999:1) “...where documentation and research exists, it tends to be institution-based, reflecting practice in a single country, with only rare attempts at drawing generalisable conclusions.” These research findings will also mean that the mission of a student counselling unit will have to receive constant scrutiny and revision. It is evident that student counselling has entered a more exciting and challenging phase as it moves more and more into the core of the entire educational process.

3.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

With the conceptual issues dealt with in the first chapter and the context of student counselling investigated in the second chapter, this chapter attempted to analyse the specific situation of the counselling practices, challenges and shortcomings of counselling distance learners in Southern Africa. One of the conclusions that can be drawn is that research is an inherent component of distance counselling.

In the following chapter a planning model on which student support planning can be based will be presented. This will lead to a report on quantitative and qualitative research conducted by the researcher on the topic. The findings combined with the foregoing information will be considered in an attempt to synthesize some common factors emerging from the information. The aim in obtaining this information is to contribute to an integrated model as the outcome of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN DISTANCE LEARNING AND COUNSELLING

4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the phenomena distance learning and counselling in higher education in Southern Africa were discussed. The conclusion was drawn that the distance learner at tertiary level in South Africa, has a much greater chance of success if appropriate counselling could be provided.

It is universally accepted that counselling cannot be conducted effectively if the counsellor does not have a clear frame of reference regarding the counsellee. In distance learning the student is usually not in the physical presence of the counsellor, to enable an accurate assessment of the student's explicit and implicit needs to be made. This chapter addresses this deficit of information in the distance learning environment. The resultant research is supported by Evans (1994:127) "Using this information - and there is no point in collecting the information unless it is used - can have a significant impact on the teaching and learner support strategies."

In this chapter a *planning* model on which the development of student support can be grounded will be presented. From this model it will become evident that quantitative and qualitative research is required to establish a profile of the student, what the needs of distance learners are and what strategies would be required to ensure that the counselling provided will benefit the counsellee.

The results of this research will contribute to recommendations on which a specific distance learning model for the counselling of distance learners will be proposed in chapter six.

4.2 A STUDENT SUPPORT PLANNING MODEL

This model, proposed by Tait (in Lockwood 1995:233) is intended as a developmental model. As the model will illustrate, the process justifies the approach and argument of this dissertation.

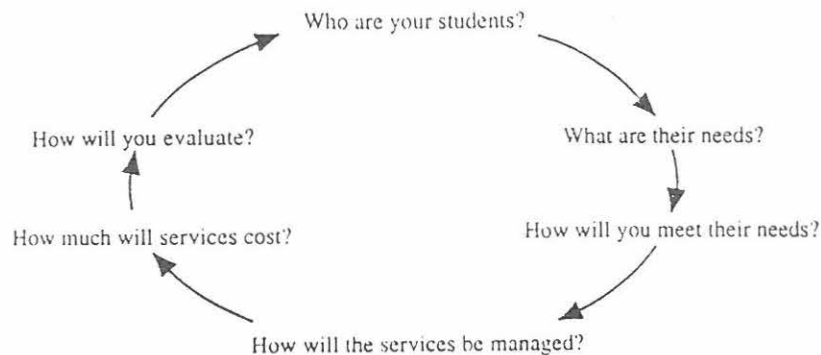


Figure 2 Tait's model for planning and managing student services

The six questions on which this model is based -

- Who are your students?
- What are their needs?
- How will you meet their needs?
- How will the services be managed?
- How much will services cost?
- How will you evaluate?

synchronise with the whole approach adopted by the researcher of this dissertation. It should be evident that the answers to these questions lie in the solution offered by this study; that in open and distance learning the establishment of a student profile is essential to the concept (or model) which underpins student counselling.

As Tait (1995:235) succinctly says: "Debate within an institution about who its students are, or will be, provides the platform on which to analyse what they need in terms of student support services." These questions are instrumental in researching a student profile.

4.3 CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes criteria as "a principle or standard that a thing is judged by"(Fowler H W and Fowler F G 1995:319).

In preparing research to test a hypothesis it is essential that this research meets with certain standards. It is also vital that the research method applied is the most appropriate to the topic and the circumstances. With regard to research criteria, Van Niekerk (in Mouton and Joubert 1990:179) identifies

"(1) universal validity,
(2) necessary relations between components of arguments, and
(3) compliance to rules" as the three conditions on which rationality and judgement in research can be based.

In the research conducted in this study an attempt will be made to indicate that the instruments and the methods used meet the conditions of universal validity, relatedness and rule compliance.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The focal constraints in researching distance learners' needs are the geographic spread of the target group and the potential costs of researching them. After consideration of various options such as personal interviews, focus groups and analysis of registration data it was decided in 1989 that for the purposes of a study, self-administered mail questionnaires would be used as a quantitative instrument.

This initiative was further supported by personal interviews with two prominent academics who are familiar with distance learning in South Africa. Such a dualistic approach to research is well established in distance education "Other researchers have adopted both interviews and inventory questionnaires" (Morgan 1995:64).

In the study of more limited scope in 1994, it was decided to do nomothetic research specifically on students' possession of study aids, as this more accurately represents the multi-media approach of true distance learning as against the exclusive use of print communication in the older correspondence model.

More recently, the researcher decided to conduct a further profile study in 1998, based on the original model, and thereby achieving a longitudinal study which would lend greater reliability and validity to the results. The results of all these instruments will be presented and integrated in an attempt to arrive at a structure and process model for the counselling of distance learners.

4.5 SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRES

At the onset of this longitudinal study the researcher initially launched a profile study on VUDEC students in 1989, and published a full report in 1991. In counselling students over time, he became aware of changing circumstances. The Australian researcher, Terry Evans (Evans 1994:128) accurately identified the problem of fluidity when he said "Adult students *en masse* are as dynamic and chaotic as the global weather system." The researcher of this dissertation echoes this sentiment by comparing his personal counselling experiences with students to the *El Nino* and *La Nina* weather patterns. Conscious of this dynamic nature, the researcher decided on more repetitive research, as described by Evans (1995:70): "The ideal research and development process is cyclic, with one informing the other sequentially."

Due to an instructional design need, the first profile study was followed by a research project of smaller scope in 1994, also using mail questionnaires. Information relating to distance learners is obviously only relevant if conducted at reasonably regular intervals, and a counselling model would best be served if it was based on a longitudinal study. With a decade separating the first study from the last, the researcher decided in 1998 again to design his instrument in such a way that data obtained in the previous studies could be compared to the

most recent data obtained. As a result of this decision, a new questionnaire survey was launched in July 1998 and the data obtained, combined with that produced in the two previous studies, forms the data-base of his quantitative research.

4.5.1 THE FIRST STUDY (1989 - 1991)

A PROFILE OF THE NEW VISTA FURTHER TRAINING STUDENT

Although random sampling was considered, the researcher chose to direct his questionnaires at the total number of first-time Vista University students in 1989. Preceding the drafting of the questionnaires, numerous meetings with lecturers and administrators were held and a number of problems were identified and formulated. This questionnaire was also submitted to the HSRC for scrutiny and comment. This led to a questionnaire with distinct themes containing structured questions and a voluntary and anonymous response facility. The broad scope of the research then indicated that a random research sample may not provide sufficient statistics to validate the conclusions drawn on which recommendations could be based. Therefore, it was decided in 1989 to survey the entire target population of 4555 first-time students. In this survey (Annexure A) a reliable response of 45,5 % (2073) was achieved and analysed. The total volume of computations was very bulky and is not reflected in this dissertation but is obtainable from the researcher on request. The full report was published in 1991.

The ethical research principles of anonymity, confidentiality, respect, privacy, voluntary participation, protection, honesty and recognition of human worth were all adhered to in all three the quantitative studies.

It is also believed that the results obtained meet the demands of validity and reliability, and that the conclusions based on these statistics therefore, meet the criteria described in 4.3.

The problems formulated were accommodated in seventy-six questions and these were grouped into nine major themes:

- Biographical detail
- Educational data
- Professional background data
- Personal circumstances
- Expectations and impressions
- Study factors
- Study circumstances
- Expectations of Vista support, and
- Expectations of distance study.

The results obtained in these themes will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Close scrutiny will reveal however, that the questionnaire design included most items, and also went beyond the features suggested by Rowntree (1992:40) namely: demographic factors, motivation, learning factors, subject background and resource factors.

4.5.2 THE SECOND STUDY (1994)

NOMOTHETIC RESEARCH ON AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN THE POSSESSION OF VISTA STUDENTS AT THE FURTHER TRAINING CAMPUS: A SURVEY.

From the initial quantitative research conducted, and in an ensuing departmental project to expand and improve the total study package which the students depended on to conduct their learning, it became evident that a follow-up study was required to determine if access to electronic aids had improved in any way, so that more media could be introduced. It was decided to research the technological infrastructure and student attitudes towards audio-visual support systems of two groups of first year students, with one set of results as a control for the other. The fact that it was again first year students, enabled the researcher to make certain comparisons with the previous research.

A questionnaire with a limited scope of fifteen questions (Annexure B) and computer response cards were used in this study on a research population of 1099 History students with the 804 Geography students responses employed as a control group. The response was smaller than that obtained in the first survey. In the survey group a response of 35% was achieved while the control group had a 29% response rate. Although this was lower than the 1991 research, it is still well above the 20% response rate normally expected from mail questionnaires in South Africa (HSRC 1998:8). A formal research report was again written and submitted to the University authorities.

As this questionnaire had a more focussed research area, the findings will be briefly discussed in this section. The results obtained indicated an overwhelming willingness by students (95%) to use audio-visual aids as optional components of their study packages. The radical change in electric supply, from 31% to 76%, not only indicated the rapid changes the country was, and is still undergoing, but also augers well for the more extensive introduction of electricity driven apparatus. Needless to say, it obviously also creates new opportunities for the application of audio-visual aids in counselling procedure. Students who did not have electric power indicated that battery operated equipment could be used (54%), and also particularly that they were willing to purchase audio-tape players, if not already part of their possessions. Computer-assisted-counselling was still not a viable option (survey group 5%, control group 2%), and until such time as fully equipped study centres are established throughout the rural districts, neither is teleconferencing. Students again expressed a strong desire (79%) for group contact sessions, providing interaction with fellow students, lecturers and counsellors.

4.5.3 THE THIRD STUDY (1998)

A NEW PROFILE OF VUDEC STUDENTS

To continue the longitudinal research and obtain updated and comparable data for this dissertation the researcher launched a new quantitative survey questionnaire in July 1998 (Annexure C). To support comparison the original questionnaire was used as a design basis.

Questions which caused problems in the first survey (such as questions 69 and 70) were either eliminated or reformulated. Questions which were linked to current circumstances (such as income scales) were updated, and the layout was improved. In terms of response, where the original survey required students to tick the squares on the questionnaire, which then had to be data-captured, students in the 1998 survey were provided with clear instructions on how to respond on a computer answer sheet, which was then fed into an optical reader for marking and computation. As the computer answer sheets could only accommodate 50 options, the third questionnaire was sub-divided into sections I and II.

To enhance correlation with the first study the researcher chose students enrolled for the same qualification programmes, rather than surveying all first-time students. As many additional qualification programmes had been added over the decade, the entire VUDEC student population comprised of more diverse study groups in 1998, and now includes degree students. By selecting students from the same programmes researched in 1989 the entire selected sample size of 3891 students also came closer to the original sample size of 4555 students of the 1989 study. For practical reasons a cutoff date for responses was given in 1998 and this was extended by a calendar month. A highly satisfying response rate of 42% was again achieved from anonymous responses without the possibility of any follow-up procedures. This percentage could have been increased by several percentage points if late submissions had been included in the sample.

The same nine sections were researched. The original process followed in the compilation of the questionnaire seems to have identified the essential components of the profile, which was one of the objectives of the study, as identified in section 1.2 of this dissertation. There are minor response variances on individual items in this third study, as respondents did not always answer all questions, and scores are based on individual item responses. A more detailed discussion of the findings will now be presented.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

A full statistical analysis of each individual item of the quantitative research is however, beyond the scope of this study. One should also not lose sight of the fact that the focus of the study is to recognise the student and his or her needs in their totality, and not to reduce the human factor to sterile statistics. As Leedy (1993:26) graphically states: "*But statistics cannot interpret those data and arrive at a logical conclusion as to their meaning.*" For this reason the results will be discussed within the nine themes. This seems to be in the spirit of the issues and goals identified in Chapter One.

4.6.1 Biographical detail

Fourteen issues were researched under this heading -

- Sex

Where the initial study identified almost equal numbers of males and females, the most recent study shows a shift of three females to one male (75:25) in the VUDEC community of teaching students .

- Course of study

After a decade and a half of upgrading at VUDEC it comes as no surprise that 65% of the sample were busy with their SED, while 23% were still working towards the certificate (SEC). The Home Economics students in both categories combined, represent 12% of the sample.

- Home Language

The students represent most of the indigenous languages in South Africa, with 88% identifying themselves with one of these and 12% indicated the two languages previously considered the official languages.

- Marital status

35% of the sample are single, while two-thirds are married (65%).

■ State of health

As a potential for success it is valuable to know that only 3% of the respondents indicated that they were in poor health.

■ Ethnic group

Sotho 24%, Zulu 13%, Tswana 13%, Xhosa 10%, Tsonga 4%, Swazi 4%, Ndebele 6%, Venda 3%, Namibian 8%, Other 15%. It is of particular interest that 27% of the respondents marked two categories, probably due to intergroup parentage.

■ Age

Five age bands were provided, and the indication is heavily in favour of mature students with 38% between 35 and 40 years old, while almost half (49%) are over 40 years old.

■ Number of children

Childless 6%, One 12%, Two 21%, Three 24%, More than three 37%. These results indicate the prevalence of large families in modern demographical terms.

■ Domestic community

It was evident from the data that most distance learners formed part of an extended family with which they had to share accommodation. Excluding the figures from a following item, 92% of the students shared accommodation with one (Spouse?) or more adults and several children.

■ Religious affiliation

This item was researched in the first study, at the specific request of the Department of Religious Studies, but was not repeated in the 1998 study.

■ Number of children living with you at home

This may seem a duplication of a previous item, but within the South African context is relevant, as there remains to some extent, a custom for children to be fostered by their grandparents. The two top categories have a higher figure than number of own children. This could suggest that in the large proportion of middle aged students, some may already be hosting grandchildren.

- Geographic location

This question may have been difficult to respond to as 12% of the students gave two responses, possibly indicating their present work location and alternatively indicating their traditional (tribal) home.

- Source of study funding.

As working adults 94% of the respondents paid for their own studies.

- Personal Income

The universal problem of student financial duress was indicated in that the average income was low (between R2 500 and R4 200 gross per month).

- Chosen method of payment

The fact that almost two-thirds (64%) of the third study's students would prefer to pay for their studies by instalment, can also be interpreted as an indication of financial pressures.

From these questions an attempt was made to obtain an impression of the counsellee as person. Although the counsellor will never lose sight of the student as an individual with individual needs, the research also identified broad characteristics of the distance learner as a body of people, which should contribute to the activities identified in a model for counselling these students.

These domestic conditions contain potential stressors which are not conducive to an effective learning environment. This may impact negatively on study outcomes and success, and suggests that particular counselling should be offered the student to cope with these circumstances. Examples of such particular counselling needs are :-

- ▶ Gender issues. With the majority of VUDEC students being female, cross-referencing with many of the other topics will indicate specifics, such as gender equity in materials development, domestic responsibilities of students, coping with study and pregnancy, and many more.

- ▶ The gradual progression to higher qualifications would indicate counselling in career-pathing and the need for motivation of students to continue with degree studies.
- ▶ With English as the language of learning, the counsellor will have to provide advice on coping by second and third language user students.
- ▶ Marital State. Many of the students are married and therefore, have to accommodate relationship issues in the competition of scarce time. The various categories of separated, divorced and widowed students imply that further personal counselling of trauma, loss and loneliness may be required.
- ▶ Although it may appear that very few students have health problems to cope with, cognisance should be taken of the very high incidence of Aids in South Africa.
- ▶ It is highly likely that students grappling with this problem will not disclose it. Specific counselling in recognising the importance of this, and issues of referral are implicit in such a situation.
- ▶ Questions about ethnic groupings may seem redundant in a new political environment, but debates by South African counsellors such as Bodibe (1996) and Naidoo(1996) clearly indicate the implications of cultural traditions in counselling procedure. The wide spread of backgrounds also implies competence in multicultural counselling.
- ▶ As indicated several times in this dissertation, the issue of maturity and an andragogical approach to educational counselling is reconfirmed by the results of this profile.
- ▶ Parenting and the problems that their children have to cope with in disadvantaged school communities, means that the VUDEC students will have to be given empathetic counselling in balancing these demands with their own academic responsibilities.
- ▶ Accepting that counselling implies a client and an institutional responsibility, the financial issues surrounding distance learners must be negotiated with the institution, while students may also require counselling in terms of financial management.

In section B of the questionnaire the educational background of the distance learner is explored.

4.6.2 Educational data

Under this theme responses to five questions were given-

- Final school qualification

More than three-quarters (78 % in 1998) of the research group had the minimum qualifications for access to tertiary education.

- Completion date of school qualification

Seventy seven percent of the respondents matriculated seven to seventeen years ago.

- Type of school attended

The larger majority (52 %) attended Government schools or even matriculated by correspondence (29 %), and another 16 % obtained their final school qualification through adult education centres.

- School performance

The bulk of VUDEC students (92 %) achieved low aggregates in the final examination. A D symbol was obtained by 22 % of the 1998 sample, and 41 % (the largest group) obtained an E symbol, while 29 % gained admission with the minimum pass symbol of F which corresponds with the results obtained in the profile study ten years ago.

- Influence of school performance on present studies

Both the 1989 and the 1998 studies also indicated that the VUDEC students (79 %) anticipated that their poor school results would have a great influence on their studies.

This natural response from the students can be supported by a previous study done in distance education in Norway in 1970 with 1417 students "The level of previous education was positively correlated with all the criteria measured, while the number of years since last school experience was negatively correlated..." (Rekkedal 1988:213) This perception is also borne out by Nora, Altinasi and Matonak (1990: 337) as they found a positive relationship between pre-college schooling results and retention rates in applying Tinto's Attrition Model. Moving away from a perception that individuals do not change, but situations do, the school of

developmental psychologists, of which Vincent Tinto is an adherent "explored the process by which students leave college..." (Earwaker 1992:25) and explains the relationship between school results and retention rates in terms of "the transition to student life, like most changes in life, has to be seen not just as a single event, but as an ongoing experience requiring a series of adjustments over time."

These findings again confirm the critical importance of information gleaned from a profile study of distance learners to the support nature of student counselling, as poor school results strongly indicate the danger of failure in their studies. As anticipated in the problem formulation of the questionnaire the results gave clear indications of educational disadvantage. The above data would then suggest student counselling focussing on:

- ▶ Inputs on the preparation of learning resources for students, and referring students to other support initiatives such as foundation courses and supplemental instruction.
- ▶ "Bantu education", as it was labelled, is notorious for the poor quality of schooling it provided. Scrutiny of the type of schools attended and the period in which the VUDEC students attended those schools, are indicative of that era, and is borne out by the resultant poor school performance reported on. The counselling of these students should also provide them with self esteem development, to prevent them from being discouraged by their own school backgrounds.
- ▶ As indicated in greater detail, student perceptions of the influence on their studies are accurate, and the volume of the problem would indicate group counselling for mutual encouragement and support.

While the relevance of school background has been substantiated, it is also necessary to investigate the professional training which the research sample, as teachers, received prior to enrolment at VUDEC.

4.6.3 Professional background

All of the research subjects were actively employed as teachers, and it was deemed necessary to obtain an employment profile which may also impinge on their study activities. In this section many issues were raised-

- Years of experience

The bulk of students had extensive teaching experience. In the most recent profile 52% of the respondents had more than fifteen years of teaching experience.

- Present qualification

The largest group (52%) had not completed a teaching qualification, and the second largest group (32%) only possessed a teaching certificate at primary school level.

- Date present qualification was awarded

Although so many students had more than fifteen years of teaching experience, it is interesting to note that 32% (almost a third) had obtained their previous qualification in the last three years. Also relevant to counselling is that another 32% of the respondents last studied more than ten years ago.

- Present teaching site

In the 1989 study 56% of students were teaching in rural areas without a town nearby. The current, 1998 study indicates a shift, in that 68% of the respondents work in the rural environment. As the upgrading needs of teachers are addressed, it is highly likely that VUDEC has reached deeper into these areas in recruiting students for their programmes.

- Size of school (scholar numbers)

There has been very little change in this item as 44% indicated employment in a medium sized school (500 - 1000 pupils) in 1989, as against 45% in the 1998 survey. The second largest cohort (33%) teach in schools with between 200 and 500 pupils.

■ Size of teaching staff

The ratio of teachers to pupils also seem to have remained reasonably constant in that 86% and 87% had between 5 and 34 colleagues at school. While this is a statistic, individual situations may fluctuate widely.

■ Colleagues as fellow students

Again, it would appear that 14% of the VUDEC students do not have fellow students as colleagues. Almost half (48%) do have one other Vista University student on the staff, although this person may not necessarily be enrolled for the same programme. It does however, provide potential for some study interaction. The remaining respondents (38%) have more than two colleagues as VUDEC students.

■ Type of school employed by

The profile indicated a mismatch regarding level of teaching (mainly primary level) and level of studies (secondary) with 64% of the respondents teaching at primary schools while they are all enrolled for secondary school certificates and diplomas.

■ Present teacher status

This response should be read in conjunction with the previous one, as has already been indicated. It is noteworthy that 11% of the teachers at supervisory level ie Heads of Departments, Deputies and Principals are still in the process of obtaining a Teachers Diploma. Once again, this is most likely linked to the less popular rural appointments.

■ Institutional character

The bulk (74%) of the responds are employed in government schools. Within the current context of occupational uncertainty in this sector, this would indicate a serious counselling need.

■ Student unrest

The responses indicate that 27% of the VUDEC students who responded to the 1998 questionnaire had to deal with student unrest between 1993 and 1997. Such unrest not only disrupts their activities as teachers, but must necessarily also place a heavy emotional burden on their study activities.

- Extra-curricular activities

Only 12% of the respondents indicated that they were not involved with extra-curricular activities at school. The relevance of this item to studies lies in a loss of time and energy to these activities.

Study facilities available at school

In the last year of the twentieth century one would assume that most schools possess modern facilities and technologies. The survey proves differently.

- School library

Even if it is accepted that school libraries are aimed primarily at the needs of pupils, one would hope that this could be a support facility for teachers who are also still studying. It is evident that rural communities do not enjoy the luxury of a library, as 83% of the 1998 respondents indicated that they did not have a school library.

- Radio broadcast reception

The 78% negative response received, in contrast to the high ratio of possession of radios at home, can be interpreted that traditional teaching does not recognize the potential of this teaching aid at schools.

- Audio tape recorder

The same argument is valid with regard to audio tape-recorders, as 81% did not have access to such a device. One should recall that the majority of audio tape instruments today are battery driven and thus, do not require access to electricity.

- Television reception

With an 87% negative response, even fewer television facilities are available at school.

- Video cassette recorder

Without a television monitor a VCR would be of little use, and 88% responded negatively to the school's possession of a VCR.

- Computer (PC)

Out of a total of 1652 responses to this question only 130 respondents (8%) indicated a computer facility at school. Although a significant increase from the 1989 study when

only one computer was indicated, it remains a grave concern that in an age of technological massification, very little of this had reached schools in the VUDEC communities.

■ Non-availability of technology

Congruent with a summary of the above findings, 63% of the respondents indicated that their school did not provide any of these facilities.

The last issue regarding the professional background was an attitudinal question.

■ Professional Ability.

Of the sample group 35% were confident of their teaching abilities, in spite of minimal qualifications and difficult circumstances, such as rural sites, large classes, heavy workloads, and few technological aids at school for teaching or studying. A further 40% indicated that they were teaching subjects they were trained to teach.

The circumstances described again present a legion of situations which impact negatively on the distance learner and for which (s)he would require student support from the institution as well as personal counselling.

- ▶ Counsellors can contribute to their institutions adopting of a policy on recognition of prior learning, particularly where students have already functioned in a specific profession for fifteen years or more. Members of faculty should also be informed, so that existing skills and knowledge can be incorporated into the teaching/learning interaction.
- ▶ As so many respondents are underqualified, the counsellor can focus on strategies to optimize their potential for successful study outcomes.
- ▶ While some students have recent study experience, it is highly likely that they would require more sophisticated skills for the higher level courses. In the instance of students enrolled who had not studied in ten years or more, andragogical literature suggest that they probably have a fear of failure, and require substantive, but unintrusive counselling.

- ▶ Counselling students in the deep rural areas is a real challenge. The identification and training of peers as counselling assistants may partially address this situation.
- ▶ As it is evident that the majority of respondents do have colleagues as students, constructive advice and counselling on study group formation should be provided.
- ▶ Read in conjunction to the responses to question 21 of the second section, it is evident that many students aspire to subject specific, secondary school teaching positions. This would be a major adjustment and personal counselling in making the transition will be very beneficial.
- ▶ In counselling people in supervisory positions, particular attention will have to be given to the development of interpersonal communication levels and managerial skills.
- ▶ The current situation in education in South Africa is unstable. Teachers are accused of not fostering a culture of learning, and news media constantly focus on the threat of retrenchment. This indicates that these students can benefit greatly from personal counselling.
- ▶ Teachers who are often intimidated (even physically attacked or murdered) by pupils should be counselled in coping with trauma, conflict resolution and negotiation skills.
- ▶ Distance learners not only have to cope with the demands of employment but generally experience that they have insufficient time available to studies. Providing counselling in effective time management can alleviate this problem.
- ▶ Counselling distance learners without access to modern technology place extreme constraints on counselling options and require creative approaches from the counsellor.

Although a large part of a person's waking hours are spent in employment, it is of more importance to consider the personal circumstances of distance learners, as this has a primary impact on their study activities, which they have to attend to after working hours.

4.6.4 Personal circumstances

Of even greater importance was the focus on those factors which would affect the humanity, and thereby the academic endeavour, of the student. This is also confirmed by Selikow (1998:5) who reported on a Regional Access Programme of student support on behalf of the esATI consortium of eight institutions of higher education in South Africa, when she said:

There is an increasing awareness that many distance learners experience problems of a non-academic nature. Many learners are faced with problems relating to studying and family and work commitments. Students who have not studied for a number of years may lack confidence. A further reality faced by many learners in South Africa is lack of resources and inadequate living and studying conditions.

It was deemed of the utmost importance to research eight individual circumstantial issues-

- Accommodation

It comes as no surprise that experts say "A very important aspect of all forms of distance education has been the importance of the home as the primary site for students' learning" (Evans and Nation 1996:168). Teachers as a professional corps, are mainly accommodated in houses (73%), but when this is correlated with the items indicating fellow home dwellers and available study space, it paints a less rosy picture. Although only 5% of the respondents indicated that they were accommodated in temporary structures (squatter camp type shacks), if this percentage is projected to the total 1998 VUDEC enrolment, it could suggest that as many as 541 VUDEC students do distance learning in the worst possible circumstances, which would indicate generous student support and empathy.

- Domestic power supply

While in a decade there was an improvement from 41% to 67% in domestic electricity supply it was disturbing that this survey indicated that approximately one in every four

VUDEC students (24%) are still forced to study by candle light, which must have a restraining influence on effective night study. This represents a noticeable drop from 76% in the 1994 survey which emanates from the fact that more students in the 1998 sample were located in the deep rural areas, compared to the 1994 sample.

■ Domestic water supply

Likewise, the need to collect water in containers which is still the plight of 61% of the students, is time and energy consuming, leaving the student with less of these precious resources to devote to studies.

■ Postal service facilities and mail frequency

Both studies indicated that postal and mailing services are not a major constraint for VUDEC students.

■ Receipt of postal items

Evaluations of the provider's postal inputs indicated that 51% found it satisfactory and 20% found it very good, while 29% said it was not to their satisfaction.

■ Daily travelling time

It can safely be assumed that most teachers live relatively close to their place of employment, as the time spent on travelling is comparable with modern urban trends. In the 1998 survey 38% spent between fifteen and thirty minutes per day on travel, and a further 21% spent less than that on travelling. A much smaller group (15%) spent more than one hour per day on travelling to work.

■ Mode of transport

In conjunction with the above and given the fact that so many students teach in rural areas and small towns, it comes as no surprise that 40% indicated that they walked to work. Considered from the individual perspective this would again suggest an energy sapping deterrent. Taxi transport has been labelled as the primary source of transport in South Africa, and 33% of students use this mode of transport.

Personalising these issues again indicate that counselling content cannot be restricted to the purely cognitive activities but have to include daily practicalities, which would in turn directly influence study activities such as reading and writing.

Some counselling possibilities are:

- ▶ Study counselling on how to study and do assignments effectively in a crowded situation, or worse, how to compensate for the restrictions of temporary dwellings.
- ▶ As one in four students still study by candle light, printed study materials should use a large enough font to ease the situation, and lecturers should also take this into consideration in the marking of assignments.
- ▶ Cross referencing the fetching of water (traditionally a woman's job) with the predominantly female student population a counsellor should try and be innovative in suggesting reflection, discussion and repetition study activities to students while carrying water.
- ▶ In general it can be assumed that counselling on the practicalities of postal delays and transport issues will be of an infrequent individual nature.

Accepting the powerful impact of perceptions, it was deemed necessary also to explore the expectations and impressions of the students, as is reflected in the next section.

4.6.5 Student expectations and impressions

It was the intention from the outset of the research not only to concentrate on the physical resources of the student, but also to attempt to plunge the depth of feelings and attitudes which have a major motivational impact on academic activity. In the survey ten questions were set to test this aspect-

■ Pre-registration information dissemination

Student impressions on the receipt of information and administrative handling of their enrolment, which as a first impression can impact on academic progress, generally proved to be moderately positive. More than half (54%) indicated that they had received all the relevant information prior to registration.

■ Primary source of information

It is evident that respondents relied heavily on friends (37%) and colleagues (37%) to obtain information prior to registration. As these sources do not necessarily have access to updated information this is a clear appeal for the implementation of strategies for the professional counselling of the distance learner in his academic activities from the very beginning. This is likely to influence student retention and student success rates. The responses indicated the distance learners' lack of counsellor contact, which only accounted for 3%.

■ Study motivation

Attitudinal issues seem to be healthy, as 75% of the respondents indicated that they had enrolled for reasons of personal improvement, while 9% were honest enough to admit that they were driven by external motivators.

■ Choice of institution

The only two significant responses were the 26% who indicated that they would have preferred to study at a Vista University contact campus while 67% indicated VUDEC as their first choice.

■ Efficiency of registration

This again seems to be a minor issue as 50% felt that their registration was handled well and a further 41% that it was satisfactory. The additional support from a counsellor would further promote this positive perception.

■ Receipt of study material

Although identified ten years ago and recommendations made for improvement then, it is of concern that more than half (54%) of the students still received their study materials too late to submit the first assignment in 1998. This result is also substantiated by an independent study done at VUDEC by Gordon and van der Walt (1998:3).

■ First impressions

A reasonably even distribution is demonstrated ranging from excellent (30%) to not as good as expected (15%), but in general the first impressions were favourable.

■ Suitability of registration date

Assuming that students have become accustomed to the present system, 55% voted for retention of the present registration dates. A third (34%) indicated that they would prefer registration as soon as their previous results become available. Moving to a flexible registration system would allow individuals to enrol when it is most convenient for them.

■ Examination scheduling

Bearing in mind that the research group are practicing teachers, the large majority of 78% still prefers to write their summative evaluation in October, as this fits school scheduling activities.

■ Length of the academic year

Lastly, perceptions about the length of the current academic year were generally positive (61%), and therefore, not of major concern to the institution or its support services.

The above topics relate predominantly to administrative support, and the students' perceptions of these services, and do not constitute a major area of concern. The counsellor's input in this regard would therefore probably focus on his institutional work, as was identified in 2.4.3:

- ▶ Briefing of administrative staff on student registration sensitivity.
- ▶ Pre-registration counselling of prospective students.
- ▶ Negotiating effective learning resource distribution by the institution.
- ▶ Playing an advocacy role in encouraging a more flexible philosophy to issues relating to student administration.

The next section researched student enrolments for specific programmes, and the relevance of their studies to their present teaching responsibility.

4.6.6 Study Factors

Five questions were set which linked the student's choice of courses to influences which directly impact on it -

■ Discrepancy between study and teaching subjects

A ranking was done of the programmes students had enrolled for, and the programmes these same individuals actually had to teach in their current positions. This then enables a comparison which highlights a mismatch between the two categories.

Ranking table according to responses, of subjects enrolled for, and subjects being taught

RANK	SUBJECT STUDIED	RANK	SUBJECT TAUGHT
1	Religious studies	1	English
2	Education (compulsory)	2	Mathematics
3	Biology	3	African languages
4	Geography	4	Religious studies
5	English	5	Geography
.....			
6	Agricultural science	6	Biology
7	History	7	Afrikaans
8	Nutrition	8	History
9	Afrikaans	9	Agricultural science
10	Business management	10	Business management
.....			
11	Applied science	11	Nutrition
12	African languages	12	Education (<i>Incorrect response</i>)
13	Clothing technology	13	Clothing technology
14	Food	14	Accounting
15	Economics	15	Applied science
.....			
16	Mathematics	16	Physical science
17	Accounting	17	Food
18	Home management	18	Economics
19	Physical science	19	Home management

Two interesting facts emerge from this comparison. In the first quartile Mathematics holds second rank in teaching subjects while it has the sixteenth rank in subjects studied. In the third quartile respondents listed education as a teaching subject. This is however, an instrument error, as Education is not taught at primary or secondary school as a school subject.

- External influences in subject choice

In analysing these results, it should be kept in mind that students cannot enrol for single subjects, but are compelled to enrol for subject groups. This administrative arrangement is of course, in conflict with current thinking on open learning. Secondly, as has been indicated before, many of these respondents are primary school teachers enrolled for secondary school qualifications which would distort these results.

- Anticipated negative influences on studies

As mature students 45% were realistic about the existence of negative influences but believed they could cope with this. The second largest response group (38%) felt that they did not have any negative influences on their studies.

- Applicability of studies

In question 21 where students had to disclose their reasons for enrolling for certain subjects, seventeen percent naively responded that they had chosen these subjects simply to achieve a higher qualification. It would appear that most of the students were not particularly concerned about the fact that they were studying subjects they are not teaching, as many hoped to do so in future (37%) and chose their courses themselves (49%).

- Quality of study material

In terms of the quality of study material the research indicated the wider scope of student support, in that their perceptions could be explored and directed towards a positive attitude while the producers of study materials could also be given feedback in the hope of upgrading this resource. The response of 39%, finding the study material only satisfactory would suggest this point of view.

The dual nature of counselling, and the undisputed value of a profile again presents itself in this section. Question 19 once again indicated their present low reliance (2%) on advice from a student counsellor. This undoubtedly has a major impact on the discrepancies disclosed.

Apparent counselling issues:

- ▶ Pre-enrolment counselling to create greater synchronicity between programmes chosen, and programmes relevant to the execution of their duties.
- ▶ Pro-active marketing of counselling services at all registration centres to prospective students.
- ▶ Participation of student counsellors in material design teams, to represent student perceptions and also to encourage text embedded counselling.

The successful completion of studies at tertiary level has at its core the ability to accumulate knowledge, skills and attitudes. This ability depends to a very large extent on the study methods learners employ, and on the direct circumstances which enhance or diminish this activity. The next sections attempts to focus on some of these issues.

4.6.7 Study circumstances

As the study circumstances could affect the ability of the students in the execution of the total of their life roles, including that of being a student, it was considered essential to explore circumstances and attitudes which would directly impact on the study activities of the individual and the responses to eleven questions were analysed -

- **Anticipated study method problems**

As teachers themselves, the students did not anticipate having severe problems with their study methods. While 45% indicated that they did not expect to have problems, a further 40% only anticipated minor problems.

■ Ease of home study

The outer parameters of 'practically impossible' and 'excellent' represented a marginal number of responses while circumstances ranging from fairly difficult to good were responded on in reasonably even proportions.

■ Domestic study area

This item again stressed the situatedness of VUDEC distance learners, where only 18% had the use of a study at home, probably more representative of the urban student sector. The diningroom and kitchen, usually a communal gathering space, was indicated for study by 34% of students. The bedroom, most likely without a suitable desk, was the study space for a further 28% of students. A smaller group of 16% were fortunate enough to attend to their studies somewhere in the school building.

Study facilities available at home

■ Study aids at home

On the whole, few students possessed electronic media at home to enhance their distance learning. The enclosed Diagramme reflects possession of domestic audio-visual study aids over the entire period of the longitudinal study. While possession of radios are high, the UNISA experience indicated that this was an expensive option, coupled with the problem that broadcast times and student available access times do not always correspond. The other technological aids are still, on the threshold of the new millenium, only available to limited numbers of students.

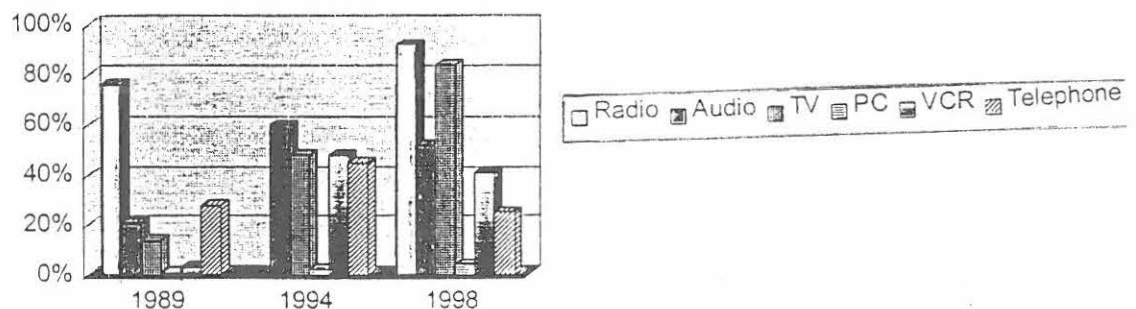


Figure 3 Technological study aids available at home

Analysis of the Diagramme provides the following information. The graph represents home technology as reported on in all three studies. The 1994 study did not explore possession of a radio at home, and therefore has one bar less than the other two studies. First of all the possession of radios reflects upwards over the decade. The fact that there seems to be a drop in audio tape equipment from 1994 to 1998 is probably due to the higher percentage of rural students in the most recent survey. As the SABC continuously extend their television broadcast networks, there has also been a marked increase in the possession of television equipment to 84% in 1998.

It is visually evident in the Diagramme that possession of home computers are still very low (4%). The validity of this finding is supported by HSRC research, as reported by Howie and Hughes (1998:20): "In South Africa 92% of students indicated that they did not have a computer at home." It is hoped that initiatives to establish computer cafes and community computer centres will rapidly gain momentum, to overcome this disadvantage.

Video recording equipment for use of video instruction has leapt from 2.5% in 1989 to 41% in 1998. The fact that both VCR and telephone equipment possession at home is lower in 1998 than in 1994, is probably also due to geographic distribution patterns.

- Achievement objectives

Emotionally the students reacted positively in terms of objective setting, as 81% of the 1998 respondents indicated that they felt it to be very important to do better than a pass mark.

- Utilization of study skills

Utilization of study strategies which involved approaches of deep learning as well as rote learning were indicated.

- Teleconferencing

Teleconferencing is not indicated as a potential option, as 70% of the students responded negatively to it. Only a quarter (25%) felt it would be possible.

■ Learning centre tutoring

Vista University has established 33 Student Learning Centres, but indications are that only approximately 20% of registered VUDEC students make use of these tutoring opportunities. This is validated by the questionnaire responses in which only 22% of the respondents indicated that they were near enough one of the centres to make feasible use of it. Half the students believed that these centres possessed the potential for study groups and the other half responded negatively to this possibility.

■ Available study time

Study time is also insufficient: only 30% of the respondents anticipated spending more than 10 hours per week in studying three or four subjects. This is totally inadequate as Hulsmann (1999:80) says: "In the case of print we need to make an assumption about the length of time the average student will spend on printed text of a given length. Following the practice of a number of distance-teaching institutions, we have taken fifty pages of print as providing ten to fifteen students learning hours (SLH)." In the 1998 study 29% of the students studied 5 hours or less per week, while a further 41% spent between 5 to 10 hours per week on studies.

■ Expectations regarding studies

A positive attitude was evident in question 40/2 where 83% of the respondents anticipated that their studies would be interesting and exciting.

■ Study fears

There was a more even spread of study related fears ranging from examination fear to fear for individualised study and study scheduling. Feasley (1983:35) articulated these fears by saying "More than campus-based students, some distance learners lack confidence in their abilities to cope with college."

Once again, the results obtained indicated a very strong hands-on student counselling approach directed more at coping with, and overcoming physical restraints rather than motivational shortcomings:

- ▶ The issue of counselling on study methods can be dealt with in print form as it is evidently not a major issue.

- ▶ Disruption of concentration in the limited study environment at home will have to receive attention. One possibility is to recommend to students that they rise one hour ahead of the family, which should provide them with space and silence.
- ▶ Counselling mode will obviously still depend on face-to-face visits to the counsellor on campus, and on telephonic and epistolary media. The use of modern technology, including teleconferencing is not a viable proposition at the present time.
- ▶ Tutors at the learning centres can be utilized for counselling, if suitable training is provided. "...if we think of tutoring as a kind of counselling we shall expect the skilled tutor to be a good listener who allows the student to talk freely without interruption, and who can elicit from the student with a minimum of prompts whatever it is that the student wants to say" (Earwaker 1992:56).
- ▶ Staffing of counselling services, and alternatively the mobility of the student counsellor to pay scheduled visits to the Student Learning Centres, would assist practitioner and client to interact more frequently.
- ▶ Due to the severe time constraints of students, they should be counselled to carry short programme summaries with them, to utilize in very short timeslots, such as midmorning breaks, or while waiting for an extramural activity to commence.
- ▶ As 29% of the respondents registered examination fear, this issue should be specifically attended to by the counsellor of distance learners.

The question may arise as to what forms of support the students anticipate from the institution. This is reported on in the next section.

4.6.8 Expectations of Vista support

Hodgson (1993:116) defines support as follows: "Support in open and distance learning systems usually refers to the help learners receive in addition to the learning materials."

As first-time students are far removed from the mother institution it was deemed necessary to establish their expectations in terms of assistance and staff approachability.

■ Assistance from lecturers

Students indicated their expectations that lecturers will understand that the students need assistance. While 64% felt that this would always be the case a further 32% (which combined with the 64%, accounts for almost the entire response sample) believed that lecturers would only take this into consideration sometimes.

■ Provision of student counselling

This survey exercise was also very valuable in that the previous observation was supported that the distance learner identified very poorly with a student counsellor. Although referring to tutor counsellors, the following quote by Lewis (1995:245) seems equally valid regarding student perceptions of professional counselling services in the distance learning environment: "But these seem not to be used as frequently as might be expected, or valued particularly highly by students, who may need more encouragement than is usually given in realising the benefits of ...support." The bigger component (45%) of students expected advice and counselling from their lecturers, while student counsellors were the second rank at 22%, closely followed by tutors who were considered by 18% as a source of counselling. This directs an appeal to the student support services to announce its presence far more visibly and to market the services it can render to the benefit of the student body, far more actively.

■ Assistance from administrative staff

More than half (55%) of the respondents also indicated that they had found the administrative staff co-operative.

■ Mode of counselling

In terms of the method of counselling communication 34% expected to be counselled by letter, and 31% hoped to receive telephone counselling while only 20% anticipated face-to-face counselling at the VUDEC offices in Pretoria. In terms of the form of counselling delivery, it would also be wise to reflect on the possession of technology by students, as discussed in the previous section, and the warning issued by Tait (1995:236):

"Both London, UK and Soweto, South Africa, have high populations densely accommodated, but again different access to technological infrastructure will demand different solutions. Economic and social factors provide further related diversity."

What counselling practices can be deduced from the above information?

- ▶ All distance learning facilitators should understand and expect to cope with basic counselling provision. Close collaboration between them and the professional student counsellors can promote this service.
- ▶ Student counsellors must be visible and audible to the student in a remote area. This would require a very active service marketing strategy.
- ▶ As reported earlier, the more conventional counselling media still enjoys prominence. Student counsellors should therefore, not only be proficient in counselling, but will have to possess outstanding communication skills.

In the last section of the questionnaire the researcher tried to plumb how realistic distance learners were about their study at a distance.

4.6.9 Expectations of distance study

The students subjected to this research had received their initial teacher training, a precondition for upgrading at VUDEC, in a contact situation. It was of vital importance to establish their limited experience and expectations of distance learning in the last research items-

- Familiarity with distance learning

An analysis of the results clearly indicated that the students were not *au fait* with the unique nature of distance learning as 29% responded that they found distance learning much the same as in the contact situation while a further 40% thought it was only slightly different .

■ Language competency in English

Contrary to feedback from the academic staff, students were over-confident of their competency in English and coping with it as medium of instruction, indicated by 44 % who felt their English was good and a further 42 % who believed it was satisfactory. A glance at the verbatim responses in the next section provides examples of student language competency.

■ Expectations of scheduled contact sessions

Having progressed halfway through the first academic year the students were however, painfully aware of their isolation and 92 % expressed the intention of attending some or all of the scheduled contact sessions (winter school). This is a vital factor in the design of a counselling model for distance learners and will be further extrapolated in the next chapter.

■ General contact frequency

Just more than half the students (51 %) expected to have regular contact with their lecturers, and a further 43 % felt it would happen occasionally.

In this last section it is apparent that the counselling services will have an active role to play:

- ▶ Counsellors must be available at registration venues to counsel first-time distance learners on the specific situations and problems they will face.
- ▶ Counsellors should support initiatives to make a 'Practical English' programme compulsory and credit-bearing for all distance learning programmes.
- ▶ Counsellors should accompany members of faculty on midyear contact sessions to attend to problems presented to them by students.

The last question of the questionnaire invited students to make individual responses. This is reflected in the next section.

4.6.10 Individual responses attached to the questionnaires.

Although the profile study was designed as a quantitative research instrument, an attempt was made to accommodate individual inputs by including an open ended invitation as the last question:

"Do you wish to mention anything not included in these questionnaires? - include a separate letter in the envelope."

This is an attempt in part, to heed the warning "As a result of this profiling process, limitations have been imposed which ignore important variables such as individual learner characteristics" (Threlkeld and Brzoska 1994:49).

The Yes responses to this question elicited a 27% positive answer, suggesting an intended 412 individualised responses. Physically only 270 letters were received. These were carefully analysed and categorized, and varied from single line comments to two page letters. In a few isolated cases the students used the opportunity to address specific administrative problems, such as changing courses. These were discarded, not being relevant to this study. Other students wished to change a response marked on the computer answer sheet. Due to the anonymity of the research, it wasn't possible to make these adjustments on the computer answer sheets. A possible explanation for fluctuations in the item response rates became evident from several letters where students explained that they had made mistakes on the computer answer sheets and destroyed them.

A wide range of issues were raised in the individual letters. Many referred to a specific question, and either indicated why a particular response was supported or rejected. Issues raised by one individual alone is generally ignored, with a few exceptions where the researcher felt the topic addressed warranted recognition.

Due to the reassurance on anonymity in the questionnaire, most letter writers did not identify themselves and unedited, verbatim quotes in this section can therefore, not be linked to a name. The letters are however, kept on file for scrutiny by any reader. Many letters also discussed five or more issues, each of which was recorded.

There were a number of issues which had a high occurrence, such as :

Letters referring to the questionnaire

As a return date was indicated many students apologised for late returns. The main reason quoted was problems with postal services. Others apologised for mistakes on the questionnaire and a few suggestions for additions or clarification were made.

Several letters of appreciation such as the following were also received:

Thank you for sending me questionnaires. This means you care for us. And It was an experience to go through the questionnaires as it provided me with an opportunity to realise that you would definitely want to improve on the mistakes that you could be making, and to can get to know the problems that we as students are accounting.

These statements seem to support the findings at Birmingham University, as reported by Bell (1996:158) when she says "The active intervention of the counselling service, in the form of the questionnaire, allowed them to marshal their personal resources enough for them to be able to ask for help."

More centres where contact sessions (winter school) are held.

It can safely be assumed that students are unaware of the enormous costs and logistical problems relating to the arrangements surrounding lecturers' annual contact sessions with students, but from the student perspective, the long distances they are required to travel, their problems with accommodation at pre-selected venues and the costs they incur are very real. This is stressed by a student who wrote *I, on behalf of other students will be very, very happy if this will be looked at to reduce travelling costs and accommodation expenses.*

Compulsory subject groupings at VUDEC

The dissonance between subjects enrolled for and being taught is exacerbated by VUDEC's rigid system of subject groupings and further by the academic ruling that all subjects at the first level must be passed before a student is allowed to continue with the next level. This creates a loss of precious time for the adult learner, incurs unnecessary additional expenses and is out of touch with current thinking on flexible and open learning. Succinctly put in one letter *Please do not take us like full time students.*

Late receipt of study resources.

This was another major concern of students who went to the trouble of attaching a separate letter, such as *We are having a problem here in the rural areas. You receive manuals late, you are an employee, due dates are at the door, you don't have enough time to study and understand, there are no fellow students to discuss, you are just fumbling alone. My plea is this, send the materials as early as February, not later than 5 February.* In discussions with administration, another side of the coin becomes apparent. Due to financial constraints, many students delay registration to the last minute and this automatically causes a delay in the dispatch of materials.

Unfortunately this stalemate does not ease the plight of the lonely learner. Sufficient student support and student advice may be a partial solution. Another related issue is the inability of the rural students to obtain the prescribed textbooks in time (or at all) for assignments.

Delayed return of marked assignments.

Apparently a policy is in place at VUDEC for assignments to be returned within three weeks of the due date, but this policy is not adhered to by all academic staff. Students rely heavily on these marks, the included feedback and the attached memoranda to establish if they are on track with their studies, and also in preparing for the summative assessment at the end of the year.

One of the many students wrote *First of all I am worried about my assignments which have not yet arrived (mid-August) to me from the university. By receiving assignments timeously, it motivates and you can determine the method you use when studying if is correct or not.* The importance of this issue is borne out by Threlkeld and Brzoska (1994:55) "Distance educators who realize the importance of 'turn-around time' on assignments are making use of the technology to expedite the process."

Recognition of assignment marks in final assessment.

Many of the respondents felt that VUDEC was not in line with other distance learning providers in that a large amount of time and energy went into the writing of assignments, but that no credit, other than access to the final examination, was given for this. One urgent plea reads *I wonder if a certain percentage of assignments could be considered during the final mark, even if its 10% it would be much.* Although this is a policy matter, it would appear that this may be an example of one of the issues which a student counsellor can take up with management on behalf of the students, as is suggested by Professor Gous in his interview, reported on in the next section.

Requests for counselling services.

At the core of this dissertation is the call for recognition of the situatedness of individual students in open and distance learning. Several long letters were received, graphically describing the negative circumstances under which students are required to study, often without any visible means of counselling. Instances are cited of exposure to taxi violence, of pregnancy and motherhood's disruptive effect on study, of threats of teacher retrenchments and loss of earnings and of township violence (*we are forced to off light the houses as early as we can to avoid the shooters to see our presence*) and the violent death of members of the family, and how this destroys the very fibre of cognitive activity. A few brief examples of requests for counselling which were received -

- ▶ *Your questionnaires were so motivating, helpful and straightforward. If (only) VUDEC could introduce more centres for its student counselling.*
- ▶ *I would like to make this submission...about my expectations on receiving a sort of orientation and guidance on the choice of subjects.*
- ▶ *So then I need advice as well as counselling what to do, as I fear that the experience I have got from you will deteriorate afterwards.*
- ▶ *We do most of the studies on our own and need continuous guidance.*
- ▶ *Many a times we experience family problem that unables us to cope with study.*
- ▶ *What about students who repeat one subject more than three times. Couldn't they be given advices on moral support/guided/intervenece by student counsellor?*

Individual suggestions that warrant consideration.

- A suggestion that student counsellors be available at the examination centres at the end of the year.
- Assistance to students in coping with personal trauma, such as illness, miscarriage and loss of employment.
- Coping with domestic, financial, teaching and age demands.
- Counselling in overcoming a severely disadvantaged childhood.
- Introduction of a toll-free counselling line

In concluding this section, it should also be mentioned that a very high percentage of the letters received made mention of stress and depression suffered by students because of high workloads, overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate working circumstances and the disruption their studies create in their other life roles.

4.7 IDEOGRAPHIC RESEARCH INTERVIEWS WITH DISTANCE LEARNING SPECIALISTS

To obtain a balanced view of the essential nature of counselling, it is not sufficient to establish the needs of the students. There are also educational insights which have a vital impact on the questions which surround such an investigation. To obtain a qualitative input in the research the researcher focussed on two academics who are acknowledged specialists in the areas of distance learning and counselling and conducted personal interviews with them.

4.7.1 Interview with Professor H.Gous

(For full text see Annexure D)

It was evident from the interview that counselling distance learners was seen to be very important but that this view was often not held by academics and authorities.

Professor Gous definitely saw the student at the core of any approach to counselling. He warned against stereotypes that could evolve from general profiles, although he acknowledged that it could provide valid counselling content. He was in favour of utilizing modern counselling instruments to assist the students in forming clear impressions of their attributes. A need for the development of such local, valid instruments was also identified.

He was of the opinion that any general courses in study skills and academic development should be credit-bearing, perhaps as a module or component of an academic discipline. The possibility of embedding some counselling in the tuition was touched on and the view was expressed that a member of faculty who failed to develop the academic skills of his students, had failed as an academic. These skills should become transferable to other cognitive activities.

An interesting view to counselling content was the contention that a particular institution and a particular course presents a particular culture which impacts on the counselling process and content. He therefore, supports a custom built counselling model for each institution. In the opinion of the researcher, this provides further justification for obtaining a student profile.

Professor Gous was of the opinion that counselling services still had a long way to go, and that this could be due to a lack of facilities and of support from the broader institution.

In terms of specific content he focussed on the distance learner and time management. He also firmly believed that student counselling has a major contribution to make to an institution's curriculum activities. It is interesting to note that this view is also supported by Bell (1996:47): "The area of institutional work is one of the most defining characteristics of the role of student counsellors."

The counselling process should commence during the admission period of a new student and members of faculty should be made aware of the vital support which a student can obtain from a counsellor.

Lastly, it was felt that any form of quality assessment of counselling should be conducted by an assessor who is cognisant of counselling needs, procedures and content.

4.7.2 Interview with Professor L. Calitz

(For full text see Annexure E)

Professor Calitz described the plight of the *lonely* learner removed from campus, from the teacher, from books and from people and materials. He acknowledged recent advances in technology available to the distance learner but believed that this would only be successfully employed, if the student received proper and timeous counselling in the use thereof.

He believed that counselling is essential for the distance learner but in a new perspective also contends that the lecturers of distance learners should be informed of the counselling, to make them aware of the unique problems with which these students struggle.

Professor Calitz believed that the distance learner is in greater need of accompaniment in terms of study skills, learning and the teaching he receives than his/her counterpart at residential universities.

As counselling content the interviewee identified self-study skills, attitudinal counselling, correct use of study aids and media and effective contact with human support systems. As a second main content component coping with study guides, tutorial letters, assignments and evaluation, were identified.

In terms of counselling procedure for distance learning, Professor Calitz believed that this can be conducted by means of print, through contact counselling and with the aid of electronic communication media.

The research done on the domestic situation of the distance learner was felt to be of high importance. This correlated with research he had done in the Transkei. The quality of the study material had a major impact on the amount of contact a student required. It was also vitally important to consider the work situation of students and Professor Calitz believed that decentralized group contact was a promising solution.

In concluding, he considered that the prospective student should be well briefed at the beginning of his course on the lonely path he is about to embark on. He also felt that counselling should occur on a regular basis, particularly before and after the submission of assignments and that modern technology could be used optimally to effect this. Lastly, he supported an approach of summative student evaluation of the entire distance learning situation but also with feedback on counselling, so that this could be used to upgrade the counselling content and procedure.

4.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter an attempt is made to provide the counsellor with a clear frame of reference regarding his students. By detailing some of the findings of a longitudinal study on student profiles by means of questionnaires, a database is established which answers to the research criteria of validity, relatedness and rule compliance. It is evident that there is a clear cohesion between the various topics researched in the profile studies, and that the research was conducted within the required scientific prescriptions. Augmented by individual inputs from students and ideographic research interviews a firm basis has been created to inform counselling content and process.

In the fifth chapter it will be argued that a dynamic, metabolic model for counselling open and distance learners is required. Other existing models will be considered before attempting to construct an integrated counselling model for VUDEC. Proposals will also be made to maintain, refine and sustain this vital activity in providing democratic education to students.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COMPONENTS, STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF A DISTANCE EDUCATION COUNSELLING MODEL.

5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

From the data in the preceding chapter it became clear that the creation of a model for the counselling of distance learning students is a very complex one. It was suggested that a firm basis for creating a counselling model in distance education is research on the needs and conditions of the learners.

In this chapter the concept of a counselling model will first be discussed. Known models will be examined. The opinions of specialists in distance and open learning will be added to this. In order to create a new model it is further necessary to try and identify the limitations and shortcomings of current counselling models. By integrating all the data collected, an attempt will be made to identify common factors for counselling distance and open learners in tertiary education.

5.2 PROPOSING A NEW MODEL FOR THE COUNSELLING OF DISTANCE LEARNERS

In proposing the creation of a model it is necessary to understand clearly what is meant by a model. Verma and Beard (In: Landman 1988:71) describe it as follows:

This term indicates a close representation of certain aspects of complex phenomena designed by using symbols which in some way resemble phenomena. A model is essentially an analogy which is useful in helping the researcher to think about phenomena.



From the literature and the research it is evident that we are dealing with a complex phenomenon, and the reason for using a model is to assist the researcher in combining the components of a new approach to student counselling in open and distance learning.

By the very nature of student counselling it is accepted that there are certain common elements which must be accommodated in a model. At the same time the argument of this dissertation made it clear that distance learners also have additional unique counselling needs and circumstances. Many of these unique elements were disclosed as a result of research on a profile of the students, as reported in a previous chapter.

A situation which is set to become more of the norm in South Africa is that more institutions are bound to offer distance learning or mixed-mode models following the initiative of the government which they expressed in the White Paper on Higher Education Transformation: "...higher education has to be internally restructured to face the challenge of globalization, in particular, the breaking down of national and institutional boundaries which removes the spacial and geographic barriers to access" (DoE 1997:4).

From the information provided in chapter two, it is also clear that each institution offering distance learning should create a specific academic culture, and that this culture also needs to be accommodated if its counselling is committed to the support of the distance learners and the pursuit of an academic goal.

In his book, *Helping and Supporting Students*, John Earwaker, an academic with extensive practical experience provides an excellent exposition of student support in general, and of student counselling in particular. He states categorically that "there is as yet no unified theory of counselling" (Earwaker 1992:108). This is explained on the basis that a specific model rests on ideology, tradition and assumptions, all of which should be reconsidered. He unravels the two foundation models of student counselling, the traditional model and the ancillary model.

The traditional model, which had its foundations in the medieval, cloistered quadrangle university (Earwaker 1992:113) has a very strong pastoral care component, dating back to the middle ages when the academics were all clerics. Counsellors adhering to this model see themselves *in loco parentis*. We should immediately remember that the open and distance learner does not find himself/herself in a cloistered quadrangle, and are mainly mature adults, not in need of parental guidance.

The ancillary model, so called because its practitioners adhere to *proper* counselling and independence of external influences “is of more recent origin, closely associated with the development of psychology as a discipline” (Earwaker 1992:108). Although these practitioners are formally qualified, enjoy professional recognition and work to well-established principles, “they are restricted in that they have to put the interests of their client first rather than be more generally helpful” (Earwaker 1992:108).

Lastly, Earwaker points out that the two basic models rest on either a pro-active or a remedial approach, and indicates that some strategic decisions must be made by any institution in adopting a particular student support policy (Earwaker 1992:95). Accepting this relevant information, it would be valuable also to consider some existing models of student support.

To pursue which strategic decisions will form the basis of a student support model, three existing models will be considered. From these components, structures and processes of counselling to distance learners, further information may be derived which can be enriched with additional elements in creating the model which this dissertation sets out to do.

The first model to be discussed is a model developed by the South African Institute for Distance Education, a South African model (SAIDE 1995(a)). This will be followed by an analysis of a New Zealand model and a model produced by an individual.

5.3 THE SAIDE LEARNER SUPPORT MODEL

The South African Institute for Distance Education came into existence in 1992, and has played a very prominent role in promoting open and distance learning in South Africa.

Answering to its purpose of promoting the development of quality distance education, it acknowledged that "...some of the pillars of distance education, such as well designed courses and active student support systems, are virtually unknown (SAIDE 1995(b):211).

One of the outcomes of their efforts was the development of a student support model.

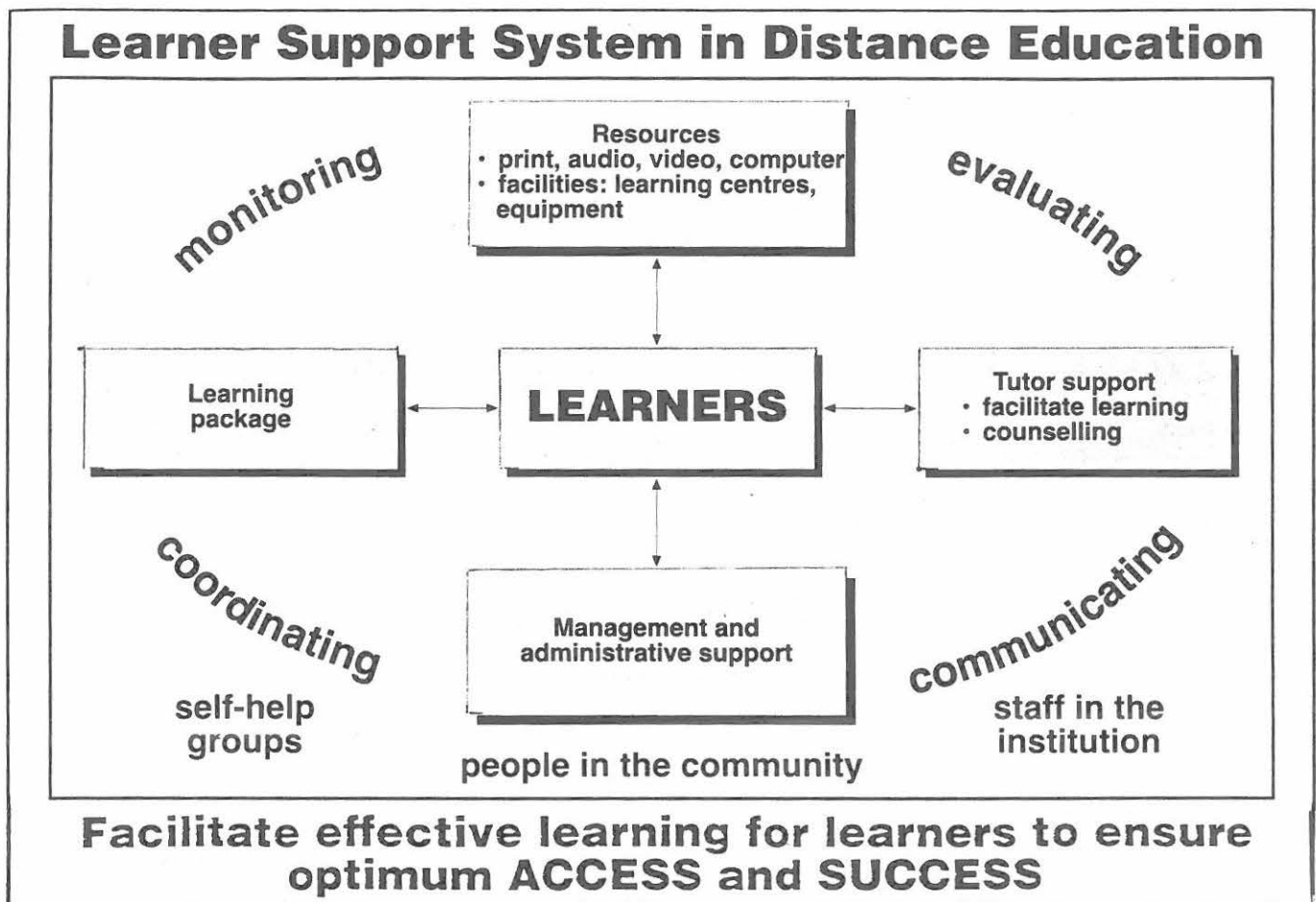


Figure 4 SAIDE's Learner Support System in Distance Education

This model provides both a structure and process. The primary value of this model is the fact that the learner is placed at the very core of the model. An examination of the structure reveals five basic components which interact:

- The learner
- Learner support provision
- Institutional influence
- Learning materials
- Support resources

There are also four processes identified to promote the learner support:

- Communication
- Coordination
- Monitoring
- Evaluation

Four groups of role players are reflected in this model:

- Learners
- Institutional staff
- Members of the community
- Self-help groups

Although this model seems adequate, the preceding research seems to indicate that all of these elements, vital though they may be, are insufficient to provide the necessary counselling and interaction unless there is a catalyst to initiate this. The contention is therefore, that the counselling cannot be marginalised to part of a learner support section but must encapsulate the learner circumstances, the university administration and the lecturers, so that the counsellor can mediate and initiate interaction between the student as learner and all the components.

The nomothetic research in chapter four clearly indicated the strengths and weaknesses of student resources. In the information obtained it became evident that counselling must also make an institutional input into the print and other multimedia learning resources. Counselling must become the change agent, both to assist and motivate the distance learner to effectively use, and to encourage the academic institution to create access to all the resources.

The philosophy of counselling as an undercarriage of student support can be made visible in the establishment of tutor support systems to facilitate student learning. The distance learner however, is rarely in a position or of the disposition to create his/her own tutor support. This again serves as an imperative for the counsellor to be pro-active in advancing the cause of tutor systems, and once these are established, to vigilantly monitor and motivate students to use these centres, and the trained peer counsellors in these centres.

The entire issue of institutional influence is wide open for input from student counselling. The quantitative research in this study included items on student perceptions of university management, and the administrative support provided to the distance learner.

In reverse, a number of recommendations can be made to management to improve the support which distance learners can enjoy from the management and administration. Without the impact of scientific evidence provided by profile researches to support these demands, it is unlikely that any institution will change its policy and make financial provision to do so. On the other side of the coin, the distance education counsellor also acts as the institutional representative enjoying the confidence of the students and as such, is in a favourable position to inform students of the institutional ethos and the specific academic culture of the institution.

The research on student learning resources in the second survey reported on, was a direct outflow of the counsellor's involvement in the upgrading of learning materials. Again this suggests a dual system where a counselling unit can directly advise and direct student learning in the interaction with learning resources, while at the same time providing members of faculty with direct feedback on problems students experience with the learning resources such as text readability, concept formation, clear word pronunciation in audio resources, workload and student friendliness of the materials.

In considering the four processes proposed by this model, it again becomes evident that the counsellor can be the catalyst which can meld the components into a tight compound product which will be visible in the ultimate academic success of the distance learner.

5.4 THE OPEN POLYTECHNIC OF NEW ZEALAND [TOPNZ] MODEL

Reid (In: Lockwood 1995:265), one of the modifiers of the Brindley model, provides a detailed description of learning support. In the text many issues raised in this dissertation is touched on. The graphic model, as seen below, does however not give evidence of much of this important detail.

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand Model is a process model. It is an excellent model in that it is a development model of learning support, firmly based on an integrated student support system which focuses holistically on the student as an individual. The centrality of the student as prospective or as enrolled/re-enrolling student is represented in this model.

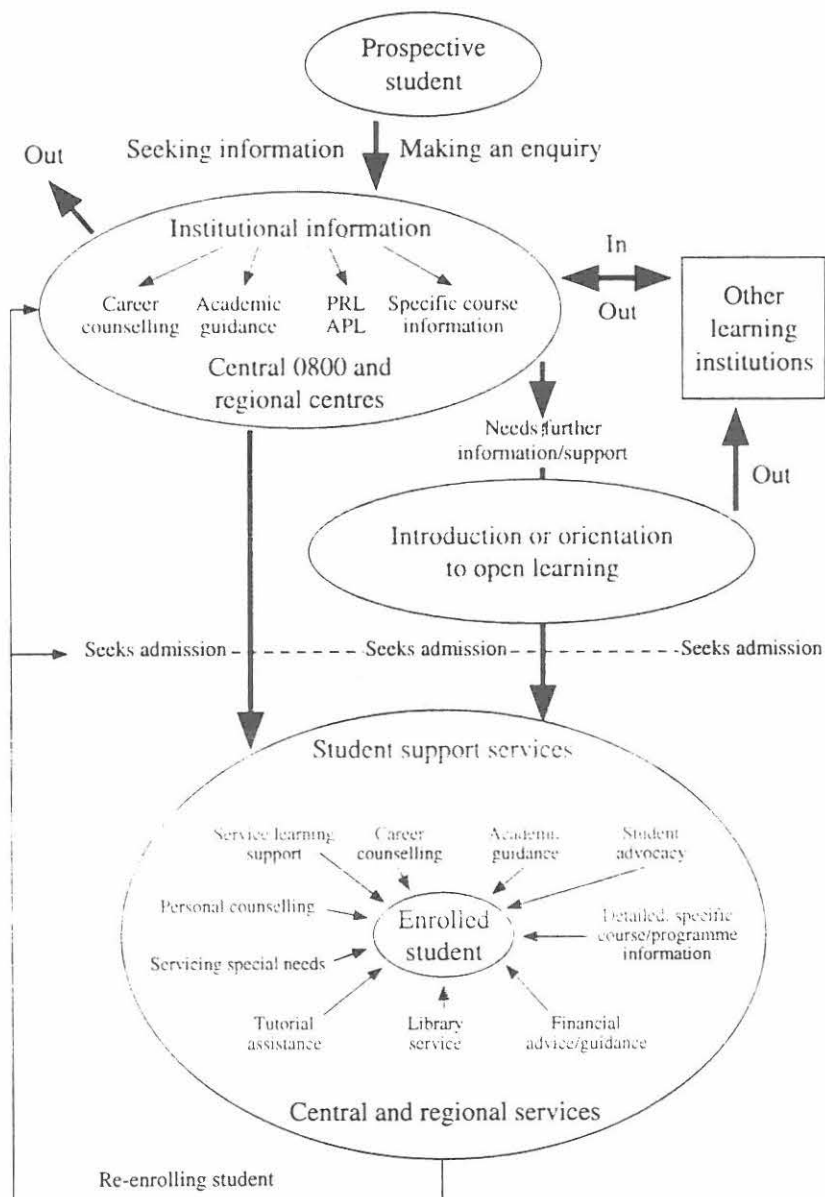


Figure 5 The TOPNZ Model

The visible structural components of this student support model are:

- The prospective student
- Central and regional centres
- Other learning institutions
- The enrolled student
- Student support services

There are a variety of processes reflected in the model, which can be categorised as

- Input enquiry
- Information dissemination
- Referral
- Orientation
- Support/guidance/advocacy and counselling.

With the exception of the student the other role players in this model are not specifically identified.

The services represented in this model are

- Career counselling
- Academic guidance
- Student advocacy
- Specific course and programme information
- Financial advice/guidance
- A library service
- Tutorial assistance
- Support for special needs
- Personal counselling, and
- Learning support (pro-active services and 1:1 assistance)

Several authors are concerned about the natural tension between the provision of a holistic and effective student support service and cost-effectiveness. This also seems to be the one criticism against this model.

While it would be an ideal situation to have access to a team of support specialists to provide a holistic service, the realities of fiscal constraint in higher education are that these services as separate units are frequently not available in distance learning institutions, and many of these roles are then taken over by the student counsellors.

A major shortcoming of this model, although mentioned in the accompanying text, is that the support and counselling services seem to be entirely focussed on the student. The invaluable function which the student counsellor can play in interacting with the institution's administration, the academic branch, the institutional management and current and future employers is not represented in this model.

A strength of this model is the inclusion of tutorial assistance, although this is shown as one of many services without a direct link between counselling and tutoring. Reid does however, in her accompanying text say "Enquiries for institutional information and advice will often be made to the central organisation, but increasingly there is evidence to support the flexibility of local or regional responses to enquiries" (Reid **In:** Lockwood 1995:265). It is assumed that the tutorial assistance takes place at local and regional learning centres. Information obtained from SACTE indicate that only approximately 20% of enrolled students make use of established regional learning centres. It would therefore, seem incumbent on the student counsellor to encourage students to make use of such a facility.

It is also interesting to note that this model does not in any way indicate an interface between learner and learning resource producer. In the text Reid (**In:** Lockwood 1995:271) again seems to suggest such a notion when saying "...those involved in supporting open learning take on responsibilities toward the learner (which)...include assessing their learning styles, towards a view of incorporating them into the learning material ..."

Lastly, Reid (**In:** Lockwood 1995:273) identifies one of the implications of providing learning support, as the establishment of a single gateway for student enquiries, and supports this with an example from TOPNZ (**In:** Lockwood 1995:267) where a central toll-free telephone service was introduced. This resonates directly with one of the verbatim student requests reported on in chapter four of this dissertation.

5.5 AN INDIVIDUAL MODEL BY VAN KOLLER

Dr J F van Koller, Director of Technikon Teaching at Technikon South Africa, one of the major distance education providers in South Africa, presented a personal model at the 1998 SAARDHE conference, and this will briefly be discussed.

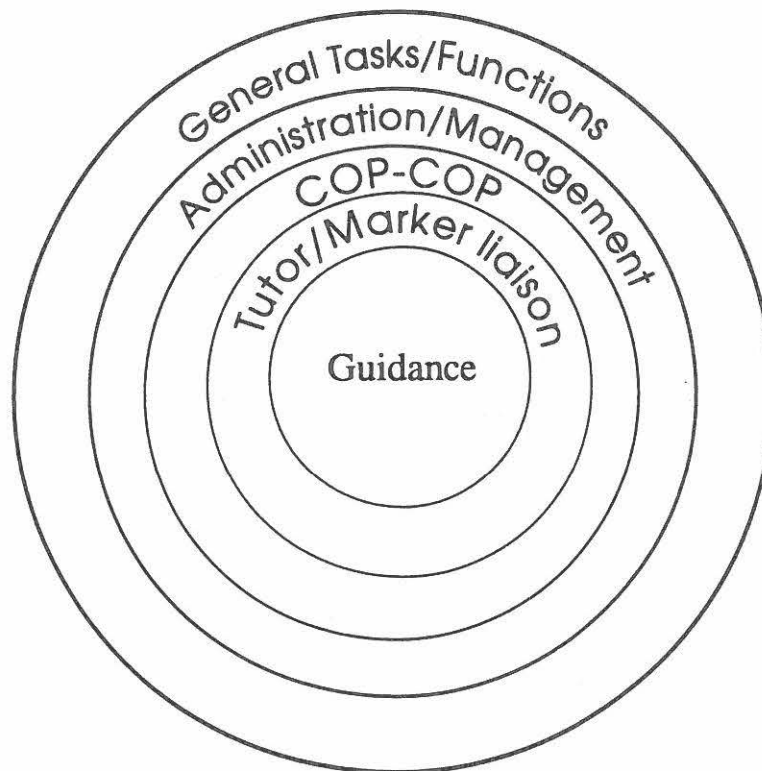


Figure 6 Van Koller's model

This concentric model is an uncomplicated functional model, not to illustrate counselling or student support *per se*, but as part of his approach to the functions and competencies of a distance education practitioner (read academic).

It is fascinating that his model sees the guidance function as the core of activities (van Koller 1998 quotes Rivis: 1994:219), followed by liaison with tutors, courseware origination and production, administration and management, and an outer crust of general tasks and functions. Scrutiny of his text supports the researcher's argument that the lecturer in open and distance learning should form part of the student support team. Van Koller also interprets feedback on assessment as a form of academic support, as well as the inputs made in the courseware development and production. Acknowledging that this model was created from the teaching rather than the learning perspective, it is still important to draw attention to the fact that the student/learner is not represented as the focal point from which all other functions emanate.

5.6 COMMON FACTORS EMERGING FROM THE STUDY

From the wealth of information obtained from the literature, the questionnaires and the interviews, it is evident that there are many aspects of counselling in a contact situation which is equally valid for distance learners. The problems of an ever growing open learning student body also suggests that unique solutions must be found in terms of both counselling procedure and counselling content. These conclusions and recommendations will be taken into account in the design of a new counselling model, which will be addressed in the next chapter. An aspect which should however, not be overlooked, is the value of a student profile as an information foundation with regard to distance learners in defining such a model. Holmberg (1989:208) justifiably states: "The search for understanding and explanation results in attempts to find a kind of instrumental approach to improving distance education, i.e. facilitating distant students' learning."

5.6.1 Generic elements

Reflecting on the discourse in chapter two, it is evident that student counselling in open and distance learning contains elements in common with face-to-face counselling with regard to:

- ✓ adherence to the same ethical principles and standards
- ✓ providing services in the same fields of counselling
- ✓ utilizing the same generic counselling practices
- ✓ and attending to the same institutional issues.

5.6.2 Circumstantial factors emanating from this study

There are a number of issues that deserve the special attention of the student counsellor of open and distance learners, more particularly, in a third world developing country:

- ◆ Students are often first generation tertiary learners, without familial or community role models to guide them.
- ◆ Students frequently come from disadvantaged communities and as a result, lack the life skills assumed to be at their disposal.
- ◆ Students, particularly in this study, are also often linguistically disadvantaged, especially where the medium of communication is a second or third language of the student.
- ◆ Students have a strong oral tradition but may lack reading and library use skills.
- ◆ Students are also generally ill prepared for the rigours of tertiary education due to unfavourable school experiences.
- ◆ Students are the target group in a rapidly changing educational evolution.
- ◆ Students are in general unaccustomed to 'external' counselling and as a result, do not utilize these services optimally.
- ◆ Students tend to enrol for distance learning without any prior preparation or familiarity with this mode of learning, and this can elicit fear and uncertainty, once enrolled.

5.6.3 The different situatedness of open and distance learners

The contention that open and distance learners find themselves in a different situation to that of the traditional contact learning student has been raised repeatedly in this dissertation and will be illustrated by way of comparisons:

- ☐ Statistically, students are more mature adults versus young emerging adults.
- ☐ Accommodation is home based versus hostels or home-removed situations.
- ☐ Exposure to township violence versus exposure to peer pressures.
- ☐ Students are career embedded versus students who are career seekers.
- ☐ The students are predominantly income generators versus financial dependents.
- ☐ Work performance pressures versus academic study focussed.
- ☐ Time restricted versus time flexibility.
- ☐ Students have often lost their study skills versus young entrant school leavers.
- ☐ Female students may experience spousal resistance to self improvement versus the young students who enjoy parental motivational support and achievement demands.
- ☐ Permanent relationships dominate versus experimenters in relationship formation.
- ☐ Norm guided versus norm explorative.
- ☐ Study isolation versus study interactivity.
- ☐ Rural isolation versus campus contact.
- ☐ Technologically deprived versus technology accessibility.
- ☐ Potentially more heterogeneous versus student homogeneity.
- ☐ Communication is mainly media bound versus face-to-face communication.
- ☐ Students are the managers of their own learning versus a lecturer driven situation.
- ☐ Diagnostic limitations versus diagnostic potential
- ☐ Non-observational versus high visibility.
- ☐ Institutional management complexity versus management centralization.

5.6.4 Additional elements to be accommodated in the model

Counselling distance learners also place specific demands on this service provision:

- The need for extensive technology, staffing and networking
- The need for aggressive service marketing
- The need for imaginative and ongoing research on counselling and outcomes.

In the next section attention will be given to the various components to be accommodated in the model.

5.7 THE COMPONENTS OF A COUNSELLING MODEL

As indicated in section 2.3.2 of this dissertation Tait identifies the elements of student support in open and distance learning as tutoring, counselling, the organisation of study centres, interactive teaching strategies and other activities. Tait says (In: Lockwood 1995:232) “These activities have as key conceptual components the notion of supporting the individual learning of the student ...(and) mass-produced materials.”

Based on the above model it can then be assumed that the functional components of a student counselling model in open and distance learning are

- ★ Student information functions
- ★ Counselling service provision
- ★ Funding of counselling services
- ★ Effective management of counselling
- ★ Quality assurance in student counselling

The structural components of the model will be

- ★ learners/students
- ★ enquiry gateway
- ★ counsellors/peer counsellors

- ★ physical resources
- ★ administrative and secretarial personnel
- ★ technology and communication media
- ★ other support units, and
- ★ referral networks.

With reference to the contextual component, it is evident that a holistic model requires that a student counselling unit in open and distance learning provision lies very close to the core of the institution, and performs a multi-faceted function.

Lastly the process components of the model implies:

- ★ administration
- ★ advocacy
- ★ consultation
- ★ communication
- ★ coordination
- ★ counselling
- ★ diagnosis
- ★ dissemination
- ★ evaluation
- ★ monitoring, and
- ★ research.

These components all appear to greater or lesser extent in current practices of counselling open and distance learners.

5.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

In this chapter the analogous nature of a conceptual model is explained, and the traditional and ancillary approaches to student support is discussed. It is further argued that the components, structure and process of a counselling model will be disclosed by a study of existing models.

The chapter discusses three different models, their strengths and weaknesses, their components and systems, and uses this information to identify the common factors and the necessary components of a counselling model. From the sum total of foregoing information several generic limitations and shortcomings are identified. The intention declared at the beginning of this dissertation that a comprehensive, integrated model is constructed and explained will be addressed in the next chapter and consideration will be given to the qualities required of the student counsellor of open and distance learning students who will be expected to function within this paradigm.

The labour and execution of this study seems justified in the words of Tait (1995:240) “The management and evaluation of student support, largely influenced by notions of quality assurance, mean that student support has to be examined, documented and reflected upon.”

To quote from home base: “It seems obvious that there is a problem in tertiary institutions. Those involved in Academic Support Programmes should seriously address the issues” (Moletsane 1992:109).



CHAPTER SIX

CONSTRUCTING AN INTEGRATED OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING COUNSELLING MODEL

6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Student counselling is the lubricant which promotes the smooth transition of the open and distance learner through higher education. “The challenge is to develop and maintain approaches which enable students to have their voices heard and for the open and distance educators and their institutions to be able to listen and understand the practical implications of what is being said (Evans 1994:128)”. The principal theme of this dissertation has been exactly to develop a counselling approach through the creation of a student profile. This then, creates an opportunity for the learner to be heard and the distance educator, and the distance learner student counsellor to listen. It also creates the practical implications, inherent in the entire counselling practice of distance learners through the creation of an accountable and holistic model, which will now be addressed.

In the preceding chapters the researcher indicated that student counselling is bound within a complex web of interrelationships. The dissertation attempted to disclose the unique nature of open and distance learning as an additional factor within this complexity. Rowntree amplifies this with his statement: “Open learners often need help and advice on matters that are nothing to do with the subject matter they are learning about” (Rowntree:1992:83). We also wish to remind the reader of Tait’s argument, reported on in chapter two, that no general schemes can be drawn nationally or internationally for student counselling. With this dictum in mind it was necessary to consider the topic under investigation from the South African perspective before moving to a long ranging research project which focusses directly on the circumstances and attitudes of the students from a specific institution.

Moving from a micro perspective, the ultimate intention of the researcher is to formulate a student counselling model which will accommodate a wider environment, and by advocating the use of student profiles, again moves towards a model which should also be seen to have applicability in the macro perspective. To extract common elements for such a more universal counselling model it was also deemed necessary to consider existing models in this domain. From this rich landscape of information it is then possible to identify the basic elements which the researchers can integrate into a new model of distance learning student counselling.

6.2 THE ELEMENTS OF THE NEW MODEL

The structural elements that must be evident in the new model are:

- The student, as the focal point or hub of the cog,
- The counselling service, as the facilitating agent,
- The traditional and devolving practices within the field of professional student counselling.
- The auxiliary services, into which the counsellor can tap support for the student,
- The academic environment, which defines the very essence of *student* counselling,
- The administrative systems which can enhance or hamper the entire process,
- The institutional culture, which visibly and invisibly influences this interaction,
- The broader society, which determines the norms and values of its members, and
- The employment sector, as the ultimate future target of the learner.

The first element, the student, should be understood to represent five categories of students; prospective students, newly enrolled students (particularly first generation students), currently enrolled students (including student leaders), re-entry students and alumni. In the distance education environment, this must be seen in the context of awareness of their personal histories, their circumstances, attitudes and expectations. The use of coloured segments in the model should therefore, also be interpreted in terms of the whole situatedness of each individual student, as reflected in the individual items within the nine sections of the profile.

The counselling service should be understood to encapsulate the professional student counsellors, their training and professional affiliations, their physical infrastructure, management support and administrative and maintenance staff.

Auxiliary services vary greatly from one institution to another but, whether available internally or externally, form an essential part of the referral systems of counsellors. In this category peer counsellors, tutors, study groups, financial and bursary advisors, health workers and psychotherapists are essentials. Assistance can also be provided in referring students to housing officials, recruitment agencies, community libraries, substance abuse treatment centres and rape and trauma counselling support groups.

The counselling practices were described in some detail in section 2.4.7, but can be summarised as all the dimensions of counselling as well as all the other counselling functions, activities and responsibilities which directly impact on this core function.

The interplay of student counselling with the academic environment was clearly championed in the interview with professor Gous. This element should be understood to include the interpersonal relationships of learners with lecturers (albeit in the distance mode), the essential nature of learning assessment, the academic curriculum and issues such as academic development and supplemental instruction. Evidently, the academic environment in distance education is also determined by the learning resources employed, the instructional design of these resources, and the transportability of academic credits.

It may seem illogical to include administrative systems in such a model, but student counsellors, particularly of open and distance learners can all attest to the advocacy role they have to fulfill when administration obstructs or hampers progress. The administrative system may also house an institution's quality assurance unit, and is essential in the provision of the accountability of student counselling units.

The institutional culture can in the broad sense be interpreted as the vision, mission and policies of an institution.

This culture is however, also present in how the institution views its clientele, its commitment to support services and its openness to democratic student inputs.

Without norms and values no society can continue to exist. In South Africa and its recent political history and new higher education policies, issues such as universal access and the right to education must perforce impact on the role of student counselling. In distance education infra-structural components such as postal services, telematic networks and accessible libraries play a vital role in student learning. Affordability and society's participation in financial aid are other determinants which influence the student counsellors in their interaction with learners.

Lastly, while career counselling is frequently seen as a separate field for career counsellors, it as frequently forms part of the job description of the professional student counsellor in the distance learning institutions. This not only requires the counsellor to provide the learner with sound and relevant career advice and curriculum compilation, but suggests that they would be involved in career exhibitions and contact with future employers. This may even be extrapolated to include the provision of life skills, and, as clearly declared by government policy, the development of distance learners as responsible citizens.

6.3 THE DYNAMIC PROCESSES INHERENT IN THE NEW MODEL

In the construction and design of the new, integrated model, the researcher intentionally selected a mechanistic visual image to indicate that in open and distance learning the student counselling will be in a state of perpetual motion. This places enormous demands on the student counsellor, as (s)he will be 'changing gears' constantly. The cog wheels suggest that the student counsellor will address the individual auxiliary services from a different angle for each individual student intervention. Dependent on the specific needs of the student the process will also be in motion, in as much as the main focus will shift from one area of counselling as represented by one of the nine oval intermodalities which represents a pneumatic cushion between the student and his environment.

Sedibe (1996:132) avers “Counselling refers to the interaction developing through the relationship between the counsellor and an individual in a temporary state of indecision, confusion or distress.” This interactive process of addressing the indecisions, confusions and distress, in the specific case of the distance learners, is mostly dependent on the use of various communication media. The researcher, in this integrated model, does not anticipate an either-or interactive process. Within the epoch of rapid change, it is anticipated that the student counsellor will employ a diversity of media in combination, in order adequately to provide the student with the necessary support and counselling.

As the dissertation has indicated, the distance learning student is initially most likely to contact the student counsellor by telephone. Having established contact, the researcher anticipates that the next century will provide the student counsellor with an arsenal of media to conduct his/her counselling. This point of view is amply supported by Sanders and Rosenfield (1998:6) who say: “...there is still room for innovation in linking the worlds of counselling and existing telecommunication technology.” There is a strong possibility that the student counsellor may mail support material to the student, either physically or electronically. This may lead to direct computer-based or interactive telephonic counselling sessions, and will most likely also include some form of contact counselling, either with the primary counsellor or by a proxy tutor or peer counsellor. Before the counselling situation is terminated, the student counsellor may then again request the student to respond in writing to indicate the resolution of the problem, or to suggest continued intervention.

The circular shape of the model ultimately also represents the cyclical nature of student counselling in the academic world, where the same student may present him/herself for counselling more than once as they move through the freshman, sophomore and senior phases of higher education, each with its own set of problems and needs.

The researcher hopes that the visual model adequately represents the movement between the various bands and elements of the model to suggest the dynamics of this process. However, within the dynamic nature of education, higher education and society,

more particularly as is evidenced by the *Zeitgeist* which has taken on an almost tangible character as we cross into a new millennium, it is senseless even to attempt the construction of a new model without considering the limitations and shortcomings currently found in this area. Ozmon and Craver (1995: 361) say of it "...intellectual upheaval is occurring, and it needs to be studied for what it portends."

6.4 THE LIMITATIONS AND SHORTCOMINGS IN THE CURRENT COUNSELLING SITUATION

From an analysis of the information obtained from the literature, research, the interviews, the existing practices in South African distance learning providers, and the other models investigated, it is evident that there are the following current limitations and shortcomings in open and distance learning (ODL) counselling services:

- The non-existence or total under provision of counselling to open and distance learners.
- The provision of counselling services, often based on erroneous assumptions
- A major lack of research and particularly profiling of distance learners.
- Insufficient staffing and funding of counselling support in distance learning
- The disregard or abnegation of the advising and counselling role of other higher education stakeholders.
- The perceiving and placing of counselling services as an add-on, peripheral support service within the institutional structure.

The first limitation, that of the under provision of student counselling in distance education was addressed in chapter three of this dissertation. Although a detailed analysis of the erroneous assumptions were not researched in this study, it is common knowledge that institutions believe that as mature learners, students do not require the help of counsellors, or alternatively believe that the restraints of distance preclude the provision of student counselling to distance learners.

Whereas student profiling was quite in vogue three decades ago, this activity seemed to lose favour over time, without an alternative action for the student to be recognised as a person, living a complex life, rather than just a student number and statistic. The researcher also believes that he has provided sufficient proof that staffing and funding of student counselling enjoys a low priority in South Africa. In the interests of the students the whole scenario of inter-institutional collaboration and cross institutional proxy counselling has also not advanced very far. To the knowledge of the researcher this only takes place between the Technikon Free State and Technikon Southern Africa at this point in time. Direct interaction with student counsellors of other institutions also confirms the weakness of student counselling being marginalised in institutions.

These issues have been taken into consideration in an attempt in the next section to create a comprehensive, integrated, structural and functional model of counselling distance learners, overcoming some of these shortcomings and accommodating the elements and processes discussed above. In the section after that the proposed model will be viewed critically. The insights obtained from this exercise will then lead to the specific qualities required by a student counselling practitioner.

6.5 AN INTEGRATED, DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT COUNSELLING MODEL

In this model the researcher attempts to create a visual construct containing all the structural and process elements decided on, while at the same time, by using cog wheels and five different levels (or bands), suggesting an ever shifting focus and interaction in counselling distance learners. The model places the students in their full diversity at the core of the model.

The second level represents the main activities in counselling open and distance learners. While it would appear as if this is an impenetrable channel, careful observation will disclose that there are openings between each intermodality. This then suggests that students can interact with any of the elements in any band, should they wish not to avail themselves of the support provided.

At the next level the model accommodates a multitude of auxiliary service which often interact with one another, but can also be linked with the student through the offices of the student counsellor.

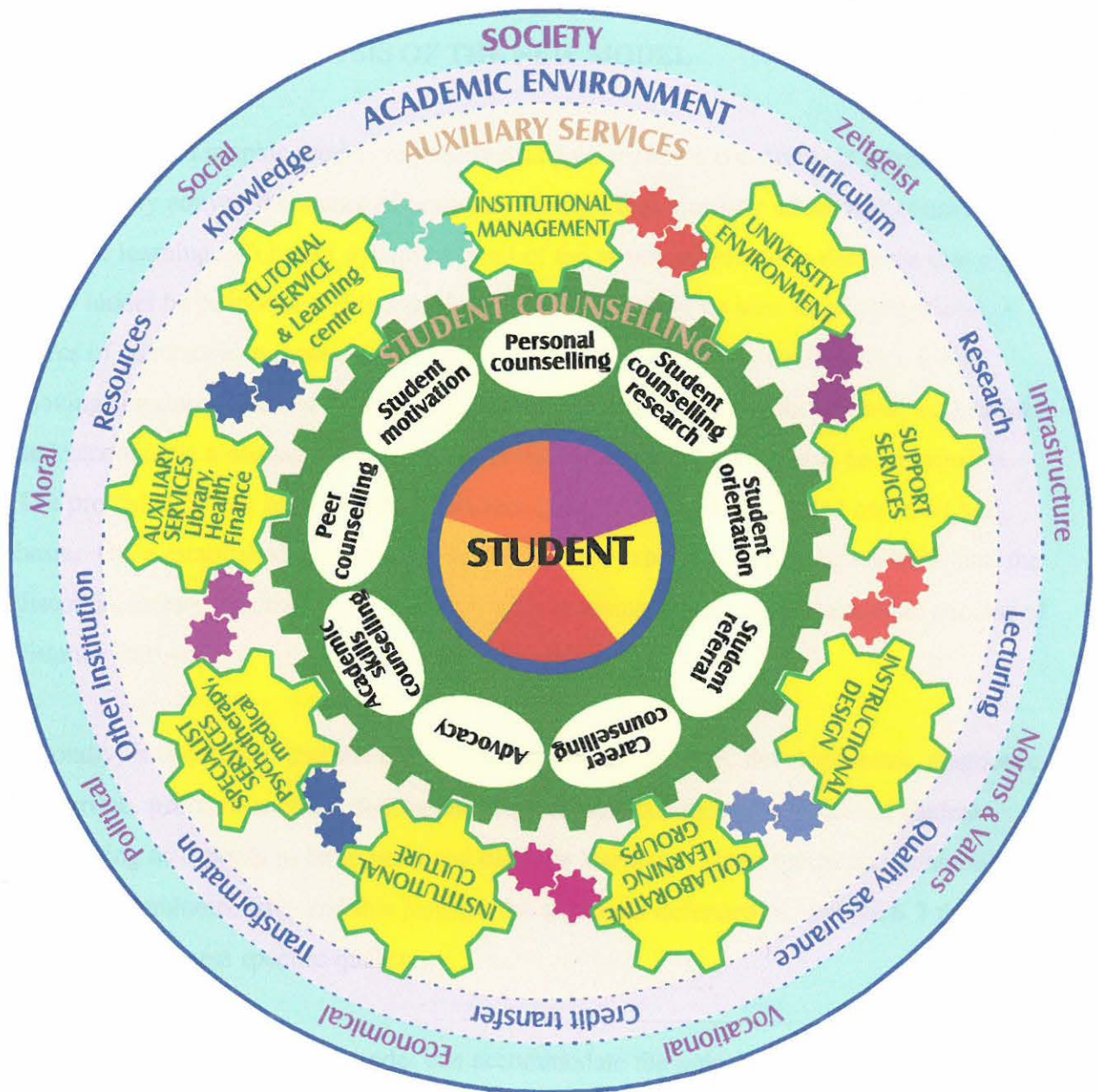


Figure 7 An integrated, distance learning student counselling model

In another perspective the semi-outer layer, the academic environment can be interpreted as being in closer proximity to the learner. Within a student support paradigm there are interlocutors.

Lastly, the outer level represents society. This relationship was explored and discussed in the first chapter.

6.6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NEW MODEL

The choice of a graphic model, represented as a mechanistic construct, is intentional to subliminally convey the nature of perpetual motion, characteristic of student counselling in distance learning. Constant dynamics in all of the structural elements demands that a non-static model be proposed. This model must simultaneously be seen to be progressive in terms of adaptation to newer insights and emerging philosophies, representing a free moving conglomeration of 'impulsive' actions. To be reliable, to be relevant, successful and accountable a distance learning student counselling model must also be sustainable. The provision of this specific kind of student support cannot be provided on an ad hoc basis. Once established, this support system creates expectations among students, and the discontinuation of such services can have a far reaching impact on the academic success of distance learners.

Secondly, it is believed that the model enhances the preventive, developmental, diagnostic, supportive, problem-solving, therapeutic, referral and collaborative nature of student counselling as it needs to be in open and distance learning. These functions cannot all be executed simultaneously, and this justifies the argument defended in section 6.7 that the incumbents possess specific qualities.

Thirdly, it is argued that this model can accommodate the uniqueness inherent in every institution, due to its dynamic interlocations between student and institution. Clearly placed within the academic environment, such counselling practices will possess a professional identity which is able to adhere to ethical standards.

The model has been devised in such a manner that it attends to all of the fields of student counselling, and can participate in all the identified generic practices of its profession.

It should be in a position to attend to the management of the unit's resources, the ongoing development of specific policy, and of staying abreast of inter-institutional trends and societal demands.

Conclusively, the proposed model can be seen to answer to the requirements of context, structure, process, content and form of providing distance learners with a reliable and accountable student counselling service.

6.7 COUNSELLOR QUALITIES REQUIRED BY THE NEW MODEL

As mentioned in section 2.4.6 extensive research (Tyler 1969:211/2) identified the following generic qualities of counsellors:

- Freedom from dogmatism or prejudice
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Sensitivity or perceptiveness
- Empathy
- Unconditional positive regard and respect
- Relationship competence
- Academic success in training as counsellors
- Affective vitality.

One would imagine that these qualities will impact positively on the counselling issues of the nineties such as multi-culturism, interculturism, gender sensitivity and student diversity. Scrutiny of the information obtained in the research, and careful consideration of the models investigated, would suggest that the following items be added to these stirring qualities:

- Andragogical knowledge and skills
- Research skills
- Psychometric skills

- Versatility and adaptive skills
- Enhanced communication skills
- Technology application skills, and
- Bureaucratic negotiation skills.

Relevant to the second last listed quality we quote Sanders and Rosenfield (1998:6) “It is clear from many personal communications that a number of counselling and psychotherapy practitioners baulk at the thought of therapy mediated by technology.” The potential of technology is also suggested in the process section mentioned above.

In a comprehensive, integrated model of student counselling the time may have arrived once more to do scientific research in this area. It is however, apparent that the traditional role of the student counsellor is undergoing constant change, and that the student counsellor of the future will above all be required not only to be highly skilled, but also highly adaptive.

6.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This dissertation indicated in the first chapter that there is a mismatch between the needs and circumstances of distance learners and the institutions that provide the learning opportunities to them. The solution to this problem lies in the provision of adequate student support to the distance learner, and in particular the provision of a professional student counselling service.

Through preceding research and re-conceptualisation the researcher sets out to develop a new student counselling model which will answer to the demands of being accountable, holistic and integrated. After indicating the root elements of the model, and the dynamic processes which make it a functional model, the chapter reflects on the current limitations and shortcomings in the provision of student counselling to distance learners in South Africa.

A complex model is presented, as the basic intention of this dissertation, but indicating that the information gleaned from profiling cannot be excluded from such an exercise. From the constantly revolving/evolving model it became evident that this situation would require highly developed skills and qualities from the student counsellor. This need is also addressed in presenting the model. In the last chapter, the dissertation propounds a resolution to the problems initially identified and offers a number of recommendations to the open and distance learning community, also indicating the implications which the adoption of this model will have.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION, PROBLEM RESOLUTION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ULTIMATE CONCLUSIONS.

7.1 SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

In CHAPTER ONE the researcher discussed the reasons why the study had become of vital importance at this stage of higher education transformation. The right to education in a democratic society was considered. It was also argued that effective student support is of vital importance if higher education is to be accessible to previously disenfranchised people. The point is argued that the adult learner is in greater need of a wide range of support services, and in particular when the adult learner attempts distance learning. Within this paradigm attention is drawn to the triadic link between the provider, the learner and the student counsellor. Because of the complexity of the student counsellor's task, the dissertation sets out to arrive at a comprehensive, integrated student counselling model. The objectives of the research are declared in chapter one as an investigation of tertiary education in South Africa, of distance and open learning and of student counselling in this situation. With the aid of this information the components of a model is identified. Several issues of enquiry are posed to elucidate this area of research and the underlying assumptions on which the dissertation is based, is identified. The concepts used in the document such as Vista University, VUDEC, adult education, further education, distance education and open learning are clarified to avoid misunderstanding. The research methodology to substantiate a new model is explained, consisting of the creation of a database by means of a longitudinal study and ideographic research to enrich the findings. Lastly, this chapter spells out the programme of this dissertation to assist the reader.

In CHAPTER TWO it was necessary to obtain a macro perspective of tertiary education in South Africa with special attention to tertiary education by distance education.

The chapter gives a breakdown of universities, technikons, specialist colleges and privately owned correspondence colleges. It provides a brief historical perspective on the establishment of tertiary education institutions in South Africa, and indicates that the demands for access to higher education can mainly be met by open and distance learning institutions. This is followed by a consideration of the present situation in South Africa regarding tertiary distance education providers. Although twelve of the twenty one universities in the country offer distance learning, most do so on a small scale. In the next section the reader is briefed on the unique nature of distance learning, with emphasis on the complexity of the distance learning student's life roles. Student counselling as a specific form of student support is discussed under headings of criteria for measuring student counselling services, the individual nature of each institution's student counselling service, the functions of student counselling services, the ethics thereof, the qualities of student counselling services and the generic practices inherent in such a service. Focus is placed on student counselling in distance learning. A brief description of the mega distance learning institutions of the world is provided and of their counselling services, where indicated.

CHAPTER THREE looks at regional and local initiatives in the provision of student counselling to distance learners. The chapter describes the student counselling practices at UNISA, Technikon South Africa, South African College for Teacher Education, VUDEC and the correspondence colleges. The same practices in neighbouring country distance learning provision is also briefly scrutinized. The challenges of counselling distance and open learners is considered in some detail before this chapter concludes with the current shortcomings in counselling activities and the need for research to inform practices and overcome the shortcomings.

CHAPTER FOUR focusses on the research process utilized in this dissertation. A planning model provides the logic to the establishment of a student profile in distance learning. The chapter then provides basic criteria for a student profile after which the research design is described and the elements of the research discussed. These elements consist of three subsequent questionnaire studies over a decade.

Based on the richness of data collected, provisional counselling suggestions are presented in each. The creation of a student data-base is constructed on nine major themes. These are:

- Biographical detail
- Educational data
- Data on professional background
- Personal circumstances
- Expectations and impressions
- Study factors
- Study circumstances
- Expectations of Vista support, and
- Expectations of distance learning.

In both the research of their professional situation and their domestic study circumstances issues of technological support are touched on. The analysis of individual responses also proves to be a valuable exercise in this section. Of particular importance is the qualitative inputs by recognised specialists in distance education in South Africa. All of this information, coupled with the ideographic research is utilized in the next chapter by the researcher in identifying common factors emerging from the research.

CHAPTER FIVE is devoted to the rationale of using a model. The traditional model, emanating from the first universities established in the middle ages, and an ancillary, modern model is considered. After this an analysis of three existing student support models is presented, indicating the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of each. Combining these insights with all the data previously explored in this dissertation, a section on the common factors which emerged precedes the section in which the selected components of a new model will be based.

The PENULTIMATE CHAPTER deals with the construction of a new model for the counselling of distance learners. Arguments for the creation of a new model is provided, based on the re-examination of current ideologies, traditions and assumptions.

Recognised elements of a counselling model is identified and this is followed by an analysis of the shortcomings and limitations of the current situation. On the basis of all these insights combined with the findings reported on in chapters four and five, the integrated model is then constructed and discussed. In conclusion the dissertation returns to the qualities of a student counsellor required by such a model.

7.2 PROBLEM RESOLUTION

The objectives identified in chapter one of this dissertation were the investigation and analysis of the following:

- Tertiary education and macro-educational developments in South Africa
- The distance education situation, and open learning
- Counselling in the distance education situation
- The essential components of a student profile
- A model for counselling distance education students using student profiles as resource.

All of these issues are dealt with to a greater or lesser extent, and contribute to the construction of an ultimate proposed model for counselling distance learners.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the brink of a new millennium, and more so in an era of technological innovation, globalization and internationalisation, human interaction is subject to too many influences to remain in a state of homeostasis. Counselling is one such an activity, and counselling our leaders of the future is now perhaps more important than what it has ever before been. At the same time the complexity of this task increases in quantum leaps, and can only remain relevant if it commits to constant introspection and re-alignment.

The recommendations reflected here are extracted from the findings of this investigation. To promote adoption, the recommendations are grouped under four categories; institutional recommendations, academic recommendations, counselling recommendations and research recommendation. The researcher wishes to stress that these recommendations are not offered in priority order. It would also be unrealistic to anticipate that all the proposals will be adopted and implemented, and an incremental approach is supported wholeheartedly.

7.3.1 Institutional recommendations

These proposals seem to address policy in the wider academic community. It is recommended that:

- The Vista University Council grants official recognition to the core importance of student counselling as an integrated academic activity, as illustrated in the triadic construction of this dissertation.
- A student counselling service again be re-established at VUDEC.
- A single student enquiry gateway be established and sustained by the installation of a dedicated, toll-free telephone line.
- That student counselling services be subjected to evaluation and accountability, by various means such as student feedback. In the event of external quality assurance, all attempts should be made that the auditor is an experienced student counsellor.
- Management accepts that the provision of an effective distance education student counselling service will require sufficient funding, staffing, technology and networking powers.
- The student counselling service will have a student advocacy role to play, in advancing the interests of students regarding policy on issues such as fees, payment arrangements and textbooks.
- The student counselling service should be allowed to participate in instructional design initiatives, to address student feedback on quality of learning resources, text readability by candlelight, lack of library facilities and text embedded counselling.

- The student counselling service will participate in the process of promoting open and flexible learning at Vista University by providing management with inputs regarding compulsory subject grouping, year marks and rigid credit granting on subject blocks.

7.3.2 Academic recommendations

The main focus in the following issues seem to be of an academic nature. It is recommended that:

- The staff of the student counselling services are granted representation on faculty boards and curriculum committees, as is the case at UNISA.
- Academic staff are informed of the scope of student counselling services, for purposes of student referral, and so that interventions on behalf of a student will be accepted as being in the interests of the institution.
- English for specific purposes be included in all VUDEC disciplines as a compulsory component.
- A used textbook depot for VUDEC students be introduced.
- A check system be introduced to ensure that all student assignments are dealt with within the three week turnabout time.

7.3.3 Student counselling recommendations

These issues are closer to the operational activities of the student counselling service. It is recommended that:

- The student counselling services should consult with, and actively employ the services of the Public Relations Department in internal marketing of its services, but also in external conscientiousness raising within the VUDEC student population and the national and provincial departments of Education, as employers of its students.

- The student counselling services ensure that their services are extended to prospective students, new students, re-enrolled and senior students and to alumni.
- The student counselling services interact with professional associations, to ensure that this distinctive service is recognised at all levels, up to the Higher Education Council.
- Student counselling services collaboratively interface with SAQA, the NSBs and the ETQAs.
- Student counselling services constantly strive to be informed of the unique service it is required to provide within VUDEC.
- Networks be set up with other tertiary education student counselling services, to provide, interchangeably, the widest possible coverage of counselling services to distance learners in South Africa.
- Student counsellors accept a role definition which isn't interpreted in the narrow psychological counselling model, but is seen as a holistic service which also attends to students' physical environment.
- The provision of student counselling to open and distance learners will require ongoing and increased encounters with students at registration, at the learning centres, at the contact sessions and on rotation at the year end assessment centres.
- The student counselling service staff receive training in preparing reliable annual budgets to ensure that they can fulfil their duties.
- Student counselling services explore linkages with the Culture studies project to familiarise themselves of the impact of the institutional culture on the services they provide.

7.3.4 Research recommendations

Scrutiny of this dissertation provides indications of future research to be considered in this field. It is recommended that:

- In distance education, student needs are researched in an ongoing manner.
- The models, structures and processes be constantly re-assessed and updated.

- A survey of student counselling practices worldwide would provide valuable insights.
- Research should be launched in the factors which promote distance learners' academic success.
- Student counselling services can participate actively in projects where the perceptions and ensuing enrolment patterns of prospective students are researched.

It is hoped that the perspectives presented in this dissertation will contribute to the enhancement of the most precious resource of any country, its human resource. At the same time the reader is encouraged to continue exploring this issue and researching the ever changing horizon of student counselling.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THIS MODEL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The researcher believes that scrutiny by distance learning providers, of the proposed new model will create a greater awareness of the essential part student counselling can and should play in supporting distance learners in their learning endeavours.

The model illustrates the complexity of this process, and this model should also be seen to represent the dynamic nature of individualised institutional student counselling models. Although not visible within the model, it must again be stressed that the entire model is based on a sound understanding of the problems and needs of distance learners. This foundational information cannot be based on mere assumption, but must be informed by a reliable study on the student profiles of the community served by each provider.

Lastly, moving from the outer parameter of society towards the centre, it is anticipated that the communities in which the distance learners live and function, will come to expect some commitment from governments and distance learning institutions to provide the student counselling that will assist the individual to achieve a dream of academic success.

7.5 CONCLUSION OF THE DISSERTATION

This research and dissertation was launched in an attempt to contribute to the corpus of knowledge regarding open and distance learning, and in particular to the aspect of student support. More specifically, to promote human resource development in a disadvantaged society and to provide learners with the optimum opportunity to achieve success in tertiary studies, the researcher firmly believes that student counselling can make a contribution.

The literature review gives very strong signals that student counselling is often disregarded and underfunded because it is seen by the governance structures within institutions to be an ancillary service of little importance. By creating this student counselling model for open and distance learners the researcher has aspired to an ideal where students will be recognised as being the focal point in any institution providing tertiary education.

Such a student-centred approach will then of necessity have to recognise the dire need students have to progress and succeed in their learning. Given the hardship of part-time, off campus learners who make a meaningful contribution to the country's economy while attempting to improve their knowledge and skills, it should then be conceded that such individuals are even more worthy of assistance in attaining these objectives.

The model created for this purpose is a comprehensive, integrated model of distance education student counselling. The argument of the dissertation is that student counselling in this situation cannot be seen as a 'pure', elitist activity, but should rather be interpreted from an eclectic point of view, attempting to address the needs of the distance learner as identified by researching a student profile, in as many ways as possible.

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DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES

VISTA UNIVERSITY

Dear Student

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FIRST-YEAR FURTHER TRAINING STUDENTS, 1989

This questionnaire is part of a study of the personal, social and academic problems experienced by students. It is intended only for students who registered at Vista University for the first time this year.

Study and adjustment problems of students who receive correspondence tuition at a university have become a major cause of concern. In spite of various investigations and serious efforts to find solutions, no university has been able to solve these problems completely as yet. It is essential that universities should do everything possible to help students with their problems and so reduce the number of unsuccessful students considerably. You will be able to contribute towards solutions to these problems by answering this questionnaire fully and honestly.

The aim of the questionnaire is to determine the specific circumstances, background, expectations and needs of the first-year student. Information acquired in this manner can help Vista University to provide better guidance to its students.

Please comply with the following general instructions when filling in the questionnaire:

1. In your own and your fellow students' interests, please answer the questions as HONESTLY as possible. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. The information you provide will be treated as STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL, and your name does not appear on the questionnaire.
2. Please read each question carefully, and answer it immediately, as instructed, before proceeding to the next question. If you work in this way, it should not take you more than 30 minutes to fill in the questionnaire.
3. Please do NOT photostat a questionnaire that has been sent to somebody else for your own use.
4. Please fill in the questionnaire TODAY, and post it as soon as possible in the prepaid envelope that has been provided.

Thank you for your valuable co-operation!

3. Language group (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Afrikaans	☐	01
English	☐	02
Afrikaans/English	☐	03
Northern Sotho	☐	04
Southern Sotho	☐	05
Swati	☐	06
Tsonga	☐	07
Tswana	☐	08
Venda	☐	09
Xhosa	☐	10
Zulu	☐	11
Other (Specify)	☐	12

4. Marital Status (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Unmarried	☐	01
Married	☐	02
Separated	☐	03
Divorced	☐	04
Widowed	☐	05

5. State of health (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Poor	☐	01
Fair	☐	02
Good	☐	03
Excellent	☐	04

6. National group (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Northern Sotho	☐	01
Southern Sotho	☐	02
Northern Ndebele	☐	03
Southern Ndebele	☐	04
Swazi	☐	05
Tsonga	☐	06
Tswana	☐	07
Venda	☐	08
Xhosa	☐	09
Zulu	☐	10
Ovambo	☐	11
Herero	☐	12
Damara	☐	13
Coloured	☐	14
Indian	☐	15
White	☐	16
Other (Specify)	☐	17

72. Evaluate your competence in the language in which you RECEIVE your tuition. (Make ONE cross in the appropriate block in EACH of columns A, B and C.)

	A	B	C	
	Reading	Writing	Compre- hension	
Excellent	☐	☐	☐	01
Good	☐	☐	☐	02
Satisfactory	☐	☐	☐	03
Unsatisfactory	☐	☐	☐	04
Poor	☐	☐	☐	05

73. What is your opinion of the medium of instruction at this University, namely English? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

No great difficulties in coping with the subjects taught in English are expected.	☐	01
Much attention should be given to explanations and presentation in study manuals to enable the students to cope with their studies.	☐	02
It will be difficult for the students to cope with English as the medium of instruction.	☐	03

74. What are your plans with regard to the consultation sessions held during lecturer's visits to various centres? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

I hope to attend all sessions.	☐	01
I hope to attend some sessions.	☐	02
I plan to attend one session only.	☐	03
I will not be able to attend.	☐	04

75. How often do you expect to have contact with lecturers during the academic year? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Often	☐	01
Occasionally	☐	02
Never	☐	03

76. What form of contact do you expect to have with lecturers? (You may make a cross in more than one appropriate block.)

Contact by letter	☐	01
Telephonic contact	☐	02
Personal contact during visits to Head Office in Pretoria	☐	03
Personal contact during lecturer's visits to various centres	☐	04

EXPECTATIONS ABOUT VISTA STAFF

69. Indicate which of the THREE options below you think will apply to the Vista lecturers (column A), Student Adviser (column B) and administrative staff (column C). (Make ONE cross in the appropriate block in EACH of columns A, B and C. You may mark a different block in each column. For example, you may think that the option to the left of block 01, applies to lecturers, that to the left of block 02 to the Student Adviser and that to the left of block 03 to the administrative staff.)

	Lecturers (A)	Student Adviser (B)	Admini- strative staff (C)	
Will take into consideration that I am a new student who has to be helped to adapt to university study	☐	☐	☐	01
Will expect me to adapt to university study on my own	☐	☐	☐	02
Will be unreasonable in his/her/their expectations of me	☐	☐	☐	03

70. Indicate whether you expect that the Vista lecturers (column A), Student Adviser (column B) and administrative staff (column C) will be easy or difficult to approach. (Make ONE cross in the appropriate block in EACH of columns A, B and C. You may mark a different block in each column. For example, you may think that the option to the left of block 01 applies to lecturers and the administrative staff, and that to the left of block 02 to the Student Adviser.)

	Lecturers (A)	Student Adviser (B)	Admini- strative staff (C)	
Will be easy to approach in connection with problems	☐	☐	☐	01
Will be difficult to approach in connection with problems	☐	☐	☐	02

EXPECTATIONS ABOUT DISTANCE STUDY

71. What do you expect distance study at Vista to be? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Much the same as study at Teacher's Training College	☐	01
Slightly different to study at Teacher's Training College	☐	02
A completely new approach	☐	03

7. Your age in years on your last birthday (Enter one number in each part of the block - see example 2.) 01

8. Number of children (Enter one number in each part of the block - see example 3.) 01

9. Number of people living with you in your home (Enter one number in each part of both blocks.)

Adults (over 18 years of age)			01
Children (under 18 years of age)			02

10. Membership of a religious group (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Apostolic Faith Mission	☐	01
Anglican	☐	02
Baptist	☐	03
Dutch Reformed Churches	☐	04
Indigenous African Christian Churches	☐	05
Lutheran	☐	06
Methodist	☐	07
Moslem	☐	08
Roman Catholic	☐	09
Zionist Christian Church	☐	10
No denomination	☐	11
Other (Specify)	☐	12

11. Vista examination centre (Enter the centre's name and code.)

Name of centre: Computer code:
(If known, enter one number in each part of the block.)

12. Means of payment you use most frequently (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Bank cheque account (cheque book)	☐	01
Credit card	☐	02
Cash (drawn from savings account, etc)	☐	03
Other (Specify)	☐	04

13. Funding of your studies (Make a cross in the appropriate block in column A and, if applicable, in column B.)

	Most important source (A)	Additional source (B)
I paid studies myself (from earnings)	☐ 01	☐ 01
My husband/wife paid	☐ 02	☐ 02
A relative paid	☐ 03	☐ 03
I obtained a bursary	☐ 04	☐ 04
I obtained a loan	☐ 05	☐ 05
Other (Specify)	☐ 06	☐ 06

14. Gross income per month (full monthly salary before anything is deducted) (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Less than R600 per month
R601 to R850 per month
R851 to R1100 per month
R1101 to R1350 per month
R1351 to R1600 per month
R1601 to R1850 per month
R1851 to R2100 per month
Over R2100 per month

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03
☐	04
☐	05
☐	06
☐	07
☐	08

SECTION B: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

15. Your final school qualification (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Matriculation/Matriculation exemption certificate
Senior certificate (without matriculation exemption)

☐	01
☐	02

16. Year in which you obtained your matriculation/senior certificate (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Between 1985 and 1988
Between 1975 and 1984
Before 1975

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03

17. Institution where you received your secondary education (You may make a cross in more than one appropriate block.)

Government school
Private school
Correspondence school
Adult education centre

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03
☐	04

18. AVERAGE percentage/symbol you obtained in final school examinations (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

A = 80-100% (average = 90)
B = 70-79% (average = 75)
C = 60-69% (average = 65)
D = 50-59% (average = 55)
E = 40-49% (average = 45)
F = 33 1/3-39% (average = 36)

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03
☐	04
☐	05
☐	06

19. In your opinion, what influence will your final school examinations have on your present studies? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Great influence
Little influence
No influence

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03

63. What study skills do you use at present? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

I memorize the content of the study manuals or textbooks.
I try to understand and apply the content of the study manuals or textbooks.
I both memorize and try to understand and apply the content of the study manuals or textbooks.
I rely totally on studying previous assignments and examination papers.

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03
☐	04

64. Is there a centre (i.e. a hall or office) with a TELEPHONE near your home or school where you could have meetings with other Vista students? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Yes
No

☐	01
☐	02

65. Do you think it would be possible to gather between 10 and 20 Vista students at such a centre every two weeks? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Yes
No

☐	01
☐	02

66. How many hours, on average, do you expect to devote to the study of your subjects each week? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Five hours or less per week
Between five and 10 hours per week
Between 10 and 15 hours per week
More than 15 hours per week

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03
☐	04

67. What personal expectations do you have of your studies at Vista? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

I expect them to be uninteresting, but essential.
I expect them to be partially interesting.
I expect them to be very interesting and exciting.

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03

68. What are your TWO main fears as regards your Vista studies? (Make crosses in TWO appropriate blocks.)

How to study effectively on my own
How best to plan my time
How to keep to a study timetable
How to do the assignments well
How to handle stress
How to cope with examinations
How to cope with the impersonal learning situation
Other (Specify)

☐	01
☐	02
☐	03
☐	04
☐	05
☐	06
☐	07
☐	08

57. What is your opinion of the quality of the Vista Study Manuals? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Excellent | ☐ | 01 |
| Very good | ☐ | 02 |
| Satisfactory | ☐ | 03 |
| Unsatisfactory | ☐ | 04 |
| Of very little use | ☐ | 05 |

STUDY METHODS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

58. Do you expect study methods to cause you any problems this year? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| I do not expect to have any problems. | ☐ | 01 |
| I expect to experience some study problems. | ☐ | 02 |
| I expect study methods to be one of my major problems. | ☐ | 03 |

59. What are your prospects for study at home? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Practically impossible | ☐ | 01 |
| Fairly difficult | ☐ | 02 |
| Convenient | ☐ | 03 |

60. What study space do you have available? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| The study room at home | ☐ | 01 |
| The diningroom/kitchen at home | ☐ | 02 |
| A study in my bedroom | ☐ | 03 |
| A study at school (classroom or school library) | ☐ | 04 |
| The public library | ☐ | 05 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 06 |

61. What media do you have available at home? (You may make a cross in more than one appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|----|
| Radio | ☐ | 01 |
| Tape recorder | ☐ | 02 |
| TV | ☐ | 03 |
| Video recorder | ☐ | 04 |
| Home computer | ☐ | 05 |

62. Generally, how important is it for you to do BETTER than merely obtain a PASS in the subjects you study? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| Very important | ☐ | 01 |
| Of some importance | ☐ | 02 |
| Not important - I would be happy if I could pass | ☐ | 03 |

SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

20. How many years have you been teaching? (Enter one number in each part of the block.) 01

21. What is your most recently completed teaching qualification? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| PTC (LPTC, HPTC, PEC) | ☐ | 01 |
| SPTC | ☐ | 02 |
| JSTC | ☐ | 03 |
| SED (University of Zululand) | ☐ | 04 |
| SEC (Vista University) | ☐ | 05 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 06 |

22. In which year did you obtain your present qualification? 01
(Enter one number in each part of the block.)

23. What subjects did you study and what symbols did you obtain for this qualification? (Enter the names of the subjects in the spaces provided below, and enter the symbol obtained for each subject in the corresponding block.)

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|----|
| | ☐ | 01 |
| | ☐ | 02 |
| | ☐ | 03 |
| | ☐ | 04 |
| | ☐ | 05 |
| | ☐ | 06 |

24. In which demographic area is the school where you teach located? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| City (e.g. Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein) | ☐ | 01 |
| Large town (e.g. Kroonstad, Uitenhage, Potch) | ☐ | 02 |
| Small country town (e.g. Hammanskraal, Brandfort, Kirkwood) | ☐ | 03 |
| Rural area without a town in the immediate vicinity | ☐ | 04 |

25. What is the number of students at the school where you teach? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Over 1000 pupils | ☐ | 01 |
| Between 500 and 1000 pupils | ☐ | 02 |
| Between 200 and 500 pupils | ☐ | 03 |
| Less than 200 pupils | ☐ | 04 |

26. What is the total number of teaching staff at the school where you teach? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Thirty-five or more	☐	01
Between five and 34	☐	02
Less than five	☐	03

27. How many of the present teachers at the school where you teach are Vista students? (Make a cross in the appropriate block in column A or column B, or, if applicable, in both column A and column B.)

	Further Training distance study (A)	Part-time degree study (B)
Two	☐ 01	☐ 01
Three	☐ 02	☐ 02
Four	☐ 03	☐ 03
Five	☐ 04	☐ 04
More than five	☐ 05	☐ 05

28. At which type of school do you teach? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

General (Academic)	☐	01
Technical	☐	02
Agricultural	☐	03
Commercial	☐	04
Other (Specify)	☐	05

29. What is your present professional level? (You may make a cross in more than one appropriate block.)

Nursery school teacher (Pre-primary)	☐	01
Junior primary teacher (Gr 1-Std 2)	☐	02
Senior primary teacher (Std 3-5)	☐	03
Junior secondary teacher (Std 6-7)	☐	04
Senior secondary teacher (Std 8-10)	☐	05
Head of department	☐	06
Deputy principal	☐	07
School principal	☐	08
School inspector	☐	09
Other (Specify)	☐	10

30. At which type of institution are you employed at present? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

Government school	☐	01
Private school	☐	02
Church school	☐	03
Technical college	☐	04
Other (Specify)	☐	05

SECTION E: ACADEMIC STUDY, SUBJECTS, STUDY METHODS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

53. For which academic subjects are you enrolled at present (column A), and which academic subjects are you teaching at present (column B)? (Make a cross in the appropriate block(s) in BOTH columns.)

	Enrolled for (A)	Teaching (B)
Accounting	☐ 01	☐ 01
Afrikaans	☐ 02	☐ 02
Biblical Studies	☐ 03	☐ 03
Biology	☐ 04	☐ 04
Business Economics	☐ 05	☐ 05
Economics	☐ 06	☐ 06
English	☐ 07	☐ 07
Geography	☐ 08	☐ 08
History	☐ 09	☐ 09
Home Management	☐ 10	☐ 10
Mathematics	☐ 11	☐ 11
Nutrition	☐ 12	☐ 12
Physical Science	☐ 13	☐ 13
None of the above		☐ 14

54. Who influenced you in your choice of the academic subjects for which you enrolled. (Indicate which ONE of the following was the most important influence on you by making a cross in the appropriate block.)

No-one influenced me - I made my own decision.	☐	01
Friends or acquaintances advised me.	☐	02
Parents/relatives	☐	03
Colleagues	☐	04
Articles in the news media and magazines	☐	05
Vista Student Adviser	☐	06
Vista subject groupings	☐	07
Other (Specify)	☐	08

55. Do you experience any negative influences that could affect your studies? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

No	☐	01
Hardly any	☐	02
Some, but I can cope with them	☐	03
Yes, definitely (Specify)	☐	04

56. What is the applicability of the subjects for which you are enrolled? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

I teach one of them.	☐	01
I teach both of them.	☐	02
I hope to teach them later.	☐	03
They are of no use in Primary school teaching.	☐	04

46. If you had a choice, where would you have chosen to receive further training? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| Vista Further Training Campus | ☐ | 01 |
| Vista Contact Campus (i.e. Soweto, Mamelodi, Sebokeng, etc) | ☐ | 02 |
| Another university in South Africa | ☐ | 03 |
| A university outside South Africa | ☐ | 04 |
47. How was your registration at Vista handled? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Very well | ☐ | 01 |
| Satisfactorily | ☐ | 02 |
| Poorly (Please state details.) | ☐ | 03 |
48. When did you receive your study materials? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| On registration (at Mutual Park) | ☐ | 01 |
| Two/three weeks after registration (by mail) | ☐ | 02 |
| Too late for the first assignment (by mail) | ☐ | 03 |
49. What was your impression of your contact with Vista University? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Better than expected | ☐ | 01 |
| As expected | ☐ | 02 |
| Not as good as expected | ☐ | 03 |
50. Judging from your present experience, when would you prefer to enroll at Vista in future? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| As soon as the results are available | ☐ | 01 |
| Before 15 December | ☐ | 02 |
| As at present (in January/February) | ☐ | 03 |
51. Considering your professional duties and domestic circumstances, when would you prefer to write your Vista examinations? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| In October, as at present | ☐ | 01 |
| After the December holidays | ☐ | 02 |
| In the middle of the year (June/July) | ☐ | 03 |
| At another time (Specify) | ☐ | 04 |
52. What is your opinion of the length of the academic year? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|----|
| Too long | ☐ | 01 |
| Long enough | ☐ | 02 |
| Too short | ☐ | 03 |

31. Were school activities at this institution disrupted by political unrest during this year (1989)? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|----|
| Yes | ☐ | 01 |
| No | ☐ | 02 |
32. What is the nature of your participation in extra-curricular activities at school (e.g. tennis, soccer, choir, etc)? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| Coaching | ☐ | 01 |
| Organization | ☐ | 02 |
| Supervision at school functions/events | ☐ | 03 |
| I do not participate because facilities are not available. | ☐ | 04 |
| I do not participate because of personal reasons. | ☐ | 05 |
33. What study facilities are available at the school where you teach? (You may make a cross in more than one appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----|
| School library | ☐ | 01 |
| Radio | ☐ | 02 |
| Tape recorder | ☐ | 03 |
| TV | ☐ | 04 |
| Video recorder | ☐ | 05 |
| Computer | ☐ | 06 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 07 |
34. Describe your professional ability regarding the teaching of school subjects before you enrolled at Vista. (Make a cross in the appropriate block in BOTH column A and column B.)
- | | Academic content (A) | Teaching method (B) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I was confident and knew exactly what to do. | ☐ 01 | ☐ 01 |
| I was teaching but not completely confident. | ☐ 02 | ☐ 02 |
| I was very unsure. | ☐ 03 | ☐ 03 |

SECTION D: STUDENTS' CIRCUMSTANCES, IMPRESSIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF VISTA

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

35. Personal accommodation (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)
- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Own house | ☐ | 01 |
| Rented house | ☐ | 02 |
| Room (with friends or relatives) | ☐ | 03 |
| Boarding house | ☐ | 04 |
| School hostel | ☐ | 05 |
| Temporary structure | ☐ | 06 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 07 |

36. Type of power supply to your accomodation (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Permanent electric supply | ☐ | 01 |
| Electric generator (220 volt) | ☐ | 02 |
| Battery power | ☐ | 03 |
| No power supply | ☐ | 04 |
| Cylinder gas | ☐ | 05 |
| Candles | ☐ | 06 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 07 |

37. Type of water supply to your accomodation (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| Running water in the home | ☐ | 01 |
| Water obtained from a communal tap outside | ☐ | 02 |
| Water obtained from a stream, fountain or well | ☐ | 03 |
| Containers of purchased water | ☐ | 04 |

38. Type of postal service you use for Vista studies (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| Postal delivery to your home | ☐ | 01 |
| Postal delivery to your own Post Office box | ☐ | 02 |
| Postal delivery to the school where you teach | ☐ | 03 |
| Postal delivery to a collection point (station, farmstore) | ☐ | 04 |
| Postal delivery to a communal Post Office box | ☐ | 05 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 06 |

39. Frequency of mail collection/receipt (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|----|
| Daily | ☐ | 01 |
| Weekly | ☐ | 02 |
| Fortnightly | ☐ | 03 |
| Monthly | ☐ | 04 |

40. Quality of the Vista postal service (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Very good | ☐ | 01 |
| Satisfactory | ☐ | 02 |
| Not satisfactory | ☐ | 03 |

41. Amount of time you spend travelling TO and FROM school each day (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| - Less than 15 minutes | ☐ | 01 |
| - Between 15 and 30 minutes | ☐ | 02 |
| - Between 30 minutes and one hour | ☐ | 03 |
| - Between one hour and two hours | ☐ | 04 |
| - More than two hours | ☐ | 05 |

42. Mode of transport you use daily (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----|
| I go on foot | ☐ | 01 |
| Animal-drawn cart | ☐ | 02 |
| Car | ☐ | 03 |
| Bus | ☐ | 04 |
| Train | ☐ | 05 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 06 |

EXPECTATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

43. Before registering at Vista University, what type of information did you feel you had received about the University? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| All relevant information | ☐ | 01 |
| Insufficient information | ☐ | 02 |

44. By what means did you obtain the most useful information about Vista? (Make a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| Correspondence with the University administration | ☐ | 01 |
| Correspondence with the University Student Adviser | ☐ | 02 |
| Personal contact with the University administration | ☐ | 03 |
| Personal contact with the University Student Adviser | ☐ | 04 |
| Contact with school colleagues | ☐ | 05 |
| Contact with friends/relatives | ☐ | 06 |
| Radio broadcasts | ☐ | 07 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 08 |

45. What was the main reason why you enrolled at the Vista Further Training Campus? (Indicate the MOST important reason by making a cross in the appropriate block.)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| To improve my skills as a teacher | ☐ | 01 |
| To qualify in an acceptable field of advanced study offered by the Further Training Campus | ☐ | 02 |
| For personal fulfilment | ☐ | 03 |
| For social reasons (e.g. some of my friends were studying, because of the status I would receive, etc) | ☐ | 04 |
| It was expected of me (by my family or superiors) | ☐ | 05 |
| To be moved into a higher category and earn more money | ☐ | 06 |
| Other (Specify) | ☐ | 07 |

10. If you do not own an audio tape recorder, would you be interested in ordering an inexpensive electrical/battery operated model through mail order?

- A Yes
- B No
- C It depends on the price

11. If you own an audio tape recorder would you be prepared to pay R10 for each tape you order?

- A Yes
- B No

12. Do you have a telephone at home?

- A Yes
- B No

13. If not, is there a place with a telephone near you from where you could phone your lecturer to discuss a problem?

- A At school
- B At the community hall
- C At a local library
- D At the Post Office
- E Nowhere

14. Do you at the moment read each Tutorial Letter carefully to be advised of available audio-visual aids?

- A Always
- B Sometimes
- C Never

15. Would you be prepared to come to Pretoria at your own expense during the winter holidays to receive lectures, if this can be arranged?

- A Yes, definitely
- B No
- C Uncertain

Please place your completed response card in the attached prepaid envelope and mail it IMMEDIATELY.

Once more thank you for your co-operation.

DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT VISTA UNIVERSITY

Dear student

QUESTIONNAIRE ON AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

This questionnaire is only being sent to the 1993 History 160 and Geography 160 students.

Vista University is doing continuous research to improve the quality of its teaching. Assisting our distance learning students in their studies, in an attempt to improve their chances of success, is part of this improvement. In this research, we are now considering the inclusion of audio-visual aids in your courses as supplementary study material.

But what are audio-visual (A/V) aids?

The audio-visual aids we are thinking of, are:

Audiotapes - An audiotape is played on a tape-recorder (Walkman). The lecturer speaks to you and you can hear his/her voice.

Videotapes - You put this tape into a VCR (Video Cassette Recorder) which plays the videotape. You watch this on a TV screen and can see and hear your message. This can be very interesting because you can also see things like maps or historical events discussed in your course.

Photoslides - This you put into a small slide viewer (which does not need power) or into a slide projector, to see pictures of the things discussed in your study manual. It is also possible to look at the slides while listening to an audiotape.

What is the purpose of using audio-visual aids in studying?

As teachers you all know that it is very important to demonstrate/illustrate the knowledge to be learnt. Using A/V aids you can hear your lecturer explaining something to you or see ecology (GGR) situations which are dealt with in your manuals. This makes it easier for you to understand the work. It also helps you to remember what you have learnt, and because you used your ears and eyes, it makes it easier for you to think about a problem, and to discuss it.

Before we can include these things in your courses, we must find out if our students would be interested in, and be in a position to use these aids. Without your contribution the Department of Institutional Development and our lecturers, won't be able to do this research.

You are therefore kindly requested to respond to the accompanying questionnaire by filling in a response card.

This is a short questionnaire. To respond to it should not take more than 15 minutes of your time. Therefore, please do it IMMEDIATELY and return the response card in the prepaid envelope to Vista today.

All response cards must reach us by not later than 15 June 1993.

In the interest of an improved course we thank you for your cooperation.



MR PAUL BENEKE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PS: If there is anything you do not understand you can contact me at:
(012) 322 1303 X301

INSTRUCTIONS

The response card is the same as the one used in your multiple choice question assignments, and must be used in the same way.

- Do not mark, bend or fold the card
- Complete the personal details on the card
- The code for HIS160 is _____
- The code for GGR160 is _____
- Use an HB pencil to fill in the answers. Do not make the mark too big or too thin. Only make one mark for each question.
- Do not rub out or give more than one answer. If you do, the optical reader will reject the card. If a card is spoilt, tear it up and use a new one.
- Also remember - there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer as honestly and correctly as possible.

Example

1 (A) ~~(B)~~ (C) (D) (E)

This means you have chosen answer B

1. If audio-visual aids are added to your study manuals as a voluntary optional, would you use them?
 - A Yes
 - B No
 - C Uncertain
2. Do you have electrical power at home?
 - A Yes
 - B No
3. Do you have electrical power at school?
 - A Yes
 - B No
4. If your answer to question 2 is No, could you use battery operated equipment?
 - A Yes
 - B No
 - C Uncertain
5. Do you have an audio tape recorder/Walkman at home?
 - A Yes
 - B No
6. Do you have a videotape player (VCR) at home?
 - A Yes
 - B No
7. Do you have a personal computer (PC) at home?
 - A Yes
 - B No
8. Do you have a photo-slide viewer (or slide projector) at home?
 - A Yes
 - B No
9. Where else can you get access to one or more of these aids?
 - A At school
 - B At a friend's home
 - C At a study centre
 - D At a library

VISTA UNIVERSITY



DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

24 July 1998

Dear Student

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR VUDEC STUDENTS, 1998

The two questionnaires are part of a study of the personal, social and academic problems experienced by students. It is intended only for students who registered at Vista University for SEC, SEC (Home Economics), SED and SED (Home Economics).

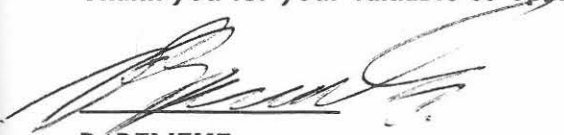
The study and adjustment problems of distance learning students at universities are still a major cause of concern. In spite of various investigations and serious efforts to find solutions, universities continue to search for solutions to these problems. It is essential that universities should do everything possible to help students with their problems and to reduce the number of unsuccessful students. Your participation will contribute towards solutions to these problems by answering these questionnaires fully and honestly.

The aim of the two questionnaires is to determine the specific circumstances, background, expectations and needs of distance learning students. Information acquired in this manner can help Vista University to provide better guidance to its students.

Please comply with the following general instructions when filling in the questionnaires:

1. In your own and your fellow students' interest, please answer the questions as **HONESTLY** as possible. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. The information you provide will be treated as **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**, and your name does not appear on the questionnaires.
2. Please read each question carefully, and answer it immediately, as instructed, before proceeding to the next question. If you work in this way, it should not take you more than 30 minutes to fill in the questionnaires.
3. Please **DO NOT** photostat the computer answer sheets that have been sent to somebody else for your own use.
4. Please fill in the questionnaires **TODAY**, and post it as soon as possible in the prepaid envelope that has been provided.

Thank you for your valuable co-operation!



P. BENEKE
Researcher

DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INSTRUCTIONS

DO NOT MARK YOUR ANSWERS ON YOUR QUESTIONNAIRES.

1. Use the computer answer sheets included to answer the questionnaires.
2. DO NOT write anything in the block on the right hand side where you usually write your name. The research is done anonymously. So ignore Instruction 2 on the computer answer sheet.

3. Enter the codes provided below on the sheet as follows:

EXAMPLE ONLY — CODE:

7	8	9	0
---	---	---	---

STUDENT NO.										SHEET CODE																			
0																													
1										2										SURNAME & INITIALS									
2										3										ADDRESS									
3										4																			
4										5																			
5										6																			
6										7										POSTAL CODE									
7										8										STUDENT NO.									
8										9																			
9										0										SUBJECT									
0										1										COURSE CODE									
1										2										ASSIGNMENT NO.									
2										3										SHEET CODE									
3										4																			
4										5																			
5										6																			
6										7																			
7										8																			
8										9																			
9										0																			

4. ♦ If you are a SEC student, use the code

1	5	1	1
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire I and

1	5	1	2
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire II.
- ♦ If you are a SEC (Home Economics) student, use the code

1	5	2	1
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire I and

1	5	2	2
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire II.
- ♦ If you are a SED student, use the code

1	5	3	1
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire I and

1	5	3	2
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire II.
- ♦ If you are a SED (Home Economics) student, use the code

1	5	4	1
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire I and

1	5	4	2
---	---	---	---

 for Questionnaire II.

You may enter your student number, **if you wish**.

5. Use ONLY a pencil to mark your computer answer sheets.

6. Examples of questions answered

Example 1 — Question 1 (sex)

If you are male, mark

1 ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

Example 2 — Question 3 and 4

NB: Mark either Question 3 OR Question 4

If your language is Southern Sotho, mark

3 ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D ☐ E

Example 3 — Question 7 and 8

NB: Mark either Question 7 OR Question 8

If you are a member of the Zulu group, mark

8 ☐ A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

Example 4 — Question 9

If your age is 27 (last birthday), you mark

9 ☐ A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

Also read the instructions on the computer answer sheet. Ignore Instructions 2 and 3, but remember to shade the correct sheet code.

PLEASE DO ALL THE OTHER QUESTIONS IN THE SAME WAY.

If possible, please complete the two computer answer sheets **TODAY**, and mail them **IMMEDIATELY, BUT NOT LATER THAN 15 AUGUST 1998.**

QUESTIONNAIRE I

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Sex
 - A Male
 - B Female
2. Certificate/diploma for which you are registered at Vista University
 - A Secondary Education Certificate
 - B Secondary Education Certificate (Home Economics)
 - C Secondary Education Diploma
 - D Secondary Education Diploma (Home Economics)
3. Language group
 - A Afrikaans/English
 - B Northern Sotho
 - C Southern Sotho
 - D Swati
 - E Tsonga
4.
 - A Tswana
 - B Venda
 - C Xhosa
 - D Zulu
 - E Other
5. Marital Status
 - A Unmarried
 - B Married
 - C Separated
 - D Divorced
 - E Widowed
6. State of health
 - A Poor
 - B Fair
 - C Good
 - D Excellent
7. National group
 - A Sotho
 - B Zulu
 - C Tswana
 - D Xhosa
 - E Tsonga

8.
 - A Swazi
 - B Ndebele
 - C Venda
 - D Namibian
 - E Other
9. Your age in years on your last birthday
 - A under 25
 - B 25—29
 - C 30—34
 - D 35—40
 - E over 40
10. Number of children
 - A None
 - B One
 - C Two
 - D Three
 - E More than three
11. Number of adults (over 18 years of age) living with you in your home
 - A Alone
 - B One
 - C Two
 - D Three
 - E Four or more
12. Number of children (under 18 years of age) living with you in your home
 - A Alone
 - B One
 - C Two
 - D Three
 - E Four or more
13. The province in which you live at present.
 - A Gauteng
 - B Mpumalanga
 - C North-West
 - D Northern Province
 - E Free State
14.
 - A Eastern Cape
 - B Northern Cape
 - C Western Cape
 - D KwaZulu Natal
 - E Namibia

15. Funding of your studies
- A I paid for my studies myself (from earnings)
 - B My husband/wife paid
 - C A relative paid
 - D I obtained a bursary or loan
 - E Not one of the above
16. Gross income per month (fully monthly salary before anything is deducted)
- A R2 500 and less per month
 - B R2 501 to R4 500 per month
 - C R4 501 to R6 500 per month
 - D R6 501 to R8 500 per month
 - E R8 501 and more per month
17. I would prefer to pay for my studies as follows:
- A In full, when I register in January
 - B In advance (November/December)
 - C In six installments
 - D In twelve installments

SECTION B: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

18. Your final school qualification
- A Matriculation/Matriculation Exemption Certificate
 - B Senior Certificate (without matriculation exemption)
19. Year in which you obtained your Matriculation/Senior Certificate
- A Between 1992 and 1996
 - B Between 1987 and 1991
 - C Between 1982 and 1986
 - D Between 1977 and 1981
 - E Before 1977
20. Institution where you finished your secondary education
- A Government school
 - B Private school
 - C Correspondence school
 - D Adult education centre
21. AVERAGE percentage you obtained in final school examinations
- A 70-100% (average = 75) [A + B aggregate]
 - B 60-69% (average = 65) [C aggregate]
 - C 50-59% (average = 55) [D aggregate]
 - D 40-49% (average = 45) [E aggregate]
 - E 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -39% (average = 36) [F aggregate]

22. In your opinion, what influence will your final school examinations have on your present studies?
- A Great influence
 - B Little influence
 - C No influence

SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

23. How many years have you been teaching?
- A This is my first year of teaching
 - B 1-5 years
 - C 6-10 years
 - D 11-15 years
 - E More than 15 years
24. What is your most recently completed teaching qualifications?
- A PTC (LPTC, HPTC, PEC)
 - B SPTC
 - C JSTC
 - E SED (University of Zululand) or SEC (Vista University)
 - F Unqualified
25. How long ago did you obtain the above qualification?
- A 1997
 - B 1-3 years ago
 - C 4-6 years ago
 - D 7-9 years ago
 - E 10 years or more
26. In which demographic area is the school where you teach located?
- A City (e.g. Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein)
 - B Large town (e.g. Kroonstad, Uitenhage, Potchefstroom)
 - C Small country town (e.g. Hammanskraal, Brandfort, Kirkwood)
 - D Rural area without a town in the immediate vicinity
27. What is the number of students at the school where you teach?
- A Over 1000 pupils
 - B Between 500 and 1000 pupils
 - C Between 200 and 500 pupils
 - D Less than 200 pupils
28. What is the total number of teaching staff at the school where you teach?
- A 35 or more
 - B Between 21 and 34
 - C Between 5 and 20
 - D Less than 5

29. How many of the present teachers at the school where you teach are Vista students?
- A Two
 - B Three
 - C Four
 - D Five
 - E More than five
30. At which type of school do you teach?
- A Primary school
 - B General (Grade 1-12)
 - C Junior High School (to Grade 9)
 - D Secondary School
 - E Community school (mixed classes)
31. What is your present professional teacher status?
- A Junior primary teacher (Grade 1-4)
 - B Senior primary teacher (Grade 5-7)
 - C Junior secondary teacher (Grade 8-9)
 - D Senior secondary teacher (Grade 10-12)
 - E Supervisory level (HOD, Deputy, Headmaster)
32. At which type of institution are you employed at present?
- A Government school
 - B Private school
 - C Church school
 - D Technical College
 - E Community school
33. Have school activities at your institution been disrupted by student unrest during ...
- A 1997
 - B 1994-1996
 - C 1989-1993
 - D None of the above
 - E All of the above
34. What is the nature of your participation in extra-curricular activities at school (e.g. tennis, soccer, choir, etc.)? (Mark only one)
- A Coaching
 - B Organization
 - C Supervision at school functions/events
 - D I do not participate because facilities are not available
 - E I do not participate because of personal reasons
35. Do you have a library at the school where you teach which you can use of study?
- A Yes
 - B No

36. Do you have a radio at the school where you teach that can be used for lecture broadcasts?
- A Yes
B No
37. Do you have a tape recorder at the school where you teach that you can use to listen to taped lectures?
- A Yes
B No
38. Do you have a television (TV) at the school where you teach that you can use for televised lectures?
- A Yes
B No
39. Do you have a video cassette recorder (VCR) at the school where you teach that you can use to see a VUDEC videotape?
- A Yes
B No
40. Do you have a computer (PC) at the school where you teach that you are allowed to use for your studies?
- A Yes
B No
41. Do you have none of the above at the school where you teach?
- A Yes
B No
42. Describe your professional ability regarding your teaching of school subjects
- A I consider myself an expert in the subject I teach.
B I teach a subject I was trained to teach.
C I teach a subject I am experienced in, but wasn't trained to teach.
D I teach a subject in which I have no training or experience, but I'm coping.
E I am not coping with the subject I teach.

SECTION D: STUDENTS' CIRCUMSTANCES

43. Personal accommodation
- A Own house
B Rented house
C Room (with friends or relatives)
D School hostel
E Temporary structure

44. Source of light at your place of accommodation
- A Permanent electric supply
 - B Electric generator (220 volt)
 - C Battery power
 - D Cylinder gas
 - E Candles
45. Type of water supply to your place of accommodation
- A Running water in the home
 - B Water obtained from a communal tap outside
 - C Water obtained from a stream, fountain or well
 - D Containers of purchased water
46. Type of postal service you use for your Vista studies
- A Postal delivery to your home
 - B Postal delivery to your own Post Office box
 - C Postal delivery to the school where you teach
 - D Postal delivery to a collection point (station, farm store)
 - E Postal delivery to a communal Post Office box
47. Frequency of mail collection/receipt
- A Daily
 - B Weekly
 - C Fortnightly
 - D Monthly
48. Quality of the Vista postal service
- A Very good
 - B Satisfactory
 - C Not satisfactory
49. Amount of time you spend travelling TO and FROM school each day
- A Less than 15 minutes
 - B Between 15 and 30 minutes
 - C Between 30 minutes and one hour
 - D Between one hour and two hours
 - E More than two hours
50. Mode of transport you use daily
- A I go on foot
 - B Bus
 - C Taxi
 - D Own car
 - E Train

Now complete Questionnaire II on the second computer answer sheet.
REMEMBER TO MARK THE NEW SHEET CODE.

QUESTIONNAIRE II

SECTION E: EXPECTATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

1. Before registering at Vista University, what was the quality of the information you had received about the University?
 - A All relevant information
 - B Insufficient information
 - C No information at all
2. From whom did you obtain the most useful information about Vista?
 - A School colleagues
 - B The University administration
 - C Friends/relatives
 - D A University Student Adviser
 - E Posters and newspapers
3. What was the main reason why you enrolled at the Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC)? (Indicate the MOST important reason.)
 - A To improve my skills as a teacher
 - B To qualify in an acceptable field of advanced study offered by VUDEC
 - C For personal fulfilment
 - D For social reasons (e.g. some of my friends were studying; because of the status I would receive; etc.)
 - E To be moved into a higher category and earn more money
4. If you had a choice, where would you have chosen to receive further training?
 - A VUDEC
 - B Vista contact campus (i.e. Soweto, Mamelodi, Sebokeng, etc.)
 - C Another university in South Africa
 - D A university outside South Africa
 - E Another college (such as SACTE)
5. How was your registration at Vista handled?
 - A Very well
 - B Satisfactorily
 - C Poorly
6. When did you receive your study materials?
 - A On registration (at Mutual Park)
 - B Two/three weeks after registration (by mail)
 - C Too late for the first assignment (by mail)
7. What was your impression of your contact with Vista University?
 - A Excellent
 - B Better than expected
 - C As expected
 - D Not as good as expected
 - E Very unsatisfactory

8. Judging from your present experience, when would you prefer to enrol at Vista in future?
- A As soon as the results are available
 - B As at present (in January/February)
 - C Before 15 December
 - D Throughout the year
9. Considering your professional duties and domestic circumstances, when would you prefer to write your Vista examinations?
- A In October, as at present
 - B After the December holidays
 - C In the middle of the year (June/July)
 - D A combination of A, B & C
10. What is your opinion of the length of the academic year?
- A Too long
 - B Long enough
 - C Too short

SECTION F: ACADEMIC STUDY, SUBJECTS, STUDY METHODS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

11. For which academic subjects are you enrolled at present?
- A Accounting
 - B African Languages
 - C Agricultural Science
 - D Applied Science
 - E Religious Studies
- 12.
- A Biology
 - B Business Management
 - C Clothing Technology
 - D Economics
 - E Education
- 13.
- A English
 - B Food
 - C Geography
 - D History
 - E Home Management
- 14.
- A Mathematics
 - B Nutrition
 - C Physical Science
 - D Afrikaans
 - E None of the above

15. Which academic subjects are you teaching at present?
- A Accounting
 - B African Languages
 - C Agricultural Science
 - D Applied Science
 - E Religious Studies
16. A Biology
B Business Management
C Clothing Technology
D Economics
E Education
17. A English
B Food
C Geography
D History
E Home Management
18. A Mathematics
B Nutrition
C Physical Science
D Afrikaans
E None of the above
19. Who influenced you in your choice of the academic subjects for which you enrolled?
(Indicate which ONE of the following was the MOST important influence on you.)
- A No-one influenced me — I made my own decision.
 - B Vista subject groupings
 - C Friends or acquaintances advised me
 - D Colleagues
 - E Vista Student Adviser
20. Do you experience any negative influences that could affect your studies?
- A No
 - B Hardly any
 - C Some, but I can cope with them
 - D Yes, definitely
21. Give your reason for choosing the subjects for which you are enrolled.
- A I teach one of them
 - B I teach both of them
 - C I hope to teach them later
 - D I only chose them to upgrade my qualification
 - E I have no specific reason

22. What is your opinion of the quality of the VUDEC study materials?

- A Excellent
- B Very good
- C Satisfactory
- D Unsatisfactory
- E Of very little use

SECTION G: STUDY METHODS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

23. Do you expect study methods to cause you any problems this year?

- A I do not expect to have any problems
- B I expect to experience some study problems
- C I expect study methods to be one of my major problems

24. What are your domestic study circumstances?

- A Practically impossible
- B Fairly difficult
- C Convenient
- D Good
- E Excellent

25. What study space do you have available?

- A The diningroom/kitchen at home
- B I study in my bedroom
- C I study at school (classroom or school library)
- D The study room at home
- E The public library

26. Do you have a radio available at home?

- A Yes
- B No

27. Do you have a audio tape recorder available at home?

- A Yes
- B No

28. Do you have a television (TV) available at home?

- A Yes
- B No

29. Do you have a video cassette recorder (VCR) available at home?

- A Yes
- B No

30. Do you have a home computer (PC) available at home?

- A Yes
- B No

31. Generally, how important is it for you to do BETTER than merely obtain a PASS in the subjects you study?
- A Very important
 - B Of some importance
 - C Not important — I would be happy if I could pass

In items 32-35, choose the option that BEST describes the study skills you use at present.

32. I memorize the content of the study manuals or textbooks
- A Yes
 - B No
 - C Sometimes
33. I try to understand and apply the content of the study manuals or textbooks.
- A Yes
 - B No
 - C Sometimes
34. I both memorize and try to understand and apply the content of the study manuals or textbooks.
- A Yes
 - B No
 - C Sometimes
35. I rely totally on studying previous assignments and examination papers.
- A Yes
 - B No
 - C Sometimes
36. Is there a centre (ie. a hall or office) with a TELEPHONE near your home or school where you could have meetings with other Vista students?
- A Yes
 - B No
 - C Not that I know of
37. Is there a formal **study centre** near your home or school where you could join other Vista students for tutoring?
- A Yes
 - B No
 - C Not that I know of
38. Do you think it would be possible to gather between 10 and 20 VUDEC students at such a centre every two weeks?
- A Yes
 - B No

39. How many hours, on average, do you expect to devote to the study of all your subjects each week?
- A Five hours or less per week
 - B Between five and 10 hours per week
 - C Between 10 and 15 hours per week
 - D More than 15 hours per week
40. What personal expectations do you have of your studies at Vista?
- A I expect them to be very interesting and exciting.
 - B I expect them to be partially interesting.
 - C I expect them to be uninteresting, but essential.
41. What is your main fear as regards your Vista studies?
- A How to study effectively on my own
 - B How to keep to a study timetable
 - C How best to plan my time
 - D How to cope with examinations
 - E How to do the assignments well

SECTION H: EXPECTATIONS ABOUT VISTA STAFF

42. Lecturers should take into consideration that I need to be assisted in my studies.
- A Yes — completely
 - B Only sometimes
 - C Unsure
 - D No — I will cope on my own
 - E They will have unreasonable expectations of me
43. I hope VUDEC will provide counselling for their students by means of ...
- A a student counsellor.
 - B tutor(s).
 - C lecturers.
 - D student administration staff.
 - E I do not require counselling
44. I find the VUDEC administrative staff ...
- A very sympathetic and helpful.
 - B co-operative.
 - C unco-operative.
 - D difficult to approach.
45. When I feel I need student counselling I will ...
- A visit VUDEC in Pretoria.
 - B write a letter.
 - C make a phone call.
 - D contact a tutor.
 - E consult somebody else.

SECTION I: EXPECTATIONS ABOUT DISTANCE STUDY

46. What do you expect distance study at Vista to be?
- A Much the same as study at a Teacher's Training College
 - B Slightly different to study at a Teacher's Training College
 - C A completely new approach
47. Evaluate your personal level of competence in studying in English.
- A Excellent
 - B Good
 - C Satisfactory
 - D Unsatisfactory
 - E Poor
48. What are your plans with regard to the consultation sessions held during lecturer's visits to various centres?
- A I hope to attend all sessions for my subjects
 - B I hope to attend some sessions for my subjects
 - C I plan to attend one session only
 - D I will not be able to attend
49. How often do you expect to have contact with lecturers during the academic year excluding the lecturer visits to centres?
- A Often
 - B Occasionally
 - C Never
50. Do you wish to mention anything not included in these questionnaires?
- A Yes — include a separate letter in the envelope
 - B No

Thank you for your participation and co-operation!

ONDERHOUD / INTERVIEW

As deelvereiste ter voltooiing van MED

As partial requirement for the completion of the MED

MED titel - VOORLIGTING AAN DIE AFSTANDSONDERRIGSTUDENT

MED title - COUNSELLING THE DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENT

Postulaat - Afstandsonderrig is 'n onwegdenkbare werklikheid en 'n onderrigwyse wat wêreldwyd toenemende steun geniet, en voorligting is 'n integrale komponent in die proses.

Postulate - Distance learning is an irrefutable reality and an educational mode that is gaining more and more support worldwide, and counselling is an integral part of this process.

QUESTIONS / VRAE

1. Is die gedagte van voorligting aan die afstandstudent in u mening geregverdig?
Is the notion of counselling of a distance learning student justified in your opinion?
2. Is dit lewensvatbaar?
Is it viable?
3. Wat sou geldige inhoud vir so 'n voorligtingsprogram wees?
What would be valid content for such counselling?
4. Hoe sien u die vorm wat sulke voorligting sal aanneem?
What do you expect the counselling form to be?
5. Is 'n studenteprofiel geregverdig in hierdie situasie?
Is a student profile justified in this situation?
6. Is daar enige spesifieke of besondere komponente wat hierin aandag behoort te geniet?
Are there any specific or special components which you feel deserves attention?
7. Welke gevolgtrekkings sou u hieruit wou identifiseer?
Finally, what conclusions would you like to make?

ONDERHOUD MET PROF HENDRIK GOUS (UNISA) OP 10 MAART 1992

VRAAG: *Is voorligting aan afstandsonderrigstudente lewensvatbaar?*

Eintlik wat ek nou gesê het hier, toe ek gesê het dit is lewensvatbaar hou stand. Die vrae hier is

- die vorm wat sulke voorligting sal aanneem
- die geldige inhoud

In die eerste plek sou ek sê die geldige *inhoud* wat 'n mens in so 'n voorligtingsprogram sal hê, sou beteken dat jy moet juis aandag gee aan die ontwikkeling van die student - eintlik basies, dit wat betrekking het op sy ontwikkeling. M.a.w. dat jy kan help om studente se knelpunte te kan identifiseer

- sy probleme wat hy het
- sy inligting oor homself
- wat al sy moontlikhede is
- beter selfkennis daarvan
- dat hy weet wat sy persoonlikheidsstyl is
- dat hy daarvolgens kan werk

dit wat hom in staat sal stel om 'n bepaalde keuse te maak. Ek dink dat die inhoud van die voorligtingsprogram sal hoofsaaklik daarop konsentreer.

Die *vorm*, dit is natuurlik iets wat 'n mens kan bepaal, deur in die begin 'n toetsprogram aan te wend en bv. met die daarstel daarvan die studente kans gee om toetse af te lê waarmee ek inligting en profiele daar kan stel.

PB Hoe moontlik gaan dit vir ons wees binne die afstandsonderrig?

HG Ek dink mens kan met behulp van moderne tegnieke baie ver kom. 'n Mens kan sekere punte benut; die universiteit self het 'n hele paar sentra waar julle julle studente kan kry, julle afstandsonderrig studente na daardie sentra kan laat kom en waar hulle dan toetse kan aflê, al het julle nie altyd miskien voorligters of dienspersoneel daar nie, maar ek dink met behulp van die rekenaar kan 'n mens bv. baie doen. Daar is toetse wat gerekenariseer kan word. Ek meen daar is sekere profiele wat 'n mens kan bepaal. Ek het onder andere nou die dag na die LASSI (Learning and Study Strategies Inventory) gekyk. Julle ken hom seker. Daar is die Meyers Briggs se Personality Inventory wat 'n persoonlikheidsbeeld kan gee. En ek dink daardie soort van ding kan die studente baie help om 'n bietjie meer te kyk na homself, veral waar hy in 'n studiesituasie moet ingaan en waarin hy dan moet bewus wees van sy vermoëns. Ons weet tog metakognisie is 'n ding wat nou baie veld wen, en met goeie reg ook, omdat 'n student moet homself leer ken, en weet waartoe hy instaat is en sy moontlikhede, en hoe hy homself ten volle kan benut. Ek bedoel, as hy dit nie raaksien nie, dan gaan hy maar op 'n manier aan soos wat sy buurman aangaan, of soos wat die dosent vir hom sê hy moet doen.

Daar is nie in die voorligting plek vir stereotipes nie, maar ongelukkig is ons geneig om baie met stereotipes te werk, juis omdat ons van hierdie gestandaardiseerde toets gebruik maak.

PB Ja, dan stereotipeer jy die mens.

HG Dis reg ja, en dan werk jy volgens die toets se uitslae, se stellings, en dit is een van die dinge; maar gelukkig kom daar al hoe meer ander metodes in soos bv. met persoonlikheidsinventarisse en beelde; persoonlikheidsstyle wat 'n mens kan identifiseer

met metodes en tegnieke, en ook soos ek sê persoonlikheidsstyle wat pas by daardie bepaalde inrigting, sy afstandsonderrig, ens. So daar is baie sulke tegnieke wat 'n mens kan gebruik en ek dink 'n mens kan miskien baie daarvan met die rekenaar doen. Ons sit nou hier met ons belangstellingsvrae wat ons eintlik baie help. Ek dink as mens die soort van tegnieke aanwend dat jy dan moet kyk na bepaalde programme wat die studente sal lok om aan die programme deel te neem. Die groot vraag wat gevra moet word, en ek sal ook 'n geweldige voorstander daarvoor wees, is dat hy "credit bearing" moet wees, hierdie soort kursusse m.a.w. as hy so 'n program deurloop het, dan moet hy daarvoor krediet kry vir sy vak. Dit is tog per slot van sake, 'n leerervaring wat hy deurgaan. Ek meen daardie leerervaring maak hom net meer geleerd. En uiteindelik is dit belangrik in sy opvoeding. M.a.w. hoekom kan hy nie daarvoor krediet kry nie. Ek voorsien die dag wat dit gaan kom. Veral ons twee universiteite wat miskien 'n bietjie kan druk uitoefen omdat ons swart studente kry. Ek sou sê, ons wil hulle nou van een kultuur in 'n ander een indruk, en op die ou end, is dit vir hom 'n traumatiese ervaring om deur te gaan, en as hy nou daardie ervaring kan bemeester of tenminste kan oorkom, ons wil hom nie in 'n bepaalde rigting forseer nie, ons weet nie of dit die regte antwoord sal wees nie, maar as ons hulle daardie ervaring kan laat bemeester is hy dus baie meer volwasse daarna, en binne konteks dan, as hy dan oor die vermoë beskik, kan hy dan nie krediet daarvoor kry nie? 'n Ander vraag is of die aanbieding van sulke programme nie dalk deel moet wees van die kurrikulum nie. Ek is 'n groot voorstander daarvoor. Ek is uitgesproke, en ek wil hoor watter redes voer die mense aan wat sê dit moet nie wees nie. Omdat dit nie sogenaamde akademiese inhoud is nie - wat is akademiese inhoud?

PB Maar sou u dit geïntegreerd in akademiese inhoud sien, of heeltemal losstaande?

HG Ek dink daar is 'n baie sterk saak uit te maak vir integrasie, binne die akademiese inhoud self, binne die vak self. Geïntegreerd in die vak is dit absoluut noodsaaklik. Ek kan nie sien dat hulle die vak kan gee sonder om die ekstrasjies by te gee nie, of om die leeromgewing om sy vak vir die student te skep nie. Hoe kan hy 'n vak aanbied as hy dit nie kan doen nie, hoe kan hy didakties dit regverdig as hy nie die leeromgewing skep soos dit geskep moet word nie. Dis nommer een.

Maar ek voorsien ook nog plek vir die algemeen. Ek dink ook tog dat daardie student se vorming tot 'n groot mate deur die inrigting moet geskied. Ek bedoel nie by vorming dat ek wil hê hy moet môre gaan ja stem vir die Nasionale Party nie. As hy nou gaan vir sy vorming moet hy dit kry, in terme van die akademie, binne die akademie, vir die dosente en so voorts. Hy kan dit in sy vak ontwikkel, maar dan kan hy dit "transfer" na ander vakke toe, goed en wel.

Maar daar is vir my ook nog 'n algemene filosofie agter die saak ook. Om 'n bietjie te kan dink, self te kan dink, op sy eie te kan dink, en buite sy vak te kan dink. So ek sou eintlik voorstel dat, dat daar selfs, dit nie groot "credit bearings" hoef te wees nie, dit kan maar 'n halwe moduletjie of so iets wees. Maar in die vak self, beslis ja. Want as dit nie in die vak is nie, beteken dit die dosent kan nie sy vak onderrig nie. Die vakonderrig, daar is dan goeie, vrugbare grond waarop die saak kan val. Jy moet tog die goeie saaiers uitstuur om dit te doen. Die vorm wat die voorligting sal aanneem moet dus daarna skik want eintlik, dit is geldige inhoud, as 'n mens daarna kyk.

Dat jy die studente in 'n, vir hom, leeromgewing moet kan plaas, of hom behoorlik kan laat gedy binne daai leeromgewing. Dat hy al sy moontlikhede na vore kan bring en benut en kan beantwoord aan sy bepaalde leerstyle en behoeftes, sodat hy daarin kan floreer, want as die boompie bietjie "tough" is, of ten minste, die wind die boompie maklik omwaai, dan moet die voorligter hom maar 'n bietjie stut gee. Dan word hy darem 'n vreeslike groot boom, 'n baie regop boom.

- 'n Studenteprofiel is dan natuurlik geregverdig. Dit is die studenteprofiel, want dit is die inligting wat jy kry, die soort van breë inligting. Maar ook, daar in die proses, kry jy ook inligting wat jy aan die student kan terugvoer.
- Is daar enige spesifieke of besondere komponente wat hierin aandag behoort te geniet? Ek sou sê dit hang natuurlik af van die bepaalde inrigting self. Die inrigting; wat is die omgewing waarbinne die inrigting sy verantwoordelikheid dra? Is dit swart-onderwysersomgewing?

PB Uit en uit.

HG Wat julle hoofsaaklik nog ervaar op die oomblik. Julle mag miskien later verder beweeg as dit.

PB Ja, maar op die stadium net dit.

HG Daar is 'n bepaalde beroepskultuur. Daar is 'n bepaalde kultuur miskien. Daar is 'n bepaalde soort strewe. Daar is allerhande ander bepaalde vrae. Daar is bepaalde soort persoonlikhede en persoonlikheidsstyle wat 'n mens dan daar sal teenkom. Die gevolg is, binne hierdie kultuur, skep dit dan vir jou komponente, bepaalde komponente wat jy miskien in 'n wyer aanbieding nie sal aantref nie. M.a.w. wat vir jou belangrik is, is nie dat jy daardie komponente sal hê nie, maar jy moet die belangrike komponente kan identifiseer ja, wat binne jou bepaalde omgewing gaan werk. So daardie kulturele konteks en die beroepskonteks kan 'n baie belangrike rol speel. Ek dink dit sou seker vrae wees wat jy wel kan aanspreek.

- Nou - 'Welke gevolgtrekkings sou u hieruit wou identifiseer?

Is dit nou gevolgtrekkings wat betrekking het op..?

PB Waaroor ons nou gesels het?

HG Oor dit wat ek nou alles gesels het, m.a.w. oor die vrae en die soort van dinge wat mens nou gevolgtrekkings kan maak.

Nommer een - die eerste gevolgtrekking wat ek maak is dat, maar ek beoordeel nie julle nie, ek beoordeel nie ons nie, ek beoordeel niemand nie, ons dienste in die verband is nog baie - te kort skiet. Met ander woorde die vraag is, kan ons alles hier doen. Het ons nommer een die fasiliteite daarvoor? - is die inrigting in die opsig vir ons ondersteunend genoeg?

- Byvoorbeeld as ons nou praat van 'n pos vir iemand net om 'n crèche te ontwikkel vir die kinders van die studente. Beskik ons oor die opleiding, beskik ons oor die inligting om alles te doen, is die personeel getalle voldoende daarvoor, is die personeel opgelei, is die personeelverskeidenheid genoeg? Kan 'n mens dus 'n situasie hanteer wat jy nou bv. soos ek vind by ons saak, waar ons in afstandsonderrig funksioneer, omdat ons nou met media en metodes doen, wat die gewone ou nie nodig het nie. Hy kan net sê, "Haai boetie kom hier" of sê - "laat die ou uit die klas uit roep" of wat ook al, of by die koshuis, 'n praatjie hou. Maar ons kan nie dit doen nie, ons moet kyk waar ons die student vinnig kan hanteer, jou student is spesifiek, 'n aktiewe, bedrywige student. Hy het nie tyd om vier ure by die voorligter te gaan sit nie, en hy kan net sekere tye van die dag daar kom. M.a.w. hoe fasiliteer ons hom daar, in terme van die tyd beskikbaar, en ook die metodes wat ons dan gebruik om hom te help om hierdie inligting te bekom. Ons het nou gepraat van die rekenaar, maar ons werk nog maar aan programme om baie van die goed te doen. Soos nou persoonlikheidspeilings met behulp van die rekenaar. Ons moet eers 'n goeie meetmiddel kry. Ons sal hopelik nog in die nabye toekoms eendag dalk iets hê wat ons saam met Vista en ander inrigtings wat in dieselfde nood as ons verkeer, kan gebruik om ons werk te doen.

Ek dink daar is gevolgtrekkings wat mens kan maak, dat ons in die opsig nog baie moet kyk na dit wat ons wel kan aanbied, die fasilitering wat ons wel kan gee en seer seker daarvan dat as ons kyk na al hierdie dinge dat jy gaan vind, nommer een, dat jy te kort skiet in die opsig, dat die dienste wat jy graag aanbied te kort skiet. Ons kan die diens aanbied, en wat moet die diens wees, om daaraan te kan beantwoord. Ek dink byvoorbeeld oor die kurrikulum en voorligting. Toe ek begin soek na al hierdie dienste of aspekte waarin die voorligtingsdiens betrokke kan wees, toe kom ek op 'n horde goed af, sodat ek later gedink het daar is te veel daarvan. Wat moet 'n mens dink en weet? Ons praat maar nou van 'n eenvoudige ding soos van "admissions" in jou inrigting, wat se rol speel die voorligter by die "admissions". Geen rol, hoegenaamd nie!

PB Dit kan kardinaal wees.

HG Natuurlik, is dit kardinaal. Want ons sê ons laat die student nie toe nie, omdat hy nie goed genoeg gematrikuleer is, of wat ookal nie, maar watter pogings wend ons aan om ons mense te identifiseer, om te gaan kyk of dit so is? Daar kom jou profiele en goed ook in, dat jy kan sien, as ek nou hierdie persoon aanvaar, is ek tevrede. Ek sal hierdie ou "motorkar" vat, want ek weet ek kan daardie ding "fix".

- Ja.

Dit is die soort van benadering wat ons kan hê. Die vraag is net om dit te kan identifiseer. Ek kan nie nou net gaan op matriekuitslae nie.

Partykeer is ons geforseer in 'n situasie. Julle is tot 'n groot mate geforseer om die kandidatuur wat julle het, te aanvaar. Hy is 'n onderwyser. "He wants some training."

As jy daardie soort situasie het, moet jy daarmee saamleef. Met ander woorde, in daardie situasie moet jy ook lees wat is sy behoeftes. So uiteindelik kom jy en jy weet, daarvolgens moet jy kan sien of jy hom wel so goed kan fasiliteer en jou dienste kan uitbrei, en tot watter mate is jy geïntegreer binne in die inrigting sonder om deel te word daarvan. Binne in die organisasie te verdwyn, onder die onderrigontwikkeling se voorskote.

Daar is ook die soort van situasiebetrokkenheid en dat die lektor maklik kan sê "Nee man, dis nie 'n probleem nie. Daar is voorligtingsdienste, of wat hulle ookal genoem word - Gaan na hulle toe."

Dat hulle partykeer nie eers weet dat daar so iets op die kampus is nie. Daar is party mense wat dit nie eers weet nie, nie eers weet wat se werk die voorligtingsdienste op die oomblik doen nie - kan doen nie. Verlede jaar moes 'n persoon my kom evalueer, my pos kom evalueer. Hy het nie geweet wat voorligting is nie. Dit het ook die gehelp dat ek gesê het hy moet dit bywoon nie. Hy was nie beïndruk daarmee nie. Hy het geen snars verstaan nie. Dit was 'n persoon van buite, nie van binne nie. Maar tog het die universiteit dit goed gevind om iemand van buite te kry om my te evalueer. Maar hy weet nie - hy het nie eers gedink daar moet voorligting in afstandsonderrig wees nie. Hy weet nie eers nie en dit help nie. Dit maak nie saak hoe goed ek my deuntjie speel of tekere gaan nie, hy is nie beïndruk daarmee nie. Ek kon dit op sy gesig lees.

- So daar is sekere gevolgtrekkings wat 'n mens dalk hier kan identifiseer, want ek dink, basies sou dit belangrik wees om binne jou probleemstelling seker daai gevolgtrekkings te antisipeer. En dat, dit is beslis, jy weet, dat die diens is eintlik belangrik, voorligting.

ONDERHOUD MET PROF LOUIS CALITZ (UP) OP 09 MAART 1992

VRAAG 1: *Is the gedagte van voorligting aan die afstandsonderrigstudent na u mening geregverdig?*

ANTWOORD: Paul, ek dink dit is 'n noodsaaklikheid, dat veral hierdie student wat as't ware verwyder is van sy dosent, of in baie opsigte ook van die universiteit af as sodanig. Hy het nie die voorreg wat die gewone residensiële student het om kort-kort as hy 'n probleem ervaar gou by 'n dosent in te hardloop en 'n probleem opgelos te kry en huis toe te gaan en aan te gaan nie. Dus in 'n sekere sin is hy 'n eensaame student. Hy is dus verwyder van die kampus. verwyder van boeke soms, hy is verwyder van direkte toegang tot mense en materiaal. Goed, aan die anderkant moet ek darem ook sê dat die afstandsonderriginstellings het so goed ontwikkel nou dat jy jou kommunikasiemiddele, d.m.v. die telefoon en konferensietelefoon en selfs video- en klankkasette het die dosent ook al probeer om in die voorkamer van die student in te kom, en met hom op hierdie wyse interaksie te voer, die probleme op te los, of selfs d.m.v. rekenaarprogramme die wat vooraf studiegids en goed uitgewerk het, of werkopdragte uitgewerk het, en nou as't ware 'n klomp standaardantwoorde. Nou dit skep weer vertroue by die student, want hoe die student te werk moet gaan om sy studies so te beplan, en dit te bestuur, as ek dit so mag stel. Om dit goed te kan bestuur, beteken dit dan dat hy dan die korrekte, tydige voorligting moet kry. Met ander woorde iemand moet vir hom sê, maar as jy hierdie probleme ervaar met 'n studiegids, skakel daardie persoon, of gaan sien die persoon of raadpleeg die gids of raadpleeg daardie werk onder andere. As hy 'n probleem ervaar van studiemetodes, dan sal hy met die dosent moet kontak maak of hy sal na sy studiegids moet verwys of na studiebriefe. Veral studiebriefe is in hierdie geval baie belangrik omdat dit van tyd tot tyd aan hom deurgegee word deur die dosent. Of hy moet weet waar om bronne te gaan trek, sodat hy dan sy probleem sou identifiseer. So na my mening is studievoorligting aan hierdie student 'n baie belangrike ding. Ek dink selfs ek sal 'n stap verder gaan. Die dosent, die afstandsonderrigdosent moet ook so 'n stel voorligting kry sodat hy kan sien wat word gebied aan die student en hy dus ook bewus kan wees van hoe hierdie student te werk gaan om sy afgesonderde vorm van studie in 'n sekere sin te kan verwerk en om hierdie manier die beste positiewe leiding te bied aan die student as't ware.

Nou, wou jy net weet of die voorligting lewensvatbaar is? So 'n antwoord op jou vraag - is die voorligting in die afstandsonderrig lewensvatbaar, aan 'n afstandsonderrigstudent lewensvatbaar - sou ek sê daar is geen twyfel daaroor nie, want hierdie student het 'n besondere leerbehoefte. Sy behoefte is om, gesien in die afwesigheid van die direkte kontak met die dosent nê; of sogenaamde gewaande afwesigheid van kontak.

PB *Dan is daar ook nog 'n kontak met medestudente*

- Medestudente, ek dit kan net tot 'n baie lewensvatbare wyse vir die student aangebied word en dit sal vir hom sinvol wees om sy studie op hierdie wyse... Want hulle het 'n groter behoefte, myns insiens, aan begeleiding. Studiebegeleiding, leerbegeleiding, onderrigbegeleiding, as wat die residensiële student het.

PB *Drie, wat sou geldige inhoud vir so 'n voorligtingsprogram wees?*

Dit is 'n groot vraag, maar as ek aan inhoude moet dink, sou ek sê in die eerste

plek studie, selfstudie d.m.v. afstand. Dit wil sê die student se ingesteldheid, hoe hy die saak moet benader, dat hy baie op homself aangewys gaan wees. Twee, dat hy sy hulpbronne reg moet ontgin en naslaanwerke en biblioteek raadpleging en die media, al die onderwysmedia, en die dosent en ook sy mede studente want hulle is groot bronne van inligting vir hom in baie opsigte.

Die hele kwessie van die gebruik van 'n studiegidse, as 'n tweede poot, dan nou die gebruik van studiebriefe, die bekomming van materiaal en die uitwerk of skryf van 'n werkopdrag/werkstuk. Die hele kwessie van eksaminering toetsing en evaluering, hoe dit geskied, en praktikums, d.w.s. sê nou maar soos by skoolvoorigting of wat ook al, dat daai praktikums ook aan hom behoorlik uitgespoel sal word. Verder hoedat hy veral, ek dink dit is die derde groot komponent, die moderne onderwysmedia tot sy voordeel aan kan wend; rekenaar, die video, kasset, radiodiens, studiegidse, studiebriefe. Die gesprekke, voorligtingssessies met die dosent buiten werkseminare. Ek dink dit is omtrent die spektrum.

Dan, vraag vier *Hoe sien u die vorm wat sulke voorligting sal aanneem?*

Met ander woorde, jy vra hierdie vraag na die formaat. Ek dink, baie beslis seker eerstens skriftelik, d.w.s. in die vorm van studiebriefe, studieleiding en studiehandleidings, studiegidse.

Dan, in die tweede plek d.m.v. persoonlike gesprekke van of voorligter of voorligters wat spesialiste is op bepaalde vakterrein en wat ook met hierdie student van tyd tot tyd kan kommunikeer.

En dan derdens, ook deur jou media d.w.s jou radio, televisie, hulle het mos hierdie programme, opvoedkundige programme. 'n Ou kan ook videoband vir die studente beskikbaar stel, audiokasset, al daai metodes en die pers, die openbare pers, want daardeur dink ek kan jy 'n groot hoeveelheid van hierdie afstandonderrigstudente - in die nabye toekoms ook satelietkommunikasie, ek weet nie, dis maar 'n bietjie vergesog vir my.

Kyk hierdie vraag vyf, *Is 'n studenteprofiel geregiverdig in hierdie situasie?*. Ek is nie doodseker wat jy met 'n studenteprofiel alles bedoel nie, maar as jy sê, die student se verbale IK vermoëns, sy matriekuitslae, sy vordering, sy akademiese vordering, sy werkservaring, jy weet suksesse wat hy daarin bereik het, spesiale toekennings, merietetoekeennings, sy moontlike beroepskeuses, ek weet nie of jy dit alles wil sien as studenteprofiel nie?

- PB Ek het 'n bietjie navorsing gedoen om ook te bepaal wat die student se werklike lewensgesitueerdheid is. (O ja.). Wat is sy huislike omstandighede, beskik hy oor studiekamers, (fasiliteit|) beskik hy oor 'n rekenaar wat hy kan benut, beskik hy oor 'n biblioteek?
- LC Ja. Of is die biblioteek toeganklik vir hom?
- PB Ja, daardie tipe van dinge, wat is die moontlikheid om studiegroepe te vorm.
- LC En, for that manner. As mens dink aan die Transkei, hoe is die posstelsel.?

Werk dit effektief of sal jy na alternatiewe metodes moet kyk? Sal jy dalk moet desentraliseer, kantore moet inrig waar hierdie student wel kan gaan aanklop, in plaas van om van pos gebruik te maak. Ek dink dit is faktore wat jy - is dit wat jy daar sê. Ek dink dit is baie belangrik hoor.

Goed, vraag ses. *Is daar enige spesifieke of besondere komponente wat hierin aandag behoort te geniet?* - In die studenteprofiel?

PB

Ja.

LC

Ja, ons het nou verwys na 'n aantal van hulle. Wat ek ook in ag - veral toe ek die studie gedoen het in die Transkei. Kyk ek het afstandsonderrig vir die Transkei ondersoek - is dat jy baie goed sal moet kyk na die verhouding tussen direkte kontak met die dosent of met ander studente, en die hoeveelheid tyd wat 'n student op sy eie moet studeer. Want, jy kan met baie minder kontak ook wegkom as jou studiegidse, studiehandleidings, alle materiaal, baie effektief is, dan hoef jy die student nie so gereeld te sien nie, en kom die beginsel van self-studie natuurlik baie sterk na vore. Trouens, ek dink die meeste van die residensiële universiteit begin baie sterk kyk afstandsonderrig van nader, wat ook minder kontaktyd impliseer maar die kwaliteit van kontak verbeter, ook nie meer 'n lesing as sodanig nie, maar dat jy 'n werkseminaar kry, waar die student probleme aan die dosent kan stel en dan op die manier dit so hanteer.

Dan, moet 'n mens mooi kyk na die werksituasie van daardie student. Baie van hierdie studente kan nie groepseminare kom bywoon gedurende die kwartaal nie. Baie van hulle is onderwysers, of van hulle wat ons hanteer, in elk geval ek weet nie van julle nie, is onderwysers, Dit is nie maklik om hierdie tydperke of vir lang tydperke uit sy werksituasie te wees nie. Dus, miskien in plaas daarvan om die student weg te trek van sy werksituasie, die hele kwessie van afstandsonderriginstelling na hom toe te bring, d.w.s. groepsbesoeke te doen, waar dit vir die studente moontlik gaan wees om sê nou maar namiddag hierdie soort van goed te kan hanteer.

PB

Ja.

LC

Ek dink dit is belangrike faktore, wat 'n mens moet in ag neem, en dan kan ek nie genoeg beklemtoon nie, die studiegidse, die werkopdragte, voorligting veral met betrekking tot die werkopdragte, want onthou nou, hierdie student moet al daardie werkopdragte, baie seker alleen gaan uitwerk, en as daar swak leiding kom van die dosent se kant af, hy nie die doelstellings en goed van daardie werkopdrag goed uitspel nie, dan is daardie student, dan word hy in die koue gelaat, en dan raak hulle moedeloos en gooi tou op. Maar, om terug te kom, voorligting. Ja, ja, ja. Baie belangrik. Dit moet elke keer deurkom nê.

- "Welke gevolgtrekkings ou u hieruit wou identifiseer?"

Waaruit nou, uit die hele gesprek?

PB

Ja, uit die hele gesprek.

LC

Goed, in die eerste plek sou ek sê. Dis belangrik dat die student goeie deeglike voorbereiding kry en skriftelik en verbaal en d.m.v. die media, ten einde hom

so goed as moontlik toe te rus vir hierdie sogenaamde eensame studiepad wat hy moet loop.

Die tweede plek is dat daar baie deeglik gekyk sal moet word, of na die inhoud van hierdie sodanige voorligtingsprogramme en dat dit op 'n gereelde basis moet plaasvind. M.a.w. myns insiens, nie net eenmaal in 'n jaar nie, maar gereeld, sê nou maar na toetse, voor toetse, of voor en na die indiening van werkopdragte om terugvoering van werkopdragte te kry en daardie soort goed. So is dit baie belangrik.

Dan derdens, moet die moderne onderwystegnologie na die beste van die student, die dosent en die voorligter se vermoëns ingespan word om hierdie stelsel so effektief as moontlik te maak.

Laastens sou ek sê, jy kan ook van die student vra om 'n kursus te evalueer en eerstens, miskien die dosent te evalueer, tweedens die studiegidse en studiehandleidings te evalueer, en derdens die studievoorligting wat aan hom gebied word te evalueer en vierdens hoe hy die kursus evalueer - so 'n soort van 'n summatiewe tipe evaluering want uit die student - en dan moontlik wenke, die student kan moontlik wenke gee, om die situasie te verbeter wat hy sit nou aan die ontvangkant en daai ou sit aan die teenkant en dat 'n mens nie mooi weet wat is die student se werklike behoeftes aan studieleiding en voorligting en hulp en jy weet evalueringsmeganismes en wat ook al die geval is nie.

